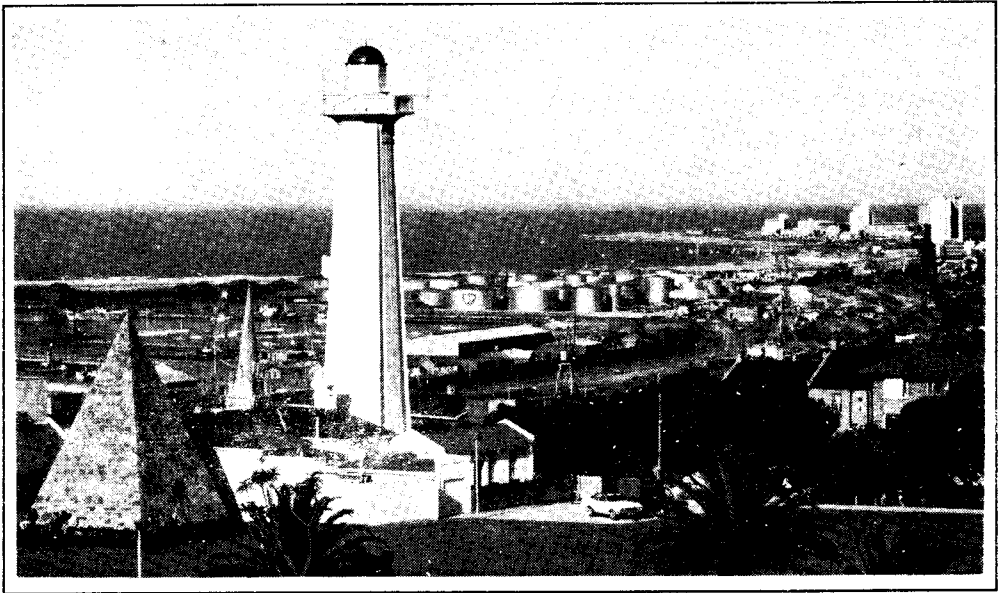




Q S X

P E



THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE
PORT ELIZABETH BRANCH OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE

P.O. BOX 10402
LINTON GRANGE
6015

March 1996

MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING

The next monthly general meeting of the Branch will take place on **Friday, 15 March 1996** in the Civil Defence Centre, Westview Drive, Mill Park, Port Elizabeth starting at 20:00 (8 pm).

Your delegate to the AGM, to be held on 9 March, will give a resumé of the proceedings at that meeting, which will probably go down as one of the most critically important in the League's history.

Refreshments will be available for a small consideration as usual during the interval.

HAMNET NEWS

Hamnet General Meeting.

The next Hamnet General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 3rd April at 19h30 at the Municipal Disaster Management Centre in Mill Park. All Hamnet members and interested parties are asked to make a special effort to attend.

At present the League is at a cross-roads, essentially because the current running costs results in subscriptions being too high for many members and some serious decisions will need to be made at the forthcoming League AGM to rectify this situation.

Whatever decisions are made, it is likely to affect Hamnet as well. There may well be a need for the National Director and Provincial Directors to hold discussions on the future functioning of Hamnet.

All this indicates that we will have to plan our future operations at this meeting and thus the importance of attending it.

73

Al Akers.
Provincial Director,
Hamnet East Cape



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A Word from ZS2RS

Our recent, and most pleasant, get-together at the QTH of Roger ZS1J was certainly worth the little effort required to get there. Those who missed out, did so in every way. It has already been suggested that the event take place twice a year. Well worth thinking about.

The PE Branch received accolades for the repeater network and of course the many hours put into it by a few. My sincere thanks again to those concerned. If only the unity and esprit de corps experienced at Plett could be transplanted to the League as a whole.

The AGM will soon be a thing of the past and the question on the lips of all concerned is, what is the future of the League? Even at this late hour, we are perusing new submissions by HQ in the form of a revised constitution, again with far-reaching consequences. Some of them could well mean the demise of Branches as we know them. Unfortunately it all revolves around the root of all evil - MONEY.

The League is no longer affordable to many amateurs and their resignations require subscriptions to be raised which, in turn, results in the resignation of more amateurs. Something has got to give and all will be revealed on March 9.

Please hang in there, support your Branch and, above all, don't sit back and let things happen. Your input is all important and, of course, appreciated.

73,

Dick ZS2RS

Plett Visit to be Repeated

Some 40 or more hams and families from the Southern and Eastern Cape, including several from other Divisions who were holidaying or permanently relocated to the area, got together on Roger ZS1J's farm near Plettenberg Bay on 18 February and had a ball. Some, in fact, had arrived the previous day, overnighting on the farm or nearby, and they got in some solid rag-chewing on the Saturday evening, touching among other things on some of the problems bedevilling the League.

