Two Countries, Two Shacks

When you see Andy, VE1AEB at one of our club meetings, you might wonder why you never run into him during the summer months.

That's because Andy spends his winters here in Vegas and summers in Halifax, the lovely capitol of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia has a rich radio history. In 1902, Marconi built his first permanent transatlantic wireless station in the town of Glace Bay and transmitted the first official transatlantic messages from North America to England. This is now the Marconi National Historic Site.

(For POTA fans, CA-4842)

Andy doesn't have a National Historic Site in his honor, but he does have the distinction of operating two stations in two different countries.

Here's his home in suburban Halifax, Nova Scotia…



And here’s his home here in Vegas…



Andy’s Interest In Amateur Radio Began In The Summer Of 2025

“My wife and I were watching a show about Mount St. Helen's eruption. There was a story about a mobile radio operator, an amateur radio operator like us, who was using his mobile rig in his truck to communicate with EMS. He was spotting people in trouble and enabling EMS to find and rescue them. I said to my wife, ‘Amateur radio, that might be a fun hobby for me!’ And so it began.”

His two shacks are well equipped.

“Here in Vegas I have an Icom IC-7300MK2 radio, a 20 ft aluminum flagpole with a 20m Shark ham stick dipole antenna using a combination of KMR-400 (outside) and RG-58 inside my condo.”

Andy just put up a Comet CHA-250HD antenna at his Vegas condo.

“After using the multi-band end fed vertical (which is what the Comet is) back in Halifax, I could never be satisfied with a simple mono-band dipole again. I am very happy with it. I know there are much more powerful antennas, and maybe someday I might invest in them, but being that I haven't had a license for a year yet, I am still trying to squeeze all the capability possible out of my Comet. I have 88 DXCC regions confirmed with QSLs so far and I hope to get the DXCC 100 award on QRZ.COM before the end of 2026.

“In Canada I have exactly the same radio, bought separately. I do not take my radios with me when I travel, but my laptop travels with me everywhere.

“I have a Comet CHA-250HD multi-band antenna set up on my deck and the antenna is about 27 ft AGL and about 70 ft of KMR-400 cable from antenna to the rig. So it works very well for European and North African continents as well as Eastern North America and the Caribbean, South America as well.

Andy Is A Big Fan Of FT8

“I am pretty much exclusively using FT8 digital mode and WSJT-X radio software on Windows 11, JTALERTV2 and N3FJP Amateur Contact Log software for call logging. I also have the ARRL LOTW Trusted QSL (TQSL) agent installed on my PC and I use both QRZ.COM Logbook as well as ARRL's LOTW for logging my FT8 calls.

“I have had a very few SSB voice calls, 99% of my radio time is spent on FT8. I use almost all bands on FT8.”

So far, Andy hasn’t done any portable operating, “But I have thought about it for sure.”

How Andy Wound Up Spending Half The Year In Las Vegas

“In 2005 I was Senior Director of Network Operations for Bell Aliant Telecommunications. I was responsible for all level 2 and level 3 operations technical support for voice, data, mobile services, networks, as well as a relatively new domain: data center operations.

“Some of my senior staff convinced me that we needed to learn a lot more about this new domain so we found a conference to attend in Las Vegas, *Implementing ITIL in computer Operations*. ITIL is the Information Technology Infrastructure Library, a set of best practices for managing data centers and large computing installations.

“We flew to Vegas on the second week of February 2006. It was warmer than usual for that time of year. Besides attending the conference, two friends and I rented a car and drove out to Red Rock Canyon. Back in those days hardly anyone was out there. We were blown away by the beauty of the scenery.

“That visit kindled my love for the area. When I went back home to Halifax, I told my new girlfriend (who is now my wife), ‘We have to go on vacation there.’ The following year, in 2007, we started vacationing here and have never missed a year since. We bought our condo in 2012 and by 2015 we were both retired and started spending six months a year here.

“Las Vegas is a big part of our lives. We will always come here as long as our health allows.”

Andy’s Favorite QSOs… So Far

“I would say the most gratifying ones have been the calls to Johannesburg and Kaliningrad. I have only had one QSO/QSL so far to all of China and one confirmed QSL to Kaliningrad. There have been many exciting ones and I'm currently at 90/100 on my DXCC target.”

The Two LVRAC Members Who Have Given Andy A Hand

Here in Vegas, Andy has enjoyed a helping hand from LVRAC member Bob, AD7J.

“He played a major role in getting me started on FT8. Bob brought his antenna analyzer and showed me how to use it, plus he explained the fairly complicated setup of WSJT-X, JTALERTV2 and N3FJP ACL.

“We got my radio working with my antenna, the software and completed a couple of FT8 calls all in one four-hour period. I am very grateful to Bob for his help. Honorable mention goes to Joe, KE7OPK, who allowed me to come visit him at his apartment and Joe verified my radio was working fine with his antenna.”

Andy Earned His First Amateur Radio License In Canada In 2025

“I was really pumped to score a 99% on my final exam for my Basic with Honours Qualification Radio Exam in December 2025 and 100% on my Advanced Qualification Radio Exam, in March 2026, both taken in Canada. The Advanced Qualification course and exam I took over the Internet using Zoom and attending 10 lectures plus one invigilated exam. A senior radio instructor, Brian Allen, VA1CC, at my home club in Halifax, was my invigilator (proctor) on my Advanced exam.

“All of my studying for Beginner and Advanced Qualification was done here at local parks in Las Vegas. My wife would accompany me relaxing in her chair while I read,

took notes, studied and took practice exams. I will always remember I learned all of my course material for both Qualifications at local parks in Las Vegas.

Andy's Other Club

Andy's Nova Scotian club is The Halifax Amateur Radio Club, founded in 1933, one of the oldest in Canada.

"It's at Fire Station #50 in the suburbs of the city. We have a few rooms that are dedicated to the amateur radio club known as HARC.

"We have quite a mix of instructors, most in their 60s and 70s, one or two in their 80s and one, who is a professor of electrical engineering at Dalhousie University, is in his early 40s. We have mostly an older membership with the vast majority being in their 50s to 70s.

An Ideal Background For Amateur Radio Success

Before retirement Andy's work as a professional telecom engineer set him up to step into our hobby without missing a beat.

"My background as a telecom engineer helped me understand the fundamentals of the hobby (electrical, mechanical, physics) and it prepared me to not get intimidated with new material to learn. If one thing engineering taught me, there are endless possibilities to learn in life and I should embrace as many as I can."

Andy Enjoys Splitting His Year Between Vegas And Halifax

The two cities could hardly be more different, which suits Andy just fine.

"Halifax is a vibrant coastal capital and one of Canada's premier maritime destinations, renowned for its deep naval roots, rich colonial history, and lively modern waterfront. It's where I have lived for 58 years. I went through all my schooling and university there, graduating from both St Mary's University and the Technical University of Nova Scotia (BEng 1988 Distinction), which is now the Dalhousie University Faculty of Engineering."

We're delighted to have Andy as a member.