



# Western Suburbs Radio Club Inc.

## May 2009 Newsletter

ZL1AC, Branch 03 NZART 3000 Great North Road New Lynn,  
 PO Box 15-122 New Lynn WAITAKERE 0640  
 President: Ian Sangster ZL1RCA, Vice President Ross Reddell ZL1VRR.  
 Secretary: Roy Milam ZL1WI. Newsletter Editor – John Neill ZL1NE  
 VHF Club Net Wednesday 07:30pm 146.525 MHz,  
 HF Club Net Fridays 07:30pm 3.623 MHz  
**Website <http://www.qsl.net/zl1ac>**



### Club Calendar

Monday	11 <sup>th</sup>	May	Club Night – Address by NZART Councillor Vaughan Henderson ZL1TGC
Wednesday	27 <sup>th</sup>	May	Committee Meeting
Monday	8 <sup>th</sup>	June	Club Night – Video Evening on Radio Related topics.
Wednesday	24 <sup>th</sup>	June	Committee Meeting
Monday	13 <sup>th</sup>	July	Club Night – To be announced
Wednesday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	July	Committee Meeting
Monday	10 <sup>th</sup>	August	Club Night - To be announced
Wednesday	26 <sup>th</sup>	August	Committee Meeting
Monday	14 <sup>th</sup>	September	Club Night - To be announced
Wednesday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	September	Committee Meeting
Saturday	3 <sup>rd</sup>	October	Used Equipment Sale – Details to be announced
Monday	12 <sup>th</sup>	October	Club Night - To be announced
Wednesday	28 <sup>th</sup>	October	Committee Meeting
Monday	9 <sup>th</sup>	November	Club Night - To be announced
Wednesday	25 <sup>th</sup>	November	Committee Meeting
Monday	14 <sup>th</sup>	December	Club Night – Christmas BBQ and Social

### May Meeting

The May meeting on 11 May at 7:30 pm will be an address by NZART Councillor Vaughan Henderson ZL1TGC. Vaughan will bring us up to date on NZART issues and projects.

### April Meeting

April was the Annual General Meeting. It was held on Easter Monday and although it was a holiday a reasonable number of club members were present. Reports were received from the Acting President and the Treasurer. The AREC report will be presented later as the AREC Section Leader was away on holiday. A new committee was elected. Roy ZL1LK resigned from the committee because of other commitments. Ian ZL1RCA was elected President Roy ZL1WI was elected Secretary. The other positions were unchanged.

### Field Day

We have received the results of the Field Day Contest and the club took out first place in the WM Hall Memorial – QRP section . We scored 217,856 points. The second place in the QRP section scored 57,036. Congratulations to all of the team members.

### Club Subscriptions

At the AGM the club subscription was increased to \$30. This is now payable to the Treasurer at PO Box 15-122 New Lynn WAITAKERE 0640, or make your payment directly to John Turnwald at the next club meeting. It has unfortunately been necessary to raise the club fees to cover the ever increasing cost of running the club and maintaining the clubs assets such as the building.

### Repeaters

At the recent Regional Coordinating Meeting the cost of maintaining the Repeater network was discussed. The Auckland VHF Group maintains all of the repeaters in the Auckland region on behalf of all Amateur Radio Operators. Financial assistance is sought from Amateurs to assist in this work. If you would like to contribute then please talk with Ian ZL1RCA.

### Used Equipment Sale

The western Suburbs Radio Club Used Equipment Sale will take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October. The Club is currently collecting surplus equipment that can be sold to raise funds for the club. This sale is the clubs main fund raiser each year and ensures the continued financial viability of

the club. If you have surplus equipment, or know of any other non-club people that may have surplus equipment, that could be donated to the sale then please contact a member of the committee.

### **AMSAT-DL Reports Reflections from Venus**

Germany's amateur satellite organization, AMSAT-DL, reports successfully receiving echoes of signals bounced off of Venus on March 25, 2009. The group's president, Peter Guelzow, DB2OS, says the AMSAT-DL team working toward launching an amateur radio satellite to Mars used a ground station at the Bochum observatory to transmit signals – "HI" in Morse code -- to our closest planetary neighbour. Nonetheless, the distance is nearly 100 million kilometres (67 million miles) and the radio signals took about five minutes to make the round trip at the speed of light.