The weather could not have been better, and many took the opportunity to stroll around the farm, enjoying the natural beauty or inspecting the improvements that Roger has effected, while the horses and week-old chicks, as well as their mothers, also attracted attention. A peek into Roger's FB shack with a host of old style equipment – all in good working order – was a singular experience.

With such weather, how could the braai be less than perfect? The congenial company, the pleasure of renewing acquaintances with some old friends and making new ones as only hams can do, made the day complete. Roger suggested making this an annual event but his proposal was rejected out of hand – everyone wants to make it a *six-monthly* visit!

Seinrapporte en die S-meter

Ek was verbaas om die volgende raad in die nuusbrieff van Tak Boland 'n paar maande gelede te lees: "Wees taktvol wanneer jy 'n seinrapport gee en van die lesing op jou seinmeter gebruik maak. Ons seinmeters gee nie almal dieselfde lesings nie, met die gevolg dat jou rapport in hierdie opsig heelmoontlik nie effektief is vir die man aan die ander kant nie. Veral nie in die geval van DX-kommunikasie nie.

'n Seinlesing is net nie altyd 'n getroue weergawe van die duidelikheid van 'n sein nie. Soms word byvoorbeeld gevind dat 'n heeltemal leesbare sein die naald skaars roer. Dit is dus misleidend vir jou gespreksgenoot om 'n S-0 of S-1 rapport te gee. 'n S-3 of selfs hoër mag miskien meer realities wees. Feit is: die goeie amateur lees sy seinmeter oordeelkundig. 'n Mens leer mettertyd aan watter soort rapport by watter soort sein pas, al verskil dit van jou seinmeterlesing."

Wat dink lesers daarvan? Ek persoonlik stem nie daarmee saam nie. Die *seinsterkte* het hoegenaamd niks met *leesbaarheid* te doen, en myns insiens is dit misleidend om 'n *seinsterkte* rapport subjektief aan te pas slegs omdat die oudio mooi leesbaar is. En as jy die swak S-1 sein aanpas na S-3, wat gaan jy maak met 'n ander stasie in die groep wat werklik S-3 op die meter skop? Hoe gaan jy die relatiewe seinsterktes van die twee stasies korrek en eerlik weergee?

Right to Use of Repeaters

The US Supreme Court ruled in a case last year that the use of a repeater is a privilege, not a right. The owner may, for good reason but not on a personal whim, refuse access to his repeater. Presumably one cannot, however, stop operators from using the input frequency to carry out a simplex QSO.

The same principle applies to a packet bulletin board, the Sysop of which may lock out any station that, for example, refuses to co-operate or in other ways makes a nuisance of himself. Although the locked-out station cannot be prevented from using the *frequency* for his own communications, one could, of course, report him to the authorities if he "interferes with or obstructs the transmission or reception of any radio communication" (Article 19(f) of the Radio Act). The maximum penalty is R2000 or six months' imprisonment or both. Q

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE PORT ELIZABETH BRANCH OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE HELD AT THE CIVIL DEFENCE CENTRE, MILL PARK, PORT ELIZABETH ON FRIDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 1996

Present & Apologies: As per attendance register.

Welcome: Since Dick was unable to attend, the Vice-Chairman AI, ZS2U welcomed members and reported that it was again not possible to introduce the Vodacom guest speaker as expected.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 1996, as circulated in the February issue of QSX-PE, were taken as read and adopted after amending details of proposer and seconder of those minutes to read Joe Jasson, ZR2JLJ and Rob Salmon ZR2AAQ, and "Grahamstown repeater" to read "link at Karcedouw" under General item 5. The adoption was proposed by Vic Olivier ZS2SZ and seconded by Al Akers ZS2U.

Matters Arising: None was raised.

Finance: Treasurer Clive ZS2RT reported a sound financial position with our current balance of savings and investments at R14 934. Clive had transferred a portion from savings account to 32 day notice deposit.

A proposal by AI ZS2U that the meeting authorise a donation towards the IARU travel fund was postponed for a later decision at the suggestion of Lynne ZS2MM.

Correspondence: AI read out several extracts from a circular from the Highveld Branch asking "Which way are we going?". Various other branch newsletters were also tabled.

