



REPEATERS VK3RGV 2m &
VK3RGV 70cm
VK3RGV B 70cm D-Star
CLUB CALL SIGN VK3SOL

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From the Acting Editor

Welcome to the September Newsletter for the Shepparton and District Amateur Radio Club. Thankyou to all those who contributed to this edition. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Peter Rentsch and I am located at Koonoomoo. I recently became an Amateur Radio operator as of August 2009. My call sign is VK3FPSR.

What a great idea the "F" call system is. Back in the late 1970,s I studied at that time to become an Amateur but got stumped on the Morse Code. It never happened. Then, thanks to Ed (VK3BG) I was informed of the changes to the rules. I studied the Foundation Manual and here I am. A dream if you like, fulfilled.

My other interest in the Electronic field is Vintage Radio. I am also a member of the North East Victorian Vintage Radio Club, so if some of you have heard of me before its probably because I do the Newsletter for that group as well.

A comment about the Comms Day I feel is warranted. On one of the second hand traders tables was a particular Radio that I was keen to purchase. I did not have sufficient funds with me on the day but I offered to pay a significant deposit on the radio and transfer the balance the next day to his account. He was not interested in the least in this arrangement, he informed me that he doesn't have a bank account, hence his sale was lost and I came away frustrated. Perhaps there is a lesson to be learnt from this by me, take more money next year, you will probably find something to buy that you did not know you needed.

Cheers & 73's

Peter.

PS – If I have omitted anything from this Newsletter please accept my apologies as I was a little short of time.

Dairy Dates.

Saturday 2nd October – Regular Meeting 1.00pm

Saturday 6th November – Regular Meeting followed by the AGM

Saturday 4th December or Sunday 5th December – Christmas Meeting

From the President.

Hello to everyone,

Firstly I would like to congratulate everyone on a very successful HAMFEST. I don't the exact figures (still being checked by our treasurer) but it looks like we have done very well this year. A full report on the day's takings will be tabled at October's meeting.

I would like to thank all members who helped with the day and make it such a great success. I have received several e-mails and phone calls asking to pass on sincere thanks and gratitude for putting on a great day! One thing that stands out in all of the contacts I've had with other amateurs this week is how fantastic the catering was! From what I have been told the hamburgers were world class. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the catering crew for a fantastic job this year. (As usual). They all have such a good time in the kitchen and by the quality of the food available it shows. Thanks for a job well done. I would also like to mention the traders because without their support the day would not be the success it is.

53rd Jota for 2010 is approaching fast this year. The dates are 16th to 17th of October. I have spoken with a couple of the leaders and they are hoping to have us at the hall from about 2-3pm into the evening.

I will not be at October's meeting as I will be away but am asking people to offer their services for some part of the event.

I have heard on the old amateur bush telegraph that Tibor VK3FTIB has successfully upgraded his license to STANDARD and I believe his new call will be VK3MRO. Look forward to talking to you with the new call. Job well done!

I would like to remind members that the clubs AGM will be held after the normal meeting on Saturday 6th November so please make sure you're in attendance to elect your committee for 2011.
See you all there

Cheers
Toby VK3PNF

Minutes of the September Meeting

September 2010 Minutes of meeting SADARC.

Opened by Toby VK3PNF at 13:05 Hours.

Attendance:

Ian VK3CHV, Steve VK3DAG, Pat VK3OV, John VK3PXJ, Ed VK3BG, Ian VK4JIN, Trevor VK3VG, John VK3FJAF, Dave VK3VCE, Peter VK3FPSR, Alan VK3AJD, Kevin VK3BPH, Rodney VK3UG, Les VK3TEX, Ron VK3COP, Toby VK3PNF.

Apologies: Rob VK3ECH, Matt VK3FMDB, Alan VK3FALN, Clint VK3CAF, Max VK3DSF, Jan VK3ALF, Barry VK3AXX,

Minutes of the Last Meeting:

Les VK3TEX was still suffering from holiday withdrawal and forgot to print the minutes out to read to the members. The members were asked if they had read the minutes in the newsletter and most had. There was no business arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

Les VK3TEX moved the motion that the minutes be passed and seconded by Steve VK3DAG. Carried.

Inward Correspondence: Newsletter from EMDRC Radio Club.

Outwards Correspondence: Several e-mails by the secretary to confirm the bookings of people who will be coming to trade at the Hamfest.

Treasures Report:

Ron VK3COP passed around the treasurer's report to the members present.

Ron VK3COP moved that the report be accepted. Seconded by Ed VK3BG. Carried.

