

HOT BANANAS

Oakville Amateur Radio Club

March 2003

SHACK OF THE MONTH



VA3EC

Harry, VA3EC (aka VE3HKC), built a custom ham shack complete with sound proofing and a sliding glass door out to the backyard pool. Equipment includes a Kenwood TS570, a Heathkit SB200, a Dentron MT-2000A 3KW tuner, a LogiKit electronic keyer, a Kenwood TM741A vhf/uhf transceiver. Harry has modified his Ham IV rotor control with EZ Rotor kit. He's got an Explorer 14 on top of a 15-meter tower plus an Alpha Delta sloper.

Meeting this Monday!

Is QRN or QRM wrecking your ham radio experience? Come to the Oakville Amateur Radio Club meeting this Monday, March 10 for a anti-interference workshop by VE3HG. Bring your real-life problems and let the club members help you get back on the air. The workshop will focus on man-made noise generated both inside the shack and outside and what you can do about it. Don't let interference put you off the air or limit your enjoyment of your ham radio hobby. See you Monday night starting at 7:30 pm.

QRM & QRN

by Peter, VE3HG

If you can't make the Monday meeting, here's a sample of what you missed on how to get rid of QRM and QRN in your shack. Don't be a victim of man-made noise.

There's two types of noise that affects the enjoyment of our ham radio hobby. The first type is noise that's generated inside the home and the second is noise that comes from outside.

Regardless of where it comes from, you'll need some tools to track it down. My favourite noise sniffer is a cheap AM transistor radio tuned to an open frequency where you can clearly hear the noise. A wide-band handi talkie that can run in AM mode on the 118 MHz airband is another excellent noise sniffer. Don't use FM mode as the noise will magically disappear.



AM radio

To eliminate your home as the source of the noise, run your rig on 12 volts. Confirm your objectionable noise is present and then turn off the power to the house. Did your noise go away? If so, it's probably being generated inside your house. If the noise remains, it's likely coming from outside. Now go ahead and turn the power back on and reset all the clocks in your home.

So let's say the noise is inside your home. Now what? Now comes the detective work. Using your AM radio, go from room to room listening for an increase in noise level. Check every appliance, whether it's running or not. There are potential noise makers everywhere and it may take a second or third look to narrow it down.

You may be surprised by how a small device can make a major racket on your radio. Check this out on page 2.

Continued on page 2.

VE3HB

The Oakville Amateur Radio Club meets on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. from Sept. to June at the Red Cross, 167 Navy St. Guests are always welcome.

There is an informal gathering 7 a.m. most Saturdays at Angel's Diner at 369 Speers Rd. and a Friday 10:30 a.m. coffee session at Tim Horton's on Cross Road.

All are welcome.

VE3OAK - 147.015 +.600 (131.8Hz CTCSS)

VE3OAK - 444.325 +5 MHz

VE3OAK - APRS - 144.390 MHz

Net - Mondays at 7:30 p.m. (except meeting nights and holidays on 145.015.)

Web Site: www.oakvilleamateurs.net

Hot Bananas

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Submit story ideas, feedback, comments, articles or artwork to ve3hg@cogeco.ca or mail to:

Hot Bananas

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*This one of the biggest noisemakers in my house!
I'm talking about the light.*

This relatively cheap light has a two-position switch. It allows the lamp to go from noisy to really noisy. It creates a big enough buzz that my shortwave radio can pick it up from 30 feet away.



Dimmer switch

This dimmer switch is another big noise source. It's quiet when in the off position or in the full-on position. Any position in between creates a buzz that can be heard on my HF set.

Another source of VHF & UHF noise was an old fax machine. My mobile radio could pick it up in the driveway. It's for sale.

Outside noises

What if the noise is outside the house? I've got an S-9 noise that only appears on 20 meters. I can hear it best on the TH-3 beam when it is pointed north-north-east which puts the likely noise source on Speers Road. My guess is someone has an arc welder or electro-plating machine which is not grounded.

The image on the next page is a shot of my IC-756's front screen. It shows the spikey type of noise I get on 20 meters. To get closer, I'm going to need to take a walk with my all-band handi talkie tuned to 20 meters. I suspect that the handi-talkie will allow me to narrow down the source to within a few yards. Then comes the tough part to convince some business owner that his machine needs grounding or shielding because it's interfering with some guy's ham radio station 1000 feet away. I'm just waiting for warmer weather before I begin the search.

Continued on page 3.

