

Rambler

Newsletter of the
Ottawa Valley Mobile
Radio Club, Inc. (OVMRC)
Volume 43, Issue No. 5



Inside...

In the beginning...

Where were you in 1957? Read about the early days of the OVMRC in this issue's Yesteryear column
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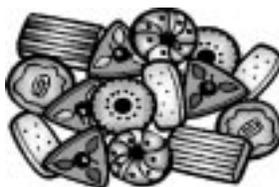
Celebrate the Season!

Amateur Radio and celebrations of the season go hand-in-hand!



For example, remember to participate in the annual special Christmas morning net on VE3TWO, starting at 9:30 a.m. The net controller will be Sydney, VE3GVI. Sydney has performed this function for the past several years. This net will last for approximately one hour. Take advantage of this opportunity to extend season's greetings to your fellow Amateurs, and mark your calendar for this special edition of the Wise Owl Net.

Of course, you, your family and friends will also want to come out to the OVMRC annual variety show on Thursday, December 17 at the Museum of Science and Technology. Be there by 7:30 p.m. to ensure you don't miss a thing!



Please also remember to bring any baked goods or sweets to the December 17 meeting for all to enjoy after the show!

Have a safe holiday and a Happy New Year! ❖

Ten Metre Net is Going Strong

by Maurice-André Vigneault, VA2MA / VE3VIG

On Monday, September 21, 1998, the 10 m "National Capital Net" was officially opened after a six-week evaluation period, on the air, at 28.505 MHz, five nights a week, from Monday to Friday at 7:00 p.m.

The National Capital Net / Le Réseau de la Capitale Nationale is a bilingual net and it is open to all Radio Amateurs, although it is primarily a gathering of Amateurs in the Capital area.

The net is an "informal gathering" and each gathering has two parts. On opening of the net at 7:00 p.m. (Ottawa time), a station can act as a traffic controller

to record check-ins and to insure a timely and orderly rotation, allowing each station to provide input. What follows is a forum including discussion on suggested topics. The net is also open to questions, information and messages. Just throw in your call sign, indicating you have a comment, and the last station to comment will let you in. Latecomers are welcomed.

The purpose of the net is to allow Amateurs to exchange information on any subjects of interest to the community, to practice communications skills on the HF bands, be it through the use of proper procedure or the set-up of an individual station, to occupy (to use) that portion of the frequency spectrum allocated to Amateur Radio, and to encourage Amateurs to upgrade to the HF bands. (*Ten*, continued on p. ⑥)

Rambler

Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Inc.
P.O. Box 5530, Stn. F
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K2C 3M1



OVMRC Executive (1998-99)

President	Doug Carswell, VE3ATY 829-7167, ve3aty@takeone.com
Vice-President	Jacques Choquette, VE3TSC 748-6597, chinook@takeone.com
Treasurer	Peter Hafichuk, VE3LBW 745-0608
Secretary	Patricia Rowan, VA3PUR 521-2014, patricia.rowan@takeone.com

Standing Committee Chairpersons

Amateur Radio Exhibit	Ernie Jury, VE3EJ 728-3666, ve3ejj@cyberus.ca
Amateur Radio Training	Bob Shaw, VE3SUY 737-9443, lycott@fox.nstn.ca Bob Kavanagh, VE3OSZ 225-6785, ve3osz@rac.ca
Delegated Examiner Field Day	Bob Kavanagh, VE3OSZ (see above) Charles Morrison, VE3TCM 228-3480
Flea Market	John Barnhardt, VE3ZOV 521-8910, ve3zov@rac.ca
Historical	Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH 747-5565, larry.wilcox@takeone.com
Membership	Tom St. Julien, VA3OFD 747-9577, tom.st.julien@takeone.com
Newsletter	Susan Mogensen, VE3MOG 833-2766, ve3mog@rac.ca
Publicity & Programs	Open
Radio Operations	Evan DeCorte, VE3DEC 722-8929, pebd@cyberus.ca
Technical	John Pope, VE3ACI 989-3629, pope@sce.carleton.ca

OVMRC Life Members

Ralph Cameron, VE3BBM	Doreen Morgan, VE3CGO
Doug Carswell, VE3ATY	Ed Morgan, VE3GX
Gerry King, VE3GK	Fred Noble, VE3BAJ
Bill Wilson, VE3NR	

Affiliated Clubs

The OVMRC is pleased to exchange newsletters with the following Amateur Radio Clubs across Canada and the United States.

