

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club
 PO Box 91215, Effort Square PO
 Hamilton, ON L8N 4G4
 Est. 1932 Inc. 1956
<http://www.hwcn.org/link/harc/>

In This Issue

March Speaker----- 1
 ARES & CANWARN
 Reminders----- 1
 HAM Call Web Site---- 2
 Minutes for the GM of
 February 15th 2006---- 2
 H.A.R.C. Executive----- 3
 N.V.I.S. Antennas ----- 3
 HARC Chairs----- 4
 Remembering ----- 6
 Important Points----- 7
 Pictorial----- 7
 Recent News----- 8

March Speaker

John Hudak, VE3CXB sends along this information about our speaker for Wednesday, March 15th.

I have our speaker lined up for the March meeting. It will be **Steve**

The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter 73 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2005

Canney, VA3SC. His topic will be "Now Hear This" - a wide ranging talk about short wave listening, reception reports, and setting up HF beacons. Steve has got so many areas of expertise he felt this mix of topics would be good for interest's sake.

Steve is a life member of the Ontario DX Association and he is also the current QSL manager for CFRB. For those that are not aware of this, CFRB also has an international outlet on shortwave, CFRX at 6.070 MHz., thus the need for a QSL manager. Steve also has a couple of beacons set up which he'll talk about. So I think his talk will be a good mix of ham related topics and SW listening topics.

Everyone is welcome. If you have a friend who is a short wave listener, encourage them to come along. The meeting will be at the regular time and location (details at the bottom of this page.)

A.R.E.S. and CANWARN Reminders

Paul Selvey VE3XPS sends along the following reminders about meetings scheduled for ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service), and CANWARN, (a network of civilian observers trained to report severe weather).

ARES schedule is as follows for the next few meetings;

All of the meetings are held at:
 Dofasco Main Office Conference

Rooms, 1330 Burlington St E.
 Hamilton, Corner of Ottawa St and Burlington St E.

Date / Time / Topic

28 Feb 20:00 Presentation on the Hamilton E.O.C. System (Emergency Operations Control)

28 Mar 20:00 Modes of Communication Used in Hamilton (Commercial and Amateur)

25 Apr 20:00 Public Perceptions and Interaction with other Agencies

CANWARN schedule is as follows;

CANWARN is a organization of volunteers who report severe weather when they see it to Environment Canada. What they do is called ground-truthing. They confirm on the ground what satellites and radars see in the atmosphere, also report on approach of severe weather missed by other sources.

A upcoming CANWARN Training Seminar is to be held on Saturday March 25th at 10:00 am. The place it will be held is the Nash Auditorium at Chedoke Hospital on Rice Avenue in Hamilton.

For developing information, pictures and announcements periodically check on both of the following web sites

:<www.breawna.com> and
 <www.ARES-ham.ca>

Club meetings – 3rd Wednesday each month – 8 pm (except July and August) at Hamilton District Christian High School, 92 Glanaster Road corner of Rymal Road (Hwy. #53) and Glanaster Road. Parking on location. Complimentary refreshments.

HAM Call Web Site

Ann, VA3NOE, sent along the following information about a new fast and convenient web site for searching Canadian Amateur Radio Callsigns.

I just stumbled on a new Canadian callsign database: at www.callsign.ca. It is amazing. You can search for everyone in your postal code, city or province! I did a search on my postal code and dozens of callsigns popped up! I thought this information might make an interesting tidbit for the newsletter.

There are HAMs everywhere!!

Minutes of the General Meeting for February 15th, 2006

by Mardy, VE3QEE, Secretary

Welcome

Roger, VE3UFZ, welcomed some members we haven't seen for a while, Joe Erwin, VA3JWE, with Greg Billy his son-in-law, David Hood, VE3DHY, John Paulowich, VE3EVI, and a visitor, Mike Yachwak, VE3FUD. In addition, Mike Krebs, VA3WXS, brought along his computer instructor, Elgie.

Guest Speaker

Guest speaker for the evening was Steve Parsons from Radioworld. Steve, as anticipated, brought with him a range of transceivers and associated equipment for getting on HF, of special interest for those of us who recently received full band privileges from Industry Canada resulting from adoption of the no-code licence.

