



The **NEWSCASTER**

The Official Publication of the Winnipeg Amateur Radio Club
<http://www.WinnipegARC.org>

October 2020

Facebook [Winnipeg Amateur Radio Club - VE4BB](#) Twitter [@ve4bbwarc](#)

VE4BB

An "On-Line Social Distance" Meeting Presentation by Jim Idelson KIIR on Tower Safety

Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/djlatour>

In view of the current "Social Distancing"
measures join WARC for this online meeting

Other Important Dates:

Newscaster: Deadline November 6, 2020

WARC: Monthly Meeting Dates **2nd Tuesdays**
October 13, 2020 - Tower Safety
November 10, 2020 - AGM (Rescheduled)
December 8, 2020 Christmas Supper
(Fingers Crossed)

ARES: Tuesday, October 20, 2020
Mark Havens VE4MWH Mobile
Computer Lab
Will be an **on-line** "Remote" meeting
Winnipeg ARES members will be
advised by e-mail

Other: December 8, 2020 - Plans are under
way for the WARC Christmas Supper
pending restrictions due to the ongoing
Covid 19 Pandemic

WARC Executive for 2020-2021...

President	John Romanec	ve4vjr@gmail.com
Vice-Pres.	Drew Kwartel	drewk1166@gmail.com
Treasurer	David Latour	ve4dla@gmail.com
Secretary	Dave Terrick	dave.terrick@gmail.com
Membership Programs	Jerry Volkens	jerryvolkers@hotmail.com
Education	Roberto Urrea	va4.rul@gmail.com
Past President	Colin Mantay	ve4cem@rac.ca
Public Information Officer....	Vacant	

From The President -

Greetings everyone! Unfortunately we have more sad news for the Amateur Radio community with Ron Place VE4PL becoming a Silent Key last month along with Tom Mills VE4SE shortly before that. WARC extends its condolences to their families and friends.

Word on the street is the sunspot cycle is starting it's upswing. OK, the upswing is more like a snail starting on a 6 year shimmy up a wall, but nevertheless it's starting to go up!

Contest season is starting up as well. For those who may be interested in contesting, David VE4DL has been writing articles in the Newscaster about his experience with contesting. Give them a read. If you think you may want to give it a go ask some of the members for advice or give the WARC executive a shout and we will do our best to answer any of your questions and guide you on your way. There are several contests each month and whether you spend a few minutes in one or 48 hours, you will learn something and hopefully have fun! The Newscaster always has a list up upcoming contests for you to check out.

For those interested in taking a bigger part in WARC - we are always looking for people who would like to become a "Member at Large" please let us know. This is an excellent opportunity to learn what it is the executive does and hopefully take on a role as a "backup". This helps tremendously in succession planning as it is important for a seamless transition when someone decides to take a break from their position. If you would like to become a part of the executive team please send us an email.

The October 13 general meeting will once again be an online affair and our AGM is rescheduled to the November meeting. So if you want to know the detailed state of the club please attend the November meeting. The September online meeting was pretty light on the number of attendees so hopefully October's meeting will be better attended. For those who are a shy about having your faces visible to others during the meeting, no worries, you can turn your camera off.

Continued...

Our Vision

To increase public awareness and respect for Amateur radio; to provide education and support in all aspects of the hobby to our members in a social atmosphere

²
If the concern is being intimidated by the technology/complexity of connecting to the online meeting please contact us and we will do our best to show you how. Check the WARC web site for details and look for your email on how to connect to it.

We are holding our breath and hoping we will be able to finally meet in person for the November meeting but will not know for sure till late October and when we find out we will let everyone know.

73, John VE4VJR



Simulated Emergency Test (SET)

For immediate release:

For what is certainly the first time in history, the upcoming Simulated Emergency Test (SET) will be held during a real global pandemic – not a simulation.

The SET is a North America-wide exercise in emergency communications, which is administered by Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) and the American Radio Relay League (ARRL).

There are different circumstances throughout the country and the various levels of governments (local, municipal, provincial/territorial and federal) continue to monitor the situation and develop strategies designed to ensure our safety while reducing the impact on the economy. It is of utmost importance, therefore, that all participants ensure that they stay safe and respect the specific rules and requirements in their jurisdiction – municipal, provincial, territorial or federal.

The rise in COVID-19 cases in various jurisdictions in Canada – and especially in Ontario and Quebec – has led to new restrictions and guidelines. These new policies include such items as the upper limit on the number of people allowed to gather and the closure of public buildings.

