

Ham Hum

January/February 2009



The official newsletter of
The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club (Inc.)
Branch 12 of NZART - ZL1UX
Active in Hamilton since 1923



Annual General Meeting

18 February 2009

7:30pm

Club Rooms

88 Seddon Road

Next General Meeting

18th February 2009

28 Feb—1 Mar : “Jock White” Field Days

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From the Committee

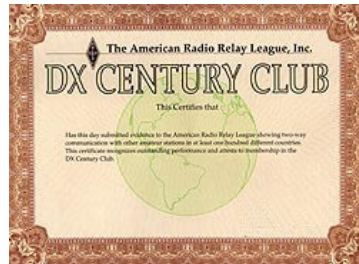
The February General meeting is of the Annual variety (see page 9). This means it is once again time to consider who you think should be leading us as we move into our 86th year of supporting Amateur Radio in Hamilton.

Please consider volunteering as a committee member. It's a very important aspect of our hobby and a very rewarding activity. Come along, hear the reports and join in the fun.

NZART elections are with us again, and this year two club members have put their names forward for consideration. Please consider your choice wisely and make sure you vote.

The Jock White Memorial Field Days happen this year on 28th February and 1st March. Setup starts around midday on Saturday with the contest running from 3pm till midnight, and then on Sunday from 6am till 3pm. Come along, join in the fun, cheer on the operators or pick up a key/mic yourself.

Congratulations go to our QSL Manager, Sutton (ZL4QJ) as he is admitted to the DX Century Club (DXCC) with 123 confirmed countries/entities. What an amazing effort.



There is a working-bee planned for the Kaimai National System node on 7-8 February. If you can help please contact ZL1KK at ngaireiain@vodafone.co.nz

Next Committee Meetings - 21st January and 4th February

SB PROP ARL ARLP003

ARLP003 Propagation de K7RA

A nice sunspot group, number 1010, appeared for five days from Friday, January 9 through Tuesday, January 13. Daily sunspot numbers ranged from 11 to 20, and this one was another Cycle 24 appearance. The Cycle 23 sunspots seem to be gone, while the new solar Cycle 24 isn't picking up very quickly.

1010 was here for five days, following a whole solar rotation--27 days of no sunspots since 1009 was visible for just three days, December 10-12. Prior to that were 23 spotless days since seeing sunspot 1008, visible for eight days from November 10-17.

This minimum looks longer and lower than the last solar minimum, but there are many ways to slice the data.

For instance, on <http://solarcycle24.com/> search the rather cluttered home page and click the Sunspots tab to the right of Trend Charts toward the upper right on the page, then inspect the bar graph titled "Spotless Days vs. Cycle 23 Minimum," the second one down from the top on the right. Click on it to fill the page, and see the comparison of spotless days per month for the period June 2007 through November 2008 with the earlier period June 1996 through November 1997.

With all that red showing for spotless days in the recent period, this certainly looks like a big difference between the recent period and the one 11 years ago, but there is an inherent bias in comparing May 2008 and May 1997, for instance. This comparison might be valid if solar cycles were precisely 11.0 years long, or in this case, 11 years from a cycle minimum to the next cycle minimum, but of course this is not the case. 11 years is an approximation, and in fact if you average all 23 of the previous solar cycles, the average number is less than 11 years.

The problem becomes apparent if we look at the data and compare spotless days for the five months prior to the beginning of this graph, January through May.

It turns out that those months had a sixty-eight percent higher number of spotless days back in 1996 than the same months 11 years later. From January 1, 2007 through May 31, 2007 there were 40 spotless days. But January 1, 1996 through May 31, 1996 had a total of 67 spotless days.

Data that is uncertain is in August 2008, which is listed with all spotless days. But August 21-22 there was a brief sunspot appearance, although it wasn't widely reported because there was some speculation regarding whether it was big enough to be counted as a sunspot. Check <http://www.spaceweather.com/> and on the archives area at the right side of the page, change the date to August 21, 2008, and note that under the Daily Sun on the left margin, it shows the daily sunspot number as 11. To the right of the daily Sun you can click on the photograph under the heading New Sunspots for a closer look.

