

The NEWSLETTER

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Links that will take you to web locations referenced in this newsletter are shown in [italicized blue text](#).

Past issues of the MARA NE NEWSLETTER may be viewed at <http://ne.mara.net/newsletters.htm>

Best viewed in Microsoft Internet Explorer. Chrome may not display some items in the correct place.

E-mail your comments, ideas, or submissions to marane@mara.net or to ve1vq@eastlink.ca

Grandma Mara's RAMBLINGS...

So far, this winter has not been too, too bad. Walter has been waiting for the big one - for the weather to turn nasty - the big dump of white stuff with the diving temperatures. He feels that too much mildish weather just has to be counter balanced with colder. I tell him to take the long view and think decades (or at least years) rather than weeks or months.

He has been spending hours sitting at the computer, working on a design for a portable end fed antenna, tweaking section lengths and loading coil properties, and designing a matching network. I worry about his back, sitting there

for so long. At least it keeps his mind off global warming, or cooling, or whatever is going on these days.

At least it keeps his mind off global warming, or cooling, or whatever is going on these days.

In between thinking about wire lengths and counterpoises and radiation patterns, Walter has been turning out straight key bases of exotic wood, for presents for those on his ham friend birthday list for the upcoming year. A non-ham friend, who has a business making cabinetry and staircases, saves him the best fancy grained scraps.

Me, well I'm just happy that it has been as mild as it has. Global warming or not, I'm thankful for the lack of snow. I used to like being out in it, but not any more. It just means it is harder to get around. My balance isn't as good as it used to be, and I'm more afraid of slipping and falling. Too many people I know have ended up doing that and breaking a bone or two. The older you get the harder it is to recover from what, just a few years ago, would have been a minor tumble with a only a few bruises.

Wendy and I have been working on our CW a few evenings a week, time permitting on her part, down in the lower part of 80 meters. She is up to a solid twenty words per minute now. She tells me about her day and I tell her about what I used to do at that age. I get to keep current on what's happening in the world of a teenager and she learns about "ancient history". Hard to believe that in a couple of years she will be off to university. Strange how these things work out. Just because, as a young girl she saw the antennas on my house lot and was interested enough to get her mother to bring her

over, our friendship started. Now here she is, a beautiful and talented young woman with a cute young man as a steady boyfriend. And best of all, she is a really nice person. Everybody should have a young friend like her.

AR

TECH AND OTHER STUFF

I was forced into doing it! In early December, the wireless from the nearly new HP laptop with Windows 8.1 went flaky. At first, I blamed it on the airport hotel wi-fi system where I stayed on the night of December 2nd. However, when I tried with the system in the house in Alberta, it was still the same. The desktop with wireless worked fine. The laptop worked with a direct hard wire connection to the router. First, I tried doing restorals, going back in time, to see if a recent update was the cause of the problem. None of those worked. I didn't have the CDs (for Windows 8) I needed to try to repair the operating system.

As much as I wanted to wait for version 10 to mature a bit more, I couldn't function without wireless. The first time I tried the download, it failed to complete. The second time the download started, and the installation proceeded as expected. I had seen warnings that it could take a long time. Those warnings were right. While I didn't time it from start to finish it was a couple of hours before it was usable again. When and if you do this, make sure you have the fastest connection you can find.

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The only problem I've noticed so far is my web based e-mail doesn't move the cursor correctly from line to line with the "enter" key in the "reply" function when I use Microsoft's Edge, their new replacement for Internet Explorer. A call to my ISP didn't provide a fix, and they hadn't heard of the problem.

The eventual fix was to replace Edge with Internet Explorer. See below.

Other than the strangeness and unfamiliarity of new software, and the fact it will take some time to get used to, it was been working (reasonably well).

INTERNET SPEED TEST

Do you have absolute faith in your Internet Service Provider (ISP), and really believe you are getting the speeds you are paying for? Or do you wonder at times

why stuff takes so long to open up on your screen?

Do a search for “internet speed tests” and pick one you like. There are two that I use now and then, when things are suspicious. The first is Ookla at <http://www.speedtest.net/> and the second is Bandwidth Place at <http://www.bandwidthplace.com/>. Your ISP may have a particular one they suggest you use. If, however you are suspicious like me, using their recommended test may have the results slanted in their favor.