New Business: New business was related only to the motions submitted for the forthcoming SARL AGM and the decisions were as follows:

- Motion 1. Yes
- Motion 2. (PE motion) Yes but should be amended to "eligible to apply for Life Membership..." (adapting wording of first sentence of Rule 13 (x))
- Motion 3. HQ should consider all alternatives (including, for example, the Australian and Austrian suffix systems) and then approach branches for views on final proposals.
- Motion 4. Yes
- Motion 5. No
- Motion 6. No
- Motion 7. No. Social members make a useful contribution to branches and would be lost if forced to belong to the League at additional cost.
- Motion 8. Yes, in principle. The Branch share of subs is important, however, as also some facility for HQ to get important information to members who do not subscribe to Radio ZS.
- Motion 9. No. Branch chairmen should be the liaison officers.
- Motions 10 to 22. No.

General

1. Al ZS2U volunteered to act as chief invigilator for the forthcoming RAE exams with Clive ZS2RT and Bert ZR2USA assisting.
2. Al would also manage the Field Day and will call for volunteers to man the phone and CW stations. Vic ZS2SZ volunteered to obtain the rules governing the event. A site is still to be found.
3. The meeting appointed Garth ZS2HB as our delegate to the forthcoming AGM in Gauteng, with Dick ZS2RS as reserve.
4. Vic ZS2SZ is prepared to give morse lessons, provided the candidates show sufficient enthusiasm.
5. Raphey ZS2SP tested the meeting's reaction to his view that the cellphone companies should be approached to give licensed hams preferential tariffs since we all use radio waves. The meeting disagreed, feeling that there were no more grounds for this than, for example, special TV licence fees for hams.
6. Finally, members were reminded of the Hamfest at Plettenberg Bay on 18 February.

The meeting closed at 21:45 and tea and munchies were taken.

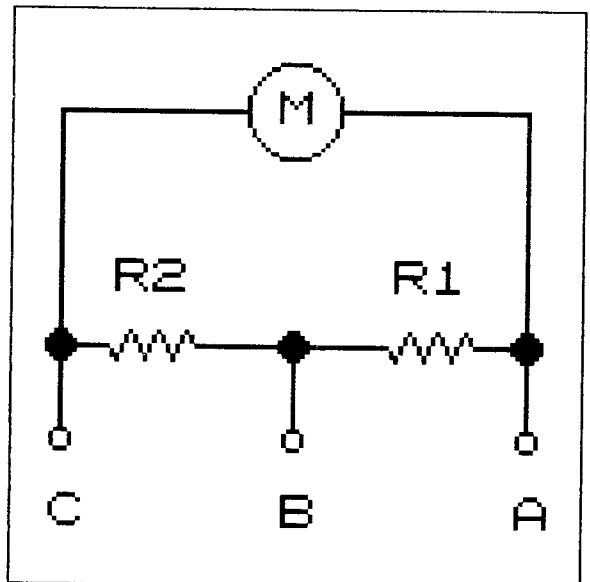
Puzzle this one out!

The circuit diagram alongside shows a meter for reading two different current ranges. Connected to an external circuit at points A and C, the meter reads ten milliamperes at full scale. Connected at points B and C it reads a hundred milliamperes full scale.

The meter itself is one milliamperes full scale and has an internal resistance of twenty ohms.

What values are R1 and R2?

Al ZS2U will put us out of our misery with an answer and explanation next month.



Fiddlers' Corner

QRP WITH EASE

Amateur Radio does *not* have to be expensive. Constructing your own gear keeps costs down, while knowing that you are using items that you have built yourself provides a measure of satisfaction that you do not get when using a bought, commercial 'black box'.

One of the main objectives of Amateur Radio is self-education, and this comes from 'rolling your own'. In this, the second article in the Fiddlers' Corner series, Viv Moore ZS2FM offers another small but useful add-on for your 'black box'.

This article describes a simple method of reducing the output power of a normal HF rig to QRP levels, or to such a level that you can use the rig as a handy signal generator. The method used does not require any modification to the rig - at least if it is one of the Kenwood TS models. Some other makes might also provide the required external connector, while a small modification may be necessary to use the device with other transmitters.

The secret lies in the REMOTE socket at the back of your set. This is the socket that is normally connected to a linear amplifier and sets the ALC [automatic level control] so that you don't overdrive the linear. What happens in normal use is that the linear feeds back a negative voltage that reduces the drive.

The simple circuit described here (Fig. 1)

emulates this control action. Take careful note of the polarity - the feedback voltage *must* be negative in relation to ground.

