



Monthly Update

April 2021

April Club Meeting

When: Sunday, April 25, 7:00pm
Where: your place

This month's club meeting will feature **Lou NO2C** and **Salli K2RYD** of Islip Terrace, NY on Long Island. **Lou** and **Salli** are members of the Great South Bay ARC who were instrumental in organizing the recent Last Man Standing special event. You will not want to miss hearing about all the goes on behind the scenes to make a special event run smoothly and to hear about other special events that they help out with. Maybe it will even spark something with us to do our Camp X activations more frequently or maybe even create new ones such as activating the Ontario Regiment Tank Museum. Hmmm.

March Meeting



On our March meeting **Daniel Allen** gave a presentation about the railway history of Oshawa. We had a report from our Repeater committee on our VE3NAA repeater and the new Yaesu DR-X2 Repeater has arrived and our Repeater Team is working on getting it installed and working with Wires-X. Our thanks go to all our members of the Repeater Committee and executive for all their hard work keeping our repeater system up and running.

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 Tuesday's pop onto OSH and join the conversation. As well, since this is a rag chew, and not a net. **Laird VE3LKS** will not be running the weekly Rag Chew net and we are looking for volunteers to step up and help This is not a hard task and is good practice in case you are ever required to run a control situation in an emergency, so whoever is there just needs to write down call signs and rotate through the list twice. You can email **Laird VE3LKS** the list afterwards and I will put the names in the log that we keep. So, make sure you have a pad of paper and a pen or pencil and be prepared to have some fun.



Latest Update is that in recent weeks, **Grant VA3KJI**, **Aldo VA3AG** and myself **Steve VA3TPS** have taken turns at Net Control. I have been selected to try and keep a list of volunteers and dates who are willing to take a turn at Net Control. So check your calendars for Tuesday nights and if your interested send me an email n and I will pencil you in. If we have enough volunteers, you only have to do it once every 6-8 weeks or so and no one person gets stuck doing it all the time...so come on everyone let's help out our club and the members! My email is va3tps@outlook.com

Be a Good Operator

I know a lot of you are good operators but sometimes a refresher for those who have been an Amateur for a while and some advice for new Amateurs doesn't hurt. One good practice to take into consideration when working a station in a pile up is your tuning. You do not need to tune up right on the frequency that the calling station is using. Move up or down 5kc and tune up there. It will make no difference and you will not annoy the calling station or those trying to make contact.

Website – ve3osh.com

Job Well Done!



I think most of you are aware that from March 24 to the 30th of this year an on-air special event was operating celebrating the TV Show Last Man Standing which, throughout its 9 years, would show Amateur Radio. For this special event there

were stations in all of the American call sign areas and two in Canada, one in BC and one here in Ontario. Unfortunately, the Ontario station couldn't get on the air and on all the DX clusters everyone was complaining about no VE3! Well along came our very own **Laird VE3LKS** who contacted one of the organizers by email and offered his services. I am not exactly sure how the conversation went but I believe it was something along the lines of "quit talking to me and get on the air".

Laird jumped on the air as KA6LMS/VE3 and gave out hundreds on QSOs to everyone, everywhere (see his QRM article in this issue). **Laird VE3LKS** stood up and jumped right in and did us all proud, showing everyone an important part of Amateur Radio - "Ham's helping Ham's".



Great job and thank you **Laird!**

73 de **Steve VA3TPS**

Wednesday Night Virtual Parking Lot

Our Wednesday night face to face is now a Virtual Parking Lot meeting over zoom so make sure **Laird VE3LKS** has your email and he will be sending out the zoom invites every Wednesday morning or afternoon. Before COVID hit there was quite a crew that used to meet at the Tim Horton's at King and Wilson at about 7:30pm every Wednesday. However, that pesky COVID thing has messed that up with not being able to get us all inside so we have adapted. This is what Amateurs do – we adapt. So, we moved our weekly meet-ups outdoors to a lonely parking lot, set up our lawn chairs, and safely distanced at 144MHz (2m) apart and enjoyed some great conversation and show n tells. Then it got cold and dark too early so we adapted, once again, and took to a weekly zoom meeting. **TAKE THAT COVID!** It has actually been quite a success as more people can show up, due to distance or schedules, and yet we can still do show n tells by simply sharing our screens. It is not uncommon to have 20 to 25 participants but we can easily handle more. So, quit complaining about being bored and hop on the Virtual Parking Lot.