Receiving lots of attention were the new, all band, all mode rigs that are very compact but relatively inexpensive and full-featured. Many of these rigs cover portions of the MF, HF, VHF, and UHF, bands and transmit

all modes including AM, FM, SSB, CW, and Digital. In addition to the transceivers we saw a fused shack power distribution bar, a compact, light weight 30 amp switching power supply, a variable balun for matching a wide range of impedances you might encounter using short antennas and some tried and trusted equipment like the popular and much recommended Kenwood TS-570 base station. We got to see, and touch, and hear about the equipment in a relaxed and informal setting. Many thanks to Steve for his presentation. We do enjoy our liaison with Steve. The Club is grateful for the continuing support of Radioworld at our annual Flea Market each October.

Business Meeting

Adoption of the Minutes of January 18th. Moved by Mardy, seconded by Lorraine, that the minutes be adopted as printed in the February newsletter. Passed.

Membership Report. Delivered by Mardy on behalf of Emsley who is on vacation. We currently have 65 members, 59 primary members and 6 family members.

Education Report. There are five candidates in the Basic class. Arrangements have been made to meet in Mohawk College until the end of February, no arrangements have been made about a location after that period.

Health and Welfare. Mary brought the sad news that we have two silent keys this month. Norman Avery, VE3BVU, and David Locke, VE3DLK, passed away recently.

Norman had been a ham only since March 1995, but he was a club member and attended meetings regularly.

David took our Basic course in the Fall of 2000. He became very active in the club and was particularly involved in the Warplane Heritage Museum station. He served on the executive and was a band captain at Field Day. David will be missed. His health failed him in the last few years and it was

hard seeing him go downhill. Our deepest sympathy goes to the families and friends of these active members of the club.

Pictures of both late members are on display. Mary led members in a minute of silence in memory of Norman Avery, VE3BVU, and David Locke VE3DLK.

Treasurer's Report. Fred reported on the status of our new RAC insurance which is now in place. He reviewed the history of our insurance expense over the past several years. The cost went from \$500, before 911, to \$1000, the next year, then to \$1500, the year following. In November, last year, we were able to negotiate a lower rate with a different carrier to near half of the \$1500 rate. Since January we have undertaken to be insured with RAC for a much lower rate. As of this week the new insurance is now in force and we have sent a letter cancelling the remaining part of the policy we negotiated in November. We expect a refund of almost half of that policy. It now looks like we may finish the year with a carry forward.

Contest Report. Fred also delivered a few words on behalf of Rick Danby, VE3BK, and the contest program. The last weekend in February we are having the 160 meter contest. Friday night at 7:00 PM until Sunday night at 7:00 PM is the contest period. Rick would like to remind the group about the contest and invite anyone interested in operating to contact him and get directions to the site.

Canadian Warplane Heritage Report. Doug reported that the group at the museum was surprised to be commended as "volunteers of the month". Doug surmised that the commendation may have been given in recognition of their efforts making the prisoner of war radio recently prepared for a special display at the museum.

CANWARN Announcement. Lorraine, VA3NZ, reported that Environment Canada is training amateur radio and civilian observers in techniques of weather observation

and reporting in order to strengthen their ability to and respond when threatening weather occurs. A training session will be held from 10:00 AM until Noon at Nash Auditorium on Saturday March 25th. We expect 100 participants. Amateur radio operators, members of CERV, and personnel from Hamilton Health Sciences have been invited to attend. Several years ago, Hamilton had an active CANWARN group made up of Amateur Radio operators. When Environment Canada closed the Mount Hope weather station, that group fell apart. There has been nothing locally since that time. When the tornado recently touched down in Hamilton and damaged Lawfield School on the mountain, and a number of homes in the city's east end, the authorities realized that trained civilian observers play an important role as a line of defence. Environment Canada's doppler radar can show on a large scale where threatening weather is developing, but it cannot pinpoint local pop-up cells or reveal conditions on a small scale. In an area under threat, local observers can give instant reports as conditions become critical.