In Ontario, the Simulated Emergency Test will continue to be held on Saturday, October 31, but the initial plan to hold the SET on Wednesday, October 28 in some areas has been cancelled since access to Emergency Operations Centres located in Municipal offices is no longer permitted.

SET Theme: A Severe Winter Storm

Planning for the SET

²

In Canada, the Simulated Emergency Test is administered by Emergency Coordinators (EC) and Net Managers (NM). This year I am encouraging all Emergency Coordinators to do a theme-based operation and to plan each stage using what 2020 has shown you so far and try to anticipate the next potential risk.

Starting from the Call-Out to your After-Action Reports, all teams across Canada must use the following common theme: a severe winter storm. We have provided some examples of severe winter storms on the RAC website to help you with the planning process.

Emergency Coordinators will be required to include a COVID-19 plan as part of their SET plan. As indicated above, all participants in the SET must follow the guidelines provided by the government and health officials in their respective area. The plan should include an outline covering social/physical distancing if operating outside a member's personal residence.

A copy of the local Health Authority's COVID-19 recommendations will be emailed to all members participating in the SET. An email list showing receipt of these instructions from all members participating in the SET will be kept by the Emergency Coordinator.

Please assess your local situation and address safety concerns according to local Health guidelines. If possible, please take part in the SET from your home or vehicle.

As indicated above, all Emergency Operations Centres and served agencies' stations (for example, the Red Cross, Emergency Social Services etc.) will need to be simulated during the SET.

Unless you are participating in the SET from your own home or vehicle, you are required to wear a mask and follow all local Health Authority Guidelines.

For complete information about the upcoming SET on Saturday, October 31 please visit the RAC website at the links provided below:

Important Update:

<https://www.rac.ca/update-on-simulated-emergency-test-saturday-october-31/>

Main SET webpage:

<https://www.rac.ca/simulated-emergency-test/>

Jason Tremblay, VE3JXT
RAC Community Services Officer

Alan Griffin
RAC MarCom Director


PROFESSIONAL IMPRESSIONS CREATED HERE
204.899.3350
1798 St Matthews Ave
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0A5

Discount for
"WARC"
members

Print It On is offering WARC members
a 15% discount on any size qty of QSL cards.

Be sure to present your membership card.

Spotlight On Hams ***The Torch has Been Passed***

Good day to all on this (printed) frequency. This is VE4DVT, Dave Terrick, and I have taken over the role of reporter for "Spotlight On Hams" column in the Newscaster from VE4DAR. I am both new to the position and new to the hobby so I thought a brief bio on me might be the best way to start curating this position.



I'm a Gen Xer which puts me in a sandwich between the true Elmers of our clubs and those who are younger and have fostered an interest in our 'old tech'. I built my first radio (a crystal set) in 1977 and shortly thereafter started collecting old radios at garage sales. My favourites are a '40s Airmaster table top (no hard data available) and the '41 Northern Electric console which is period correct for my River Heights bungalow. I should really connect it to my new Aluminium Farm and see how the tube tech compares with my iCom 756 for SWL... I may be surprised, but I still marvel at the Magic Eye tuning tube that is the great granddaddy of the Waterfall!

In the past year and a month I have gone from nothing but a shortwave receiver to an iCom 756 Pro II and a Yaesu FT2980 2M mobile and, of course, the ubiquitous Chinese HT as my entry to the local repeaters. I am the Secretary for WARC and the Treasurer for WSC. I am on the edge of writing my advanced certification and am preparing to write my CW exam simultaneously. Overachiever? Perhaps. But, I have been welcomed at every step by the community and it makes me proud of our fraternity!

I want to hear from YOU. If you have never been featured in the "Spotlight On Hams" Column Newscaster please reply to VE4DVT@Rac.ca and I will arrange an interview for future publication. I'd like to take this column to a broader form so any and all ideas will be considered. We ALL have a story to tell about our

Ham experience, whether it be new or old. Please share.

73,
Dave Terrick

Minutes ***WARC General Meeting September 8, 2020***

Call to order
- 7:40 pm

Introductions
- Skipped

Previous meeting's minutes
- No discussion arose

Business
- Membership dues are now due. \$20 for RAC members, \$30 for non-RAC members
- Ron Place VE4PL and Tom Mills VE4SE passed away over the summer

Treasurer's report
- Total funds on hand \$14,488.77. 5,511.20 in reserve, \$38.24 in Paypal, and the balance in the current account.
- August revenues \$30 in memberships and \$0.35 in interest.
- Expenses \$630.49 including a \$600 donation to the Firefighters Burn Fund.