This was the first time planetary echoes have been received in Europe, according to Guelzow, and the greatest DX ever achieved by radio amateurs, as the signals travelled more than 100 times farther than those sent to the moon for EME (Earth-Moon-Earth) contacts. A fast-Fourier-transform (FFT) analysis program was used to decode the returning signals. Guelzow says the tests were repeated successfully on March 26 and that as a result of the successful reception of echoes from Venus, the ground and command station at Bochum has been cleared for operational use.

AMSAT-DL is working on building a satellite known currently as Phase 5A (P5A), which is intended to be launched into Mars orbit in an effort to show that interplanetary exploration is possible on a "low budget" basis. Low budget in this case, however, will still require an investment of more than 20 million Euros (approximately \$26 million US).

More information is available on the AMSAT-DL website at < <http://www.amsat-dl.org> >.

### **'Quiet Sun' Baffling Astronomers**

By Pallab Ghosh - Science correspondent, BBC News

The Sun is the dimmest it has been for nearly a century. There are no sunspots, very few solar flares - and our nearest star is the quietest it has been for a very long time. The observations are baffling astronomers, who are due to study new pictures of the Sun, taken from space, at the UK National Astronomy Meeting. The Sun normally undergoes an 11-year cycle of activity. At its peak, it has a tumultuous boiling atmosphere that spits out flares and planet-sized chunks of super-hot gas. This is followed by a calmer period. Last year, it was expected that it would have been hotting up after a quiet spell. But instead it hit a 50-year year low in solar wind pressure, a 55-year low in radio emissions, and a 100-year low in sunspot activity. According to Prof Louise Hara of University College London, it is unclear why this is happening or when the Sun is likely to become more active again. "There's no sign of us coming out of it yet," she told BBC News. "At the moment, there are scientific papers coming out suggesting that we'll be going into a normal period of activity soon. "Others are suggesting we'll be going into another minimum period - this is a big scientific debate at the moment." Sunspots could be seen by the Soho telescope in 2001 (l), but not this year (r). In the mid-17th Century, a quiet spell - known as the Maunder Minimum - lasted 70 years, and led to a "mini ice-age". This has resulted in some people suggesting that a similar cooling might offset the impact of climate change. According to Prof Mike Lockwood of Southampton University, this view is too simplistic. "I wish the Sun was coming to our aid but, unfortunately, the data shows that is not the case," he said. Prof Lockwood was one of the first researchers to show that the Sun's activity has been gradually decreasing since 1985, yet overall global temperatures have continued to rise. "If you look carefully at the observations, it's pretty clear that the underlying level of the Sun peaked at about 1985 and what we are seeing is a continuation of a downward trend (in solar activity) that's been going on for a couple of decades. "If the Sun's dimming were to have a cooling effect, we'd have seen it by now."

Middle ground 'Evidence from tree trunks and ice cores suggest that the Sun is calming down after an unusually high point in its activity. Professor Lockwood believes that as well as the Sun's 11-year cycle, there is an underlying solar oscillation lasting hundreds of years. He suggests that 1985 marked the "grand maximum" in this long-term cycle and the Maunder Minimum marked its low point. "We are re-entering the middle ground after a period which has seen the Sun in its top 10% of activity," said Professor Lockwood. "We would expect it to be more than a hundred years before we get down to the levels of the Maunder Minimum." He added that the current slight dimming of the Sun is not going to reverse the rise in global temperatures caused by the burning of fossil fuels. "What we are seeing is consistent with a global temperature rise, not that the Sun is coming to our aid." Data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shows global average temperatures have risen by about 0.7C since the beginning of the 20th Century and the IPCC projects that the world will continue to warm, with temperatures expected to rise between 1.8C and 4C by the end of the century. No-one knows how the centuries-long waxing and waning of the Sun works. However, astronomers now have space telescopes studying the Sun in detail. According to Prof Richard Harrison of the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Oxfordshire, this current quiet period gives astronomers a unique opportunity. "This is very exciting because as astronomers we've never seen anything like this before in our lifetimes," he said. "We have spacecraft up there to study the Sun in phenomenal detail. With these telescopes we can study this minimum of activity in a way that we could not have done so in the past."

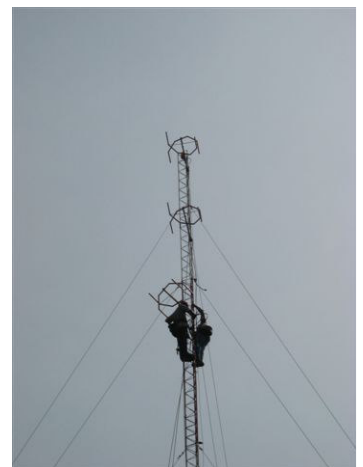
### **From Alan Bennett ZL2TAG**

Alan sent his apologies to me for non-attendance at the April AGM but unfortunately I didn't read the email in time so please accept Alan's apology now. Alan has also sent in the following report.

