



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

# The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter 76 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2008

## February Meeting

On Wednesday February 18th we are pleased to welcome Robert K.

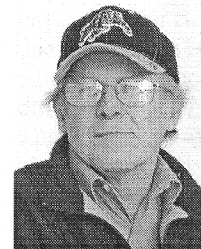


Zimmerman, VE3RKZ, as our guest speaker. Bob will be giving an illustrated presentation about his 12 years at the Arecibo Radio/Radar Telescope in Puerto Rico.

Hamilton Amateur Radio Club, authoring several articles in our newsletter and submitting an entry in the 2008 Home-Brew contest. We are delighted he can speak to our group this month.

## President's Message

by David Bruton,  
 VE3DWJ



For those you who missed last month's meeting we had a number of people contributing to the program. I would like to thank the following club members for their contribution: Rick VE3BK, Mardy VE3QEE, Roger VE3UFZ, Emsley VE3JAI and John VE3CXB.

Rick talked about the antennas at the contest site. He explained why different antennas are used and about how the contesters reduce interference caused by multiple transmitters in close proximity. Rick explained the use of commercial filters to reduce this interference.

Rick showed us baluns, stubs, and bandpass filters that the group have tried. He showed us one of the books that he uses containing construction and calculation information. The book also contains drawings of projects. Some of these projects have been done at the contest site, and some projects are planned for the future.

## In This Issue

- February Meeting----- 1
- President's Message-- 1
- The Beat Goes On--- 2
- HARC Executive----- 2
- Decline in BPL----- 3
- HARC Chairs----- 3
- Nuts and Bolts----- 4
- Important Points----- 4
- Panadapter----- 5
- Contest Corner----- 5
- Border Fees----- 5
- News About Town---- 6
- Saga of My Random  
Wire Antenna ----- 7
- Minutes----- 8
- Pictorial----- 8

By way of introduction here is some information about Bob that was taken from an article Broadbanding the Arecibo Dish, published in the journal QST June, 1997 pp. 28-32:

*"Bob Zimmerman was first licensed at age 13 in 1965. He studied at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville (BS and MS in physics) and then switched to electrical engineering at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Campaign (MSEE). He hopes to spend his entire career in radio electronics.*

*He has worked at Watkins-Johnson Company (antennas), Arecibo Observatory (low-noise receivers), NASA Goddard Spaceflight Center (laser communications), the Voice of America (high-power transmitters), and has now returned to the Arecibo Observatory to head the Transmitter Section of the Electronics Department. With the support of his wife and two daughters, he is constructing a 1296 MHz ham EME station at their home in Arecibo."*

Bob is currently residing in Hamilton, and actively contributing to the

Club meetings – 3rd Wednesday each month – 7:30 pm (except July and August) at Hamilton District Christian High School, 92 Glanaster Road, Ancaster, L9G 3K9, corner of Rymal Road (Hwy. #53) and Glanaster Road. Parking on location. Complimentary refreshments.

I would like to thank Pat, Rick's wife and Chris, his daughter for postponing Rick's birthday party in order to let him to speak to us. January's meeting was the same date as Rick's birthday and we sang Happy Birthday to him.

Next on the program was the talk on the Yaesu FT897 (FT857) radio. Mardy, Roger and Emsley brought their transceivers for demonstration. In small groups around each table they explained how their radios work. Roger explained how to use software to program the radio with a computer. Mardy demonstrated how to control the radio with a computer using a free program called Ham Radio DeLuxe. John and Emsley are also using the same radio. John uses his rig for DX, but also he has hooked a computer to the radio to try digital operation using RTTY, and Emsley has taken his radio camping. It was a good meeting, many members got involved talking about their radios and how they have solved problems along the way.

