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**Northern Corridor Radio
Group VK6ANC**

WA Amateur Radio Yearbook

1992 - 93

The Radio Amateur's Code

The Radio Amateur is -

Considerate - He/she never knowingly uses the air in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

Loyal - He/she offers his loyalty, encouragement and support to their fellow amateurs, local club and national society, through which amateur radio is represented to their government, the International Amateur Radio Union and the International Telecommunications Union.

Progressive - He/she keeps their knowledge abreast of science. His station is well built and efficient. His operating is above reproach.

Friendly - Slow and patient sending when requested, friendly advice and counsel to the beginner, kindly assistance, co-operation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the marks of the amateur spirit.

Balanced - Radio is their hobby. He/she never allows it to interfere with any of the duties they owe to their home or community.

Patriotic - His/her knowledge and station are always ready for the service of their community and country.

PHONETIC ALPHABET

A Alpha	J Juliet	S Sierra
B Bravo	K Kilo	T Tango
C Charlie	L Lima	U Uniform
D Delta	M Mike	V Victor
E Echo	N November	W Whiskey
F Foxtrot	O Oscar	X X-ray
G Golf	P Papa	Y Yankee
H Hotel	Q Quebec	Z Zulu
I India	R Romeo	

**Northern Corridor Radio Group
WA Amateur Radio Yearbook 1992 - 93**

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This yearbook was put together, on a voluntary basis, in people's spare time. The authors tried to check as many facts as possible and apologise for any inaccuracies. We hope the information inside will prove of use.

Brief History of the Northern Corridor Radio Group (VK6ANC)

The club was formed by a small group of amateurs living in the so called "Northern Corridor" suburbs about five years ago, led by John Howlett, VK6ATA and Nick Morgan, VK6ND, then VK6EU.

The club started off in the Greenwood Scout Hall, where it was decided the main aims of the fledgling NCRG should be to create friendship between radio enthusiasts in the area and provide a focus for contesting activities. Other founder members included Peter Hackett VK6PK, Phil Hartwell VK6ABL and a very youthful Wes Beck VK6JIP.

Back in those days, Phil taught people how to "do" morse code and the members looked around for a place where they could build a super contesting station, so those with small backyards and pockets could operate DX without annoying their neighbours or breaking the bank.

After a year or so, the NCRG moved to Carine College of TAFE, its present home, and started to build up a club shack. The State Energy Commission chipped in with a 40-foot mast, donated for nothing and planted in the ground for the princely sum of \$10. The same mast now supports the club's present 4-element Wilson System 1 yagi, plus various other HF and VHF antennas.

Since then, the club has grown and grown, becoming one of the largest and most successful radio clubs in Australia. In 1991, VK6ANC was the leading station in the WIA's John Moyle Field Day, multi-operator, multi-band section. VK6ANC is the WA WIA QSL Bureau's best customer and the NCRG has run many special event stations for the WIA, including VK6CUP (Americas Cup) and VI88WIA (80th anniversary of the WIA)

Current officers are Mel Bishop VK6TVA, President, and Bill Billington VK6UE, Secretary/Treasurer. Some of the founder members have moved on but John VK6ATA and Wes VK6JIP are still very much involved and, if you look hard, on the shelves of our well equipped shack, you can still see VK6ABL's morse training set-up.

If you wish to join us, the club meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month in the Library at the Carine College of TAFE. Even if you are just passing through Perth, come along and say hello.

The "Where" and "When" of Radio Groups in WA

The WA ATV Group -

Meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 8pm at Churchlands Campus, Edith Cowan University, Pearson St, CHURCHLANDS Perth. Contact Brian Pilcher, VK6TTV on (09) 387 6797.

ATV net meets on 145.500MHz FM at 8pm on Wednesdays.

The Hills Group -

Meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm at the Guide Hall, corner of Sanderson Road and Brady Road, LESMURDIE. In addition, at the same address, there is a "practical" night at the same time and address on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

The Northern Corridor Radio Group -

Meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm at the Library of the Carine College of TAFE, Almadine Drive, CARINE. Secretary/Treasurer is Bill VK6UE (09) 409 9751.

The WA VHF Group -

Meets on the 4th Monday of each month at 8pm at Wireless Hill Museum, Wireless Hill Park, off Almondbury Road, BOORAGOON. Further details from 277 7049 or 339 3273.

