

QUA FARC

Franklin Amateur Radio Club Inc. NZART Branch 10



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Meetings: Club meetings are on the third Tuesday each month in the clubrooms, 19 Stadium Drive, Pukekohe, at 7.30 PM. Visitors welcome.

Next General Meeting

Our June meeting (Tuesday 18 June) will feature Vance Rowe, a leading Australian expert on lithium combustion. Vance is a member of the Australian Federal Government Standards Committee on fire safety and trains engineers all over Australia on fire damper installations and inspections. He will visit us through Microsoft Teams.

Next Practical Training Session

Our next practical training session will be devoted to preparations for the Franklin Junk sale – see below. We will be arranging valuable items on the front table and gathering other items on side tables for easy viewing. This preparation evening will be open to all club members and will take place Tuesday 25 June at 7.30 PM.

Junk Sale



Franklin Amateur Radio Club will hold this year's junk sale on Tuesday 16 July, starting at 7.30 PM at the clubrooms at 19 Stadium Drive, Pukekohe. There is no entry fee but we run a raffle through the evening with the chance to win a produce basket. There will be coffee and tea after the sale ends.

Committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month (excepting January) at 7.30 PM in the clubrooms.

Subscriptions: individual \$20, family \$30, due December
Bank Number: 02-0404-0157944-000

Nets: HF Sunday 9 AM, 3.700 MHz (Mike ZL1UOM); VHF Sunday 9.30 AM, 146.900 MHz (Peter ZL1PX); DMR on TalkGroup 5301, Wednesday 7.30 (Steve ZL1TZP).

QUA editor: Peter ZL1PX pjh@teachlit.com

QUA is sent by email to members and anyone interested.
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May Car Rally

Peter ZL1PX

I haven't attended a car rally since BC (Before Covid) so I was interested to see how this one would operate. Right from the start, I was impressed. Courtney Jones, safety coordinator, called all marshals and radio people together. He made it clear radio helpers must stick to their radios with knobs on (pun intended). If we didn't stay by our radios the Chief Marshal, Chris, would be 'blinded'.

Courtney explained there were two marshals at each location. Their job was to keep everyone safe and their tools were a red flag and a fire extinguisher. If a car was on fire, they were to aim at the seat of the fire and keep going until the fire was out. If the extinguisher ran low they could ask the radio person to get another extinguisher delivered – but to keep going as long as their extinguisher had chemicals.



Marshals take turns to fill out 'next of kin' and other details.

Finally, Courtney directed all radio helpers and marshals to record their personal and next-of-kin details. That seems to me to be a good way to impress on everyone the seriousness of the event and the potential for injuries or worse.

After our safety briefing, we lined up in convoy mode and were led off to our respective course locations. These were

Start...	Ian/Helen ZL1AOX/ZL1HOW
Mid Point A...	Peter/Francois ZL1PX/ZL4FJ
Mid Point B...	Mike/Eric ZL1MFL
Mid Point C...	Ian ZL1IRC
Finish...	Durlene ZL1ULK

Richard ZL1BNQ provided a mobile station and David ZL1DK acted as Base station. Tom (ZL1TOM) rode as coms for the Medical car. For Francois, it was his first car rally and he helped me at the first Mid Point. I was lucky to have him as Mid Point A was a short slope between two corners with a loop of rally course between them – so essentially two mid points. We parked our cars half way up this slope and Francois watched the lower part of the course while I watched the upper. We both used our Anytone 5 watt handhelds to communicate with base – which was clearly visible just beyond the start point.

Mike ZL1MFL and his mate Eric, were at the next location – Mid Point B – only three hundred metres further on. These early stations were so close together we sometimes had to wait for cars to move on before it was quiet enough to make a report.

The importance of making a report is to enable base to know where every car is at any time in the rally. Cars leave the start point one minute apart. As each car passes a Mid Point, the radio helper at that point calls in the name of the point and the car number. For example, 'Alpha 23' reports that car number 23 has passed Alpha point. This enables the next station operator to record that car number and watch to see that it then passes his/her point. If that car does not pass in sequence, the operator calls base to say a car is missing and a search can begin.



Mid Point A, a long slope between two corners of the track.