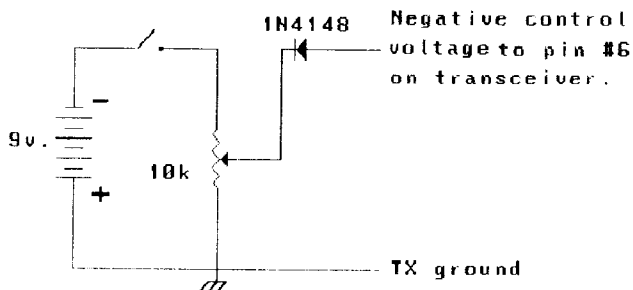


Fig. 1. Circuit diagram of the add-on output level control unit.

From information at hand it would appear that, on the Kenwood TS series, the connection should be made to pin 6 of the remote socket.

Measuring your Output

Once you have the power reduced you will want to know what the level is. Fig 2 describes a peak reading diode detector. Although not a laboratory model [Run that past me again? - Ed.], it will give a fair reading of the SSB PEP power level.

The two resistors act as a 50 Ω dummy load and their power handling capability should not be exceeded. Of course, the dummy load could be made up of *any*

number of resistors connected in parallel to give 50 Ω.

Couple it all to your rig, connect a volt meter, whistle into the mike and take a DC voltage reading. Square that value and divide it by 100 and you have the output in watts.

$$P = \frac{V^2}{2R}$$

So for 5 watts you should obtain a 22V reading.

Try 5 watts into your 40 meter antenna and you will be surprised with the signal reports that you get! Ω

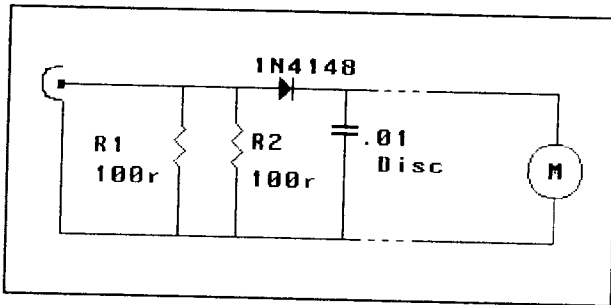


Fig. 2 - Device for checking the QRP output level.

ERRATUM

CORRECTION

DELTA LOOP ANTENNA

In the article on antennas in our February issue, some incorrect dimensions were unfortunately provided regarding the delta loop described on Page 7.

Clearly, the base of a triangle cannot be a half wavelength if each of the other sides is a quarter wave! The Idiot of this fine newsletter should have noticed that himself when preparing the drawing for printing - please accept his apologies! The correct measurements are 17,450 metres for the 'base' (the 'top' in the diagram) and 13 metres each for the other sides.

The results indicated by the author of that section of the article were achieved with these correct dimensions and the quarter wave stub of 10,863 metres. However, AI ZS2U has pointed out that, while the formula used for the delta correctly produces something longer than an electrical wavelength, the formula for the stub would normally be the more usual

$$\frac{299,8 \times \text{Velocity factor}}{f \text{ in Megahertz}} \div 4$$

the velocity factor of 0.56 to 0.68 being applicable for coax.

St Helena Island Activity

Andy, G4ZVJ, will be operating from St. Helena under the callsign ZD7VJ from 29 March to 12 April using CW only. His operating frequencies will be 1827, 3503, 7003, 10107, 14027, 18077, 21027, 24897 and 28027 kHz ± the QRM, and he will listen up the band.

From 16 to 23 April there may also be activity as ZD8VJ.

Ω

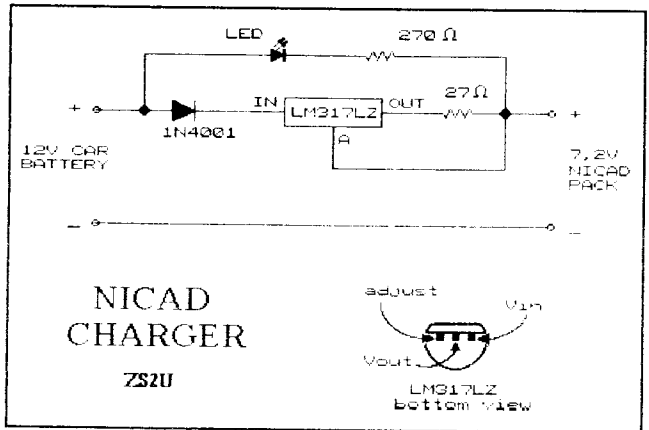
Mobile Nicad Charger

AL AKERS, ZS2U

Handie-talkies are very useful and it would seem that virtually every amateur has one. Charging the nicad packs for these handie-talkies is easy when mains power is available but, when it is not, such as at some caravan parks or when motoring in remote areas, charging can be a real problem.