Reports:

Rodney VK3UG gave a brief report on the 6M repeater and says it should be operational around November.

Steve VK3DAG gave a brief report on the hall committee and said that all was good but they just mentioned that the hall should be kept clean after each visit by our members.

General Business:

Hamfest: Les VK3TEX started by saying that he has contacted people on the Internet and via e-mail about the Hamfest and there were quite a few traders and private sellers coming this year.

Toby went through the prizes for the Hamfest for both the door prize and the raffle.

Ron went through the list of the jobs required for the Hamfest and who would be doing what.

Meeting closed by Toby at 14:00 Hours.

Announcements

From Rodney - A number of members of S.A.D.A.R.C. and the local Vintage Radio Club (many of our members are members of both clubs) have installed solar panels to either put power back into the mains or as stand alone systems to feed either their home or amateur shack.

I think it would be advantageous for members to know who else in both clubs have solar (electricity) energy systems either up and running or are planning to install some system. If we know who has systems we can talk with one another about the best ways to go about anything in regard to the systems, and to deal with problems. Like for example I have a problem with severe electrical noise (radio interference) from the inverter, which has been ongoing since solar panels were installed. With persistence I have been able to persuade the supplier that this is not good enough and an inverter of another make will be installed shortly and this should cure the problem. I know of another installation where interference is ruining radio reception too, so mine is not the only one.

For the above reason and other reasons I'd like to have all members who have solar electrical installations contact me so that we can establish a local forum which can assist members to see how to go about solving problems or working out the best system to install. Things like, which solar cells perform the best in hot weather, who are the best suppliers, etc.

If you are interested in this idea contact me by email rodlynn6@bigpond.com, , telephone 03 5825 1354 or letter to 6 Mundoona Court Mooropna, 3629.

73 Rodney VK3UG.

From Les - On a recent trip to Cairns Les – VK3TEX was smitten by the bug and proposed to his new girlfriend. She accepted his proposal so Wedding Bells are on the way. Congratulations Les.

An article of Interest

The following article appeared in the EMDRC Newsletter. Permission to reprint the Article was obtained by Rodney. VK3UG

Shopping Centre Car Troubles

My work takes me to many shopping centres all over Australia. We manufacture equipment using the 433.92mHz LIPD band that has an output power of 1 milliwatt (maximum) and most of the time we are 20db down on this so as to reduce "range" for our application.

This story starts in Mid January 2010 when I went to a local shopping centre in the outer eastern suburbs of Victoria and parked in the underground car park. As amateurs well know that as soon as we go into an underground car park the FM repeaters are usually instantly unreachable and that is exactly what happened for me and I thought nothing more about it.

Also as luck would have it, I did not turn off my 2m FM transceiver straight away as I was looking for a car parking space because it was busy and needed my full attention. After the obligatory 10 minutes circling I found a space not too far from where I wanted and parked. As I leant down to turn off my set I noticed that it had about S4 or S5 showing on received signal strength but nothing was coming out of the speakers.

A quick twist of the squelch showed it was "just noise" and I immediately assumed it was some kind of substation or switching noise (shopping centres use a lot of power I "wisely" told myself).

I got my gear out of the car and then... the remote door lock did not work. Damn I thought. It is about 5 years old and the battery is probably flat was my guess. I used the key to manually lock the car and thought nothing more about it all except wondering where I could get a new battery to solder in.

An hour later I returned to the car and again the remote failed to work and again I used the key to manually open the door. One thing I did notice was that another car, not far away, had its alarm operating. I thought no more and drove home where... the remote again worked. Curious I thought..hey..electronics are funny things I said to myself.

All this lay dormant as a fuzzy memory till mid Feb when I flew to a shopping centre in New South Wales that really wanted to see my equipment and talk to me about their needs. It thought it a bit strange that they wanted to talk to me about it as most clients are happy with e-mail and brochure exchanges.

The only problem was that a massive dose of flu had hit me and I felt like death warmed up all day but that's not the interesting bit.

The shopping centre manager and assistant manager made me most welcome and I duly did my "stand-up show and tell" on what we do and how it works and all was going very well. They seemed happy and I sniffed the prospect of a good sale in the offing.

Then the questions started. Since I designed and programmed it I don't mind that at all.

Their first question was "Will your equipment cause interference to car remote controls" along with a penetrating stare and I instantly felt something was wrong as I'd never been asked this before. I know for a fact that it won't and can't.

I gave an emphatic no. We use a spectrum analyzer to measure output power and frequency and to my knowledge no manufacturer is silly enough to use the LIPD band in question. Not withstanding this, our output power is extremely low and our "use time" is only very short so it would not jam a signal for long if one existed anyway.