The West Australian Amateur Digital Communications Group (WAADCA) -

Meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 8pm at the Wireless Hill Museum, Wireless Hill Park, off Almondbury Road, BOORAGOON. Further details from VK6QL on (09) 364 7992.

West Australian Repeater Group -

Meets bi-monthly, with separate technical meetings. Contact VK6QL on (09) 364 7992 for further details. In addition, there is group net every Sunday on 146.750MHz FM.

Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network

Phone the secretary, Fred Morgan, VK6FRE on (09) 276 4897 for details of meetings at SES Metropolitan HQ, 3/7 Lynton Street, MOUNT HAWTHORN.

In addition to the above groups located in the metropolitan area of Perth, there are a number of radio clubs in the country areas of WA. The following postal addresses were gathered from the 1992 Australian Radio Amateur Radio Callbook, published by the WIA. We should warn readers that at least some of the following clubs may be "dormant".

*South West Amateur Radio Group - c/o 7 Nash Street,
BUNBURY WA 6230*

Southern Electronics Group - PO Box 738, ALBANY WA 6330

*Esperance Amateur Radio Group - c/o 12 Young Place,
ESPERANCE WA 6450*

*Geraldton Amateur Radio Group - PO Box 91, GERALDTON
WA 6530*

*Goldfields Amateur Radio Group - PO Box 50, KAMBALDA
WA 6444*

*North West Australia Radio Group - PO Box 410, WICKHAM
WA 6720*

*North West Radio Society - c/o 10 O'Flaherty Street,
NEWMAN WA 6753*

Ockley Radio Club - PO Box 134, WICKEPIN WA 6370

Peel Amateur Radio Group - PO Box 261, MANDURAH WA 6210

A good place to gather information about club meetings in the Wireless Institute of Australia news broadcasts on Sunday mornings - see the WIA section of this book on page 6 for details on times and frequencies.

How to become a Radio Amateur in WA

The best way to prepare for the AOCPL range of amateur radio licences is to take an evening course at a local TAFE college. Even if your local college is not running a course at present, you may be able to find sufficient numbers of other people at your local radio club who are interested in taking such a course to convince the local TAFE to put one on. Heaven knows, you may even be able to find someone at your local club who is willing and able to act as an instructor for the course!!

For those in the metro area of Perth, Mount Lawley College of TAFE has a long history of running courses, taught by Doug Couch, VK6WT, and Wayne Dowie, VK6WD. Please contact the college on (09) 427 5333 to see if they are planning to run a course in the new academic year.

Canning College has reputedly run an "Introduction to Amateur Radio" course in the past. They can be contacted on 458 9644.

For those who have done the text book swotting on their own behalf and wish to take either novice, limited or full call technical and morse examinations, there are a number of exam services in the Perth metropolitan area and in the country areas of WA. These organisations conduct examinations for the various grades of radio amateur licences on behalf of the Wireless Institute of Australia.

Some of these are:

Perth - North of the river - Northern Corridor Exam Services. Contact Phil, VK6ZPP (09) 409 1156, Phil, VK6KS (09) 344 5241 or Bryce, VK6KBE.

Perth - South of the river - Victoria Park. Contact Glen and Dianne Cousins, VK6AUZ and VK6BC on (09) 361 3985

The two Perth metro services work quite closely together in order to give candidates as many opportunities as possible to take exams throughout the year.

Mandurah - Peel Amateur Radio Examinations Centre, c/o PO Box 261, MANDURAH WA 6210

Yarloop - Examiner, VK6PM - c/o PO Box 88, YARLOOP WA 6218

Bunbury - Examiners are VK6OT, VK6WJH, VK6HX and VK6AJJ. See latest edition of Australian Radio Amateur Callbook for addresses.

Albany - Examiners are VK6BRN, VK6XY and VK6TR. See latest edition of Australian Radio Amateur Callbook.

Goldfields - Examiners are VK6ANR and VK6AJO. See latest edition of Australian Radio Amateur Callbook.

Esperance - Examiners are VK6QJ and VK6ATS. See latest edition of Australian Radio Amateur Callbook.

Northampton - Examiner is VK6IU, PO Box 259, NORTHAMPTON WA 6535

Wickham (North West) - Examiners are VK6PA and VK6YA. See latest edition of Australian Radio Amateur Callbook.

The monthly magazine "Amateur Radio Action" sporadically gives details of examination services around Australia and is worth keeping an eye on. Details of services were given in the issue numbered Volume 15 Number 4 (4th August 1992 issue ?).