Here is a reminder that on Tuesday nights, the club has a check-in net from 7:30 PM local time and swap shop following the net at 8:00 P.M. local time, on VE3NCF 146.760. As you know, the net controller and swap shop controller are volunteers who are encouraged by your participation. Please keep them smiling by checking in at 7:30 PM and 8:00 PM and filling the air with amateur radio traffic. We have quite a large coverage area. When there is a lot of traffic it generates interest. We have received check-ins from as far away as St. Catharines, Brantford, and parts of Toronto. Help us build interest.

The annual Paris to Ancaster Bike Race takes place April 19. Gary VE3TTO is your contact for volunteers. Gary a club member has been co-ordinator for many years. The race has 22 checkpoints for radio operators to man. Please support this activity and give Gary a call 905-387-1103.

I hope to see you at the meeting on February 18, at which our guest

speaker will be Bob Zimmerman VE3RKZ.

## And The Beat Goes On

by Mardy, VE3QEE

Back issues of THA (The Hamilton Amateur) are posted on the HARC web site at <hamiltonarc.ca>. Over a year ago, October 2007 to be exact, there was a story in our newsletter about a Coils booklet published in November 1962 by the late Russell Summerville KY8BYN.

Recently, I got an e-mail from a SWL in Tennessee who found that story by surfing the internet. It seems that this SWL, named Stephen, purchased a Morris Coilmaster on e-Bay. The Coilmaster is a device for winding various kinds of coils used in radios of the 1960s era. (There is a picture following this article.) In the box with the, now antique, Coilmaster was an instruction sheet that made reference to the Coils book by Summerville. So the SWL, Stephen, searched the net for information about the Coils book and found our newsletter with the story. Can you believe it? He was interested in obtaining a copy of the book so I e-mailed him a scan of the publication.

This story illustrates one of the great aspects of Amateur Radio. The purposes of Amateur Radio spelled out in the I.C. Regulations are self-education, intercommunication, and experimentation. To these three purposes, hams add two more, public service and fostering international good-will. Those five purposes describe most of what we do in Amateur Radio. We think of them as "traditions of Amateur Radio" The story just told illustrates the tradition of self-education and sharing knowledge. For me, that tradition is what makes Amateur Radio such a great hobby. I love the sharing aspect, or as some would say the "elmering".

I have heard it said that the internet is a threat to ham radio. but I think the opposite. The internet expands

## HARC 2008-2009 Executive

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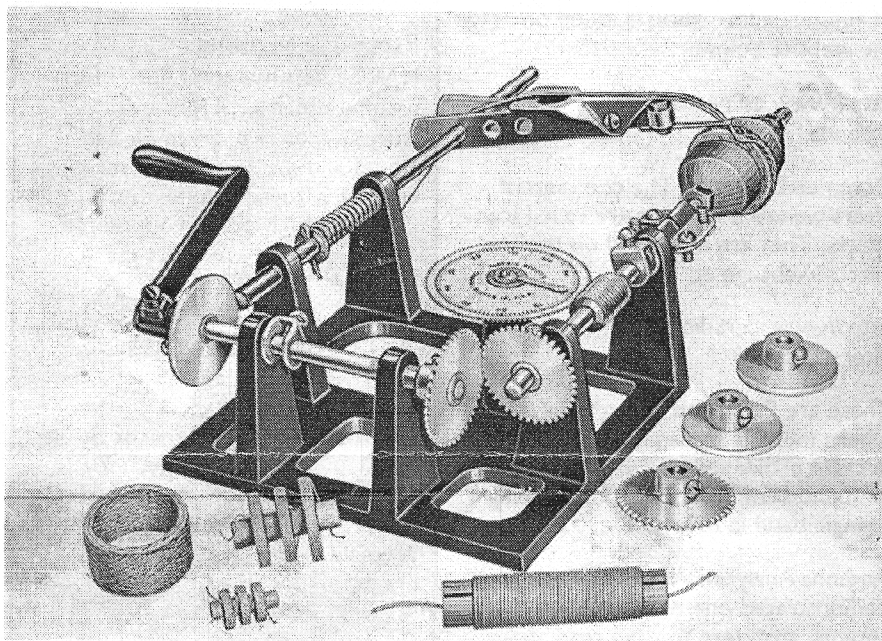
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our ability to share information and at the same time speeds up how fast we can find it, and how far we can reach out to get it. Rather than being a threat to our hobby, the internet supports Amateur radio in many ways.

