

Monthly Update

March 2024

www.ve3osh.com

Club Executive

President – **Derek VE3TKE**
Vice President: **Peter VA3PKM**
Secretary: **Neil VA3NH**
Treasurer: **Bob VE3HIX**
Membership Secretary: **Thomas VE3PDK**

Committee's

Repeater & Technical -Trustee: **Daren VE3NMD**
Website: **Laird VE3LKS**
Club Examiner: **Aldo VA3AG**
Newsletter: **Steve VA3TPS**
Net Manager: **Steve VA3TPS**
Presentation Coordinator: **John VE3KZT**
RAC Representative: **Ken VE3RMK**

Repeaters

2m VHF FM Repeater – VE3OSH

Frequency: 147.120 MHz
Input Tone: 156.7 Hz
Input Offset: +600 kHz
AllStar Node: 27838

70cm UHF Fusion/FM Repeater – VE3NAA

Frequency: 443.000 MHz
Input Tone: 136.5
Input Offset: +5 MHz

70cm UHF DMR Repeater – VE3LBN

Frequency: 443.9875 MHz
Colour Code: 3
Input Offset: +5 MHz
DMR ID: 302340

APRS iGate – VE3OSH

Frequency: 144.390 MHz

February Meeting

At our February Zoom meeting we had a very informative presentation by **Tony Pattinson VE2KM** on CW Training and how to improve your speed. I have included an article from him on CW Training for anyone who missed the presentation.

March Meeting

Our monthly meeting on Zoom will be Wednesday March 20, 2024 at 7:00 pm and we will have a presentation by Allan Boyd VE3AJB who will discuss the Hamshack Hotline and some new features that you can now do with these phones.

Tuesday Night Rag Chew

Were Back!!

The club's weekly Tuesday Night Rag Chew starts at 7:00 pm. Our current net controllers are: **Aldo VA3AG, Grant VA3KJI, Derek VE3TKE, Peter VA3PKM, Quinton VA3NLM** and **Neil VA3NH**. Also **Nick VA3NPW** has offered to be a spare and fill in once in a while.



This is not a formal net but rather a lively round table. Some can only stick around for a few minutes while others are there from start to finish. We never know what the topic de jour will be but someone always comes up with something interesting. So, if you are available between 1900 and 2000 hrs on Tuesday's pop onto VE3OSH and join the conversation.

A big thank you to all our Net control operators for stepping up!!

If anyone would like to give Net control a try one week, let me know and we will fit you in as a guest net control.

Wednesday Night Virtual Parking Lot

The club has a weekly Virtual Parking Lot (VPL) meeting on zoom starting at 7:00 pm for members and guests. Everyone is welcome to attend. On the third Wednesday night the club has it's member meeting on zoom first and after the meeting is finished we have our virtual parking lot for those who are still on-line.

If you would like to attend our weekly VPL send an email to **Derek VE3TKE** at VE3TKE@gmail.com. Our club Secretary **Neil VA3NH** will be sending out the zoom link prior to the Wednesday meeting time. It has actually has been quite a success as more people can show up, due to distance or schedules, and yet we can still do show & tells by simply sharing our screens. It is not uncommon to have 20 to 25 participants but we can easily handle more. So, quit complaining about being bored and hop on the Virtual Parking Lot.

At our zoom meetings we have Amateurs from around the globe.

So, try to remember Wednesday nights and drop by our Zoom VPL and say hello and see who is visiting from around the globe. It starts around 7:00 pm and lasts until the last die-hard leaves but you can pop in anytime and say hello and stay as long or short as you want.

White Feather Fun!

Some of the club members meet up on Saturday morning at **White Feather Country Store**. So, if you need your fix of a steamy hot beverage, as well as a hot fritter,



pop up to **White Feather Country Store**, which opens at 8:30 am, and join the gang in the south east corner of the parking lot. Make sure to bring a lawn chair as we sit outside in the parking lot even when it's cold or raining. Just give a shout on the repeater between 8:00 and 8:20 to see if anyone is heading up that way and come and join us. **White Feather Country Store** is located at the corner of Simcoe St and Raglan Rd in Raglan, just south of our repeater site.

