

VK3AWS



WANSARC NEWS

March 2008

Western and Northern Suburbs Amateur Radio Club
(WANSARC)
Incorporated in Victoria
A7611S

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A WIA Affiliated club

News and views from the Western and Northern Suburbs Amateur Radio Club VK3AWS—MARCH 2008



Would you buy a radio from this mob of blokes? Judging by the happy smiles on dials they have made a killing at the Kyneton Hamfest no doubt hunting in a WANSARC pack and forcing traders to lower their prices!! From left to right Bob VK3EL, John VK3FMPB, Trevor VK3FTDX, Dave VK3FXDX and Rod VK3MRT.

The group, and others, are attempting to attend every Hamfest in Victoria—good luck!

John VK3FMPB and Rod VK3MRT share their observations on Kyneton and Healesville on Page 5 of this edition. Thanks for Dallas VK3EB for the photograph.

NEXT MEETING
Friday March 7, 2008.

This will be held at the usual place, Building K, NMIT, at 1930 hours.

This month is the Annual General Meeting, so think about how you would like to contribute to the running of the club in the coming year.

Nominate and be part of another exciting WANSARC year!

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A 160 METER VERTICAL ANTENNA—by Mick VK3CH

Mick's Dad, Ian VK3IV, has been keen to experiment on 160 metres. So the hunt was on to build a suitable antenna for not only 160 but other bands.

Three lengths of 6 meter Aluminium tubing was purchased from Smart Aluminium in Thomastown. They stock tubing that will neatly fit within the next diameter up in size, just perfect for antenna making, thanks to Bob VK3EL for telling about their existence. They will also deliver to your door for a fee if 6 meters of tubing is a bit much for your car!



The three pipes were inserted into each other for an overall length of just over 12 meters and joined up with hose clamps and several grub screws just down from the hose clamps to stop slippage and give a few points of electrical contact. 4 lengths of 'whipper snipper' cord were attached at the 2 points of joining the change in diameter lengths of tube. I was wondering how I was going to get all this up in the air, but I hit on the idea of approaching the house and lifting the end of the mast onto the roof and leaning it against the house, with a massive droop across the roof. The end of the 12 meter antenna was supported by PVC tube about a meter high with hose clamps to keep the tubing nearly vertical. Then the whipper snipper lengths were tied off one by one, after untangling them of course! I was thinking of putting a small 'capacity hat' on the top of it, but decided against that when I saw the whole thing curve into a quarter circle when I went to lift it up into the air! It's quite surprising once when made vertical how well it stays in the air. I gave it a good shake and it stayed in place, with no movement in high winds.



After trying the auto tuner for 160 meters, it refused to tune below 1860 kHz. A copper pipe earth was attached then 160 meters was lost all together! Some counterpoise radials were added then 160 meters still would not tune. I thought a coil between the auto tuner and tubing would solve problems and that ended being the case. About 8 meters of hook up wire was all that was on hand so that was wound on the PVC pipe with 30cm of tube cut away and the coil wired in series in the gap, about 64 turns in all, glued in place with Tarzan's Grip glue, man that stuff has a potent aroma when you pour it on! Back to the radio, an Icom 706MKiiG, for tests.

160 meters was there with every other band right through to 6 meters all tuning up with a match of better than 1.5 : 1 VSWR on every band. With a coax run of 16 meters length there will be little loss on HF.

The first night stations on 1843 kHz heard from VK2 and VK3.

The next day on the AM Net, more than 10+ stations heard checking in with Chris Long VK3AML coming way over the 9, with no static crashing at all. Later in the week heard VK3YXC in Little River booming in 30+ over 9 He returned the call with good reports – looks like we are "off the blocks" on 160 meters. The counterpoise wires are just insulated multi stand hook up wire, as the bottom 'loading' coil, nothing special or expensive.

The longest counterpoise wire at 41.45 meters length just fits within the property, being run on the ground around the back fence through eyelet holes screwed into the wood at the bottom of the fence, along the side fence finishing up the pole and in the roof of the driveway carport. Looks like the 1843 AM Net has a new member. 73 Mick VK3CH

CYCLE 24 HERE IT COMES.....contributed by Peter VK6YSF

With the appearance of [Sunspot 981](#) -- a high-latitude, reversed polarity sunspot -- on Friday, January 4, experts at NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) said that Cycle 24 is now here. "This sunspot is like the first robin of spring," said solar physicist Douglas Biesecker of the Space Weather Prediction Center ([SWPC](#)), part of NOAA. "In this case, it's an early omen of solar storms that will gradually increase over the next few years."