Algoma ARC	Sault Ste Marie, ON
Augusta ARA	Augusta, ME, USA
Border City ARA	Windsor, ON
Chatham-Kent ARC	Chatham, ON
Calgary ARC	Calgary, AB
Comox Valley ARC	Comox, BC
Halifax ARC	Halifax, NS
Heritage ARC	Coburg, ON
Kingston ARC	Kingston, ON
Lambton County ARC	Sarnia, ON
London ARC	London, ON
Metroplex ACA	New York, NY, USA
Ottawa ARC	Ottawa, ON
Pioneer ARC	Nepean, ON
Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC)	Ottawa, ON
Rideau Lakes ARC	Smiths Falls, ON
Scarborough ARC	Scarborough, ON
Seaway Valley ARC	Cornwall, ON
Sudbury ARC	Sudbury, ON
Surrey ARC	Surrey, BC
Saskatoon ARC	Saskatoon, SK
Thousand Island ARC	Brockville, ON
Truro ARC	Truro, NS
West Island ARC	Dorval, QC
Winnipeg ARC	Winnipeg, MB

Sponsors

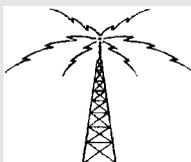
The OVMRC acknowledges the following organizations for their support of our activities by providing them with courtesy copies of the *Rambler*.

Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc., Mississauga, ON
TakeOne Info System, Ottawa, ON



OVMRC code phone:

Practise your CW!
737-0197



OVMRC Repeater:

147.300 MHz (+)
444.200 MHz (+)



OVMRC web page:

<http://www.takeone.com/public/ovmrc.htm>
Webmaster - John Rodger, VE3JR
jrodger@takeone.com



Next Meeting:

☞ Dec. 17, 1998
Rambler Deadline:
☞ Jan. 1, 1999

The *Rambler* is the official newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Inc. and is published 11 times a year (monthly, except for July). Opinions expressed in the *Rambler* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the OVMRC Inc., its officers or its members. Permission is granted to republish the contents in whole or in part, providing the source is acknowledged. Commercial use of the contents is expressly prohibited. Submit articles to the editor by e-mail to: <ve3mog@igs.net>.

Strays

Comments by OVMRC President,
Doug Carswell, VE3ATY



Judging by the number and type of questions from the membership at the last club meeting, Bob Shaw made an informative and interesting presentation on the merits of the 5/8 whip compared to other antennas. Thanks Bob, for advancing our understanding of vertical antennas in an informative and enjoyable manner.

The program for the December meeting promises to be quite enjoyable and well-suited to the season. Ken Barry, VE3KJB, our entertainment wizard extraordinaire, has put together a fun evening for the club. Ken has also invited all the Amateurs in the Ottawa area to attend, as well as the Museum staff. What a great opportunity to see some auld Amateur friends who may have faded from our current view.

I am also happy to report Gerry King, VE3GK (a.k.a. the Golden Kilowatt), will talk about his antenna experiences at our January meeting. Let me tell you, Gerry's presentations are always an informative treat. Not everyone builds an 80-metre quad!

At the November meeting, Bob Campbell, VE3KLLK, inquired about amendments to the club bylaws that deal with the disposal of Amateur Radio equipment belonging to the estate of a deceased Amateur. Bill Wilson, VE3NR, inquired about the same subject as he was concerned about the disposal of Doug Burrill's radio equipment, as did Linda Balke, VA3LJB.

Coincidentally enough, our Secretary, Pat Rowan, VE3PUR, is currently searching past issues of the *Rambler*, looking for amendments to the existing Club bylaws that have been enacted by the membership. Fortuitously, Pat recalled the amendment in question, which provides for the formation of an ad hoc committee under the direction of the Membership Chairman having the purpose of assisting in the disposal of a deceased member's Amateur Radio equipment.