"Turn over that whiteboard" was the request which I duly did (I was standing during the presentation) and there was a spectrum graph showing a massive spike on 385mHz.

Damn curious I thought and then it all came out. They told me an interesting tale of terrible woes!

The centre has an underground car park and with painful regularity car remote door locks would fail. Worse still was that if the user was lucky enough to get the "sweet spot" where the remote worked then often the car electronics would lock up and the car would have to be pushed out of the car park before it would start. They had customers purchasing new remote's (not cheap!) and that made no difference.

The centre contacted the brand new police station on the other side of the road and they actually turned off their regional

transmitter for some hours and that made no difference. A major RAAF base is located quite close to the centre and they also turned off some systems and that too made no difference.

At this stage desperation was setting in so they found a consultant from Sydney who charged them \$4,000 (I am not kidding!) to come and inspect and do an analysis to tell them what was wrong.

This consultant brought "some kind of gear that had to be kept level" (I kept my mouth shut and did not mention that radio waves only travel in the flat in retail spaces.. I had the flu after all) but was unable to pinpoint the problem on the day. However he called the ACMA who were really helpful and after some investigation it was determined that a major retailer has a shop in the right proximity to the problem had a history of this kind of problem.

The equipment in question was a customer counter. They said "counter" to me. I doubted this at the time and still do - I would have thought it was a theft detection device - but that is what I was told.

The shopping centre got the retailer to turn off the device and "all was good" as the interference abruptly ceased.

I listened with rapt attention to this story as it really hit close to home with spectrum usage, interference and all kinds of radio technology that intrigues me. Then I remembered mid Jan and my own car problem. Isn't life strange I thought!

The story continues.

On my return to Melbourne I contacted my client at the local shopping centre and asked them if they had the same kinds of problems. I got a "sheepish and evasive yes" from them and with a little probing the similarities were extreme.

The exact same retailer was "above" the area in question where I had parked.

There was a definite area where if you parked your car the remote was most unlikely to work and a few cars had to be pushed out of the area. I was quite surprised as I would not have thought the car would have been immobilized – but that is what I was told by two separate centre management teams.

Neither centre had cordoned off the area, even after telling me where it was and that customers had purchased new remotes and consultation with car dealerships and all the problems they knew about and nothing had made any difference.

They had a bit of a look around but were totally out of their depth. I don't know what they had been telling customers whose cars were immobilized.

All that aside, I played my part and told my local centre managers about what I knew and loaned them the business cards of the centre management team in New South Wales for them to make contact.

Some of the interesting points that come out of this were that;

- * Neither centre cordoned off the affected area even though they knew of its existence.
- * The retailer in question would have been well aware of the problem. This was not the first time(s).
- * The problem was not followed through to its logical conclusion. The equipment is not conforming to any kind of standard and should not be in use in Australia.
- * The effects in both centres were extremely similar and severe. I would have doubted that in-car electronics would have been susceptible to this kind of problem to this extent. Surely they would not "lock up the engine" but both shopping centres independently told me the same thing. Both centres had to push cars away from the problem areas. I was surprised

(then again I'm not at all familiar with car electronics anyway!).

* I noticed significant "noise" on 147MHz 2m FM in my car. I drove around and it was quite localized. I would have expected it to take many hundreds or thousands of metres to abate yet over a space of perhaps 100 metres it went from S0 to S4 then back to S0 again. It really was localized. Car remote door locks I've tested on my spectrum analyzer are usually located somewhere near 305MHz. The client showed me a spectrum with a big spike at 385MHz. What was going on - these are big differences in frequency? I suspect that the noise was very intense at one frequency and de-sense was happening because of insufficient out of band filtering in the nearby receivers (I had seen this before on the 915-928MHz ISM band with SAW filters but that is another story). Maybe the noise was very broad (but I doubt it)? Maybe it was a very bad switch-mode supply? I don't know.

After little thought I came to the conclusion that what had happened is not an isolated experience. We regularly hear of devices coming into Australia that use "out of band" frequencies. For example; radio headphones using the 2m band etc.

Also, the ability of "lay people" to deal with this kind of problem is about nil. It was hard enough for a "consultant" to pinpoint a problem even though he had some equipment.

For myself I had made bad assumptions from what I had seen based upon my expectations for car remote electronics and that it would be "impossible" for legitimate equipment such as would be installed by normal retailers to interfere with it.