Membership report
- Currently 28 paid up members, 18 full and 10 complimentary student memberships

Education report
- WARC will not be having a fall class this year.
- WARC's web site lists 1) Quebec club that has a self paced online course, 2) RAC has an online course, 3) Fellow from the Kitchener-Waterloo club has assembled a basic Study Guide and may hold an online class if there is interest from those who purchase his study guide.
- RAC also holding a CW course.

ARES report
- Jeff dovyak not present but sent an email saying teh Manitoba Marathon is on for Oct 11, 2020 and ARES needs a lot of volunteers. Can apply from a link on WARC's homepage.

RAC report
- RAC holding a CW course

DX report
- David VE4DL, Dan VE4DRK and Dave VE4DVT spoke to this. essentially little outside of NA.

Break
-Skipped
50\50 draw
- Skipped

Program\Presentation
- David VE4DL gave a presentation on CW Groups That Help You Improve

Adjourn
- 9:20 pm

Contest Calendar

Extracted From

<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/>

October 2020

K1USN Slow Speed Test 0000Z-0100Z, Oct 12
 4 States QRP Group Second Sunday Sprint 0000Z-0200Z, Oct 12
 Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest 0100Z-0159Z, Oct 13
 RTTYOPS Weeksprint 1700Z-1900Z, Oct 13
 NAQCC CW Sprint 0030Z-0230Z, Oct 14
 Phone Fray 0230Z-0300Z, Oct 14
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 1300Z-1400Z, Oct 14
 VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest 1700Z-2000Z, Oct 14
 RSGB 80m Autumn Series, Data 1900Z-2030Z, Oct 14
 AGCW Semi-Automatic Key Evening 1900Z-2030Z, Oct 14
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 1900Z-2000Z, Oct 14
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 0300Z-0400Z, Oct 15
 RTTYOPS Weeksprint 1700Z-1900Z, Oct 15
 NCCC RTTY Sprint 0145Z-0215Z, Oct 16
 NCCC Sprint 0230Z-0300Z, Oct 16
 Araucaria World Wide VHF Contest 0000Z, Oct 17 to 1600Z, Oct 18
 JARTS WW RTTY Contest 0000Z, Oct 17 to 2400Z, Oct 18
 10-10 Int. Fall Contest, CW 0001Z, Oct 17 to 2359Z, Oct 18
 New York QSO Party 1400Z, Oct 17 to 0200Z, Oct 18
 Stew Perry Topband Challenge 1500Z, Oct 17 to 1500Z, Oct 18
 Worked All Germany Contest 1500Z, Oct 17 to 1459Z, Oct 18
 Feld Hell Sprint 2000Z-2359Z, Oct 17
 Argentina National 7 MHz Contest 2130Z-2230Z, Oct 17
 Asia-Pacific Fall Sprint, CW 0000Z-0200Z, Oct 18
 UBA ON Contest, 2m 0700Z-1000Z, Oct 18
 Classic Exchange, Phone 1400Z, Oct 18 to 0800Z, Oct 19
 and 1400Z, Oct 20 to 0800Z, Oct 21
 Illinois QSO Party 1700Z, Oct 18 to 0100Z, Oct 19
 RSGB RoLo CW 1900Z-2030Z, Oct 18
 Run for the Bacon QRP Contest 2300Z, Oct 18 to 0100Z, Oct 19
 K1USN Slow Speed Test 0000Z-0100Z, Oct 19
 ARRL School Club Roundup 1300Z, Oct 19 to 2359Z, Oct 23
 Telephone Pioneers QSO Party 1800Z-1900Z, Oct 19 (Digital Only)
 and 1900Z, Oct 19 to 0300Z, Oct 20 (All Modes)
 RSGB FT4 Contest Series 1900Z-2030Z, Oct 19
 Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest 0100Z-0159Z, Oct 20
 RTTYOPS Weeksprint 1700Z-1900Z, Oct 20
 Phone Fray 0230Z-0300Z, Oct 21
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 1300Z-1400Z, Oct 21
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 1900Z-2000Z, Oct 21
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 0300Z-0400Z, Oct 22
 RTTYOPS Weeksprint 1700Z-1900Z, Oct 22
 NCCC RTTY Sprint 0145Z-0215Z, Oct 23