CQ CQ CQ

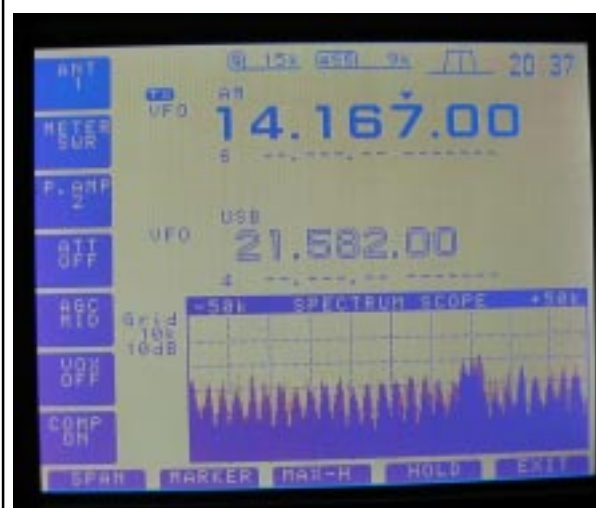
Executives & Coordinators

Club Executive 2002-2003

President	Jack Livingstone	VE3ITM
Vice President	Denny Zidek	VE3OKD
Secretary	Greg Foster	VA3GGF
Treasurer	Carvell Pelkey	VE3CPQ
Director	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUZ

Club Coordinators

Membership	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUZ
Program	Denny Zidek	VE3OKD
	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUZ
Emerg. Coordinator	Rick Harrison,	VE3YRH
Assistant E. C.	Jack Livingstone	VE3ITM
	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUZ
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VHF net activities	Denny Zidek	VE3OKD
Repeater	Greg Foster	VA3GGF
	Gary Hetherington	VE3TGH
	Harry Kosterman	VA3EC
Web site	Michael Willems	VA3MVW
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Examiner	Jack Livingstone	VE3ITM
Public Relations	Doug Smith	VE3RG
Equipment/Shack	Mike Brown	VA3GRL
	Jack Livingstone	VE3ITM
DX Interest Group	Ron O'Reilly	VE3FII
Club Bulletin	Peter West	VE3HG



This is my nightmare S-9 noise on 20 meters.

For more information on QRM and QRN come on out to the club meeting this Monday night when I'll tell you how to track down noise on 40 meters and what to do if you suspect you've got a noisy powerline or pole in your neighbourhood. You don't have to be beat by man-made noise.

Letter to the editor

Hello Peter:

I read your article about antennas in the Hot Bananas with interest, (if you like I could add a lot about accessories).

Of particular interest was your comment about a Butternut antenna in a city lot. I can tell you that one of my antennas is an HF9VX and it works beautifully.

The radial system is a problem, so I laid down a 24 foot length of chicken wire 3 feet wide and sodded over it. It works very well.

At the lake, I have a 252ft Carolina Windom with the transmitting radiator running along the edge of the bank above Lake Huron, so I have about 90 feet of height above the water, and boy does this ever work. I get great reports on my 1000MP.

I check in to the Century Club on 160 occasionally and get really good reports from Texas, Florida, California etc. Just thought I send along some comments.

73 Gord VA3OD VE3RRT

Digital imaging



Paul Sparrow



It was a big turnout at the Burlington Club meeting.

Each of us is convinced that he is a good driver and each of us thinks that to take a good photograph is in his nature. Well, think about that again!

On February 6th, members of our club had another joint meeting with the Burlington Radio Club. The presentation was related to digital imaging and the speaker was Paul Sparrow, a professional photographer.

The presentation started with a slide show of his work. As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, most of us felt quite humble about our abilities to take a good picture, after seeing these images.

Paul has imaginative compositions, some of them quite surrealistic, while others showing the beauty of Mother Nature or our city surroundings. All that in digital format!!! Paul explained the basics of digital imaging, hardware and software tools needed to create such images.

But as in every profession or hobby, there is a human being behind the action, who can use those tools efficiently. This tool is Adobe Photoshop software.

To modify the color tone of the image, reconstruct the old faded photograph or to create some tricky collage from three individual images seems to be quite a simple task. Well, as everything in the life – if you know what you are doing, it looks simple.

To apply this technique and knowledge to our hobby: You can use it to create images for your personalized QSL card or assemble the picture to send it on SSTV.

The presentation and lively discussion would have continued well into the late evening, so Norm had to call it off at 10 P.M.

I would like to thank Norm, VE3CZI for arranging this presentation and inviting the members of OARC to the meeting.

The joint meeting of our neighboring clubs was well advertised in advance. It is a reality that not too many members of Oakville club showed up. But, here I am coming to different issue – volunteering.

To organize the presentation for the meetings, prepare the HB bulletin or any other kind of volunteer work for the club takes a lot of personal time and extra effort.

