

THE OVMRC RAMBLER

Volume 36, Number 1 - January 1993

Happy 1993!

President ponders past projects – proudly predicts positive prospects!

The Presidential report
by Bob Sharp, VE3YBC

As my first term as your President reaches the half way mark, I thought I would take some time to review what we (the club) have been doing. I didn't think it would seem like much, but when it's all written down it is rather impressive.

So if anyone asks you what the OVMRC has been doing, you can tell them that in the six months from June 1992 to January 1993 we have promoted amateur radio by providing communications or displays for the following events:

- Gloucester Soccer Club 12th International Tournament
- Italian Festival Cycle Race
- 1992 Cycle for the Kids
- National Museum of Science

- and Technology "Techno Days"
- National Museum of Science and Technology "Talk to Santa"
- DOC Car Rally
- Ottawa General Hospital "Rattle Me Bones" Fun Run

We ran a very successful Field Day station, we published a members phone directory, and our Seniors Group received a \$6998 New Horizons grant to help re-equip the Museum station.

In our first 6 months we have successfully upgraded VE3TWO (2m) and added VE3TWO (6m).

We have four club sponsored nets on our two repeaters:

- the Wise Owl net
- the Welcome Mat net
- the 6m net on 2m
- the 6m net on 6m

We also sponsor the Pot Hole net weekly on 3.760.

Our Education Committee has published their own training manual. It is being distributed by CARF and its publication will ensure a good supply of qualified hams to perpetuate our fine hobby. As everyone knows, we also run a very successful amateur radio training course which should graduate 30 new hams in the spring.

To help those in our community less fortunate than ourselves, we have made contributions to the Ottawa Food Bank as well as to the Shepherds of Good Hope. Yes, we do more than just play radio these days.

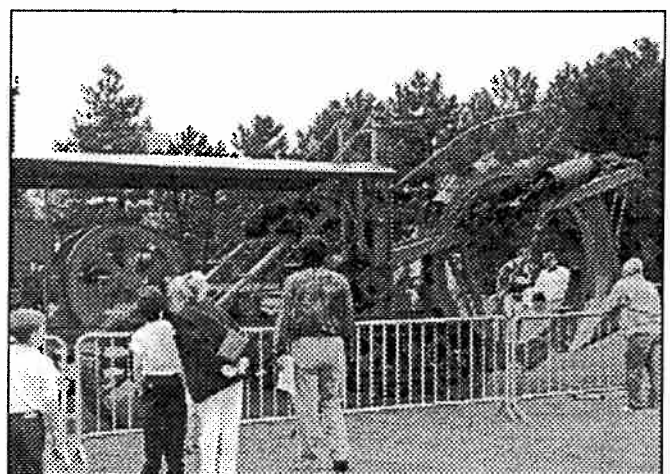
Well my friends, that's what the first six months have been like. Just watch and see how the next six go.

-73-



Field Day brass pounders

Both photos: VE3WEH



Techno days: tuning an old tube rig always draws a crowd

RAMBLER

The *Rambler* is published monthly by:

The OVMRC
Box 5530, Station F
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K2C 3M1

Opinions expressed in the *Rambler* are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club, Incorporated, its officers or its members. Permission is granted to republish the contents, in whole or in part, providing the source is properly acknowledged. Commercial use of the contents is expressly prohibited.

The 1992-1993 OVMRC executive

- ✓ *President:* Bob Sharp, VE3YBC, 731-7089
- ✓ *Vice-President:* Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH, 747-5565
- ✓ *Past President:* Jerry Wells, VE3CDS, 225-7374
- ✓ *Treasurer:* Richard Adams, VE3EIT, 749-2619
- ✓ *Secretary:* Larry Woram, VE3WLN, 835-2959

Standing committee chairs

- ✓ *Amateur radio exhibit:* Cy Webster, VE3SIY, 733-2371
- ✓ *Amateur radio training (acting):* Doug Carswell, VE3ATY, 839-5854
- ✓ *Field day:* Vic Bajaj, VE3BSV, 726-9270 *late*
- ✓ *Flea market:* Ken Barry, VE3KJB, 746-4823
- ✓ *Historical (acting):* Pat Brewer, VE3KJQ, 825-8721
- ✓ *Hysterical:* Neil Herber, VE3PUE, 829-4668
- ✓ *Membership:* Mike Beausoleil, VE3BGP, 739-8871
- ✓ *Newsletter:* See hysterical (don't ask)
- ✓ *Publicity and programs:* Keith Beardsley, VE3SVQ, 731-7912
- ✓ *Radio operations:* Ian Kennedy, VE3SNX, 747-8387
- ✓ *Technical:* John Pope, VE3ACI, 989-3629

Ramblerites

Contributors to this issue:

Roger VE3XRR, Ron VE3UWR, Bob VE3YBC, Leo VE3NVL, Larry VE3WLN, Fred VE3BAJ, Rod VE3ROD, Allan VE3TYJ, Doug VE3SPF, Larry VE3WEH, Ron VE3MUD

Your New Year's resolution should be: "I resolve to write an article for the *Rambler*."

