

Monthly Update

April 2018

April Club Meeting

When: Tuesday, Apr 17, 7:00pm
Where: White Cliffe Terrace Retirement Centre, Courtice



High Power Rockets – Dave Rajnauth VE300I will be our guest presenter this month. Dave is an IT professional specializing in networking and security. Over the years Dave has often been my “go to” guy when I have run into snags. Dave has many interests including Amateur Radio, rocketry, robotics and even has a pilot and glider license. These rockets that Dave will present on are not your Toys R Us model rockets but powerful units that soar high into the heavens. Check out Dave’s info at QRZ.com and come prepared to be amazed.

Hamfest Update

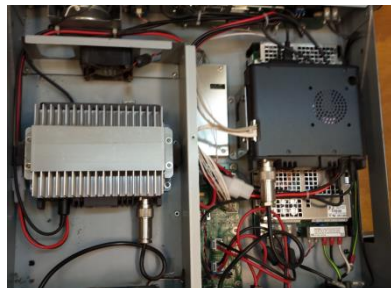
The 42nd Annual Durham Hamfest will take place on Saturday, April 28, 2018. **Steve VA3TPS** reported that there are only a few more tables left so things are looking good at two weeks out.



- Chair** – Alison VE3GRL
- Security** – Lex VE3LEX, Steve VE3SBQ, Bill VA3WTV, Vic VA3JAR, Al & Karen, Larry SWL
- Parking** – Joe VE3VGJ, Doug VA3DCE, Alex VA3AMP, Randy VE3JPU
- Vendor Tables** – Steve VA3TPS
- Vendor Sign In** – Larry VA3FHG
- Refreshments** – Jeffrey VA3RTV, Jackie VA3BTO, Colleen SWL
- Treasurer** – Glenn VA3GAR, Ralph VE3CRK
- Admissions** – Randy VE3JPU and Kent VE3KUT

Don’t forget to bring a reflective vest if you have one and make sure your handhelds are programmed for our frequencies.

VE3NAA Out of Service - Update

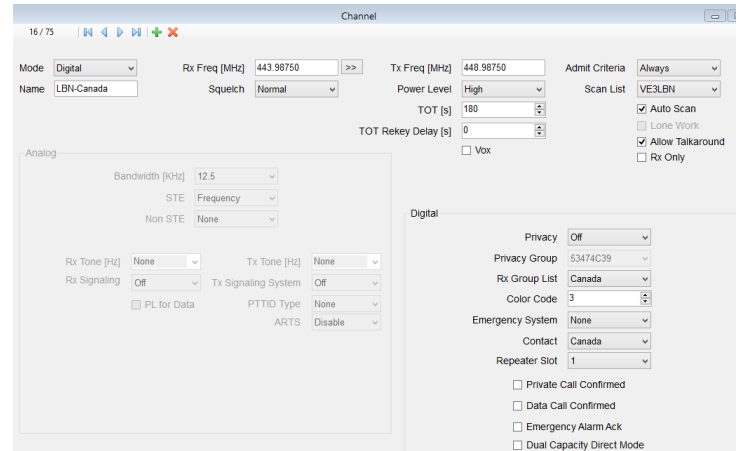


Well, the part arrived for the repeater, **Jeffrey VA3RTV** skillfully installed it, and the 440 repeater was put back into place at the repeater site. However, there was still a problem. If you were standing in the parking lot at Purple Woods the repeater worked fine. If you moved more than a few hundred metres away – nothing. So, the team bounced back into action and after several days of testing and further repairs had the repeater up and running. This time the issue boiled down to the existing patch cables that connect the radios to the cans and the cans to the duplexer. The existing patch cables were RG8, of questionable vintage with equally questionable connectors. New cables were installed using LMR-400 and now it is working like gangbusters although Jeffrey informs me that they are still going to do some more tweaking over the next few weeks as time permits. Some fellows at the Wednesday night coffee meet even suggested that it now works better than it ever has. TNX again to **Jeffrey VA3RTV**, **Lex VE3LEX**, **Bob VE3HIX** and **Jimmy VE3SOI** for the hours that they have put in up there.