A final word of advice. Talk to your local examination service about the best way to pass the examination in your area. Sometimes there are people locally who don't mind giving keen would-be licencees a bit of coaching in their spare time. The local radio club may also be able to help. Good luck!

The Wireless Institute of Australia, including news broadcasts in Western Australia

The Wireless Institute of Australia, founded in 1910, is the world's oldest national radio society. A member of the International Amateur Radio Union, the WIA's federal office is located at 3/105 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield North, Vic 3161

Any mail concerning national issues should be sent to

PO Box 300, Caulfield South, VIC 3162
Telephone: (03) 523 5962
FAX: (03) 523 8191

The general manager of the federal office is Bill Roper, VK3ARZ, and its business hours are 11.30am - 5pm (WA time), weekdays. Bear in mind, the office is likely to open and close one hour earlier during summer, due to daylight saving in Victoria.

There is a federal councillor for each state. WA is currently represented by Neil Penfold, VK6NE (Telephone 409 9333).

The acting secretary of the WA division of the WIA is Tony Lumley, VK6ZTL. He can be reached on (09) 388 3888, the WA division's telephone number, which may also accept FAXs. Enquiries about membership can also be directed to Dave Wallace VK6IW on (09) 341 3655.

The postal address of the WA division is: PO Box 10, WEST PERTH, WA 6872.

Important addresses for WA members are:

QSL Bureau Manager, PO Box F319, GPO PERTH WA 6001	Bookshop Officer, PO Box 299, ARMADALE WA 6112
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Every Sunday, the WA division of the WIA broadcasts its weekly news programme for members, a mixture of federal and WA news, including local club, DX, satellite and data comms information and a "For Sale" (disposals) segment.

The news transmission is broadcast every Sunday morning at 0930 on 146.700MHz FM and re-broadcast simultaneously on 3.550, 7.075, 14.115, 14.175, 21.185, 28,345, 50.150 and 438.525MHz SSB. The original 144MHz transmission and the 7MHz re-broadcast both come from the shack of the Northern Corridor Group at the Carine College.

There are relays in the rural parts of WA. These are as follows: general rural areas on 3.582 MHz and 147.350MHz (repeater); Busselton 146.900; Bunbury (Mt William) 147.225MHz(repeater), 147.250 (repeater); Mt Saddleback 146.725MHz; Albany 146.825MHz (repeater).

The broadcast is re-broadcast for listeners in the Mt Barker area on Sunday evenings at 1900hrs on 146.700MHz. At the time of going to press, the news was also being re-broadcast on 3590MHz at 1900 on Sunday from Bunbury, giving good intra-state coverage.

A useful WIA number is (09) 325 3544, for information about TAFE courses to obtain a radio amateurs licence.

How to QSL in Western Australia

There are two routes open for the sending and reception of QSL cards in WA and the cheapest of these involves joining the Wireless Institute of Australia.

If you are interested in collecting QSL cards, for awards or just for fun, becoming a member of our national society is a necessity, unless you are a millionaire.

Sending a QSL card direct to an radio amateur in another country on order to obtain their card is going to cost you a minimum of \$2.40/2.50 per card. In amateur radio circles, if you desire a card to be sent to you direct, it is expected, even demanded, that you supply return postage.

Put yourself in the place of a DX station receiving 1000s of cards from amateurs all over the world. If the 100s of stations you are forced to work every time you go onto the air didn't send you return postage, you'd be bankrupt. Besides, what's in it for the DX station? It isn't much fun receiving 100s of cards from countries you've worked 100s of times over!

Never forget, the DX station may not want your QSL and yet you are expecting them to do quite a lot of administrative work on your behalf - checking his/her log for your QSO, writing out a card for you (which they will have had to buy from a printer) and getting their Post Office to accept your IRC (international reply coupon). Being a DXstation is a pretty thankless and expensive task, if you ask me.

If you join the WIA, for a fee of around \$60, you can send QSLs via their bureau for the princely sum of 5c each. A sheet of 100 QSL stamps can be obtained from the WIA QSL Bureau for the cost of \$5 and a SAE.

If you lodge a bundle of stamped self addressed envelopes with the Bureau, these will be held for you and cards received by the Bureau put into these on a "one by one" basis, until an envelope is filled to the postal limit with cards. This will then be despatched to you and the Bureau will start to fill the next envelope, and so on.

