



REPEATERS VK3RGV 2m  
& VK3RGV 70cm  
CLUB CALL SIGN VK3SOL

Volume 3, Issue 8,  
Septembert 2007

# SADARC

SHEPPARTON & DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

## COMM'S DAY A GREAT SUCCESS



The annual COMMS day event where commercial traders and amateurs sell amateur radio equipment. It was a very successful day for Buyers, Sellers and the club.

## Office Bearers

**President:**

Roger Conway VK2RO

**Vice President:**

Kane Hinchliffe VK3HKH

**Secretary/Awards Manager:**

Duncan Cameron VK3MDC

**Treasurer:**

Danny Hender VK3FDTH

**Public Officer:**

John Waters VK3PXJ

**Membership Secretary:**

Pat O'Shannessy VK3OV

**Technical Committee:**

Ray Wales VK3RW

Neil Webster VK3KAL

**Committee:**

Jacek Szczurek VK3TJS

Rob George VK3ECH

Max Johnston VK3DSF

**Newsletter**

Editor - Lisa Laffan

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# A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

## SEPTEMBER 2007

**AGM BARBEQUE MEETING 6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2007**  
**GUEST SPEAKER PETER YOUNG (VIA DIRECTOR)**  
**VIA ACTIVITIES & BPL MATTERS**



Hi to everyone,

What a big month we have had, congratulations to Daryl VK3KL and his team for presenting our most financially successful Comm.'s Day, a job well done, special congratulations goes to Jacek's daughters, they made a profit of \$396 from the raffle, well done, a full report will be available at the next meeting

Enclosed in the newsletter is the proposed Club Restructure, it will be put up for discussion and hopefully adopted by the members prior to our AGM Meeting, I outlined my proposal at the last meeting and explained that for the club to move forward we needed some serious changes to the present structure, the work load needs to be spread over the membership, it is also imperative that the club has some input at a local level, I would like to see as many members as possible attend the AGM meeting in October, its your Club and its future is hanging in the balance, your current Executive will not move

forward under its present structure, I feel the proposed restructure is very simple and defined, it allows for positive input at all levels, it also spreads the load more evenly across the membership.

At the next meeting we will be holding a Club Barbeque to start at 11.00am, we need to know numbers to enable us to cater, its important that you let us know if you are available to attend prior to our meeting, we will only cater for the known members that can make the Barbeque, a couple of plates of goodies from the members would also be appreciated, the club will supply the meat and bread. We also have a Guest speaker in attendance. BPL will be high on the agenda, this is a must attend meeting if you want to know what's happening about BPL.

Membership numbers are on the increase, we are back to 63 members and growing, also if the members would like to take on a project, how would you like to build a fully functional Antenna Analyzer 1.3-31mhz for \$130 in kit form, now this would be a good club project, for more infor-

mation bring it up at the next Club meeting.

JOTA 20/21 October keep this date in mind, members will be called on to assist at the club rooms for this very special occasion, our club has been designated as the official club station in the district for the JOTA Event.

Congratulations to Peter SWL (not any more) Peter passed his Foundation License Assessment last Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September, A special thanks to Pat VK3OV for taking Peter under his wing and passing on his knowledge to enable Peter to be in readiness for Assessment, I know Pat put up a lot of his own personal time to prepare Peter, and Pat enjoyed every minute of it, the outcome was always going to be positive.

(Step toe) Wayne VK3XQA was a very busy person at the last comm's day, did we see truck loads of gear coming into the hall? Yes we did, well done, Wayne donated his time and secured all of his offerings on the day to donate the proceeds to the Club, now that deserves a very special thank you, I can tell you that's dedication, what a lovely gesture, and thanks again (Step toe) Wayne.

Who said 6mts? Its official, we have a 6mtr Repeater Frequency allocated to the club, watch this space, no time frame has been put on this project but we will keep you informed on the progress.

Les VK3TEX and Pat VK3OV have started the upgrade to Standard License course at the Club Rooms from all accounts it appears to be well supported, we look forward to hearing from Les and Pat from time to time on the progress. Also did I hear correctly, "I hope so" VK3HKH Kane's father has shown an interest in obtaining his Foundation License, keep up the good work Kane and let us know the progress.

