

**Radio Amateurs of Canada applauds 60 metre band frequency allocations!**  
**Radio Amateurs du Canada se réjouit de l'allocation de fréquences sur la bande du 60 mètres!**



**MARCH / APRIL 2014 – MARS / AVRIL 2014**

Dave Snydal, VE4XN (left) and Bill Karle, VE4KZ, discuss one of the documents at the Manitoba Amateur Radio Museum.



George Hrischenko, VE3DGX, on his "One and Only DXpedition".



VE7RC Copper Island Activation



John (Jack) S. Belrose, VE2CV/VE3CVY,  
on the EH Antenna Systems



**RAC Canada Day  
Contest 2013  
Results**



# A VISIT TO THE MANITOBA AMATEUR RADIO MUSEUM

Bill Karle, VE4KZ

## INTRODUCTION

You know how you intend to do something but it repeatedly gets put off? That was the case with my oft-intended but oft-postponed trip to the Manitoba Amateur Radio Museum (MARM). The XYL and I figured it was about time to take a trip to central Manitoba and see MARM, located on the grounds of the Manitoba Agricultural Museum.

The founder is Dave Snydal, VE4XN, well-known Manitoba Amateur. When the XYL and I arrived, after a couple hours drive from our home, Dave toured us around. We had a grand time looking at the hardware, learning facts that we did not know, and visiting with Dave.

MARM is a living museum in that the collection continues to grow with additions of vintage and modern equipment while including a functioning Amateur Radio station, a repeater and beacons.

## PUBLIC PART OF MUSEUM

When Dave and his colleagues started working on the project, the vision was to show ham radio through the decades. As a base, there already was an Amateur Radio station on the Agricultural Museum's grounds, established in 1980. By 1984, MARM was born and began operating out of a part of a refurbished train station on the grounds.

As the years went by, it became clear that proper space was necessary. Gumption, and no small amounts of arm-twisting and grant seeking, eventually resulted in the construction of the MARM display building in 1991.

The first impression upon entering this building is the odour of pre-modern electronics! You know, that smell of cotton covered wire, beeswax, shellac,

**Note:** Dave Snydal, VE4XN, licensed in 1962, has distinguished himself in many ways. In addition to being an inductee of the Canadian Amateur Radio Hall of Fame (2000), he also served as Mid-west Director of the Canadian Radio Relay League (1990-1993); served in various capacities with the International Ham Fest, Brandon Amateur Radio Club, the Canadian-American Repeater Council, the Amateur Radio League of Manitoba, and more. He was behind establishment of repeaters VE4BDN, VE4CTY, VE4IHF, VE4MTR and VE4TED. He is a trustee of RAC's Defence of Amateur Radio Fund. While being of great service to the amateur and other communities, he also has racked up over 220 DXCC entities and has completed working all US counties.

dusty tubes and, one imagines, a trace of ozone. And no wonder since you are greeted by floor to ceiling shelves of electronic gear plus map file drawers of interesting documents.

The second impression is how well organized everything is. Each item has a label naming the hardware and giving a little added information such as the era from which it is drawn. The XYL and I both remarked at how clean everything was; nary a dust bunny in sight.

The museum includes equipment and accessories that are commercially manufactured, constructed from kits and homebrewed. I drifted down memory lane picking out my first homebrew transmitter, first kit transmitter, first "good" receiver, and on and on.

The displayed items cover much of Amateur Radio's history. For example, there is a serviceable spark gap transmitter and a long wave crystal receiver from the 1910-19 decade. Jump forward a few years and lay your hands on a Tuned Radio Frequency (TRF) receiver with its manifold knobs and low voltage vacuum tubes designed to run from batteries.

Turn the clock forward some more and marvel how the basic five-tube superheterodyne receiver – that brought radio to the millions – after being gussied up with a beat frequency oscillator made a functional receiver. Skip forward some more and witness the quest for sensitivity, selectivity, dynamic range and low noise



in the post World War Two receivers. At the same time, the first single sideband transmitters began to become commonplace. Another twirl of the MARM time machine and you see rigs reaching into the VHF and UHF spectra. One more turn of the time dial and observe our modern solid-state integrated circuit rigs.

