



# West Island Amateur Radio Club Bulletin

February 2012 Edition

Upcoming Meeting – February 20<sup>th</sup> 2012

This month's topic

“Ham Nation Podcast”

*Video presentation given by Bram Paterson, VE2XCS*

## President's Message and Report

by Ken Fraser, VE2KLF

>>> WI ~ ARCS <<<

### Tales from the QTH:

I shall keep this epistle short, as there is another one in our newsletter by Eamon, VE2EGN on an introduction to SOTA. I should note that this practice is to be encouraged as we certainly have room (within reason) for other amateur radio contributions to the monthly newsletter from our club membership and others. If your contribution needs a wider readership, I would suggest forwarding it to the TCA magazine, RAQI Radio Amateur or even QST!

Not much radio work is going on at the QTH as I am bogged down with tax submissions for the XYL's business at the end of her fiscal year. And I am still SHREDDING my way out of my basement. Somewhere in this period I picked up a new 15-year-old grandson when my eldest son and wife adopted him. Maybe I can see if he might be interested in joining our august hobby ... hmm.

### JAN 2012 MTG:

Please see the minutes for 2012-JAN-16. If you were not present, you missed and great presentation on EME systems by Stuart, VE2XX!

### FEB 2012 MTG:

#### Tentative agenda:

- CSM reports, etc
- Solder-Spot updates
- SOTA updates. We express condolences to Dan, VE2KEY at the passing of his mother.
- Reports on VP6T and HK0NA dxpeditions and contacts.
- Other business
- Coffee/drinks/cookies, and rag chew
- A podcast presentation on ham radio by Bram, VE2XCS
- 50/50 draw

**Notes:** 2012 dues are now “due”! If you have not already settled your account, please see Malcolm, VE2DDZ. Tnx.

Time to start thinking about our annual “**show and tell**” that has been tentatively assigned to the MAY 2012 meeting. Drag out those recent or otherwise ham radio creations, humorous or serious, and give us a short demonstration. There is certainly room for the Solder-Spot groups! Be on your best behaviour as we shall probably record the event with pics and maybe a video.

C U on the 20th of February – 2012 ... de .ken. VE2KLF

# What Happened

## Minutes of the January 2012 WIARC meeting

by Keith Glashan, VE2MTL

### Minutes of the January 2012 WIARC meeting by Keith Glashan VE2MTL

The meeting began at 19:57. Ken VE2KLF presided and welcomed the 24 attendees. First time visitor Peter attended and brought an old "19" set with him. Keith VE2XL promised to give it a good home. Peter has an interesting background, although he is not a Radio Amateur. Not yet, that is. We'll work on that one. I expect we will see him at future meetings. There was the usual roll call with call signs. The details of the Monday January 16, 2012 meeting are as follows.

1. **VHF Repeater:** Ken VE2KLF mentioned that there have been some recent complaints about reception on our 146.910 repeater. J-F VE2TBH commented on his recent observations concerning the cavities and suggested that it may be time to have them retuned.

2. **SOTA:** Eamon VE2EGN and Dan VA2KEY talked briefly about a possible SOTA event planned for Mont Megantic or Mont St. Joseph both located in Parc national du Mont-Mégantic.

3. **Bert VE2WD:** Keith VE2XL talked about Bert Widdop VE2WD, a long time member of the club who has recently moved into the West Island Manor in Pierrefonds. Bert slipped outside his house in December and was sent to the Lakeshore to be checked out. Although there was only a bruise or two, it was determined that he should no longer continue to live alone. Keith described his life and career in the RCAF and later with Air Canada. Born in Alberta in 1919, he got his ham ticket in 1937. I visited him last week and found him to be in excellent spirits and as sharp as ever. He wished that I say "Hello" to the boys at the club meeting tonight. His

new QTH is 17725 Pierrefonds Blvd., Pierrefonds, Québec, H9J3L1. Just go north on St. Charles and turn west onto Pierrefonds Blvd. It's only a couple of blocks down. You can't miss it. Please visit him.