Well that's all for now folks, see you at the AGM and come along and support our Guest speaker,

73s Roger VK2RO



**1a Joseph Baldwin Place**  
**Shepparton (03) 5821 6400**  
**Email: gvtools1@bigpond.com.au**

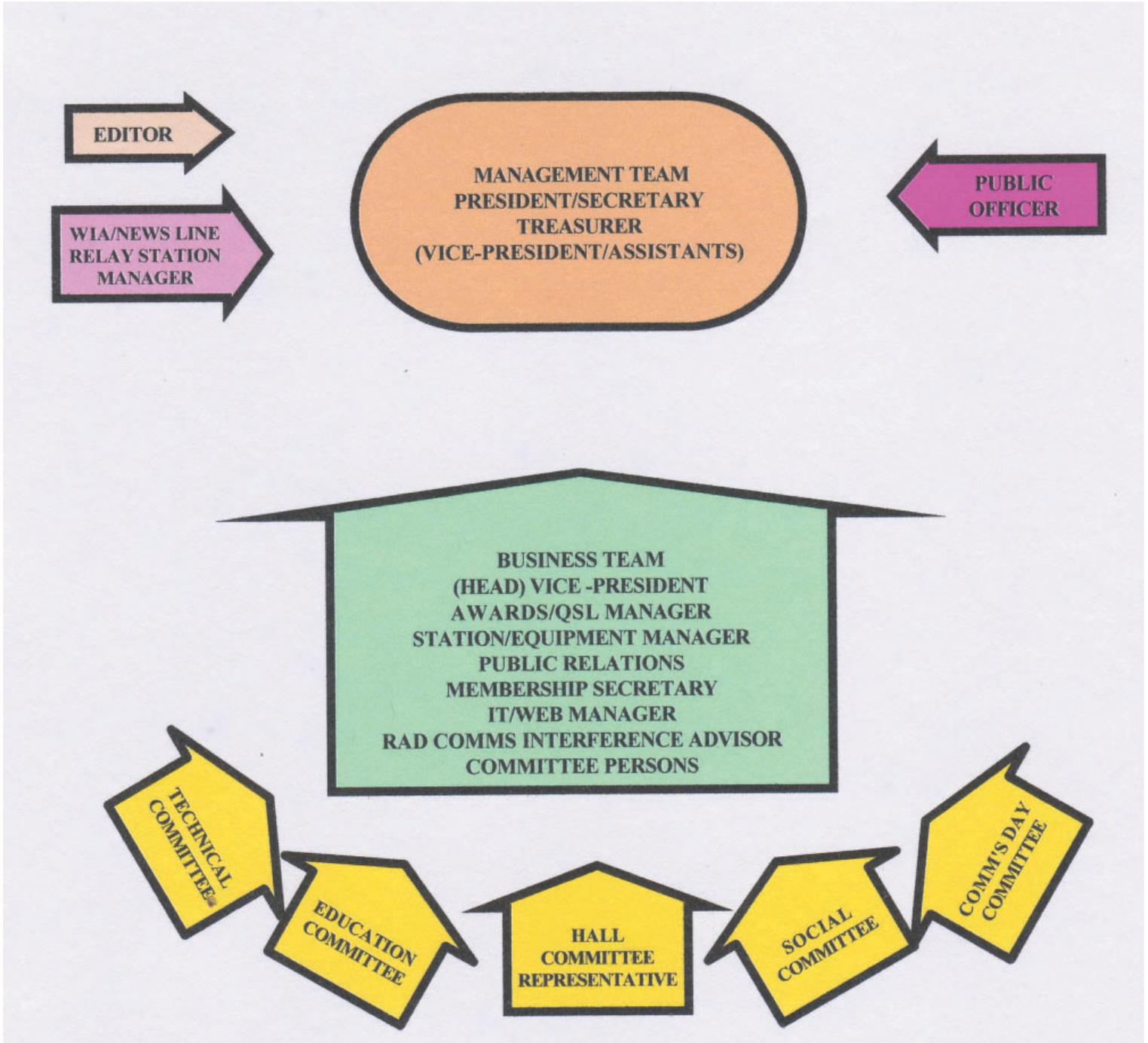
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# OCTOBER 2007 SADARC PROPOSED CLUB RESTRUCTURE



## SADARC PROPOSED CLUB RESTRUCTURE OCTOBER 2007

### AS PER THE FLOW CHART

#### MANAGEMENT TEAM

President/ secretary/ treasurer (vice president /assistants)

#### PUBLIC OFFICER

One member

#### EDITOR

1 honorary member

#### WIA/NEWSLINE RELAY STATION MANAGER

One member

#### BUSINESS TEAM

Head vice-president (president)

Awards QSL manager/ membership secretary/ station-equipment manager/radio comms interference advisor/ public relations officer it web page manager/ plus committee person/s

#### COMMS DAY COMMITTEE

Minimum 4 members

#### TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

1 or 2 technically qualified/experienced members

**SADARC PROPOSED CLUB RESTRUCTURE OCTOBER 2007**

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Current assessors/learning facilitators/educators.

**HALL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

One elected member.

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

minimum 2 members.

