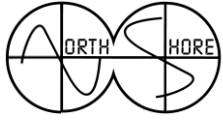


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I don't believe it! This is a new call for me!!! Whaaddiya mean SWR is 6.5:1??

From Ken VE3RMK



You can imagine my consternation. I had some free time (relatively speaking) and had wandered into the shack intent on as many minutes of quality radio time as I could squeeze in. I fired up the rig which is attached to the 20M dipole and there was a call prefix I had not heard before. The QSO was in full swing between this 'new call' and a W3 station. The W3 was running major power. The other HAM call prefix SM was only running 100W!! There wasn't a pile up at all and the next Ham to answer the QRZ was a VE3 at 100W. I was really keen to be the next in the log, so when there was a break in the conversation I tuned up.... Or to be completely factual I tried to tune up. In eager anticipation I hit

the tune button and everything got really, really quiet. I concluded that something was wrong, so I powered off the rig. After a 20 second wait I powered it back up again. The SM call was still there still no pileup, so I hit 'tune' again. Same result. Knowing that it is insanity to do the same thing over and over again expecting a different result, I shut things down for the evening vowing to figure it out tomorrow.

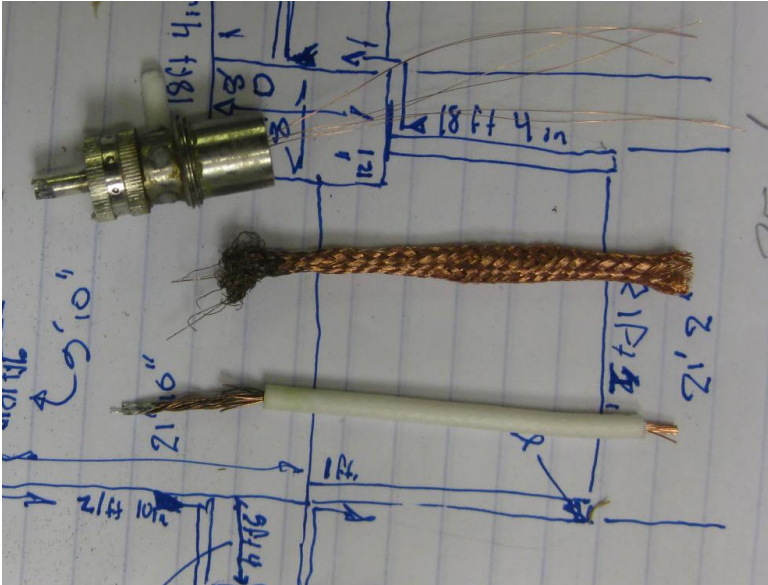
After work the next day I connected everything up again and tried to tune up on 20M. Bingo!!! Same result. Consistency is a wonderful thing even when things are going bad. At least if something is consistently wrong you can track it down and fix it. First I checked the rig into my dummy load. Life was good. The rig was OK. Then I checked the antenna. The picture at the start shows the result. So I dropped the antenna and replaced the coax. Et voila! 1:1!! Just like that. I was pleased right up until I realized that the new coax was about 15 feet too short. So I checked the old coax. It was 1:1 as well. Now I was concerned or more accurately perplexed. I put the old coax back up and it was still 1:1. Sadly there were no unusual call signs to chase.

The next day after work there was a lovely strong signal from Arkansas. Arkansas is a state I need for the WAS award. I tuned



up and WHAM!!! 7.3:1 this time. To say that I was aggravated would be an understatement. I checked the coax at the rig end. It looked OK. From the previous day when I had inspected the antenna end of the coax it looked OK too. So I decided to go out and give the coax a shake. Checking again the SWR was 1:1. I had found the culprit. The connection or rather the connector at the antenna was bad or bad most of the time. Taking down all the coax and getting it into the shop for surgery was a weekend job.

I should explain at this point that while I generally do my own connector terminations, this particular cable was acquired as part of a lot purchase. I carefully looked over the cables to check the soldering of the connectors and they looked really good. More than one Club member had told me that the connector could be a major problem area and that a good solder job was critical.

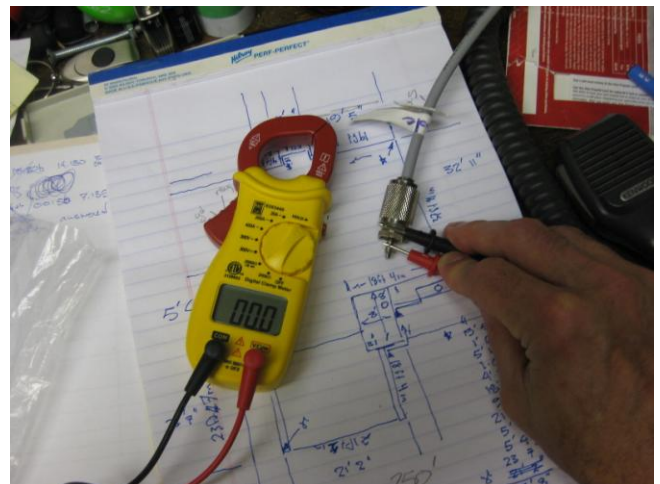


The weekend arrived without the usual rain, so early on Saturday morning, when it would be impolite to wake the neighbours by using the lawnmower I started coiling up the coax and disentangling it from the pass-through I had constructed to it get from outside to inside. That part was easy. Hooking up the antenna analyzer and the dummy load, I could get any SWR value I chose by wiggling the connector. Eventually I got to the point where all I could get was a dead short. The next part, equally easy was to use the side cutters to hack about 6 inches of coax from the antenna end.