Let us do some comparative economics on the postage costs of direct QSLing versus Bureau QSLing. Discounting the actual cost of your QSL cards and envelopes, every 100 cards you send "direct" overseas will cost you at least \$240. In the case of cards sent direct to other Australian radio amateurs, this is reduced to \$90.

By comparison, 100 bureau QSLs, despatch and return, will cost you around \$16.70, whether these are overseas or Australian cards. The cost is worked out like this. 100 QSL stamps will cost you \$5. Sending 100 cards to the bureau will take 13 x 45c stamped envelopes, on the basis of an average of 8 cards per envelope, and getting the cards that are sent back to you via the Bureau will cost you a further 13 x 45c stamps, totalling \$11.70.

The long and short of this is that direct QSLing to overseas amateurs is over 14 times more expensive than the Bureau, on the basis of 100 cards. Even if we include the whole \$60 of a subscription to the WIA as a QSLing cost, direct QSLing to overseas amateurs is still over three times more expensive!

Why do I QSL direct sometimes? Cards sent via the bureau can, on occasions, take up to 18 months to get a reply and sometimes I don't want to wait. Some DX stations can only take QSLs direct because they live in countries without a radio society and a QSL bureau.

There is a further hidden cost to QSLing direct. A set of the ARRL International Callbook - DX and US listings - is going to cost you around A\$115. Even if you share the cost with a DXer friend, you will need new copies every couple of years...

Incidentally, if you send a card to another VK6 amateur via the WIA QSL Bureau, you don't even have to fix a QSL stamp to it. Also, if you attend WIA meetings, you can collect your QSL cards from the Bureau Manager and do away with the expense of lodging SAEs with him.

The address of the WIA QSL Bureau in WA is
PO Box F319 GPO, PERTH WA 6001

Don't forget, if you're not a WIA member, the Bureau is CLOSED to you...Good DXing de VK6VZ

VHF and UHF Repeaters and Digipeaters in WA

The information is given in the following format: *O/P frequency; I/P frequency; callsign; location*. Repeaters in the Perth metropolitan area are shown in *italics*. Those with (P) at end of information are proposed.

The 6m Band - Voice Repeaters

53.800MHz O/P 52.800MHz I/P VK6RTH Tic Hill, Midland
 WA Repeater Group 4 minutes 10W Permanently linked to
 VK6RTH 70cm repeater

The 2m Band - Voice Repeaters

146.625 O/P	146.025 I/P	VK6RAT	Rottnest
146.650 O/P	146.050 I/P	VK6RBY	Bunbury
146.675 O/P	146.075 I/P	VK6RNR	Northampton
146.675 O/P	146.075 I/P	VK6RCA	Whim Creek
146.700 O/P	146.100 I/P	VK6RAP	Roleystone, Perth
146.700 O/P	146.100 I/P	VK6RWR	Wickham
146.725 O/P	146.125 I/P	VK6RAL	Albany
146.750 O/P	146.150 I/P	VK6RLM	Lesmurdie, Perth
146.750 O/P	146.150 I/P	VK6RES	Esperance
146.800 O/P	146.200 I/P	VK6RTH	Midland, Perth
146.800 O/P	146.200 I/P	VK6RWP	Dampier
146.825 O/P	146.225 I/P	VK6RAA	Mt Barker
146.850 O/P	146.250 I/P	VK6REX	Exmouth
146.850 O/P	146.250 I/P	VK6RKB	Kambalda
146.875 O/P (P)	146.275 I/P	VK6RSR	O' Connor, Perth
146.900 O/P	146.300 I/P	VK6RMW	Bunbury
146.950 O/P	146.350 I/P	VK6RPD	Fremantle
146.950 O/P	146.350 I/P	VK6RSG	Goldsworthy
147.000 O/P	146.400 I/P	VK6RAW	Katanning
147.000 O/P	146.400 I/P	VK6RAK	Kalgoorlie
147.000 O/P	146.400 I/P	VK6RGN	Geraldton

147.000 O/P	146.400 I/P	VK6RNW	Port Hedland
147.100 O/P	147.700 I/P	VK6FWC	Millendon/Perth
147.125 O/P	147.725 I/P	VK6RHB	Gin Gin (P)
147.150 O/P	147.750 I/P	VK6RMJ	Manjimup (P)
147.175 O/P	147.675 I/P	VK6RIJ	PORTABLE EMERGENCY
147.200 O/P	147.800 I/P	VK6RCT	Cataby
147.225 O/P	147.825 I/P	VK6RHW	Toodyay
147.250 O/P	147.850 I/P	VK6RMS	Boddington
147.275 O/P	147.875 I/P	VK6RWM	Wyalkatchem
147.300 O/P	147.900 I/P	VK6REN	Eneabba (P)
147.325 O/P	147.925 I/P	VK6RKL	Kellerberrin (P)
147.350 O/P	147.950 I/P	VK6RBN	Busselton