Solar physicist David Hathaway of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama concurred, saying that new solar cycles begin with a "modest knot" of magnetism, like the one that appeared on December 11 on the east limb of the Sun: "That patch of magnetism could be a sign of the next solar cycle. New solar cycles always begin with a high-latitude, reversed polarity sunspot." The region of magnetism that appeared back in December achieved high latitude (24 degrees North) and was magnetically reversed, but no supporting sunspot appeared until 25 days later.

Reversed polarity means a sunspot with opposite magnetic polarity compared to sunspots from the previous solar cycle. High-latitude refers to the Sun's grid of latitude and longitude. Old-cycle spots congregate near the Sun's equator; new-cycle spots appear higher, around 25 or 30 degrees latitude. Sunspot 981's high-latitude location at 27 degrees North and its negative polarity leading to the right in the Northern Hemisphere are clear-cut signs of a new solar cycle, according to NOAA experts. The first active regions and sunspots of a new solar cycle can emerge at high latitudes while those from the previous cycle continue to form closer to the equator.

Solar Cycle 24 Predictions

While experts vary in their predictions on when the solar cycle will peak and how strong it will be, NOAA, in April 2007, in coordination with an international panel of solar experts, predicted that the next [11-year cycle of solar storms](#) "would start in March 2008, plus or minus six months, and peak in late 2011 or mid-2012." In the cycle forecast issued in April 2007, half of the panel predicted a "moderately strong cycle of 140 sunspots, plus or minus 20, expected to peak in October 2011. The other half predicted a moderately weak cycle of 90 sunspots, plus or minus 10, peaking in August 2012. An average solar cycle ranges from 75 to 155 sunspots. The late decline of Cycle 23 has helped shift the panel away from its earlier leaning toward a strong Cycle 24. The group is evenly split between a strong and a weak cycle."

NASA's Hathaway, along with colleague Robert Wilson at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco last month, said that Solar Cycle 24 "looks like it's going to be one of the most intense cycles since record-keeping began almost 400 years ago." They believe the next solar maximum should peak around 2010 with a sunspot number of 160, plus or minus 25. "This would make it one of the strongest solar cycles of the past fifty years -- which is to say, one of the strongest in recorded history." Four of the five biggest cycles on record have come in the past 50 years. "Cycle 24 should fit right into that pattern," Hathaway said.

Amateur Radio and Solar Cycle 24

According to Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, "As for improvement in propagation on the higher bands, we still have a way to go before that happens, and it depends on the magnitude of Cycle 24. The Solar Cycle 24 Prediction Panel has published predictions for Cycle 24, but unfortunately the panel did not reach one consensus prediction. If the larger of the two predictions comes true, we should expect consistent F2 propagation on 10 and 12 meters to start toward the end of 2009. If the smaller prediction comes true, this will be delayed about one year."

Luetzelschwab, who writes the column "Propagation" for the *National Contest Journal* ([NCJ](#)), continued: "While we wait for improved high band conditions, don't forget the low bands. Around solar minimum and for the next year or so, the Earth's geomagnetic field is at its quietest. This is good for low band propagation. Thus, right now is the time to start (or add to) your 80 and 160 meter [DXCC](#) efforts."

Active Solar Cycles Bring Sunspots, Solar Storms

While sunspots are good news to Amateur Radio operators, an active solar cycle can disrupt other aspects of life that we take for granted, since violent eruptions occur more often on the Sun during an active period. According to NASA, solar flares and vast explosions, known as [coronal mass ejections](#), shoot energetic photons and highly charged matter toward Earth, jolting the planet's ionosphere and geomagnetic field, potentially affecting power grids, critical military and airline communications, satellites, Global Positioning System ([GPS](#)) signals and even threatening astronauts with harmful radiation. These same storms illuminate night skies with brilliant sheets of red and green known as [auroras](#), or the northern or southern lights.