Be aware that speeds will vary over time (even minutes). Take a few readings at different times of the day to establish a baseline for comparison later. Keep written records so that if the speeds are consistently low then you have something to provide your tech support to prove your case.

Wireless connections are usually slower than hard wire connection cabled back to your router. If you can, try speed tests both through wired and wireless.

MONITORING TIMES MAGAZINE

“Monitoring Times was a monthly printed magazine based in the United States covering shortwave listening and DXing, scanners, mediumwave broadcasting as well as utility stations, pirates and clandestines. It ceased publication in 2013 after 31 years of publication beginning in 1982” So says the description on the web page of americanradiohistory.com



with on-line copies of the magazine from 1982 to 1999.

Doug DeMaw, W1FB, had a column in the magazine called DeMaw’s Workbench, from 1988 to 1997.

Kind of fun to look at the advertisements from those days.

INTERNET EXPLORER IN WINDOWS 10

If you, like me, have installed Windows 10 and have wondered what happened to Internet Explorer, wonder no more. It’s actually still there along with the new Edge browser. If you only want to use it once in a while, you can access it from the Edge “more” menu. That’s those three dots on the upper right under the X you use to close the program. Click on those three dots and part way down the list you should see “Open in Internet Explorer”. Click on that menu item to open IE. However, once you close it, you have to go through the same steps again the next time you want it.

A way to make it permanently accessible is to go to the Start menu at the bottom left corner of your screen (see CLASSIC SHELL in the right column on this page)

and type “Internet Explorer” in the “Search Programs and Files” box. Right click on Internet Explorer in the found programs list. Left button click on “Pin to taskbar” to attach it to the taskbar at the bottom of the screen.

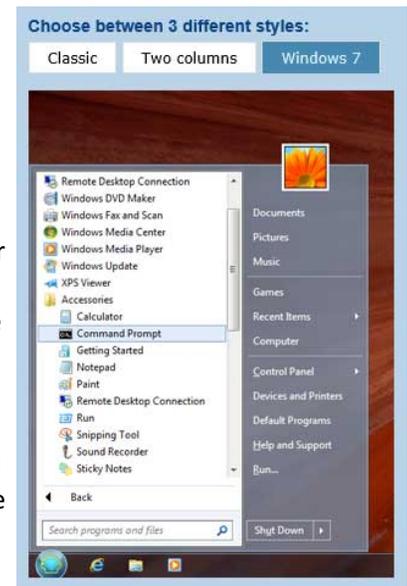
With IE back again, my web mail issue with Edge is no longer a problem. So long Edge - it’s been nice to know ya!

CLASSIC SHELL

While we’re on the subject of Windows operating systems, there is a small piece of software that gives you back the Start menu that you had in Windows 7 and earlier versions.

Microsoft must have really paid attention to the people who were part of the test team for Windows 8. I can’t believe everyone of those individuals wanted it removed.

Classic shell may be downloaded from <http://www.classicshell.net/>. Once you have it on your computer you will have a familiar Start icon down in the lower left corner of your screen. It is customizable so you can set it to however your heart desires.



BAOFENG HANDHELDS

Boafeng is the “new kid on the block” when it comes to multi-band hand helds in the VHF/UHF range. Certainly the price is right for these radios. I see one (UV-5R Dual Band) on Amazon.com for \$26.90 and free shipping.

Technical details are given as:

Frequency Range: 65-108 MHz (Only commercial FM radio reception) VHF: 136-174 MHz(Rx/Tx). UHF: 400-520 MHz(Rx/Tx)

The description says it is “Ideal for: Baby monitoring, floorwalkers, adventure sports, retail, and manufacturing industries”. Nary a mention of amateur radio!

Two of these are cheaper than a pair of FRS hand



holds. Great - now every kid on the block can have one! And look at the frequency possibilities! [*some sarcasm here*]

It used to be that you had to know which diode to clip or which short to remove (or add) to open the frequency range on VHF/UHF radios. Not any more.

