

Message from the London Amateur Radio Club

Promoting Amateur Radio in London
and surrounding areas since 1920



May 2, 2005

-
- Next Meeting...
 - Meeting Topic – Mobile HF operation by Eric, VA3EP
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Other Items of Interest...

- ⇒ CANWARN awards to LARC members
 - ⇒ End of RADIO SHACK in Canada
 - ⇒ Mounties seize counterfeit electrical equipment
 - ⇒ St Thomas Club meetings
 - ⇒ Using a computer headset with your radio
 - ⇒ Results of May 1st Foxhunt
 - ⇒ Wanted: Morse code equipment
 - ⇒ 2005/2006 Club Election in May
 - ⇒ Field Day 2005
 - ⇒ London Hamfest 2005
 - ⇒ Adobe Acrobat Reader v7.0 for Windows XP
 - ⇒ Is your address CORRECT?
 - ⇒ New LARC email address
 - ⇒ Are your friends receiving this bulletin?
-

The next Meeting is...

Reminder of the next monthly Club meeting on Thursday, May 12th, 2005 @
7:30pm

All meetings are located at St. Judes Anglican Church,
1537 Adelaide Street North at Fanshawe Park Road East in London, Ontario,

They are normally held on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm EST
during the months of September to June (no meetings July and August).

**Meeting Topic: Safe and Efficient Mobile Operation
by Eric Pierce, VA3EP**

How to install and operate an HF/VHF/UHF mobile station

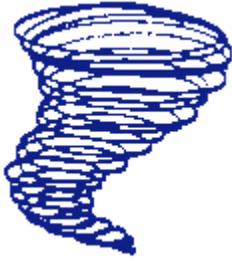


A serious mobile DXer !

Eric will be talking about what he learned installing and operating a mobile HF/VHF/UHF/APRS station in his vehicle.

He will be discussing rig types, rig mounting, antenna types, antenna mounting, power wiring, antenna wiring and operating issues. If you are interested in doing a mobile installation, you will be sure to learn many useful tips. Even if you already operate mobile, you will probably pick up a few you are not aware of.

Update on Canwarn 2005 by Tom, VE3OEP



As you probably know Canwarn has been operating in the London area to provide Environment Canada with visual information on severe weather as it passes through our region.

The severe weather season is approaching and Canwarn will begin operations for the summer of 2005 at the beginning of April.

It is currently planned that a training session will be held in April during one of the club meetings. This training is for both amateurs wishing to be spotters and experienced Canwarn members. I hope you will be able to attend.

Canwarn would also like to find some amateurs who are available to run nets in the event of a callout by Environment Canada. The controller would be expected to commit to being available for about 4 weeks during the period from April to October. The weeks will be selected at mutually convenient times. During those weeks the controller will be assigned a pager and will be required to report to the London Central Fire Hall to run the net in the event of a Severe Thunderstorm Warning. We usually try to have one on-call controller to cover the hours of 10 am to 5 pm and an evening controller to cover the hours of 5 pm – 11 pm. This is an ideal activity for a retired amateur who is comfortable with computers, the Internet, and 2m equipment. Experience running a net is not required and training will be provided for those selected.

For further information on being a controller or on joining Canwarn in another capacity please contact Tom Stewart at ve3oep@rac.ca

Other Items of Interest

CANWARN Training



Plus Awards to LARC members

The April meeting was the annual CANWARN meeting. The meeting was very well attended with environment Canada presenting to a full house.

During the training presentation, it was re-emphasized that 1/3 of all weather reports (which also includes all electronic methods) come from spotters. They are currently trying different methods to increase the number of spotters and were thankful for the dedication of the ham radio community.

After the meeting, awards were given to 4 LARC members that have been instrumental in supporting and promoting CANWARN since the early days of the project.

The four hams awarded were:

Dave Young, VE3EAY
Tom Stewart, VE3OEP
Rob Bryant, VE3LUV
Al Bernier, VE3LOD

Each of the recipients was presented with a jacket as well as a plaque.



End of “RADIO SHACK” in Canada

More than 900 Canadian electronics stores to become THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY

Richmond, Va. and Barrie, ON, April 27, 2005 - Circuit City Stores, Inc. and InterTAN Canada Ltd. today announced that on or before June 30, 2005, all stores currently operated by InterTAN Canada Ltd. under license from RadioShack Corporation will be re-branded as THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY. The introduction of THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY stores begins today with the unveiling of the Toronto Eaton Centre location.