ARES Announcement. Paul Selvey, VE3XPS, reminded members of the second, in a series of ARES meetings at offices of Dofasco on Tuesday February 28th, at 8:00 PM. This session will feature a presentation on the Hamilton E.O.C. System.

New Business.

Field Day Workshop. The group discussed the need for a Field Day workshop and decided that the best way to approach this would be to hold a special one-hour meeting prior to the regular April meeting at which time the first order of business will be to appoint a Field Day Coordinator, who will immediately take over the meeting. Decisions will be made regarding Band Captains, organization of the day and placement of stations at the site. Decisions will also be made regarding responsibilities for equipment, generators, antennas, tents, etc. The special meeting is open to all who are interested. Members will be advised

HARC 2005-2006 Executive

President

Roger Pimm VE3UFZ
905-560-2628
rpimm@cogeco.ca

First Vice President

Ron Ouwehand VA3OUW
905-692-4684
ron.ouwehand@sympatico.ca

Second Vice President

John Hudak, VE3CXB
905-627-9475
hudakjm@mcmaster.ca

Secretary

Mardy Eedson VE3QEE
905-648-0187
meedson@cogeco.ca

Treasurer

Fred Robinson VE3GCP
575-5197
FredRobinson@MountainCable.net

Repeater Chairman

John Vandenberg VE3DVV
905-692-3802
JVandenberg@mountaincable.net

Membership Chairman

Emsley Mitchell VE3JAI
905-627-0333
eamitch@mcmail.cis.mcmaster.ca



of this meeting in the March newsletter.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

NVIS - Near Vertical Incident Skywave

A Solution For Local And Emergency Comms. Technical Review by John Hudak, VE3CXB

I'm willing to bet most hams will have never heard of NVIS, or if they have they're probably not sure what it means. I'm also willing to bet most hams will have heard of the terms "cloud burners" or "sky warmers". By this is meant an antenna in which the majority of the radiated RF goes upwards at a high angle instead of the more desirable low radiation angle.

We've all been taught that when it comes to certain antennas, typically dipoles or yagis, etc. that "higher is better". This is for good reason. Many hams are interested in extending the coverage of their signal. This is especially true if you are working DX. The reason we are told to get our antenna as high as possible is to enhance the low angle radiation of our signal. You may have heard it said that we should get our antennas up to at least 1/2 wavelength above ground. This is because at this height the maximum in our transmitted signal pattern goes out at an angle of around 30 deg. with respect to the ground. The lower the takeoff angle from our antenna then the farther out our first hop will go after it's first refraction off the ionosphere (it really is a refraction, not a reflection). Very low takeoff angles close to zero degrees will get our signal out to a maximum around 2500 miles on the first hop.

There are other factors that go into determining how far our signal will go, however the one parameter over which we have complete control is the height of our antenna. Most of the time it would appear to be a good thing to keep our antennas above ground at least 1/2 wavelength. For those who cannot get their antennas up high we are told that we are wasting radiated RF energy because we are now "warming the clouds". At an antenna height of 1/4 wavelength or less a good portion of

our signal is going straight up or close to it. This is not good if you're chasing DX.

However, is low antenna height really a bad thing? Remember now that if we decrease our takeoff angle we increase the distance to our first skip. We will have formed our first skip zone, which is the distance between where our ground wave signal falls off and the distance at which our signal comes back down to earth after the first skip off the ionosphere. In a sense we are the creators of our own skip zone. If we increase the takeoff angle of our signal we do the reverse in that we decrease the distance to our first skip. This can be useful to us.

Anyone who has tried to communicate with a "local" ham on certain frequencies during certain times of the day will soon realize that it is not so easy to do if they are beyond the ground wave distance. Our signal is just skipping on over their head. By sending our signal up almost vertically up into the ionosphere we are achieving "Near Vertical Incident Skywave" communications.

NVIS is a technique with which we can get around the problem of our self created skip zone. This may be of great importance to those involved in emergency communications. During massive power failures it may be necessary to communicate with stations out of range of our VHF/UHF rigs or our repeaters, provided they are running on backup power. And if our HF antennas are geared towards low takeoff angles to enhance DX, well we certainly won't find it desirable to only be able to communicate with far off DX stations during a local crisis.