I trimmed back the jacket and with the vise-grips gave a tug on the braid. I was shocked! All but 5 strands of the braid came out. The holes on the PL-259 were nicely filled smooth with solder. There was no evidence of solder on the inside. Further, most of the strands for the centre conductor were broken. At least I thought, I can do better than this. I prepared to do the clean-up of the freshly cut end and redo the PL-259. The job was simple... I gazed with pride on my handiwork and grabbed the ohm-meter.

When I read the 0.0 ohms after a successful termination, I knew what I had to do. Hack the end off and do it again. Immediately after cutting the errant connector free I made the unpleasant discovery that I had just un-terminated my 2M j-pole. I now know to have only one coax on the bench at a time. So seeking to recover some of my dignity, I disassembled the 2M connector. Talk about a harpooned ego. Only 12 strands were firmly connected!! My soldering was no better than the person who had done the other cable. Something had to be done.. My soldering iron with the tip that 'just' fit the hole in the PL259 was not good enough.

While this could be considered a painful lesson, it was a lesson well learned. We're always supposed to be learning... I learned.....



After scouting Canadian Tire, the Hardware stores and Princess Auto it became apparent that the butane micro-torches are all imported from China. So faced with that choice I picked the lowest price, Princess Auto. The butane micro-torch made lots of heat and the cleanup of the connector was a breeze. Now I admit that there not being much solder in the connector had a lot to do with that too.

When a Club member tells you how wonderful soldering with a micro-torch is.... Believe them. In jig time I was done. The micro torch soldering of the braid meant that the solder went in the top hole and ran out the bottom hole. Talk about slick! It was done. The SWR on the dummy load was 1:1. Reconnected to the antenna and strung back into the shop I had a less than 1.5:1 across the whole band. My joy was somewhat tempered by the realization that it was now OK to wake the neighbours with a lawnmower.....

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Time for Membership Renewal

ON behalf of the Membership Secretary

We are in full-swing for our membership drive for 2012. We have to have our Club roster and fee submitted to RAC prior to the December meeting to insure that we are insured for 2012.

Please see the Club Executive or get the membership form on the Club web-site www.ve3osh.com.

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Ontario South Director's Report – October 2011

Greetings from your recently-elected Director for the Southern Ontario region! I thank you all for your support and I look forward to my two-year term as RAC Director. This report is one avenue by which I would like to disseminate news and information from RAC to the Assistant Directors and other RAC members. I plan to send these reports as regularly as I can. I hope you will find them informative and will pass them along to your contacts at other radio clubs in the

region.

Distracted Driving

As you're all aware, the provincial government passed distracted driving legislation in 2009 in an attempt to curtail handheld communication devices use by Ontario drivers while they're behind the wheel. Amateur radio operators were able to secure a three-year exemption from the legislation. However, we are quickly approaching 2012 which leaves us about a year to address the exemption in the hopes of securing the continued use of mobile radios by Ontario hams. A committee was struck over the summer comprising Bill Unger, VE3XT, North East Ontario Director is Chair of the committee, Marcel Mongeon, VA3DDD, RAC Honourary Counsel and yours truly. Through the work of Bill we have collected a number of support letters from public service agencies for whom radio amateurs provide service. These agencies have submitted testimonials pointing out the invaluable service hams provide and that without an exemption to the legislation that service will be severely affected.

Steve Pengelly, VE3STV (former RAC Honourary Counsel) has arranged a meeting for later in the month between with the committee and the assistant to the Deputy Minister of Transportation and the Director of Safety to present our case and begin a dialogue on how the legislation is not good for amateur radio and, hopefully, make the exemption permanent, as has been done in other provinces. I will provide more information in a future director's report.

The Canadian Amateur – an Electronic Future?

As part of your RAC membership you receive a copy of The Canadian Amateur, "Canada's Amateur Radio Magazine". For the past year, RAC has been investigating the production of an electronic version of TCA which they've dubbed "e-TCA". After several months of testing on different computer platforms we have arrived at what we think is a product that is ready to go. Essentially, it would involve navigating to a website and downloading your e-TCA. You would then be able to leaf through it as you would any other magazine except it would be on your computer, wireless device or e-book reader. There are several advantages to this format: first, you receive your TCA almost immediately with no waiting for Canada Post; second, you can click on hotlinks within the articles and advertisements and learn more about the subject or product for sale very quickly; third, it's environmentally friendly as no paper is consumed; and fourth, there is a cost savings to RAC by not having to publish a harcopy version. I believe the vast majority of our members are fairly computer savvy and would take to an e-TCA quite quickly. Stay tuned for more updates.

RAC Insurance

Last year around this time RAC was the recipient of a bombshell by its then insurance carrier: sorry, we are not renewing your coverage. In a heartbeat, Ian MacFarquhar, VE9IM and Jerry Beneteau, VE3EXT got together to look for a new carrier. Through their efforts RAC was able to secure a new insurance provider in record time but had to implement certain restrictions, the main one being it was only available to RAC affiliated clubs and RAC members of affiliated clubs. A new perk has been offered by RAC's carrier: an increase in the third-party liability coverage to \$5 million with no increase in the premium charged. I think this is an excellent bonus and will go a long to help clubs involved in activities that require that kind of liability coverage. Many thanks to Ian and Jerry for their efforts.

RAC Needs You!

RAC is an organization that operates almost entirely on membership dues. Working with commercial interests to secure valuable radio spectrum for radio amateurs, maintaining a website for members and non-members, providing membership services, all these things require money. I strongly urge you to promote RAC at your club meetings and ask your fellow hams to join RAC. Your support goes a long way to keep our hobby vibrant and moving forward into the future.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.

73,

Jeff VA3WXM
Ontario South Director
Radio Amateurs of Canada