Linda subsequently attended our last executive meeting and introduced Malcolm Burrill to the executive to assist him with the disposal of his father's equipment. Your executive has appointed two club members to act in this matter. Dan Reardon, VE3GUU, was contacted to take advantage of his knowledge acquired through running the swap net. Dan was most helpful and suggested a number of steps to follow prior to placing the equipment on the market, including: (i) examination of the equipment for completeness (that is: are all the required peripherals and manuals available), and (ii) assessing the condition of the equipment.

Bill Wilson and I will be going to Doug's place for the purpose of conducting these reviews and will then relay the information to Dan for his assessment of possible market value. We will then advise Malcolm, so that he can properly assess any offers he receives. At the same time, a list of the equipment will be published in the *Rambler*. Bill noted that now that the ground rules have been sorted out, it will be necessary to confirm the acceptability of the intended course of action with Doug's estate.

Also at the November meeting, Ken Halcrow, VE3SRS, made an enquiry regarding the Y2K problems. Invited to attend the November executive meeting, Ken explained that there could be a number of disasters triggered by computer clocks not being able to deal with the year ending in 00, and that the OVMRC could assist with the emergency response capability.

Ken will work directly with Evan DeCorte, VE3DEC, our Radio Operations assistant, to start the process of developing an emergency response capability within the club, and will write an article for the *Rambler* to provide more information about the issue. Perhaps as part of helping the club becoming more effective in this area you can plan on becoming involved in next year's Field Day. ♣

Minutes

November 19, 1998 general meeting
taken by Patricia Rowan, VA3PUR



President Doug Carswell, VE3ATY, opened the meeting with a call for visitors, who were Graham Bennett, a ham in training; Larry, VE3WSB; and Tom, VE3OFM. There were no technical problems among the members.

Christmas Party: Ken Barry, VE3KJB, brought us up to date on his preparations and requested donations of cookies and sweets for the refreshments. Please call 746-4823 to advise of your offering.

Santa Claus: Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ, requested volunteers for the talk to Santa on December 13, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Museum.

Y2K Working Group: Ken Halcrow, VE3SRS, wanted to know if a group had been formed to work with this coming problem and he was invited to the Executive meeting for further discussion and to determine what direction to take.

Approval of October minutes: A motion to approve was made by Steve Middleton, VE3RUU, and seconded by Ken Barry, VE3KJB. Motion carried.

Santa Claus Net: This net will be held on December 25 at 9:30 a.m on VE3TWO by Sydney, VE3GVI, and all are invited to participate.

Tabs and shredder service: David Yerxa, VE3UES, reminded everyone of the service that he still provides and invited all to help collect pop can tabs.

Canadian Ski Marathon: Rick Furness, VE3IHI, announced the details of the Ski Marathon, which will be held between Lachute and Buckingham on February 13-14, 1999, and invited the members to volunteer for this exercise. He promises lots of fun. Please contact Harry Jones of CFRA.

Breakfast at Bella Vista Restaurant: Bob Shaw, VE3SUY, announced that a list would be up to indi-

cate who would like to join this group and the first breakfast would be on November 22 at 9:00 a.m.

Antenna available: Linda Balke, VA3LJB, wanted help in the disposition of this equipment of the late Doug Burrill, VE3CDC, and was invited to the next Executive meeting to help set this up.

Guest speaker: Bob Shaw gave a talk about the 5/8 whip and was very well-received. He accepted many questions from the floor and after the meeting, he showed a video from the RAC series (68 minutes) on the same subject to all those who were interested.

Door Prizes: A coffee mug and three passes to the Museum were won by Don Raymond, VE3DRO, and also by Peter Hafichuk, VE3LBW. The 50/50 draw (\$31.00) was won by Lise Chislett, VE3OFZ. The meeting ended on this happy note.

Submissions to the *Rambler*

Do you have an article you wish to have considered for inclusion in the *Rambler*? Send your submission to the *Rambler* editor by e-mail (much preferred!) to <ve3mog@igs.net> or via Canada Post to Susan Mogensen, VE3MOG, *Rambler* Editor, 1010 Bosque Crescent, Cumberland, ON K4C 1C3.