It is not only hardware on view. Those map drawers hold paper documents and photographs that will, in my case, require more time to appreciate. For example, there is a "cease operation notice" that went out to the Canadian Amateur population within days of the September 1939 declaration of war on Hitler's Germany by the British Empire, of which Canada was a part.

Should you go to MARM with family members not interested Amateur history, know that Internet access via Wi-Fi is available. How considerate!

## AMATEUR RADIO STATION

Amateur Radio Station, VE4ARM, is in a room lined with glass windows immediately adjacent to the display area.



The public can observe hams operating the modern and/or vintage stations or toiling at the well-equipped workbench.

The station includes a rotating Yagi-Uda beam up 15 metres (50 feet) as well as dipole antennas.

Floor to ceiling shelving, of which this is only one section, displays equipment for all Amateur Radio eras.



One of two operating positions in the ham station part of the museum.

There is a two-metre FM repeater, VE4MTR, with its antenna up 30 metres (100 feet).

The design is thorough. For example, the observant will notice AC outlets in the ham station, with red-coloured faceplates denoting that these outlets are supplied by one of the three generators that MARM maintains.

Near the entry door is a master switch: one pull and the entire station is disconnected implementing the adage "switch to safety". As a side note, each building similarly is protected: no leaving the MARM workshop, located elsewhere on the grounds, with a soldering iron smouldering on the bench.

### NON-PUBLIC PARTS OF MUSEUM

Far from public areas are two buildings owned by MARM: one serves as a workshop and the other as a store of equipment and materials not on display. A third structure owned by the Agricultural Museum garages MARM's vehicles.

The workshop is used to catalogue, evaluate and refurbish newly arrived acquisitions. There are workbenches, cabinets of large and small parts, and necessary hand and power tools. In short, it is shop to die for! It is encouraging to know that a cigarette-smoke encrusted Collins S-Line ensemble, resting on the floor, will be resurrected to presentable condition in this shop by volunteer hands.

The storage building has shelving groaning under loads of equipment, accessories, vacuum tubes, books and magazines. Most are catalogued and tagged.

Dave Snydal, VE4XN (left) and Bill Karle, VE4KZ, discuss one of the documents.



For example, there are many boxes of tubes. These are a resource not only for MARM efforts, but also for radio restorers who regularly visit in order to find parts for their work. Dave comments that these and others, such as the fleamarket buyers, contribute funds to support the museum.

The garage building covers MARM's wheeled vehicles including its float. Float? Yes. With high profile events happening at the Manitoba Agricultural Museum, such as the Threshermen's Reunion, MARM likes to show off its contributions and one way is to join the parade. MARM also has golf carts helping folks get around. The wheeled generators are stored here.



A view of a portion of the Shop Building.

### SPARK PLUGS

Clearly this enterprise, for MARM is nothing less, did not spring forth overnight.

In addition to Dave, the visionary and main-man, three hams are recognized in the Museum as having created the facility. All now Silent Keys, they are Bill Williams, VE4IW, Bob Bryan, VE4RO and Bill Panting, VE4KX. I noticed that Murray Ronald, VE4RE, a well known Winnipeg entrepreneur, also has made significant contributions toward a building and towers.

Hundreds of others have made donations of time and money as Founders, Life Members and Friends.

### CONCLUSION

The Manitoba Agricultural Museum is located just off of the Trans-Canada Highway, near the town of Austin. It is about two hours west of Winnipeg and one hour east of Brandon.

The Museum's website has a map as well as pictures and information to whet your appetite. It can be found at: [http:// www.marminc.ca](http://www.marminc.ca)

That's the story of our trip to The Manitoba Amateur Radio Museum.

The XYL and I both agreed that we must return, and soon!

Bill Karle, continuously licensed since 1957, has held calls K8QGT, VE2ECW, briefly 4S7KZG, and presently VE4KZ. Bill is a Certified Emergency Coordinator. His Amateur Radio interests include propagation, antennas, digi-modes and DXing. He is retired following a career in international consulting, university teaching and university administration.