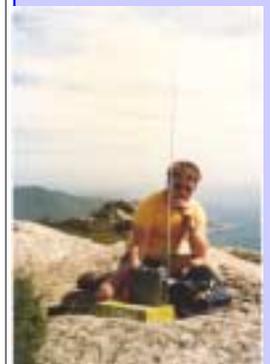


CLUB WANTS OLD PHOTOS

Do you have any old photographs of club members or club functions?

If so, please contact **Mark VK3PI** as WANSARC would love to borrow photographs to scan for the WANSARC archives.

Photographs may be in digital format or more likely old style prints. If you would care to scan the photographs and forward them on, fine. Alternatively if they could be borrowed for a week or so the photographs could be scanned and catalogued, then returned.



Pictured a **1983** blast from the past, **Mark VK3PI** operating portable at Mount Oberon. Rig is an IC505 (still going) running 10 watts and just the vertical whip antenna. Contact was with a VK4—now that's radio!!

Vale Hal Armstrong VK3EKF

Yet another long time member of WANSARC is a silent key with the passing of Harold (Hal) Armstrong, VK3EKF, at the age of 92.

Despite his age, Hal was an enthusiastic participant in many club activities, particularly those involving practical work. Who can forget Hal's delight in building a portable UHF antenna from wire, a few nuts and an SO239 connector.

Hal was no stranger to the practical side of life, having qualified as a builder early in life through formal studies at the "Working Man's College", better known as RMIT.

With the outbreak of war, Hal was determined not to be drafted for the Army, not because he was not keen to serve King and Country, more so that he was not keen to be in the Army, So Hal joined the RAAF as a Wireless Mechanic, spending most of his time in Papua New Guinea.

Members will remember Hal as an enthusiastic supporter of the club, with a no-nonsense attitude. He lived life to the fullest and we are all the better at WANSARC for having shared in a good part of Hal's 92 years.

WANSARC members were well represented at Hal's service, with Bob VK3EL, Mark VK3PI, Tony VK3BZT and XYL Carleen, John VK3FMPB, Dave VK3FXDX, Dan VK3DWH and Geoff Moore. President Graeme VK3NE was unable to attend but sent his apologies.

To Alva and family, very best wishes from all club members. We will fondly remember Hal VK3EKF.

Mark VK3PI



Don't forget the WANSARC club net, each TUESDAY evening on 146.450MHz FM. The club call VK3AWS is activated by Bob VK3EL. The net commences at 1930 hours, so please check in and have a natter.

Interest in a 10 metre "net" is increasing, so tune your 10 metre box to 28.470MHz prior to or after the VHF net and let's make 10 active again locally.

And listen on 160 metres to hear the re-broadcast of the net by Dallas VK3EB.

Kyneton and Healesville Hamfests by John VK3FMPB and Rod VK3MRT

It's that time of the year again. Yep, load up the car with all the radio gear. The Mobile (706), the portable (IC-V82), the antennae, the leads, books, and head on up to Maribyrnong, to pick up Rod (MRT) and his portable. It was an early start again this year. I picked up Rod at about 8 am and headed up the Calder in the direction of Kyneton. On the way up we made contact with Trevor (FTDX) and Dave (FXDX) and also with Bob (EL) and Dallas (EB) in their respective cars. Having someone to talk and yap to probably made the trip seem a little shorter I'd say

We have been to a few Hamfests in the past, did I say a few? We knew what to expect and roughly where to go. As we got onto the Calder we noticed quite a few classic cars around us. Hot Rods, Old Fords, Chevys, and VWs. We noticed a plethora of VWs parked in the emergency lane near the old abandoned servo just before Gisborne. We also saw Ferraris, Commodore Group As, Ford XR8s, a Maserati or two, a couple of Lamborghinis, a Rolls and lots of old Holdens and Fords to drool over.

We arrived at Kyneton before opening time and helped ourselves to the food stand. Toast with eggs and bacon but no drinks. Very dry I thought. We got our tickets and both Rod and I thought surely this will be the day we win another prize. We thought it but we couldn't make it materialise that way sadly. With an ICOM D-star radio as the main prize it sure would have been good to win.

It seems to me that as you get more into Ham or Amateur Radio you get more out of the Hamfests. Sort of the more you know the more you wanna know. I was keen to get to Terry Murphy, the dipole guy and make a dipole or two. He came up with a better idea and we made the centre piece for what I believe is a centre fed inverted V dipole. I am supposed to be able to change the bands it will work on by changing the length of the leads I put into the sides of it. I will do this by buying some more of the connectors and having a few different lengths of wire for diff bands.