Coffee Time Alternative

Now that the colder, nastier weather is upon us, some of the members (fair weather hams) also meet up at the Coffee Time in Courtice at the same time on Saturday morning. Most arrive at 8:00 am.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

According to Thomas VE3PDK, our membership secretary, and Bob VE3HIX, our treasurer, this is the most wonderful time of the year! We are making your membership renewal even easier this year. Step 1: go to the membership section of our club web page and submit the online form. This step is required each and every year as the club updates the membership information provided on this form into the club records. This also allows the club to send out a correct and updated membership list.

We now have a new process for payments. The club has setup a direct e-transfer process that will transfer your money directly into the club bank account. So send your membership payments to treasurer@ve3osh.com. The club Treasurer will notify Thomas when your e-transfer shows up in the club bank account and Thomas will email out to you a receipt stating that your payment has been received.

If you want to mail a cheque you can send it to the club President at 45 Allard Avenue, Ajax Ontario L1Z 1B6. He will forward it to the club Treasurer.

If you wish to pay in CASH. Feel free to hand the cash to one of the club's executive at WFF or Coffee Time or when you meet up for coffee.

Website – ve3osh.com

NOTE – if you are claiming that you are a RAC member make sure you check you call sign on the www.rac.ca website to make sure your membership is paid up. We have to double check this for our RAC insurance policy so please do not try to claim this if you are not a current RAC. The dues are staying the same for 2024 at \$30.00 for a RAC member and \$40.00 for Non-RAC member.



Canadian Amateurs Invited to Participate in Solar Eclipse Project in April 2024

<https://www.rac.ca/canadian-amateurs-invited-to-participate-in-solar-eclipse-project/>

"The Case Amateur Radio Club W8EDU of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio is excited to invite Canadian Amateurs to participate in our upcoming eclipse research project!"

Attention all Canadian Amateurs:

The following item is courtesy of the [Case Amateur Radio Club](#):

The Case Amateur Radio Club would like to invite you to participate in the CHU Eclipse Data Collection Project!

We will be monitoring the reception of the Canadian time standard CHU before, during, and after the eclipse to measure the recombination time of the ionosphere. In other words, we know that the ionosphere changes in response to the presence of UV radiation in the sun by ionizing during the day and 'de-ionizing' at night (which is why many frequency bands propagate differently during the day and the night).

We understand how the ionosphere changes over a normal 24-hour period in response to the relatively slow transition from daytime to night time, but want to learn more about how it changes over a much shorter period (which is what the eclipse provides). We want you to help!

Our goal is to study how the eclipse affects radio wave propagation, helping us understand the ionosphere's recombination time. To achieve this, we need your help recording Canada's time standard station CHU for two weeks surrounding the April 8 eclipse. Anyone with a KiwiSDR or a rig capable of interfacing with analysis/recording software like Fldigi is encouraged to join the effort!

This project has already garnered enthusiastic support from various communities, including the American Radio Relay League, the Radio Amateurs of Canada, and the Ham Radio Citizen Science Investigation HamSCI.

Email – info@ve3osh.com

CW - 2 Journeys and the Impact of Instant Character Recognition.

Learning CW is, in reality, learning to listen, understand, and speak another language. Just like learning French, German, Spanish, or any other language there are several ways to do it. To learn CW there are also many ways ranging from the very good to others that are so abysmally bad that using them will stunt your CW progress forever.

Some delivery methods are web based, some phone apps, some group classes in person or online using video conferencing, some private with one on one coaching.

Here are some of the **METHODS TO AVOID**.