**PROPOSED CLUB MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE**

**SO HOW DOES IT WORK**

Basically if you follow the flow chart it is self explanatory with a couple of provisos the Public Officer, Editor and the WIA news line relay station manager report directly to the management team, the management team manages all aspects of club business and receives input via the business team the business team needs to have at least 5 members from the Shepparton and local districts the business team needs to meet at least 4 times a year, the business team will be headed by the vice-president (the president if called on will have the casting vote on all matters) the business team will take minutes of all meetings and report and put forward motions at the regular club meetings, the business team will be responsible for the co-ordination of the rd contest/ jota/field days/guest speakers/club projects/80m club net roster and the general smooth running of all general club business.

**AWARDS QSL MANAGER DUTIES** to maintain all station log books to receive club QSL cards and speedy replies, to liaise with the Editor for the awards printing.

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY DUTIES** to liaise with the treasurer and maintain correct and up to date members and life members register and to liaise with the editor.

**STATION EQUIPMENT MANAGER DUTIES** to maintain all club equipment and maintain an equipment register and create an inventory of all club owned equipment including serial numbers if applicable to maintain the book library and

create a book register.

**RAD COMMS INTERFERENCE ADVISOR** to provide advice to members on station installation and interference problems.

**IT/WEB MANAGER DUTIES** maintain SADARC web site and keep up to date, liaise with the membership secretary for current membership web register liaise with the Editor and keep the wombat award register up to date, promote the club via the web page.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER** to promote the club activities via the media with press and local radio releases

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE** maintains the repeater station at Mt Wombat

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE** provides social activities such as outings and end of the year Christmas party

**COMM'S DAY COMMITTEE** wholly and solely responsible for conducting and arranging all aspects of our annual event.

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE** qualified assessors and learning facilitators will conduct potential candidate assessments experience members to conduct education classes to assist members in personal education (electronics related).

**HALL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE** a financial members of the club liaises and attends hall committee meetings when called on conveys any business matters to that committee.

**Please note** any one member of the club may hold multiple positions on any one of the committees.

This proposed club restructure has been prepared by Roger Conway VK2RO club president

**YOUR SAY - Members comments regarding the restructure proposal**

Firstly I would like to say that I fully endorse Roger's proposal for the SADARC Management Restructure.

The main benefit I see is the fact that more members will be involved in managing the affairs of the club. This must be better than most of the ideas always coming from the same

members. It will also reduce the workload on the existing management team and should make their job more enjoyable.

One of the major problems I see facing our club is the fact that members reside over a large geographic area and travelling for some who live a large distance from Shepparton can be a problem in

terms of travelling time and of course the cost of fuel. So if the business team comprises members who live close to Shepparton, this must be a big plus for the club. Finally, I hope the club endorses Rogers proposal. Duncan Cameron Club Secretary

Having listened intently to the proposal put forward by our now standing President VK2RO Roger, I think his proposal has a lot going for it, maybe a little sorting out by the club members, he and there, but the proposal sounds good. VK3DWG. Bill.

The club has existed for a few years now and has achieved some good things, eg: S repeater, radio shack at Mooroopna, IRLP etc. but we have only just scratched the surface. The Hamfest is an example of how we can work together on a large project but we could also do smaller, interesting things the rest of the year. We have a good spread of age, experience, knowledge. All we need is keen people to lead projects. I support the restructure idea suggested by the

President at last meeting. Actually, we NEED to restructure the club to keep it interesting and spread the workload. I am happy to assist Les on the Standard course and would be involved in a Foundation course at the room if we could get 4 to 6 starters. What other things do other clubs get into? We could probably do likewise if individuals were asked to lead them. Nobody needs to be an expert, we can all learn together. 73's Pat, vk3ov

NOTE: All content in the Your Say columns has not been edited in any way, and has been placed in the newsletter 'as is' from members.

**YOUR SAY**

- Members comments regarding the restructure proposal continued...

In Roger Conway's President's Report in the August Issue of the SADARC Newsletter wrote (in part):- "Membership numbers are down, we have 53 Financial Members at this stage, this is approx 20 down on the last financial year, this is obviously a reflection on the way I conduct the Club's business, I know that my way of running your club is different from the norm, but members need to reflect on how far we have come in the last 2 yrs, it has been a very positive

outcome, and basically I have completed what I set out to do over the last 2 yrs, It is time for someone to take the club to the next level, this indeed may not be an easy task, but very achievable. The Club may also want to look at the way we accept new members, the Executive should probably look at what potential a new member can bring to the Club, I think its probably better for the Club to move forward with members that are going to support the Club, it needs to be positive rather than finger pointing, or non supportive. Members need to realize how much time and driven Kilometres the executive puts in to support your club and its activities in providing a positive outcome for the club, not an easy task when the majority of the executive lives far and wide from Shepparton."