Reproduced on page 3 of this issue, is the original instruction sheet that came with the Coilmaster. You will see, printed at the bottom of the leaflet, a reference to the Coils booklet by Russell Summerville.

I wonder if anyone in our Club has seen or used one of these machines. It would be fun if someone could bring in a Coilmaster to demonstrate. If you look carefully at

# THE NEW MODERN *Coilmaster*



This new, hand-operated, coilwinding machine will produce self-supporting, universal and honeycomb coils, also solenoid, single-layer, etc. Samples of these are illustrated. Three cams, 1/8", 3/16" and 1/4" throw are included with each machine. Using these in various combinations with the four gears that are supplied, and using different sizes of wire, from No. 22 to No. 40, many types and sizes of coils can be made. The arm that carries the wire guide is quickly adjustable on the shaft for pi spacing, and also adjusts for different diameter coil forms. With the COILMASTER the precision type coils required in the various electrical fields today can be accurately wound. It is suitable for both experimental and practical work.

## MORRIS REGISTER COMPANY

2925 West Broadway

Council Bluffs, Iowa

Note: A Booklet, "COILS" by Russell Summerville may be obtained from: 73 MAGAZINE, Peterborough, New Hampshire. It is priced at 50 cents, and contains valuable information and data to guide the experimenter.

the picture you can actually see how the apparatus worked using a cam to move the feed arm back and forth. It's a marvelous relic from our hobby's past days.

## FCC Reports A Decline In BPL Customers

*BPL stands for Broadband Over Power Lines a way to deliver internet service by modulating the 60 cycle power supply. The concern for amateurs has been the observation that where BPL has been*

*deployed it produces RF interference. The following BPL update comes from the ARRL electronic newsletter.*

On January 16, 2009, the Federal Communications Commission released data, as of December 31, 2007, on the services used for high-speed Internet access in the United States. According to the data collected by the FCC, as of that date there were 121.2 million high-speed lines (including wireless), a 20 percent increase in just six months. In sharp contrast to the rapid growth in mobile wireless, cable modem, ADSL and fiber as delivery mechanisms to subscribers, Broadband over Power

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Line (BPL) utilization apparently declined during the period.

According to the FCC figures, the category "Power Line and Other" dropped from 5420 lines in June 2007 to 5274 six months later. It is not known how many are "Power Line" and how many are "Other."

"Despite the enormous and unwarranted hype given to BPL by the FCC under Chairmen Powell and Martin, the message from the marketplace is clear: BPL is going nowhere as a means of delivering broadband connectivity to consumers," observed ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ.

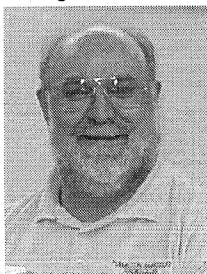
"Still, the FCC has unfinished business with respect to BPL. It has been nine months since the federal Court of Appeals ordered the Commission to correct the errors it committed in adopting rules that inadequately protect licensed radio services from BPL interference

<<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/04/25/10064/>>, yet the FCC has made no effort to comply. With the change at the FCC helm that is about to take place, we hope the foot-dragging will come to an end and the Commission will fulfill its obligations to the Court as well as to its licensees."

## Nuts and Bolts of Ham Radio

More information following the presentation by Rick Danby, VE3BK

In response to questions from some members here is where I got the information on some of the stuff shown at the last meeting.



Antennas. I often use these two books (The ARRL Antenna Book and the ARRL Handbook) for many antenna designs. The antennas at

our Contest site, like the Windom and the Loop, are basic designs found in these books. Another good source of antenna information is found on the website below.