Circulation:

Bill Chapman, VE3RWC, Superb stuffer.
Fred Haire, VE3NJJ, Extraordinary exemplar.
Dave Scobie, VE3BOX, Kwality kopier.

We gratefully acknowledge the support provided by Advanced Copy Systems in printing the *Rambler*.

Mark Your Calendar!

Next general meeting:

Thursday, January 21, 1993 19:30 local time in the auditorium at the National Museum of Science and Technology. Home-brew night. Bring yer projects (non-liquid).

Next executive meeting:

Thursday, January 28, 1993 19:30 local time in the volunteer room at the National Museum of Science and Technology.

Deadline for the next issue of the *Rambler*:

Thursday, January 28, 1993.

Affiliated clubs

The OVMRC exchanges bulletins with the following organizations:

Augusta Amateur Radio Association, Augusta, ME
Border City Radio Club, Windsor, ON
CARF, Kingston, ON
CRRL, Arva, ON
Chatham-Kent Amateur Radio Club Inc., Ridgetown, ON
Calgary Amateur Radio Association, Calgary, AB
Halifax Amateur Radio Club, Halifax, NS
Heritage Amateur Radio Club, Cobourg, ON
Kingston ARC, Kingston, ON
London Amateur Radio Club, London, ON
Ottawa Amateur Radio Club, Ottawa, ON
Pioneer Amateur Radio Club, Nepean, ON
Scarborough Amateur Radio Club, Inc., Scarborough, ON
Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club, Cornwall, ON
Sudbury Amateur Radio Club, Sudbury, ON
Saskatoon Amateur Radio Club, Saskatoon, SK
Thousand Islands Amateur Radio Association, Prescott, ON
West Island Amateur Radio Club Inc., Dorval, PQ

Sponsors

The OVMRC provides bulletins to the following organizations for their past support of our activities:
Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc., Mississauga, ON
Seaway Communications Co., Cornwall, ON

Ramblings

Words of wisdom from our President, Bob Sharp, VE3YBC



I hope all of you enjoyed the December meeting and our guest speaker for the month. I enjoyed finally seeing the Field Day video at the proper speed. Thanks Larry.

The Food Bank drive was quite a success – our members contributed four large boxes of food. Nobody counted, but I would estimate that we donated at least 200 items to the Food Bank. I personally delivered the boxes to the Food Bank warehouse on Bayview road on the Friday morning following the meeting.

Since the coffee and cookies were free that night, we asked for donations for charity. Sue VE3SLC counted the proceeds (over \$20) which were sent to the Shepherds of Good Hope.

On the topic of the Shepherds of Good Hope, it seems there were some members who were

not pleased that we (the club) planned to donate \$200 to help out the Shepherds of Good Hope this Christmas. I admit that I did skirt the topic and I apologize for not being able to table a motion and allow for the usual whole nine yards of discussion.

However, folks, it is Christmas time. I feared that we would be still discussing this item next year at this time. I felt it was more important to brighten Christmas for a few families. (Our \$200 donation would have provided for at least two families in the Ottawa-Carleton region.) However, some people in our club insisted that we follow the bylaws to the letter.

[The club bylaws state that the Executive must be bound by the approved budget and cannot commit funds for other than budgeted items in excess of \$100 per calendar month without prior approval of the membership. Ed.]

I can see quoting the rules and regulations when we want to spend money on something foolish, but this was to help out the less fortunate at Christmas. I was saddened by the “Scrooge-like” result.

Where were all the people who claim they care about our club when the elections were

held? Everyone was acclaimed. If anyone seriously objects to the way I handle club business, the bylaws provide a way to have me removed from office.

I've said my piece for this month. On to the future...

