



West Island Amateur Radio Club Bulletin

September 2015 Edition

Upcoming Meeting – September 21th 2015
This month's topic
“ Summer Activities ”

President's Message and Report

by Malcolm Harper, VE2DDZ (ve2ddz@ve2ddz.ca)

Hi all,

I am looking forward to seeing everyone after our summer meeting hiatus. I hope you all had a good summer.

My summer was very radio active with Summits on the Air activities in addition to some QRP CW events. Our September meeting will again be devoted to reports from members about their summer radio activities. We'd love to hear from you September 21st if you would be willing give us an update on your activities. Your report should be kept to a fifteen minute maximum and if you could let me know ahead of time that you will be presenting, I'd appreciate it. Photos and slides are welcomed.

Congratulations go out to Bram, VE2XCS, the recipient of two scholarships as he pursues at his studies at Cegep de Saint-Laurent. You can find more details later in the newsletter.

I am impressed each year with the Field Day event that we manage to put together. Eamon, VE2EGN has once again given us a detailed report which you can see later in the bulletin. When I think of all the upgrades to our Field Day operations that we've done over the past seven or eight years and the fact that we've done it all on volunteer power, I am amazed. We've added a satellite station, a VHF station, and now a second HF station. We've gone from essentially pot luck meals to feasting. We've gone from organization at the May and June meetings to online polls and email lists and orientation sessions. We've moved to totally battery powered operations.

I have to remind myself that all of this takes hours and hours of volunteer time. An example is the upgrade from generator power to battery power we've enjoyed the last two years. We may take for granted Dan VA2KEY showing up with his trailer full of batteries Saturday morning all wired and ready to plug in. We don't see the time he's invested drumming up sponsorship from Batteries Expert, picking up the batteries in the form we need, delivering them to the site, and protecting them from the elements. We just see them plugged in to the distribution and battery boost system designed and built by George, VE2NGH. We don't see a lot of the time and effort behind the scenes in this and in all of the areas of Field Day.

I think we're getting to the point where some volunteers will be stepping down or asking for a change of responsibilities. I have to remember that that may mean that some of things that we've been taking for granted may not happen in future Field Days. Essentially Field Day is what we make it. What happens or doesn't happen at Field Day depends on what we as volunteers are willing to undertake.

September 21, 2015 Meeting Agenda

- Silent Key Ceremony
 - Peter Cheasley, VE2TPR, SK
 - Thain MacDowell, VE2NI, SK
 - Joe Cassidy, formerly VE2QG, SK
- Tips
- SIGs
- Reports
 - Field Day - Eamon VE2EGN
- Flash Talk - Antenna - Gilles VE2TZT

- Other Business
- Membership list
- Break (coffee, ragchew, cookies)
- Summer activity reports

See you on the 21th.

73,
Malcolm VE2DDZ

What happened

Minutes of the June 2015 WIARC meeting

by Keith Glashan, VE2MTL (kglashan@yahoo.ca)

Minutes of the WIARC Meeting June 15, 2015 By Keith Glashan VE2MTL

The meeting began at 19:38. Malcolm VE2DDZ welcomed the 25 attendees and started the meeting with usual roll call with call signs. The details of the meeting follow.

1. New Members/Visitors:

Mark VA2MM just completed giving an amateur radio course to a group of students. One of his recent graduates, Eugene, attended the meeting tonight. He does not have a callsign yet but should have one shortly. Congratulations, Eugene, and welcome.

2. Tip Time Tips:

Malcolm had a tip for the members this evening. He had recently used a 3-D printer to create a project box with lid. Unfortunately, he left it in his car and the heat warped it severely.

His tip was to keep items such as this out of your car if it will be sitting in the hot sun.

3. Sunday Net:

Malcolm showed a large collection of slides that he took at the breakfast held a couple of Saturdays ago at Le Manoir. The event was a get together

for the Sunday evening net group. There were about 20 attendees.

4. SOTA News:

The group activation planned for Mont St. Bruno the end of last month fell through because of poor weather conditions. It will have to be rescheduled to a future date.

5. WIARC Mug:

René VE2RI showed us a very attractive glass mug which he can engrave with the WIARC logo, your name and callsign. They are available for \$20.00 and René donates \$5.00 from each sale back to the club.

Several members ordered one on the spot.