The 70cm Band - Voice Repeaters

438.225 O/P	433.225 I/P	VK6RTH	Midland/Perth
438.525 O/P	433.525 I/P	VK6RUF	Roleystone/Perth
438.675 O/P	433.675 I/P	VK6RBN	Busselton

The 2m Band - Digipeaters

144.825 Freq-in	VK6RTH	Tic Hill, Midland/Perth
144.850 Freq-in	VK6RFH	Wireless Hill, Perth
144.750 Freq-in	VK6RTR	Pinjarra
144.850 Freq-in	VK6RAA	Albany
144.850 Freq-in	VK6RCA-1	Whim Creek
144.850 Freq-in	VK6RMS	Boddington
144.850 Freq-in	VK6RAW	Katanning

Please note that the range of all the enclosed repeaters will depend on the terrain and the size/efficiency of your antenna and transmitter power. Most of the repeaters on the above list can be accessed from a motor vehicle with 10/25W and a simple vertical antenna, from

distances of ranging from 30km up to 150km, in the case of high powered, well sited repeaters.

In WA, the repeaters are operated by a wide range of groups, on a voluntary basis. These are: WAADCA, Esperance ARS, Geraldton ARC, Goldfields ARC, Katanning ARC, ARS of NW Australia, Perth TV Group, WA Repeater Group, WA Signals ARG, Southern Electronics Group, Southern River Group, Southwest ARG, Think Tank, WA VHF Group, Western ARS, WIA WA Division, Wickham ARC and the WA WICEN Group.

If you use a repeater on a regular basis, please join its operating group and help support what you use.

Brief Bandplans for 6m, 2m and 70cm

The 6m Band

50.000 - 52.000 **RESTRICTED USE SEGMENT - shared use with broadcasting services. No interference should be caused to Channel 0 transmissions.**

50.000 - 50.100 CW only

50.100 - 52.000 CW and Phone

50.110 International DX calling frequency

50.250 - 50.300 Beacons (VK5/6/8/9 only)

52.000 - **NARROW BAND MODES**

52.000 - 52.010 DX only: EME

52.010 - 52.050 DX only: CW

52.025 CW calling frequency

52.050 - 52.100 DX only - Phone and CW

52.050 DX Meteor scatter calling frequency

52.075 RTTY (FSK) calling frequency

52.100 - 52.300 General - CW and Phone

52.100 Calling frequency - primary national

52.200 Calling frequency - secndry national

52.300 Calling frequency - SSTV

52.300 - 52.400 Beacons - secondary segment

52.400 - 52.500 Beacons - primary segment

52.500 - 52.600 **FM SIMPLEX AND REPEATERS**

52.525 International FM Simplex Calling Freq

52.550 - 52.975 Repeater Inputs

53.000 - 53.100 Simplex - data transmission

53.000 BBS Forwarding

53.025 General use

53.050 General use

53.075 General use

53.100 General use

53.125 - 53.525 Simplex - voice

53.500 National voice calling frequency

53.550 - 54.000 Repeater Outputs

The 2m Band

144.000 - 144.600	NARROW BAND MODES
144.000 - 144.050	DX only - EME
144.050 - 144.100	DX only - Terrestrial
144.050	CW calling frequency
144.075	RTTY (FSK) calling frequency
144.100 - 144.400	General - CW and Phone
144.100	Calling frequency - primary national
144.200	Calling frequency - secondary national
144.300	Calling frequency - SSTV
144.400 - 144.500	Beacons - primary segment
144.500 - 144.600	Beacons - secondary segment
144.600 - 145.700	GENERAL USE - ALL MODES
144.700 - 144.925	Packet Radio - 10 channels at 25kHz

The Microwave Scene in Western Australia - 10 and 24GHz

There has been a considerable rise in interest of late in these "microwave" bands in WA. This has been mainly due to the local availability of suitable RF heads and a simple circuit board for 10GHz, at prices attractive to the average radio amateur. Unfortunately, equipment for 24GHz is still expensive.