Keep in mind that the January meeting features our Home-Brew contest. The rules for the contest are as follows:

1. Entries must have something to do with amateur radio.
2. Entries must be done in accordance with your operating privileges. (Don't make a 10m dipole if you can't legally operate on 10m.)
3. Your project must work, and if asked to you must be able to prove it.
4. Judges' decisions are final.
5. When in doubt, see rule #4.
6. Prizes will be given for the best entry in six categories.
7. You must be a member of the OVMRC to enter.

Our judges will be John VE3ACI, Jerry VE3CDS and Wil VE3XMT. Come out and dazzle them.

I hope you had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing you in January at the meeting – even those with the lynch rope.

– 73 de VE3YBC –

DOC car crew coughs up kudos

Yves Brunet of the DOC recently sent the following to our Prez

“This is to thank you and the OVMRC for your help in organizing the first DOC Car Rally.

The assistance of your group in establishing communication links between checkpoints has

proven to be very much appreciated by the checkpoint marshalls and rally participants. At all times, we were in a position to know exactly how many participants were to come to each of the checkpoints, how many seemed to be lost and how many had in fact given up! Some of the radio

operators even assisted overloaded checkpoint marshalls. What great help you were!

If you are willing, I would very much like to use your services next year. The second DOC Car Rally will probably be held on October 2, 1993.”

–73–

Minutes

from the last general meeting, by Larry Woram, VE3WLN



OVMRC General Meeting,
December 17, 1992

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 19:30 by the President, Bob VE3YBC. Guests at the meeting included Travis VE3FK and Richard VE3ZXZ. Bob suggested that amateurs may wish to send greetings to our forces overseas

2) CARF Bulletin

The CARF representative advised that municipalities are ignoring the fact that the federal government has jurisdiction over antennas and antenna structures

and passing restrictive bylaws. In this respect CARF is asking amateurs to advise them of any such bylaws. It was noted that Fred Hammond VE3???, of Hammond transformer fame, celebrated his 80th birthday recently and suggested that the club may wish to send our congratulations. The new callbook is available from Dan VE3EBI for \$35.

3) Guest Speaker

Ed VE3EFP introduced the evening's guest speaker, Dr. Antonio Salvadori of the University of Guelph, who is better known as Toni VE3NXQ, CK2CDX and EI2VUE to name just a few of his calls. In addition to being an avid DX'er Toni is also the author of the popular logging program, GemRadio.

Toni gave a brief history of how he came to develop GemRadio into the program it is today, starting with his first QSO on July 5, 1984. Using an overhead projector, he demonstrated the

ease of loading the program onto a hard drive. Toni then walked us through all the menu functions and explained all the features of the program. During and after his presentation he took questions from the floor. Later in the evening members were able to purchase the program.

4) Door Prizes

The first door prize, a copy of GemRadio (donated by Toni), was won by Dave VE3TVU. The second prize, a Diamond antenna, was won by Paul VE3NPD.

5) Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 21:10 and was followed by coffee and ragchew. Coffee and cookies were on the house with donations going to a charitable organization. Larry VE3WEH showed his video of the club Field Day 1992 during coffee.

-73-

Mailbox..... from page 5

They are offering a return bus trip and 2 nights hotel (double occupancy) for \$115.

The December issue of the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club's *Groundwave* featured a new cover page with the club logo prominently centered over the curved title. Nicely done. Peter VE3LBW reported a very successful flea market and he and his helpers were congratulated for their efforts. The OARC, subject to ratification by the membership, will be sponsoring an Advanced Amateur Radio Course for amateurs with their basic licence and those wishing to upgrade.

Classes will start in January.

Another newsletter featured a new format and name, the *Lambda* by the Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club. The club repeater VE3SVC is reported to be back on the air after installation of a new repeater controller. The controller's new features were explained including how to use the phone patch and the speed dial feature. The club is sponsoring a very worthwhile project in allowing hospitalized and mentally disadvantaged children the opportunity to speak to Santa Claus through amateur radio.

With the Christmas season upon us, our editor has imposed

an earlier than usual deadline for submissions and, as such, I have not yet received several newsletters. In next month's column I hope to be able to catch up and also include the second part of the Sable Island DXpedition report. The visit last year by the West Island ARC has raised my interest in this aspect of the hobby and I am looking forward to part two.

So much for the mail. The best to you and your families during the holidays and in the new year. Happy Christmas, Joyeux Noel, Zallig Kerstmis, Buon Natale and Feliz Navidad.

