

# THE PROPAGATOR

The monthly newsletter of the **I**llawara **A**mateur **R**adio **S**ociety Inc. (IARS)

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday each month (except January) at 7:30pm in the State Emergency Services building in Montague Street North Wollongong.

VISITORS ARE MOST WELCOME

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Volume 94 Number 2

February 1994

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## EDITORIAL

Giddy all. If we haven't met the name here is Michael and I'm going to attempt to help Peter out and take over the job. Hope you all had an excellent holiday this year. This is my first attempt and hopefully it will have something of interest to someone somewhere. Never thought there was so much involved into producing each issue! Thanks to all those who have helped me on the way. Please let me know what sort of stuff you'd like included as I don't have a much of an idea. All comments good/bad appreciated as I'm as new to this as you probably are ! If you find any articles YOU find interesting please mail them to VK2GNV @ VK2XGJ on the packet system.

At the moment I am moving house and have no phone number which can be made publicly known.

Will let my new phone number be made available in the next issue possibly. The best bet for contact is via packet at the moment or via VK2FPN if needed.

I have also included a kindly donated article on the Australian Travellers Net which was extracted from the June 1993 edition of "Caravan World" magazine.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

February - Brian VK2KLH to speak on ways of attracting new members to our club.

March - IBM computer club to attend meeting.

April - Warren Robinson giving a talk on communications in bushfire control.

## COMMITTEE MEETING

Present - ZWG, UBF, KLH, KWG, MT, UR, SRB, XQX.

Matters arising from minutes:

- Brian KLH monitored frequencies regarding possible VK2RIL frequency shift due to pager interference.
- Rob MT spoke to Paul at Dick Smith Electronics regarding advert for IARS to be placed in store.
- Discussion on Propagator being placed in Dick Smith stores.

## GENERAL BUSINESS

- Publicity brochure for IARS to be given to computer clubs. Ken KWG to map out brochure for distribution.
- Field day regarding John Moyle contest. Simon XQX to draft letter to be sent out to members.
- Club badges can be made by Brookes Engraving. Notification to be brought to members at next general meeting.
- Simon XQX spoke on sale of raffle tickets to be used as a fund raising project.

**CENTRAL COAST AMATEUR RADIO CLUB  
1994 GOSFORD - CENTRAL COAST FIELD DAY AT WYONG RACECOURSE**

Amateur radio operators, their families, friends and those interested in amateur radio are invited to attend the 1994 GOSFORD - CENTRAL COAST FIELD DAY which will be held on Sunday 27th February 1994 at the prestige venue, the WYONG RACECOURSE. Gates open at 9:00am.

**TRADING AND ALL ACTIVITIES WILL COMMENCE AT THE NEW TIME OF 9:00AM.**

**REGISTRATION:**

ADULTS - \$8.00, CHILDREN (under 12) - FREE  
SENIORS CARD - \$5.00, PENSIONERS -\$5.00  
Special Group Concession is available on application.

**FIELD DAY ATTRACTIONS INCLUDE:**

ARA stand	Trade Displays and Sales	Free Bus Tour tickets
Disposals	WICEN Display	Reptile Park visit
WIA Historian stand	Flea Market	Satellite TV demo
QSL Bureau	Amateur TV Groups	Fox Hunts
Seminars and Technical Lectures	Packet Displays, Workshops	
VK2 Education Service stand	Ladies Stall	

**SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS** sessions throughout the day on topical subjects, including equipment presentations from suppliers, packet, repeaters, and other specialised topics.

**A FIELD DAY INFORMATION SERVICE** will be provided on the Gosford 2 metre repeater (6725) on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning using the callsign VK2AFY/P.

**TRAINS:** Sydney and Newcastle trains operate frequent services to Wyong. WYONG RACECOURSE is a short 5 minute walk from Wyong railway station.

**PARKING:** Plenty of off street parking is available within WYONG RACECOURSE grounds.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Accommodation is usually scarce on the Central Coast at Field Day time, and early booking is advised.

**CATERING:** Tea, coffee and biscuits available from 9:00am to 3:00pm at no charge in the Dining Room. Take-away food can also be purchased within WYONG RACECOURSE.

**CALLS PRESENT:** Bring your QSL cards for the "CALLS PRESENT" boards.

**EXHIBITORS:** Companies, persons, groups or clubs wishing to set up a traders table or display at the Field Day should contact the Field Day Committee at PO Box 252, Gosford NSW 2250, before 29 January 1994.