The mode of operation on "10 gigs" is wideband FM and to assist operators in the Perth metropolitan area, there is a beacon on 10.400GHz, located at Bickley, just south of Lesmurdie. Just aim your 10GHz antenna in the same direction as the local TV antennas! The beacon has an output of 6mW, fed into a 6dB omni-directional slotted waveguide 80m above the ground.

Most activity using the basic 10GHz kits is centred around the beacon frequency, using 30MHz IFs and full duplex operation. There are already around 40 kits being built in the metro area and in places as various and far away as Albany, Victoria and New Zealand. The basic system has been proved over distances of up to 60km, using simple 20dB gain horn antennas.

With some small modifications, the 10GHz kit system can also be used for data transmissions. A small number of operators have been already been experimenting with ATV transmissions using the kit operating in FM mode. Further development is being attempted using ex-satellite LNCs as the first stage in the receive chain. The use of LNCs should give improved noise figures over Gunn type mixers.

Narrowband modes, such as SSB, are currently achieving distances of over 1000kms on 10GHz. Only the cost of building such a system - over \$500 - is stopping us in WA from achieving these distances. Maybe soon...

The 24GHz band is the latest experimental experimental stage of activity and the current distance record a lowly one kilometre. Work is going on to improve antenna gain - typically 40dB - and transmitter stability.

If you would like to join us on these bands and modes, try calling on 144.330MHz FM in the early evening. We microwave enthusiasts often gather there and will be pleased to assist with any questions on the subject.

The only worthwhile books on the subject that I have come across are volumes 1,2 and 3 of the RSGB Microwave Handbook, in particular the latter. Volume 3 contains practical examples of equipment for all the microwave bands.

As a final note, if you have any microwave components, particularly waveguides, that you have no use for, please re-cycle them. Good homes can be found easily...

For further information on any of the above, please contact myself, Keith VK6XH on (09) 279 4923 or Barry, VK6ZSB on (09) 448 1028. 73s.

A Consumers Guide to Australian Contests

The aim of this "calendar" is to look at the main contests likely to interest Australian radio amateurs - even those who have not been involved in them before.

Not all the contests run by radio amateur organisations around the world are just an excuse for a bit of egotism and to see who has got the biggest erection, sorry, antenna. Some are an excuse for reknwing old friendships, like the Australian RD Contest, and others, such as the UK RSGB's Commonwealth Contest, depend more on your knowledge of propagation and skill in winking out weak signals.

On the other hand, there are the traditional big ones such as the CQ WW Contest, where brute signal strength, an array of towers larger than the R & I Building, an open cheque book and an army of ruthlessly drilled operators is the only way to compete, let alone win.

This calendar will focus on the first two categories of contests. If you are interested in the third, you will be a died-in-the-wool contest operator, doing one armed push-ups whilst simultaneously reading the pages and pages of contest rules in CQ magazine, and far too advanced for this article.

Exact dates of the following contests in 1993 are unknown. However, rough dates and times of each contest are shown in italics

Remembrance Day (RD) Contest -

This is the "big one" and the friendliest contest in the calendar. It is held to commemorate those amateurs who died during World War 2 and, in the words of the WIA, "is designed to encourage friendly participation between all amateurs and to help in improving operating skills".

This contest is held annually during the weekend nearest to 15th August, the date on which hostilities ceased in the south west Pacific. Starting time is usually 0800Z on the Saturday and it lasts for 24 hours, till 0759Z on Sunday. The contest runs on all bands 1.8MHz to the Microwaves and participating stations aim to contact as other amateurs in VK, ZL and P29 as they have time to.

No one bothers with formal signal reports and stations simply exchange serial numbers, plus any other information they care too. A typical exchange might also consist of at least 50% friendly chat - name, QTH, etc.

Another special aspect of this WIA contest is that the real competition is State Vs State, with all scores in each State being added up and a perpetual trophy going to the one with the highest cumulative total. So, if you want to rub salt into a Victorian or two, get in there and remind them which state won the Sheffield Shield and the AFL Premiership in 1992. You can bet in 1993 the Vic's will at least want to hold onto the RD trophy.

VK-ZL-Oceania DX Contest -

There are two sections of this contest, one phone and the other CW, sponsored by the New Zealand society, NZART. It is an HF contest, on the old 160 to 10m bands, and is about contacting as many stations as possible, around the world. VK and ZL stations are only permitted to contact each other on 160 and 80m.

The SSB leg is usually on the first Saturday in October and the CW one on the second Saturday in October. Although the format of the contest is traditional "work em as fast as possible", the manners of the competing stations is a million miles removed from the US-style mega contest. Take a look this year, you might be pleasantly surprised.