<http://www.qsl.net/wb1gfh/antenna.html>

Commercial Filters. The commercial filters we are now using are called Ice Filters. They are described on the Ice Filters Webpage at:

<http://www.iceradioproducts.com/filtersrf.html#2>

These are Pass Band Filters used where multiple transmitters are used in close proximity, such as Field Day or Contesting. Each filter allows only a single band in or out.

Antenna Analyzer. At the meeting we demonstrated one of the MFJ antenna analyzers. You can read about it on the MFJ web page at:

<http://www.mfjenterprises.com/Product.php?productid=MFJ-269>

This antenna analyser is a very effective aid for HF/VHF/UHF antenna setup.

On the MFJ webpage you can read about the many jobs this antenna analyzer will do in addition to what we showed at the meeting.

Baluns. Check out another website for more information on homemade baluns of the type I made and brought to show at the meeting. Here it is:

[http://www.qsl.net/iz7ath/web/02\\_brew/11\\_balun/english/pag09\\_eng.htm](http://www.qsl.net/iz7ath/web/02_brew/11_balun/english/pag09_eng.htm)

If you have been inspired to read up on some of this information, and you are motivated to build something, don't forget to show us at Home-Brew Night and even try it out on Field Day. The equipment we have been talking about is relatively inexpensive compared to a transceiver but it can really improve the results from your station.

## Important Points

### Executive Meetings

HARC Executive committee meets each month, except July and August. Members are invited to attend and participate. The meetings are on the Tuesday following the club General Meeting each month. Ask an executive member for the location.

### 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 at 7:30 p.m. HARC "swap net" follows at 8 p.m. All contacts are welcome.

### Examinations

Amateur radio license examinations are conducted the second Wednesday of each month, except July and August. Contact the voluntary examiners to make an appointment. There will be a fee for each examination.

### Membership Information

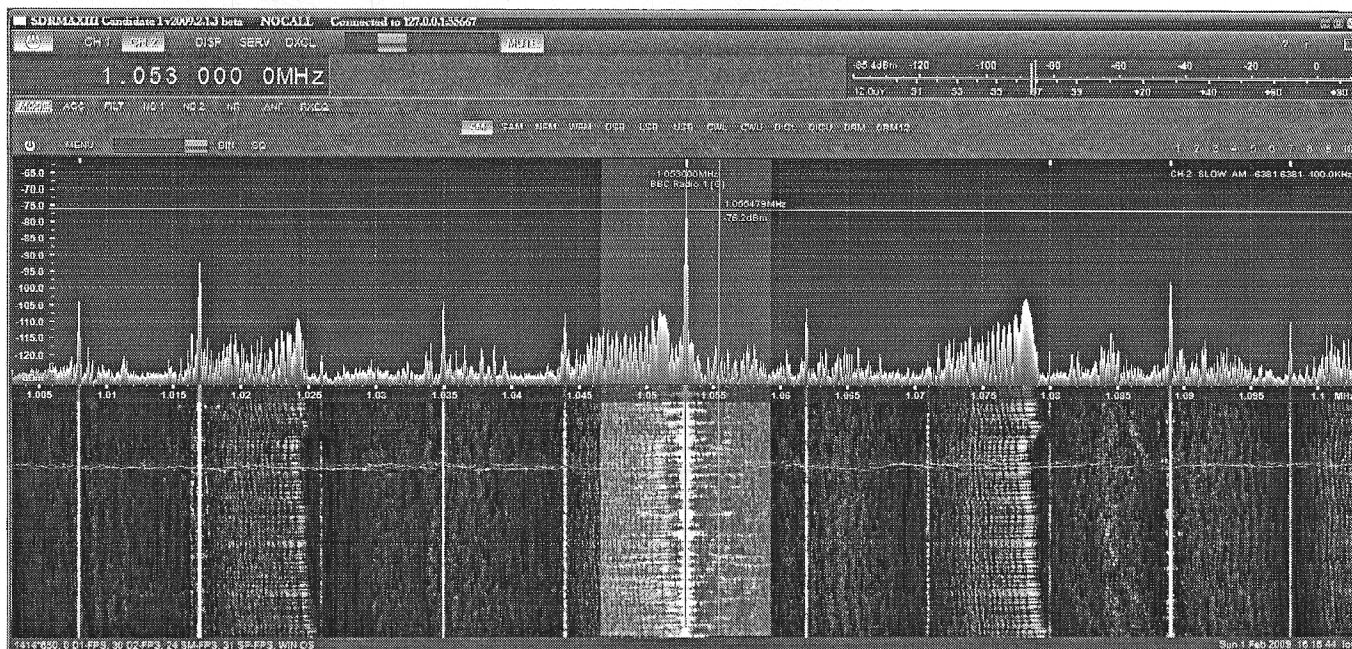
Club membership, including all privileges, is \$25 per person, per year, Sept 1 to Aug 31. Additional membership, for immediate family living in the same home, is \$1 per person. One newsletter sent to each address.