We, Bruce and Muriel, would like to comment on this as Financial Members in an open forum, to which we hope other Members will add their comments, however they may affect the Club. Roger, From our own experiences as Executives and Members, of various types of organisations over a very long time ranging from Church groups, Scouts and Guides, Local Government, Fire Services,

Hospital, Progress Associations, Local Country Ambulance, Amateur Radio, Dealers (Motor and Radio/Electrical), Retired Seniors (at Local, State and National levels) we have found a pattern which falls into place over the first two, and later years where pettiness develops within the ranks. Yet there is a much greater percentage of complacent, satisfied, and un-vocal, contented, majority of membership. The pettiness which invariably can be traced quite easily, comes from members who feel they must be heard, and yet are not initially prepared to go to the Committee with their problems and bring them into the light of day, but rather to make snide remarks to other members, about the management of the organisation. It is quite amazing, looking back over the years to identify the type of member who starts this sort of covert destruction and distrust. We have found it comes from people who have been a failure to a greater or lesser degree in their job, and their marriages, in their raising of their families, and in their church and other non-business and social associations. They are also identifiable by their nit-picking and snide questions and comments at meetings here they can "have a go" at the Chair, or members, or sub-committees indicating their disapproval of someone or something, without offering to take on themselves, the responsibility of helping to "fix" the problem. An alert Chair can spot these individuals, by the frequency of their "offerings" and can have a quiet word to them after the meeting.

This situation is more often found when the Chair, or Management is really experienced, competent and devoted to the

Organisation's success, very often at considerable personal cost in effort and financially. We feel that these problems are greatly magnified when the Club or organisation is spread over geographically large areas and very much so, when the Committee is not able to be cohesive "after hours", and to thus be able to do things quickly before issues become problems. We are sorry that due to age and distance, we have not been able to be physically present at meetings and get on our feet and open up discussions which support the Management. We do try with our travel notes, to play some part, and we have this warm feeling about the Club. Apart from the distance problem, which should NOT be one of communication, as a Radio Amateur group, with several avenues of communication open to us a no significant cost with repeaters, the Internet, an excellent, well prepared and delivered, monthly Newsletter. We feel very happy to have as President a mature, competent and forthright businessman, who obviously has many other more significant concerns, but is prepared to not only sit as Chair, but also join in with the dirty hands jobs as well. We would like to feel that many other Club members feel the same, with the exception of the odd "mole" who will need to be rooted out, or who may even recognise themselves from this open letter. We also have a very strong impression, that you do have strong support from most, or all of, your Committee. We would like them to know we appreciate their efforts, and we would like to make special mention of, and thank, Lisa Laffan who also has other things to do, but does such a great job of putting together and producing a

first rate Newsletter.

As far as the falling membership is concerned, we would put it rather differently. The has never ever been anywhere any organisation where membership does not fluctuate up and down, and there are very many reasons for this. We have stated our problems of health and distance, and this can be quite a problem for some, along with generally rising costs of living, which have quite an effect. There are also people who will join an organisation hoping there will be "something in it for them" and drop out when they discover this not the way it works. The real joy of belonging to a well run organisation is in fact "belonging", being given the opportunity to contribute to the organisation. There are no doubt other people who join as a means to becoming a Ham, and who later find that being a Ham takes so much of their time and interest, they do not have the time for membership. There is also the hidden power in a lot of households, that of the Ham Widow, or Bowls Widow, where nature takes its course! Can I remind you Roger of the members who are impressed enough with the Club and its management to make donations of Gear etc to the Club? We know how disheartening it is to feel you have not succeeded in building up a large membership, but with due respect, we feel that the membership is really very good for a country area, where there are more pubs than there are Hams! The number of new Hams is also one the big successes of the Club's Management. Stay with us please, the Club needs you.

Regards Bruce VK3QC and Muriel VK3BJO

# Home Brew Lightning Arrestor

Good use of a Lightning Arrestor normally used for phone lines, (available from your nearest Telstra Liney, or see me at a club meeting, I will carry some with me), can be used for Amateur Radio purposes, where the centre terminal is Earth and the outer terminals go across the phone pair.



Picture: Phone line gas arrestor.

If you only want one of the two arrestors inline, don't cut the centre wire off, just fold it back, but make sure it connects to the back of the plug to earth. Once you tighten it up, (without pushing the front of the connector out) soldered the tip of the plug and your done! Check with a multi meter for continuity, it should read an open circuit of course!

If you use N type connectors, you will again have to improvise and figure out how to insulate the inner end of the arrestor from shorting out to the body of the connector. Keeping all lengths as short as possible will help to keep impedance's from varying to far from what it should be.