We lost several cars during this rally. Two of them went off track and were helped to get back on course by marshals. Another two rolled but continued after they were righted. One car wrecked its front suspension going up a bank and had to retire. In each case, base was able to find the missing car because of a careful tally kept by radio helpers. Fortunately, no humans were harmed in the running of this rally.

NZART Conference 2024 June 1/2

Peter ZL1PX

Luckily for me, my daughter Nicola (no call sign) lives where the runway used to be on Wigram Air Force base in Christchurch. I travelled there the day before conference in an attempt to 'acclimatize' to minus 4 temperatures but I am never going to be accustomed to Christchurch winters. At 7.45 AM on the Saturday, Steve ZL1SPR swung by to take me the 2 miles to the Air Force Base Museum. Nice warm car, Steve!

On arrival at the museum, we drifted into a side hall with a score or more early arrivals. There were call sign tags and lanyards on a table next to a coffee station. I noticed a card for Kevin ZL1ABY, a CW enthusiast whom I had worked but never met. He showed up fifteen minutes later and we shook hands. Probably a fair chunk of the conversations around me were hams meeting people they had worked. So, a warm welcome on a chilly morning.



NZART 2024 annual conference held within Wigram Air Force Base Museum, Christchurch.

Conference proceeded an hour later. By now, there were many more amateur operators milling about. As a delegate, I sat among the front rows of seats at large tables, each with a branch name card and power available for a laptop. President Daniel Vandenberg ZL2DRV talked his way through the early items – welcome to everyone, branches present, apologies and Silent Keys.



View from delegates' tables as Daniel opens 2024 Conference

Daniel revealed there were 197 registrations for conference this year, a considerable increase over last year's event. He also spoke of NZART membership being around 1550 for 2024. Looking around, I was able to count 27 branch

delegates at the front tables, but there may have been more at the far end of my row that I wasn't in a position to view.

As branch president, I haven't appreciated until this conference just how central is the Council in the running of NZART. Council members spoke on several key issues. 1. Public Liability Insurance (you are covered if you work on a task for NZART purposes AND you are a paid up member). 2. AREC (proposal to establish a limited liability company to simplify the management structure). 3. Finance (we are healthy). 4. Website and email (now in new hands). 5. Demographics (how to attract younger people to ham radio). 6. Callbook and Break-In. (high cost of printing and postage) Most of these issues had no easy, simple solution readily available and triggered much discussion from the floor.

After morning tea, Daniel asked the meeting to consider Remits 1 and 2. There were a number of speakers in support of and against Remit 1. When the vote was put, conference was against. Remit Denied. Remit 2 on the new constitution changes went through unopposed.

After lunch, numerous awards were presented. One went to Howard Buxton for his service on council. Several Break In writers won awards. Warren Harris ZL2AJ won 'Amateur of the Year' for his work on ham cram and other projects. He was keen to look at what needed to be done to keep hams with clubs once they passed their exams. Vaughan ZL1VH pressed to see a new exam syllabus. Warren tried to reassure him the new syllabus would be out soon.



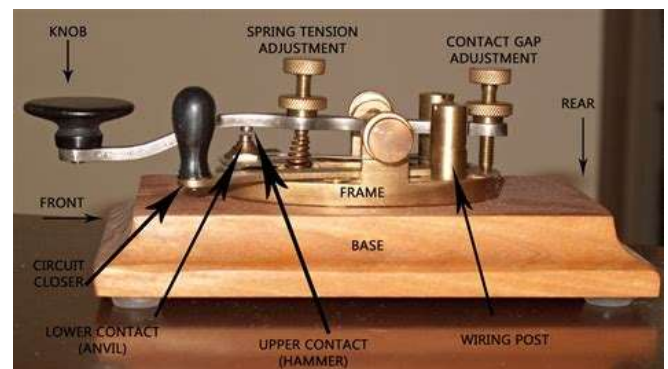
Singing trio *The Starlets* emerge from a DC3 aircraft.

The AGM meeting was staged in Theresa Angela Wing – suitably curtained away from exhibits. Saturday evening's dinner, held in the Aircraft Hall, set us right amongst it with the buffet counter set up between a Dakota DC3 and an original US jeep. The evening began in dramatic fashion with singing group *The Starlets* bursting forth from the passenger door of the aging Dakota and making their way through the audience to a multimedia stage at front of hall. They began their performance dressed in WW2 uniforms singing "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" but later changed to more modern dress and more contemporary music. A fitting finale on a day of new understandings and issues.