"Ninety percent of all Canadians live within a 10-minute drive to one of our locations. By June 30, THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY will have the same national coverage," said Brian Levy, president and chief executive officer of InterTAN Canada Ltd. "Customers will continue to see quality, national and international electronics brands as well as an emphasis on personal and portable devices."

THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY will be the local destination for personal electronics such as MP3 players, digital cameras, LCD TVs and a broad selection of personal and portable consumer electronics. THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY will also offer a diverse mix of communication, computer and household electronic products.

The Eaton Centre store in Toronto is the first location to be re-branded THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY and will be followed by other locations in the Greater Toronto Area and other major markets. The introduction of THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY will be supported by a major advertising campaign featuring television and radio commercials as well as print and outdoor advertising.

The company also released a copy of the mark for THE SOURCE BY CIRCUIT CITY.



www.TheSourceCC.com

Related Link from CBC Business News:

<http://www.cbc.ca/story/business/national/2005/03/24/radioshack-050324.html>

POLICE CHARGE TWO TORONTO MEN WITH SELLING DANGEROUS COUNTERFEIT ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS

Summary taken from: http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/on/press/2005/2005_mar_30_e.htm



(Toronto, Ontario - March 30, 2005) Following a two month investigation, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Greater Toronto Area Federal Enforcement Section have charged two Toronto-area men and a Toronto import-export company with four counts each of dealing in counterfeit products.

When tested by Underwriters Laboratories, the counterfeit extension cords melted and caught fire within a matter of minutes. The power bars were found to have undersized wiring and no surge suppression. They were also found to have reverse polarity wiring which is a shock hazard and a plastic casing which ignited immediately since it was not made of fire resistant material.

These seizures and charges are part of Project Ocat, an RCMP anti-counterfeiting initiative launched in October 2004 with a mandate to target counterfeit products in the Greater Toronto Area. Since its inception, Project Ocat has seized more than \$3 million (retail price) of counterfeit products including toys, sports jerseys, clothing, ball caps, pharmaceuticals, work boots, running shoes, batteries, shampoo, computer software, computer games, anti-virus software, electrical products, lights and lamps. Most of these counterfeit items were seized at various cargo and postal facility outlets in the Greater Toronto Area.

St Thomas Club meetings – by AL VA3LX

Here's the details of the EARS meetings for St.Thomas.

We now meet the First Wednesday of each month, at 8:00 PM, in the Community Room of the "Real Canadian Superstore".

The Superstore is located at the corner of Talbot Street, and First Avenue beside Wall*Mart. The community room is located on the second floor, with access via stairs or elevator. No outside food or beverages are allowed, but may be purchased at the Superstore. Please retain your receipt as we are asked to submit them to the store. All are welcome, as we have lots of seating.

Talk-in on VE3STR-R, 147.330 + (114.8 PL)

Thank you,
VA3LX

How to wire a computer headset into your radio – Mark VE3PZR

During the January presentation, I talked about buying an inexpensive computer headset and rewiring the microphone for ham radio use. With field-day quickly approaching, this is a quick and easy project that will add to the enjoyment of the event.



Heil headset for ham radio \$300

The headset pictured above is the Heil headset manufactured specifically for radio use. It can be purchased at most ham radio outlets for about \$300.



Typical computer headset - less than \$30

The headset pictured above is a typical headset purchased from Futureshop or Walmart. The cost is usually less than \$30 and can be as low as \$10 if they are on sale.



Cordless-phone headset

Another source of cheap headsets are cell-phone and cordless-phone headsets although most of them only have a single ear-cup (driver safety issue).

Cont'd...

One of the common traits of computer headsets is they have two plugs. One plug is used for the headphone audio, the other is for the microphone.