1. Associating a letter with a word or phrase. The presenter in this [video](#) is an enthusiastic memory coach. He describes two methods of learning CW;
 - Method #1 - The Quick & Dirty Way;
 - Method #2 - The Masterful Way;

If all you want to do is recite the characters these methods might work. For communicating by CW they are not only **useless** but will prevent you from achieving a speed suitable for use on the air. Imagine trying to have a conversation with your spouse where **e v e r y w o r d h a s t o b e s p e l t o u t l e t t e r b y l e t t e r** and between each letter you have to use a memorized phrase or associative word to be able to identify the letter and subsequently assemble the letters into a word.

!! IMPORTANT !!

One of my CW clients had used the above method to initially learn CW. He can recognize individual letters but cannot copy any words. He has explained his difficulties as follows:

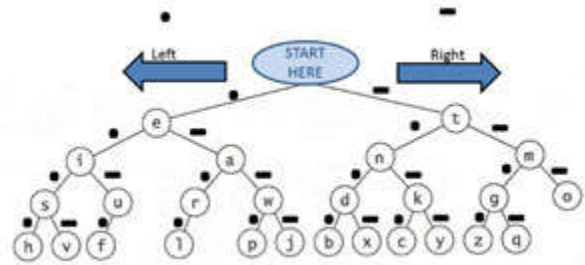
"By the time I have gone through the phrase associated with the CW sound that I heard and have identified which letter it was I have missed what follows. I can get the first letter of a word and that's about it."

It is much harder to unlearn, or get rid of, a bad habit than to learn a good habit from the get go. Having said that, there are ways to get rid of bad habits but that is out of the scope of this article.

2. Counting dots and dashes (dits and dahs) from a chart showing letters and dots and dashes. This is a little like having to think of a letter B as 1 vertical stroke plus 2 semicircles one above the other on the right hand side of, and the open side of the semi-circle attached to, the vertical stroke. Perhaps you did learn to write this way; look how long it took you to learn. Also you learned the sound of B and how to say it long before you learned to write it (more about this later).



3. Dot – Dash mapping. This method, illustrated, associates the dots and dashes with the physical positioning and layout of the associated letter. I believe this method was used by the US army at one point. There is also a [US Army Training Video](#) which, among other things, equates CW rhythms to soldier's steps. Go figure!



4. CW Tree. I think this is a brilliant way to illustrate the structure of the CW characters and an **absolutely useless** way to learn to copy live CW.

5. Listening to the CW character sounds and looking at letters on flashcards or on a screen. Of the baddies this is the least offensive of the baddies but it will slow your progress. When you are involved in a conversation with a friend in the pub you do not rely on mental pictures to be able to understand what he is saying. No. You recognize the words being said from the way they sound. Also you can continue the conversation despite the background noise from other conversations, TV, etc. You will put this skill into practice later in your CW journey. The best, and most cost effective CW filter is located between your ears.

If you are an absolute beginner the best way to learn CW is to use a sounds only approach. No charts or look up tables.. Nothing visual just recorded CW character sounds and the associated spoken letter, your ears, and the grey matter between them. At the beginning nothing should be written down. Writing letter by letter will impede your ability to progress to reading fast CW.

Beginners who use a good method can achieve 10 to 12 words per minute in 5 to 8 weeks. Anyone who has already learned the code using a good method can, by using a regular daily practice routine which includes an ICR exercise, increase their operating speed in a matter of 3 to 4 weeks. Later in this article you will see evidence that supports this statement.

Let's examine how you learned your native language and compare it to the various methods used to teach CW.

When you were a child you reacted to all the sounds around you. Eventually you realised that the larger bipeds were using something which you later came to know were words. You then found that by mimicking those "sounds" ie words, you got lots of smiles and hugs.

Suitably encouraged, you learned to listen attentively and then utter the sounds you heard most frequently. Only after several years did you learn that words were made up of letters and, even later, to write.

Learning CW is just learning another language. If a CW course followed the above approach it would take years to become proficient. So instead we learn to translate. We already know our native language, its alphabet, and how to spell commonly used words and their sounds. So we start with learning the CW sounds of the most used letters of the alphabet (and numerals) we know and eventually transition to translating the sounds of commonly used syllables, prefixes, suffixes, and whole words not individual letters.