**DISPOSALS:** Disposals lots for the 1994 Field Day will be limited to a minimum lot value of \$20. Vendors who wish to sell items of small value are encouraged to sell via the Flea Market. Forms for Disposals and lot numbers may be obtained in advance by sending a stamped self addressed business size envelope to The Field Day Committee, PO Box 252, Gosford NSW 2250. Items for disposals may be booked in on Sunday 27th February between 7:00am and 9:30am. Please note that 9:30am is the cut-off time for Disposals booking-in and late arrivals cannot be accepted. Improperly tagged or catalogued items WILL be refused. Because of the new venue of WYONG RACECOURSE, it will not be possible for Disposal items to be booked in on the Saturday afternoon prior to the Field Day. Any inconvenience caused by this change is regretted.

**FLEA MARKET:** For those who wish to sell their own equipment, trestles will be available and open boot or tailgate sales may be conducted in the Flea Market. Setting up of the Flea Market area will be from 8:00am.

**INFORMATION** on the WYONG RACECOURSE venue, the new STARTING TIME OF 9:00AM,

Group Concessions, Trade Displays, Flea Market, Disposals, Programs or any other Field Day activities may be obtained by writing to:

The Field Day Committee,  
Central Coast Amateur Radio Club Inc.,  
P.O. Box 252  
GOSFORD NSW 2250  
or by phone: 043 402500

For those of you who somehow managed to misplace the article mailed to all members a few weeks ago here's a reminder. Don't forget to bring your money for the bus to Wyong kindly organised by Ken VK2TKE. Last year it costed \$20 which included admission to the event. The bus will be leaving Ken's house at Mt.Warrigal at 5:30am (27/2/94) and the Baby Health Centre in Fairy Meadow at 6am. Get in contact with Ken at the meeting to book your seat or ring him on 97 3037 for more details.



# NEWTEK ELECTRONICS

Reseller for :-

Altronics, Arista, Jaycar, Rod Irving

Stockist of :-

Alarm accessories, UHF antennae, tools, computer accessories, test equipment, cable, R.F. sprays and electrical components for the Professional, Amateur and Hobbyist.

Call in and see Jack at :-

**102 Kembla St. Wollongong**  
**Phone and Fax 27 1620**

**If we haven't got it  
we'll be happy to get it in**

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## FOR SALE

One 27 MHz Marine CB radio with SSB.

Contact Eddie Chylinski, 5 Devon Rd, Dapto. Phone 62 2470 for details.

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## COMPUTERS

The following was submitted by Michael James to Media Watch ACAR Magazine:

**AMIGA** - A tree. Slow growing, but it will last forever. Dead easy to get going, just chuck the seeds in the ground. Many uses. Becoming more common.

**IBM** - Cactus. They're everywhere and you cannot get rid of them. Don't need much to keep them growing, but dead hard to start. Every time you turn around, you get pricked.

**MAC** - Pot. Purely for hippies. Easy to get, but very expensive.

In 'Letters to the Editor' ACAR Magazine Reg Forsaith writes "that PCs and their use are analogous to the experience of shopping in Sydney."

**DAVID JONES.** Not many about, but good at what they do. Friendly environment. You can enter the store from many entrances on many levels, frequently assisted by a doorman. You can get everything from fashion to fridges. The prices are sometimes higher, but so's the quality. A bit light-on in everyday items like food, but what there is tastes fine. Very flexible, not always cheap, but is excellent value. **THE AMIGA.**

**TARGET.** They're everywhere. All the same - but some are bigger and have better service. Access via the one wide entrance. Quite a large range of products, many of them Target's own brand. You won't find a fridge but they've got a pretty good esky. Plenty of food, but it's all pre-packaged and you don't have a choice about the presentation. Wide aisles, simple signs to guide you. Plenty of checkouts, short queues, easy and painless. **THE MACINTOSH.**

**WOOLWORTHS.** Access by a single turnstile, and you'd better grab a trolley. Looks OK, but cheaper than Target. Lots of shelves packed to the rafters with thousands of products that are really just different versions, sizes and shapes of the same things, each claiming to be "new and improved" and "the product of the latest research". No fridge, but a tacky wine cooler. The use by dates aren't far in the future. The proprietors claim new, improved methods of payment and quicker response to the shopper's demands, but the checkout still has queues. **WINDOWS ON A NAME BRAND PC.**

**FRANKLINS.** Turnstiles and trolleys again, but at least without the pretensions. Crowded, narrow, cluttered aisles. The same stuff you found at Woolies, only cheaper. Most of the products work if you're careful, read foreign instructions and stick well within the expiry dates. No fridge, but plenty of styrofoam stubbie holders. The checkouts take time, lots of it, next to a howling baby. You get what you pay for, with a **PC CLONE.**

Quote by D.Bieber (comparing computers and fast food - in hamburger terms):

AMIGA = Burger King "have it your way"

MACINTOSH = McDonalds "take it as we make it ..."

MS-DOS Systems = "here's a cow, tomatoes, charcoal... bring your own knife..."