Of course, we can't make any assurances that your article will be printed in the *Rambler*, but we can offer this 100% guarantee: if you don't send it in, it won't be published!

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
January/99	January 1/99
February/99	January 29/99
March/99	February 26/99
April/99	March 26/99
May/99	April 30/99
June/99	May 28/99

NiCad and Gel Cell Care for Dummies

Part III

by Len Gelfand, VE3LGZ

CHARGING NiCADS

Avoid *overcharging*. This practice is probably the most common battery killer.

As often as convenient, discharge the NiCad fully before charging to minimize the chance of overcharging, and, as some experts claim, a memory problem. Avoid recharging the NiCad after every partial discharge. NiCads, (unlike gel cells) aren't harmed by being left in a partly discharged state.

Avoid the temptation to continue charging a NiCad that doesn't reach the fully charged voltage in the recommended time. It has one or more defective cells. You will only succeed in overcharging and killing the remaining good cells.

Instead, open the battery case (often difficult) and replace the bad cell(s). The replacements should be charged to the approximate state of charge of the other cells. This will postpone having to buy a new battery.

Use an intelligent charger

The best NiCad charging method is to use an intelligent charger like the one Bill Wilson, VE3NR, showed us at homebrew night a few years ago, or the many described in ARRL Handbooks and Amateur Radio periodicals. These chargers stop charging when they sense the small decrease in voltage that occurs when a charging NiCad is fully charged.

The next best NiCad battery charging method is to use a constant current power supply. If you have one, you probably don't need instructions. But if you are a beginner and decide to get one, here is what you do.

Divide the Ah rating of your NiCad by 10. Set your constant current (constant Ampere) supply to this value. If the NiCad is fully discharged, charge for 14 hours, then stop. For example, many batteries for Amateur Radio handhelds with AA cells inside have a

rating of 600 mAh. Set your constant current power supply for 60 mA (600 divided by 10) and charge for 14 hours.

The original power supply and battery pack of the ubiquitous HTX-202 charges this way.

Timing is everything

Why do you charge for 14 hours rather than 10? To fully charge a NiCad, you need to put about 40-60% more electricity into it than it will give out.

If the NiCad is only partly discharged, you will have to guess the amount of charge (electricity) used and reduce the charging time proportionally.

At this slow charging rate of 1/10 of the NiCad's capacity, you won't harm the NiCad by charging a couple of hours more than necessary.

You can shorten the charging time by increasing the charging current but this requires greater vigilance and more knowledge. If you are a beginner, don't try it without help.

Check the manufacturer's instructions

If you don't have an intelligent charger, or a constant current power supply, follow the charging instructions of the manufacturer. But if the instructions say you can leave the battery on charge continuously, be skeptical.

Most chargers will overcharge and damage the battery if it is left on charge much longer than the recommended time. The safest tactic is to charge the battery for the length of time stated in the instructions and then stop charging.

If you don't have the manufacturer's instructions, or if you want to use a power supply made for another device, here is what has to be done.

(*NiCad and Gell Cell Care*, continued on page ⑤)

Ten Metre Net, continued from p. ①

As of November 20, we had a total of 524 check-ins and are pleased to announce that the 500th check-in was Guy Charron, VA3ZFA, who reported on the net on November 17, 1998.

On November 23, we began an evaluation period for the CW net, coming on the air 15 minutes before the SSB net and taking check-ins at individual speeds. We will carry on this evaluation period for a while and if we have plenty of stations reporting in we will

extend to 30 minutes, starting the CW calls at 6:30 p.m. Ottawa time. Depending on propagation, which tends to degrade around net time, contacts have ranged far and wide, especially to the south.

Join in for some fun on 10 — a band bursting with activity since the start of the present sun cycle. Ask questions, increase our knowledge, come and discuss the subjects you have at heart — chances are you'll find someone with whom to exchange your ideas. ✦

Hams Help High Horizons

by Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH

Jerry Wells, VE3CDS, Silent Key, was the President of the Ottawa Handicapped Association which is the umbrella group for the High Horizons. Members of High Horizons are from many faiths, including United, Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and others.