A good program is based on learning a few characters and words in small increments with feedback and evaluations at regular intervals. A layered approach is adopted. Advancing to the next segment can only occur when the content of the current segment has been mastered. An absolute beginner can learn CW in about 6 to 8 weeks as long as they use a good proven technique and they practise 1 hour every day. It has long been recognized that instantly recognizing the CW characters and their associated letter in the alphabet is key to being able to copy CW at any useful speed greater than about 12 words per minute. [An article By Nancy Kott SK \(KZ8C\)](#) clearly explains why Instant Character Recognition (ICR) is so important. All the good CW courses are based on an approach outlined in her article. Beginners, having learned the alphabet using one of the good techniques, can usually operate at about 6 to 10 words per minute. With a little practice they can usually get to a slightly faster speed.

The next few paragraphs will detail two separate CW journeys; Mine and that of John GOUBE.

My journey (G3YAQ, VE2KM, VA2XDX, VA2KCC, VE0DX).

As a young man I was taught CW by a UK Army Reservist. He could simultaneously chat with me, poke his budgie, and copy a CW QSO at 30 words per minute. Due to daily practice and his tutelage I had absolutely no problem passing the UK ham morse test at 12 wpm. I was awarded the call sign G3YAQ.

A couple of years later I relocated to another town in the UK and joined the UK Royal Naval Reserve as a communicator. As I already knew CW I was immediately put to work training absolute beginners and helping get them to the minimum required speed of 12 wpm. During this time I was able to advance through the ranks and eventually achieved the rank of Radio Supervisor (Comms Branch speak for Petty Officer). This was only achieved after passing a code test at 20 wpm.

Unfortunately I never learned to touch type so all my code copying was done by writing down each letter as it was sent. Accuracy at the letter by letter level was important as on many occasions we were receiving messages that had been encrypted and sent in 5 letter code groups.

The years went by, a family was acquired, and a move to Canada occurred. I was active as a CW and SSB operator for a while but then my career got in the way and what was supposed to be a short break turned into a 30 year hiatus.

In 2018 the ham radio bug bit again. I reactivated now with call sign VE2KM. Not having touched a key or listened to CW in many years I was pleasantly surprised to be able to copy at about 15 wpm. With a little practice I was able to get to 18 wpm but could go no faster. I could not get to my former speed level no matter how hard I tried. This was when I joined the CW Academy (CWA) as a student and was very lucky to be assigned to a class with John AJ1DM as the advisor.

John immediately recognized the source of my problem. It was the pencil and copying letter by letter. He introduced me to the concept of head copy and ICR, especially Nancy Kott's article mentioned earlier. It took a lot of self discipline on my part to abandon the pencil - I removed them from my operating position during class sessions to avoid being tempted.

My problem was that I could no longer write as fast as I had in the past. He also introduced me to ICR and with daily application I was able to regain my former operating speed. Now I was able to join CWOPs and become an advisor. Whoopie - I could start teaching CW again. In addition to CWA classes I also teach CW at all levels for Radio Amateurs of Canada (the national body) and SKCC.

John's (GOUBE) Journey

I started my journey into Amateur Radio back in the 1990's, after a short spell on the then Illegal CB radio.

I was first licensed in 1993. My main interests are QRP CW. Unfortunately my home location is a bit of a challenge being both small and suffering from the ever increasing urban noise. My antennas are all home brew wires. In 2014 I bought my first Black Box rig Yeasu FT817ND. Up until then I had been using HomeBrew CW rigs. I am a member of G-QRP, FISTS, SKCC, QRP ARCI and locally I am a member of S.P.A.R.C's Staffordshire Portable Amateur Radio Club.