4. **Solder Spot:** Paul VE2OFH said that he was in the process of ordering the 40 meter receiver kits. He added that there is a transmitter kit also available. He reminded us that not all Solder Spot members are licensed at that level.

5. **Ski Marathon:** It was noted that the Ski Marathon is coming up shortly. This year the route is from Buckingham to Lachute.



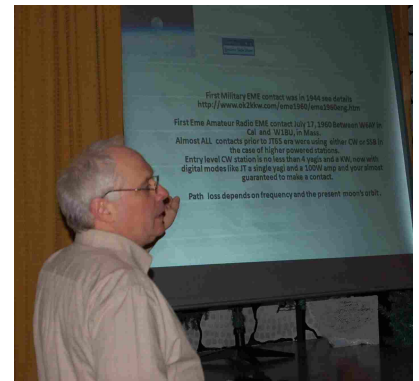
**Ralph VE2GO showing his ham certificate from 1939**

6. **Ralph VE2GO:** Ralph VE2GO brought his 1939 "Ham" certificate of proficiency, this time all nicely framed. He talked about his own career and his two principal interests, radio and music. He talked about his time with the Ottawa A.R.C. and teaching CW to the 5wpm class. However it was his love of music that got him to take the music exams at the Royal Conservatory of Toronto. Eventually he taught piano to teen age youngsters, and became the organist and choir director at St. George's Anglican Church in Ste. Anne de Bellevue. In closing, he showed us some QSL cards he received recently. The problem being that he has not been active for some time. Someone out

there is either pirating his call sign or there are a lot of mistakes being made. Keep watch.

7. **Two New Hams:** Ken VE2KLF recognized recent grads Tony VE2TNY and 15 year old Harrison Kyle VE2HKW.

6. **Speaker Stuart VE2XX:** After the break, Stuart Truba VE2XX gave us a presentation on EME (Earth Moon Earth). Stuart has been "On the Moon" for some time now. His first installation was at a previous residence in TMR. Although 2 meter frequencies were



**Stuart Truba VE2XX giving his presentation**

principally used for this method of communication, there has been a movement towards using higher frequencies. Nowadays, using 432 MHz and JT65 mode software, you can operate EME with as little as 1 Yagi and 100 watts. Stuart talked on the pros and cons of Yagi vs. a Dish. He discussed power dividers and failure points. He also cautioned about taking care of losses in the system, minimizing your connectors, and by using only the best coax. He had prepared several technical slides, showed many pictures of ham installations in other parts of the world, including extra large dishes such as the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico. He was able to play audio of some of his actual EME contacts. Though his was quite a technical presentation, it was received enthusiastically, and included a lot of questions from the audience. Good

show, Stuart. Well done. Come again. Thanks!

Tonight, the winner of the 50/50 draw was our guest speaker Stuart VE2XX. Congratulations.

This month, there were several magazines for the taking, thanks

once again to Ken VE2KLF.

Something Punny - A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.

The meeting adjourned at 22:26. See you February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

73, & good DX de Keith VE2MTL

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## What is SOTA?

By Eamon Egan, VE2EGN

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SOTA (Summits on the Air) defines itself as “an award scheme for radio amateurs and shortwave listeners that encourages portable operation in mountainous areas.” SOTA has taken off in popularity in North America and worldwide since its start in 2002 in the UK.

### How it works

Summits are verified by local SOTA organizations to have a minimum qualifying level of height and prominence (above the surrounding area), are given a SOTA designation, and are listed in the database on the SOTA web site. Hams participate in SOTA as activators or chasers. Activators climb the mountains and operate from the summits. To claim an activation credit, each activator must make a minimum of four contacts. Points awarded for activations depend on the summit height, with an additional seasonal bonus in some cases.

Chasers stay at home listening for activators to call “CQ SOTA” and then contact them for chaser credit, logging the activator call sign and SOTA summit designation. Activating operators do not need to contact chasers, as a QSO with any amateur operator counts towards activator credit. However most activator contacts are with chasers since they are the ones listening for the activators. Any mode or amateur band can be used for a SOTA QSO, although repeater contacts don't qualify.

