

# Monthly Update

## March 2025

[www.ve3osh.com](http://www.ve3osh.com)

### Club Executive

President – **Derek VE3TKE**  
Vice President: **Peter VA3PKM**  
Secretary: **Neil VA3NH**  
Treasurer: **Nick VA3NPW**  
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: **Dylan VE3KXY**  
RAC Representative: **Ken VE3RMK**

### Repeaters

#### 2m VHF FM Repeater – VE3OSH

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

#### 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

### March Meeting

Our March meeting will be over Zoom on Wednesday March 19, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

There will not be any presentation for this meeting.

### February Meeting

At our monthly on Wednesday February 19, 2025 at 7:00 pm the NSARC members were invited to attend a Zoom presentation on NVIS Antennas by the Auxiliary Communication Service (ACS) GH Section. This was presented by **John VE3IPS**. This was informative on the types of antennas out there for NVIS. We then conducted our regular monthly meeting after at 8:15 pm.

### Tuesday Night Rag Chew



The club's weekly Tuesday Night Rag Chew starts at 7:00 pm. Our current net controllers are: **Aldo VA3AG, Grant VA3KJI, Derek VE3TKE, Neil VA3NH and Steve VA3TPS**.

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.

**Just a reminder to everyone that our Net Controllers are doing a great job volunteering and are there for us every Tuesday at 7:00 pm so that we have a Net, so how about dropping by and checking in and say hello. It only takes a few minutes and the Net Control operators will appreciate it.**

### Wednesday Night Virtual Parking Lot

The club has a weekly Virtual Parking Lot (VPL) meeting on zoom starting Wednesday night 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 [president@ve3osh.com](mailto:president@ve3osh.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 also remember that you can also ask questions of the group as well.

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.



Some of the dedicated White Feather gang on a cool November 2 morning.

## Alternate Saturday Location

With the cooler weather some of our other members meet on Saturday morning at the Coffee Time in Courtice, Courtice Rd and Hwy 2 at 8:30 am.

Here is a photo from December 28, 2024 with a record 16 people attending!



# MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

We are now in our third month of this new year. There are quite a lot of previous members who have not renewed their membership for this year for some reason. We remind that your membership fee is due if you wish to remain as a member in good standing.

The membership renewal process is: Step 1: Click on this link <https://ve3osh.com/membership/> to take you to the membership section of our club page and submit the online form. Step 2: Click on this link to e-transfer your membership fee to the treasurer [treasurer@ve3osh.com](mailto:treasurer@ve3osh.com) or give either Nick, Derek or Thomas your fees in cash. NOTE – if you are claiming that you are a RAC member make sure you check with RAC 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 2025 at \$30 for a RAC member and \$40 for Non-RAC member.



## ANALOG HAM MEETS DIGITAL WORLD PART 2.

### Real Hams Read the Instructions

by **Neil McAlister - VA3NH**

In ancient Greece Socrates once said, "The more I learn the less I know." In other words, when we think that we know something, maybe it is only because we do not know other things that would make us reconsider what, in ignorance, we previously thought we understood. More than two millennia later his observation still stands the test of time. Indeed, it goes double in a rapidly evolving technical field like Amateur Radio. For example, many non-hams think they "know" that ham radio is an old-fashioned hobby with shrinking numbers of adherents. What those nay-sayers think they "know" is just plain wrong. In fact, there are more licensed radio Amateurs in Canada than ever before: over 73,000 in 2023 after steady growth over the previous two decades. Way back in 1981, the very first music video ever shown on MTV was "Video Killed the Radio Star." Luckily Amateur Radio sings a happier tune. It is a progressive hobby that has always embraced modern, cutting edge technology. Those who participate in ham radio have seen it grow and change with the times. Up-to-date computers and digital communication are a routine part of what we do. Software Defined Radio (SDR) is well established. Most ham shacks use software for one or more aspects of logging, propagation forecasting, digital modes of transmission, and computer assisted rig control. A thriving and changing technology can be challenging to use, however. Every shack is different, and one size does not fit all.