6. Peter VE2TPR/SK:

It was announced that Peter VE2TPR passed away a few days ago. No one has any details at this moment. We will hold a silent key ceremony for Peter at the September meeting.

7. Repeater 146.910:

Charles VE2RFI reported that he installed the tone board on the 146.910 repeater. It now requires an 88.5 Hz tone to get into the repeater.

Charles also mentioned that some members seem to be experiencing occasional dropouts on the repeater.

He asked that we listen for such occurrences. If you hear any, please take note of them and report it to Charles.

8. 160m Contesting:

Gilles VE2TZT, also known as VA2EW, gave a talk on his 160m

antenna installation. He was entering the 160m CW contests frequently, but was unable to improve his third place position in Canada. He realized that he would have to be able to better the output pattern of his antenna. He showed us several slides of his new installation and the new equipment in his shack. He is now able to adjust his output pattern as required. By the way, he has now improved his position from third place to second. He now has his sights on that station in PEI. Congratulations Gilles.

9. ARRL Awards:

Marc-Andre VE2EVN and Harrison VE2HKW each received an award from the ARRL for operating at the Vermont Hamcon station last February.

10. Summer Meetings:

Malcolm VE2DDZ announced that we will again hold informal meetings on the 3rd Monday in July and August. However, there will be no formal meeting agenda.

11. Break Time Cookies:

This evening, the break time treats were provided by Keith VE2MTL. Thanks Keith. According to the volunteer sheet, no one has yet volunteered to provide treats for the September meeting.

12. After the Break:

After the break, Eamon VE2EGN gave a briefing on the field Day 2015 which takes place June 27th and 28th.

He confirmed that the Beaconsfield site will be used again and he plans to operate 2A.

We will be using battery power supplied by 'Batteries Expert' once more. All are invited to help set up on Saturday at 9AM.

For those interested in a practice session on the N1NM logging software, there will be a get together at George VE2NGH's QTH next Saturday afternoon.

Please contact Eamon or George if you plan to attend. There was a lot of technical discussion on operating with two rigs and two logging computers, etc. There seems to be sufficient number of tents available and are looking forward to good weather for the weekend.

13. 50/50 Draw:

This evening, we used the 50-50 draw as tickets for a prize. In this case, René VE2RI supplied a CD as the prize. The winner this evening was Charles VE2RFI. Congratulations and thanks.

14. A Pun my Word:

If a deaf child signs swear words, does his mother wash his hands with soap?

The meeting adjourned at 21:36. See you September 21st, 2015.

73, & good DX de Keith VE2MTL

Bert VE2ZAZ Youtube Videos

by Dan Monptetit, VA2KEY
(dmontpe@hotmail.com)

I'm sure most of you, remember Bertrand Zauhar VE2ZAZ, he was the guest speaker at last April's WIARC meeting.

Dan VA2KEY came across Bert's Youtube page and would like to share it with you

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWDEBcFt0Brf6fwhkR4ZvPw>

Monthly Meeting tips

Have you worked on a ham radio project lately? Did you discover a solution to a problem that may be helpful for your fellow WIARC members? Then come and share your tips at our monthly meetings.

A short amount of time will be allocated at the beginning of each meeting for members to share tips. Please let the club's executive know ahead of time so we can manage the meeting schedule accordingly, by sending an email at ve2cwi@wiarc.ca

A look back on Field Day 2015

by Eamon Egan, VE2EGN (eamon.egan@gmail.com)

Each year, the name of the game at Field Day has been to build on past successes while trying a little something new. At this year's fifth joint MARC / WIARC Field Day, many successful elements were recycled from previous years. For the third year in a row we were fortunate to enjoy a great location on the lakeshore, at Beaconsfield's Centennial Park. This year our principal innovation was to attempt a 2A configuration for the first time in the clubs' collaborative Field Day history.

One week before the event, we held a training session in HF operations in George VE2NGH's backyard. A few old timers showed up to watch a couple of newbies, including MARC course graduate Erin VE2SXX, get some pointers on HF Field Day operations. We presented a PowerPoint to go over some basics, then logged a couple of West Virginia QSO party contacts to demonstrate contest logging. After those dried up, a ragchew or two ensued.

Our Field Day site plan was similar to last year's, and we occupied an area just west of the parking lot not far from the playground and beach. The previous night we relied on the expert bow and arrow technique of Gilles VE2TZZ to pre-place our antenna ropes in the trees. Thanks to having this out of the way before the start of setup on Saturday morning, we were able to get on the air earlier, logging our first contact only 11 minutes after the starting gun. Next year we will aim for the first minute!