-73-

From the mailbox

by Larry Woram, VE3WLN



This month we will start with the Saskatoon Amateur Radio Club's *Feedline*. The SARC reports that their membership is growing and now at 48 regular members and 33 associate members. George VE5SZU will be writing a review on the Realistic HTX 202 and his early impressions favor the unit. They have arranged for a group purchase discount and are waiting for more amateurs to graduate, since Radio Shack will not sell to any unlicensed amateur radio operator. (Several other clubs are also making group purchases of the HTX 202 – more on this later.) The feature article was an antenna tutorial by Joe Reisert W1JR.

Our most westerly associate club, the Calgary Amateur Radio Association note in *Key Klix* that since 1966 they have provided amateur radio communications to the city of Calgary to relay election count results from the polling stations back to the city mainframe computer. Fourteen base operators control an average of 10 to 16 amateurs. Within 8 to 10 minutes approximately 140 results were available in the past election. CARA's membership is a little over 400 and they are trying to get back to the 500 mark soon. Congratulations to Jeff VE6RCI, the new

DX News Editor. From his column I note that he is still working DX with a vertical (the tower fund must still be growing.) *Key Klix* carried a product review on the Radio Shack HTX 202. On the plus side, it is said to cope with inter-mod problems better than many other rigs, it has a repeater time out warning (switches off the PTT and bleeps you before the alligator gets you) and it has a low price. On the negative side, there is no case or desk charger available. When bought in lots of twelve, Radio Shack gives a 15% discount. A speaker-mic, mag-mount antenna and batteries should be available in the new year through the RS service department.

The Border City Radio Club Newsletter reported courtesy of CARF News Service that Canada will host the 1995 IARU Region 2 Conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Canada won over Nicaragua and Cuba. The Niagara Peninsula Amateur Radio Club is the local club. The December meeting of the BCRC will feature Paul Gryn of the DOC who will touch on no-code license, amateur radio vis-a-vis DOC and future relations between the DOC and one national organization. The BCRC placed fourth overall in Canada for Field Day with 5950 points. Well done! Another interesting statistic (courtesy of CARF) is that there are 1 203 226 amateur radio stations in Japan and 2 280 705 licensed amateurs.

The December issue of the *LARC Bulletin* published by the London Amateur Radio Club announced that their guest speaker for the general meeting was also a representative of

Communications Canada. Following the meeting they were to have a swap-shop night. The Goblin Patrol on Halloween was a success with 29 volunteers out on Friday and 31 on Saturday. Amateurs made numerous reports leading to two arrests by the police. The VE3OPP station at the London detachment of the OPP was activated, however all proved quiet in the surrounding towns.

With the holidays approaching and working double shifts Val VE3VAL, the editor of the Chatham-Kent Amateur Radio Club *Clear Signals*, published a leaner-than-usual December issue. At the November meeting a motion was put forward for the club to donate amateur related books to schools and libraries. After the meeting was closed the names of veterans who served in the war that had been members of CKARC were read. This was followed by a reading of *In Flanders Fields* and a minute's silence.

The Scarborough Amateur Radio Club's October/November bulletin carried an editorial by Dave VE3SVL which I wish I had the space to quote verbatim. Dave wrote on contesting, Particularly the recent CW contest and how the actions of some amateurs spoil the privilege of operating for others. "Contesting should be about quality and not quantity." A SARC technical forum conducted by Tony Fegen VE3QF/G3TTF discussed antenna gain and directivity.

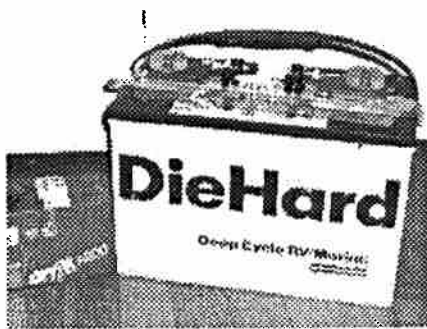
The SARC newsletter also included an announcement by the South Pickering Amateur Radio Club for DAYTON 1993.

See Mailbox..... page 4

Technical topics - boat battery basics

by Doug Bannard, VE3SPF

Exposing a few myths about the care and feeding of car or marine batteries in the shack.



Much of the amateur radio equipment sold today is designed to be operated from a nominal voltage of 13.8 Vdc, rather than the traditional 120 Vac used when vacuum tube equipment was more prevalent. Since regulated 13.8-V power supplies capable of supplying the 10 to 20 A required by most rigs are quite expensive, it seems attractive to invest instead in a car or marine battery and charger.