NVIS is not a type of antenna. It is a "system" which includes hardware, knowledge of propagation, operating procedures, and cooperation. NVIS fills the gap between line of sight groundwave communication and skywave propagation. NVIS occurs as a result of F layer propagation (get out your ARRL books if you're rusty on this stuff) and is typically most useful in the ham bands from 160m

HARC 2005-2006 Chairs

Awards Chair

Casey VanBroekhoven, VE3CVP
905-385-8724 <ve3cvp@gmail.com>

Contesting/Property Manager

Rick Danby VE3BK
905-544-3253 rdanby@simpatico.ca

Education

Mardy Eedson VE3QEE
905-648-0187 meedson@cogeco.ca

Volunteer Examiners

Bernie Granby VA3XJ
905-527-7175 berngran@hwcen.org
and

Lorraine MacPherson, VA3NZ
905-389-7653 va3nz@rac.ca

Field Day

David Bruton VE3DWJ
905-383-9808 am983@hwcen.org

Flea Market

Mardy Eedson, VE3QEE,
905-648-0187 ve3qee@rac.ca

Health/Welfare

Mary Urbanski VE3OGQ
905-388-8383

Hospitality

Bernie Granby VA3XJ
905-527-7175 berngran@hwcen.org
Ilona Davidson VE3UGM

Membership/Web

Emsley Mitchell VE3JAI
905-627-0333
eamitch@mcmail.cis.mcmaster.ca

Newsletter

Mardy Eedson VE3QEE
905-648-0187 meedson@cogeco.ca

Public Liaison Co-Chair

Stanley Bolibruch VE3GFE
905-528-4002
Neil Galloway VE3VNG
905-383-6986

Repeater

John Vandenberg VE3DVV
905-692-3802
Jvandenberg@mountaincable.net

Swap Net Control

Don Grisenthwaite, VE3DDQ,
905-388-1365 ve3ddq@cogeco.ca

Communication

Michael Krebs VA3WXS
905-523-9005
mkrebs@sympatico.ca

to 20m, although usually the range will be limited mostly to the 80m and 40m bands. Keep in mind that because we are beaming straight up that higher frequency signals will tend to just go through the ionosphere and out into space instead of being refracted back to earth. In a situation where an 80m signal sent straight up will be returned back down to us a 20m signal on the other hand may just continue on out into space. This is because our 20m signal has exceeded the critical frequency. The optimum frequency to use for NVIS is one that is just below the current critical frequency at the time of operation. By doing so the majority of the signal will be returned back down to the earth. Using frequencies significantly lower than the critical frequency may result in excessive D layer absorption during the day. There are web sites which you can access in order to find out what the current critical frequency is at your location and time. Note that the critical frequency will vary according to the time of day, time of year, the point in the solar cycle which we are at, etc. In the "good old days" before computers there were charts which tried to predict the critical frequency throughout the year but these days with our instant access to the internet it is easy enough to just look it up. Having this real time information is a big plus for NVIS.

How do we beam a signal straight up? It's relatively simple in that we abandon our premise that "higher is better". Instead of having our 40m dipole at a height of $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength (approx. 66 ft.) we cozy our antenna up close to the ground. If you have an ARRL Antenna Book or a similar text there will be polar plot diagrams which show the radiation pattern of our horizontal $\frac{1}{2}$ wave dipole at various heights above electrical ground. Or you can use a computer program such as EZNEC to model the radiation pattern if you need to be more specific as to your location and antenna. There is some disagreement as to what the best antenna height is. It's been said anywhere from $\frac{1}{4}$ wavelength to $\frac{1}{20}$ wavelength above ground. At $\frac{1}{20}$ wavelength on 40m that's only about

6 ½ feet above the ground. Others will say somewhere between 10ft. to 15 ft. is optimal. Sounds wacky doesn't it given the "higher is better" mantra we've always heard? It does however make sense when we remember that we are trying to beam our signal straight up. The result will be that our signal will come back down upon us in a cone of RF that has a radius of up to a few hundred miles. In other words we will now be able to make those QSO's that previously were within our "silent" skip zone.