The only reward for this work is the participation of club members during the meetings, Monday's Net check-in or writing the articles for the bulletin.

I would like to appeal to all members of the Oakville Amateur Radio Club to be more active and participate.

The Club has a long history of achievements and proud moments. Now it is up to us to continue the tradition and walk in this direction, or as Hollywood portrays – ride the horse into the sunset.

73, Denny VE3OKD

Gary & Amy in the deep woods

The picture "Muskoka" was taken last summer, July 12, 2002 at the Huckleberry Rock Cut in Muskoka of Amy and I. This was my first Geocache site that took me two summers to find! The box I am holding is an old ammunitions box that was hidden at the base of the rock I am sitting on, buried under leaves. My other hand is holding the log book to sign and some of the "cash" that was in the box.

http://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?ID=2550 This is the URL for the above site

The picture "Dark Park" was taken summer of 2001 in the Torrance Barrens, site of the world's first Dark Sky Reserve located in Muskoka. The cache was covered with a flat rock and was one of the easiest to find. This cache site was placed here by a fellow ham who lives in Muskoka and is a great promoter of the Park. Since this cache has been here, it has led others to find this park and most hadn't heard of the park. I sure helps to have a GPS with back track, this displays your track on the GPS screen and sure was needed to find our way out. But good lesson learned, know your way back out! If it hadn't been for the "back track", as we had entered the area off the trail, we would have missed the way we had come in.

http://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?ID=3148 This is the URL for the above site.

This URL has information on the in's and out's of Geocaching <http://www.geocaching.com/articles/finding.asp>

Hope the above information helps.....

de Gary



Here's Gary VE3TGH and daughter Amy, VA3AKU



Here's the hidden cache.

"Jeep Thrills" or "Don't give me no Static!" by Harry, VA3EC

Over the past year I have experienced a steadily growing problem of static noise in the receive signal on my mobile transceiver. I thought FM was immune to static, however this appears not to be the case. When I was well within the repeaters' coverage I had no audible noise. The further away I got from a repeater, the static noise would become noticeable and as the signal-to-noise ratio reduced it rendered the mobile rig useless. However, everyone could hear me just fine and with no static. I checked the antenna for an open ground and tested the antenna with an analyzer, no joy! Over this period of time I noticed the Jeep was getting to be a pig on gas.

Peter, VE3HG, my son Nick and I went to the Burlington Ham Fest February 1. Peter was in the process of manipulating my total lack of fiscal responsibility and trying to coerce me into buying his dual band handi. He brought it along in the car to Burlington. The close occurred when I could hear the static on the handi as well. I was helpless and had to buy the handi to assist me in sleuthing out my noise problem. Never occurred to me to just borrow it, but I needed a technology fix anyway. I finally put 2 and 2 together and suspected the ignition wires. No problem, the Jeep has a straight 6 engine and easy to work on. I bought new wires, plugs, rotor and cap and in the bright sunshine of February 1 I played auto mechanic for about 45 minutes.

Bingo! The noise is gone! The bonus is that the Jeep is purring like a hungry dog on a T-Bone. Total cost of the repair was \$400. I believe this to be very good value. The parts cost \$100 and the Static meter which also doubles as a lovely dual band handi cost \$300. Most tune-ups cost \$300 to \$400 dollars basically I got the handi thrown in for free!

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SSTV

An overview and introduction to Slow Scan Television Is this a mode for ARES?

by Glenn, VE3CEZ, Oakville Amateur Radio Club, Milton Amateur Radio Emergency Service

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago a Japanese Amateur Radio operator, Makoto Mori, with the call sign JE3HHT started on a computer program creation that would fascinate and enhance the station operation of hams around the world. The end result of Makoto's work was MMSSTV, a program he has provided free to all amateur radio operators. Impressive and easy to learn, this program is commercial grade although specific to one mode of operation, and that is Slow Scan TV. Today (Feb'03), the most recent version available for download from the Internet is v-1.09. This product has been produced for amateurs by a fellow amateur. The following is therefore specific to the MMSSTV product.

WHAT DO I NEED

MMSSTV is so versatile you can use it on VHF / UHF or on the HF bands. Primarily found on HF and on many bands, there are quite a few operators that join up with each other or CQSSTV on 20 meters. The frequency normally used for this mode on 20 meters is 14.230 MHz and on occasion when crowding occurs, 14.233 MHz. All that is needed for receive operation is the MMSSTV software, a computer equal to or greater than 100 MHz (486 is possible but could be too slow), a radio receiver capable of HF or VHF / UHF reception, and an input cable that connects between the radio output and the sound card input of the computer. You can set up your radio to transmit with MMSSTV by following the comprehensive instructions included with the program. It is also possible to use the software with the Rigblaster interface, the Rascal interface or several of the homebrew interfaces found on the Internet.