West Australian Annual 3.5MHz CW and SSB Contest

This one has the potential to be a mini RD Contest but currently lacks support in a big way. I entered the CW

section a couple of years ago and was really enjoying its informality until I ran out of stations to work halfway through.

The two sections of the contest each run for an ideal 3 hours, between 1030Z and 1330Z, on a Sunday evening. The CW section is usually on the first Sunday in August and the SSB on the first Sunday in September.

The basic idea is to contact as many stations as possible, with WA stations giving out signal reports and their shire numbers, as published in the WIA magazine, Amateur Radio. Other stations give signal reports and the serial number of the contact. Support this contest and have some fun, be you novice or full call. Oh yes, and you can work the same stations twice during the sessions.

John Moyle Contest

Those who enjoy a weekend in the bush with the local radio club will love the John Moyle, or "Field Day" as it is often called. The contest usually takes place at the same time as the Japanese DX Contest and the UK Commonwealth contest, with very interesting interactions on the HF bands..

Just about every frequency and every mode is OK for the John Moyle, with difficult types of communication, like VHF/UHF satellite stuff, earning those brave enough to try them lots of bonus points. NCRG typically work all bands 80 through to 70cm on all modes and enter the 24 hour multi-operator multi-band type section.

However, there is nothing to stop a few like minded radio amateurs from forming their own radio club especially for the weekend - how about the "Dumblayung DXers" - and entering as a six hour multiple operator VHF/UHF station, if they like. You can mix and match the section you enter to suit your operators and interests, even operating from home if you like.

The John Moyle usually takes place around the second weekend in March, during any 6/24 hour period during 0100 UTC on the Saturday to 0759 UTC on the Sunday. One thing you should note about this contest is that its rules seem to change every year. There is no truth in the rumour that it always changes in favour of the Eastern states when a WA station finishes at the top of the winners list.

Other contests to note are:

VK Novice Contest - Usually a 24 hour affair, around the third weekend in June

RSGB Commonwealth Contest - for CW fans and usually the same weekend as the John Moyle Contest. Why not send a log into both?

The Key HF Nets for West Australians

This is a simple guide/listing to the essential HF Nets for West Australians. With the current declining sunspot cycle, all of the nets are listed below are on 14MHz, except one. Amateur Radio Action magazine regularly publishes listings of all HF net frequencies, compiled by Ash Nallawalla, ZL4LM/VK3CIT. The most recent listings were in May/June/July issues of ARA.

The Travellers Net - Every day at 0300Z on 14.116MHz, run by Peter VK6HH and Roy VK6BO with the assistance of other stations across Australia. If you are going "bush" and have a HF rig in the car/4WD/caravan, this is the net to check into daily when you stop for lunch. A number of potential disasters have been avoided by people checking into this net when travelling.

VK9NS DX Net - Hosted by Jim Smith, or his wife, Kirsty VK9NL from their QTH on Norfolk Island, the net meets on 14.222 MHz every day from around 0530Z, except Mondays. Sometimes the net can start informally from as early as 0400Z. Remember, the early bird catches the DX!

Southern Cross DX Net - Run most evenings by Gray VK4OH and Bob KI4RU, the net is a laid back affair, starting around 1200Z on 14.226MHz. If you want to work rare Pacific Islands, this is the place. Stations from Africa Europe and South America are also regulars. It runs until around 1400Z, when the "W7PHO Family Hour" net starts on the same frequency. DX stations often stay on into the Family Hour net.

The Butterfly Net - Also on 14.226 and very good for working into Africa in the Spring at around 2200 - 2300Z, the net always welcomes VK6s. However, the net controllers AA0BS and W1BIS are often not the strongest of signals into WA.

The ET DX Net - on 14.160 and usually audible in spring, summer and autumn around 2200Z, net controller Ed, KZ4C, is very fond of Sandgropers. All kinds of DX seems to pop up here, although not consistently. When it's good, it's very good and when it's not, at least you've got Ed to say hello to.

14.256 Nets - There always seems to be some kind of net on this frequency, and often at its centre there is a really hot DX station. Popular swarming times are 2200 - 2300 in the spring/summer/autumn and around 0300Z all the year round, when stations in the Indian Ocean often surface.

The Shaver's Net - 7.090MHz. This is one net you can't miss if you are a WA radio amateur. If you want amusing discourse about the weather, if you are young or old, you will find the true spirit of amateur radio here at 2330 - 0000Z, every day.

