



# West Island Amateur Radio Club Bulletin

**April 2011 Edition**

**Upcoming Meeting - April 18<sup>th</sup> 2011**

**This month's topic**

**“ Field Day Plans - Solder Spot News - RAC.CA addresses - and other important issues ”**

*Be part of the discussion.*

## **President's Message and Report**

by Ken Fraser, VE2KLF

>>> WI ~ ARCS <<<

### **Around the QTH:**

As a follow on to my router saga (see Feb 2011 NL), I have now discovered how to fix the bug that was limiting the wireless transfer rate to that close to dial-up performance. There was a ratio of around 100:1 in speed penalty when referenced to the direct (CAT5) connection. After running tests to rule out RF interference, and at some point rebooting the netbook, it became clear that the culprit was the hibernation routine. Somehow the netbook transceiver driver settings are modified when the netbook goes into hibernation. I now restrict the start up to the standard boot up and all is well!

Otherwise, the maple sap has been running buckets (the standard 9 L type) full for weeks and I am up to more than 8 L of the good old maple syrup by now (from four sugar maple trees that were part of the turn of the 1900s old sugar bush). Before this district was developed the old sugar shack was about a block away from the QTH. But, looking into the buckets on April 11, the season is just about over with the moths doing the back stroke in what is left in the buckets! I have kept records for the past 30 years or more and this year appears to be a good maple syrup run. Now for the pancakes ... m-m-m-m.

### **March 2011 MTG:**

Reg, VE2AYU gave us a short rundown on the development of an “Autonomous Stress Indicator” he and Don McGillis with others have been designing at McGill to protect our power grids from massive propagating failures. He mentioned the 2003 Northeast blackout affecting Ontario and Northeastern US states. There, the operators of the power networks did not have realtime information as to the initial cause of the interruption and made changes which in most cases made the situation worse. The ASIs are placed a suspected weak points in the network(s) to give the operators realtime information and thus affect the correct control procedure(s). Hydro Quebec's operation was isolated by asynchronous ties (DC lines) in 2003 and therefore did not go down with the rest of the AC networks. I was at Reg's and Don's delivery of a paper on their ASI system a few months ago to the local Life Members of the IEEE. Reg, Ralph, VE2GO and myself are LMIEEEs and I think there are a few others in the WIARC group.

Once again Gilles, VE2TZZ kept us spellbound with his discussion of his home “Fab Lab”. He took us through the design and construction phases of an antenna switching system complete with CAD design tools for circuit board layout and production. He was proud of the sheet metal shear and bender he used to construct his own chassis and boxes. Each step in the processes was well engineered, illustrating all the items and design choices that need to be made to achieve the final product. I hope you fellows in the Solder-Spot were paying attention! As part of my training and teaching design projects at McGill, I went a similar route although, at the time, some of the CAD tools 25 or so years ago were somewhat primitive to what is available now. I remember the spun on photoresist mess and the preparation of photo masks. Yes, we made further messes with the ferric chloride solutions which, at one

point, we replaced with ammonium persulfate which made less mess, but the stored salt was unstable over time. Ah the good old days ...

#### April 2011 MTG:

Tentative agenda:

- Further on Field Day plans ... VE2NGH, George
- Hamfest survey ... VE2WTQ, Terry and Malcolm VE2DDZ
- Happenings at the Solder-Spot ... VE2OFH, Paul
- RAC call@rac.ca usage proposal (this created much discussion on the April 10 Info Net)
- Other business
- Coffee/drinks/cookies, 50/50 draw and **rag chew** until the doors close

#### Notes:

A “Show and Tell” is planned for the May WIARC meeting. Bring your pet (amateur radio related) projects and tell us about them. This can be a venue for the initial Solder-Spot projects! It would interesting to do a VSWR test on those new, roll-up J Antennas ... or any other antenna structures (that will fit in the hall) for that matter.

The Lester B Pearson School Board's Science and Technology Days will be held on May 25 and 26 (09:00 – 14:00 each day) at the St-Lazare airport and WIARC will be participating as a partner. Setup will be on May 24 from about 10:00 to 14:00. We are looking for volunteers to help with setup and meeting with the primary school students (in chaperoned groups of 15 – 20 for about 10 -15 minutes each group) to give them a taste of amateur radio.

C U on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April – 2011 ...

de .ken. VE2KLF

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## **What Happened** **Minutes of the March 2011 WIARC meeting**

by Keith Glashan, VE2MTL

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### *Minutes of the March 2011 WIARC meeting by Keith Glashan VE2MTL*

The meeting began at 19:50. Ken VE2KLF presided and welcomed the 20 attendees. There was the usual roll call with call signs. The details of the Monday March 21, 2011 meeting are as follows.