### 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 factual content. E-mail submissions to Editor, John Hudak VE3CXB, <[judakjm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:judakjm@mcmaster.ca)>



## New Panadapter Screen

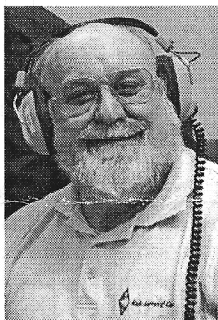


The picture shows a new panadapter screen from the Software Defined Radio application SDRMAXIII, developed to run on the QuickSilver 1 Receiver (QSIR). What you are seeing is a frozen frame showing all signals received in a 100 KHz wide passband from 1.000 MHz to 1.100 MHz. The radio is set for AM reception. At the center is the AM signal from BBC Radio 1, on 1.053 MHz. Above is a "spectrum" display and below is a "waterfall" display. In real time, both displays would be in motion. To watch two really great clips go to <<http://www.n9vv.com>>. You can watch both SDRMAXIII and SDRMAXII in operation..

## Contest Corner

by Rick Danby  
VE3BK

Our members did very well on the last CQ WW 160 meter SSB contest in 2008. Here's an opportunity to do it again.



This is to announce the upcoming contest. As is often the case, the rules are a little different this time around. Go to the website for the rules at:

<http://cq-amateur-radio.com/160%20Meter%20link.html>

This is a forty-eight hour contest, starting at 22:00 GMT or 5pm Friday Feb. 27, 2009 and ending on 22:00

GMT or Zulu on Sunday March 1st which is 5pm local time.

You will notice that the contest starts and ends 2 hours earlier than before. There is another change in the rules. Now the DX station must give us a signal report, readability and strength (RS) and their CQ Zone instead of the country as we did last year. According to the new rules, Multi-Operator stations can only operate 40 of the 48 hours, which is really good for us, allowing us an 8 hour sleep period in the daytime of Sat. Feb. 28th as this contest takes place on a night-time winter band.

So give me the times you can operate. You can bring your radio as a listening station or we can swap it out for operating. We are only allowed one station on the air, but we can have a second radio to listen with only.

Hope to see you all there.....let me know if you are coming, otherwise,

plan on giving us a contact from your home station please.

## Border Fees on Ham Radios and Gear

Here is a tip coming to us by e-mail from one of the members of the Contest Club Ontario (CCO) of which our Club is a member.

January 29, 2009.

When you order ham radio gear on the internet, be sure to have the seller use USPS (United States Postal Service) to send it, and NOT UPS or FedEx as they both charge a brokerage fee which is usually a minimum of \$45-50 and a percentage. Canada Post has a flat \$5 processing fee and will collect only PST and GST as there is no duty.

