



Nortown Amateur Radio Club

Minutes of the April 20th, 2012 Meeting

Present:

Bert VE3ENA
Doug VE3EES
Ron VA3GRE

John VA3AAD
Tom, VE3BKA
Frans VE3VNC

Ian VE3IJS
Jim, VE3GRT
Geoff VE3GEG

Recent member-attendees who were absent:

Tony VE3VME
Vince, VE3ELB

Vipi VE3PID
Elliot VA3EJF

John VA3MDJ
David VE3VNE

Club President, Ian, VE3IJS chaired the meeting. Elliot, VA3EJF and John, VA3MDJ were travelling and had sent their regrets.

Old Business

Repeater

No change in that Elliot, VA3EJF has new IRLP software and had expected to be able to test it by now.

It was agreed that John, VA3AAD would contact Vipi, VE3PID to arrange for the transfer of the 70 cm Club loaner radio to Ron, VA3GRE, who lives quite a bit closer to the repeater, and who can make better use of it, since VE3PID's QTH seems to be out of range,

Sunday Morning Net

The frequency is 28.550 MHz. each Sunday from 11:00 to 11:30 AM Net. As many as five or six members have checked into this net.

Doug, VE3EES stated that he was receiving interference at 28.552 MHz. that he could not tune out and requested that we move to *.549 to help him to receive messages. It was agreed that we will start on *.550 and move to *.549 as necessary.

Nortown Web Site

No change. John, VA3AAD had noted that the web site shows an incorrect location for the repeater and an incorrect Net frequency along with numerous other errors. Elliot, VA3EJF will make corrections.

Club Elections

Club elections are supposed to be scheduled for the first meeting in May, but will now have to be delayed until the June 1st meeting. Most of the current executive have been in their positions for two years, which is the maximum permitted under the Club Articles of Incorporation. As Immediate Past President, John, VE3MDJ has the unenviable task of arm-twisting volunteers who will agree to participate in the official slate and run for election. The composition of this slate should be announced at the next meeting. Further nominations will be accepted up until the May 4th meeting.

Fox Hunt

Doug, VE3EES had volunteered to set up a fox hunt this summer and be the fox. John, VA3AAD described how to build the directional receiving antenna, as described in article from the March/April 2012 issue of TCA that was attached to the March 16th minutes. It requires two inexpensive one-half-inch PVC pipe fittings that are only available by mail order. He asked whether those participating in the fox-hunt would be interested in sharing shipping costs. Only one other member was interested. This matter will be discussed at the next meeting, but unless at least six members can commit to participation in the fox hunt, the issue will be dropped..

Upcoming Presentations

The schedule for presentations is:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| May 4, 2012 | Ian, VA3IJS – subject tba. |
| May 18, 2012 | John, VA3AAD – RF mixers. |
| June 1, 2012 | Jim. VE3GRT - video |
| June 15, 2012 | Tony, VE3VME – Field day (June 23, 24) preparations |
| Sept. 21, 2012 | John, VA3AAD – RF cavity resonators.. |

Volunteers are needed for the next season's meetings..

Remember that there is a loose-leaf book [our Presentation Binder] containing articles from recent QST "Hands-on-Radio" or "Hints and Kinks" columns and some Radcom issues. It's now kept in the Club meeting cupboard for use by members wishing to develop presentations. These need not be complicated or lengthy, and can be on any radio-related topic. ARRL members (only) can access all except the most recent issues at: <http://www.arrl.org/experiments-1-through-10>. Members are requested to bring in and give to John, VA3MDJ old copies of QST and Radcom so that he cut out and file useful articles in the Binder.

New Business

Club Future

There was an extended discussion about the various issues listed in the April 6th document that was attached to the "minutes" for the meeting that was not held on that date. The following notes are an attempt to summarize this discussion:

- **Club Survival:** There was a consensus that we all want the Club to continue to exist and that a "virtual club" without regular meetings is not an attractive

alternative. Amalgamation with another club would be a last resort. Two possibilities are CenTor (formerly from the Ont. Science Centre) that meets once a month on Tuesdays in Leaside, and the Scarboro Club that meets twice a month on Mondays. These clubs each seem to have about 30 members.