During tests some hams have reported increases of up to 15dB in signal strength. Also reported have been decreases in noise levels – and that's always a plus. In effect we are shielding our antenna by keeping it low. We reduce the amount of propagated noise signal that we pick up from distant thunderstorms, electrical interference, etc. An increase in signal and a decrease in noise – and all without having to climb up some high support to string an antenna.

What kind of antenna to use? Well our good old ½ wave dipole is probably the easiest choice, or at least some variation of it. You could use a pair of Hamsticks configured as a dipole if you want portability. Some hams have even tried building a vertical yagi out of wire. You hang your dipole and close below it you lay out another wire which acts as a reflector. Of course this does not count as a true Yagi because reflector to driven element distances are not "according to theory", but increases in gain by using a simple reflector wire have been reported. As always, your mileage may vary.

The quality of our NVIS signal will depend very much on the quality of the ground beneath the antenna. The better the ground the more efficient will be the radiated signal. Those hams who can string their antenna over a saltwater marsh will be way ahead of the game. You could go all out and try covering your backyard under the dipole with chicken wire to increase the quality of the ground. Normally we don't worry as much

about ground quality when talking about ½ wave dipoles but this is one case in which a good low loss ground underneath the antennas is desirable. You may find it necessary to make some improvements to your ground, such as using a counterpoise system.

One other consideration is the antenna's characteristic impedance. The characteristic impedance of a dipole in free space is around 73 ohms. The actual impedance of a dipole depends on its electrical height above ground. At our desirable height of ½ wavelength the impedance is about 70 ohms. When we lower our dipole closer to the ground the impedance drops dramatically. At a height of 1/8 wavelength it's about 25 ohms, and at 1/20 wavelength the impedance drops to around 10 ohms. Now we're talking a significant mismatch so we will have to employ some sort of matching device such as a transformer or an antenna tuner. Of course the actual feedpoint impedance will be influenced by the quality of the ground beneath our antenna.

For NVIS it is preferable "not" to use high power (much above 100 watts, give or take). If you do then you risk increasing the strength of the groundwave signal which might cause interference to the NVIS signal due to phase distortion. This is where the ground wave destructively combines with the NVIS signal in such a way as to decrease readability. This is similar to the multipath distortion we hear on VHF signals.

Also, it should go without saying that, due to reciprocity, NVIS also works for received signals too. I've already mentioned the benefits which result in lower noise levels on received signals. However, in order to properly utilize NVIS, both ends of the communication path should be using NVIS techniques. It does not do much for signal reception if the receive antenna is relatively deaf to the incoming high angle signals.

Having gone through all of this, if you think about it you are probably using

NVIS right now on 80m and maybe 40m without even knowing it. On 80m ½ wavelength is about 125 ft. I'm willing to bet that most hams out there do not have their dipoles up 125 ft. off the ground. If your 80m antenna is only 30 ft. off the deck then you're already in NVIS territory. Therefore for us folks who have to have our antennas at a more reasonable height we are already shooting a lot more of our signal upwards than we would like. Even on 40m, ½ wave is 66 ft. and once again I'll bet most of us have our 40m antennas at a lower height. This might explain why it is so (relatively) easy for us to check into nets like ONTARS on 80m or the TP Net on 40m and still be able to carry on QSO's with relatively close stations. If you really had your low band antennas at their optimum height you probably couldn't work the locals.

So, in a nutshell, there you have it. NVIS is probably something you would never have thought of trying. It is relatively simple to implement – just string up a low dipole (make sure you guard against anyone walking into the low wire and getting their neck caught!!! - string up some coloured marker ribbons on the wire). You can get as simple or as complicated as you want. If you are working a contest think in terms of all those stations that are within your skip zone that you might otherwise might not be working because they are in your skip zone. And for emergency communications it might be of great benefit, depending on the scope of the disaster. NVIS as a method results in dependable local area HF communications.