If you have a story about import fees, and would care to share it with

THA readers, please send it to the newsletter editor. Thanks to Rick VE3BK for the tip.

## News About Town

by Mardy VE3QEE

Last month I reported that both my computers had been wiped clean. In the process of finding and reinstalling erased software I came across a couple of Ham Radio programs that have been updated recently. These programs are both free downloads from the internet and some of you may want to look at them.

From Ray Goff, G4FON the Morse Code program based on the KOCH method and its companion KOCH RX (Koch perscription) have been updated. See Ray's web page at:

<http://www.g4fon.net/>

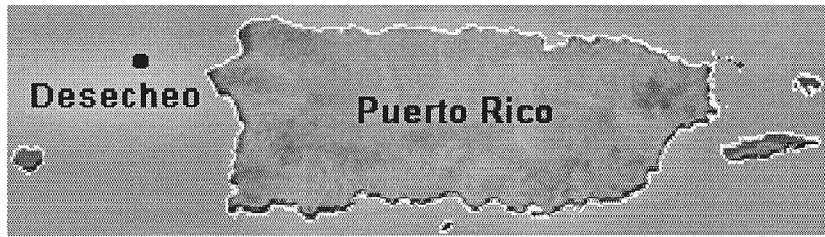
Also from Simon Brown HB9DRV, the rig control program Ham Radio Deluxe with a new companion program DM780 for sending and receiving a variety of digital modes have been updated to build 1901. See Simon Brown's web page at:

<http://www.ham-radio-deluxe.com/>

## Canwarn Training.

Lorraine MacPherson VA3NZ, sends this news about the next CANWARN training session.

A free Canwarn training session takes place this spring on Saturday April 18th, 2009 starting at 9AM. Location is at the Nash Auditorium of Chedoke Hospital. Please arrive a little early to sign in. Bring your friends and neighbours. You will be trained how to recognize signs of impending dangerous weather and how to report your observations. This training is open to any interested persons, not just ham radio operators. I have attended several of these sessions. They are worthwhile whether (not weather) it is your first time or a repeat visit.



## Erland Lee Museum

Lorraine also reports the following date for the Erland Lee Museum fundraiser.

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club has received information about Erland Lee Spring fundraiser again this year. Date is Saturday March 28th, 2009 8 am to noon. Snow/rain date is to be April 4th 2009. In previous years hams have staffed a demonstration station upstairs in the barn building while a local service club has had a pancake sausage and maple syrup breakfast

## Guides On The Air

Tom Van Wort, VA3TVW reports participation of local Pathfinders in an amateur radio special event.

VA3TVW will be operating a station for Pathfinders on Sunday February 22nd 2009. I will be operating from Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Modes of operation will be voice (on 80m 40m 20m 2m and as well on IRLP) node 2791.

We look forward to contacting or hearing from local hams as well as making contacts from farther away.

Hours of participation will 1:30 pm est time to 4:00 pm est {1830 utc 2100 utc}

As it stands we have 12 girls and 4 adults that will be participating. Also VE3WKG (Kevin Girard), VE3NVY (Jeff Smallwood), will be helping out as well with the operating.

Guides On The Air is an annual event sponsored by CLARA the Canadian Ladies Amateur Radio Association. Here is the webpage as well <http://www.clara.comm.sfu.ca/gota.html>

## DX: KP5 - Desecheo Island DX-pedition.

Rick Danby VE3BK sends this news about an opportunity to get a DX contact from a rare location!

In less than two weeks, there will a DX-pedition to KP5, Desecheo Island. For those of you do not know Desecheo Island, it is one of the more sought after DX locations in the world. The map above shows its location just west of Puerto Rico. For more information go to their site at:

<http://www.k5d.us>

The expedition will be on the air from Feb 12th - 26th. Since Puerto Rico is relatively near to Canada and local operators routinely make contact with this part of the world, getting this DX entry should be possible even for a casual operator. Why not give it a try?