Three or four volunteers are required from 9:30 a.m. until about 2:00 p.m. on Tuesdays to assist members into and out of MacKay United Church Hall, Dufferin Street, off Beechwood Ave. If you volunteer, you will receive many benefits, including a free lunch and the biggest benefit of all, lots of comradeship. Notable members and volunteers include: Jerry Wells' wife, June Knight; Paul Duguay, VE3NPD; and his wife Simone, Lilian Benoit, whose husband

is Ben, VE3JBQ; Wanda Hafichuk who is married to Peter, VE3LBW; Graham Bennett, and yours truly. If you volunteer, there is a three-week trial period, so if you find "This is just not for me," you are free to resign!

There is a crafts group, choir (come out to the OVMRC Variety Show, December 17th to enjoy some of them) exercise class, special events on special days and holidays.

High Horizons members attend from September to the following June, with no meetings during summer months and four weeks off at Christmas.

If you wish to volunteer or would like more information, please telephone Lila Lipscombe, 746-4267, the leader of High Horizons, or Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH. ✦

NiCad and Gell Cell Care, continued from page ⑤

First, make sure the power supply delivers direct current (DC). It will have a label stating the input voltage that should be 115 V 60 Hz., and the output voltage and current. Don't worry about the output numbers. Just make sure the output is DC. If it has no label, the output will have to be checked with a voltmeter. If the output is AC, the unit is not usable for battery charging.

Second, connect the power supply, through a meter to measure amperes (ammeter), to the battery that isn't fully discharged and has all its cells OK. Make this connection only long enough to get a reading on the meter. The positive wire from the power supply must be connected to the positive of the battery and

the negative to the battery's negative.

Making the correct connection will require some fiddling because of the variety of connectors and polarities. It's easy to damage the power supply, battery, and meter. Get help if you aren't certain that you can do it correctly.

Third, divide the Ah rating of the battery by the amperes shown on the meter in the previous step. Multiply this value by 1.4. This is the number of hours you should charge the battery. If it is less than 10 hours, get advice from someone knowledgeable before you use this power supply as a charger. Faster charging increases the chance of damaging the battery.

(Ed. - look for Part IV in the January *Rambler*). ✦

Yesteryear

A look at *Ramblers* past,
by Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH



Since this is a special time of the year, it seems appropriate to present some early history of the OVMRC. We must thank Ed Morgan, VE3GX, for writing and preserving so much of the history of the OVMRC.

November 1957: The club was formed by a group of mobile Radio Amateurs after a series of informal meetings. Gerry Erland, VE3BBY, was elected Chairman to serve until the first general election could be held.

The following Amateurs were among the pioneers who conceived and formed the club: Gerry Erland, VE3BBY; Tom Hayes, VE3ABC; Eric Bodley, VE3AK; Glen Pack, VE3CGP; Ian McIntyre, VE3DMT; Gerry Harbottle, VE3AGU; Gord Grant, VE3DY; Harry Hayes, VE3BEB; George Brunet, VE3BZI; Doug Burrill, VE3CDC; Doreen Morgan, VE3CGO; Don Waters, VE3DEL; Ken Scrivens, VE3AFO; Ed Morgan, VE3GX; Gerry King, VE3BST; Doug Metcalfe, VE3BON.

It was an unwritten rule that Amateur Radio discussions were taboo during functions of a social and family nature.

January 1958: The first general election was held and Gerry Erland, VE3BBY, was elected President. Club membership totalled 69 and most members were mobile on 75 and/or 10 metres with a few on 6 metres.

May 1959: The Club Monitoring Service was initiated on 3760 kHz to provide emergency and general traffic for mobiles and out-of-town stations. Doreen Morgan, VE3CGO, operated the facility daily from about 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. using MARS PBY equipment loaned by Mike Larson, K5IJV/VE3. Mike was an American Amateur, a member of the United States Air Force, living in Ottawa on a loan to the Royal Canadian Air Force.

June 1959: The first Club Field day was held.

September 1959: The club call sign, VE3RAM, was selected by the membership. The letters “RAM” have dual significance. They are the first three letters in the name of the club bulletin “The *Rambler*,” and in addition, stand for “Radio Amateur Mobile.”