NCCC Sprint 0230Z-0300Z, Oct 23
 CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Oct 24 to 2359Z, Oct 25
 Kentucky State Parks on the Air 1400Z-2200Z, Oct 24
 RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint 1600Z-1959Z, Oct 24
 K1USN Slow Speed Test 0000Z-0100Z, Oct 26
 QCX Challenge 1300Z-1400Z, Oct 26
 QCX Challenge 1900Z-2000Z, Oct 26
 Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest 0100Z-0159Z, Oct 27
 QCX Challenge 0300Z-0400Z, Oct 27
 RTTYOPS Weeksprint 1700Z-1900Z, Oct 27
 SKCC Sprint 0000Z-0200Z, Oct 28
 Phone Fray 0230Z-0300Z, Oct 28
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 1300Z-1400Z, Oct 28
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 1900Z-2000Z, Oct 28
 UKEICC 80m Contest 2000Z-2100Z, Oct 28
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 0300Z-0400Z, Oct 29
 RTTYOPS Weeksprint 1700Z-1900Z, Oct 29
 RSGB 80m Autumn Series, SSB 2000Z-2130Z, Oct 29
 NCCC RTTY Sprint 0145Z-0215Z, Oct 30
 NCCC Sprint 0230Z-0300Z, Oct 30
 Zombie Shuffle 1600-2400 local, Oct 30
 UK/EI DX Contest, SSB 1200Z, Oct 31 to 1200Z, Nov 1
 Russian WW MultiMode Contest 1200Z, Oct 31 to 1159Z, Nov 1
 RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint 1600Z-1959Z, Oct 31
Into November 2020...
 North American SSB Sprint Contest 0000Z-0400Z, Nov 1
 Silent Key Memorial Contest 0600Z-0859Z, Nov 1
 Classic Exchange, CW 1400Z, Nov 1 to 0800Z, Nov 2
 and 1400Z, Nov 3 to 0800Z, Nov 4
 High Speed Club CW Contest 1500Z-1800Z, Nov 1
 K1USN Slow Speed Test 0000Z-0100Z, Nov 2
 RSGB 80m Autumn Series, Data 2 000Z-2130Z, Nov 2
 Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest 0100Z-0159Z, Nov 3
 ARS Spartan Sprint 0200Z-0400Z, Nov 3
 RTTYOPS Weeksprint 1700Z-1900Z, Nov 3
 QRP Fox Hunt 0200Z-0330Z, Nov 4
 Phone Fray 0230Z-0300Z, Nov 4
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 1300Z-1400Z, Nov 4
 VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest 1700Z-2000Z, Nov 4
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 1900Z-2000Z, Nov 4
 UKEICC 80m Contest 2000Z-2100Z, Nov 4
 CWops Mini-CWT Test 0300Z-0400Z, Nov 5
 RTTYOPS Weeksprint 1700Z-1900Z, Nov 5
 NRAU 10m Activity Contest 1800Z-1900Z, Nov 5 (CW)
 and 1900Z-2000Z, Nov 5 (SSB)
 and 2000Z-2100Z, Nov 5 (FM)
 and 2100Z-2200Z, Nov 5 (Dig)
 SKCC Sprint Europe 2000Z-2200Z, Nov 5
 NCCC RTTY Sprint 0145Z-0215Z, Nov 6
 QRP Fox Hunt 0200Z-0330Z, Nov 6
 NCCC Sprint 0230Z-0300Z, Nov 6
 IPARC Contest, CW 0500Z-1200Z, Nov 7
 Ukrainian DX Contest 1200Z, Nov 7 to 1200Z, Nov 8
 SKCC Weekend Sprintathon 1200Z, Nov 7 to 2400Z, Nov 8
 RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint 1600Z-1959Z, Nov 7

Continued....

5
ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW 2100Z, Nov 7 to 0300Z, Nov 9
AWA Bruce Kelley 1929 QSO Party 2300Z, Nov 7 to 2300Z, Nov 8 and 2300Z, Nov 14 to 2300Z, Nov 15
IPARC Contest, SSB 0500Z-1200Z, Nov 8
EANET Sprint 0800Z-1200Z, Nov 8

Good Luck In The Contest

Confessions of a Casual Contester - 6 from the shack of DavidVE4DL

I am not now, nor ever have been, a Contester. I don't see myself becoming a Contester either, if one defines the term to include round-the-clock operations, intravenous fluids and diapers, and frequent relays of cold, one-hand meals. Not my thing, at all. BUT.....