1. **Field Day 2011:** Ken VE2KLF talked about the field day meeting that took place last Thursday March 17<sup>th</sup>. It has been agreed that this year's event will be a tri-club one with MARC and the Concordia University Amateur Radio Club joining forces with us. He hoped that we will be using the Pine Beach location on Dorval. Another tri-club meeting is scheduled for late April, after the Concordia exams.

2. **Hamfest 2011:** Morrie VE2BWS introduced the survey that he and Terry VE2WTQ have prepared. There were survey forms available at the meeting for those who would not be filling out the “on-line” version. You would have all received the survey electronically with the March bulletin. They really need your feed back and are encouraging all of you to fill out the electronic version or the paper one ASAP. By the way, I personally completed the “on-line” one and I'm sure I did it in less than 10 minutes.

3. **St. Pat's Parade:** Vern VE2QQ talked very briefly on “radio” activities during the recent St. Patrick's Parade. Organizers used 92 commercial MOTOTRBO digital radios for the day.

4. **Solder Spot News:** Paul VE2OFH announced the venue for the first

meeting of the “Solder Spot”. Its full name is the Knox Crescent Kensington and First Presbyterian Church located at 6225 Godfrey in NDG. He has planned a one day J-Pole project for Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup>. Starting time is 9:30AM; it should run about 3 hours. Paul expects that future projects would likely be more complex, taking multiple sessions to complete.

**Power Grid:** Reg VE2AYU presented the project that he and his 2 colleagues have been working on for some time. They have a system designed to minimize black-outs and rolling black-outs over the power grid network. He used the term “Autonomous Stress Indicators”. Its use is to pinpoint the exact location and nature of problems which occur in the grid from time to time. He referred to the black out of August 2003. When the system collapsed, operators tried to bring it back ‘on-line’ but their uncoordinated

efforts just made things worse. Nobody really knew the “where” and the “why” of the problem. Reg says he and his team would need about \$1,000,000 to develop the system. If you have some extra cash lying around, Reg is your man to see.



***Reg VE2AYU giving his presentation on Power Grids***

**6. MARC Hamfest:** Vern VE2QQ announced that the next MARC Hamfest will be held at the usual Lasalle Legion location on April 16<sup>th</sup>. See you all there!

**7. Audit:** Vern VE2QQ reported that he had recently audited the Club books. He visited the QTH of the treasurer and found everything in good order, even the books. Thanks Vern.

**After the Break:** Gilles VE2TZT was our guest speaker this month. He gave us a most interesting and challenging synopsis of a home project from conception to completion. Gilles had many slides of a project that he recently completed that he described as being of medium complexity. He started with some CAD software he used to develop his schematic diagram. This software produces the

PC board layouts. There were 2 layouts produced for the double sided board. He recommends that you make a custom box to house your next project. Gilles explained that “off the shelf” boxes always seem too small or too big. To produce tailor made boxes, Gilles bought a sheet metal machine which can cut and/or fold aluminum. He had the completed project at the meeting for display purposes and we all agreed that he ended up with very professional results. Gilles cautioned us that it takes a lot of very careful planning to allow for the locations of screw holes, indicator lights, switches, and other control knobs. He spent a lot of time discussing the preparation and etching of the PC boards using the output from the CAD software. He had several detailed slides of the whole process. There are many steps to follow, including laminating, cleaning copper, scuffing the copper, etching, washing, and drilling. Gilles recommends that you refer to some web sites for more information.



***Gilles VE2TZT giving his presentation on electronics homebrewing***

For PCB making (BRAQ): visit <http://raqi.ca/braq/divers/pcb/pcb.htm>.

For CAD software (Kicad) visit [http://www.lis.inpg.fr/realise\\_au\\_lis/kica\\_d/](http://www.lis.inpg.fr/realise_au_lis/kica_d/). I hope this helps. I suspect that the members found the thought of taking on a project of this nature more than a little overwhelming. Like most new concepts, we initially tend to shy away. However, if you break it all down to its little steps, there is probably nothing that any one of us couldn't do on a good day. Just the same, it is comforting to know that we have a person like Gilles to call on for real expert advice. Gilles, congratulations on an amazing project, and on such a professional presentation. Finally, a “grand merci” for all the work you put into tonight's show.