Some hams get years of good service from their batteries using such a setup. Many others end up with a battery which can't hold a charge after only two years. Yet the battery would have lasted four to five years in a car. What gives? Let's have a look...

A Few Basics

Car and marine batteries are lead-acid batteries. That is, they contain plates made from a lead alloy, coated with an active material which is also a lead compound. The battery contains an "electrolyte" – a mixture of sulphuric acid and water. When the battery is charged, a chemical reaction takes place between the electrolyte and the active material on the battery plates

which converts electrical energy to stored chemical energy. When the battery is discharged, the chemical energy is converted back to electrical energy.

What causes lead acid batteries to fail prematurely?

1) *High temperatures:* These batteries age quickly at elevated temperatures. High temperature may be due to the surroundings or due to excessive current being used to charge the battery. An electrolyte temperature of 50°C severely shortens battery life.

2) *Overcharging:* Charging a battery at too high a current shortens its life by overheating it, or by destroying the active material on the positive plate.

3) *Infrequent Charging or Undercharging:* If a battery is chronically undercharged, or (even worse) stored for more than a month without being charged, it tends to self-discharge. When it does so, it forms hard lead sulphate deposits around the active material on its plates. This renders the battery permanently useless – it can no longer accept or hold a charge.

4) *Lack of Maintenance:* If the electrolyte level is not maintained, the tops of the plates become exposed to the air, causing a permanent loss of battery capacity.

5) *Misapplication:* Car batteries are intended for starting cars. They make fine back-up power for the shack as long as you don't "deep-cycle" them. They do not like being discharged until "flat", then recharged repeatedly – as might happen with a Field-Day battery. If you intend to discharge a battery until it's flat, buy a deep-cycle marine battery.

The Five Common Myths

1) *Just buy a battery charger:* The ham who buys a car battery and automotive charger may not have a serviceable battery for very long. Unfortunately, almost all automotive chargers are designed to get a dead battery back into service on an occasional basis. They may leave the battery undercharged or overcharged. These chargers use pulsating dc to charge the battery. This causes large ripple currents to flow in the battery, hastening the destruction of the active material on the battery plates. Regular use of automotive chargers is the # 1 cause of early battery failure. Even the small 1 or 2 A chargers available for trickle charging can produce enough ripple current to seriously harm a battery.

2) *Use the battery as a filter:* Worse off still is the ham who buys an automotive charger, puts it in parallel with the battery and leaves it on for hours while operating, using the battery as a ripple filter. This causes the same problems as (1) above.

3) *Add new electrolyte:* Never add commercially available electrolyte to a car battery. If the electrolyte level is low in any of the cells, top them up with **distilled water – not tap water**. A battery which no longer holds a charge **cannot** be rejuvenated by replacing the old electrolyte. So take it easy on both your pocketbook and the environment – if your battery no longer holds a charge it cannot be rejuvenated by any reasonable means. Take it back to where you bought it to be recycled.

See Battery..... page 8

Class of '92 by Ron Clément, VE3UWR & Roger Rose, VE3XRR

Telecommunications teaches tolerance

What does this new year have in store for us? Well, for one thing, the class of '92 graduates will have one year of experience under their belts. For many of us, the past year was one filled with "electrifying" experiments and delightful conversations with old and new friends. Unfortunately we don't have statistics to show how many of us have gone on to expand our knowledge to HF and other areas.

It is important for us to have an environment in which we can all maintain our enthusiasm. We strongly believe that the OVMRC has provided us with that support and we're sure everyone is grateful for it. Some of us may not be fully involved in club events, but we don't think this is due to lack of interest. A good number of amateur operators are also involved with other organi-

zations. That's just the type of people we are.

Hamming is a great hobby, and just putting your two cents worth can make a difference. For example, while doing our thing at Scout headquarter's radio club (VE3SHQ) one Wednesday evening, we met 'uncle' Bob (VE3DUB) on 2m. The subject of conversation was CW and we were looking for some practice for our young students (one of them, Danny, VE2KAA is a scout with his basic licence). We got an immediate offer from Bob to go on 40m and to give this scout a chance to have a real QSO in CW.

You can imagine the reaction shown by this scouter. Here was a stranger offering to give him a chance to send and to patiently listen to the butchered code being sent. I am sure that Danny will remember that for many

years to come. Yet, to us, it seemed to be such a simple action. Isn't that what hamming is all about?