We housed both HF operating positions in a single tent lent by Yves VE2YMV. Satellite and 6m operations were hosted in another tent nearby.

HF transceivers (FT-1000MP and TS-450SAT) and tuners were provided by Gilles VE2TZZ and Charles VE2RFI. The same antennas used last year were assigned to the first HF station: a ladder-line fed 20m horizontal dipole, set quite high above the tent, plus 40m and 80m slopers pointing southwards towards the lake. The second HF station used a newly built ladder-line fed 40m dipole located a bit nearer to the lake. Antenna locations were carefully chosen to separate them adequately, and to orient the horizontal dipoles end to end to minimize inter-station interference. With the resulting

configuration, interference stayed within acceptable limits and front-end de-sense did not significantly affect operations. A wireless router was all it took to seamlessly network the two laptops running the newly released N1MM+ contest logger, and we were glad to see that its emissions did not contribute noticeably to the RF noise level.

In HF operations we maintained our goal of welcoming brand new hams as well as operators newly involved in club activities. We ended up with 14 licensed amateurs in the HF log this year, and running two stations helped to ensure everyone had ample time to operate. It was encouraging to see so many participants take up the challenge and keep the stations busy, at least during most of the normal waking hours.



Picture of the team putting up the 6m Yagi. Team work at it's best.

Early on Saturday, a couple of veteran operators including Gilles and George were on hand for coaching. Erin VE2SXN as well as Noel VE2AWC and Rudy VA2AJR tried their hand at phone operations, while Vlad VA2TTA proved to be an unstoppable machine on CW, staying on the air for six or seven hours at a stretch, and amassing over 300 contacts. By the time Eamon VE2EGN tried his hand at search-and-pounce on a higher band on Sunday morning, many of the exchanges were pre-filled from Vlad's nocturnal 80m activity, making the job a whole lot easier!

The HF stations were powered again this year by a set of high capacity lead-acid batteries kindly provided by Batteries Expert on Île Perot, allowing quiet operation to minimize acoustic nuisance to regular park users. To improve power efficiency we ran both HF rigs from 12V supplies, used 12V LED lighting strips instead of an incandescent bulb at night, and suggested that George could survive without his 120VAC fan, eliminating all inverter power loads except logging computers. Such diminished auxiliary power consumption allowed us to run both HF stations over a 24h period from the same battery configuration that powered last year's 1A setup.

The 6m station consisted of Charles's FT-857D, with the beam antenna set up the same as last year, about 20' up in the air on stacked 10' masts. We resorted to "armstrong" rotation after a valiant attempt by Harrison VE2HKW to get his rotator working. The band, although it had been hopping a few days earlier, barely cooperated during Field Day hours, opening up to allow only a handful of longer-range contacts into the midwest alongside the usual Quebec and northern Vermont QSOs. In satellite operations Malcolm, VE2DDZ had excellent success, bagging six contacts, including a run of four on a single FO-29 satellite pass.

The weather cooperated to some extent, blessing us with pleasantly cool temperatures throughout operations and holding off on the rain until early Sunday morning. However the rain was in full force by the early afternoon, motivating those

present to start tear-down a bit early and work quickly to finish by around 4pm. All the tents had to be dried out in the following week.



The crew enjoying Harrison's Breakfast

We logged 926 QSOs, for a total score of 4050 after bonus points were added in. Though perhaps not super competitive in the very popular 2A category, this tally handily surpasses last year's 1A score, and counts as respectable considering this year's goals of welcoming new operators and breaking new ground with a 2A setup. As we build up our Field Day operator base, we hope to welcome back our older operators with improved skills each year, and to continue attracting new participants. This way, even without putting much stress on competition, we expect our score to improve "organically" in the years to come.

The clubs' executives would like to thank everyone who came out to help, and particularly those who had a big hand in organizing the event ahead of time. Bob VE2PDT smoothly handled our special event application and our relations with the City of Beaconsfield, for whose welcome and cooperation we remain grateful.