Map of current critical frequency:
<http://www.spacew.com/www/fof2.html>

A few links with info on NVIS
<http://www.w0ipl.com/ECom/NVIS/nvis.htm>

NVIS Antennas:
<http://www.qsl.net/wb5ude/nvis/index.html>

<http://www.athensarc.org/nvis.htm>

Remembering

by Mardy, VE3QEE



David Locke, VE3DLK, SK

David was an active member of the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club who will be sadly missed. David had been a Radio Amateur only a few years, since taking the Basic Course in the Fall of 2000. At that time he was retired, and looking for an additional hobby to satisfy his appetite for involvement, for learning, and for tinkering, all of which he loved to do. David had other hobbies too that he actively pursued, chief among these was making and operating radio controlled boats and cars, Ham radio fit nicely with that. David was an able machinist, with a metal lathe and drill press in his basement, and a radio broadcast enthusiast, with a complete professional broadcast booth, circa 1960s, installed at his home. On more than one occasion David remarked to me that getting involved in HAM radio had been the best thing for him because each day it gave him something to look forward to when he got up in the morning.

You get out of an activity what you put into it. David put a lot into the hobby he loved. A regular participant at the Canadian Warplane Museum, David loved talking to the visitors, and hearing what they had to tell of their experiences during the war, and about the equipment on display that they knew so well. David became quite knowledgeable about the old equipment from his contact with the veterans. He also helped set up the station at VA3CWM, and enjoyed operating, especially the digital modes on computer.

David was elected a club director, and at the time his illness began, was serving as Vice-President. At that time he acted as sort of an ambassador-on-the-air, talking every day and making contacts with all the groups he could talk to from Oshawa through Brantford around to Niagara Falls. He was actively involved in the Tech Net and I guess you could say was one of the founding members. At flea markets David loved to meet face-to-face the people he spoke to on the air. He was always willing to help solve a technical problem by explaining how he had done something, or by putting you in contact with a person who could help.

David was a band captain on Field day and hosted the UHF/VHF group operating from his van, complete with home brew gain antennas comfortable shelter and sleeping accommodation. He also looked forward to attending the annual Christmas parties, and it was he who originated the much quoted phrase, "They clean up good," when commenting on a photograph of our members dressed up for dinner at the Yacht Club.

I liked David a lot because of his positive attitude, his acceptance of everyone, his quiet dignity in the face of hardship, and his love of life. It was hard to watch him go downhill over a period of several years. His association is one I shall not forget. In my mind, David demonstrated the very best qualities we admire in a Radio Amateur. I truly will miss his presence.



Norman Avery, VE3BVU, SK.

Norm was licenced in Amateur Radio less than a year. He had studied on his own and qualified well enough to gain HF privileges under the new upgraded system. Norm was not new to using the radio. In his job driving taxi in the city, and also as a recreational CBer, Norm enjoyed radio, but the Amateur Bands were, for him, a new adventure. In the time since earning his licence Norm pulled together an effective station at his residence, complete with balcony antennas and a desk lined with transceivers. His friends will attest that he was proud to demonstrate the hobby and explain how the apparatus worked. He had found a satisfying outlet for his energies.

Norm joined the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club and regularly attended meetings. Just a day or so before hearing the sad news of his passing the executive had been discussing the idea of inviting him to volunteer for a job to help the club.

I am sorry that Norm had so little time to enjoy the hobby, but from what I learned talking to others at his memorial service, he was well on his way to becoming one of us when his time was cut short.

Important points

Executive Meetings

HARC Executive committee meets each month, except July and August, at Mohawk College in room E031B. All members are invited to attend and participate. The meetings are on the Tuesday following the club General Meeting each month.

VE3NCF [146.760- & 444.075+]

HARC operates VE3NCF repeater, located atop the Niagara Escarpment. It's open for use by all Amateurs. Special features are a privilege of membership.

Nets

HARC "check-in net" is held every Tuesday evening, except July and August, at 7:30pm. HARC "swap net" follows at 8pm. The ARES net is held on Thursdays at 8:00pm. All contacts are welcome.

Examinations

Amateur radio licence examinations are conducted the second Wednesday each month, except July and August. Contact the voluntary examiners to make an appointment. Each test \$5.