Think about it – we never met this amateur operator. He could be any race, any religion, blind, paraplegic, poor, rich, or whatever. It made no difference to us. Society might be far more tolerant if we could only communicate with other people through amateur radio. What a concept!

Anyway, we feel we had a wonderful first year in the amateur radio world (literally the world!). We may not be as far advanced as we could be, but like we said, other interests keep us away for now. We can't speak for everyone else in the Class of '92 but we hope that what we feel is shared by them all. Thank you OVMRC.

-73-

Rod's radio restoration – a case for CW completed

by Rod Pike, VE3ROD

Last month Rod began his radio saga by venturing off into the wilds without a microphone or key. Here is the conclusion. Ed.

Now where was I? Oh yes, I was just about to call VE3BPU and see if he could get me the pinout for the mic.

I called Harry and he was able to hear me even though I had the shift wrong (I had a 50/50 chance of getting it right). I don't know what Harry thought, but he was very patient. Remember that first time you tried Morse code? I must have sounded ten times

worse. Doing Morse on a key is one thing, but tapping it out with a little wire on the end of your finger on the top of your radio is another. Anyhow, I managed to give Harry my call and that was about it. I had no luck getting the pinout but at least I knew the proper shift for listening to USB and transmitting CW so I could hear and be heard.

I had to do something about my code. It was pretty bad. I knew I should have brought my key! What would McGyver have done? I had a few more minutes before sked time, so I went to the kitchen to see what I could find. What I found was a plastic

measuring spoon, a half teaspoon to be exact. It had a good spring action. I stripped more insulation off the wire and wrapped it around the handle end of the spoon to give me a wider striking area. With a suitable spacer, I could get out much more reasonable code – although still a little shaky. Maybe my lack of practice was showing through.

When sked time arrived I heard VO1AI calling me. Harry came on and told Bill that he had been talking to me on (hi hi) CW and that I was not able to contact him using phone.

See Rod's radio..... page 9

4) *Use the battery from the car you junked:* If you saved the battery from a scrapped car and let it sit for more than a month without charging it, it will be badly sulphated due to self-discharge. It will have very little capacity and will probably let you down in an emergency situation – keep that battery charged.

5) *Get a maintenance-free battery:* There are three different types of lead-acid batteries: standard, maintenance-free and immobilized-electrolyte.

Standard batteries with filler caps are usually the lowest cost and good for ham radio because you can add water as necessary.

Maintenance-free batteries are the same as standard batteries except you can't add water – there are no filler caps. They are more expensive and provide no real advantage in a ham shack. Contrary to popular belief, they do use water. Mechanics often take them apart to add distilled water to extend their lives!

Immobilized-electrolyte batteries (one trade name is GEL-CEL) are the “Cadillacs” of lead-acids. The electrolyte is absorbed in porous separators between the plates, and cannot spill. The plate chemistry is slightly different so that no hydrogen is produced during charging (the source of electrolyte loss). The most expensive of all, this battery is *very* tolerant of storage. They can be stored for a year or more in a charged state without worry of self-discharge or sulphation and loss of capacity. They are available in *all* sizes – a 100 amp hour (Ah) unit sells for about \$300.

Now – What to Do?

Now that you know the five most common battery myths, here's what to do to make that battery

last up to ten years (like they do in telephone central offices).

Make sure you chose a big enough battery for your application. For example, if you want to use it for Field Day, where it will supply 5 A for 20 hours, then you will need a 100 Ah battery. If it's only for periodic backup in the shack, a 50-60 Ah unit is more than enough.

Build yourself the analog expanded scale voltmeter on page 52 of the December 1992 QST, or buy yourself an inexpensive digital multimeter. You need to monitor the terminal voltage of your battery accurately.

If you have a 13.8-Vdc power supply for your shack that is regulated and current-limited, use it to charge the battery. It can actually be quite a low current supply if you are not worried about re-charging the battery very quickly. You can build your own with an LM317 regulator and a few other parts from a well-stocked junk box

Connect the power supply in parallel with the battery through a diode with a current rating greater than or equal to the output current of your power supply. Connect the diode in the positive lead between the power supply and the battery. Connect the diode's anode to the power supply positive and the cathode to the battery positive. This diode keeps current from the battery from flowing into the power supply when the supply is turned off (or during a power outage). This prevents both power supply damage and battery discharge.

