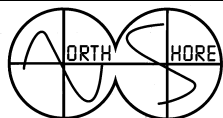


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The Welcome Back from Summer Issue:

Well, how was your summer? If you've got a good story to share. Send it in.

Attention builders and tinkers:

Component Cross Reference Software available for PCs.

NTE Electronics has released version 11.0 of "QUICKCross". It's free and allows you to cross reference semiconductor components and other things.

Here's the link to the registration form:

<http://nte01.nteinc.com/webforms.nsf/qcsignin?openform>

I've used it to track down information on things I've salvaged from old electronic equipment.

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From The Chair in the Shack.

Yet another year of hamming confronts us. I began with a visit to the cottage of Mike VE3VCY and Skipp K2PXQ who assisted in erecting a third antenna system so that we each had one to work on. My second ham related activity was the Barrie hamfest where I picked up some LMR 400 equivalent cable on its spool to replace the lossy RG-8X feeding the new antenna. It is almost 200 feet from the radio.

Now, like the rest of us, I look forward to a club meeting to renew old friendships. In my absence, some of the club stalwarts took on another Scugog Century Circle and performed well as usual. A new club season brings with it a renewed push for several things. We hope to have the new UHF repeater active soon since all that is needed is a ground rod and some plugging in. The grant application winds its weary way toward completion so we might have a more useful OSH in a year or less. The hamfest will be upon us before we know it and will require some creative work to make it a success both for visitors and for our coffers.

What we will need is more commitment. That is not about more slogans or club attire or rah-rah stuff. Quiet willingness to take on the various jobs at hand is something that any member should be considering. All of like the idea of arriving at a meeting and having a great time and then resting for a month. The club can't keep going that way. Your executive have been working at reducing expenditures both to show the Trillium foundation that we are fiscally responsible AND to prepare ourselves for the possible reduction in hamfest profits. Most hamfest have shrunk recently and ours will be no exception. A couple of years ago our expenses were three times the fees brought in from members. Hamfest helped us over the hump as did the use of our savings. We cannot continue that way.

One method of reducing expenses has been to position repeaters on public property and getting electricity either free or at cost (no hookup charge). We have also asked the legion for a reduction in our rental costs and they have gracefully accepted our request. Other cost-cutting measures will no doubt have to be found. At some point one has to ask what exactly we want from the club as members and what we are willing to contribute in time, effort and maybe even money in order to keep it going.

Now is a good time to consider each of those things so that we discuss and act in a way that will allow us to enjoy the club in a form we desire.

Ham radio is a huge amount of fun and a great learning process. After years of saying that I'm not a

club person, I've come to appreciate that it has added to that fun in many, many ways. From friends to technical tips to descriptions of DXpeditions, the club has provided more than I could ever have hoped for as an individual. I hope that you feel the same.

73 de Pete

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What I learned this summer:

In spite of or because of the weather in what are our traditional summer months I had a really good summer. I didn't get my HF dipole up before the patio got taken over by our screen-room. There's no way to get the ladder up against the chimney when the screen-room is up. That's on tap for this fall. I did learn a bunch of things, some of which are related to amateur radio.

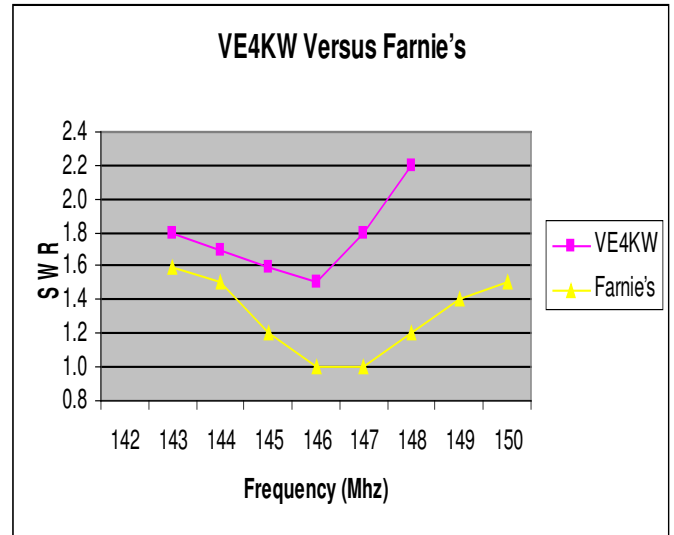
One of the things I did learn which is not related to HAM is that hay or straw when accelerated by the line on a "weed-whacker" will penetrate workpants. I also learned that hay or straw has very sharp ends and after they've gone through the workpants, they leave nasty cuts. For a while my legs looked like I was recovering from chickenpox. The hay at my Mom's place was 4 feet high in places. The bank must be cut by hand as the grade is too steep for the tractor.

Related to amateur radio, I learned that building our own antennas is fun and rewarding.

The first antenna I build was a VE4KW j-pole. I borrowed Peter's MFJ259 analyzer to check it out. Contrary to the article the SWR was not "flat", but it was still pretty good. I used this antenna while on vacation. I had the antenna leaning up against the wall in the bunkie above the boathouse, about 12 feet off the water. I was able to hit the local club's repeater without problems. It was about 35 miles as the crow flies. It worked well. To be honest though the antenna for the repeater is on a tower at 1300 ft. above sea level. Club member's with mobile rigs at higher wattage where hitting the repeater from as far away as Sudbury, and along the TransCanada Highway about 40 miles away over the Canadian Shield. Still, 5 watts (or there about) on a Handi-Talkie did alright.

The second antenna I built was "Farnie's J-pole. After building the first antenna, I was a little more cautious, and as some member's of the club can attest I asked a few more questions. Two interesting things came out of this. The first is that the "Nike" method (remember the "Just Do It" motto) of construction is alive and well. The second thing was that this antenna is really good. It is very close to flat, in terms of SWR.

Here's the chart to illustrate the differences.



I'd like to say the reason is in the BALUN used on Farnie's j-pole, but I'm not sure that this is the whole answer. The other thing I did read about is the loss associated with using RG-8X at VHF frequencies. Another issue could be the feed-line length on the VE4KW j-pole... it is long... Anyway I've got 2 darn good j-poles. One thing on my list of things to do is to set up a feed-line so I can phase the 2 antennas. Peter mentioned that I could get a "whole lot" of directivity then.....

I also got to stop by the Lindsay-Haliburton Club Hamfest (yes, I had my Wife's permission... She even strolled around with me and carried the stuff I bought). I saw quite a few of our club members there. There were some good deals too. I'm slowly accumulating some of the "bits and pieces" I'll need for the fall activities.

I hope to that we'll have the sales flyer from our local HAM store starting soon.

I think it's going to be a great fall season.

Your humble scribe.
Ken
VE3RMK