I recently developed a circuit for charging the nicad packs for my handie-talkie from a 12 volt car battery. These packs are 7,5 volts and, as it seems that most handie-talkies use packs of this voltage, there may be others who would be interested in such a circuit. In fact, it can be used in this configuration to charge nicad packs up to 9,6 volts and even, while the car's engine is running, a 12 volt nicad unit – the charging source needs to be at least 2 volts higher than that of the pack being charged.

The circuit uses a type LM317LZ voltage or current regulator, which has a maximum current rating of 100 milliamps and is the same size and shape as the small plastic transistors such as the types 2N3904 and 2N3906. Here it is used as a current regulator, controlled by the 27 Ω resistor. This resistor value is obtained from $R=1200/I$ Ω , where I is in milliamps. In this case the current is about 44 milliamps.



The recommended charging rate for nicads is 10% of their ampere-hour rating for 12 to 14 hours. Penlite size nicads are rated at about 500 mA-hours, therefore charging current would be 50 milliamps.

The charge indicator LED path draws about 10–15 milliamps, so total charge current is about 60 milliamps. Close enough.

Nicads can be charged at higher current rates, but this is not recommended. Gas is developed in the cells when being charged, but they can handle this at the 10% charge rate, even when fully charged. However, at rates much in excess of this and particularly when fully charged, these cells could explode. Even if they do not, their life expectancy is likely to be decreased.

Ω

- It is better to be a pessimist than an optimist. When things don't turn out the way a pessimist expected, he is elated. Not so the optimist. – *GF*

BAN THE BOMB AND QRO

...SAYS VIV MOORE, ZS2VM

Welcome to the realm of QRP, a place where less RF power is more fun for the operator. There is a sense of accomplishment, and a smile steals onto your face when that distant QRO station gives your 1 watt SSB transmitter a 59, or your CW signal a 599 report.

Is it so important to get a 59 report? Won't a 51 do? After all, the regulations state that one should use only as much power as is required for reliable communication.

The P.E. Branch offers the "Algoa Bay QRP 20 Club Award" that recognises amateurs who have made contact with other amateurs in twenty South African Maidenhead Locators while using a maximum input of 5 watts. One of our members, Fanie ZS2EM, achieved this using only *300 milliwatts of double sideband*. There are others, Andries ZS2P and André ZS2AL, well on their way using similar equipment.

André ZS2ACP has more than 40 grid squares with QRP contacts on 40 meters in Japan, South America, Italy and a number of African countries. I have 148 QRP contacts on 40 meters using under 3 watts, 92 with RS 55 reports or better, 40 with RS 52 and more, 14 with RS 50 and 51, one 42 and one 31. WHO NEEDS QRO??

These experiences and qualities place QRP operation near the heart of Amateur

Radio. Some QRPers are captured by the nostalgia that goes back to the early days when Hams, through necessity, used only a few watts and every QSO was logged as an achievement. There is pride in home-made gear and the ability to be heard at great distances. QRP operators use equipment that takes less space, is more portable, less dependant on mains power and usually costs a lot less than its QRO counterpart.

Experimenting and low power go hand in hand with simplicity as the keyword and the QRP arena is one of the few places where the average home-brewer can still make a decent showing. Still another QRP advantage is relative freedom from interference with commercial services and other amateurs. Just think how easy it would be to get into the States on 20 meters if they operated at the *lowest* possible power rather than the highest!

If you like a challenge, then QRP is possibly the greatest operating challenge in Amateur Radio today. Ω

FOR SALE ★ SWOP ★ WANTED

FOR SALE

- ★ Yaesu FL2100B with manual (ex late ZS2FA but never used since) plus 2x572B valves – Phone Bill Atteridge ZS2V @ 53-2598
- ★ TET 2 metre Swiss Quad, good gain. (Ex Ron Harvey estate) – Viv Moore ☎ 30-4433

WANTED

- ★ VFO modification data for TR38B1 – Fanie Swiegers ZS2EM, ☎ [0423] 96-1645, PO Box 1412 Jeffrey's Bay 6330. Will recompense reasonable costs.