A detailed user's guide covering every mode of communication that is possible with one particular transceiver would be very helpful for Amateurs who use that rig -- but largely irrelevant for everyone else. Therefore we will avoid a deep dive into point-less detail.\*\* However, a few general observations may help someone considering a leap into the world of contemporary Amateur radio equipment ...

When my 35 year old transceiver quit for the third time, it was the cue to modernize the shack at VA3NH. After working with the old HF unit and an external sound card to make them handle Slow Scan TV and many digital modes, I imagined that I knew a thing or two about the subject, and that a more up-to-date transceiver would be a straightforward set-up. Many new transceivers have built-in data ports: no external sound card required. So plug and play, maybe? Real hams don't need instructions, do we? We do. The old rig had just single sideband for packet, PSK31, JS8, SSTV and the like. Very few adjustments. But besides CW, AM, SSB and FM, the new SDR rig had additional modes called DATA-L, DATA-U, RTTY-L, RTTY-U and PSK. There was an extensive screen-based menu for overall operation of the transceiver, and a sub menu for each different mode.

These touch screens were populated by mysterious labels like PLAY, PEAK, MARKER. Yes, there were some buttons and knobs on the rig too, and a few of them even looked familiar. But monikers like CLAR, QMB, CS and CONT/APF surpassed my feeble understanding. Particularly intriguing to this retired physician was one button labeled DNR, which in my line of work stands for "Do Not Resuscitate." (Hmm. That sounded bad. Wasn't that what happened to my old rig?) Moving on, did the new rig have an S meter? Check. Power meter? Check. But ALC was nowhere to be seen on the new transceiver's opening screen. With growing frustration I tried different modes, experimenting with combinations of settings on rig and software. Almost nothing worked. It took some digging just to unearth menu items that enabled CW. Starting slowly at first, light finally started to stream through the cracks into a dull mind. I realized that the more I learned about this intimidating SDR transceiver, the less I really knew in this world of touch screens and menus. The problem was not so much that the rig was difficult to use, although it was user unfriendly compared to the now defunct analog transceiver. The real problem was the over-confident operator who had imagined that he knew how to use new equipment without first learning something about it.

Consult the Operation Manual! Although it was clearly written, comprehensive and well illustrated, in 120 pages it did not contain any instructions to make the transceiver play nice with third party software that many hams use routinely -- WSJT-X, GridTracker, fldigi, Winlink and so on. Whether for copyright or liability reasons, the transceiver's manufacturer didn't offer any help with that.

Settings within the software proved equally unhelpful. Some software had not been updated to include my rig among its menu choices. Other software offered the choice, but only told the software side of the story. What about settings needed for the radio? Internet searches led down time-wasting rabbit holes. Some posts on chat groups gave inaccurate advice, contradicted in subsequent posts by other people who had failed to achieve success using the same settings. One well meaning operator had posted commendably detailed info for both radio and software; then admitted in a second entry that he had accidentally posted instructions for a different rig to the wrong discussion thread! One ham asserted that the new rig did not work with such-and-such software -- while another guy on YouTube demonstrated the same combination functioning perfectly.

After several days of futile effort this ol' ham was beginning to fear that he had bitten off more than he could chew, suffering the first twinges of buyer's remorse. But snippets from the manual, scraps from the Internet, suggestions from colleagues, and even the results of my own failed experiments started to congeal into a very rudimentary but helpful understanding of this perplexing, new rig. A few key concepts finally started to make sense. Going over the same YouTube video for the third time, I caught a throwaway comment about one important setting for one piece of software. I read postings more critically, and suddenly realized that a typo in a baffling chat group posting should have said QSK, not PSK. That drew another critical link between software and transceiver -- and voilà! A little more tweaking and a week later, every mode that the old, analog rig used to handle worked on the new rig -- only better, with far greater sensitivity and QRM rejection. That ominous looking "DNR" button meant Digital Noise Reduction. Wow! Sheepishly I now admit that real hams DO read the instruction manual. And scour the Internet. And ask for advice. Most importantly, we try to understand our equipment, not just to follow blindly down a list of instructions.