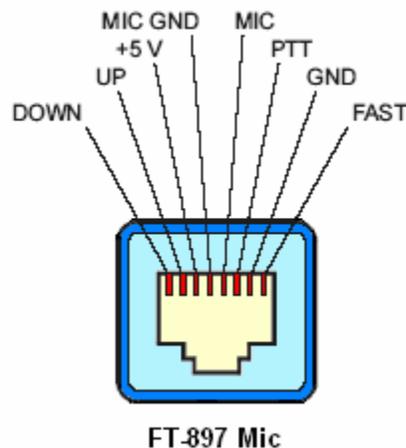
headset audio cable (left) and dollar-store adapter (right)

Getting audio into the headset is easy; go to a dollar store and pick up a headphone adapter plug for \$1. Plug the headset plug into the adapter and plug the adapter into the headphone jack on the front of your radio. You should now have audio going into the headset. If all you want is to listen, sit back and enjoy, you are done.

If you want to use the boom mic on the headset for transmitting audio, you might need to wire a very easy circuit. The reason is due to the condenser mic element requiring a small voltage to operate. A computer puts 5 Volts on the audio line to power the mic element; some radios also power their mics via the same method but many do not.

I have included the mic pinout of the Yaesu FT-897 as an example. To test your rig to see if power is provided to the mic, measure the voltage between the MIC and GND.

Some radios might call this pin the "TX AUDIO" or "AUDIO IN" pin. You may notice that one of the pins actually says +5V. Ignore that pin for now, it might not be required.



If your rig shows at least 3 volts on the audio line, no extra circuitry is required. Simply connect the computer mic directly to the radio.

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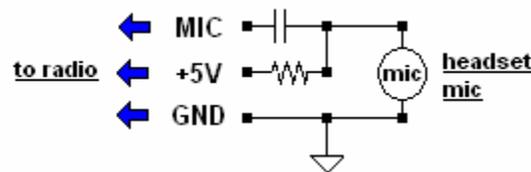
The pinout of most computer mic cables is below. I personally made a small adapter cable with a radio-mic connector on one end and an audio jack on the other. That allowed me to try multiple computer headsets without cutting any wires. To save a dollar or two, you could cut off the computer plug and directly solder a radio-mic plug.



computer MIC cable pinout

If your radio does not have a voltage on the audio line, you must insert the voltage yourself via a 2 component circuit. I have drawn the schematic below. The parts are small enough that you can hide them in the radio-mic connector.

I have found that exact values are not necessary. I steal the +5V from the radio's mic jack (see the FT-897 pinout as an example). The cap is being used as a DC block and should be somewhere between 1uf to 10uf. The resistor should be something in the range of 1k to 10k. If you use a 1/8th watt resistor, they are TINY but still large enough to be easily soldered, even for fat fingered Charlie! The audio quality is extremely high.



Schematic for radio powered condenser MIC

Unlike radio mics that only pass the vocal range, the computer mic will transmit a full fidelity (extremely clear) signal. This is ok for around the house (will pickup background noises – kids, dog, TV) but might not be suitable for mobile use (road noises).

Three methods of Keying your radio (computers do not have PTT):

1. For those of you that attended the Jan meeting, you might remember the small adapter box that I built. It was the size of a 9V battery and was used as my interface between the radio and the headset. It contained the 2 components plus a large RED push button switch. I had the switch wired as the PTT for the radio.
2. An alternate and more relaxing method is to ignore wiring a switch and simply use the VOX function of your radio. Lean back in the easy chair and talk, the radio VOX will start the transmission and stop when you stop talking.
3. If you like positive control of your radio, a foot switch can be wired into the back of the radio. Radioshack sells a footswitch for guitar amps that seems to work with my HF radio.

That's all folks, Catch you on the air!! de VE3PZR QRT.

Results of LARC Foxhunt



On Sunday, May 1st, the club had its first Fox Hunt of 2005.

Don VA3DWB operated as the fox and tried to foil everyone's attempts by varying the power of his transmitter and keeping his transmissions limited to 1 minute on, 4 minutes off.

The following people participated in the hunt and represented 5 vehicles:

Hunters:

- VA3PTV, Pam
- VE3PTV, Archie
- VA3TPA, Chris
- VE3PZR, Mark

The Fox:

VA3DWB, Don

- VE3UZ, David
- VE3GYL, Kathy
- VA3RGR, Roger
- VA3DAE, Doug



The winner was Doug, VA3DAE who was able to find the fox in 1 hour using a bow-tie "handi-finder" antenna.

Doug thanks Tim Spicer (VE3ZTS) for making the antenna available and stealing the glory from all other participants!