Some in the WSRC may be interested in these pics. One of my "hobby" jobs in Thailand is technical advisor to several FM community stations in this area. A recent upgrade was to remove a stacked folded dipole (2x4) on 2 sides of tower and replace with these beauties, a single 4 stack with matching power divider. With Tx of 300watts, the range is 40km radius for full quieting on a car radio, with no flutter at all, out to 50km with some noise. Circular polarisation, tower is 42 metres high, no hills. The dipoles only gave 20km radius and even then considerable flutter after 12km.

I wisely stay behind camera, keeping away from towers. The riggers use a simple belt clip, no harness. No record of an accident.

Matching is near perfect, with only 2 watts reverse at 300 watts forward on a Bird ThruLine.  
 This setup is on 88.5mhz (a QSL for any NZ DXer ! ) Greetings, Alan



**Club Nets**

VHF Net 146.525 MHz 7:30pm every Wednesday,  
 HF Net 3623 KHz +/- QRM/QRN 7:30pm every  
 Friday. All are welcome to check in on the nets.  
 The full HF Net Roster can be found on  
<http://www.qsl.net/zl1ac/wsrc-hf-roster.html>

1-May-09	ZL1MW	Brian
8-May-09	ZL1NE	John
15-May-09	ZL1ACZ	Barry
22-May-09	ZL1WI	Roy
29-May-09	ZL1VRR	Ross
5-Jun-09	ZL1MW	Brian
12-Jun-09	ZL1NE	John
19-Jun-09	ZL1ACZ	Barry
26-Jun-09	ZL1WI	Roy

**Dictators and Amateur Radio**  
 by Francisc Grünberg, YO4PX

Amateur radio was always complicated by dictators with distrust and fear, as a suspect and potentially dangerous avocation. The ability to transmit messages over the barbed wire of the "Iron Curtains" and across heavily guarded borders, where weapons are pointed more into the country than out, was associated in the Romanian People's Republic, and in the other former or current totalitarian régimes as well, with the activity of spies on the enemy's payroll.

In the dictators' paranoiac imagination these spies, disguised as radio amateurs, were trying to undermine the "heroic effort of the people for the construction of the new society": another name for the total control and submission of its citizens, the final endeavour of all régimes with socialist, communist, military, tribal or fundamentalist ideologies.

Risking the simplification inherent to any generalization, the degree of democracy present in a country is directly proportional to the number of its licensed radio amateurs, the liberties they enjoy and the administrative obstacles they may or may not confront. Today, an indication of such freedom is the absence of bureaucratic hindrances imposed on the importation of amateur radio rigs, getting a transceiver through customs at national frontiers, and the willingness to allow visitors' time-limited amateur radio activities.

Western democracies acknowledge radio amateurs' merit, as pioneers of the short waves to humanity's benefit and for the services they rendered and continue to render to their communities. Laws in these countries grant radio amateurs and their equipment freedom of movement and activity thanks to reciprocal agreements. The CEPT Convention provided a huge step forward as it simplified operation for amateurs of the signatory countries.

In Spain amateur radio is considered a form of art. In Güimar, Canary Islands, a statue was dedicated to amateur radio, with a syrinx (panpipes) representing the five (in 1974) amateur short wave bands. Many American presidents proclaimed amateur radio a national resource.

For whole decades BY1PK was the only workable station in China - until silenced by the infamous Cultural Revolution. Now we hear many BY calls and, on the VHF and LF bands, thousands of licensed QRP stations. No doubt the tenacious efforts of Martti Laine, OH2BH played a decisive role in this opening to the world.

After many years of silence in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, a single station, YI1BGD was licensed. This followed a demonstration by Erik Sjölund, SMOAGD, who made some 50 contacts before Iraqi officials who were amazed by the number of hams eager to contact a new country.

North Korea authorized only a few sporadic operations, the most productive being the activity of Ed Giorgadze, 4L4FN. He made more than 16,000 QSO's before the authorities shut him down. KA2HTV's recent failure doesn't offer much hope the situation will soon change.

Myanmar's (Burma) military junta is quite reluctant to issue licenses to foreign operators. But they are occasionally heard, especially when intended to convince the generals that liberalizing amateur radio could boost the country's image to a world concerned by human rights violations.