**Available in our junk yard .....**

1. Electronic bits and pieces (millions!)
2. Meters, gauges, instruments, cables, wires etc
3. Metal sections:- copper, brass, aluminium, s/steel
4. Motors, gearboxes, pumps, assorted machinery
5. Steel sections, sheet, planks, ladders, shelving, scales, safes, compressors
6. We buy all metals incl. platinum & gold
7. Two acres jammed full of practical junk and valuable government disposals

**Our regulars swear it is  
the best  
place for value**

# **CAVIONS**

**11 Molloy St.**

**Bulli**

**Ph (042) 84 6838**

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## **\*\*\*REPEATER REPORT\*\*\***

**5/12/93 - 28/1/94**

**VK2RAW (146.850)** - The previously mentioned slight amount of desense that 6850 suffers from it's own TXer is still with us. This is only a problem during the day, when the rptr's solar panel is in view of the sun. (From 1700 to 0900 the rptr has no apparent desense). The desense appears to be related to the increase in battery voltage when they are being charged in the daylight. It would appear that some part of the rptr system is voltage sensitive (above about 13 volts). We suspect that it is the rptr's TXer exciter, in particular the voltage regulator section. As well as affecting the rptr's RXer (causing the desense), it is also affecting the WIA Broadcast Link RXer & the Link TXer feeding the same Broadcast across to 8225 at Knights Hill. The fact that it is having such a profound effect on the 8225 Link TXer (remember it's not RXing), leads us to think that the "noise" generated (possibly by the exciter's regulator), is being induced not via RF but via the DC line. This is all conjecture & will only be proven (or disproven, which is probably more the case!), by a visit to the site. This visit is planned for tomorrow (Saturday), the 29/1/94.

**VK2RIL (147.275 & 438.725)** - Since the last report, the Sublime Point rptr's have undergone considerable change & quite a deal of controversy. Where do I start?...

As I had previously reported, the IARS had still not received ANYTHING from the WIA, in particular NTAC (NSW Technical Advisory Committee), in regard to our request for assistance or advice for our 7275 Pager problems. Finally, on the 22/12/93, we received a letter from NTAC, in particular Bob (BMU) (dated the 16/12). Apparently Bob is a very knowledgeable gentleman & I do not dispute this in any way, BUT his suggestions for possible help in alleviating 7275's Pager problems leave a hell of a lot to be desired. Before I continue, allow me to remind you that these are my own personal opinions, not that of the IARS; but the comments I am going to make about Bob's suggestions have been supported by many fellow Club members I have spoken to.

The reason I wish to report what was sent to us & my feelings about NTAC's suggestion, bears significant influence to a later decision that was made by the IARS Rptr Committee & was subsequently supported by the IARS at the January Committee meeting. This decision will follow further down.

Due to space restrictions, I will only quote the relevant sections of NTAC's letter with my comments following. The sectional quotes are not taken out of context.



*"As you aware the problem of pager interference is wide spread through out the country and will only be resolved when we can get the paging operators to clean up their act."*

- When is this going to happen & who's going to MAKE THEM "clean up their act"? Three years of actively pursuing 7275's Pager problem with a hell of a lot of support from the local DoTC office (before it was shut down) resulted in no real gains. We still cop heaps of interference & now that we are just a lone voice to Telecom, without the support of our local DoTC, I reckon we've got "buckleys" of getting Telecom, let alone other organisations, "to clean up their act". Also, when he says "WE", does he mean the WIA is going to help us? Well the Pager problem is certainly not new & it has had a direct impact to WIA members (as well as all Amateurs who use 2m), but I certainly haven't heard that the VK2 WIA has in the past, or is contemplating in the future, taking any Pager operators to Court in support of their members (no, they would apparently rather spend member's money on \$300 an hour Solicitors fighting all manner of legal problems or else employing Security Guards for WIA meetings). Besides, I'm sure that if it were possible to "get the paging operators to clean up their act", the many, many companies that have had their radio services severely affected or compromised by Pagers, would have had a much better chance of doing something about it, due to their much larger legal & monetary resources, but have been unable to do this..

*"Cleaning up the top end of two metres is going to be a long hard process and it appears we are not going to get much help from the SMA."*

- I totally agree, but how long? & why should we have to wait? & hard for who?... you mean three years of persistence with DOTC's help isn't long or hard enough???