We had quite a turnout this year

Dan VA2KEY took charge of securing our energy needs from Batteries Expert, whom we thank once again for their generous sponsorship. George, VE2NGH, as usual participated in antenna layout planning, worked with VE2EGN on

overhauling Field Day antennas and other gear, lent his practiced hand to the setup of HF stations and antennas, and afterwards took care of assembling and submitting our Field Day results. Matt, VE2MTA set up and manned the PR tent, explaining our goings-on to passers-by, along with Rene VE2RI and one or two others, while Harrison VE2HKW and Bram VE2XCS took care of site security.

Field Day acknowledgements would not be complete without thanking Charles, VE2RFI, who once again took charge of preparing great food to keep us going during the event, and miraculously maintained his composure even when pulled two ways at once between lunchtime sandwich preparation and helping to set up his rigs for HF and VHF operations. On Sunday morning, those present were very grateful to Harrison who took the initiative to cook a fabulous breakfast for everyone.

To prepare for next year's Field Day, this fall we will once again poll club members to get an idea how the last two Field Day operations (conducted since the last poll was held in 2013) have been perceived by members, and to help us make plans and set goals for the future.

Ham radio @pp of the month: Ham Radio Prefixes

by Bram Paterson, VE2XCS (ve2xcs@bell.net)

Ham Radio Prefixes (Android – Free) : Provides a quick lookup of a callsign's country of origin, ITU zone, CQ zone and GMT. The apps only has one pop-up ad when you open it. <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.vincere.hamradioprefixes&hl=fr>

The HVU (HF, VHF or UHF) Scanner frequencies of the month column

by Bram Paterson, VE2XCS (ve2xcs@bell.net)

Unfortunately there has been a lot of changes in the public safety radio scene these days. In this month's column, I will recap the frequencies that have recently been switched over to digital and explain the concept of a trunking system.



City of Pointe Claire Public Works: 151.9550 MHz (On the SÉRAM P25 Network)

SPVM Channel 5: 410.6125 MHz (Fully digital and encrypted on SÉRAM P25 Network)

City of Montréal parking agents: 411.9625 MHz (Now in the 700 MHz portion of the SÉRAM P25 Network)

However, one new frequency has appeared this spring, it's the Beaconsfield Public Works/Security on 171.6450 MHz, replacing the former 169.530 MHz that was used for more than a decade now. Others, like the Pierrefonds/Roxboro and DDO Public Works/Security still operate on 410.0875 MHz and 410.7625 MHz respectively.

Some services still remain in analog. For how long, who knows ? It's the case of the SPVM operations (Channel 1 to 4 and 6 to 11) and the CBSA agents at the Montreal-Trudeau Airport. By the way their frequency is 410.4625 MHz and has good coverage in the W-I.

For those looking for the RCMP frequencies, they have been operating on a conventional digital encrypted Motorola P25

system in the 420 MHz band, for a couple of years now. Sometimes, their encryption mode is switched to off depending on the operations they are carrying out. Mind you, you need a P25 compatible scanner or SDR dongle with the proper software to listen in.

Some of you may ask what is a conventional system vs. a trunked system? In a conventional system, all radio communications happen on the same channel (It's a channelized system like ham radio). On the other hand, a trunked system operates on a group of allocated frequencies and conversations switch frequencies among the group.

Conversations hop from frequency to frequency every three to five seconds (In a EDACS system). Meanwhile, others systems switch frequencies every time one communication is ended and a new one is started (In the case of an analog and digital MOTOROLA system) and sometimes when there's no traffic, some conversations may linger on the same channel for minutes (In the case of an LTR system).

In trunking a system, users use talkgroups and they appear as channel 1A,B,C etc on their radio's display. Each radio has it's own list of talkgroups it has access to. As scanner listener, we often refer to the talkgroup as the group we listen to. For example, I used to listen to talkgroups 04-032 for the Pointe-Claire Public Security and 04-047 for Beaconsfield Public Security (on EDACS RSP sys. 4).

The advantage of trunking over conventional is an increased number of users on a given system and better use of the frequency spectrum. More users, less channels. This is especially true with the arrival of DMR, we can easily double the number of users on a given frequencies, since users use a talkgroup either on Slot 1 or Slot 2.

In the case of EDACS and Motorola systems, there is a control channel that coordinate the frequencies hops, LTR systems don't use such a channel, but rather a group of channels to control the system. Unfortunately EDACS system are going to disappear in the following months, all to be replace by P25 systems. The last active one, will be the STM Bus and Métro systems. Hopefully, there still is a few LTR systems in service in the greater Montreal area.