HOW FAR CAN I TRANSMIT

On HF it definitely depends on propagation at the time you are transmitting, relative of course to the time and the frequency you have chosen. I have had a 50-watt DX SSTV contact with an amateur in Argentina on 20 meters. You too can make distant contacts when you are fully setup and work the signals. Reception of signals has been captured from Siberia in Russia, Germany, Japan, Italy, England, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and many US states.

HOW ABOUT POWER OUTPUT

This is a good question. Don't forget to reduce your transmit output to approximately half of the rated full output of your radio. Unless your radio is 100% duty cycle, running at full power will soon cost you your finals! As with any digital transmission type, operate at ½ the full power output or less, you'll be surprised as to just how far your signal will go. To explain this a little further, if your radio is rated at 100 watts out on HF, typical TX will be 50 watts or less on the digital modes. Do not engage your speech processor as it could distort the transmission.

SSTV STILL SOUNDS COMPLICATED

It may sound complicated, it may look complicated, but believe me it is truly simple and you can receive assistance from many amateurs to get setup once you're on the air. MMSSTV includes built in help for setting up your soundcard to WWV. First off, tune in WWV on 5, 10 or 15 MHz AM. Click on the "Option" bar at the top of the window, select "Setup MMSSTV", click on the "Misc" tab and look down to the bottom left of the screen where you should see a frequency like 11025.00 Hz or thereabouts.

Next to that number is the word "Adj". Click on "Adj" and follow the instructions to setup your soundcard using the WWV broadcast. WWV and produces a white vertical bar over a 3 to 5 minute period on your screen with the time clicks you hear. Simply click your mouse cursor to the top left of the vertical line, then click again at the bottom left of the vertical line and release the mouse button. Follow the instructions and with a click or two your soundcard should be calibrated.

WHAT ABOUT SENDING PICTURES

There is space at the bottom of the MMSSTV screen for both Transmit Templates and Stored Pictures. As you create your Transmit Templates, you can also save them for future use, there is plenty of available space for the multitude of combinations that you can devise. Saving a template is as simple as dragging with your mouse from the template window to an open stored template window below. As for photos there are enough frames to hold 25 pages of 12 pictures each. Loading them in to the program is as easy as two or three clicks of the mouse. Loading them into the transmit window is only a drag and drop away. Once loaded into the transmit frame you can send the picture by clicking on the **tx** button located at the bottom left of the transmit window. Most transmissions are made in Scottie 1 mode so while you are in the transmit window click on Scottie 1 as the mode prior to sending your picture. Many other modes are available by highlighting a mode while in the transmit window and right clicking on the mouse. You'll be amazed.

IS THAT IT?

Not quite. You need to play with MMSSTV and learn as you go. Also, learn from others as you progress with the software over time. You can automatically encode your call sign within the signal, and decode other hams call signs when they have done the same within their program. Auto slant adjustment is possible although most operators now prefer proper calibration so as not to slant your picture during transmit or receive. A log program is available within the program so you can record the QSOs and images sent by others. When an encoded signal is received, your software can insert the call sign into your display and highlight call signs that have been logged previously and display all the information regarding that station that was previously logged. Filters are adjustable as are demodulator modes. You can also have your call sign sent in CW at the completion of your SSTV transmission. Many items to play with and get more confident and competent with as you explore the software.

The best part remains in that the program is FREE to all amateurs.

COMMON SSTV HF FREQUENCIES

In JA land the most active frequency is 7.033 MHz

1.918 MHz for 160 Meters

3.845 MHz for 80 Meters

7.228 MHz for 40 Meters

14.230 & 14.233 MHz USB for 20 Meters

21.340 MHz USB for 15 Meters

28.680, 28.677 & 28.683 MHz USB for 10 Meters

Most of these are calling frequencies and sometimes you'll find groups active on them with a control station to alleviate mayhem. Courtesy is to join in with an established group and **DO NOT TRANSMIT OVER ANYONE** as this is a quick way to become ignored in the future. Be ready to use a microphone to pass on your call sign in order to join a group. 3 kHz spacing is required with SSTV signals so the frequency space is at a premium and movement up or down may be required. Stay within the assigned portion of the spectrum.

VHF Frequencies

Transmissions have been heard on 144.950 MHz although a regular frequency has never been established and many packet stations exist in this area of the band..