- **Number of Meetings:** It was felt that we should continue with two meetings a month (i.e., 17 or 18 meetings a year).
- **Meeting Day:** Fridays continue to be best for all nine of the members present. In a show of hands, five members could attend Monday meetings, four on Tuesdays, and only two on Wednesdays or Thursdays.
- **Field Day;** It was agreed that Field Day is an essential Club activity, since almost half the membership participate. It was felt that liability insurance is necessary for Field Day, which means that the total cost for this activity is \$570 per year.
- **Repeater:** It was felt that IRLP might increase Club visibility and attract more members, but that if we cannot get IRLP going, we should shut down the repeater. In that event, it was felt that Club members themselves could dismantle the unit and remove it from its location.
- **WACAN and WAVE Awards** There was no consensus over whether these should be continued. It was agreed, however, that applicants should scan their QSL cards and email them to the Club in PDF format, eliminating the need for out post office box (\$160/yr.).
- **Club Web Site:** It was felt that the misinformation now on our web site detracts from the Club's image and that an up-to-date site might even attract new members. Two members stated that they might be able to learn how to set up and operate a web site. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.
- **Meeting Location:** It was agreed that the Bayview Arena is a good location but that if the City starts to charge a rent we would have to move. VE3EES kindly offered his house in Richmond Hill but there was no consensus about whether many members would be willing to drive that far.
- **Sunday Morning Net:** It was agreed that the net should be continued and that it was a means of attracting new members.
- **Increasing Club Membership:** One suggestion was to link up with Scouts Canada but no one volunteered to take this on as a project. Another suggestion was to set up tables at hamfests (@ \$25 per hamfest).

The following key issues were not discussed:

- **Club Executive:** Volunteers are urgently needed for next year's Club executive. Although we hold annual elections, traditionally, this has been a two-year commitment. Should we make it a one-year commitment?
- **Presentations:** These are a core meeting activity. With a requirement for about 16 or 17 presentations a year (excluding the annual garage sale), and with only 10 members who seem willing or capable of making presentations, how can we get a commitment from most of these members to each give two presentations a year?.
- **Meeting Attendance:** How can we make the meetings more interesting or do something else to increase meeting attendance?
- **New members:** What else can we do to attract new members?

- **Yahoo Discussion Forum:** (not previously listed) A Yahoo group that automatically emails messages on topics of interest to Club members might help to revitalize the Club.

This discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

Bremer-Tully Radio

As agreed upon earlier, Bert. VE3ENA has scrapped this radio.

Finances

The raffle yielded \$10.00. There was no coffee collection because the coffee maker was inoperative. VE3IJF will attempt to repair, or we'll have a hot water jug and instant coffee.

Presentation

Bert, VE3ENA brought in test equipment, all of which he had constructed, and each of which demonstrated incredible workmanship. He gave a seven-part presentation:

- A two-tone (900/1700 Hz.) audio oscillator for testing SSB modulation, based upon three op-amps and a ± 6 V battery pack.
- A pick-up unit for sampling the output of an SSB transmitter.
- A tuning unit to receive a transmitter's test signal from the pick-up unit, to provide input for the vertical plates of an oscilloscope.
- Two CRT oscilloscopes.
- An in-line switch from a hand-held transceiver's wall-wart that contained a bypass resistor. When in the "on" or closed position the resistor was bypassed so that it allowed for the usual rapid charge. When in the "off" or open position it allowed the resistor to permit a 1-2 mA trickle charge, so that the transceiver was always ready for use. For a 12V 200 mA Wallwart a 6,000 ohm 1/8 watt resistor would be sufficient to provide 2 mA.
- A square-wave/sine wave/saw-tooth wave signal generator.
- An unregulated ± 0.2 to 12V 20A variable voltage power supply to replace a worn-out battery for an electric drill. (Replacement batteries are prohibitively expensive, costing almost as much as the tool for which they are designed.)

Circuit diagrams for some of these devices have been photographed and are attached to these minutes.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Friday, May 4th. Ian, VE3IJS will handle the presentation. He is now frantically reading up on some subject that will be of interest to most members, subject tba. You won't want to miss this demo.

John, VA3AAD
Ian VE3IJS