WINNER: Doug VA3DAE

<http://www.handi-finder.com/>

Editors Note (VE3PZR): My participation was literally at the last moment. I was driving across the city and heard the talk on the radio. Using just my HT and monitoring the signal strength, I was able to determine which part of the city contained the fox and maybe would have found the culprit given enough time. I can see how this could become an addictive activity; I suggest that everyone should try it at least once.

Obviously technology wins (bow-tie antenna). I had done some research in the past on this antenna and I am currently making a circuit board layout.

A future newsletter will contain more info...

Wanted: Morse code keys and oscillators – by Terrence Edward Hillier



To any one who might have some old morse code keys and oscillators laying about, currently myself VE3TEH and Floyd Donald VE3ONF, Allen McRorie VE3GAM, are teaching morse code to developmentally challenged adults and are in need of morse code keys and oscillators.

This project is going so well it looks like it will be a full time function at the school.

We need morse code keys and oscillators that can be left at the school permanently for them to practice on as well as the fact that the staff will be eventually doing the teaching in other schools as this is working so well for their hand eye coordination.

We are not concerned that they get their morse ticket as much that they get the use of their hands back. I can tell you tough we have about 3 or 4 that will not only get the 5wpm but the basic as well.

They really enjoy doing it and we do as well, just ask Allen, he came out once to see what we were doing and hasn't missed a day since.

For more info call me 519-637-2032

EDITORS Note: This looks like a good project for some 1st time builders. If there is some interest, I can etch some simple oscillator boards if some guys want to try putting them together (mark@foxhollow.ca).

Field Day 2005



Just to keep everyone in the information loop, the current plan is to once again have field day at Reservoir Hill Park in Byron. It was the location used last year and every one was happy with the location.

Some of the rules have changed for stations participating in field-day 2005.

The following links give some information on the changes:

1. <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/> ARRL Contest forms and rules
2. <http://www.hfradio.net/bulletin/feb2705i.html#Contest> Contest News

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the global event, here is a brief description:

Ham Radio operators from all over the US and Canada as well as all other parts of the world, take their radios, antennas and equipment into the great outdoors to set up and operate away from electrical power mains.

Purpose: an annual exercise where ham's set up and operate radio communications in the event of emergency or disaster conditions. Priority is placed on skills and equipment developed to meet the challenge of emergency preparedness and to acquaint the public with the capabilities of Amateur Radio. Hams work as many stations as possible on any or all amateur bands and, in doing so, to learn to operate in abnormal situations under less-than-optimum conditions.

Who can attend: the event operates under the supervision of the local radio club (LARC). That means any person, even those with out a valid radio license, are permitted to show up and operate any radio on any band. For those of you that have thought about working HF, here is your opportunity to get on the air.

Cont'd on next page...

Field Day Committee:

The following people are currently on the mailing list called:
fieldday2005@hamster.foxhollow.ca

VE3SQU, Tony Drawmer (Coordinator)	drawmer@odyssey.on.ca
VE3NLP, Mike Doncaster	ve3nlp@rogers.com
VA3MSV, John Visser	va3msv@hotmail.com
VA3PTV, Archie Van De Velde	archie@execulink.com
VE3PZR, Mark Bramwell	mark@foxhollow.ca
VE3GB, Gord Baker	gord.baker@rogers.com
VA3ATB, Brian Bouckley	brian.bouckley@sympatico.ca
VE3XMA, Mike Argyle	mikeve3@hotmail.com
VE3EAY, Dave Young	mooseve3eay@hotmail.com

If someone wants to be part of the process and is not listed in the above group, they should send me an email to be added to the email list as well as you will receive a copy of the planning document.

Activities requiring volunteers:

Band Captains, Tents/lodging, Power, Food

Extra Activities: This year we will hold a foxhunt and a BBQ on the same week-end as field-day.

Meetings: There is a weekly get-together at the Cottage Restaurant on Saturday mornings between 9:00am to 10:30am. If you are interested in chatting about field-day, drop by have some breakfast and let us know what's on your mind.

For more information, send email to: fieldday2005@hamster.foxhollow.ca

PS: A detailed message will be sent in June outlining field-day activities.