Back in the 1990s the process to obtain a Ham Radio Licence was first to attend a night school class followed by a City and Guilds theory exam. On passing that exam you could apply for a "B" class licence that only allowed access to frequencies above 30Mhz. To be able to gain access to the HF bands you had to pass a 12 wpm Morse test that consisted of sending and receiving a passage of plain text.

It took 2 months for the results of the theory test to arrive so while waiting I started to learn CW using a set of cassette tapes from the G-QRP club by G8PG and with the help from my mentor / elmer John Badger G4YZO.

The format of the tapes and the Morse class with G4YZO went along the lines of "Speaking" the character, Speaking the "Sound" then "Hear the sound".

Think FoxTrot; think Di-Di-Dah-Dit; then send the code on a Key.

When it came to sending you would say the character in your head while operating the key and use the words to "Time" your sending. You would literally tap out Di-Di-Dah-Dit. Having used this method of sending for such a long time it is now making it difficult for me to improve my sending speed.

I was ready to take my morse test after only 3 weeks of practice but had to wait a few weeks till an examiner from the UK Coast Guard was available. The time from starting to learn the code and passing the morse test was 6 weeks. I traded in my B class call sign (G7MUP) for an A class call sign GOUBE which I still hold.

Fast forward to 2020 and my retirement from the auto industry. As a retirement hobby I decided to become more active in ham radio. In attempting CW QSOs I discovered that the method of learning that I was originally exposed to had left me only able to decode the slowest of speeds on air as I was still going through a 5 stage process to read the code.

1. Hear the sound
2. Convert to Dits and Dahs
3. Look it up on my whiteboard in my head
4. Recognize the character
5. Write down the character

This coupled with saying the code in my head as I send is very limiting.

In September 2023 I posted a message on a FISTS UK Group site that I was not getting many replies to my CQs sent at 12 wpm and that on those occasions when I did get replies they came back too fast for me to copy. Even though I sent QRS. I came to the conclusion that QRS was an urban myth and that is what I posted.

Enter Tony VE2KM (ex G3YAQ) who sent me an email offering his coaching experience to try and help me. I did not know it at the time but my CW journey which at this point had stalled at about 10 wpm, was about to take off in a completely new and different direction.

At first I was anxious about taking his offer as he mentioned CWops Academy. I had reservations as I had approached a UK CWA Adviser before who had put me off with talk of "Head Reading" and the use of a paddle.

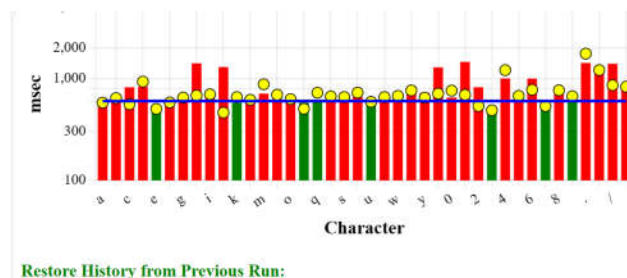
So after a very frustrating period of struggling on air with no result I took up Tony's kind offer. He introduced me to Instant Character Recognition at 25 wpm character speed. "What!" I Said "25 wpm" to which he explained that I would not be able to hear Di's and Dah's but hear the individual and distinct "Sound" of each character.

The first thing Tony did was to send me a link to an Instant Character Recognition application that had been designed by one of his friends and cw mentor John (AJ1DM) also a CWA advisor. I was very skeptical but with an open mind I tried it.

I found it to be a highly addictive and fun method to help improve ICR speeds; it's like playing a video game. You get to see your results and progress instantly..

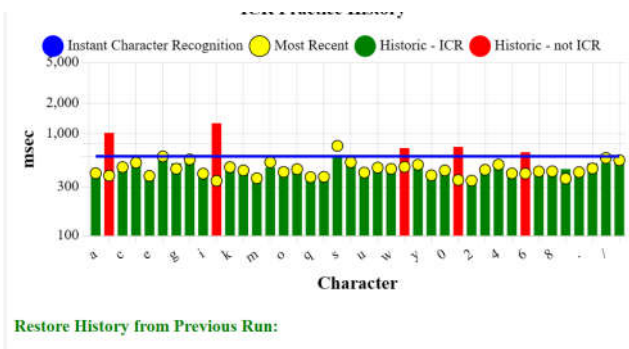
Here is a screenshot of my very first attempt.