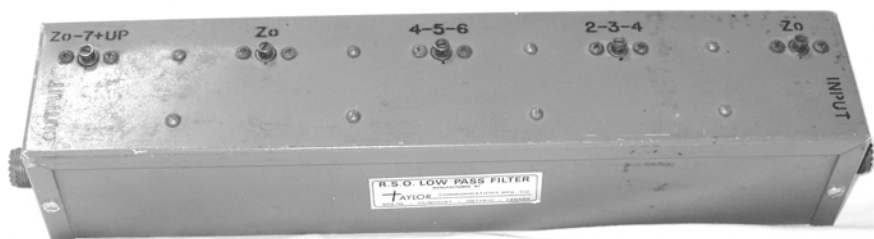
Membership Information

Club membership, including all privileges, is \$25 per person, per year, Sept 1 to Aug 31. Additional membership, for immediate family living in the same home, is \$1 per person. One newsletter sent to each address.

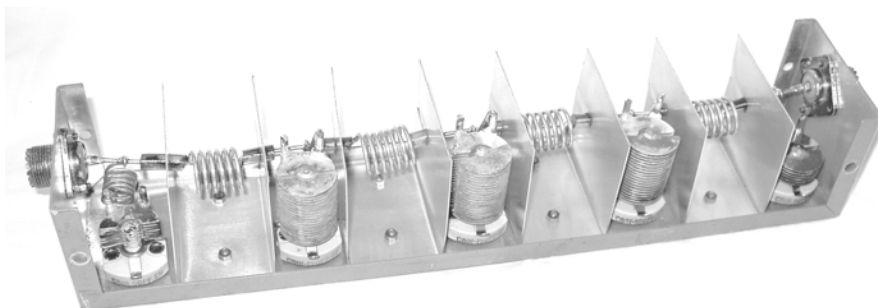
The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur is published ten times each year (not in July or August). Deadline for article submission is the *last Saturday* of the month for the next month's issue. Preferred format is .txt file. Articles will be checked for spelling and grammar, but the author is responsible for the factual content. E-mail submissions to Mardy, VE3QEE < ve3qee@rac.ca >

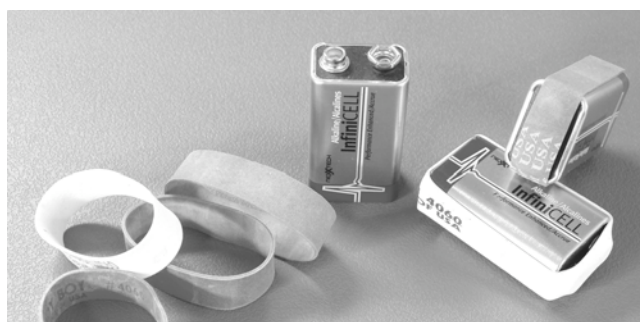
If you eat broccoli or other fresh produce bunched with those fat elastics here's an idea. To protect an extra 9 volt battery from being shorted out in your tool box cover the contacts with a fat elastic. Works like a charm and you're recycling too.



Inside this 1960s Taylor low pass filter is a series of inductors and capacitors made to pass 1 to 30 MHz signals while blocking signals above 30 MHz. Beneath the cover of this uninteresting gray box lies a beautiful and still gleaming network of air variable capacitors and inductors each isolated by a shielding enclosure. Marvelous engineering from the build-your-own days.



February's guest speaker, Steve Parsons showing some of the feature-packed, light, and portable goodies from Radioworld of particular interest to amateurs recently qualified to get on HF.



Recent News from Here and There

collected by THA editor, Mardy, VE3QEE

In an article titled: **Canadian Amateur Service Loses 220 - 222 MHz** starting on page 14 of the March-April issue of The Canadian Amateur, it appears that we have indeed lost the lower portion of the 1 1/4 meter band. Apparently the band was not being used enough by Amateurs, and 220 is not a common band on transceivers now being sold. We still have exclusive use of the band from 222 to 225 MHz. For a more thorough explanation of the story see the article in THA and to read the Industry Canada announcement visit the web at: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insmt-gst.nsf/en/sf08494e.html>. (They don't make it easy for you to find, do they?)