## Kits

I found this web site on one of the SDR discussion groups.

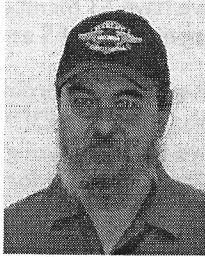
If you are looking for a way to get your feet wet with a home brew project, and make something useful for around the shack a great way to go is build a kit. Kits these days come in a small package with a circuit board and highly integrated parts. They are not difficult to assemble and provide satisfying results. You may wish to check out these offerings at:

<http://www.qsl.net/k5bcq/Kits/Kits.html>

If you do assemble a project for fun, don't forget to enter it in the Home Brew contest and Show-And-Tell night which takes place at the May meeting each year.

## The Ongoing Saga Of My Random Wire Antenna

*Or - Do You Really  
Need a Tuned  
Dipole To Get On  
The Air? by John  
Hudak VE3CXB*



I've been running a random wire antenna since I got my ham license four years ago. Before I became a ham I was a short wave listener for many years. My SWL antenna was about 60ft. of wire strung up in my small backyard, and fed with a single wire feeder - your typical "inverted L" type of antenna commonly used by SWL's. When I got my license I first attempted to use this antenna for transmitting - with terrible results. I had great difficulty loading up, even with an automatic antenna tuner. What I did in an attempt to tame things down was to move the single wire feeder away from the end of the long wire so that the feed point was now about 1/3 of the way along the wire. In addition I laid 60ft. of wire down on the ground as a counterpoise, plus I bought an older Dentron manual antenna tuner at the Brantford hamfest. Now the antenna worked - sort of - more or less!!!

It seemed to load up nicely on 80m, 40m, 17m, and 12m, and I easily made contacts. It sort of loaded on 10m, but the adjustments on the antenna tuner were "touchy". On 15m. it barely worked, and on 20m it would not work at all. This I thought was odd since the Dentron tuner I bought has a reputation of being able to load up a piece of wet string. I thought for sure it would load on 20m but but it just would not work. It would tune on 17m, but only if the ground was damp. I noticed that after we watered the lawn it would work just fine on 17m. but after the ground dried the match would go bad. One day I did an experiment. The ground was dry and I tried as best I could to load up. I then had my wife start watering the ground at the

far end of the counterpoise wire and slowly move towards the transmitter end. Sure enough as she put more water on the ground around the wire I got a good match. Strangely this effect with the damp ground occurred only on 17m. Fascinating stuff these antennas, aren't they?

I then attempted to see if I could load up on 160m., although I didn't hold out much hope with antenna being so short. I laid out a much longer counterpoise wire in the backyard, maybe 120ft. or so. I just wound it around the perimeter of the yard. Even with this longer counterpoise I could not load up on 160m. I happened to have a length of scrap wire about 30ft. long, and on a whim I just strung it out on the floor in the house. Now the antenna would load, but only on the upper half of the band (1.9 to 2.0 MHz.). However, would anyone be able to hear me? I knew that Rick VE3BK was going to be out at the contest site so I made arrangements with him to see if we could attempt a contact. Sure enough we managed to have a QSO. So far so good. I was radiating some RF instead of losing everything into the ground. Still, this was not DX, so I tried calling some of the U.S. hams during a contest. I actually made contact with a few of them in the midwest, and got a QSL card out of the first guy I talked to just to confirm my first ever 160m "non-local" contact. Without that extra 30 ft. of wire however I could not get out on this band. Another problem with this antenna is RF in the shack. in the room where I have my rig the outlets are protected with GFCI's (ground fault circuit interrupter). On some bands RF in the shack would be sensed by the GFCI's and the breakers would trip. This is a problem I never completely solved although I did try rearranging cables, using ferrite chokes, etc. which did help some. Then - one day the lightbulb came on in my head. Some (most?) of my problems are caused by not having the antenna fed at the centre, like in a dipole. At the centre of a half wave dipole the feedpoint impedance will be somewhere around 50 to 70 ohms, depending on