An Overview of Packet Radio in Western Australia

This short article is designed to give WA radio amateurs a guide to getting started on "packet".

There are basically two different types of configurations that make up a packet station. These are: (1) a computer/terminal connected to a TNC (Terminal Node Controller) and (2) A computer emulating a TNC connected to a modem.

Let's look at the TNC first. A TNC consists of 2 major functions: a packet assembler/disassembler and a modem (modulator/demodulator). A TNC is controlled by a micro-processor which handles all the "intelligence" of the TNC's operations.

In the packet assembly/disassembly function, data from the computer/terminal (referred to as a computer from now on), is broken up into manageable "packets" which is carried by the AX.25 protocol on the air. Once this information is ready for transport on the air, this data is sent to the modem which changes the digital information into an audio signal which is then modulated by the transmitter. At the receiving end, the reverse occurs.

In the second configuration, a program can be loaded into a computer which also performs the packet assembly and disassembly function and the handling of the AX.25 protocol. Information is sent and received to and from a modem, which in turn is connected to a radio.

Setting Up - If you are setting up a packet station for the first time, make sure that the RF side of things is working OK. A lot of faults with signals can be traced back to changes that were required to be made to the radio to make it suitable for packet operation. If you wish to use VHF, unless you have a specific target area in mind, it pays to use a vertically polarised omnidirectional antenna. Very few stations on VHF use horizontal polarization, which is more common on HF packet.

Make sure you have an adequate Tx power supply that can withstand prolonged continuous transmissions. If your power supply can just handle things on voice, it may not work too well on packet. Things like hum on your signal will make your signal undecipherable by other stations. Try to use shielded cable between the radio and the TNC/modem, and between the TNC/modem and the computer.

Bulletin Boards - By far, the most interaction a packet station will have is with a Bulletin Board Service (BBS). A BBS is another packet station running a program designed to pass electronic "mail" and forming part of a

world wide BBS network. Here you can leave messages or computer programs for your friends to pick up at a time that suits them, much in the fashion of a notice board.

Also, the BBS network serves as a forum for discussion on various topics, of which the on-going debate can be quite lively! A brief list of WA BBS is given below.

Repeaters - Unlike a voice repeater, a packet repeater, otherwise known as a Digital Repeater (or "digipeater") operates in a simplex mode. That is, the digipeater can only be receiving or transmitting at any given time. See page 9 for a list of digipeaters.

Software - By far, the two most popular computers used by packet operators in WA are the IBM PC and compatibles, and the Commodore C64/128.

IBM - The vast majority of packet operators using IBM computers use a TNC for packet communications. Comms software is required for the operator to communicate with the TNC. Ordinary comms programs designed to work with telephone modems such as TELIX and PROCOMM will work OK. However, there are specialised programs designed to communicate with TNC's.

The more popular of these in WA are PAKET, written by Tony Lonsdale VK2DHU, and YAPP (Yet Another Packet Program) written by Jeff Jacobsen WA7MBL. The other IBM packet station configuration is the BAYCOM program. BAYCOM has the computer emulating a TNC and is used in conjunction with a simple modem.

C64 - Unlike the IBM, the most popular configuration of a packet station using a C64 is the DIGICOM/DIGIPROM program (hereinafter referred to as DIGICOM). DIGICOM works in the same manner as the BAYCOM program for the IBM, whereby the program uses the computer to emulate a TNC. A simple modem is then connected to the computer to complete the setup.

User Groups - At present, there is one only special interest group supporting users of packet radio. This is the Western Australian Amateur Digital Communications Association (WAADCA) - see page 3 of this book.

BBS Listing (callsign - frequency - location - coverage)
VK6BBK - 144.850MHz - Katanning - Gt Southern area
VK6BBS - 144.875MHz - Roleystone - Perth to Pinjarra
VK6KS - 144.825MHz - Balga - Perth metro area
VK6LI - 144.750MHz - Harvey - SW Area
VK6SR - 144.850MHz - Albany - Gt Southern coast
VK6YA - 144.850MHz - Point Sampson - Intl Gateway
VK6YBN - 147.575MHz - Boulder - Kal/Coolgard/Boulder
VK6YBP - 144.825MHz - Balga - Perth metro area
VK6ZML - 144.875MHz - Mt Hawthorn - Perth metro area

73 de Phil Street VK6KS (09) 344 5241