Injured Miner Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ, Talking, Joking

This item comes from the ARRL weekly e-mail bulletin to members.

Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ--the lone survivor of the January 2 Sago Mine disaster in Upshur County, West Virginia--is continuing to recover. Speaking on The Early Show on CBS TV March 2, McCloy's wife Anna told co-anchor Hannah Storm that her husband is talking again and even telling jokes. "He'll listen to jokes and understand," Anna McCloy told Storm. "He'll talk to me and the kids--just regular conversation."

She also said McCloy has told her he remembers "bits and pieces" of the mining disaster that left 12 of his co-workers dead of carbon monoxide poisoning. McCloy, 26, who's been in a rehabilitation facility since January 26, also answers questions appropriately, recognizes his family and can "move quite well," Anna McCloy said. She has remained at her husband's side since his rescue.

McCloy eats with assistance and has expressed distaste for institutional cuisine, instead preferring the

restaurant and fast food fare his wife supplies.

Anna McCloy says she's "not quite sure" if her husband realizes he was the only survivor of the mine mishap. "I don't question him about it. When he wants to talk about it, I listen to him, but I don't push him, and I don't question him," she said.

One of Randal McCloy's physicians, Dr Julian Bailes, told Storm that McCloy has "improved beyond our expectations" during rehabilitation. "I think we see his old personality coming back."

Well-wishers have been sending cards and QSLs to McCloy at PO Box 223, Philippi, WV 26435. A fund has been set up to accept donations for McCloy's benefit: The Randal McCloy Jr Fund, c/o Clear Mountain Bank, 1889 Earl Core Rd, Morgantown, WV 26505.

Dis & Dat Scheduled for Return in April

I know that many of you look forward to Bernie's Dis & Dat feature in The Hamilton Amateur, a feature which is missing from the current issue. I was just talking to Bernie on the phone and am glad to report that he and Ruth are back from their vacation. We can look forward to another Dis and Dat in the next issue. Stay tuned.

E-mail Charges Proposed by Canada Post

This item was sent to me on e-mail by one of our members. The idea seems too preposterous to imagine, and I think it is. A search on Google turned up another posting which discredits the announcement as a hoax and a chain letter. Here is a portion of the original e-mail.

E-mail charges proposed by Canada Post AND legislation is going forward. The last few months have revealed that the Government of Canada is attempting to quietly push through legislation that will affect your use of the Internet. Under proposed legislation Canada Post will

be allowed to bill email users out of "alternate postage fees". Bill 602P will permit the Federal Government to charge a 5 cent surcharge on every email delivered, by billing Internet Service Providers at source. The consumer would then be billed in turn by the ISP. Toronto lawyer Richard Stepp, QC is working to prevent this legislation from becoming law. etc etc.

It appears that this letter is a hoax and one that has been around for a while. One clue is the phrase "please forward to all your friends". If you did respond in this fashion, it would in effect create a chain-mail scenario.

Another clue is grammatical. The phrase, -- *be allowed to bill email users out of "alternate postage fees"* -- is grammatically incorrect. Using the unnecessary words **out of** illustrates colloquial use of language, which would not likely appear in an legitimate announcement.

Another clue is historical. Given the way the media waits to pounce on any little event and "mine" it for a news story, I can hardly imagine something of this magnitude going unreported, bigtime, in the national and international media. Yet there has been no reporting of this story.

So, I think we can all relax. I don't believe such a proposal exists. If you get an e-mail like this I think you can safely disregard the contents.

Besides that, could you imagine what HAMS would do if they thought they were going to be charged extra for sending an e-mail? You can probably guess. They would all, with great enthusiasm, revitalize the packet network so they could send and receive messages while avoiding the surcharge.

In fact, I think there is merit in returning to packet not just because I believe in maintaining a redundant, non-commercial technology, (in case commercial technologies fail), but also because it avoids all the spam, popup ads spywear and viruses now present on the current incarnation of the internet for which we pay lots.