At this point the ONLY solution that NTAC suggests is given. It is to long to quote but suggests that we REVERSE 7275's input & output, then to overcome some obvious problems with reversal, suggests we put CTCSS encode & decode onto the rptr!!! This is bloody stupid. It means that if your radio doesn't have CTCSS capabilities you will NOT be able to access the rptr. I estimate that over 95% of radios probably don't have it. If you have CTCSS encode only, you will be able to access the rptr but your poor old RXer is now going to be 600kHz closer to the pager TXers, that is 125kHz away from the edge of the 2m band & only 162.5kHz away from one of the proven problem pagers in W'gong on 148.0375MHz. (A nice comparison is this... You have a CB radio, but 16 channels away, on top of a big tower or mountain that is in line of sight of your station, there is someone running a power mike into a 1kW TXer). I don't know about your radios, but mine have enough problems already, let alone going closer to the offending transmissions.

If you have CTCSS decode, great, you won't be annoyed by Pagers while listening on 147.875MHz, but why bother, you can't use the rptr anyway unless you have CTCSS encode as well! Also, I believe that if we were to have CTCSS only access to our rptr, it may well be in contravention to SMA regs as it then becomes a closed-access rptr. Sure rptr's can have CTCSS facilities, but only to prevent users from inadvertently accessing some hidden function; like preventing novices from being transmitted from a 2m rptr to a linked 70cm rptr. Can you imagine the flak if the WIA did this to 7000 Dural? I guess it doesn't matter, they've pulled it off the air anyway.

I leave the best till last...

*"Ultimately this is your problem to solve. We can't solve it for you. We can not expand the spectrum and magically produce a clear interference free channel. If you can find a solution, either technical, political or legal, we will of course support you in every way possible."*

- I don't know about you, but that sure as hell sounds like they are wiping their hands of the whole messy problem. Anyway, I never asked them to "magically produce a clear interference free channel", far from it. All I asked from the WIA was for some ideas or suggestions & possibly even some support in our efforts, on behalf of our members, to operate a rptr that was free from illegal spuriis & intermods from Pager TXers. Also, that third quoted sentence smacks of sarcasm & it belittles & insults our basic request for assistance from the WIA.



After sending three letters & waiting over 9 months, this is all the help we get from the WIA, the organistaion that supposedly exists to support those it represents! Can you imagine my anger & bewilderment after intitalling reading what amounts to a "cop-out" on the part of the WIA. This is what we had waited all those months for! After re-reading the letter a few more times & realising no help would be forthcoming from the WIA, the last paragraph (as quoted) was actually quite helpful to our cause. We have been officially told that the problem is OURS to solve & the WIA will support us in EVERY WAY POSSIBLE if we can find a solution. Well we think we have...

Possibly by the time you read this, our solution will have been instigated. 7275 rptr is to become 5650 rptr. To access the rptr you will need to transmit on 145.050MHz & receive the rptr on 145.650MHz. In essence we will be creating a "rptr sub-band". I expect some surprise & concern on the choice of frequency by our Club's members. Let me assure you, that this decision was not made lightly & has been discussed at length with many members & then supported by same. It was also supported at the January Committee meeting. I will briefly discuss the positive aspects to this decision.

1) The new freqs take the rptr & the user right away from the pagers to a little used (even under-utilised) section of 2m. We have monitored both freqs (input & output) considerably, both here & in Sydney & they are very "clean".

2) This idea is not a "selfish" one. We have devised a set of three channels which will cause little if no inconvenience to users, but will be very valuable to other "positive off-set" rptr groups suffering pager probs. The three channel pairs are: 145.025/145.625, 145.050/145.650 & 145.075/145.675MHz. Already the Shoalhaven Club are proceeding towards "5625" & the Goulburn Club towards "5675". (Both have positive offset rptrs with accompanying pager probs). Other groups will quite possibly jump at the opportunity to get rid of pager problems by joining us on 145MHz.

3) The last paragraph in the WIA's letter works in beautifully with the concept. We will be fixing OUR problem & we can only expect TOTAL SUPPORT from the WIA with our "technical" solution.

With regard to the suggested VHF Band Plan, the 145MHz region is classified as a "General Use segment that can be used for any purpose" with Wide Band or CW modes.

The only "down-side" initially, is that presently Novices would not be able to legally use the rptr, as the current regs limit them to 146-148MHz, but apparently this will change with the new regs (whenever that may be). I certainly am not encouraging Novices to ignore current regs, but would it really seriously affect anyone if they ventured down to 145MHz? Until the regs change, we felt Novices wouldn't be to greatly affected because they could still use 6850.

So what do you the members think? Do you agree or disagree? Please tell us your feelings.

1. Most of the above was typed back at the beginning of January, since then other things have happened. The NTAC Chairman, Cesar (TCM) & the above letter writer Bob (BMU), have both since resigned their positions. The new Chairman of NTAC is now our own "packet king" John (XGJ), congratulations John. I do wish him every support in his new position, but we both know he's gonna' cop a heap of flak with all this terrible mess with the VK2 WIA at present. In the meantime, my earlier remarks still stand as they were quite current at the time of writing & are in part, the catalyst for our decision to change 7275's frequency. Hopefully John will be able to help us, but his position as NTAC Chairman must be kept quite seperate from his position as member of the IARS for reasons which are quite obvious.