Now check August 22, and see the same sunspot number 11.

It is easy to inspect this data and make comparisons if you download the Solar Data Plotting utility mentioned in our first bulletin of this year, Propagation Forecast Bulletin ARLP001, at <http://www.arll.org/wlaw/prop/2009-arlp001.html>. The GRAPH.dat file for this program has sunspot and solar flux numbers since the start of 1989, and if you copy it into your documents folder and rename the file to graph.doc, you can page through it easily with a word processor. You can also take this file and load it into a spreadsheet program.

At least with our quiet Sun the geomagnetic indices continue to stay quiet.

Geophysical Institute Prague predicts quiet days from January 16-22, except January 18 to be unsettled, and January 19 at quiet to unsettled. NOAA Space Weather Prediction Center along with the U.S. Air Force predict quiet conditions with a planetary A index of five for the rest of January, except 8 on January 19, 10 and 8 on January 27-28, and 8 again on January 30.

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Internet Links

If you would like to add something that you've found on the internet to be useful, informative, or just plain funny, send it to me at zl1dgk@nzart.org.nz

VK Logger (QSO across the Tasman)

<http://www.vklogger.com/>

Component lookup

<http://octopart.com/>

ZC1 Radio Club

<http://www.zc1-radioclub.wellington.net.nz/>

Homebrew Yagi information

<http://www.yu7ef.com/>

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Installing Free view decoders on an older computer

Considering the dearth of good TV programs I had been contemplating purchasing a receiver for a few months, especially with the comedy program "Parliament" coming up.

But to spend \$300 to \$400 on something I might not want has put me off.

Then TV/video cards for computers started to become available.

The decoding MPEG4 etc. is done in software and the minimum specs (1.6 gig processor and 256MB memory) seemed to fit. The computer I wished to use had a Sempron 3000+ 1.8 processor and 512MB memory. The computer card that seemed to be the best option was a tri-mode.

It received analogue, satellite and terrestrial digital all for \$160 odd dollars. So off I go with cash in hand to the local computer specialist.

I explain what I want and to double check ask if it would run on my computer which was only 18 months old and made by his company. Although I purchased it from a major electronic/everything but the kitchen sink and it seems knowledgeable staff, shop.

Anyway the expert says "you will need a new computer. Yours is too old and funnily enough we can sell you a new one." Not having the cash for a new one, or at least not needing one, I go away disillusioned with the card manufacturers so called minimum specs.

Any way, shortly after I'm wandering through the store I purchased the computer from (as you do) and see a "Pinnacle" pen TV receiver for \$99.95. I read the specs and thinks, "worth a go for \$100"

I ask the staff if it will work with my system, and as above pretty hopeless, but at least they say I can return it within 14 days if not satisfied. (someone else had already done that which explained the price).

Now for the working bit. It installed OK, The set-up worked OK and only one thing was missing, "THE PICTURE".

I knew the Pen was OK because it did work on our new note-book (3 odd gig processor and 2 gigs RAM)

Now, the computer concerned had been running slow for some time and I just had not gotten around to doing anything about it, so now was the time.

The computer used Windows XP (service pack 3) for the operating system. Windows comes with a very comprehensive set of management programs. Task Manager being one.

Windows needs these programs primarily because it is "messy". It uses many, and I mean many set-up files "registry files", DLL's and other little add-ons which the user does not know are being added to his or hers com-

puter when you load a new program.

Whether you like it or not many of these files and programs are running in the background all the time. Even when not needed.

The 1st thing to do for a quick speed up is to prioritise your processor usage. Use your processor (CPU) for running programs, not for good graphics. Next get rid of the files running in the background you do not want.

Many of these files may be from “free” programs you have downloaded from the net and then deleted. Many of these FREE programs will not work properly or stop annoying you until you pay for them “register them”. And they will not delete easily. Even when you think you have deleted them some parts could remain. And they pop up time and again.

