

Monthly Update

January 2021

January Club Meeting

When: Sunday, January 24, 7:00pm
Where: your place

Once again we will be utilizing Zoom videoconferencing to conduct our meeting this month. **Laird VE3LKS** will be hosting the meeting and you will receive an invite to the meeting in the next few days. **Grant VA3KJI** will be doing a presentation on 3D printers but if anyone else wants to share something please let me know. Meetings will only be interesting if **YOU** help make them that way!

December Meeting

Well, it was definitely not what we are used to in the North Shore ARC. No nicely decorated buffet tables. No casserole dishes, crock pots and platters filled with scrumptious entrees, salads and delicacies. No holiday music playing in the background. However, we did manage to get together on Zoom and we made the best of a bad situation. Let's hope that in 12 months we can have our annual Christmas Potluck again and we will do it up big time. **Gary VA3GDZ** did make the evening all worthwhile with a fantastic presentation on the Peanut, a VOIP mode that brings DMR, Fusion and DStar together in one handy app.

Tuesday Night Rag Chew

This is not a formal net but rather a lively roundtable. 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 2000hr on Tuesdays pop onto OSH and join the conversation. As well, since this is a rag chew, and not a net, feel free to step in and moderate the group should one of the regulars not be there. All you have to do is jot down who is on and rotate through the list so that everyone gets a chance to participate.



Artemis Information and Software

Artemis is most useful for hams using digital modes on an SDR transceiver. It is a data base of all known digital signals complete with a waterfall photo and audio sound sample of each one.

The article is "Hunting Signals With Artemis" on page 60 of the January 2021 QST. You can download the zipped application file from <https://aresvalley.com/Artemis> into the folder you would like and then unzip it there. Then do an update in the upper left corner. I spent half the afternoon today exploring in the database. *73 de Farney VE3BHQ*

Wednesday Night Virtual Parking Lot



As well as the Tuesday night rag chew on the repeater there is quite a crew that meets on a Zoom meeting that we have named our **Virtual Parking Lot** on Wednesday evenings from 7:00pm until 8:00pm...ish...9:15...you get the idea. It is safe to say that they usually go longer than 8:00pm. It is NOT a club meeting format but just a chance to see each other, chat, ask questions, show projects or other interesting tidbits with the group, and just have fun. What have you been missing? A tour of **Farny's VE3BTQ** family clock from circa 1750. **Grant's VE3KJI** new 3D printer. And the fun goes on and on. I think it is safe to say that those that have been attending have been having a fun and informative time. **Laird VE3LKS** will be **sending** out an email with an invite to the Zoom meeting on Wednesday mornings so if you're not on **Laird's** email list let him know so he can add you. **TAKE THAT COVID!**

Swap Shop

For Sale

Yaesu MLS-200-M10 Speaker - good condition. Moisture and dust protected, 10ft shielded cord. Handle up to 8watts .3.5mm 3conductor mini plug, 4 ohms (Note: speaker is wired to the tip (+) and ring (-) of 3 conductor mini plug and may not work with all radios) asking \$20 Steve VA3TPS va3tps@outlook.com

Comet CTC-50m Window Feed Thru - New never used \$50.00...Steve VA3TPS at va3tps@outlook.com

Paradan Antenna Disconnect Actuator and Radio on Sensor - Switches your antenna to ground when radio is powered off to prevent damage from lightening or static electricity. New never used. \$80.00 Steve VA3TPS at va3tps@outlook.com

Yaesu FT-891 and LDG Z-100Plus

Yaesu FT-891 HF/50 MHZ transceiver new in the box with all the accessories that came with the radio. Comes with the perfect companion antenna auto tuner the **LDG Z-100 Plus** also new in the box with the cable for the radio. \$ 1200.00 all new. Aldo at 905 429-7320 or via email at va3ag@sympatico.ca

Kenwood TM-2530A - 2m mobile, 5w/25w, stock microphone with up/down buttons, cigarette lighter plug. Asking \$125 or best reasonable offer. Not sure if I ever had a manual or mobile mount but will do some digging. I ran this as my igate for several years. Check out more info at <https://www.manualslib.com/manual/86424/Kenwood-Tm-2530a.html> Contact Laird VE3LKS at VE3LKS@yahoo.ca

Icom IC-728 HF transceiver - with **Icom AT-160** auto antenna tuner. Comes with stock mic and all cables needed for connecting. Just plug an HF antenna in and away you go. \$500. Contact Laird VE3LKS at VE3LKS@yahoo.ca