Also, TNX goes out to **Clint VE3KDK** for removing the messages/announcements that kept coming up. Until they can configure these messages to be quieter when the repeater is in use they will remain off. The exception is the identifier which, for legal purposes, must remain but this will alleviate a lot of annoyance. Hopefully the repeater crew can give us more of an update at the meeting on Tuesday night.

DMR Notes

Now that we have Talk Groups, RX Group List and an overview of Channels we will take a more in depth look at the latter. Below is a shot of the channel that a lot of us have in our DMR radios to chat on the Canada wide Talk Group on our VE3LBN digital repeater.



We will start at the top left corner and make our way down and across. We will not discuss the greyed out Analog section as it won’t be needed for this example. Keep in mind that these are the settings for a Radioditty GD-77 handheld and other models may have the same fields but slightly different option choices.

The **Mode** box allows us to choose whether this channel will operate in Digital or Analog mode. Since we are using VE3LBN we choose Digital. The **Name** can be anything you want but I like naming conventions so I called it LBN-Canada. This will make creating Zones a lot easier too but more on that later. The **Rx Freq** and **Tx Freq** are simply where we put in the RX and TX frequencies for the VE3LBN repeater the same as you would do for an analog repeater. **Squelch** offers you two options of Tight and Normal. Tight is very restrictive so we use Normal. **Power Level** offers us High and Low but since our repeater is a distance away so we set it to High. Now the next option, **TOT [S]** is where we start to differ from a common analog radio. TOT[S] stands for Time Out Timer in Seconds and in this case we set it to 180 seconds. If you get long winded the radio will stop transmitting after 180 seconds. This is a feature that most commercial digital radios have so that if a radio gets keyed accidentally then it won’t hang the entire system up. Too bad more analog radios did not have this option. **TOT Rekey Delay [S]** is the amount of time, in seconds, that you have to wait until you can transmit again once you unkey. **Admit Criteria** is one of those settings that can cause arguments amongst the purists in Amateur Radio. The options are Always, Channel Free and Color Code. Always means that if you press the PTT then the radio is going to transmit regardless if anyone else is transmitting or not. Channel Free only allows you to transmit if no one else is transmitting. Color Code will only permit the radio to transmit if there is no signal, or if the signal present on the receive frequency has the same color code. For Amateur use I do not believe this last option is used. I configured my code plug to be Always but others would disagree with this and suggest it should only be Channel Free. My feeling is that we have operated many decades with radios that could key up over other people. However, being that Amateur Radio is a polite hobby very seldom have I heard someone doing this maliciously and so do not see why this is such an issue. The downside to setting it to Channel Free is that some radios have a longer timeout delay, not to be confused with the TOT settings, when the repeater stops transmitting and before your radio allows you to transmit. So, try as you may, you may never be able to jump into a conversation if the other operators radios have a quicker reset. I experienced this myself with a couple of the local blokes when I first set up my radio. **Scan List** – we actually have not created a Scan List yet and it is one of those chicken and egg things. You can either create a Scan List with one channel in it

before you start creating your Channels or you can go back into every Channel later and add the Scan List. The Scan List actually comprises of all the Channels that you are going to be using in a Zone but, again, that will be a topic for next month. To make it easy on myself I create a Scan List with just one Channel in it and then populate the rest into it later. So, in our case, I have created a Scan List called VE3LBN, to reflect the digital repeater that we are creating this Channel for. I can then use this Scan List name in all the Channels and then only have to add all the Channels to the VE3LBN Scan List when I am done. I know, it sounds like a dog chasing its tail. **Auto Scan** allows the radio to start scanning all the Channels in the Scan List when you choose this Channel. So, when you select this Channel, LBN-Canada, it will look at the Scan List that is assigned and start scanning them to see if there is any activity on those Channels as well. **Allow Talkaround** is the same as using the reverse on an analog repeater. So, instead of TXing to the repeater you are TXing on the output frequency so anyone close by should be able to hear you.

Well, I have run out of space for this month but we will finish off the last few options next month and show you a Scan List and Zone configuration.