UHF Frequencies

Transmissions have occurred on the P.A.R.C. 443.550 MHz repeater with permission of the Peel Amateur Radio Club. An SSTV net may be established after trials on a repeater in Halton, with access by many amateurs. Startup will be announced, so stay tuned. Other transmissions have occurred between 446.800 MHz and 446.975 MHz. This portion of the spectrum has a 25 kHz raster. SSTV requires 3 kHz separation.

Join in, and most of all, enjoy the MMSSTV software!

Just a note on the name: This software is referred to as "Mickey Mouse" over the air, but the MM refers to the creators initials (Makoto Mori) SSTV. Good Luck, download your own copy at this address: <http://www.qsl.net/mmhamsoft/mmsstv/> or enter MMSSTV in your browser and search.

Have fun with your copy of MMSSTV!

Hamvention News

- thanks to Doug, VE3RG

Although 2003 marks the last year of a five-year contract to hold Hamvention at Hara Arena (in Dayton, Ohio), organizers hope to keep the show there for the indefinite future. Rumors crop up each year—and this has been no exception—that this year’s event will be the last to take place at the venerable venue near Dayton, Ohio, that’s served as Hamvention’s home since 1964. Negotiations on a new contract to retain Hara for future shows remain in the offing. Billed as “the world’s largest Amateur Radio gathering and trade show,” **Hamvention 2003 takes place May 16-18.**

“We haven’t made any decisions yet,” Hamvention production manager Garry Matthews, KB8GOL, said this week. “We want to get this year’s show under our belt and then renegotiate the contract.” At the same time, Matthews said, there are no plans to go elsewhere, nor is Hamvention under any threat or pressure to relocate. “There’s nothing planned to move,” he said. “But,” he conceded, “we’ve looked at alternative locations in case something happens. Anything could happen to Hara.”

Matthews says the sponsoring Dayton Amateur Radio Association has explored several other possible locations for Hamvention, which has quietly dropped “Dayton” from the show’s official name. Matthews says no other site in the Greater Dayton area will serve the purpose that Hara does. “None of the other venues will support the show at its current size,” he said.

Speaking of size, Hamvention reported that attendance for last year’s 50th anniversary event was 24,832—down about 5 percent from 2001’s crowd of 26,151. 2002 marked the second year in a row that Hamvention’s attendance had dipped. Attendance climbed to 28,804 in 2000, the year of the ARRL National Convention at Dayton. Matthews has said that any crowd larger than 28,000 starts to push the envelope as far as Hara Arena is concerned—especially the human comfort factor. Hamvention attendance peaked in 1993 at 33,669—before the event date changed from April to May.

As for continued use of Hara Arena, Matthews points out that the building has never been sold, is not for sale now and never has been. As for a new contract with Hara? “We’ll evaluate the show after June 1, and we hope to improve some things,” he said, without revealing any details. In the meantime, he’s pouring his energy into the arrangements for this year’s show, but, he reports, things have been slower to come together in terms of advance sales to visitors and vendors. “If we go to war, people might not want to travel,” he said. “There’s nothing to panic about, but it’s tougher this year.” Some changes already have been announced. Among other things, Hamvention this year will replace its annual banquet and entertainment with a more low-key award winners’ reception at Hara Saturday evening.

Between now and show time, Matthews says Hamvention will—among other moves—boost its advertising and promotion to counteract the sluggish advance sales. “We’re going to have a good show,” he predicted confidently. For additional insights and information on Hamvention, see “How Hamvention Happens,” in April 2000 QST and available on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2003/03/06/4/0004053.pdf>>. For more information on Hamvention 2003, visit the Hamvention Web site <<http://www.hamvention.org>>.



QRT by VE3HG

Are we having fun yet?

Ham radio, like life itself is full of challenges. Nothing stays the same and I say good thing! Like so many others I just found myself suddenly self-employed (which in journalism circles means out of work!) so I’ve got some more time to work on the station and put up a couple of more antennas. There’s time now to work on my DXCC.

On that theme, the CQ WW WPX phone contest is coming up March 29 to 30. This is a great contest where everyone works everyone else for new call sign prefixes. I’m hosting a multi-op, single transmitter, high-power, all band assault on the record. Anyone who wants a taste of contesting at an award-winning station (mine) is invited to drop me an e-mail at ve3hg@rac.ca and let me know when and for how long you want to operate. If you’ve never been on a contest before, we’ll show you what to do and coach you through your first few contacts. This is a great way to learn more about contesting and this is a great contest to get started.

This issue of *Hot Bananas* went together in a few hours thanks to all the excellent contributions. I hope you enjoyed reading this issue as much as I did putting it together. Hope to see you all at the meeting this Monday.

73 Peter, VE3HG