On the 28/12/93, a small working-bee was arranged for Sublime Point. In attendance were Brian (UBF), Simon (XQX) & family, Ken (TKE) & myself. Our intentions were to move 8725 rptr from near the Kiosk across to where 7275 (5650) is located. Also, to change 7275's antenna from a folded-dipole to a commercial dual-bander & also placing it on top of the tower (below the lightning arrester). This has greatly improved our all-round coverage (in particular to Vic's place at Wilton). A duplexer/combiner was also installed to combine 7275 & 8725 together onto the same feedline & antenna.



All went well, except for 8725's diplexer which appeared to have gone off tune. Ken & I tried to adjust on site, but were unsuccessful. The diplexer was later re-tuned by Graeme (CAG). Thanks Graeme. On the 16/1/94, we returned the diplexer to site & put 8725 back on air. At the same time, both rpters (& the battery chgr), were installed inside a new security cabinet to prevent un-authorized "touching" (a recent problem).

Another "problem" occurred after our 28/12 visit. 8725's old battery bank was brought back by myself (now both rpters are on 7275's batteries), unfortunately all 6 of them tipped over in the back of my ute, expelling over 7 litres of sulphuric acid. Yes it was a mess...

Just to add to our woes around this time, 7275 started failing. Michael (XCE) was on site (for other business) on the 7/1/94. Asked him to check a few things re the failing. Unable to rectify on site, so he kindly brought it down for us. Spent the next week with 7275 on the work bench, but it didn't fail once. Elected to just change every IC on the Control Board. Also, made the Ident a "Courtesy Ident" (ie: it waits until the end of your over to Ident) plus the tail length was increased & a "beep" was added. (This brings 7275 in line with 8225 & 8725. 6850 will be changed shortly.) 7275 was re-installed also on the 16/1/94.

**VK2RUW (438.225/29.290)** - I see by the line counter on my computer that I'm out of space, but I've got to quickly tell you the latest with the 10m Gateway. JA's, ZL's & assorted VK's still call-in at various times. The interest generated around VK for other "gateways" has been very good. Already, Rod (VK4ARN) has connected a gateway to the Brisbane 6m rpters (VK4RLB). Quite a few 6m ops, both in Brisbane & DX, have worked thru VK4RLB to our VK2RUW. (6m to 10m to 70cm & return) I think this is definitely a VK "first". Rod is now working on connecting their gateway to their 2m & 70cm rpters. Brian (VK3EO) in Melbourne is working on connecting a 10m gateway to their 70cm rpters. Also, Will (VK6UU) in Perth has plans on the table for the same. All very exciting. We have also decided, with consultation with the VK4's, to change our gateway's frequency from 29.290MHz to 29.040MHz. This will get us away from the JA domestic call-channel (29.300MHz).

Till next time - Rob (VK2MT).

## WAY BACK THEN Episode 26.....1980.

- (i) New meeting place.
- (ii) Start of comic strip.
- (iii) Weekly club net to 80m.

As from the first meeting in 1980 (Feb) the club's monthly meetings were relocated from the Town Hall Committee Room to the Congregational Church Hall in Coombe St. Coombe St runs between Market and Crown Sts, almost opposite the Town Hall, so was just as convenient a location and it offered larger premises to accommodate the 55 to 80 members who attended meetings at that time. (Club membership stood at 129 in 1980).

It was not surprising, perhaps, that the previous years Officers were re-elected at the AGM in March.

The Propagators of that period were mostly 10 to 14 foolscap pages in length and included many technical articles by club members and others, plus articles of a more general radio nature. It also featured club news and columns from contributors such as the Novice Section by Gio, VK2VPD, The Satellite Report, Microwave News and a short Moonbounce Report by VK2ALU as well as occasional articles on 10 Metre News, WICEN News by Jim, VK2BBG and WIA Information by Geoff, VK2ZHU.

The February issue included an interesting article from VK1ZRQ on fires in the home - as a consequence of a "devastating" fire in the shack of a local amateur - which nearly cost him his home - useful reading, even today.

Whilst on the Propagator, the May issue saw the first of the hilarious comic strips which featured the king and his cohorts as well as the occasional "adaption" of other well known comic strips to amateur radio topics. The strip appeared fairly regularly over a period of some 9 years and, if one looked at it closely, it was possible to sometimes recognise the activities of certain club members!

The king was a real "high power addict" and his station, VK2KING, had its transmit power amp. output meter calibrated in megawatts (with its pointer normally "wrapped around the end stop") The effects of this were usually sensational!!