Tuesday Night Rag Chew



Our Tuesday night informal rag chew on VE3OSH is becoming more active and quite a few guys have been joining in. Even **Steve VA3TPS** up in Fenelon Falls has been checking in using his 2m beam that he has pointed at us. The discussion starts at around 7pm when people start to show up on the repeater. Sometimes we slide

over to the VE3LBN digital repeater where we can also chat with guys like **Mike VA3MCX** up in Kapuskasing. Topics change by the minute and we make every effort to make sure that everyone gets to have their say in an orderly fashion. We had a real good conversation about antennas a few weeks ago and sometimes we chat until well after 2000hrs. Even if you just want to listen in we encourage you to at least break in and let us know that you are there.

Wednesday Night Face-to-Face

As well as the Tuesday night rag chew on the repeaters there is quite a crew that meet at the Tim Horton's at King and Wilson at about 8pm every Wednesday. It actually gets quite crazy as we discuss all things radio, update our digital radios with the latest code plugs, discuss hobby issues, and generally have a good time. If you are in the area on Wednesday night and have a few minutes to spare we would definitely enjoy your company.

Saturday Breakfast

If you are not tired of chatting or meeting up with club members during the week then you will be interested to know that there is a group that meets on Saturday morning for breakfast at Johnny's Original Eatery. The restaurant is located in the plaza on the northwest corner of King and Thornton. Members and families usually start to arrive at about 8:30am.



CANWARN 2018

CANWARN weather training sessions are coming up soon. If you are interested in being a severe weather spotter you will definitely want to attend one of these sessions. You do not need to be an Amateur to be involved as there are many ways to pass information along to Environment Canada.



- May 3 – **Whitby** – 1930hr – Whitby Centennial Building, 416 Centre St S, Whitby
- May 5 – **Toronto** – 0900hr – Environment and Climate Change Canada Headquarters, 4905 Dufferin St
- May 8 – **Uxbridge** – 1900hr – Uxbridge Arena and Recreation Centre – 291 Brock St. W

Geoff Coulson has a unique talent of being able to bring storm watching to life and it is very informative. Please see the entire listing in the email that you received this Update in. Some venues have specific methods to RSVP.



Saturday Coffee Break

One more social event to promote here. The Whitby ARC hosts a coffee break every Saturday afternoon. They meet at the Blue Sea Fish and Chips located at 836 Brock St. N in Whitby from 2pm to 4pm. All Amateurs are welcome.

Contests

For those who like to do some contesting you may want to bookmark

<http://www.contestcalendar.com>. This is an excellent site listing all the upcoming contests complete with contest parameters. There are too many to list here but some that caught my attention are the **ARRL Rookie Roundup** on April 15 (only four hours long), the **Ontario QSO Party** on April 21/22 and **Worked All Provinces of China** on April 21/22.



As a side note, yes, that is Tim Allen of Home Improvement and Last Man Standing fame in the pic above. He actually had two Amateur radio stations setup on the set, one at his TV show home and one at his TV show office in Last Man Standing using the call KA0XTT. In real life he has the call KK6OTD under his real name Tim Dick.

QRM from the Shack



Man time sure does fly by and luckily, for both you and me, with all the other information in this Update there is not much room for me to ramble on.

Just a reminder that we will have a table at Hamfest which members can place any radio related items that they would like to sell. Please mark your asking price on the item and also provide the table caretaker your lowest acceptable offer. We encourage you to drop by and help out at the table if you have items there.

At a future meeting **Vic VE3JAR** has agreed to do a presentation on the remote HF station that he uses. Vic lives in an apartment so you know that working HF is almost impossible. Well, Vic and several other Amateurs have a site where they have radios and antennas and it can all be operated from the comfort of his apartment. I am looking forward to seeing this in action. If you have any suggestions for an upcoming meeting I am all ears.

I also mentioned to Vic that I would like to possibly build a Hex Beam this year. I do not have a heavy duty tower to put a large beam on but a Hex Beam, with its small footprint of about 22 feet and good coverage and performance on 6 through 20 meters makes it very enticing. Vic has been filling my email with lots of links to diagrams, parts and Amateurs experiences. So, if anyone else is interested in making one maybe we could form a small group that would meet regularly to work on them.

This months' meeting is going to be jammed pack again so I had better warn **Bob VE3HIX** to have is Treasurer's report ready to rattle off as I did not give him enough time last month. ☺

Well, I hope everyone survives the deluge of rain that we are supposed to receive this weekend. The good thing is that wet ground usually gives you better radio signals so stay dry inside and do some DXing.