This was recorded 23 Nov 2023.



Tony looked at my result and told me that if I continued to use it daily I would be completely in the green in a week. So I incorporated the app as part of my daily practice routine.

Here is a screenshot after using it for only 2 days.



there has been a significant increase in the amount of green bars especially in the numbers and punctuation characters which I had been having trouble with.

Tony was wrong. Here is a screenshot taken only 2 days later.



In the Nancy Kott ICR article she states, "The key to success is to say the letter within a half second of hearing it". The blue line is at 0.6 seconds and my average response is below that for all the characters.

Now if Tony (VE2KM) and John (AJ1DM) could come up with a way that I could similarly improve my urban noise level I would be a very happy radio ham.

Summary; If you are struggling to achieve your CW goals Tony will be happy to help you as long as it is during the winter months. He is too busy teaching sailing and navigation in the summer months. Use QRZ.com and VE2KM to find his email address.

You have to commit to one hour regular cw practice sessions broken into short periods of 10 to 20 minutes each and every day. If you cannot make this commitment don't waste your time or Tony's as you are not adequately motivated and you will not be successful..

CW is the original, and only, digital mode that does not need a computer.

73 **Tony VE2KM**

Swap Shop

For Sale

1. Icom IC-92AD Dual Band D-Star Transceiver.
2. Icom HM-175 GPS Speaker Microphone
3. Icom BC-177 Charging dock with Icom BC-123 SA Charger
4. Icom IC_92 AD Instruction Manual
5. RT Systems Windows Cloning Software with RT Systems USB-92 USB cable

All are in good working order. **\$350**

Website – ve3osh.com



Ken Fitzgerald, VA3KJF at webhog@me.com....905-435-6311

For Sale

(from Larry VA3FHG SK Estate)

Alinco DJ-G5T/E dual band hand held. Includes manual, drop-in charger, cigarette power adapter, spare battery, mic and antenna. Was tested and working on VE3OSH. **\$150**



Email – info@ve3osh.com

Diamond SG-7200 dual band VHF/UHF mag mount antenna. **\$50.**

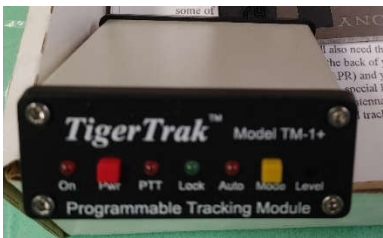
Kenwood TM-D700A dual band, APRS ready. Includes mic, display separation kit and display mounting bracket. No manual but it can be downloaded for free from the Kenwood site. Tested and working on VE3OSH. NOTE – does not have a GPS so one will need to be connected if you want to use it for sending out beacons while mobile. **\$350.**



Garmin GPSMAP 60CSx gps. Includes manual, Trip and Waypoint CD, City Navigator North America CD, cigarette power adapter and USB cable for updating. Tested and working. **\$150.**



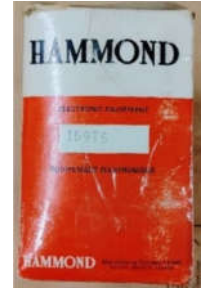
TigerTrak TM-1+ Trackin Module. APRS tracler. Untested and no GPS or cables but from what I have read you would need to make/buy one based on your radio. **\$15.**



Contact **Laird VE3LKS** at VE3LKS@yahoo.ca for info on these items

For Sale:

Website – ve3osh.com



Hammond 169TS Transformer – never used. \$80 new at Hammond. Asking **\$25.** Proceeds go to the club. Contact **Laird VE3LKS** at VE3LKS@yahoo.ca

Station of the Month

Don't forget I need some more pictures of your Radio Shacks so send the picture and info to Steve VA3TPS at va3tps@outlook.com

Editor's Note

Don't forget I am looking pictures of your Radio setups, home or mobile and also some articles or ham radio related stories, just send them along to me at va3tps@outlook.com .

