



# MAPLE VALLEY

## H A M L I N K



VOL. 17

February 2010

NO. 2

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Scott NS7C

#### What could have been....

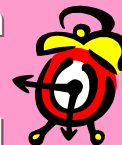


As I prep to teach the Technician License class this week, I am going through my radio gear and pulling out various items to bring along. This week's session is where I pull out all the toys and have mostly show and tell. One of the items I always bring is my Kenwood VC-H1 "Visual Communicator". Not so much because it is a cool accessory, but because it is a lesson on how Hams just don't get it!

I think it was 1997, maybe 1998, when I bought it. I ordered it the day I heard about. For those of you who have forgotten, the VC-H1 was the HT sized device with a camera and color screen that connects to your HT (or other radio) to allow you to send and receive pictures. I thought it was the coolest accessory! Granted, it was SSTV, low resolution, took like a minute or more to send a picture, and made a awful noise on whatever frequency you were using, but, it was cool.

Consider for a moment what the personal communications landscape looked like in 1997. Analog cell phones were becoming popular, but they were BIG, clunky, and could, well, make and receive a voice phone call. That's it. Motorola famously said something like "it is not for everyone, we might sell a hundred thousand worldwide." They didn't get it, but consumers did! It is a

Next club meeting is on Saturday



February 27th at 10:00 AM at Fire Station 81. Mark it on your calendar.

little over a decade later, and there are few people in the US that do NOT have a cell phone. It is estimated that nearly 90% of the population are cell phone equipped. And not only that, most cell phones are camera (both still and video) and text capable. Do you know anyone, outside of my 90 year old mother, who hasn't sent and received pictures on their cell phone?

Hams didn't get it. Everyone I showed my VC-H1 to said something like "who needs that?" And "how much does it cost?? No way I'm spending that much for a HT accessory." I don't know how many Kenwood sold, but it certainly never gained much popularity. They probably lost money on it, and it was discontinued after a short run. I rarely run into anyone else who has one, and so it spends most of its time in the back of my truck gathering dust. I would sell it, but who would buy it?

Now lets imagine if the Amateur community actually "got it." VC-H1's would have been flying off the shelves, Kenwood would have had trouble keeping up with demand. Soon, the other big Amateur equipment manufacturers would have wanted in on the business, and would have introduced their own versions. Demand from the Amateur community would have pushed the technology

*(Continued on page 2)*

The Maple Valley Amateur Radio Club is a group of amateur radio enthusiasts in the greater Maple Valley area who meet and engage in activities to further the advancement of this hobby for the good of ourselves and the community. Everyone is welcome at the monthly meetings. A simplex net is held each Tuesday evening at 8:00 PM on 146.54 MHz.

<b>President:</b>	<b>Scott Currie</b>	<b>NS7C</b>	<b>ns7c@arrl.net</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Jim Aigner</b>	<b>N7MU</b>	<b>jimaigner@comcast.net</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Larry McDonnell</b>	<b>KE7MPR</b>	<b>larrym@skynetbb.com</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Richard Green</b>	<b>KR7L</b>	<b>kr7l@arrl.net</b>

In the event of an emergency in the area, amateurs are encouraged to check in and or monitor at 10 minutes past even hours on 146.54 MHz simplex to provide status or ask for assistance.

MVARC, P.O. Box 1188, Maple Valley, WA 98038

(Continued from page 1)

further, and eventually it would have been part of the standard feature set, and our HT's would all have a color screen and camera built in. We would have figured out better/faster protocols to send the pictures and video in digital form. And of course text messaging would be a standard feature as well, along with tethering to your computer for sending and receiving data! And all without an expensive monthly service plan.

We still don't get it. If we don't demand to see these new technologies incorporated into our devices, companies will have little incentive to do the research and development. And if they do spend the money to bring our devices up to the 21st century, we must respond by embracing them and voting with our wallets.

Hams often tell me the price of new D-Star equipment is too high. Consider this, my first ICOM HT was an ICOM IC-2AT. A good radio for its day, it was 2M only, no memories, no CTCSS encode or decode, and no out of band receive. I paid \$250 for it new in 1981. I did a bit of research to determine the buying power of 1981 dollars versus 2008 dollars, there is some disagreement amongst researchers, but on average that \$250 in 1981 would be more like \$590 in 2008. With \$590 today, I can get a new IC-92AD with a case and a speaker mic! That would be a dual band, 2M/70CM HT, full CTCSS encode/decode, DCS, 1304 memories, receives "DC to light" with scanning capability and weather alert function, and yes, digital voice and data via D-Star. Sounds like a bargain, but they are not selling like hot cakes. Why not?

As we head into this new decade, lets embrace new technology and see Amateur Radio once again advance the Art and Science of radio!