Straight Key Night 2004

Peter ZL1PX

Straight Key Night (SKN) is a laid-back approach to Morse contesting and occurs on the second Sunday in June and the first Sunday in December. It is held on the 80 metre band at 8 PM in June and 9 PM in December. This hour long 'contest' is intended as a friendly hour of making contact with other CW operators. There is no requirement to submit a log or summary sheet. The emphasis is on helping new ops experience the camaraderie of the Morse code community.



Straight key

There are four rules to follow: 1. Operators must use a straight key, no bugs, sideswipers, paddles or keyboards. 2. Maximum transmitter output is 100 watts. 3. All contacts must be CW to CW. 4. You cannot 'park' on a frequency. If you call CQ and complete a contact, you must then move at least 2 kHz away. After you answer a CQ to complete a contact, you can use that frequency to call and complete a CQ of your own but must then move away.

I tried SKN in June last year (2023) but found it frustrating and perplexing. Operators seemed to be going at hyper speed. When I tried to answer their CQs, I was shunted aside by faster, more experienced operators. I wasn't really keeping up. It was all too much too soon. I persevered, because that's the kind of person I am, but was able to make only three contacts within the contest hour.

This year was different. I had increased my CW speed to somewhere around 15 WPM. When I heard a new call sign, I was quicker to make a response and not let other operators override me. I had also mastered the skill of a quick assessment of readability, strength and tone (RST) of new signals. It would be easy to just use 599 for this rating but most operators probably appreciate a more honest rating. Some operators on SKN used the alternative rating of readability, strength and noise (RSN) which indicates the amount of noise they are dealing with.

Signal reports are essential to the 'contest' as this is the first bit of information in the exchange. The entire string to the exchange is sent within diagonal strokes. Thus my opening transmission to Gerard ZL2GVA was:

ZL2GVA DE ZL1PX 559/WAIUKU/PETER/ZC1/ICOM/100 K

I have highlighted the exchange info above in yellow. The reference to ZC1 gave the type of Morse key I used. ICOM was the brand of transceiver. 100 was the power in watts.



Rig set up for CW on 80m band – 3519kHz

I worked a dozen operators this year on SKN. That seems a respectable result for only my second year at the event. The furthest North was Mike ZL2AUA in Kerikeri. The furthest south was Morrie ZL4QA in Invercargill. Only one of my contacts was an Auckland call – Paul ZL1AJY of Birkenhead. The increase in speed I had achieved through the year since 2023's event meant I was able to copy better than 70 per cent of all transmissions.

Most stations gave me a signal report of 599 in excellent band conditions. However, Greg ZL4GW in Dunedin rated me as 479 and Morrie in Invercargill gave a 589. I rated most stations as 599 myself but gave three stations lower ratings.

The 70 per cent I give as my copy performance above worries me a bit – but only a bit. There were a couple of stations whose CW made little sense to me. I managed to get their call signs and a sig report but little else. I won't record them here. They could have been going much faster than I have yet encountered. Or maybe they did not use the diagonal stroke structure I was expecting and this ram-raided me. Another possibility, which I hesitate to mention but will anyway, is QSD (defective keying).

The strongest lesson in all this is to keep going. Last year, I felt frustrated and perplexed. This year, I copied most of what I heard and made a respectable tally. What is invisible is the Morse I got involved with in the time between these two events and which made SKN a different experience for me the second time I tried it. That's what CW really is – a continuous learning story – and ever more satisfying as the story continues.

Basic Morse Training

Franklin Branch commenced basic Morse training recently on EchoLink. So far six club members have taken part. It is intended mainly for members but other amateurs are welcome. The sounds covered so far have been Q, Z, 7, G, full stop, zero and 9. We tailor the transmission files

especially for use with the TeachMorse app which can be downloaded from NZART. The advantage of EchoLink over HF is immense as we reach every place with an Internet connection and the sound quality is excellent. We make the training file available before each session so you can catch up if you miss a session.

Day and Time Details: Monday 8pm, double click on ZL1PX in EchoLink.

Further Details: contact pjh@teachlit.com

Harry's Humour