Your rig(s) should be wired directly across the battery terminals, and your voltmeter must be connected directly across these terminals as well. Make sure the leads going to the rigs have appropriately sized fuses in them. Use a 1 A fuse in one voltmeter lead to prevent accidents in case of a short circuit at the voltmeter.

Adjust the output voltage of your power supply very slowly until the voltmeter reads 13.8 Vdc ± 0.1 V. It may take some time to make this adjustment correctly, since a battery which isn't completely charged will tend to make your power supply current limit and drop its voltage.

Remember that batteries produce hydrogen when they are almost fully charged. Although the amount produced at a terminal voltage of 13.8 V is small, it is still present. For this reason, do not enclose the battery, and beware of sparks and open lights around it while it is charging.

Now you're ready to go. Key the rig. If your power supply is on the wimpy side, you will notice the voltmeter drop from 13.8 V to somewhere between 12 and 13 V. There is less voltage drop with larger power supplies. Operate as much as you want. With a small power supply, the battery voltage will continue dropping the longer you operate. When the voltmeter reads 11.0 V, **stop operating!** The battery has discharged as much as it can do without damage. Shut down your rig at this point and leave the power supply on until the voltmeter reads 13.8 V. Then leave it on a few hours longer to ensure a full charge.

You do not have to leave the power supply turned on all the time. If you wish, it can be disconnected after the battery is fully charged. In fact, the battery will last longer if it is not continually “floated” at 13.8 V. You can take the battery out on Field Day (with the voltmeter of course). Just remember to charge it once every three weeks at a minimum – even if you're not using it. Buy some distilled water at the drugstore to keep its fluid levels topped-up. And above all, HAVE FUN.

Doggone "mobile" rigs make MUD mad!

by Ron Howe, VE3MUD (KC4YXJ)

Alptly enough, it happened on Labor Day. As I stepped outside, I sensed something was amiss. I opened the car door, sat behind the wheel and looked in the rearview mirror. Two things immediately struck me as odd:

- 1) Why could I see, unobstructed, into the rearview mirror?
- 2) Given this unexplained increase in visibility, why couldn't I see my Wilson 1000 mag-mount antenna perched on the trunk??

Neurons clicked, the blood boiled, then I went into labor. Some individual, (or individuals) clearly born out of wedlock had "rig-napped" my 10m mobile – antenna and all!

After living in a high-density urban area close to our southern neighbors' national capital for three years, locking our cars faithfully, we looked forward to relaxing in the "wilds of Rockland". Given the statistic that cars are stolen at a rate of one every 90 seconds in the U.S., I thought I had beaten the odds and safely returned.

NOT!!

Frustrated, incredulous, and more than just a little angry, I wondered why my 300 pounds of "livestock" (my two Newfoundland dogs) had made nary a sound. Needless to say, later that day the dogs and I had a heart-to-heart talk to review the implicit duties and responsibilities of dogs. I did most of the talking.

Lessons learned?

- 1) Always write down your rig's serial number.
- 2) It's handy to keep receipts.
- 3) Advise your insurance company you have a mobile rig(s) and confirm that your policy covers these items.
- 4) Photograph your mobile rig in-situ.
- 5) If you own a mag-mount, consider locking it in your trunk at night or when parked in "questionable" areas of town.
- 6) *Always* lock your car.
- 7) See item 6.

As my ol' dad says, "One percent of the population learns from their own mistakes, 1% learns from others'. The other 98% *never learn!*"

Smugly counting myself in the first group, learning from my own expensive mistake (\$50 deductible) I returned to religiously locking my car. December 15 I got hit again!! This time my 2m rig!!

Words alone could not express my anger at this monotony, though I must confess that once I had verbalized my displeasure in the frosty predawn darkness there was no need to get out and scrape the windshield.

On arrival home that night, the dogs and I had another little chat. No barks? No growls? Sympathetic to my dilemma, the dogs had little, if anything, to say. Suddenly I realized their stony silence spoke volumes. They knew the identity of those dastardly, despicable dirtbags! No wonder no barks, woofs, growls or howls!

The "Newfs" still look at me, tight-lipped, silent with knowing brown eyes. Like the miserable sod who knows the ending to a best-selling novel, they've just bursting to say "who done it".

Now, if I could only teach them Morse...

-73-

Rod's radio..... from page 7

With my new "key" I broke in and we moved to another frequency. Bill first thought that my mike wasn't working, but he added insult to injury by laughing when he found out that I had just forgotten it. I then tried to explain that I wanted to get the pinout for the mike connector. He has the same rig and I was hoping he had it with him. Unfortunately, he too was at a cottage, so I was out of luck. Bill jokingly berated me on my code. It was only after I told him I

didn't have a key that he complemented me on the quality of my dits and dahs.