-Scott



## SIMPLEX NET

by Chuck, KK7CB  
Sto99@msn.com



Simplex net every Tuesday night at 8:00 o'clock p.m. on 146.540 MHz. ARES checkins as well. If any NCS has a conflict with these dates, please substitute at will, but let Chuck know at Sto99@msn.com



Check-ins from Jan.19 through Feb.16, 2010

KK7CB	Chuck
K7CJK	Colin
KC7FSR	David
AC7NP	Dale
N7VOE	Dan
KC7HVV	Dick
N7BVT	Doug
KF7ACL	Duke
KB7VDG	Gary
KB7QPS	Greg
KR7JWL	Jerry
N7MU	Jim
KE7SXH	Joe
N7SPN	John
K7LWT	Kathy
AE7MK	Matt
KE7WVP	Mike
N7UIC	Mike
KF6MHR	Pat
KE7OCY	Patrick
KF7AOR	Paul
WA7ZWD	Phil
KE7MPJ	Rich
KR7L	Richard
WB6AWO	Rick
KF7ACR	Ron
KE7MAI	Ryan
NS7C	Scott
KE7MPO	Skip
KE7OCX	Steve
N7BOF	Tex
W7OXB	Tom

## NEW LICENSES/UPGRADES

Ryan, KE7MAI has upgraded to General. Congratulations, Ryan!

## Net Control Stations

March	2	Rich	KE7MPJ
	9	John	N7SPN
	16	Gary	KB7VDG
	23	Open	
	30	Richard	KR7L
April	6	Chuck	KK7CB
	13	Rich	KE7MPJ
	20	John	N7SPN
	27	Open	

## Got E-mail?



It seems that email addresses change frequently nowadays. If yours has changed recently, please inform the newsletter editor of your *preferred* email address. Don't miss a single issue.

Just send an email to Richard, KR7L@arrrl.net

## COMING EVENTS

### 29th Annual Mike & Key Electronics Show

March 6, 2010 at 9:00 A.M. at the Western Washington Fairgrounds in Puyallup. Admission \$8. Tables \$25

### Communications Academy Registration Now Open



Communications Academy, April 10-11, 2010 at South Seattle Community College. For more information and to register go to

<http://www.commacademy.org>

Early Bird rates through March 28, 2010.

## 160 meter Full wave loop project

By Ryan, KE7MAI

For some time now I have wanted to put up an antenna for short wave listening. When I lived in Lebanon Oregon, while my wife was getting her master's degree, we often listened to short-wave late at night while on a Halicrafters S38A tube set. The antenna we had was a V shaped long wire antenna about 12 feet off the ground which I bought as a kit from Radio Shack. Our favorite broadcast was Radio China which had a learn-Chinese segment and a music hour. We liked listening to what they called Jade bells and Koto drums.

### The Antenna

I began researching antennas on the internet and decided on a loop antenna. It looked pretty simple to construct. However the more I read the more variables I found and soon I had more questions than answers. I found that some sources recommended a 1 to 1 balun at the feed point to keep RF off of the feed line and some recommended a 4 to 1 balun at the radio to match the impedance. Some recommended 300 ohm twin lead and others recommended 450 ohm or 600 ohm line. Still others recommended 50 or 75 ohm coax. There were many opinions about the type of wire to be used as the actual antenna. There were also many ideas of how to connect the feed line to the antenna element itself.

After much reading and with a lot of help from Mike (N7UIC) here is what I did. I chose non insulated aluminum electric fence wire for the antenna element. I did not choose it because it was the best money could buy but because it was very inexpensive and came on a roll longer than 500 ft. For the feed line I used 450 OHM window line which I was able to buy from a friend on the 11 meter band who has a knack

for having or being able to find unusual things like that. For the "mounts" I used 155-lb test pink nylon line. My daughters said pink would work much better than yellow orange or green. To attach the feed line to the antenna I used two pieces of clear Plexiglas as a sandwich with stainless bolts to attach the element to the feed line and dielectric grease to keep the corrosion away. I would have used silicone but I wanted to be able to take it back apart without a problem. Two nylon bolts in the windows of the window line were used to hold the line in place. I used nylon bolts rather than stainless to eliminate any possibility of capacitance.

### Putting it Up

On a mostly dry Saturday morning recently Mike his son and myself set out to build and install the antenna. We rolled out and measured the wire. Although 529 feet was the resonant length on 160 meters we went with 550 because Mike had read that it was better to be a little long when trying to load on multiple bands. We also figured better a little long then too short. Mike brought a compressed air tennis ball launcher that he built to shoot a line over the highest possible branch of my cedar trees. We selected four trees that are approximately 125 feet tall as our corners. Without much trouble we were able to get the line near 110 feet up in all corners. We tied a loop around the antenna wire to attach it to the line and left it somewhat loose so the antenna could travel if necessary. No insulator besides the nylon itself was used. We hoisted it up and after some adjustments to the individual lines we were ready to try it out. I ran the window line into the house and attached it to my MFJ -949E tuner which has a built in 4 to 1 balun. From there it went into the Yaesu FT-920. The 920 is a 160 thru 6 meter radio which has its own automatic tuner so I am only using the MFJ as a balun. The antenna loads up on all of the amateur bands from 160 to 10 mostly with-

out the need for the tuner.