Package Deal - Yaesu FT-450D HF/50MHz transceiver - with built-in auto antenna tuner and stock mic with up/down buttons. **Signalink USB sound card** for working digital modes such as FT8. All cables needed to connect Signalink to the FT-450D and the CAT cable to connect FT-450D to radio. \$950. Contact Laird VE3LKS at VE3LKS@yahoo.Oca

Saturday Breakfast

AKA "**Coffee, Fritters and Critters**"

because we have coffee, eat a fritter and talk with the Amateur critters that show up! Our Saturday morning meet ups at **White Feather Country Store** has morphed a bit thanks to this COVID annoyance. They had to close their dining area but you can still get take out from the counter. 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 8:30am, and then join the gang in the south east corner of the parking lot. Make sure to bring a lawn chair. 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 if we are. **White Feather Country Store** is located at the corner of Simcoe St and Raglan Rd in Raglan.



A Case for Decorating Your House for Christmas with Randomly Blinking Lights

Yes, it's that time of year already again. Sadly, or fortunately depending on your viewpoint things are different this year. COVID with all of the conflict, contradiction and confusion it's dumped on us has made it easier to stay home and play radio. One of the nice things about this time of year is that the antennas can be left connected to the radios, which makes it easier to jump on the bands, chores and other duties permitting.

One of the 'other' duties that bubble up to the top of the stack is putting up the Christmas lights. It's nice to be able to do this before the ice and snow hit. Being more or less at home when the weather is pleasant really does make it easier to be enthused about the job.

The Christmas lights are up and I was feeling pretty happy with the result.



Then my wife mentioned 'how nice it would be to have lights up at the back of the house'.

Now, my first thought was one of disappointment, because I had promised myself that I would do my darnedest to get on the air with Morse code.

As with so many other things (COVID) and other duties as required collided with my best laid plans.

My second thought was how nice it would be to have a Christmas light dipole, even a cloud warmer in the back light with blinking or pulsing lights. I'm quite sure that no one would look up from their cell phones to ponder what was happening as they meandered down the green belt, but you never know. I told my wife of my 'cool' idea. She was not all that impressed in the least.

My third thought was annoyance that I had donated my incandescent Christmas lights to Value Village.

To my surprise there was an article in the TCA about light bulb antennas. I even showed my wife, who was still not impressed.

Having some time, my plan was to see just what you could do with a 100W light bulb. After all, it would mean some quality time in my workshop with the radios nearby.

Back to the light bulb. The first thing I did was set up a 100W light bulb and check the resistance (see picture). The calculated value of 144 ohms seemed like a good idea, but with widely varying manufacturing techniques and standards, particularly from off-shore suppliers a check seemed like a good idea. The measurement on a couple of bulbs shows surprisingly close values. Who would have guessed?

With the basics out of the way it was time to break out the MFJ 259B and record how things looked for the bands. To be frank the numbers looked pretty bad. The lower the frequency the better the SWR which on the 160M band got down to 4.5 – 4.6.... Certainly not usable...

Based on this I decided to set up a light bulb dipole and rerun the checks. While you might not think so, the results were worse.

What this shows me is that while I may have any older Christmas lights a string or two of work lights or other lights could be promising.



Who knows what the protective metal cages might do as capacity hats. Probably not a lot but you won't know until you try eh?

Who knows what benefits one might get from using 25W, 40W or 100W bulbs.

And as is shown in the TCA article, using a Hamstick as a loading coil could only help.

So in keeping with the best traditions of Amateur Radio I decided to hit the dollar stores and see what they have in terms of incandescent light string... After all, it's cold and there's snow in the air. Who doesn't work on antennas in weather like this?

I spent 12 dollars of 4 strings of outdoor mini-lights.

I admit to being worried about how the strings are connected internally, but for QRP power levels they should be OK.

My center connector is straight out of the junk box.



Perhaps my Scottish heritage is showing a bit too much with wanting to save the light strings if at all possible. Connecting the strings is pretty easy when you can use the plugs.



One of the benefits of using this center connector is you can use the plug at each end of the string to make sure that the lights still work.

And the added benefit is that using the black antenna rope and green light is they are pretty much invisible. This is what it looks like against a brighter background.



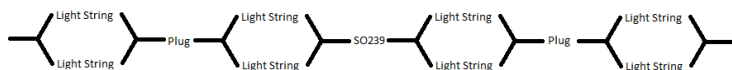
The test results suggests that the light bulbs do add some length to the legs of the dipole. It also suggests we'd be pretty close for 20M.