Letter to the Editor

ADVANTAGES OF COMPULSORY MEMBERSHIP

There are a number of Radio Amateurs in this country who are bent on undermining the SARL, and in so doing destroy the only protector of Amateur Radio in the RSA. This is sheer folly and will only play into the hands of our enemies who are set to take away some of our bands from us. The writer feels very strongly about this matter and therefore wishes to emphasise the benefits of a possible solution, however unpopular it may appear at first, namely compulsory membership. The main advantages are highlighted here:

1. The majority of Radio Amateurs in the RSA (including the writer) believe that the present SARL subs are too high, especially under current economic conditions and that is the major gripe! Having discussed this matter with a number of local amateurs, such as Vic Olivier ZS2SZ, Garth Laaks ZS2HB, Al Akers ZS2U etc., it appears that an annual subscription of under R100 would be acceptable to most amateurs. Now, the introduction of compulsory membership could bring this about during the current year. The question is, just what are the opponents of this system complaining about, when they will all derive benefit from it?

2. Based on information received from Headquarters, there are currently 2099 members of the SARL, comprising 1544 full members at R177 each, 451 pensioners at R177 each, and 104 students at R108 each, providing a grand total of R350 817. There are currently 5213 transmitting amateurs in the RSA, excluding licences for branches, repeaters etc. If we make a rough calculation and assume that around 4000 amateurs would pay the full membership subs of say half price i.e. R90 per annum (R8 per month), and 1200 pensioners and students who would qualify for a rebate at say R55 (R4.60 per month) then the total annual income would be R426 000. All will receive full benefits including RADIO ZS.

3. With this type of income the SARL could consider further rebates (of course, it is imperative that the League remains inside their budget) –

- (a) An increased levy for branches.
- (b) Family membership where more than one

amateur operates from the same household, where an admin fee could be added for each family member, (i.e. if so desired by the family members).

4. This will also be a real boost for RADIO ZS too, as a circulation of around 6000 copies is more likely to appeal to advertisers. Coupled with the lower unit printing cost of the magazine it could become self-supporting.

5. When all Radio Amateurs are members of the SARL then the latter could become the true bastion and leader of amateur radio in Sub-Sahara. With its greater strength it could fight more effectively to protect our interests at Government level or internationally via the IARU. This will also satisfy those who feel that the SARL is not a democratic society nor representative of all Radio Amateurs in this country.

6. What benefits are there for the (ex) non-member?

- (a) He can now make contributions, maybe for the first time ever, to the SARL and the IARU who have fought for and protected the bands that he has been using for years.
- (b) He could now have a say in League affairs and elect his favourite councillors.
- (c) Among the non-members there are many highly skilled technical people who, with their extensive knowledge, could make some valuable input to amateur radio.
- (d) Of course, the non-member will now be represented and defended by a strong SARL whenever necessary.

7. Hopefully, if the Regulator decentralises the licencing, and nominates the SARL to issue amateur radio licences, then maybe the SARL could charge the Department an admin fee which could help to bolster their coffers! –

Mike Bosch, ZS2FM

○ *Mike, many would say that it is Council – or certain councillors – who have undermined the League. • Forcing disenchanting hams – and many inactive ones – to pay to belong to a society against their wishes, especially when it has been dragged down to its knees by its*

'leaders', is hardly democratic. It can best be described as **non-violent mugging!** The League could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered 'democratic' or representative of conscripted members.

• Forced to join, those 4000 new members could well pass a motion to disband the League, and we would have brought this upon ourselves. • The present voting system is undemocratic and so it is difficult to introduce the changes we need – or even secure a democratic voting system! – while a branch with a very large membership has been able to

tip the scales even if it struggles to attract 20 people to its meetings!

Far better to make the League attractive and affordable to all. That will ensure growth and a **contented membership once again**. It can also be done within a year and I hope that delegates to the SGMs and AGM will take off the kid gloves and say out loud what they know needs to be done to ensure that an end is put to the root causes of our present dilemma.

• Council says it is not currently pursuing the idea of shanghaiing licensees!– Ed.

Ω

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

New Radio ZS Editor

Following the retirement of Reno, ZS6OF as Editor of Radio ZS, we hear that Keith Radue ZS6BRH, a new acquisition on Council and brother of our local Dudley ZS2DR, will be taking on Radio ZS for the next few issues at least. We wish him all success and offer our help where outside assistance is practical.

A thought that comes to mind is remote helpers typing up 'copy' for Radio ZS – it could be faxed out to us and the resultant files transmitted to the Editor electronically, even via our League's own packet system if the Regulator has no objection. Perhaps proofreading could be similarly 'farmed out' to remote helpers.

Another PE suggestion adopted

We suggested recently that an RAE applicant should be allowed to request the immediate issue of a ZR licence if he or she passes the exam, and not have to wait for the results to arrive and then write back to apply for the licence. The idea has now been adopted and the latest application forms make provision for applicants to indicate their wishes.