Saturday Breakfast

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, just south of our repeater site. Email – info@ve3osh.com



Tuning a Random Length Wire Antenna

In 1976 when I achieved my "Proficiency in Radio Certificate, Amateur" and the call sign **VE3IAC**, I needed an antenna. The simplest and least expensive that would meet my immediate needs was a wire in the attic. I installed and used this antenna for all of my HF work on 80 through 10 meters before abandoning Amateur radio in the late '80s. All of the equipment is long gone except for a Morse key and that thin piece of red wire leading from my basement work shop near the back of the house to the attic where it terminates close to the front of the house.

I never really intended to return to Amateur radio and didn't renew my license. It was this wire and my 2000 Miata that brought me back. A sports roadster is probably as far as you can get from Amateur radio although there are at least six licensed hams in the Trillium Miata/MX-5 Club. Maybe sports car people like radios or radio people like sports cars. I don't know but I digress.

CB radios and their use to communicate while touring with the Trillium Miata/MX-5 Club was the impetus behind my obtaining a new Amateur license. Ontario's distracted driving regulations allowed a licensed radio operator to hold a CB radio's microphone. At the time I had a Cobra 75 WX ST CB radio with everything in the over-size microphone. My partner Carol didn't want to use the radio so I obtained a new license (**VA3KPW**) so I could operate while driving. (CB radio in the early '70s led me to Amateur Radio in the first place.)

It was consideration of the distracted driving regulations that inspired Trillium (the car club) to strike a committee to look into hands free microphones. As an

Amateur I was asked to be part of the committee that after its deliberations recommended the use of the Cobra CA BTCB4 self-contained Bluetooth wireless hands-free headset microphone or the Cobra CA MS4 self-contained wired hands-free microphone. While discussing microphone options and radio installation I found out about the SARK 100



Antenna Analyzer. I was intrigued by this device and bought one to "assist fellow club-members install and set up radios and antennae on their "Miatas" at least that's what I told myself. I was already on the pathway leading to Amateur radio activity, but at that time I really wasn't aware of the inevitable.

The next step was joining the North Shore Amateur Radio Club after installing iaxRpt software on my Windows computer and participating in the Covid-19 QSOs hosted by **Laird Solomon VE3LKS** while he streamed his part on YouTube. None of this would have happened had I not spent time with fellow Trillium Club member, **Larry Whitney** who recently obtained his Amateur Certificate and license **VE3LWJ**. By now I had my license, membership in an amateur radio club, an antenna suitable for HF work, a Morse key and an antenna analyzer. I still had no radio equipment but that was about to change.

It was when **Larry** decided to buy a "new" radio that I was offered the opportunity to buy his Kenwood TS-440S HF transceiver if it would get me back to Amateur radio. I decided to proceed and since late December have been gradually becoming active. While waiting to pick up the radio, I installed a braided copper wire DC and RF ground system.

When I picked up the radio, I discovered that my "new" transceiver had the optional Automatic Tuner installed. This was something I was vaguely aware of; a new exotic feature offered in the latest radios just as I was bowing out in the late '80s. Now I had a Morse key, a radio with an antenna tuner, an antenna, ground,

and an antenna analyzer. What I didn't have was power for the radio or for the analyzer.

Originally, I anticipated buying a used Kenwood DC power supply. Switching power supplies in my mind were "noisy".

Perhaps they were thirty years ago but I discovered that new ones were lightweight, quiet, reliable, and cost effective. In fact, they were far less expensive than an older type used power supply that would require me to float a major loan just to pay for the shipping. I solved the problem by buying a TekPower TP350 switching power supply with a fixed output of 13.8 Vdc at 23 Amps. It features an automotive accessory type socket rated at 10 Amps, no meters but it has a thermostatically controlled fan so the power supply is not only RF quiet it is quiet in the audio spectrum as well.