The 2 strings of lights total 13.0 feet (if you believe the packaging).

For 14.35 MHz calculations suggest a length of 16.306 feet.

For 18.068 MHz calculations suggest a length of 12.951 feet.

The lights are connected like this:



NOTE: don't try to stretch the strings too tight or you'll end up having to repair the socket connections. I didn't connect the common side to anything.. Hot side only is shown.

This was fun, but because this is QRP at best, I'm thinking I'll wait and see how many 25 foot strings of the 4 or 7 watts bulbs are left after Christmas in the ½ price sales.
de Ken VE3RMK

QRM from the Shack

Welcome to January and yet another version of a lockdown! Maybe this one will be a winner.

A big tip of the hat this month to two of our members. Tnx goes out to **Ken VE3RMK** for his article on using Christmas lights to create a dipole for HF. Not sure if Ken actually fired it up and made any contacts but I can only imagine the neighbor behind him sitting in the family room, looking outside after imbibing in a few egg noggs or other Christmas cheer, and seeing the lights blinking to Morse code. If he does it again I think he needs to give us his sched so we can try to make a contact with him. I hope his QSL card has Christmas lights on it! As well, **Steve VA3TPS** has added a feature to the bulletin this month so we can advertise items that we have for sale. It sure saves a lot of \$\$\$ when you need something and you can buy local. It is nothing to have to pay upwards of \$100 to have a radio shipped. Oh, and no, I am not getting out of Amateur Radio. I am simply culling the herd as I have my eye on another radio that I can't justify buying unless I free up funds.

If you are not dropping by the Virtual Parking Lot meet ups on Wednesday evening then you are missing out of some great conversation, show n tells, opportunity to ask questions, and just having fun. Just about anything goes and everyone is welcome to join in. If you are a member then you are getting the invite on Wednesday morning. If you are not a member and are not on our North Shore Friends email list then send me an email and ask to be added.

At our meeting this month we will be voting in our new Membership Secretary. **Thomas VE3PDK** has stepped forward and offered his services but we still need to make it official. Tnx, **Thomas**, for being willing to serve. We are still looking for a meeting coordinator. If no one steps forward we will simply stop having our monthly meetings until someone does.

After asking repeatedly for people to report what they are doing with Amateur Radio during this opportune time (at least COVID has one upside) I guess it is safe to assume that many are not doing anything. Time to get off your duff and change that! Some have been quite busy and have even been giving us updates on our Virtual Parking Lot. **Grant VA3KJI** got a 3D printer for Christmas and made a nice case for his NanoVNA amongst other things. **Gary VA3GDZ** has been talking up a storm on local repeaters as well as on VOIP modes. **Fanny VE3BHQ** gave us a virtual tour of his antenna farm recently and also showed us pics of a clock that has been in his family since the 1700's. **Warren VA3WEB** has been lighting up POTA and has activated 10 different parks. This has earned him the distinction of being a bronze level POTA activator. **Joe VE3VGJ** has been hard at work imagineering antennas, the latest being a Bowmanville Creek Coil, and testing out new modes. **Stan VE3ILU** picked up one of those inexpensive switching power supplies from Amazon and has been doing some testing and designing a circuit to prevent spikes. So, what is stopping the rest of the group? Let's start seeing what you are doing on our Wednesday night meet ups!

You may have noticed that VE3OSH is working but not sounding like it usually does. We are having an issue with the external computer that controls the repeater. When that happens the repeater reverts back to its own internal controller and keeps working merrily away. So, the identifier functions a bit differently and you will not be able to get in on AllStar but **Lex VE3LEX** and **Clint VA3KDK** are working diligently to get it rectified. Work is also progressing with the C4FM Fusion repeater. VE3NAA is now dedicated for digital communication only so if you have a Yaesu Fusion radio then give it a go. There is a minor issue if you are trying to get to it via the internet but **Lex VE3LEX**, **Aldo VA3AG**, **Cam VE3IGX** and **John VE3KZT** are working at getting that resolved.

Well, it is getting late on Friday morning and I need to get this out so that you can put the monthly meeting, this Sunday evening at 7:00pm, in your calendar. For a teaser for what you can expect in next month's Update you will be treated to some pics, and maybe some words of wisdom, on **Joe VE3VGJ's** Bowmanville Creek Coils antenna.

73 de Laird VE3LKS