I am very happy to take advice from people on the practicality of this idea. Is there anyone out there who knows anything about this? I bet there will be.

This is my theory, I now understand a lot more about this Ham Radio caper. So therefore, when we go to a Hamfest, I am not going in 'blind' as it were. I am not just a spectator looking at the stuff they are selling as a trash and treasure market as it were. I look and understand more of the relationship between parts on table A and parts on Table B. You might then buy cable from one bloke and plugs from another and something else from someone else. You then take it all home and are able to put it together (or build it) into a useful item that you may need.



Nik VK3FNIK, Norman, Chris VK3FY, Trevor VK3FTDX chew the fat at Kyneton

WIA COMMENTS ON "F" CALLS AND IRLP CONNECTIONS

A question has arisen as to the interpretation of the Determination amending the Amateur LCD affecting Foundation licensees.

The question is whether a Foundation licensee can transmit tones, for example, the tones necessary to operate through an IRLP gateway. Of course, the DTMF tones to access an IRLP node transmitted by a Foundation station must be analogue tones, and not a digital transmission.

The ACMA is advising those who have raised this question that the Amateur LCD as amended does not prohibit the transmission of such tones by a Foundation licensee.

Such operation is contemplated by the note to the provision prohibiting the direct connection of a Foundation station to a public telecommunications network which makes it clear that indirect connection through a gateway operated by another licensee is permitted.

WIA email

Kyneton and Healesville Hamfests (continued)

Rod (MRT) now takes the pen to tell of his day at Kyneton. Like Johnno, I had a fair idea of what I wanted to do on the day - check out the bargains to be had on the tables and attend a couple of lectures.

First up was Phil Grimshaw's lecture on antennae. Phil's lecture on HF antennae, including the G5RV, was very informative. His discussion about modifying the G5RV for use in restricted spaces is of particular interest to me, as I am planning on building one of these at home soon. Afterwards I purchased his book and accompanying CD. Next up was a tour of the tables to check out any bargains to be had - many of which seemed to have disappeared whilst I was at the lecture! However, there was plenty of activity and I met up with some acquaintances from previous Hamfests.

The D-Star lecture was really informative. I missed the launch of D-Star and as a result was completely unaware of its features. The presentation and demonstration were excellent. Of particular interest were the data transmission and messaging facilities of D-Star. Afterwards, I returned to the tables and picked up some valves for a radio project I hope to build in the near future.

Unfortunately, none of us were lucky in the raffle. So we then wrapped it up for the day and took off to the local fish and chip shop in Kyneton for a late lunch with myself, Johnno, Dave, Trevor, Bob, Dallas and Chris and his sons, comparing purchases and exchanging stories over lunch in the local park.



All in all, it was an excellent day out. The Hamfest was very well attended and everyone had a great day. **And then to Healesville. It's like a breath of fresh air.** The town seems very lovely with its cafes and other sights to see. We also found the people to be very friendly. There is much in the way of lovely terrain and hills and streams. This made the drive to

the town a little bit more enjoyable. The swap meet was held in a smallish hall so it probably looked bigger than it was, even though there actually was a lot of things on sale once we got there. I thought some of the items for sale I had seen before however. We spent a little, not much though. Lots of stuff I didn't need or want this time but who

knows in the future. Plenty of talking was done throughout the day.

We met up with a few WANSARC members, including Bill VK3DWF and Ray VK3KEL. Another great day of bargains and meeting people!!

Top left the bargain hunters sift through "stuff" at Healesville and left Ray VK3KEL, Bill VK3DWF, Dave VK3FXDX, Rod VK3MRT and Trevor VK3FTDX share stories at Healesville.



CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

March 7, 2008 is AGM night.

The club is seeking nominations for:

PRESIDENT

V/PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

TREASURER

5 COMMITTEE

Other positions include PUBLIC OFFICER, MAGAZINE EDITOR/PRODUCER, and WEBMASTER.

Nomination forms will be available on the night and must be completed with a nomination and second.

Please consider contributing to the club management—the more people the less load.

See you at the next meeting.