The strip, which was unsigned, is a real radio amateur's "Collector's Item", some episodes being reproduced in AR. and other publications.

When our source of low cost printing of the Propagator became no longer available, about mid-year, the club purchased a second hand rotary duplicator in order to keep the cost of producing it to as low as possible.

Club funds were augmented during the year by a series of raffles - the last one, drawn in December, being for a Datong Morse Tutor.

The club Store was also still "going strong", with regular purchases and sales.

A survey of operation of the club's 2 metre repeater -carried out in May - showed that it had been used for 12.5 hours over the week.

The Sunday Night club Net was changed from 10 metres to 80 metres in August, as it was thought that more club members were now operational on that band than on 10 metres.

JOTA weekend saw the club out in the field "under canvas" with lots of scouts at the previously used site at Bass Point - large, and some novel, antenna systems and gear on HF and VHF resulted in many contacts - and funny stories to tell afterwards! Some members also set up at the Mt. Kiera Guides Camp (with their own caravan accommodation).

Talks etc. at meetings during the year included -

Mar -Talk by District Radio Inspector, John Milton.

Apr - Demo of homebrew antenna rotator and readout by Roger, VK2AIV (also written up in Propagator).

Jun - Amateur radio Television - Ian, VK2ZIM (and written up in Propagator).

Jul - Demo of Tono Theta 7000E Communications Computer by Barry, VK2FE, of Macelec.

Aug - Quad Antennas by Keith, VK2OB and Trade Display by Mike of Scalar.

Sept - Operation on 10GHz Amateur Band by Lyle, VK2ALU.

Oct - Metal Detectors. Talk and Demo by Denis, VK2DMR.

Nov - Auction.

Dec - Demo of Solid State Radio Teletype and Slow Scan TV by Dave, VK2YKQ and Paul, VK2ZQT.

The year was rounded off by a club Christmas Barbeque at Saddleback, which was "well attended". It also included a 2 metre pedestrian fox hunt and audio beeper hunts for the kids.

Lyle VK2ALU.



# AMATEUR RADIO AND THE TRAVELLER

## The Australian Travellers' Net

highways; it doesn't work outback. CB is another popular option, although with limited reliability over long distances.

The Radio Amateur has an additional and very effective option. Radio Amateurs differ from the users so far mentioned in that they must qualify at an examination before they can become licensed.

Once licensed they can operate on a very wide range of radio frequencies

with whom they wanted to communicate. So Keith became a kind of radio chairman (or as communicators say, 'The Net Controller').

Later, when Keith was no longer available, this onerous voluntary job was taken on by Arthur Oliver, VK6ART, who had for some time been assisting Keith. Arthur greatly formalised procedures. This was partly due to Arthur's sense of order and also very much out of necessity. Necessity in this case because the Net was growing in popularity so quickly, with the growth in numbers of Amateurs (and people generally) who were travelling the outback and the oceans. Arthur was located in Perth and was assisted (and relieved on his and wife Eileen's shopping days) by Roy Chamberlain, VK6BO, also of Perth.

As those who operate HF radio know, it can be difficult to communicate with stations who are too close (in some conditions 'too close' may be 1000kms!). So Arthur and Roy were assisted by other amateurs around Australia so that at Net time no traveller would go unheard.

Then it became Arthur's turn to retire, and Roy took on the job, now assisted by (or should we say the job shared with) Peter Harrison, VK6HH, also in Perth. Their main interstate assistance comes from Bob, VK5RI, in South Australia, although other amateurs both in SA and other states, even New Zealand, play a valuable part, particularly under poor radio conditions.

As usual, willing shoulders find additional loads and so it is with Roy, Peter, and Bob. Each evening they also operate 'The Indian Ocean Net', which caters specifically for yachtspeople in that area. Evening radio propagation conditions are quite different from those around midday, so this net caters often for a group different from those who check in on the daily Australian Travellers' Net.

Roy and Peter receive weather maps direct by radio and print them out via their computers, so can provide detailed weather information to the ocean travellers.

This is how the Net works. The formal net time is 0300z, that is 0300 UTC, which for our purposes is GMT. This is 11.00 am in WA, 12.30 pm in SA and NT, 1.00 pm in the Eastern States and



Roy Chamberlain VK6BO, Samson (Perth), WA.