A little trick that will help you see if this is causing you problems is to hold the shift key down as you start the computer. Do not release it until you are sure start-up is finished. This stops a lot of files being loaded at start-up. If you computer runs faster with some of your programs you now know where to start your clean-up.

Anyway most you will know all about these problems or how to fix them, but a good place to learn is “help and support” from the Windows menu when you press the start button (lower left)

Also a site I have found helpful is “cnet.com.au”. But once again be careful with so called “freebies”. Be careful as you can stuff things up badly unless you know what you are doing.

Fortunately windows allows you to reset to previous settings within reason, so only do a little bit at a time and then check that all is well first before further proceeding.

Anyway after several hours work my computer runs many times faster and “Lo and Behold” Freeview works.

AND now it works THERE'S STILL NOTHING WORTH WATCHING.

Possibly more on this subject could be written over the next few months by our esteemed editor who is well qualified to do so. Hint, Hint.

Now some people have asked about a program I use to down load music from records (plastic/vinyl) to computer. It's called “Audio recorder for free” and can be downloaded from many sites.

I use the headphone output from my stereo padded with a 39ohm resister

across (out to earth) and a 39 ohm in series to the line in of the computer.
The above resisters of course duplicated for stereo.

If you want to record each track separately its a bit of work, as you have a lot of stopping and starting to do (you can name the tracks) but just to duplicate your LP's is easy.

ToFa'a, Jim Medland
ZL1UCT

{ I plan to look into this more in the coming months—Editor}

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Join Now

HAMILTON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (INC.)

ZL1UX

All Welcome

Come and be a member, share your interests with others that enjoy the hobby of Amateur Radio.

The club has recently been active in radio contests, AREC activities, upgrading radio equipment, upgrading clubrooms, working bees, monthly meetings, social events and we are currently running Amateur Radio education classes.

Come along.

Top 10 electronics part searches for 2008

Hitachi—HD74LS04P
Skyworks Solutions—SKY77340-13
Texas Instruments—SN74LS74AN
Atmel—ATMEGA168-20PU
PanaVise—201
Sanyo—STK392-150
AVX—TAJA105K016R
Hitachi—HD44780A00
NEC—2501
Intel—82371EB (PIIX4E)

- Octopart

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Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Incorporated

Annual General Meeting

Date: 18 February 2009

Time: 7:30pm

Location: Club Rooms

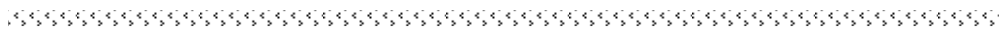
88 Seddon Road

Business: Accept report(s), Elect Officers and Committee, Set Subscription rate and appoint Auditor.

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All members welcome to attend to hear about the year just gone and to choose who will lead the club into the future.

Nominations for all positions welcome.



Technology Convention 2009

being held in Hamilton, New Zealand, during the 11th and 12th April, 2009

This is about Amateur Radio related technology.

Registration forms will become available about the delivery time of the January/February NZART Break In Magazine (First Week February). It is important that accommodation is booked EARLY, as the V8 racing is on the weekend following the Convention.

Registration Forms can be requested by email at techcon09@nzart.org.nz

We are looking for speakers/presentations/demonstrations for durations of 15 to 45 minutes. A data projector and laptop will be available.

Please contact Kevin Murphy at rfman@xtra.co.nz ASAP with topics and expected duration.

Electronic format is preferred as we would like to do a Proceedings CD of the Convention.

If you are unable to attend but wish to provide a presentation for the convention/proceedings please contact me at the above email.