**GET TO
IT !!!!**

**DO YOU HAVE
INFORMATION
OR AN ARTICLE
YOU WANT TO
SHARE WITH
MEMBERS?**

**Why not write it
up for the maga-
zine in word for-
mat, with pic-
tures, and send
to the club:**

**WANSARC,
PO Box 336,
Reservoir 3073.**

**It's your maga-
zine!!**

Your magazine
contributors this
month include—

**Graeme VK3NE,
Rod
VK3MRT, John
VK3FMPB,
Mark VK3PI,
Peter VK6YSF,
Graeme
VK3PGK and
Mick VK3CH.**

Thanks folks!

WHAT ABOUT THIS ? Contributions from members

A mechanic was removing a cylinder head from the motor of a Harley motorcycle when he spotted a well-known heart surgeon in his shop. The surgeon was there, waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his bike.

The mechanic shouted across the garage, "Hey, Doc, can I ask you a question?"

The surgeon, a bit surprised, walked over to the mechanic working on the motorcycle. The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked, "So Doc, look at this engine. I open its heart, take valves out, fix 'em, put 'em back in, and when I finish, it works just like new.

So how come I get such a small salary and you get the really big money, when you and I are doing basically the same work?"

The surgeon paused, smiled, and leaned over, and whispered to the mechanic...

"Try doing it with the engine running."

*From
Graeme
VK3NE*



*From
Graeme
VK3PGK*

Yes, that's correct dispatch.....we are attempting to pull over an erratic driver.....yes, yes, it is an Ostrich but he is currently failing to stop.....

DEAR RECEIVER,

You have just received a Taliban virus.

Since we are not so technologically advanced in Afghanistan, this is a **MANUAL** virus.

Please delete all the files on you hard disk yourself and send this mail to everyone you know.

Thank you very much for helping me.

Chief Hacker

Taliban

*From an
unknown
club
source*



WANSARC is at
www.wansarc.org.au
Or www.wansarc.org

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Peter VK6YSF (formerly VK3YSF) is continuing to support WANSARC, even though geographically he is some '000's of kilometres west of here. Peter and XYL Colleen have settled well into Northam, north of Perth. Peter is planning his new shack at the moment and will be on air as soon as possible. That means as soon as he has perfected the shack, as those that know Peter know that what he does is as near as perfect as one can get.

WANSARC VK3AWS

PRESIDENT: Graeme McDiarmid VK3NE vk3ne@wia.org.au

SECRETARY: Mark Stephenson VK3PI Telephone: 0400 443 218
vk3pi@optusnet.com.au

All correspondence to be addressed to the **SECRETARY: PO Box 336**

RESERVOIR 3073

WANSARC CLUB PROFILE

History

The Western and Northern Suburbs Amateur Radio Club (WANSARC) was first formed in 1969 and since then has served the needs and interests of amateur radio operators, short wave listeners and those interested in hobby radio and electronics. The club is not gender specific, having both female and male members. Members come from all walks of life with a mix of experience, young and mature, novice and technical. The most important aspect of the club is the willingness of all members to share their knowledge for the benefit of others. Members mainly reside in the west and north of Melbourne; however membership is encouraged from all interested.

Meetings

Building K, Northern Metropolitan Institute of Technology (NMIT), St. Georges Road, Preston (Western side between Bell Street and Cramer Street) Melway 18 E12 **PARKING at NMIT- Members please note that parking adjacent to the club room building K is illegal and NMIT staff WILL book any cars which are parked in that area. ALL members must park cars in the main car park to the WEST of building K. Just look for vehicles with lots of aerials!** Meetings held on the 1st Friday of each month (excluding January) commencing at 7.30pm local time.

Talk in on 146.450MHz FM—call club station VK3AWS.

Benefits

Free technology and related presentations, sponsored construction activities, discounted (and sometimes free) equipment, network of like minded radio and electronics enthusiasts, excellent club facilities and environment plus an informative monthly newsletter for members to post articles, news, classifieds for all radio, test equipment, etc, featuring Amateur Radio news from WANSARC, WIA, ACMA, Melbourne Clubs, VK and Worldwide.

Club Nets

146.450MHz FM each Tuesday evening commencing 7.30pm local time. Also monitor 28.470MHz on 10 metres USB.

More Information: **Website:** www.wansarc.org.au **Email:** wansarc@wia.org.au

Postal: WANSARC PO Box 336 RESERVOIR 3073

Friday March 7, 2008

AT NMIT Building K, 7.30pm

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