At the end of May comes WPX CQ World Wide CW contest. One of the REAL contests I like to enter. Once again, I do use N1MM and the WinKeyer to send code at 26wpm, but I still have to copy what they're sending to enter it into the logging software. I was a little out of sorts, so I needed more time to copy the exchanges before throwing my call in the ring. Suffered multiple power failures during the first day, eventually traced to my power distribution block that runs everything in the shack. Still managed 26 contacts in under 3 hours total operation. Not what I wanted, but happy with it otherwise.

The Sunday evening after the CQWW I fired up fldigi for the first time in ages, first time with the Kenwood TS-590S. Easy as pie to set up the new rig and be on the air in only 15 minutes. I started my HF career in digital mode back in 2012. Not CW or SSB, but PSK31! I was mic-shy and slow with the key, so HF 'texting' seemed like a safe way to start. I really liked it too, making hundreds of contacts with at first the TS-520S by hand, and then the TS-430S with a TNC (much easier). Once I moved into phone and code contacts, I stopped the digital for a couple of years. Until a couple of weeks ago.

What a change! Very few signals compared to 2018. Lots of new types not seen before. Still, I made a few PSK31 contacts. The very first one was, strangely, with the same ham who was my last PSK31 contact in 2018. Still enjoyable, still a rag-chew mode that I like. Watching the waterfall between contacts, I noticed a signal that was strange to me. I put a vid on the Facebook page and got the answer that it was Olivia. Well, okay. Fldigi does a dozen kinds of Olivia, so up I go and answer the CQ. This is a fun mode. Capable of decoding ridiculously low signals well below the noise floor. In this mode, lots of ops use RSID, so the software can warn you there is a signal you can't hear or see, and tunes it in for you too. Made several contacts that evening. Then, nothing since. Nada. Zip. Like all the Olivia ops took vacation. Ah well. It's only one a couple dozen modes fldigi will handle.

Then comes a RTTY signal. That's fun too. Much faster than Olivia (about 6min per exchange), indeed at my

5

typing speed it's essentially live. So I knock off a few contacts that way too. And behold, there is a RTTY contest on the following weekend. I'm the 3rd most successful contester in Canada! (there WERE only 3.) Again, assorted software issues prevented me being a "serious" contester but didn't stop me having fun. N1MM is supposed to be RTTY-friendly, but I could not get the connection to work. None of the help advice comes from TS-590 ops, so their settings didn't work for me. I ran it all off fldigi and though clumsier and less 'helpful', it is certainly workable. I'll be in the next RTTY contest Fathers' Day weekend.

I'll step on my soapbox for a moment, and suggest that if you DO operate any of the digital modes, that you enable RSID or TxID (depending on what your software calls it.) This lets other hams find you, even if they aren't familiar with your mode. Even if your signal is below the noise floor, the software will find and act on the RSID tag being sent. I guarantee it will lead to more contacts than NOT using it will.

But it isn't REAL contesting. Nope. Not at all.

Editors note: This article should have been published last month as number 5 and the last month's article (listed as 4 in the September issue) published this month as number 6. Back on track for next month!

Amateur Radios, Antennas, and more ...

Winnipeg ICOM Dealer...

Micro-HighTech Communications Ltd.

2217 Henderson Hwy, East St. Paul, MB
(Just south of perimeter hwy)

Ph. (204)-783-1885 Fax (204) 779-7522
Contact George Hill, VE4GDH

E-Mail Steve at

Steve@microhightech.ca

WARC Membership Dues

Membership dues were due at the end of September !
\$20 for RAC members, \$30 for non-RAC members.

You can renew or join on-line at ...

<http://winnipegarc.org/join.html>

DMR NEWS...

Operation of the DMR repeater in Winnipeg will change effective 01 November 2020.

For those amateur radio operators who operate on VE4DMR, the colour code will change to 4. Presently the colour code is 8 and after the above date you will not be able to access the repeater.

Calvin VE4AJ (on behalf of the administrator)

Manitoba Repeater Society

The Manitoba Repeater Society operates and maintains a linked repeater system across southern Manitoba, including Winnipeg.

If you are a user of any of these repeaters, we urge you to support the group by becoming a member.

VE4MAN - Starbuck, VE4CDN - Morris,
VE4PLP - Portage, VE4MRS - Bruxelles,
VE4GIM - Gimli, VE4MIL - Milner Ridge
VE4EMB - Hadashville, VE4FAL - Falcon Lake,
VE4WPG - Winnipeg, VE4VJ - Winnipeg, VE4WRS
- Autopatch & IRLP link Winnipeg

Links to repeaters in Ontario, Brandon, Selkirk and soon to be the Dauphin & area.

info@mb-repeater-society.ca
<http://www.mb-repeater-society.ca/>
<http://www.facebook.com/ManitobaRepeaterSociety>

WARC's October Meeting Instructions

For WARC's October meeting will be our second on-line general meeting, and depending on restrictions due to Covid 19 social distancing we will hold our first in-person meeting to be in November.