In the pictures, I have used N type T connector as I don't have the PL259 variety on hand, but you will get the idea from it just the same. You may want to solder a short heavy earth strap to the back of the T to take it to the bulkhead; be warned, you will need a big soldering iron for this job, and prepare the

think, and in the vhf/uhf spectrum, and as far as your transmitter goes, 90v equates to somewhere around 25-40 watts before it breaks over. (Depending on the SWR, but keep it as low as possible)

Because you are using 2 in series, this should equate to 50 - 80 Watts from your transmitter before it arcs over!

Important things to remember:

If you do one of your feeder lines, do them all; Put them at the point of entry to the building;

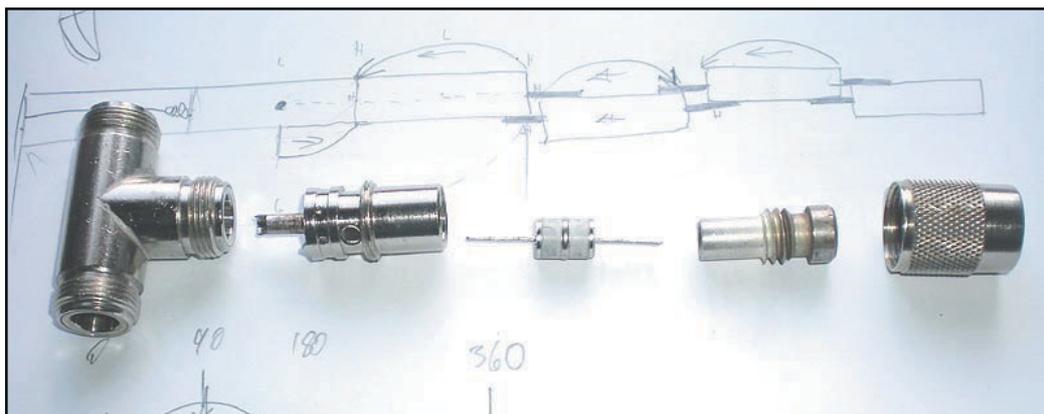
Keep the arrestor on the antenna side of the bulkhead and make the earth bloody good!

Lightning takes the most direct path to earth when directly hit, (the shortest rout possible) but in most cases if you were to be hit like this, there won't be much you can do about it. It will most likely vaporize all the metal in sight! But the main thing is to decrease the likely hood of this happening by discharging all metal surfaces to ground keeping everything at the same potential, at the same time minimizing the

If you use them for RF bulkhead lightning arrestors, you will need a coaxial 'T' inline with your feedline just where it enters the building.

By mounting the T to a bulkhead plate made from something good, (I use 1/4" bright aluminium plate for professional arrestors, but each to there own;) but make it Very well earthed (include the copper pipes around the house into it if you can) and make sure the T is on the Antenna side of the plate. The plate is handy to use as you may have several runs of coax to bring into the house at a later date!

Off the centre of the T, use a Amphenol PL259 or one that will normally accomodate RG213 so you can fit the gas arrestor into it and screw up the cable end with a brass bolt or if you have the RG58 adapter feral that goes with it (it maybe hard to get these days) and trim it to length to make it fit nice. You will have to use your imagination a bit here but make it tight for a good connection, also you will need to sleeve the arrestor with some spaghetti (pvc tape might do the job) so that only the back end of the arrestor is earthy.



Picture: Lightning arrestor.

surfaces to solder with a file, as some of the plating on these T's are only chrome which doesn't make a good joint at all! Take it back to brass and keep it rough for a good key. Use lots of heat, but avoid excessive heat as you may find a blob of cheep plastic insulation on the ground! : ( If you can clamp the T into a position to do the same job that would be good too. Try and keep dissimilar metals to a minimum as well. Keep it out of the weather of course and it should work fine!

These arrestors are 2 x 90v in series I

harmful static build-up in the line which may damage your receiver. Other mods in this case involve placing high value resistors across your input socket in the radio, which keeps voltages bleed down.

In some older radios, receiver front ends were made up with matching networks which were of an earthy (DC) nature, but this is not always the case in modern radios.

Good Luck with this project. : ) VK3KAL



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# A Better Ground Plane for Mobile Antennas

By Rodney Champness VK3UG

Most mobile antennas have less than perfect ground planes. A VHF/UHF antenna mounted in the centre of the roof of a vehicle can be considered to have a good ground plane. For a variety of reasons mobile antennas are commonly not mounted in the centre of the metal roof of the carrying vehicle. For VHF/UHF antennas the most likely locations to mount the

antenna are on the gutter grip (on older cars), the mudguards at the front of the vehicle or on the boot lid at the rear. However, it is possible to improve the effectiveness of mudguard and boot mounted antennas by a simple addition to the earthing. It would be nice if the bonnet of the vehicle could act efficiently as part of the ground plane. Normally the bonnet and the mudguard are not earthed directly across to each other where the mudguard mounted antenna base is located – but this can be done.