By Max Tulloch

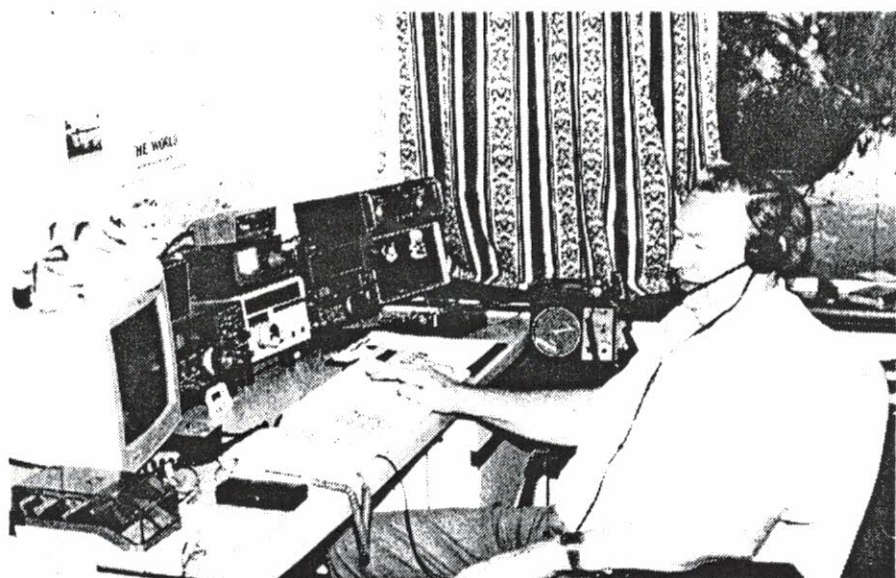
As communications become better and better, so this vast country of ours appears to become smaller and smaller! There's an STD/ISD public phone at every village and roadhouse and it may accept credit cards, pay card ... or even money! But this is a one-way communications system; friends and family can't contact us!

Of course there are other options. The Royal Flying Doctor Service using high frequency radio (HF or short wave) has always been the mainstay of outback communications, and now also with RFDS and OTC RADPHONE we can call both ways. Telecom's MobileNet is marvellous provided we are in the densely populated areas or on the most used

and use transmitter powers similar to those allowed RFDS, OTC and similar users. They can communicate across Australia and even the world, but this is of no use if the station to whom they wish to talk is not listening. This condition applies of course in an emergency too; it may not be possible to pick up a station who can assist.

The Australian Travellers' Net was born almost accidentally. Keith Williams, VK6KC, was employed at a cultured pearl farm at Kuri Bay off the north-west coast of WA. One of his duties was Radio Officer. In this condition of isolation, radio became his social outlet as well as his duty. He used to operate his station at a regular time of day and travellers, whether on land or sea, came to know this and left messages with him to be passed on to others. They would also call him, or listen on his frequency at that time of day for fellow travellers





**Peter Harrison VK6HH, Roleystone (Perth), WA.**

3.00 pm in New Zealand. The frequency is 14.116 MHz and the mode SSB. The Net operates every day of the year! At about 30 minutes before Net time, stations will begin checking in. They will call Net Control in turn and give the name of both their present location and that at which they expect to overnight. They will also pass any messages they want sent on and list the callsigns of any stations with whom they want to communicate.

At 10 minutes before Net time, the Net Controller will call for any stations with urgent or priority traffic. This call is repeated by interstate helpers and we all listen carefully; no station in distress is likely to be missed. At Net time the Net Controller opens the net and lists all the stations so far heard, their locations and intended overnight location, and calls for any stations who want to contact the stations listed. He also lists

those stations for whom there is traffic and those stations for whom callers are waiting. He then distributes the traffic and supervises the arrangement by which those stations wishing to communicate together move to another frequency.

Net Controller then swings his beam antenna toward south-eastern Australia and calls for any travellers who wish to check in with the Net. He repeats the call for Queensland, then Northern Territory, northern Western Australia, and the Indian Ocean as he sweeps the beam around. Interstate helpers repeat the sweep until it is certain that no station in Australia or on the surrounding oceans or islands has been missed. A call is then made for home and mobile stations who wish to enquire about travellers.

Listeners to the Net are amazed at how quickly Roy and Peter can come

back using the names of station operators and their travelling companions, how quickly information is available on the whereabouts of stations or where and when they were last heard from, and what traffic is awaiting the caller. All this information is stored in their computers, and between them they have a UHF radio link to exchange information. The Net operation is fast, smooth, and professional.

For us travellers it means that each day, no matter where we are, we have 'someone of our own' to talk to. We can send messages and receive those which will have been phoned to Roy and Peter. They'll range regularly from family bereavement to birthday greetings, but have included personal and vehicle accidents and other emergencies. Sometimes the emergencies did not involve amateurs, they just happened to hear on radio or stumble onto the scene.

Of course many amateurs know each other and those who don't, often soon do. In many instances it is the lady of the crew who has the licence and in others both parties of the couple have their own callsigns. We take an interest in what our fellow amateurs are doing, where they are and where they are going. We often arrange to meet.