All in all, I hope you have fun listening to your receivers. If you have trunking capability, then listen in on the remaining systems, before THE BIG UPGRADE to DIGITAL. Next month's topic is the VHF Civilian Airband (108-136 MHz)

Bram Paterson, VE2XCS - Scholarship Winner

by the WIARC Executive

Congratulations to Bram Paterson, VE2XCS. Bram has been an active member of WIARC since 2009 when he completed the certification course given by François, VE2AAY. Among other things, he has served as our publications director, net control operator, and treasurer.



Picture of Bram VE2XCS in his ham shack

Bram has just started his studies at Cegep de Saint-Laurent in Ville Saint-Laurent. He is studying Technique de l'électronique, a three year program. The program has a very hands-on approach to teaching electronics with 50% theory and 50% practice. He will be studying circuit board design, mathematics, computers, software programming, RF technology and networking. Once he graduates he plans on continuing to study Electrical Engineering at University.

We think very highly of Bram at WIARC and it is good to know that others share our high opinion of him. He has been awarded two scholarships in support of his studies. He won a \$500 Radio Amateurs of Canada scholarship supporting study in Electrical, Electronic and Software engineering. He also won the Brit Fader Scholarship valued at \$1000. This scholarship administered Halifax Amateur Radio Club is designed to promote study in the field of electronics or electrical engineering by licensed Canadian Radio Amateurs. The Brit Fader Scholarship announcement is available online at http://www.halifax-arc.org/node/47/html_links.htm#2015BritFaderAward

Congratulations Bram, these awards are well deserved and we wish you all the best in your studies.

WIARC Information net 2015-2016 Season

by Bram Paterson, (ve2xcs@bell.net)

The Info net will start again this year on September 13th 2015 on it's usual frequency 146.9100 MHz ***with a 88.5 Hz CTCSS tone both on transmit and receive*** every Sunday evening at 8PM local time.

NAQCC Anniversary

by Malcolm, VE2DDZ (ve2ddz@ve2ddz.ca)

I am continuing to slowly improve my operating ability in CW. For me right now being on the air in CW is the best practise I can find. When I'm activating a lot of SOTA in the summer I do some CW each activation and that fits the bill. When my activations slow down in the fall, or when it gets cold in the winter, I don't get on the air often enough in CW to get the benefit I want so I turn to other resources.

I have found that the North American QRP CW Club (NAQCC) has some CW operating activities that fit the bill. They have monthly CW sprints. Don't get scared off by the word sprint - it refers to duration, not CW speed. Participants are very willing to slow down to newbie speed and because it is only a two hour event, I don't have to maintain the high concentration level that CW still requires of me for an extended period.

The NAQCC also has weekly QRS (slow speed) nets. I find that I can operate the Thursday evening 40m net from my QTH even with a high background noise level. For the nets only you can run at higher than QRP power level if you need to and they really will slow right down to your speed.

You can get more information about the NAQCC at <http://naqcc.info/>

The NAQCC is celebrating their eleventh anniversary October 12 - 18 with some special stations and calls on the air. Details are on their website.

We want to hear from you

by Bram Paterson, VE2XCS (ve2xcs@bell.net)

Do you have an idea or story that you want to share with your fellows WIARC members. We want to hear from you. Please send your article to the newsletter editor at the beginning of the month to the following email address: ve2xcs@bell.net

+++ Free Flea Market Tables +++

Flea-market tables available free to members. Members are reminded that there are always tables available at the regular monthly meetings.

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.

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

To advertise items for sale, send details to Bram VE2XCS, the newsletter editor at ve2xcs@bell.net.

He will gladly include them in the next bulletin. Please remember to include all pertinent information relating to the item you wish to sell.

Footnotes About Us

The West Island Amateur Radio Club was founded in 1972

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

E-mail: VE2CWI@WIARC.CA

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Webmaster : Wayne Hodgins, VE2WRH

Immediate Past : Ken Fraser, VE2KLF

President

News and comments are always welcomed; please submit them to the following address, VE2CWI@WIARC.CA

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

Repeaters: VE2RWI VHF - 146.910 MHz (-) and VE2RWI UHF - 443.050 MHz (+)
(88.5 Hz CTCSS tone transmitted and received on the VHF repeater and a 141.3 Hz CTCSS tone transmitted only on the UHF repeater).

Monthly Meetings

Held the 3rd 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 VE2RWI Repeater

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