Please download the FreeConferenceCall app to your computer, tablet or smartphone, as that provides the most trouble-free access to the meeting.

Signing in well in advance of 7:30 will give everyone time to sort out technical troubles at their end.

Instructions:

At the scheduled meeting time...

By telephone dial in to the conference at (720) 740-9634 (LD Charges may apply). When prompted, enter the access code 1448748 followed by pound or hash (#).

By computer/smart phone - join the video and screen sharing session, click the online meeting link

<https://join.freeconferencecall.com/djlatour>

Or enter Meeting ID "djlatour" in the app.

VHF Nets

**MRS Nets - 147.390 Mhz +
Sundays & Thursdays at 9:00 pm**

This net covers Winnipeg and the MRS linked repeater system, and includes various announcements on amateur radio activities and "Dick's Swap & Shop"

**The Morning Net 147.390 Mhz+
Weekdays at 9:00 am**

This net covers Winnipeg and hams of all ages are welcome to join in this net which is always a lot of fun!

**The Newbie Net 147.390 Mhz+
Saturdays at 10:00 am**

A net for new hams to participate in a Net and get on the air!

D-Star Nets on the VE4WDR System using

**UHF 444.575+ DV Port B and/or
VHF 145.490- DV Port C**

TransCanada D-Star Net - Fridays at 8:00 pm
On "Free Star" Reflector 5 (XRF005BO) **New**
Also on VE4DMR Timeslot 2 Talkgroup 302050

HamNation D-Star Net - Wednesday at 9:15pm
On "DPlus" Reflector 14 (REF014CL)

Ozark Mtn. D-Star Net - Sundays at 8:00 pm
On "DPlus" Reflector 1 (REF001CL)
More nets <http://www.dstarinfo.com/nets.aspx>

HF Nets

**MB Evening Phone Net - 3747 Khz
Daily at 7:00 PM Local Time (CT)**

**Prairie Traffic Net (CW) 3660 Khz
Daily at 0130 UTC**

**Aurora Net (Afternoon) 7055 Khz
Daily at 2330 UTC**
**Aurora # 2 Net (Evening) 7055 Khz
Daily at 0230 UTC**

**MB Wx Net 3743 Khz
Daily at 8:30 Local Time (CT)**

The Newscaster is the Official Publication of **Winnipeg Amateur Radio Club**
Please send your submissions/comments to the editor Mark VE4MAB, - ve4mab@outlook.com

Lighting-up the Bands...No Joke!

By K8AQM/VE9AQM (Reprinted with permission)

Amateur radio is full of mysteries and especially in the theory of antennas. Why do circles of wire radiate, why do random length wire antennas work and especially in this article, why do lightbulbs radiate? The absolute answer is I don't really know except that any wire conductor will radiate "some." This is proven by the use of some folks having an antenna most amateurs should think wouldn't work but through the use of a tuner they do work! The following article is our adventure using lightbulbs as antennas.

For the past year here at K8AQM we have been experimenting with a "light bulb" for an antenna. At the present time we have "light bulb antennas" for 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 meters. Admittedly, they are used primarily for FT8 and FT4 operation but...I have used them twice in Straight Key Century Club, Straight Key Sprint (SKS) events with amazing success!

The light bulb was used back in my early Novice days (1960s) as a means of tuning a transmitter before connecting it to a "real antenna," my homebrew transmitter had no meter. The light bulb was considered a "dummy load" antenna. Back in those early days my childhood friend (also a ham) lived only two blocks away and quite by chance he "heard" me tuning up! Wow, the lightbulb really was an antenna! As "Generals" we used the dummy load light bulb antennas to talk (AM) late at night on 10m doing our physics homework. One night as we were trying to figure a problem determining the potential energy of some homework problems, a voice broke in and told us we had forgotten an important step and our answer was wrong... DEAD SILENCE...who was this and how could he have heard us? Would you believe it was our physics teacher all the way across town?!? He heard us by chance as he was tuning and hoping for a late night 10m band opening.

Years passed and there was no need for a lightbulb dummy load as the rigs now had meters and tuning was made much easier. An article announcing a "light bulb QSO" party caught the eye of my friend Jeremy, KD8VSQ. I don't know how he does it but he always manages to talk me into the craziest ideas! We started to think about building an "efficient light bulb antenna" (an oxymoron?). With the help of KE8CEW who is a mechanical shop wizard, we designed a fairly efficient dummy load lightbulb antenna.