Socrates was right. Often we do not really know as much as we think we do. In Amateur Radio -- as in all of life -- there is always lots more to learn. And that's half the fun of it!

**73 de Neil -- VA3NH**

\*\* For info about what worked -- and what didn't -- on a Yaesu FTDX10 contact **Neil VA3NH** at [secretary@ve3osh.com](mailto:secretary@ve3osh.com) --

P.S. a Morning Smile: It's a scientific fact: People who have more birthdays live longer.

## YLRL Launches Pico Balloon under our callsign K4LMB



Thanks to the generosity of both Robert Goulden, KJ7VBX who donated a Pico Balloon with tracker and Rick Cooper, K7CNT who made the tracker, the Young Ladies Radio League launched its first unmanned balloon at 5am on Feb. 15, 2025!

The tracker is already transmitting from over the Atlantic ocean and being heard and spotted in the Scandinavian countries, West Africa, UK and Central Europe. It has traveled 2,518 miles in 23 hours moving about 100 miles an hour at approximately 44,000 feet. We don't know how long it will stay up and there are many variables in balloons, however our goal is to circumnavigate the world at least 1 time! Even if we don't women all over the world can be proud of the first ever Pico Balloon launch under the YLRL call sign K4LMB. I visualize YL's are powering this balloon and I'm excited by the thought!!!

Click this link to see where our balloon is: <https://traquito.github.io/search/spots/dashboard/?band=10m&channel=23&callsign=K4LMB&dtGte=2025-01-17>

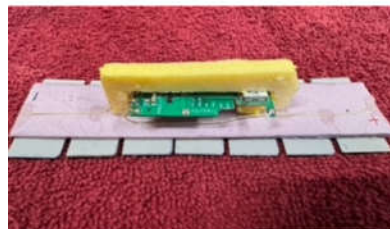
Details of this balloon: The tracker is a TRAQUITO and transmits over WSPR protocol at 20mw power output on 10 meters. It's solar powered so we can expect transmissions during the day light. Total weight is 12 grams. Hydrogen gas filled this 32" clear spherical Yokohama balloon. For ease of handling we used a 10m wire dipole antenna with a tail 8 feet on each side of the tracker.

### How this happened?

Robert, Rick and Vicki Zumwalt, N6KLS, YLRL President, are all members of the Hu-alapai Amateur Radio Club (HARC), in Kingman, AZ, home of Route 66. The Pico Balloon is very delicate and Robert had to stretch it carefully in a room that was humidified for about one week. Once carefully stretched the balloon was filled with hydrogen gas and delicately transported to our lift off site. Rick built the tracker and inserted the call sign, which is our YLRL K4LMB call sign, in honor of the Young Ladies Radio League. The antenna is a vertical dipole.

We had to ensure the winds were practically non-existent prior to launch and then up, up and away it went.

Here is a pictorial of the process:





**Martha VA1MD**

### For Sale

Nothing new for sale this month.

Remember that any posting in the For Sale column in the club newsletter can only be listed for three (3) Months, thereafter it will be removed to keep the For Sale column fresh.

If you have items for sale or if you have items that are free for the pick-up, feel free to list them here in the club For Sale column.

### Station of the Month

If you would like to share your setup, either mobile or ham shack send your pictures and a brief description about your setup to Steve VA3TPS at [va3tps@outlook.com](mailto:va3tps@outlook.com)

### Editor's Note

Thank you to **Neil VA3NH** and **Martha VA1MD** for their articles.

Don't forget I am looking for articles for the bulletin or any special events or information Ham Radio related.