All activator QSOs must be made with equipment and portable power sources carried to the operating site by the activators. Operating from or in the vicinity of a motor vehicle does not count. In the VE2 SOTA region, activation must be within 25m (vertically) of the summit. Even if a motor vehicle gets them fairly close, activators must carry their equipment some distance on the “final ascent” to the summit.

The worldwide SOTA organization maintains an online database of activator and chaser QSOs. As ham radio activities go, SOTA is friendly and non-competitive. While points are awarded for SOTA activities, the emphasis is more on the whole experience, which for activators goes beyond simply operating the radio. Logs are accepted on the honour system and points appear automatically as soon as logs are entered.

The SOTA organization offers awards for activators and chasers at different point levels. Activators get “Mountain Goat” awards and chasers get “Shack Sloth” awards. Any amateur can participate as activator, chaser or both, although activator and chaser points are separate and do not combine. SWLs can also get SOTA credit by logging activations they hear on the air.

### WIARC SOTA Experience

Starting in November 2011, WIARC members Dan VA2KEY, Malcolm VE2DDZ, Eamon VE2EGN, Bram VE2XCS, Marc-André VE2EVN and Andy VE2DNN have activated three VE2 SOTA summits: Mt Rigaud (VE2/ML-005), Mt St Bruno (VE2/ML-001), and Mt St-Hilaire (VE2/ML-003). VE2EVN also pulled off a solo activation atop Mt Royal (VE2/ML-004). On our first outing (Mt Rigaud) we were joined by seasoned SOTA activator Jean VE2JCW. Being new at this, our group chose easy, nearby summits. Since SOTA is new in Quebec, our WIARC group got to be the first to officially activate each of them.

We've all been lucky in that so far our equipment and power sources have cooperated to beat Murphy's law and give

each participant the four QSOs needed to qualify for each activation. On our first trek up Mt Rigaud we brought a heavy battery on wheels which didn't roll too nicely over the rocky "potato fields" on the pathway, and had to be carried part way. On subsequent outings we adjusted power sources and equipment according to lessons learned. It turned out that smaller sealed lead-acid batteries could supply enough power and hold up long enough to operate moderately powered VHF and HF rigs for the duration of the activation.

VE2EVN, VE2XCS, VE2DDZ and VA2KEY used portables on 2m FM, with VA2KEY also logging some simplex D-Star contacts. In some cases repeater contacts were used to solicit simplex QSOs for SOTA credit. VE2EVN's solo Mt Royal experience was a big challenge as desensitization from nearby high power broadcast transmitters made it difficult to hear his contacts. On Mt. St. Hilaire, VE2EVN was surprised to get a call from chaser W1AIM, 148km away in the middle of the Green Mountains.

VE2EGN, VE2DDZ and VE2DNN operated HF on 20m, 18m and 10m. Most HF QSOs have been phone with VE2EGN logging a few CW contacts. On the easy hills chosen so far we've used full power HF rigs since none of us has working QRP radios (if we tackle higher peaks we may need to lighten the load). While much SOTA activity is done using QRP, this is not a requirement, and lugging bigger rigs up the hill allows operation at higher power levels. VE2EGN was able to run 30 to 50 watts although the small battery did not work well at the full 100w power level.

On the summits we operate in close enough quarters that some coordination is needed, so each operator works a different band. We worked 20m and 10m on Mt St Bruno, and 20m and 18m on Mt St Hilaire. Wire dipoles tied to small trees at arm's reach above ground level served as antennas, with or without a tuner.

QRM on SOTA activations can be far quieter than in the city, letting us work stations that would be impossible to hear from a home QTH. On Mt St Bruno VE2EGN logged a S2S (summit to summit) contact with another SOTA operator on W4/HB-048 (Three mile Mountain in VA). Other HF highlights were a few transatlantic contacts with SOTA chasers in England, Italy and Spain by VE2EGN and VE2DNN.

HF SOTA activators benefit from the web based SOTA alerting and spotting system. Activators post an "alert" listing the operators planning to activate, along with the summit designator, expected starting time, frequency and mode. Chasers read the alert and tune in at the appointed time. Activators are often a bit optimistic on how long it takes to get to a summit and set up operations, so chaser patience is appreciated. Once a chaser hears you he may spot you on the SOTA spotting site so other chasers can find you. While the SOTA alert and spotting system can be used by VHF / UHF activators, the longer HF range practically guarantees that some chasers who see your alert will be able to work you.