Looking at the two photographs it can be seen that “finger stock” as used to RF proof sealed boxes is placed onto the side of the GME antenna base adaptor. It is placed so that the bonnet rubs

on the finger stock as the bonnet is closed. It is necessary to remove paint at this particular point and to put a little anti-corrosive paste there to stop any rusting (if the bonnet is metal). By doing this simple modification a cheap and more efficient ground plane is achieved. I have had my finger stock for several years and I think I got mine from Vorlac (now closed) a subsidiary of Rockby Electronics in Melbourne.



## MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER MEETING

Shepparton and District Amateur Radio Club Inc. A6677S. Minutes of monthly meeting held on Saturday 1 September 2007 at the Mooroopna Community Hall, Echuca Road Mooroopna.

The president Roger VK2RO opened the meeting at 1305 hours and welcomed all present.

**Present:** Roger VK2RO, Duncan VK3MDC, Danny VK3FDTH, Trevor VK3VG, Ed VK3BG, Ron VK3COP, Terry VK3FTED, Graham VK3ACK, Rodney VK3UG, John VK3PXJ, Les VK3FLGL, Allan VK3AYD, Brian VK3HBW, Bill VK3DWG, Pat VL3OV, Jan VK3ALF, Peter O'Connor SWL, Neil VK3KAL, Max VK3DSF, Rob VK3FMAC, Daryl VK3KL, Kane VK3HKH, Terry VK3FTHS, Les VK3TEX, Max Berry SWL, Ernie VK3BSD, Wayne VK3XQA, Jac VK3TJS, Kevin VK3BPH, Barrie VK3KBY.

**Apologies:** David VK3ANP, John VK3FJHM, Rob VK3ECH, Alan VK3FALN, Ray VK3RW Angela VK3FELT.

Moved: Rodney VK3UG, seconded: Les VK3TEX and carried.

**Acceptance of minutes of last**

**meeting:** The secretary Duncan VK3MDC read the minutes of the last meeting and these were accepted. Moved: Duncan VK3MDC, seconded: Danny VK3FDTH and carried.

**Treasurers Report:** The Treasurer Danny VK3FDTH presented the report on the club finances. Moved Danny VK3FDTH, seconded Jan VK3ALF and carried.

**Outward Correspondence:** Nil.

**Inward Correspondence:** Certificate from Black Sheep Squadron special events station.

QSL cards for the club station VK3SOL. Roger VK2RO indicated that he had obtained a quote for 1000 VK3SOL QSL cards at a cost of \$168 delivered to Australia. Roger asked the meeting if he should proceed with the order. The meeting agreed. Moved Brian VK3HBW, seconded Danny VK3FDTH and carried.

**General Business:**

**Comms Day:** Pat VK3OV and Daryl VK3KL ran through a list of items requiring attention. Volunteers are required on Saturday afternoon to help set up the hall and on Sunday to clean up.

Keys to hall: Kane VK3HKH will pick up keys.

Additional trestle tables from CFA. Kane VK3HKH will provide a trailer to pick up the tables on Saturday with help from other members.

Entry tickets/raffle tickets – completed.

Forms for club membership renewal on the day – Danny VK3FDTH.

Members to man doors – John VK3PXJ, Terry VK3FTHS and Danny VK3FDTH.

Announcements – Terry VK3FTHS.

PA System – Les VK3TEX to arrange. Directions to hall on RGV – Terry VK3FTHS Door prize/ Raffle prize – Jac VK3TJS to provide engraved glass. Roger VK2RO to discuss provision of a radio with the traders.

Money Tins - Collect from clubrooms following the meeting.

Extension leads/power boards – Members to provide.

Foundation Licence books – If WIA bookshop not attending, Ed VK3BG will obtain six books.

Toilet paper for hall – Pat VK3OV.

Check Kitchen – Jac VK3TJS.

**Rent for Club Rooms:** No rent

## Minutes of meeting continued

paid for some time. Kane VK3HKH to follow up with committee.

**Mt. Wombat Clean Up:** To be held in October. Details to be finalised at the October meeting.

**Club Website:** Roger VK2RO raised the issue of the club membership list on the club website. Jac VK3TJS will amend the list as required.

**Jota – 20/21 October:** The radio room and internet access at the club rooms is functional and volunteers for the weekend will be finalised at the October meeting.

**Training Courses:** Les VK3TEX indicated that there are four starters for the training course for upgrade from foundation to standard licences. The course will commence the week after Comms Day.

**Learning Facilitators:** The WIA wants representation from our club. Roger VK2RO outlined the requirements for those interested in becoming Learning Facilitators. If the club has no Learning Facilitators we have a problem with

only two assessors for our large geographical area.