London Amateur Radio Club
28th Annual
2005 FLEAMARKET

Every year at the end of September, the London Amateur Radio Club sponsors a technology flea market. This year the flea market will be held on Sunday Sept 25th at the "London Western Fair Grounds".

The flea market is extremely important to the club. It is a major source of revenue and allows us to continue with our various functions and services without raising the membership dues or to put it another way, it stops us from closing the doors due to lack of funds.

The full brochure: <http://www.larc.ca/newsletter/LARC-HAMFEST-2005.pdf>

Inquiries can be sent to: hamfest2005@hamster.foxhollow.ca

How to support YOUR flea market:



The most obvious way to support your hamfest is to **attend**. We charge a small admission for people to enter the flea market. Bring a friend or two. The standard ham-radio flea market of today contains several non-hamradio items and has the interest of a broader audience.

Rent a table. Many of you have high-quality, under-used equipment that is begging to be updated. Seize the opportunity to sell your old equipment and of course buy new stuff! Start cleaning out your closets and garages NOW and have your goods ready for sale on Sept 25th.

Another way to support the flea market is to **volunteer**. We need some people for various activities such as security and setup/teardown on the day of the hamfest. Please send me an email letting me know you are interested in helping.

The real measure of success of a flea market is what happens 'next' year. Many of the SW-Ontario area hamfests are dying due to lack of vendors which has the side-effect of buyers not willing to show-up in subsequent years. We are lucky because some large vendors such as Radioworld have already committed to be a vendor for our 2005 hamfest. Radioworld (and other larger commercial vendors) no longer appear at many of the 'smaller' hamfests which in essence was the last nail in the coffin of those hamfests.

Bring-and-Buy



Based on the success of last year's bring-and-buy table, we have decided to offer it again this year!

The situation:

Many people like to come to our hamfest and look around and have a good time.

Not many are willing to rent a table because they might only have 1 or 2 items for sale or they simply do not want to sit there all morning dealing with the endless stream of people asking the same questions over and over again.

Solution: This year the club will have a bring-and-buy table.

Here is how it works....

You do not rent a table but you come to the hamfest as a buyer. You also bring your 1 or 2 items and go the LARC table. We will take the item(s) and fill out a for-sale card that describes the item plus your asking price. It will cost you a loonie (\$1) to leave your item on the club table. When the item sells, you will pay us 5% as a commission. If your item does not sell, you pick it up at the end of the hamfest and the only cost to you was the \$1 that you left earlier in the day.

For example: If you asked us to sell your mobile radio, you might put a \$200 price tag on the unit. You left a dollar behind as payment. When we sold your radio, we keep a total of 5% which is normally \$10. Since you already paid a buck, we only keep \$9 giving you back \$191.00.

The rules are simple:

- We are only willing to sell one or two items per person. We are not trying to displace our normal table rentals.
- It costs a dollar per item to have it placed on our table
- We will retain 5% as a sales commission when the item sells.
- Please be reasonable with your pricing; it doesn't do either of us any good if you are asking an extremely high price for boat anchors. Radioworld is a good place to compare prices because they have both a new and used section on their webpage.

New LARC email and Web addresses



I have retired the old LARC email address of:
LARC@hamster.foxhollow.ca

It was receiving more spam than real email.

The new email address is: LARC2005@hamster.foxhollow.ca

Hopefully this will not confuse any inbox filters some of you may be using. The old address will continue to operate for 30 days; after that period the email will be bounced back to the sender.

The LARC web site now has a new shorter name: www.LARC.ca

The old name of: www.LARC.on.ca will continue to work until August, 2005

Are your friends receiving this bulletin?



Last September we collected hundreds of email addresses from people interested in receiving the monthly club bulletin via email. Each month I received bounced email from accounts that are no longer active. With the availability of cheap (free) email addresses, many of us move around on the Internet leaving our old mailboxes behind. If someone you know is no longer receiving this bulletin, tell them to send a message to the club with their current email address.

Have anything to say?



If you have a comment or announcement that might be of interest to the club, feel free to send me a message and I'll include it in the next mail out.

My email address is: mark@foxhollow.ca

Our Club Web page is: <http://www.larc.ca>

For list of upcoming events:
http://www.larc.ca/meet_2004_5.htm

If you want to be added or removed from our Mailing list, send an email to: mark@foxhollow.ca