We haven't had any members shack or mobile setup pics in a while. There must be some out there so send them to me with a short description of your station and setup.

## To Kerchunk the Repeater or not to Kerchunk!

Sometimes Hams simply hold down their mic for a second and let go, just to see if they are able to access the repeater. This is known as *kerchunking*. It's bad practice to kerchunk a repeater. If you want to see if you're hitting the repeater, simply say your call: "VA3TPS testing." If you hear the courtesy tone when you let off your mic, you're making it into the repeater. And by giving your call, you may spark a conversation with another Ham!

There may come a time when you need to know if your radio sounds good into a repeater; perhaps you're having a technical issue, or you've made an adjustment to your radio. It's perfectly fine to get on your repeater and ask for assistance. For example, "VA3TPS testing; can anybody give me a signal report?" will do nicely. Be mindful of the time and don't tie up the repeater too long trying to diagnose a problem. If there's a lingering issue, move to a simplex frequency to continue diagnostics.

I believe it is safe to say that most of us have at some time in our hobby Kerchunked a Repeater without putting our callsign out there. But it does get annoying when you have person after person Kerchunking the Repeater, so remember the rules and use proper etiquette and use your callsign "VA3TPS testing", you never know you might be pleasantly surprised and someone will give you a call and you will have a great qso and you will also be setting a good example for the new amateur radio operator's listening! Another note is if I might suggest that when we bring up the Allstar Link over the air we should also use our callsigns."VA3TPS for the Allstar link".

## Upcoming Events

### March Monthly Meeting

Will be on Zoom at 7:00 pm on Wednesday March 19,2025.

### CQ WW WPX SSB Contest

March 29 to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 more info at <https://www.cqwpw.com/rules.htm>

This is a great contest for DX, you can work anyone, any where for lots of qso's.

### Durham Hamfest



**April 12, 2025**

It is getting closer, your Durham Hamfest organizing committee has been having meetings with this year's volunteers to organize this year's event. We are now accepting bookings by vendors for tables. The Hamfest will be held on Saturday April 12, 2025 from 0900 to around 12 noon. The website for our Hamfest is: [www.durhamhamfest.com](http://www.durhamhamfest.com). If anyone has any questions or comments about the Hamfest you can contact Laird VE3LKS by email at: [ve3lks@yahoo.ca](mailto:ve3lks@yahoo.ca). Also spread the word around the airwaves when you're talking to your fellow amateur radio operators about our Hamfest!

## From the President

The club Allstar link (27838) has been installed for a while now and is fully working. I have noticed that a few members are using their own node to connect to our Allstar node. A few members are also using their Hamshack Hotline phone or their mobile phone to gain access to our Allstar node. This is great to see.

If you are club member and are looking for more information about how to use either your PC, mobile phone (IOS or Android), Hamshack hotline phone send the repeater group an email at [repeater@ve3osh.com](mailto:repeater@ve3osh.com) to receive further details. I would like to see more members using our Allstar node.

The next step that is planned is to remotely connect on a full time basis our repeater to other repeaters. There are a few club's that have asked to be linked to our repeater. I would also like to see a wider area Durham Region coverage as well.

This means that when anyone on a linked repeater, including our repeater speaks they will be heard on all of the linked repeaters. This will allow a wider group of people to communicate with us and may create more traffic on our repeater.

Another planned action is to connect our Allstar node to some of the larger Canada wide Net's to also create traffic and allow our members to communicate on these nets. We can program our Allstar to connect and disconnect these nets on a regular basis.

**My question to our members is this something that we want to do.** I will bring this up at this month's member meeting but feel free to send me an email at my new club email address [president@ve3osh.com](mailto:president@ve3osh.com) advising me that you are interested in linking on a full time basis and which regional or national nets that you would like to hear and/or participate with. Also you can let me know if you want more information on Allstar or the linking of repeaters.

Derek – VE3TKE

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