



HAMS Keywite News

September 2008

www.marc.org.za

MIDLANDS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
P.O.Box 1076, HILTON, 3245



AFFILIATED TO
THE SARL & IN
ASSOCIATION
WITH THE NATAL
CARBINEERS

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Scribbles from the Skipper

Where do you get the electronic components that you need for your projects? Nobody seems to have stock of even the most common components used in electronic construction, never mind the more sophisticated ones! A company in Gauteng was very helpful. Of my R157,37 order they had R24,33 in stock. No problem, they would ship it adding R40 p&p! The balance would be shipped as stock became available, again adding R40 p&p per delivery. I am sure that they own SAPO shares! Getting components from Digi-Key or one of the US vendors worked out cheaper. So, collect all the radios, DVD players, etc. that you can lay your hands on and use them as your component store. I recently used this source to complete a kit in which a large number of surface mount resistors were missing.

To date I have not received any "wish lists" as to what you as members would like to hear and do at our monthly meetings. The committee is thinking about talks/discussions on Software Defined Radio, the computer in the shack (see article in this issue), Ham software. Please feel free to add to the list and let's see what we can do.

It is some time since we had a flea market. What about a big one! Let us get together with Highway and Durban, say 1st November (to be in time to get your Christmas gift!). Give it some serious thought and discuss it at the meeting.

Finally, my apologies for non-attendance at the next meeting. Although our planned overseas visit has been canceled, we have some family obligations in Gauteng where I hope to attend the Radio Technology in Action meeting.

73, ZS5BLY

PLEASE NOTE THE NEW CLUBHOUSE HOURS.

Saturday from 08:30 to 10:30

The Clubhouse will be manned by Bert, ZS5MQ and/or Peter, ZS5PJ

The club meets on the third Saturday of every month, except December at 13:00 at the Natal Carbineers Conference Center, Geere Street, PMB.

Sunday Morning Bulletins (MARC and SARL) as well as the Club Net from 07:45 on 3620 kHz and the 145.750 MHz repeater.

From the Editor

My apologies for this much reduced issue of HHN. The reason is that your editor has been held in a horizontal position for most of the past two weeks while the white-coats are hunting for blown fuses, dry electrolytics and malfunctioning valves (I am a pre-transistor model!).

Wessel, ZS5BLY.

Renewal of Club fees for 2008/09.

This is to remind members that the annual membership fees are now due. At the AGM a very slight increase was announced which brings the amount due by the four membership categories to the following:

Ordinary full member	R90,00
Country member	R60,00 (lives further than 20 km from PMB Post Office)
Joint member	R110,00 (husband and wife)
Student member	R30,00

Payment can be made by Electronic Transfer, a deposit into the Club account, or by cheque or cash at the next meeting. The Club banking details are set out below.

CLUB BANKING DETAILS

Bank: First National Bank	Branch: Bank Street	Branch code: 220-825
Account holder: Midlands Amateur Radio Club	Account Number: 625057756507	
Type of account: Current	<i>Reference to use is your call sign</i>	

News and Views

① APRS

The following from Shaun, ZR5S tells its own story!

Hear ye, Hear ye..... So, my good friend Stanley, ZR5SEM drops off his car on Friday after work for a service at a mechanic who works from home in Wembley, PMBurg. A few hours later at 21h00 Stanley's car goes mobile to Clarendon school where the mechanics son attends an evening school function. I know this because my son was there last night too. After the mechanic picks up his kid from school, he clocks up some mileage around town. (unclear as to what he was doing)

Next day, Saturday (today) this vehicle goes off to the other side of town to an industrial area. It has since been parked there under shelter in the huge shed. It is under shelter as Stanley's vehicle is only picking up 3 satellites and his position is jumpy due to the weak sat fix.

Mmmmmm! is this vehicle in a chop-shop or has the mechanics tool-boy taken this car home for the week-end. Either way, BUSTED!!! thanks to APRS.

Now let's see what happens on Sunday. Will "ZR5SEM-13" go to church or attend a soccer match somewhere in our city????? Or will this vehicle ever leave this place in its original state, or be sold piece by piece?

All speculation at this point, but this certainly is not normal for a vehicle that is booked in for a service. Or have the standards in SA dropped a wee bit?

[All the evidence can be seen in the screen shot below. Ed]



① Repeaters

Reports from mobile stations seem to indicate that the Estcourt repeater is a bit hard of hearing. OM Shaun will be looking into the matter and report back as soon as he has more information.

① More repeaters

While on the Swartberg site, OM Philip discovered that he could work the UHF repeater at Mt Gilboa using a 5 watt handheld feeding a mobile whip. The Hillbillies are working on a possible UHF link to the hub.

A Computer in the Shack

Do you have a computer in your shack? If the answer is "no" (maybe 30% of readers!), then do this: explain to the SW that the existing Oxwagon Mk iii is not the ideal machine to use if she wants to Skype the children and /or grandchildren in ZL or VE land. Get a new model for HER!

Now remove all the accumulated junk from the old model and set it up somewhere near your radios.

If your response to the opening question was "yes", then what do you do with this machine?

In my opinion the best thing that ever happened to Amateur Radio was its marriage to the computer. This combination opened up a vast field of applications and experimentation ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime. Best of all is that most of the software required for these activities is available on the Web for free! My Nobel Prize goes to all those guys out there that, with great expenditure of time and effort on their side, make these programmes available to all of us at no charge. When using these programmes, please send an e-mail to the author to thank him for his work - it is the least that we can do to encourage others to continue with this type of work. Other software may be shareware or careware (*send \$1 to my grandma at*).