No reason to re-invent the wheel, we decided not to wind our own loading coils and just use hamstick-type or similar mobile antennas as our loading coils. We used some old quad fiberglass poles and later some PVC pipe for mounting the antennas. Here is what we did: we took the "stinger" out of the hamstick and connected a wire from one of the light bulb socket screws to the where the stinger had been secured in the coil. No connection was (at this time) made to the other lug of the lightbulb socket. Figure 1. Illustrates the connection.

Connecting the base of the hamstick was easy too, we just connected the base via a nut in the bottom of the hamstick. A wire attached around that bolt was connected to the center pin of the so-239. Figure 2 illustrates how this was done.

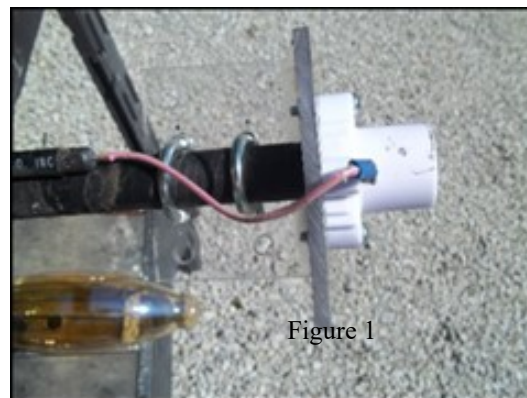


Figure 1

A bolt with a wing nut was added to the plexiglass mount which we used to attach the two "tuned elevated radials." A wire connected to the ground side from the mounted so-239 is connected to the wingnut.

The length of each of the radials at 7.050 MHz. is 33.19 ft. on 40m. It is best if the radials slope down from the base of the antenna (you can fine-tune the exact frequency a bit with sloping the radials or raising them) but on our 160m antenna they are nearly flat, parallel to the ground and it still works fine.

Since there was no hamstick available for 160m, we used two 80m hamsticks connected in series, stinger lug to base. We still needed a capacitor top hat to get the frequency lower.

Our 20m, 80m and 160m antennas required the use of a “top hat” loading system to get the exact frequency we wanted; we used that other lug on the light bulb socket to connect a hard-drawn aluminum wire (length determined by “guess-and-by gosh”). We then just trimmed the top hat to the exact frequency needed using an MFJ antenna analyzer.

So what is the “theory” as to why this antenna system works? I believe the hamsticks are similar to the “tuner” (loading coil) and the lightbulb is the “random wire” like any other random wire-tuner system. N6BV, who designed many commercial antennas once said, “anything can radiate...some.” I believe this to be true and my experiences with lightbulbs has proven this.

A note about our light bulbs...we use Satco s2431 bulbs. These bulbs have over 60 inches of filament (woven back-and-forth)! They are rated at 100 watts but we run them at 90 watts max. Figure 3 shows what the Satco s2431 bulbs look like.

2019 was the first year we tried the light bulb antennas in the Light Bulb QSO Party. Using a single light bulb antenna made for each band 160-15 meters we made 253 QSOs on FT8. Thinking further during our “shelter in place” time, the idea came, “Why not phase two bulbs for each band and achieve direction and gain, ie, “phased verticals!”



Figure 3



Figure 4

Cutting two quarter wave 75 ohm coax for each band 80-10 meters, tuned radials, a second hamstick and bulb, the arrays were fashioned. Figure 4 is a picture of our 10m array which we oriented broadside north and south. Due to the length and real estate required for a phased 160 array we opted to continue with just one bulb antenna for 160 meters. The antennas were mounted in or near the woods on the property and provided quite a light show ... especially at night! I am a little surprised there were no reports from neighbors about “blinking lights in the woods!”