the height of the antenna above ground and the proximity of nearby structures. When you feed a half wave antenna at the end, the feedpoint impedance will be high - upwards of around 5000 ohms or more. Add in the facts that I was not feeding my antenna at either the end or the middle, I was using a single wire feeder instead of coax or balanced line, and my antenna was not resonant on any of the ham bands, and the result is that the impedance could be just about anything. When I checked it with a noise bridge that was pretty much what I found. The antenna did appear to resonate somewhere in the 8 MHz. short wave aircraft band. On any of the ham bands the impedances were all over the map. Then I got to reading up about non-resonant antennas. There are some who believe an antenna does not have to be resonant, or even 50 ohms, to work well. You can do your own reading and formulate your own ideas on the matter.

So I thought, let's try a transformer to step down the impedance. At one of the hamfests I came across a fellow selling a "like new" LDG 4:1 balun. The price was right so I figured I'd give it a try, and if it didn't work I wouldn't be out much money. Got home, hooked up the balun and presto - all seemed to be right. The lower bands (80 and 40) still operated as before. On 17m it didn't matter anymore whether or not my wife watered down the counterpoise, 15m and 10m worked fine now, and the previously unusable 20m now worked. And 160m? Yes, I could now load up my 60 foot piece of wire across the complete band without having to resort to laying wire around the floor in the house. I only had to rely on my single outside counterpoise. Just to make sure everything was working OK, I went through all the bands and made a number of contacts. The antenna worked just fine. Only on 160 did I have some difficulty getting out. No surprise there, as the antenna is way too short and my ground losses are probably pretty high. Just the same I did manage to make a few contacts, but I won't be working any long haul



DX on 160m. Of course this random piece of wire is not going to compete with a properly tuned yagi, or a quad, or delta loop, or whatever. What it does prove though is that even if you have a terrible property situation, and don't have the room to put up that dream antenna farm, you can still hang some wire up and make contacts. In fact I've managed to work most parts of the world on my random wire antenna, except for the far east. Sometimes band conditions become the limiting factor, and not how exotic your antenna might be.

## Minutes Of January 21st, 2009

By secretary Ron Ouwehand VE3OUW.

### Guest Speaker

Rick Danby had a talk about antennas. Mardy Eedson introduced the Yaesu FT 897 radio to the club. There were several sites set up in the

room by club members. Roger Pimm had a VHF demonstration setup, Emsley Mitchell had his radio on 40 meters and Mardy demonstrated the Ham Radio Deluxe Program.

### Business Meeting

Treasurer's Report. Fred Robinson VE3GCP gave the treasurer's report.

Health & Welfare Report. Mary VE3OGQ reported that Norm Tipler VE3AEF became a silent key and Colin Daniels VE3GCD became a silent key. Condolences have been sent.

Contest Chairman's Report. Rick Danby VE3BK, Contest Coordinator, reported that the 160 meter CW contest would be held at the end of January. The next contest we are participating in will be Feb. 27th to

Rick, VE3BK organized a Tuesday group at the airport. Attending were Emsley VE3JAI, Dan VE3DJ, John VE3CXB, Mardy VE3QEE with Doug VE3NBL assisting. Visitors come to see the station when the room is open.

March 1st. That contest will be the CQ Worldwide Sideband contest.

Membership, Sheri, VE3ZQV reported we have 63 members as primary members and 5 as family members.

Repeater. Coordinator, John Vandenberg, VE3DVV reported that we are still waiting to hear about the new controller for the repeater.

Mardy VE3QEE reminded members that the next flea market is in St. Catharines on February 7th and the following one will be in Burlington on February 28th. They are all listed on the RAC site.

Adjournment. Moved by Mardy VE3QEE seconded by Jack Gauthier VE3WBT the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