**Annual General Meeting:** The next meeting will be the AGM and Roger VK2RO outlined a proposal to set the direction for the club looking into the future. Details of Rogers's proposal will be included in the newsletter. Roger also asked all members to think about this prior to the AGM in October. The President closed the meeting at 1515 hours.



Muriel continues from No7.

I am writing excerpts now from my diary notes circa 1980.

After leaving Tonopah we continued north on highway 95. The country began to change from desert to farm lands, with rich fields of alfalfa (lucern) as we neared the eastern edge of the Sierra Mountains. One of the most interesting towns we stopped in for the night at was Bishop. In its early days Bishop had been destroyed by a massive earthquake, but it is now a large, attractive town and the hub of the district.

An interesting place we found to visit was The Devil's Postpile in the Sierra Mountains not far from Mammoth Lakes and 68 miles north of Bishop. From Bishop the road north gradually rises all the way to Mammoth Lakes and at the turn off, 50 miles from Bishop, we passed Mono Lake. A huge crater lake it is the remnants of a Volcano, which thousands of years ago had erupted, causing great devastation for miles around. At the Mammoth Lakes visitor centre we found that we could drive to Minaret Summit ski area and take a shuttle bus to the Postpile site. On the way to the shuttle terminal we stopped to look at a deep earthquake fault.

It was 300 yards long, 60 feet deep and from 7 feet to 8 feet wide. There were steps leading down to the bottom and a path through the bottom length of the fault. Ice and snow covered the bottom path through the fault. The temperature at the bottom was quite chill and we appreciated the warmth of the sunshine above when we emerged once again at the top. The shuttle bus to The Postpile ran every 15 minutes and served several campgrounds, lakes and hiking trails in the river valley 2000ft below, where the San Joaquin river has it's beginnings. At the Postpile parking area we joined a tour group for the ¾ mile walk to the Postpile. This geological feature was formed nearly a million years ago when basalt lava erupted in the valley, completely filling it and was more that 400ft deep. Surface cracks started when shrinkage, caused by cooling was greater than the strength of the lava.. Each crack branched when it got to a critical length and with other cracks formed an irregular pattern over the surface of the cooling lava. The cracks deepened and formed long basalt columns. Nearly 40,000 years ago glaciers flowed down the middle fork of the river and

## Ham Radio and Travel outside Australia

*By Bruce VK3QC & Muriel VK3BJO Plowman*

quarried away one side of the Postpile exposing a wall of columns 60ft high. We were told of two other places where this formation can be seen. The Giant's Causeway in Ireland, and Fingal's Cave in Scotland. (there is a like formation on the coast of southern Tasmania). Climbing the steep path to the top of the Postpile you can walk around on what appears to be a patio of 4, 5 or 6 sided tiles. These tile shapes are the tops of the basalt columns.

Just a few miles north of Mammoth Lakes is Tioga Pass. One of four Passes by which the Sierras can be crossed and the Eastern gateway to Yosemite National Park. We camped that night in the Porcupine Flat campground, high in the mountains. In the "Ladies" –single Unit – toilet, a notice was pasted on the wall which had me chuckling. It read:-  
WARNING - BEAR HABITAT

It is Federal Law that all food or similar organic material must be kept completely sealed in a vehicle or camping unit that is constructed of solid non-pliable material or must be suspended at least 10ft above ground and 4ft horizontally from any post or tree trunk. This restriction does not apply

to food that is being Eaten or is being prepared for eating.

**PROTECTYOURPROPERTY AND YOURSELF**

It was the sentence about the eating and preparing of food that made me laugh, as I got a mental picture of a 'get fit type' trying to do just that whilst 10ft up and 4ft out.

Yosemite Valley, with those 3000ft granite cliffs forming it's sides, Half Dome Rock towering above, the Merced river flowing through the Fir tree forest floor, was every bit as beautiful as we had remembered it from our visit in 1976. Leaving Yosemite after lunch we headed for Stockton but missed the turnoff and drove on until we came to the small town of Bridgehead where we booked into a cheap motel. Here we had our first experience of a water bed. What an experience that was. At first it seemed comfortable, but whenever either of us moved, we would gently float around unable to control the rocking and floating motion of the bed. If anyone wants to ask about another aspect of using a waterbed, we don't recommend it, but we are able to report – no punctures.