When the power supply arrived, I plugged in the antenna analyzer and discovered that my end fed random length wire was somewhat beyond the range of the Kenwood's automatic tuner. I suspected as much and had decided to buy a MFJ-

16010 Random Wire Antenna Tuner. This L-network device is capable of handling the power output of the Kenwood and was much cheaper than building one. I had considered that option because I had designed and built one with a roller inductor and large variable capacitor adjusted by a Vernier dial back in the mid-70s.



It was almost as big as my new Kenwood and I discovered that just an appropriate variable capacitor cost a lot more than the MFJ tuner. That afternoon the power supply arrived I called RadioWorld and arranged to pick up the tuner and an 18 inch length of coax with Covid-19 appropriate curb-side delivery the same day.

So finally, we're going to discuss antenna tuning after more than a page of getting to the point. The instructions that came with the MFJ 16010 tuner direct that for each position on the Inductance switch, turn the capacitance control for maximum noise. This device has a toroid coil with twelve taps (A through L) rather than the roller inductor used on my home-brew L-network tuner. The capacitor knob is connected directly to the capacitor's shaft making fine tuning somewhat more difficult than the Vernier control that I was familiar with back in the day.

Noise was high everywhere and propagation poor. I found it difficult to attain a setting that put the antenna system i.e., the long wire and L-network, within the operating parameters of the transceiver's automatic tuner. Part of the problem was that I set the RF gain too low. This resulted in an excessively high S meter reading. The noise amplitude seemed consistently high. Maybe it's my old ears. In many cases I tried tuning with the automatic tuner which just turned and turned without resolving the mismatch.

Several times the automatic tuner was able to bring the SWR down to 1:1 but if I disconnected the coax from the transceiver and connected it to the analyzer to make a measurement, I might have an impedance of about 50 ohms but the SWR

reading was >10:1. This happened so often I expected my antenna analyzer was not working. It was after checking the analyzer on a dummy load that I realized that it was working. I finally resolved the problem by connecting the Antenna Analyzer to one end of the 18" cable and the other to the L-network tuner. I selected the centre frequency of the operating spectrum on the antenna analyzer for each band and starting with A, rotated the capacitor very slowly for the lowest SWR or lowest impedance reading if the SWR was >10:1 for each Inductance position until achieving a reasonable SWR reading. I then wrote the band, frequency, and switch position letters and rotary control numbers down to make a pre-set table.

The results? I can't tune on the 80-meter band; the wire just isn't within the MFJ's capability to bring it within the operating range of the automatic tuner. I didn't even try the 160-meter band which I couldn't use with my home-brew L-network. However, on all other bands it only takes seconds to achieve an SWR of 1:1 using



my pre-sets to select the correct Inductance and capacitance settings on the MFJ 16010 tuner. Operating the transceiver's automatic tuner takes care of the rest resolving to

an SWR of 1:1 So far, I've made few contacts and am pleased with the set up. It took almost a month to get it properly organized. This minimalist Ham Shack resurrects the wire in the attic that was neglected for so long. It feels useful again and happily resonates!

73 de **Paul VA3KPW**

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

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

Kenwood TM-2530A 2m mobile, 5w/25w, 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 <mailto: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.ca

Sangean ATS-803A Short Wave receiver. FM - 87.2-108MHz. AM - 150 - 29999KHz (LW 150 - 281KHz, MW 520-1620KHz, SW 11-120m). Requires 6 - D and two 2 - AA

batteries. Can also run with an external power adapter that you can source online. Have two of these radios. \$75.00 each. Contact Laird VE3LKS at VE3LKS@yahoo.ca



Realistic TRC-419 40 channel AM CB. \$30.00. Contact Laird VE3LKS at VE3LKS@yahoo.ca

Editor's Note

I want to thank **Paul VA3KPW** for his recent article. I would also like to encourage anyone with stories or amateur radio related information to send it to me so we can share with everyone. If you're doing a parks on the air (POTA) or special event or operating from a unique location, take a couple of pictures and send it to me. If you have some new equipment and radios or just a picture or two of your shack send them along.