If you subscribe to QST magazine, or if you can borrow a copy, take a look at the Tech Correspondence column for November 2015. The same Baofeng going for \$26.90 (don't forget the free shipping) fails ARRL's spectrum testing for two meters.

It's another case of getting what you pay for.

PAC-12 VERTICAL ANTENNA

I've mentioned this vertical antenna kit *before*. I see that it is once again available for sale (\$120 US) on their web site at <http://www.qrpkits.com/pac12.html>

The kit comes with all parts necessary to build a fixed coil (40 Meters) vertical (with two extra coil forms for 30M or higher). Coil kits are available to cover 80 through 10 meters. You can order it with a multi band adjustable coil covering 40 through 10. The kits even have wire included for the ground leads. Fine tuning (with the fixed coils) is done by adjusting the length of the stainless steel whip.

Coverage can be extended to cover 6 and 2 by eliminating the coil and using the whip for adjustment.

FOREIGN LINGUISTIC BLOOPERS

Those of you who have been around the ham bands through the gradual fall of equipment manufactured in North America and the rise of Japanese equipment will remember the user manuals and their strange and often humorous translations. The JA makers have gotten much better with their English production. However, with the current rise of Chinese ham manufacturers, the strangeness is once again on the increase.

The one on the right is from a page on Amazon.com for a NIPPON Model UDF-60 UHF Digital Flat Antenna. Note the "eves" trough. And under the section about operating the antenna



Operating cautions:
You may not get the best performance or get the interferences if the antenna is located at the behind of buildings or the spots where the signal is weak.

Keep the coaxial cable from the roof or eves trough

Again from Amazon.com, from a page by Nicheone -

Nicheone is a well-know online seller, specialized in walkie-talkie and engaged in the walkie-talkie sales for many years. As a professional and reliable eBay seller, our products with advanced technology, quality, stability and loved by the majority of customers.

Notice: after your payment, besides the shipping address, Please also tell me your telephone number. (telephone number is very important for the shipping, it can help the shipping be fluent.) otherwise shipping will delay.

And two final ones quoted in *The Almost Complete Guide to Yaesu's VX-6R* by Phillip J. Boucher.

Oning the radio by the knob, turn right.

The PTT button pressed, for sending and not sending let go.

I suspect that the Japanese manufacturers took such a ribbing about their manuals (there is a rumor that they used Japanese students attending North American universities to write their manuals) that they eventually hired native English speaking technical writers to smooth out their text. Something it appears the Chinese have yet to learn. 

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

...it ultimately is impossible for another person to offend you or to offend me. Indeed, believing that another person offended us is fundamentally false. To be offended is a choice we make; it is not a condition inflicted or imposed upon us by someone or something else.

David A. Bednar

Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

DI-DAH-DI-DAH

Have you ever noticed how many people are offended by something or other these days. Look at road rage! Someone was offended by somebody cutting in front of them in traffic. Maybe it was intentional, or maybe the offender's spouse was nattering in their ear, "turn right here... right... RIGHT! ... NO - LEFT!" while they were busy turning into the right, then left lane. Sympathy rather than anger should be your reaction.

Or fights, during or after sporting events, because somebody made a comment someone didn't like about "their" team or "their" player.

We have to be so careful these days that we don't say something that just might possibly offend someone. We hardly dare to wish someone a Merry Christmas any more lest we insult a Muslim or an closet atheist or someone who doesn't believe as we do. So, we've given in and announce, "Happy Holiday", instead. Does it trouble you when someone greets you with "Happy Chanukkah" or "Happy Kwanzaa"? Doesn't bother me. Why should it? So why should a "Merry Christmas" bother someone else?

Remember the old saying we used to spout when we were children, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names can never hurt me." Adults who so easily take offence seem to forget this.

A quote from an e-card at someecards.com says, "Announcing *I'm offended* is basically telling the world you can't control your own emotions, so everyone else should do it for you."

Now that's a non-offensive and politically correct quote for you!

Until next month,

VE1VQ



Did you get anything good for Christmas? Anything remotely resembling something of a ham radio persuasion? Perhaps you had to buy it for yourself!

Please tell us what Santa brought you. Send an e-mail to ve1vq@eastlink.ca so we can include it in an upcoming Newsletter article.