October 1959: The first of many social evenings was held at a rented reserve military mess. The members spent pleasant evenings chatting and dancing. The music was provided from records owned by the members. It was an unwritten rule that Amateur Radio discussions were taboo during functions of a social and family nature.

June 1960: The second Field Day was held and coincidentally, we placed second in the two-transmitter class.

July 1960: The Club Monitoring Service equipment was replaced by Ed Morgan’s modified 19 Set. This was necessary as Mike Larson, K5IJV/VE3 was leaving the Ottawa area with his equipment which he had loaned.

The club also supplied communications on 50.4 MHz during the three-day Capital City Regatta for the 100 sailing craft. Three “marine mobiles” were used by seven club members with a fixed station at the Boat Club during this three-day event.

December 1960: The first annual Childrens’ Christmas Party was held complete with Gerry King as Santa Claus, presents, cartoons, games and refreshments. This event became one of the most popular of our annual activities.

Next month, I will cover the years 1961 to 1966. I would like to wish all of you a “Merry Christmas” and safe and “Happy New Year.” ❖



The FCC has cancelled a General upgrade of a Kentucky ham because the Physician's Certification he used to obtain a Morse code waiver was not a valid document. He was notified that his operating privileges have been returned to his previous class. He could run into difficulty if and when he either tries to upgrade again or to renew his current licence. (*FCC*)

Large tubes for sale

There's some good news for hams with older power amplifiers that use large tubes. Triton Services are now offering U.S. made 4-400A and 3-500Z transmitting tubes. A few years ago it purchased Eimac and is producing the tubes to the original specs. (*Amateur Radio Newslines*)

On August 27-30, the world's only working Alexanderson alternator came on the air in Gothenburg, Sweden for the European DX 1998 Conference. The SAQ call letters were sent in Morse on 17.2 kHz from a site having six antenna towers and a 200 kilowatt transmitter. (*ARRL*)

Barry Amateur Radio Society in Ireland will operate GB100SFL (December 17-18) to mark the centenary of the first commercial ship-to-shore radio communication. On December 24, 1898 Marconi operated from the lighthouse at Dover and made contact with the East Goodwin ship in the English Channel. (*Graham Kemp, VK4BB*)

Amateur Radio operators helped locate and retrieve a NASA payload carried aloft by a high altitude balloon during the peak of the Leonids meteor shower. The balloon photographed the Leonids from above the earth's atmosphere and used special aerogel containers to attempt to capture a meteor. (*NASA*)

Hams to the rescue in Central America

Ham radio is playing a major role in rescue and relief efforts in storm ravaged Central America. Also,

the Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN), a global network of Amateur Radio operators, is providing emergency health and welfare communication for Hurricane Mitch relief work. (*Ham Radio Online*)

FCC petitioned for low frequency allocations

The ARRL has petitioned the FCC to create low-frequency allocations at 136 kHz and at 160 kHz. These allocations will permit experimentation with equipment, antennas, and propagation allowing a transmitter output of 200 W PEP.

Several countries throughout the world such as New Zealand, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and several European nations already enjoy LF allocations. (*ARRL*)

Satellites launched

Two more Amateur Radio satellites are now in space! On October 24, SEDSAT-1 (Students for the Exploration and Development of Space Satellite #1), was placed in orbit. PANSAT, the Petite Amateur Navy Satellite was launched October 31 from Space Shuttle Discovery (STS-95). PANSAT was constructed at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School. (*AMSAT*)

Low-cost Amateur Digital Video (ADV) is now possible using off-the-shelf technology, data networking and standard Internet technologies. LT4OZ and KB5IHI will provide a proof-of-concept demonstration of this application and prove the utility of Amateur Digital Video by bringing a system on line. (*Ham Radio Online,;Les, KT4OZ, Ed, KF7VY*)

New Commodore 64

A Dutch Antilles firm is making a comeback with the \$400 "Commodore 64 WCI"! It will have 16K RAM, a floppy drive, a 56 kps modem and use the TV as a monitor. The operating system will be Windows 3.1 with Netscape browser and still be able to run C64 software. (*TelePARC, Ottawa*) ❖