### The Cost

The total investment was  
 \$14.99 electric fence wire  
 \$15.00 window line  
 \$18.99 155lb test line  
 \$4.00 misc bolts and grease

### Conclusion

Overall this was a good learning experience and although I am sure some improvements could be made the performance is exceptional. I never even knew there was a Canadian time broadcast at 3.330 MHz or a retransmission of 1060 AM Alberta's classic country at on 6.030 MHz. It surprises me how many hams are out there at all times talking away. You need only the antenna to hear them. For someone who wants to get into HF or would just like to have a short-wave listening antenna the loop is a great idea. They can be made very inexpensively for any band but of course the bigger the better. 160-meters is 529 feet; 80 would be about half that and so on. There are many calculators on the web. A great thing about wire antennas is that if you live in area where there are restrictions a loop is almost invisible. I have to really look to find mine and I am the one who put it up. There are many ways to construct a loop antenna. A lot depends on what materials you have and what you are willing to spend. From what I can tell there is no absolute right or wrong way to build one. If anyone has comments suggestions or questions I can be reached at 59redwing@gmail.com.

Pictures next time.



**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Please welcome **Jim Bull, KE7OW**, of Covington our newest member. See his article on page 4.





# March 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2 Net-Rich KE7MPJ	3	4	5	6 Mike and Key Flea Mkt 9AM-3PM
7	8	9 Net-John N7SPN	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Net- Gary KB7VDG	17 *Mike KE7WVP	18	19	20
21	22	23 Net- Open	24	25	26	27 Club Meeting 10AM Sta- tion 81
28 Comm Academy Early Bird ends 12AM	29	30 Net- Richard KR7L	31			

**Maple Valley Amateur Radio Club**

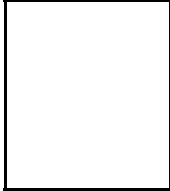
*An ARRL Affiliate*

PO BOX 488  
MAPLE VALLEY WA 98038

[www.kc7key.org](http://www.kc7key.org)

Tuesday night net 8:00 PM,  
146.540 MHz  
Net Control Volunteer call  
Chuck KK7CB 425-432-1119  
for changes  
\* - Happy Birthday

**Maple Valley Amateur Radio Club**  
**P.O. Box 1188**  
**Maple Valley, WA 98038**



**MEETING PROGRAM**

**February 27th Club Meeting Program**

This month's program will be a talk and demonstration of repair shop practices for VHF radios. Roger Steyaert K7RXV will make a short presentation about how a technician determines if your radio is operating properly. Using his Cushman C6A service monitor, he will demonstrate how to measure common radio performance pa-

rameters such as frequency, FM deviation, PL tone frequency, and receiver sensitivity. If you have a VHF handheld that is suspect, bring it along so Roger can check it out. To check receiver sensitivity, you will need a short cable to connect your radio's antenna output to the male BNC terminal on the service monitor. *[Ed. i.e. an SMA or BNC on one end and the male BNC on the other.]*



**Remember!** **ARES Team members** check in for roll call on the net Tuesday nights at 8:00 o'clock p.m. on 146.54 simplex. Scott will call for the Maple Valley ARES team members.



THE MAPLE VALLEY *HAMLINK*, the official publication of the Maple Valley Amateur Radio Club (MVARC) is published monthly except for combined issues in July/August and November/December. Comments and ham related submissions are welcome, but inclusion is at the discretion of the MVARC newsletter staff.

This newsletter and previous editions for about one year can be viewed and downloaded from our website <http://www.kc7key.org>. ARRL and ARES logos are registered ARRL service marks and are used with permission.

Membership information: An interest in amateur radio is the only requirement. Dues are \$16/year (\$8/for first additional family member, with remaining family members free). Beginning April 30th of each year, dues are payable. Contact Richard, 253-630-1426. Dues for new members are pro-rated based on the month of becoming a member. See the web page for the amount.

**COMMITTEE HEADS**

ARES Team Leader:	Scott	NS7C
Education Liaison:	Peggy	KC7CLI
Event Support Coord:	Doug	N7BVT
Membership Committee:	Jim	N7MU
Newsletter Editor:	Richard	KR7L
Proof Reader	Jean	KE4NCX
Simplex Net Manager:	Chuck	KK7CB
Technical Committee:		
	Scott	NS7C
	Rod	WE7X
	Phil	WA7ZWD
Web Site Administrator:	Scott	NS7C