The winner of the 50/50 draw was Sheldon VA2SH. Congratulations, and thanks for donating your winnings to the Club.

This month, thanks to Ken, there were some magazines available as door prizes.

Something Punny - Did you hear about the guy whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.

The meeting adjourned at 22:04. See you April 18<sup>th</sup> 2011.

73, & good DX de Keith VE2MTL

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## Update - WIARC hamfest and auction survey

by Terry Ladd, VE2WTQ

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The response to the hamfest and auction survey has been tremendous with over half of the WIARC membership participating. Several members took the time to fill out the comment section which added to a better understanding of their feelings/perspectives/suggestions. Thank you to all.

This survey has managed to get some of us thinking and discussing what kind of events we want for our club. The hamfest is one such opportunity but there may be other types of events worth considering. Any solution to revitalize or improve an event such as the hamfest/auction will not occur over-night or without the commitment and involvement of our members.

Most members feel that the WIARC hamfest is worth retaining. The event is valued as a social event - although finding deals/treasures and making the club some money are desirable outcomes too. There is a general sentiment that the event needs to change – perhaps in format and/or content.

There is some concern about the viability of the auction without an enhanced supply of merchandise/equipment worth bidding on. For many years, the auction has been the identifying feature of the WIARC hamfest. It may be time to consider other elements such as educational/instructional talks, posters or demonstrations.

The shortage of vendors – commercial and independent, is viewed as a detractor to the event. The location is not seen as a major issue. Other items such as offering breakfast with admission have mixed reviews. The survey was a good start. We need further discussion/investigation/research before formulating a proposal.

I believe the next step in this process will be to speak with potential vendors about their expectations – what would entice them to participate this year. Attending the MARC hamfest makes sense.

My original idea was to take a hard look at the hamfest/auction to see whether it should be retained, modified or abandoned. Based on the information received so far, it appears that we should start planning the 2011 WIARC hamfest or a similar event. In some ways, time is running out...

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## Dave VA2DGC Hosts WIARC Executive Meeting

by Keith Glashan, VE2MTL

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***Everyone seems to be amazed by Dave's antique radio collection.***

Executive meetings are usually held during the week following the regular monthly meetings. Until now they have always been held at the home of one of the executive members, and on a rotational basis.

However, this month, Dave was kind enough to host the exec meeting at his QTH. Following the formal business part, Dave gave us a tour of his antique radio collection.



All of us were truly amazed at the quantity and quality of his items and the superb manner in which he displays them. They say that seeing is believing, so I have included a couple of pics to prove my case. Thanks, Dave, for the opportunity to visit your QTH. Now we will have to find another reason to visit you again.



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## Free Flea Market Tables

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Flea-market tables available free to members. Members are reminded that there are always tables available at the regular monthly meetings. This practice was very popular years ago. Lately, it seen to have fallen out of practice.

So, if you wish to sell something, or clean out your basement, or do your spring cleaning early, you don't have to wait for the next Hamfest. Just bring those junk boxes, antenna parts, and old rigs to the next WIARC meeting and set up your table at the back of the hall. It's free. It's fun. It's win-win.

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## \$\$\$ Swap Shop \$\$\$

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If you like to advertise an item you wish to part with, please send an email to [ve2cwi@rac.ca](mailto:ve2cwi@rac.ca) before the first Monday of the month for publication in that month's edition to the editor attention.

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## Footnotes About Us

### The West Island Amateur Radio Club was founded in 1972

**Mailing Address** - P.O. Box 884 Pointe-Claire, Quebec H9R 4Z6

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**Vice-president :** Charles Robitaille, VE2RFI

**Treasurer :** Malcolm Harper, VE2DDZ

**Secretary :** Keith Glashan, VE2MTL

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Articles and comments are always welcomed; please submit them before the first Monday of the month for publication in that month's edition to the editor's attention, [VE2CWI@RAC.CA](mailto:VE2CWI@RAC.CA)

**Website:** <http://www.wiarc.ca>

**Repeaters:** VE2RWI VHF - 146.910 MHz (-)  
VE2RWI UHF - 443.050 MHz (+) (141.3 Hz CTCSS tone transmitted by both repeaters).

**Monthly Meetings**

Held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month, except July & August at: Lakeside Heights Baptist Church, 275 Braebrook, Pointe-Claire (West Island part of Montreal). Visitors are always welcomed.

**WIARC NETS on the 146.91 Club Repeater**

Information Net each Sunday evening at 8PM running for approximately an hour.  
All are welcome to participate.