## How to get involved

For general information about the program go to [sota.org.uk](http://sota.org.uk). For information on the VE2 SOTA region including an interactive map showing all SOTA designated VE2 summits, see [ve2sota.radioamateur.ca](http://ve2sota.radioamateur.ca). Any amateur can sign up on the SOTA web site ([sotadata.org.uk](http://sotadata.org.uk)) and immediately begin logging activations or chaser QSOs. Chasing can be a good way to get a feel for what's involved in the programme. To find activations to chase, look at the activation alerts and spots at [www.sotawatch.org](http://www.sotawatch.org). One other great SOTA resource is the nasota Yahoo group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nasota/>).

To find out more about the WIARC SOTA group, contact Dan ([va2key@gmail.com](mailto:va2key@gmail.com)) or Eamon ([ve2egn@gmail.com](mailto:ve2egn@gmail.com)) or check out the group wiki at [wiarc-sota.wikispaces.com](http://wiarc-sota.wikispaces.com), which documents our activities and helps us communicate to plan future activations. We trade observations about equipment, decide on dates and sites, coordinate bands, and work out transportation. Thus far WIARC SOTA has run loosely with no one person taking responsibility for organizing. Although by now group members have some SOTA experience to share and are glad to answer any questions, new participants are encouraged to be self sufficient by learning on their own what equipment and techniques may be needed.

The WIARC group plans another activation within the next couple of months, possibly one more before springtime to gain us a higher summit with winter seasonal bonus points.

## Final words

SOTA is a great new activity that combines the challenge of field operation with healthy exercise and a love for the great outdoors. It offers all amateurs a great opportunity for enjoyment and personal growth.

## Free Flea Market Tables

Flea-market tables available free to members. Members are reminded that there are always tables available at the regular monthly meetings. This practice was very popular years ago. Lately, it seems to have fallen out of practice.

So, if you wish to sell something, or clean out your basement, or do your spring cleaning early, you don't have to wait for the next Hamfest. Just bring those junk

boxes, antenna parts, and old rigs to the next WIARC meeting and set up your table at the back of the hall. It's free. It's fun. It's win-win.

## \$\$\$ Swap Shop \$\$\$

To advertise items for sale, send details to Bram VE2XCS, the newsletter editor at [ve2xcs@bell.net](mailto:ve2xcs@bell.net). He will gladly include them in the next bulletin. Please remember to include all pertinent information relating to the item you wish to sell.

## Footnotes About Us

### The West Island Amateur Radio Club was founded in 1972

**Mailing Address** - P.O. Box 884 Pointe-Claire, Quebec H9R 4Z6

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**Vice-president :** Charles Robitaille, VE2RFI

**Treasurer :** Malcolm Harper, VE2DDZ

**Secretary :** Keith Glashan, VE2MTL

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**Editor :** Bram Paterson, VE2XCS

**QSL Manager :** Bob Loranger, VE2AXO

**Webmaster :** Wayne Hodgins, VE2WRH

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Stuart Truba, [VE2XX@RAC.CA](mailto:VE2XX@RAC.CA)

Articles and comments are always welcomed; please submit them before the first Monday of the month for publication in that month's edition to the editor's attention, [VE2CWI@RAC.CA](mailto:VE2CWI@RAC.CA)

**Website:** <http://www.wiarc.ca>

**Repeaters:** VE2RWI VHF - 146.910 MHz (-)  
VE2RWI UHF - 443.050 MHz (+) (141.3 Hz CTCSS tone transmitted by both repeaters).

#### Monthly Meetings

Held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month, except July & August at: Lakeside Heights Baptist Church, 275 Braebrook, Pointe-Claire (West Island part of Montreal). Visitors are always welcomed.

#### WIARC NETS on the 146.91 Club Repeater

Information Net each Sunday evening at 8PM running for approximately an hour.  
All are welcome to participate.