So what is available? It is difficult to make a list, so the applications will be grouped in broad categories. Firstly, those applications where the computer is not connected to the radio:

1. Schematic capture, simulation and PC board layout
2. Antenna design and simulation
3. Test instruments eg. I-V curve tracer, scope, spectrum analyzer, etc.
4. Station log book

5. Satellite tracking
6. Propagation predictions
7. e-QSL
8. VHF/UHF coverage of station and repeaters
9. IRLP and VoIP

and when the computer is connected to the radio:

1. All the digital modes eg. packet, APRS, SSTV, digital voice, etc.
2. Satellite tracking, auto antenna steering and Doppler correction
3. Station control
4. Software Defined Radio
5. DSP audio profiling (Rx and Tx)
6. IRLP and VoIP

I am sure that I have missed some and will be pleased to have some feedback. Should make an interesting discussion if all the users can bring along their computers and show us some of the software that they use. Even in the professional field a large number of test and measurement equipment is available as a "black box" attached to a computer: some of them can even be networked so you may sit in PMB and take measurements on a setup in Cape Town!



Built to Last

The SG-237 is designed with high density surface mount components on a 4 layer PCB, providing high efficiency, reliability and performance. The PCB is mounted on a sturdy chassis plate which provides an excellent electrical and RF ground system. The unit is fully waterproof (under 2 ft of water for 24 hours). The case is weather resistant, high grade ABS plastic that is sealed at the factory.



Use for base, mobile, portable, marine or aviation.

The SG-237 is our most popular Smarttuner. It's rugged construction and small size allow maximum flexibility. It has a 100W power rating and additional frequency coverage to 60MHz, matching it perfectly with the most popular HF transceivers. It will work with any balanced or unbalanced antenna including whips, backstays, dipoles, loops and longwires, and requires a minimum of only 28 feet of antenna for full coverage operation.



KENWOOD

TM-D710A
Multi Communicator 144/440MHz FM Dual Bander

The control head is detached and comes with remote cable for easy installation. The TM-VD710A is a true dual-band operation radio so VHF+VHF/VHF+UHF/UHF+UHF operation is possible.

- High RF Power Output (50W)
- 1,000 Multifunction Memory Channels
- Dual Receive on Same Band (VxV, UxU)
- EchoLink® MEMORY (Automatic Dialer)
- EchoLink® Sysop Mode For Node Terminal Operation
- Multiple Scan
- Invertible Front Panel
- Choice of 2 Backlight Colors (AMBER/GREEN) For The LCD Panel
- 104-Code Digital Code Squelch
- "FIVE-IN-ONE" Programmable Memory



ICOM

Icom and the renowned IC-756PRO series continue to make ham radio history:

- First 32-bit floating point DSP transceiver
- First transceiver with customizable filter shapes. There were no optional filters to buy, for none were needed.
- First mid-class HF transceiver with +30dBm-class third-order intercept point*
- First amateur HF transceiver with a large TFT color LCD



We are a Garmin agent, please contact us for your automotive, marine, aviation or fitness requirement.



KENWOOD
Listen to the Future

The all new Kenwood TS-2000 series transceiver offers today's demanding Amateur operator high performance standards without the compromising limitations found in other similar multi-band, multi-mode transceiver. The TS-2000 offers users three distinct operation platforms, the traditional transceiver with full function front panel, or the high-tech looking "silver box" version that allows mobile operation with the new RC-2000 compact control head, or the ARCP-2000 computer control program making the TS-B2000 functional from your personal computer. The new TS-2000 offers 100 watts on HF, 6 meters and 2 meters, 50 watts on 70cm, and when you install the optional UT-20 1.2 GHz module at 10 watts, you will have assembled the most complete dual receiver multi-mode transceiver ever produced. The TS-2000 is transverter frequency display function ready to work with the latest satellite frequencies available.

Radio Accessories & Data Modems

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Rep. of South Africa
Tel: +27 11 802-2976
Fax: 086-615-3597
Email: radioacc@telkomsa.net

ADVERT



SOLAR Power for your Shack

Be prepared for extended power outages. Convert your shack to use 12 volt Solar Energy. I have acquired affordable 10 watt Solar Panels. Each panel is capable of sending $\pm 720\text{mA}$ at 13.8Vdc into your lead-acid battery. You can add more panels in parallel to increase your charge rate.

Solar Panels, 10w @ R298.00 each,
120W switch-mode inverters @ R290.00 each,
12v energy saving lamps @ R49.00 each,

Contact: - Shaun Rudling (ZR5S) on 082-676 1488 or
shaun@pmbnet.co.za

Bulletin Readers

7th September	Mike	ZS5BGV
14th September	Robin	ZS5MRS
21st September	Mike	ZR5ML
28th September	Wessel	ZS5BLY
5th October	Mickey	ZS5QB
12th October	Mike	ZS5BGV
19th October	Robin	ZS5MRS

[If it is not possible for you to take your bulletin, please arrange with somebody else to do it]

On the Giggle-Hertz bands

When children do well at school, the parents declare the child clever. When they do bad, then of course they have a bad teacher. The following children must have had very bad teachers if their answers in exam papers are anything to go by.

1. Three kinds of blood vessels are arteries, vanes and caterpillars.
2. Blood flows down one leg and up the other.
3. The moon is a planet just like earth, only it is deader.

They said it. (The very famous Mr Anonymous)

1. Life is very insecure. Always eat your pudding first.
2. Support bacteria. They're the only culture some people have.
3. Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.
4. When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Club will take place on Saturday, 20th September, 2008 at the usual venue starting at 13:00. Committee meeting will start at 12:00.