Also don't forget the Swap Shop, if you're looking for something to pick up or have something to sale or give away, send me the information and I will put it in the bulletin. My email is va3tps@outlook.com.

73 de **Steve VA3TPS**

New POTA Activator

It looks like we have a new POTA activator. **John VE3KZT** has been lighting up a few parks as of late and will soon be giving **Warren VA3WEB** a run for his money or at least braggin' rights in the North Shore. As most know, **John** was supposed to have a hip replacement recently but the last wave of COVID put a kibosh on those plans with elective surgeries being cancelled. So, **John** is putting the time to good use by getting out, enjoying the spring weather and activating some parks. That's the spirit **John!**



QRM from the Shack

My favorite part of my QRM from the Shack article is when I can welcome new members to the North Shore ARC. This month I am pleased to announce that **Godofredo**, aka **GJ, VE3GEJ** has joined our ranks. **GJ** studied with the Barrie club and got his license but since he lives in the Ajax area decided to look for a club that was more local to him. We are glad that he found us and look forward to meeting in person whenever we are able. **Thomas VE3PDK** and I had the pleasure of chatting with **GJ** on the VE3OSH repeater shortly after he became a member. As well, even though not technically a "new" member, we are pleased to announce that we have a new Amateur. **Carl VE3TUV** wrote his exam on April 3 and passed with flying colours. Many of you have seen **Carl** at our BBQs, corn roasts, and weekly trips to White Feather but now we will be able to chat with **Carl** on the repeaters and HF as well. Congrats, **Carl**, and looking forward to hearing you on the radio.

A tip of the microphone to **Aldo VA3AG** who has been quite busy administering exams over the last little while. It sure is nice having someone local to fill the needs of those looking to write the exam.

Really nice to see members starting to submit articles to **Steve VA3TPS** for the newsletter. **Paul VA3KPW** did an excellent job on his article this month about tuning a random length wire. I found it both educational and entertaining. Just think, you too could be famous, like **Paul**, by simply submitting a nice article with some pics. Today, the North Shore ARC Update. Tomorrow, QST and maybe a Pulitzer but you have to start somewhere.

Now that the warmer weather is upon us, with exception to the snow that we had this week, I have started to work on my 49:1 balun. I had already glued the three toroids together but I have now completed winding the wire around the toroid and have mounted quite a bit of the hardware to the plastic electrical box that I am using to house it all. I also did a cursory check of my 40m homebrew vertical and so far the chipmunks and squirrels have not chewed any more of the radial wires into pieces. All is good. Lots of birds in the backyard this spring too. So far I have seen Blue Jays, Cardinals, Goldfinches, Robins, Sparrows and Nuthatches. I am going to try and woo some Orioles in and one of our members lent me an Oriole feeder but I am waiting for the short cold spell to pass in case it freezes and blows it up.

Reflecting back on the last year of COVID, and all the various times of restrictions, there have been some negatives but also, surprisingly, some great positives. On the negative side of the ledger I would have to include a lot of my favorite North Shore events including our always amazing Christmas Potluck, beating mosquitoes off while enjoying burgers and fixings at our Summer Kickoff BBQ and using the whiskey bottle timer to make sure the corn is cooked properly at our Sermon On The Mount Corn Roast. Yes, they are all food related but also very heavy on mingling face-to-face with good friends and I have really missed those opportunities. On the upside COVID has sparked former dormant Amateurs to dust off their rigs and get back on the air and inspired others to crack open a study guide and get their ticket. Thanks to the efforts of our members, who I like to call North Shore Ambassadors, we have been fortunate to have some of these new and renewed Amateurs join our ranks. We have run up against obstacles but, as typical Amateurs, have found ways to work around them. One prime example is Field Day where most of us operated from our home QTH while others operated from their cottage. We set up a zoom meeting so that all the operators could chat with each other and club members could pop in to see how things were going. This actually got some working Field Day who had never participated before. Looks like we will probably be using this method again this year so we should have no problems. Our Virtual Parking Lot zoom meetings have also been a lot of fun with many topics discussed and shared. We have talked about anything like hot peppers, starting plants, model aircraft, abandoned rail lines in lakes, 3D printers, machining techniques and even radio. We even get visitors from exotic places like Kapuskasing, Calgary and even Hawaii joining us. I bet we have had a 100F temperature difference between some of our stations occasionally. If you can think of any other fun ideas that you would like to try don't hesitate to reach out and run it by a few others. Who knows, it could be the next great social event on our calendar!