People from all walks of life become amateurs. Some are from the electronics or allied industries but most seem to be folk who wanted more out of radio than is available from any other radio hobby. Typical were Marlene and Jim, who went on holidays and took along CB because it seemed the thing to do. They saw the value of radio as a communications system and social hobby. With no previous knowledge of radio, they both studied and passed the exams. They are now Marlene VK3WQ and Jim VK3DL, and make themselves heard from the highways and backroads of Australia.

Study courses are advertised in our sister magazine *Amateur Radio Action* and also in *Electronics Australia*. Courses are run either by, through or supervised by Wireless Institute of Australia or by its members. Study books are also available from Dick Smith's.

Check out any study material and make sure it originated in or is suitable for this country. Foreign material may be even better in some ways than our own, but it's the Australian exams you have to pass!

So if you're listening on 14116 kHz SSB around 0300 you may hear Margaret and me, Max VK3AKT. Then you'll find out where we are and where we're going!



**Bob Gebhardt VK5RI, Mt Bryan, SA.**



# BEWARE!

## TWO-WAY RADIO AFICINADO'S DISEASE

HIGHLY INFECTIOUS TO PERSONS OF ALL AGES

**THE SYMPTOMS:** The sufferer becomes confused and disorganized when a two-way radio is not within hearing. Will be observed wandering around in a bewildered state muttering strange words. Rapid rise in temperature and activity at sound of "CQ" or other terms associated with communications. Logorrohea usually follows. Behaviour can become erratic with involuntary finger-stabbing or hand claspings motions. Babbling and foaming at the mouth is not unusual which sometimes seems violent to non-believers. Patient spends much time and money locked away in small room by themselves muttering strange canticles into a microphone. Can also be seen climbing tall trees or erecting large vertical totems. They seem not to notice the presence of "normal" people.

CAUTION: THIS CONDITION IS INCURABLE

**THE TREATMENT:** Patient must be allowed to spend time alone with two-way radio with no interruptions in small quarantined area, sometimes mobile. Should be encouraged to attend bar-be-ques and special days to meet other victims of this illness and exchange ideas with them. Family and friends can aid recovery by allowing patient much time alone with radio and supplying free drinks and meals. In case of emergency contact Wireless Institute or nearest Citizen's Band Radio Club.

THIS DISEASE IS NO RESPECTOR OF PERSONS

*Jim.. VK2ZWG*

**POST BOX - "THE ILLAWARRA AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY Inc."**  
 PO Box 1838, Wollongong, 2500.

<b>REPEATERS</b>	VK2RIL	147.275	Voice/RTTY	Sublime Point
	VK2RIL	438.725	Voice/RTTY	Sublime Point
	VK2RAW	146.850	Voice	Mt Murray
	VK2RUW	438.225	Voice	Knights Hill
	VK2RUW	29.290	UHF Gateway	Knights Hill
	VK2RUW	144.775	Packet (ROSE)	Knights Hill

**BROADCASTS** - The Wireless Institute of Australia, N.S.W. Division broadcast is relayed to 29.620 MHz and 146.850 MHz at 10.45am and 7.15pm each Sunday. Callbacks after the broadcast.

**NEWS LETTER** - The "PROPAGATOR" is published each month to reach all financial members in the week preceding the Club meeting. Articles and letters are always welcome. Commercial advertising \$60 per ad per year, member's classifieds free for one issue. See Mick VK2GNV for details.

**MEMBERSHIP** - \$20.00 P.A, concessions \$15.00 P.A, expiring immediately after the Annual General Meeting in July.

**LAWRENCE HARGRAVE AWARD** - VK stations require 10 contacts with IARS members. Overseas stations require 5 contacts. One contact with the Club station VK2AMW is suitable. Details of contacts are to be sent to the Club secretary.

\*\*\*\*\* **COMMITTEE** \*\*\*\*\*

PRESIDENT	VK2KWG	Ken Grimm		
VICE PRESIDENT	VK2XQX	Simon Ferrie		
SECRETARY	VK2UR	Ron Hanks	(042) 84 2691	
ASSIST SEC	VK2SRB	Robert Bonella		
TREASURER	VK2UBF	Brian Farrar		
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COMMITTEE	VK2ZWG	Jim Beaver	VK2KLH	Brian Clarke
	VK2GMC	Phillip Klower		
REPEATER	VK2MT	Rob McKnight	VK2TKE	Ken Goodhew
QSL CARDS	VK2XGJ	John Simon		
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CANTEEN	VK2GMC	Phillip Klower		
WIA LIASON	VK2XGJ	John Simon	VK2MT	Rob McKnight
LIFE MEMBERS	VK2ALU	Lyle Patison	VK2CAG	Graeme Dowse
	VK2OB	Keith Curle		