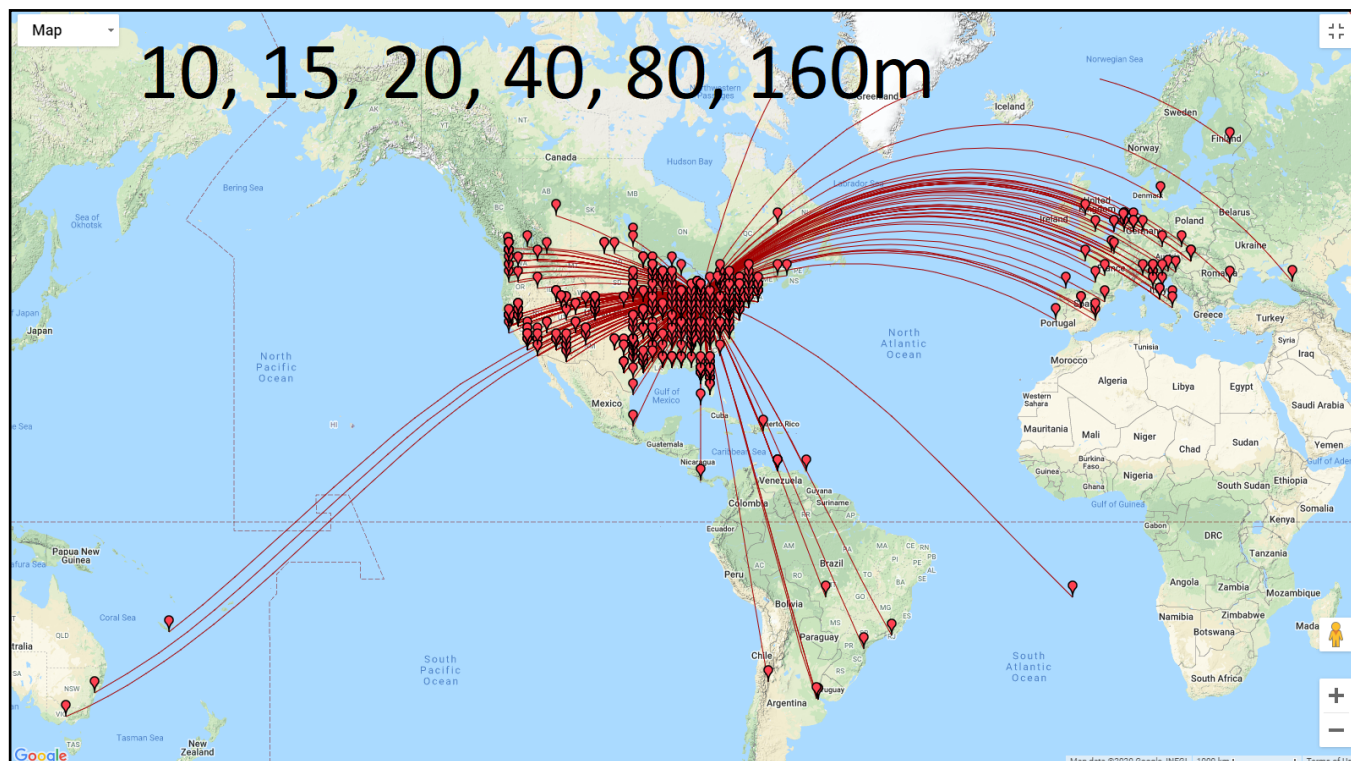


The night light show in the woods!

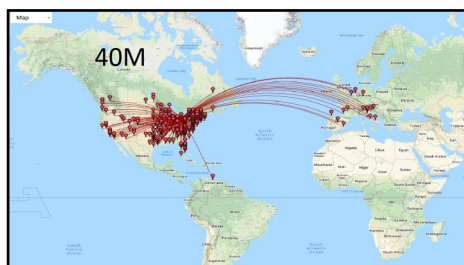
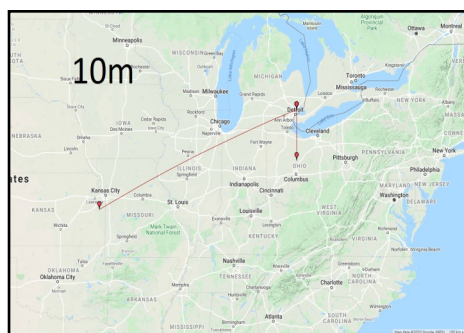


Due to a difference in SWRs the power in each bulb of an array was not the same.

Of course the big question is... did they work and what did we work. Oh yes they worked, to the tune of 665 QSOs in less than 24 hours! Check out the total distribution of our contacts and the band by band breakdowns.



We worked all continents. Our best DX was VK and all running with less than 100 watts per bulb!



Truly light bulbs will work as antennas...they will never replace a good dipole nor yagi. It was a “fun” projects and it was great to see it all work as predicted, better propagation would have helped on the higher bands.

Now the question is....can we build a “four square” for next year’s event! Naw...well, maybe!

Thanks to Jeremy KD8VSQ and Roger K2RLY, with out their help it wouldn’t have happened.