With regards to the Last Man Standing event I have been asked to give a few of the KA6LMS/VE3 stats from the station that I ran. First off, I can't express how much fun working this event was. You all know I am a huge Last Man Standing and Tim Allen fan so being given the opportunity to participate was thrilling. As **Steve**

Website – ve3osh.com

alluded to in his article I started operating as the /VE3 station about half way through the event. I had worked some of the stations earlier and was planning to try to knock as many more off the list as I could when I got home from White Feather Farm. Quite a few of the message boards were enquiring if anyone had heard the VE3 station but no one had. I checked the LMS website and saw that there was only one operator for VE3 so, being my normal crazy self, I sent **Lou NO2C** an email with a short radio biography asking if he would be interested in having a second VE3 operator. I sent the email at 12:04 on Mar 27 and four minutes later I had a reply stating that they would be happy to have me operate along with the requirements and info for doing so. I spent some time familiarizing myself with what I had to do as an operator, set up my logging software, ate a bit of lunch, said goodbye to my wife and son for the



Just a wee bit of a pileup on FT8

rest of the weekend, and made my first contact at 17:07 UTC. The rest of the weekend was a blur and even Monday and Tuesday were fun operating when I was not working. Overall, I logged 1,551 QSOs – 8 provinces - 48 states - 13 countries. 1,251 of the QSOs were SSB and 300 were FT8. My last contact came at 23:31 UTC on Tuesday, Mar 30 when I made a 2m contact with none other than our own **Scott VE3RPN** as I was taking check-ins on our weekly North Shore ARC Rag Chew. Other notable North Shore contacts were **Joe VE3VJG**, **Steve VA3TPS**, **Grant VA3KJL**, **Robert VE3IRB**, **John VE3KZT**, **Ken VE3RMK**, **Gary VA3GDZ** and **Warren VA3WEB** who I worked on both SSB and FT8. As well, there were some local Amateurs **Glen VE3LIZ** and **Bill VE3CRU** that cracked the pileups and **Michel VA6HEM** that made a contact from Alberta via our AllStar link on QSH. I operated with the Yaesu FT-450D transceiver and Heil ProSet 6 headset, both which I had obtained from **Vic VE3JAR**, so I think a bit of his infamous DX skills leaked out of the radio and into my veins. I primarily used the G5RV but occasionally switched to the 40m homebrew vertical and ran at 100w. Overall, stations chasing /VE3 were very respectful and polite in the pileups. There were only a few times when I had to ask whoever was tuning up to move off 5kc and then come back. There were also a few who kept thinking that their call was the one I was after even if not one single letter or number in their call was in the call that I was asking about. Oddly enough, I have a built-in filter in my brain that immediately ignores rude behaviour like that and those stations never seem to get logged before the bands change and I can't hear them anymore. ☺ As an operator I have to give huge kudos to those who organized it. This was no small feat but it went off seemingly without a hitch. Would I do it again? In a heartbeat! Until the next event, Baxter out.



Definitely a face made for radio!

Well, I am just wrapping this edition up so I can send it out tomorrow and guess what? YES! We have another new member of the North Shore ARC. **Jamie** just passed his exam, with a 95% to boot, and is waiting for his call sign. I will hold off with more details until next month when I actually will have more details. Congrats on getting your ticket **Jamie!**

Hope to see you all on Sunday evening on our monthly meeting!



73 de Laird VE3LKS

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