Contact with an Albanian station was an unattainable dream during the Stalinist dictatorship of Enver Hodja. Now there are some active stations thanks to powerful associations that championed getting a ZA call sign on the air after many decades.

In Poland all amateurs were forced to hand over their equipment following the imposition of martial law, inspired by the Soviet Union, in December 1981. General Jaruzelski stifled in bloodshed the protests of the trade union Solidarnos?, and the SP prefix was absent from the bands for almost two years.

Turkey for many years was prominent on the Most Wanted Countries List, now a few local stations and occasional visitors can be worked from TA-land.

Under the Taliban régime licensing a YA station was hardly conceivable in a country where the most elementary human rights were violated. Now hams working for international organizations are sporadically active from Afghanistan.

But where tradition is shattered, short instruction courses and donated gear cannot replace the passion and knowledge transmitted from generation to generation, from mentor to disciple, which ensures the perpetuity and development of the hobby. Hopefully, the spirit will reignite in Libya, Yemen, Rwanda, Iran, Sudan, Mount Athos, Somalia, Congo, Cambodia, Laos, countries and entities where amateur radio activity is inexistent or drastically restricted...

There are cases when the oppressive régime feels itself impregnable and magnanimously allows the licensing of a few "reliable" residents, intimates of the power wielders, for propaganda's sake to defend itself from the international amateur radio community's disapproval. Some dictatorships, after lengthy negotiations, authorize time-limited activities for foreign operators present as United Nations officials, NGOs or peace-keeping forces.

In Romania the dictatorial régime branded amateur radio as well. For 45 years the state of one's "dossier" was decisive in obtaining a license. In the 1950s those applicants who hadn't a "healthy origine" (i.e., originated from a family of workers or peasants) could experience huge difficulties, and not only in the realm of amateur radio. Family members living in the West, unfavourable information from the schools' secretary of the Communist Party, from the college or employer's "cadres office" (today's personnel office) regarding the applicant's lack of enthusiasm and attachment to the "Party Line," denunciations, containing mostly mendacious and misinterpreted information - all were grounds for denial without explanation of the application or suspension of a previously issued license.

Truly impartial historians of Romanian amateur radio should record its decades-long constraints as subordinate to the army. This practice followed piously on the heels of the Russian pattern. The Securitate (the former Romanian secret police) exercised relentless control of the licensing procedure through the so-called Higher Radio Commission, overseeing the entire activity of the radio amateurs, beginning with the assignments in leading positions in the county clubs and in the Romanian Amateur Radio Federation and ending with the accurate inventory of the equipment owned.

In the 1980s the Radio Control Centres launched a series of residential inspections and license suspensions for varying periods of time. Was it merely coincidence that many holders of those suspended licenses were also members of reputable foreign clubs? This group included the most active and notable amateurs, authentic ambassadors of Romania on the air.

Yearly "informative materials" drawn up by the Securitate and presented with the force of "truth" cited "negative aspects," like "relations with foreigners" (regulated by notorious Law 23 requiring compulsory detailed reports about the nature of these relationships and their progress), the correspondence of amateurs, alike the correspondence of all other presumptive "unfaithful" citizens, was inspected and systematically censored. Receiving a transceiver from friends or relatives in Western countries was a terrible humiliation and a matter of suspicion - an opportunity for blackmail.

But not only amateur radio was subject to thorough supervision. The presidential couple Ceausescu deemed profoundly undesirable: computers, video recorders, TV antennas pointed towards Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary, TV satellite dishes, books, magazines and newspapers from abroad, everything enabling the free circulation of ideas and information, not to mention the free movement of Romanian citizens.

We don't have yet sufficient and complete information about the Stalinist trial of George Craiu, YO3RF, and the ordeal of his imprisonment. We don't know the truth about the conviction of YO7DZ. I don't think amateurs are aware of the fact that in the 1987 anticommunist uprising in Brasov, two years before the revolution and the régime's collapse, a ham was among the participants. He was charged during the inquiry with "subversive communication with the West," although he was a short wave listener and possessed only a receiver! After 1989 he also faced a defamation lawsuit, because he thought he recognised a member of Parliament on the TV screen as his torturer. We don't know how many persons abandoned hope after their failed attempts to obtain a license.

To understand the past a people must become acquainted with it and finally to admit it. With no hard feelings, no resentments, but fully aware of the truth. This truth must not be silenced and buried under the dust of archives. I think it's important to be uttered, recorded and known, in order to avoid all the tragic mistakes of the history.

Francisc Grünberg, YO4PX