Finally the pessimist in me wonders just how much of this problem is caused by cost cutting at every step in the process. The car electronics are most likely "made to a cost" so that front-end rejection may not be done or may be limited; the equipment causing the problem was designed with a "devil may care" mentality whereby any interference is completely ignored (or maybe the filtering components were removed and bridged out after compliance was gained so as to cut cost .. as per some switch mode power supplies I have seen).

Since then, in May 2010, I took my IC92AD hand held through two large shopping centres and the changes since the last time I did this are dramatic. Previously there has been little noise or telemetry. Now it is quite busy – vastly different. Outside three "brand name" retailers my hand-held was basically blotted out by the anti-theft pillars. Also, every 10 to 30 seconds a loud "chirrup" of telemetry was heard. Quite obviously I seeing a trend.

Triple O Emergency call

On boxing day 2009 I was happily enjoying a cup of coffee on the back deck of the house playing radios. After the rush and hurry of Christmas I was enjoying the peace and quiet, having a nice QSO with some friends on the local 2m repeater with my hand-held.

After a few minutes and in a break between overs "Joe" came up and asked me if I would put out a "000" call for him.

My excuse for asking the silly question "is this for real" is that, well, it came so far out from the ordinary and he was so calm and matter of fact about it. However this does not change the fact that with minimal thought I would have remembered that Joe is one of the least likely people to fool around on air like that and he was indeed genuine. In fact, I doubt any Amateur Radio operator would do such a thing as "lark about" like that.

Joe revealed that he was in his car doing a milk-bar run for some much needed provisions and he had forgotten his mobile phone.

The reason for all this was that there was a woman in a distressed state standing in an intersection in amongst heavy traffic on two of Melbourne's busier roads. I know the roads and I know that they are never safe to be in the middle of the road - traffic is always busy there.

I quickly got a pen and asked Joe to spell out for me the details which I duly wrote down. This did not sound like the time to be fumbling for details.

Now this may be a strange admission at my exalted age of 53 but I've never called 000 before! Well a first for everything I suppose.

I placed my call and asked for police then started off my story with "My name is Richard Holmes and I'm a licensed Radio Amateur calling on behalf of another licensed Radio Amateur". The police officer did not seem in the least bit concerned as (perhaps) I'd given him my name and address and phone number. After that he took the details I'd written down and we finished up the phone call fairly quickly.

After this excitement I went back to my cuppa on the deck and trusty hand-held and continued my happy QSO's. However after just a few minutes Joe came back up to say that the same woman was now on another intersection not far away and the police were nowhere to be seen so with a few more details pencilled down I made my second ever 000 call.

As luck would have it, I got a different police person and with just a little explanation gave all the details of myself and of the new location of the distressed person. This again went smoothly and I thought the police handled the call very well. I'll admit to being a little worried that they would not take me seriously but that was not the case.

When I got back to my cuppa Joe was still on the radio and after a very short time said he could hear police sirens in the distance. Hopefully it was police sorting it out and not an ambulance.

Well, we never heard any more about this event however it did make a good talking point on the repeater for a few days.

Some Light Entertainment

GREAT TRUTHS THAT LITTLE CHILDREN HAVE LEARNED:

- 1) No matter how hard you try, you can't baptise cats.
- 2) When your Mum is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- 3) If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- 4) Never ask your 3-year old brother to hold a tomato.
- 5) You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- 6) Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- 7) Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time.
- 8) You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- 9) Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts.
- 10) The best place to be when you're sad is Grandpa's lap.

GREAT TRUTHS THAT ADULTS HAVE LEARNED:

- 1) Raising teenagers is like nailing jelly to a tree.
- 2) Wrinkles don't hurt.
- 3) Families are like fudge...mostly sweet, with a few nuts.
- 4) Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.
- 5) Laughing is good exercise. It's like jogging on the inside.
- 6) Middle age is when you choose your cereal for the fibre, not the toy.

GREAT TRUTHS ABOUT GROWING OLD

- 1) Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- 2) Forget the health food. I need all the preservatives I can get.
- 3) When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- 4) You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- 5) It's frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- 6) Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- 7) Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE:

- 1) You believe in Santa Claus.
- 2) You don't believe in Santa Claus.
- 3) You are Santa Claus.
- 4) You look like Santa Claus.

SUCCESS:

- At age 4 success is . . . not piddling in your pants.
At age 12 success is . . . having friends.
At age 18 success is . . . having a drivers licence.
At age 35 success is . . . having money.
At age 50 success is . . . having money.
At age 70 success is . . . having a drivers licence.
At age 75 success is . . . having friends.
At age 80 success is . . . not piddling in your pants.

Take the time to live!!!

That's it for this time. Have a great month.