I thought HQ might have taken the trouble to let us know of the adoption of our idea, which will save several weeks' delay in getting on the air.

Linked Repeater System

The problem that caused our linked repeater system to lock on, with a good deal of squawking and other noise, was fixed when Chris ZS2AAW and Trevor ZS2AE were in the area during the weekend of the fabulous visit to ZS1J's farm. Since then, things have been going well and many praises have been expressed regarding the operation of this system. Chris has also changed the crystal on the remote HF transceiver on 7098 kHz which will hopefully cure its tendency to drift.

Meanwhile, the East London lads have replaced their simplex VHF link into our repeater system with a normal repeater on 145.075/675 and this seems to be performing well. It is located at the site of their previous 650 repeater, i.e. at the Frere Hospital. The East London 650 repeater has been relocated to a high tower elsewhere in the city.

Packet Radio Scene

The old transceiver at the BBS was replaced some weeks ago with a Europa unit but the hoped-for improvement for our remote members using the digipeater near Grahamstown failed to materialise. Although the digi faithfully retransmits everything that the BBS instructs it to, the BBS refuses to return the compliment, continuing to ignore all the advances made

to it by the digipeater. Chris ZS2AAW has promised to see what he can do to fix the BBS's attitude problem as soon as possible.

Jim ZS2LR reported recently that he has acquired an exclusive direct route to and from a large network in the USA with access to Europe as well as North America. More recently he has informed us that the SATGATE route has been re-established, so things should flow even more speedily than they have been doing.

New HQ office hours

Due to a cut-back in staff in order to cut costs, the SARL HQ office hours are now 0900-1300 Monday to Friday. It was stated that fax facilities would nevertheless be available at all hours on [011] 484-2831 and the automatic telephone answering device on the same number after office hours. A local member who tried to call after hours recently had no luck, but hopefully that was a one-off occasion.

Contests

The SARL Field Day event has been postponed a couple of times, and as we go to press there has been no announcement of the final date. The Branch has decided to participate once again, with Al ZS2U co-ordinating, and he is looking for operators who would like to assist. There will be operation on SSB as well as CW. Contact Al if you will be able to help once we know just when the event is to be held.

The next Hamnet Simulated Emergency Contest is due to take place on 19 May, so it is not too early to start checking over your equipment and deciding on your operating site.

Ham Radio in SA Schools

A new drive to interest young people in amateur radio is afoot. As part of the SARL's 'RDP (Reconstruction & Development Programme) Vision', an attempt will be made to draw the attention of schools to the considerable value of Amateur Radio as an educational hobby. The plan is to foster an interest in

technology via the establishment of radio clubs at high schools, and in particular at *technical* high schools, colleges and technikons.

To this end, it is envisaged that branches of the SARL will provide training and expertise to establish a pool of licensed teachers, and not only the pupils. The SARL plans to provide additional tuition and training via shortwave broadcasts.

The scheme will be known as ARISAS - Amateur Radio in South African Schools. Hopefully it will succeed where other recent attempts have failed. There is a better chance of this if we concentrate on the technical institutions, where the pupils have already signified their technical leaning.

A Comet Cometh

The new parabolic comet whose name I have mislaid (I only remember that it sounds like a belly laugh) is approaching Earth rapidly and should be visible to the naked eye from about 6 March, reaching its brightest point on 27 March when it will be nearest to Earth - a mere 15M km. If, by that time, it has grown a tail [what's this, a blinking heavenly tadpole?] we are told that it will be even brighter. They didn't say brighter than what.

However, it is possible that the comet will be too close to the Sun in our sky for us to see it well, and our best view will probably be some time in May.

Perhaps we should all gather at Mike ZS2FM's QTH to view the thing from his observatory.

St Helena Island Activity

Andy, G4ZVJ, will be operating from St. Helena under the callsign ZD7VJ from 29 March to 12 April using CW only. His operating frequencies will be 1827, 3503, 7003, 10107, 14027, 18077, 21027, 24897 and 28027 kHz \pm the QRM, and he will listen up the band.