As luck would have it, someone else was listening to this comedy of errors and they had the pinout information. Armed with this knowledge, I agreed to meet again in another hour.

I managed to get a connection that looked right on the S-meter, (yes, I even had a dummy load for testing) by talking into one of the earpieces of my headphones. The VOX was a godsend since my hands were busy trying

to maintain the correct connections and I had left my third hand at home next to the soldering iron.

I was able to make a phone contact with VO1AI and we had a good laugh about the whole ordeal. I even got a pretty good report on the quality of my audio.

That's my summer adventure. There must be others out there with similar experiences and I for one would like to hear about them.

-73-

Upcoming Events, Help Wanted

Still (always!) looking

Net controllers needed to relieve the regulars. The Wise Owl net, the Pot Hole net, the Welcome Mat net etc., etc. No experience necessary. OTJ training with potential for advancement. Contact Ian VE3SNX at 747-8387. Contributed by VE3SNX

End of January 1993

Twenty-one day, 5wpm Morse code class. HF privileges in just a few weeks! Contact Al (Mr. Morse) Barnes, VE3TYJ at 746-5994.

Contributed by VE3TYJ

January 15, 1993 to March 26, 1993

VE3TWO (147.300+) Wise Owl Qualifying Nets
From January 15, 1993 to March 26, 1993 anyone checking-in on The Wise Owl net (Fridays at 20:00) can qualify to be a Wise Owl. During that period, you must check-in ten times or more to receive a class "A" certificate. Check-in seven times or more for a class "B" certificate. Certificates are awarded at the May OVMRC club meeting.

Contributed by VE3NVL

February 13, 1993

Radio operators needed with mobile radios and handie talkies to provide communication for the 10K run sponsored by the National Capital Commission (NCC) on Saturday morning February 13, 1993. For more information contact Leonard VE3LPH at 733-5122 or Ian VE3SNX at 747-8387.

Contributed by VE3NVL

May 15, 1993

OVMRC flea market. Canadian Forces Reserve Barracks, Dow's Lake, Ottawa, Ontario. Free admission. Doors open to vendors at 08:00, to the public at 09:00. Tables (\$20 for commercial vendors and \$10 for all others) can be reserved by contacting Ken Barry, VE3KJB at 746-4823. Wheelchair accessible. Refreshments. Talk-in on VE3TWO, 147.300+.

Contributed by VE3NVL

To put a notice in here,
call Leo VE3NVL
at 225-0902.

Fred's call for competent code

by Fred Noble, VE3BAJ

Learning the code is not easy for most people. In fact, it is difficult indeed for some of us. However, modern methods leave me thinking that surely a motivated person should be able to achieve 5 wpm without undue anguish, and 12 wpm if enough time is available to work regularly.

WIAW is one source of practice that has been on the air for many years. Frequencies are 1818, 3581.5, 7047.5, 14047.5

KHz (and others). Speeds are 5, 7.5, 10, 13 and 15 wpm in sequence. The WIAW CW transmission schedule is:

09:00 Wed, Fri
16:00 Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun
19:00 Mon, Wed, Fri
22:00 Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun

This schedule appeared on page 93 of the December 1992 QST.

Good luck!

[Don't forget the OVMRC code
phone at 746-2065. Ed.]

-73-

Items for sale

For Sale, \$0.00

Two 20-foot sections from a 40-foot steel mast free to a good home. Contact Joe VE3PDS at 824-3162 or try on VE3TEL.

For Sale, Two Newfoundland dogs

Get along well with children but not recommended for guard duty. Any reasonable offer accepted. Contact VE3MUD for further details.

-73-

Rambler readers riled – "stop stupid squibs" squawk subscribers

by Neil Herber, VE3PUE

Since this issue of the *Rambler* marks the halfway point in our editorial career, we thought we should write something about the difficulty of getting enough good material to fill each issue.

Of course, it would be a bald-faced lie – something we're incapable of, our face being somewhat hirsute. We currently have an oversupply of good stuff.

Still in the wings are a series of articles by Ian VE3SNX on digital modes, another fine equipment review by Ed VE3VLF and a whimsical item by Ed where he tries to explain ham radio in the 24th century.

Please write something for the *Rambler*. We give priority to new authors and technical articles.

-73-