Upcoming Events

CQ WW WPX Conest SSB is on March 0000z March 30 to 2359z March 31,2024. This is a really big contest so there will be lots of stations and DX Stations so fire up the radios and grab a few more countries for your DXCC. More information at <https://www.cqwpw.com/rules.htm>



April 20, 2024

It is getting closer, your Durham Hamfest organizing committee has been having meetings with this year's volunteer's to organize this year's event. We are now accepting bookings by vendor's for tables. The Hamfest will be held on Saturday April 20, 2024 from 0900 to around 12 noon. The website for our Hamfest is: www.durhamhamfest.com . If anyone has any questions or comments about the Hamfest you can contact **Laird VE3LKS** by email at: ve3lks@yahoo.ca .

Also spread the word around the airwaves when your talking to you fellow amateur radio operators about our Hamfest!

Email – info@ve3osh.com

54th Annual Canoe the Nonquon – June 01, 2024.

Some of you may remember this event from previous years. Well guess what.. NSARC has now been confirmed to take over this event on an annual basis as the previous Ham Club has declined participating any more. Details on what the event want's us to do and the locations are being worked on and more details at the upcoming March member meeting. This event is being held on June 01, 2024.

NSARC Summer BBQ – June 19, 2024

The annual summer BBQ will be held at Purple Woods Conservation Area located at 38 Coates Road in north Oshawa. This year Martha VA3SBD will be coordinating the BBQ food. Martha will also coordinate the food for this year's Field Day event as well. More details to come.

Field Day – June 22 – 23, 2024

The annual Field Day event will be held at Purple Woods Conservation Area located at 38 Coates Road in north Oshawa. This year Martha VA3SBD will be coordinating the BBQ food with Daren VE3NMD coordinating the Field Day operations. More details to come.

Aquino Tank Weekend – July 26 – 28, 2024

This annual event will be held at the Ontario Regiment RCAC Museum. 1000 Stevenson Road North. Oshawa, Ontario. Laird – VE3LKS will be the coordinator for this event. More details to come.

NSARC Fall BBQ – September 18, 2024

The annual fall BBQ event will be held at Purple Woods Conservation Area located at 38 Coates Road in north Oshawa. We are looking for a food coordinator for this event. If you are interested let Derek know at the upcoming member meeting. We need to finalize this position before we break for the summer.

From the President

Sorry no news about the replacement tower at the repeater site. We still have Radio Silence despite emails, telephone calls with voice mail messages being left. More details on what I am planning as the next step at our March member meeting.

I recently attended the Peterborough Amateur Radio Club's (PBO) March member meeting that was held on Zoom. Saved a lot of driving. They physically meet in a local school library as well as host a zoom meeting for those who cannot attend in person. This process worked well. They had someone moving the camera to show who was talking at the time and then reverted back to the new President Clive. My reason for attending the PBO meeting was to discuss the proposed fall joint Hamfest with their executive and members. After answering questions the PBO group voted to proceed with the Hamfest. The next step for PBO is to determine which of their members will be participating. Once this has been determined, they will let me know and we can have a joint meeting with both clubs to review who will do what. I will be asking at NSARC's March member meeting for NSARC members who like to assist with this event.

We have finished the content training of the NSARC Basic training course. Next week we will be having a review session with March 28th being scheduled for the class on-line exam once we know how many would like to write. We have had four of the course participants write an early exam as they felt that they were ready. Aldo invited them to his home to write the exam. All four passed their Basic exam with Honours with one of them receiving a pass mark of 100%. Congratulations to all of the participants. We have 30 participants left to write the exam.

Derek Christian VE3TKE – President