From 16 to 23 April there may also be activity as ZD8VJ. Q

Congratulations

on your birthdays:

March

- 20 Andre de Ridder
- 21 Andrew Gray ZS2G
- 22 Peggy Moore XYL of Viv ZS2VM

April

- 2 Eddie Coetzee
- 3 Ria XYL of Garth ZS2HB
- 4 Iona XYL of Eric ZS2CV
- 5 Mike Jones ZS2MJ
Heather XYL of Jimmy Hoole
ZS2ABM
- 9 Piet Blom ZS2PB
- 11 Simone Pukall Olivier ZS2YL
- 13 Graham Butcher ZR2GIB
- 16 Hans Rohwer ZR2AX
Schalk vd Merwe ZS2Y
- 17 Allan Ansell ZS2AJ
- 18 Jock Morris ZS2MD
- 19 Margaret XYL of Waldie Bartie
ZS2WM
- 20 Trevor Scarr ZS2AE
Joey XYL of Des Pettit ZS2ABU
Glenn Weiss

on your anniversaries:

March

- 18 Keryn & Jonathan Parish
- 21 Maureen & Neil Fulton ZS2MG

- 26 Simone & Keith Olivier ZS2YL and
ZR2AAX
Des & Alan Paulsen

April

- 6 Wolfe & Cathy Gerstle ZS2WG
Judith & Bob Urquhart
- 8 Marlene & Andrew Gray ZS2G
- 10 Sel & Rietjie Staples ZS6SS
- 15 Jack & Claire Smailes ZS2SM

on your achievements Chris White ZS4ABS for winning the Single Operator category in the Hamnet Simulated Emergency Contest on 8 October, Al Akers ZS2U for taking 3rd place and Matt Wallace ZS2MW, who came 4th.

Welcome to our RAE candidates Melissa Knight, Lesley-Anne Bartlett, Johannes Pieterse, John Raven, Denise Lee, John Lee, Marina Jorritsma, Ian Moore, Ron Fitzmaurice, Andrew Smith and Bob Urquhart.

Home Again: Royden Thompson ZR2ABF back in Grahamstown, taking another short break from treatment in Johannesburg. Trust you'll be back permanently soon, fully recovered. Royden. Q

If you or your spouse's birthday, or your anniversary, is not mentioned when it is about to fall due, it indicates that the details are not on our records. Please let Owen Thomas, ZS2AZ, have the particulars so that we can update our records and make an appropriate fuss of you and your XYL/OM on your special day.

Port Elizabeth Branch Committee

Chairman; Special Events	Dick Schönborn ZS2RS	38-5070
Vice Chairman	Al Akers ZS2U	30-2983
Secretary	Bert van der Poel ZR2USA	55-2690
Treasurer; Assets Control	Clive Fife ZS2RT	32-3203
assisting with Assets Control	Lynne Crothall ZS2MM	35-4671
Social, Library	Owen Thomas ZS2AZ	38-4134
assisting with refreshments at meetings	Bill Hodges ZS2ABZ	51-2580
Repeaters, Packet	Chris Scarr ZS2AAW	38-1344
QSX Manager	Trevor Scarr ZS2AE	32-1746
assisting as QSX Editor/layout	Garth Laaks ZS2HB	38-1101
Technical Classes	Gerhard Baum ZS2UM	30-5224

Branch VHF & Other Services

REPEATERS

Town VHF	145.050/650	Grahamstown	*145.150/750
Town UHF	431,050/438,650	Kareedouw	145,125/725
Cockscomb	145.000/600	Lady's Slipper	*145,100/700
Cradock	145.050/650	Uitenhage	145,075/675

* East London's repeater on 145,075/675 MHz is linked to PE's coastwise 2m repeater system.

OTHER SERVICES

Packet Bulletin Board (ZSØNTP)	144,675
Digipeater (Grahamstown - ZSØGHT)	144,675
2m Beacon (ZS2VHF CW ID)	144,910
6m Beacon (ZS2SIX CW ID)	50,005
6m Link with Lady's Slipper 2m Repeater	51,400
Wefax Relay (Meteosat)	145,350

Sunday Bulletins

Branch bulletins are transmitted on Sundays immediately after the Headquarters English transmission, i.e. at about 08:45, on 3640 and 7098 kHz as well as the 2 metre linked network giving coastwise coverage from East London to George and beyond via repeaters on 145,750 MHz (Grahamstown), 145,700 (PE Slipper), 145,650 (Knysna) 145,700 (George) and East London's 145,675. PE's HF station on 7098 kHz is also switchable for two-way linking to the 2m system.

With us you can talk so much further!

Date	Prepare and Read on 145,700
17 Mar	ZS2RT
24	ZS2AE
31	ZS2AAW
7 Apr	ZR2AZ
14	ZS2RS
21	ZS2U

DIARY DATES

MARCH

9 SARL AGM Jhburg
15 Branch Meeting

APRIL

3 Hamnet Gnl Meeting.
?? Entries for RAE due.
Maybe Field Day Contest?

★ We Like Being Your Branch ★