Our next stop was to be Concord, CA, where we were to visit

# Ham Radio and travel continued...

Joan Fieler and her sister Jean Proctor. Joan Feiler, WA6WZB, (now a silent key) was a Ham in poor health whom we had visited in hospital on our way south, and her sister Jean. We had met Joan via Ham Radio when we were in Inverness, and she was in hospital in San Francisco. We went to visit her in hospital several times. Her sister, Jean Proctor, had come from Concord to be with Joan who was a wheel chair patient at that time. They had both had been in unhappy marriages, and because of Joan's health, Jean who was the younger of the two ladies, decided they should live together in Jean's rented house, so she could care for Joan. Because Joan was going to spend a lot of her time in and out of hospital, the hospital management agreed to allow her to operate on 2 meters with a hand held transceiver, provided it did not interfere with the hospital's electronic gear. Two of the local Hams in San Francisco felt they should install a ground plane 2mx antenna on the roof of the hospital as Joan was on the upper floor, and near a window. The hospital Matron was so impressed with the pleasure Joan was getting from not only keeping in touch with her existing friends, but also that these friends, all Hams, were prepared to do the installation of the antenna and also undertook to maintain it into the future, so that ANY Hams who were admitted, were able to use it, that she persuaded the Hospital Board to agree to the installation. The Hams in turn were so pleased to have the opportunity to demonstrate the value of Ham Radio to the community, that they ran a series of efforts to raise funds for, and to install and maintain a radio intercom system among the several scattered buildings in the hospital grounds, and also the hospital's vehicles. After quite a lot of the set-up had been done, the Repeater group approached the FCC to issue a

free licence to the hospital for a ten year trial of the value of radio in medicine. This was to include the ambulances which served the hospital.( In the USA most ambulances are either owned and operated by hospitals or by Taxi or Hire Car Companies. This introduced so many license problems that the FCC had ruled that emergency communication by radio had to be handled by the Fire Authorities, who in any case were obliged to attend all road, rail, and air events etc. They also had to have a certain number of Medics available at all Fire Stations [called Fire Halls], to go with Fire Trucks which called an Ambulance if required. The Fire Services became so proficient in this service that the Police and the 911 service {like our 000}, now call the Fire Service, and let them call the ambulance if needed.) At the time we made our last visit to Joan before heading South, Joan was expecting to be able to leave hospital and go home, so the two ladies decided we should call and have a Mothers Day lunch with

them.

During the time we had been at Inverness we had made the acquaintance of a young Aussie girl Judi Rodoni. She and her husband, Dennis, had asked us back to stay overnight on our way to San Pablo to visit a sick Ham friend "Brock", K6ZJL, a Ham we'd had many talks

with via radio and whom we had met at a luncheon. After a very enjoyable time with the Rodoni's we said our goodbyes and headed to San Pablo. Upon our arrival at Brock's home we were met with the sad news that Brock had passed away. His wife Elma told us she was glad we were there. Lowell Amadahl, WA6IRF, a longtime friend of Elmer and Brock, and a Lay preacher, had been in constant contact with Joan Fieler, WA6WZB, who through the Mount Tamalpais Repeater was keeping Brock's amateur friends up to date on his illness. Joan had announced that there would be a general broadcast at 5.30pm. A QST. Lowell was going to use "Brocks" 'rig' to make the announcement of his passing. He asked Bruce to be with him and be ready to take over in the event that he (Lowell) was emotionally unable to finish the broadcast. It was one of the most moving things we have ever listened to. As we gathered in the room that had been Brock's "shack", Lowell quietly and firmly began the announcement from

station K6ZJL and after he had finished the sad message, Elma went on briefly to thank all her friends for their messages of support and encouragement over the previous few days and concluded by saying "Goodbye". A few of the Hams listening responded with short messages of condolences

and sympathy and then the Repeater fell silent for 2 or 3 minutes. After this Lowell invited Bruce to conclude the broadcast by giving the call sign K6ZJL for the last time. Station K6ZJL had become a 'silent key'. The last thing for Lowell to do was to write up the final transmission in the Station Log, which Brock had always meticulously kept, and Bruce, as a Licensed Amateur Operator, witnessed Lowell's entry with his signature beneath Lowell's. The next morning Joan announced in another general broadcast at 6pm, in what was a most professional and yet dignified manner that we had ever heard on Amateur Radio, the arrangements for a Memorial Funeral service to be conducted the following Sunday at 2pm. On the Saturday, Jack Newman, Brock's son, phoned Bruce to say that Elma had asked if he would be an Honorary Pall Bearer at the Funeral service. The term Honorary is used in America when there is no actual burial taking place after the service, and it is an honour to be asked. The eight honorary Pall Bearers, 6 of them Hams, were each given a white carnation to pin to their coat lapel and at the conclusion of the service each bearer placed the flower on the open casket as he filed past. Lowell Amdahl wrote and delivered the Eulogy. During the closing part of the service, as friends and relatives filed past the casket, the Organist softly played the theme that had been Elmer and Brocks favourite song. "Always". The interment was to be held the following Thursday in Tacoma, in the State of Washington, with full Naval Honours. Bruce filled in and posted to each Ham who had participated in the services and Call Backs, a K6ZJL QSL Card. The next day we left to continue our trip to Portland, Oregon. See you next month.