- Kevin Murphy, ZL1UJG

Upcoming Happenings & Events

<i>Date</i>	<i>Happenings & Events</i>
1 Jan-28 Feb	National System Award
26th January	HF Net, 3.575 MHz, 19:30
27th January	VHF Net, 146.525 MHz, 20:00
1-28 February	North Canterbury ARC 40th Anniversary Award
2nd February	HF Net, 3.575 MHz, 19:30
3rd February	VHF Net, 146.525 MHz, 20:00
4th February	Committee Meeting
7-8 February	DX Weekend Contest
8th February	NZART HQ Info-Line
9th February	HF Net, 3.575 MHz, 19:30
10th February	VHF Net, 146.525 MHz, 20:00
14th February	Boat Anchor Sprint
16th February	HF Net, 3.575 MHz, 19:30
17th February	VHF Net, 146.525 MHz, 20:00
18th February	Hamilton AGM
22nd February	NZART HQ Info-Line
22nd February	NZART Official Broadcast
23rd February	HF Net, 3.575 MHz, 19:30
24th February	VHF Net, 146.525 MHz, 20:00
28 Feb-1 March	Jock White Memorial Field Days

4th March—Committee Meeting
7th March—Te Puke Market Day (Paengaroa)
8th March—NZART HQ Info-Line
14th March—Colville Connection (AREC)
18 March—General Meeting
22nd March—NZART HQ Info-Line
28th March—EXPO-09 5th Wellington Region Expo
29th March—NZART Official Broadcast
4-5 April—Low Band Contest
5th April—NZART HQ Info-Line
11-12 April—VHF Convention 2009 (Hamilton)
17-19 April—V8 Supercars
18th April—World Amateur Radio Day
19th April—NZART HQ Info-Line
26th April—NZART Official Broadcast
29th April—Hamilton AREC Section Meeting (AREC)
2nd May—45th Rotorua Marathon (AREC)
2nd May—GlobalSET (EmComm) Exercise
30 May-2 June—NZART Conference (Hastings)
6-7 June—Hibernation Contest
25 July—Waitakere Sprints (Phone)
1st August—Waitakere Sprints (CW)
1-2 August—Brass Monkey Contest
15-16 August—ILLW
September—9th Kairangi Hill Climb (AREC)
3-4 October—Microwave Contest

Hamilton AREC Section News

Kona is sorted out with all operators rearing to go.

The Operators are:

Base - ZL1PK, ZL1DGK, ZL1LD

Stony - ZL1TNO and family

Hill - ZL1IC, ZL1TCE

Fletcher - ZL1UD, ZL1CNM

Fantail - ZL1UPJ and family

Standby - ZL1AVR, ZL1TXQ

Briefing notes will follow shortly

The AREC Icom will be ready to go as this edition goes to print.

That's really it for this edition. Remember the AGM, and I will see you all there.

Tony ZL1UD/ZK1EC

Upcoming AREC Events

Please mark these dates on your calendar and/or diary

The club has 2m handheld radios for use on events like these which means YOU can help out.

Colville Connection (Kona) 2009

14th March 2009

Using HF & 2m (simplex & repeater).
ZL1TNO/XYL, ZL1PK/ZL1DGK/ZL1LD,
ZL1UD/ZL1CNM, ZL1UPJ/OM, ZL1IC,
ZL1TCE Reserve : ZL1AVR, ZL1TXQ
already booked in.



Hamilton Section Meeting

29 April 2009

9th Kairangi Hill Climb 2009

September 2009

26th Annual Rollos Bridge to Bridge Water Ski Classic 2008

November 2009

16 operators needed (ZL1DK, ZL1DGK already booked in)

For Details about and to help with these events, contact :-

Tony Case ZL1UD zl1ud@nzart.org.nz

or one of his deputies (ZL1PK, ZL1TCE, ZL1UPJ).

Club Information



Contacts :-

Business Meeting: 1930 First Wednesday of each month
88 Seddon Road, Hamilton

General Meeting: 1930 Third Wednesday of each month (except Jan)
88 Seddon Road, Hamilton

Homepage: <http://z11ux.tripod.com>
eMail: branch.12@nzart.org.nz

HF Net: 3.575MHz LSB 1930 Mondays
VHF Net: 146.525MHz simplex 2000 Tuesdays

2m Repeater: 145.325MHz -600kHz split
STSP 146.675MHz -600kHz split
Repeaters: 438.725MHz -5 MHz split
ATV Repeater: 615.250 Ch39 (off air)

Cover Photo: AGM notice

Sender	Hamilton Amateur Radio Club (Inc) PO Box 606 Hamilton 3240
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