



QSX-PE

AUG
2026

NEWSLETTER FOR THE DISCERNING RADIO HAM

PORT ELIZABETH AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY



The shack of ZS2G
Andrew Gray

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GROWING THE
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HF
CONTEST**

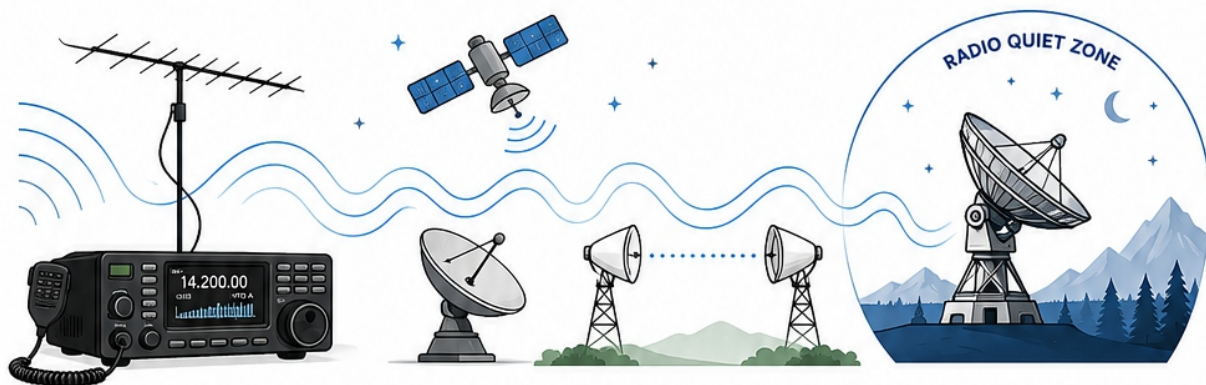
**THE
RULE BOOK**



PORT ELIZABETH AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
ESTABLISHED EXCELLENCE IN AMATEUR RADIO

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Disclaimer

The Editor, nor any PEARS club member shall be held liable for errors and/or omissions in any article and/or drawing contained in this newsletter. Furthermore, any view expressed is not necessarily that of the Editor, any committee member or other members of the Club. The material contained in this newsletter is not meant to defame, purge, humiliate and/or hurt someone's person or feelings. If copy is unintentionally infringed, we apologise. The newsletter is published as a free service to Amateur Radio Operators and friends.



YOUR COMMITTEE

Meet the team behind your Club!



Thank you to each of our committee members for their time, dedication and support.



CHAIRMAN

Kevern
ZR2BK



VICE CHAIRMAN | RAE

Vaughan
ZS2VR



**SECRETARY | REPEATERS
QSX EMAIL | CLUB DATABASE**

Chris
ZS2AAW



TREASURER

Mike
ZS2MIC



**TECHNICAL | REPEATERS
SEARCH & RESCUE
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION**

Glen
ZS2GV



**COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Andrew
ZS2AFB



**COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Patsy
ZS2PTY



**COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Odette
ZS2OD



**COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Andre
ZS2ALN



CLUB NEWS

What's going on?

Welcome to August and a brand-new edition of the QSX. In this month's QSX we have the usuals – Club news with the minutes of the meetings, updates on club activities and repeater infrastructure, some contesting, dxing, and of course, something technical.

Our member profile this month is Donovan. Donovan, a past chairman of PEARS and a long time RAE instructor, may need no introduction to many of our members but read up on Donovan's profile - there is some interesting reading!

Meshtastic continues to show growth in terms of the network and in terms of the number of PEARS members getting involved. If you are not up to speed with the happenings in the Meshtastic realm, grab the first of Tony's articles from last month's QSX before you dive into this month's update from Tony ZR2TX.

What I think is great news for PEARS is the fact that we now have All star and Echolink on Ladies Slipper Repeater. It is all installed and ready to use thanks to Kevern. Read the article on how to use it in the technical section.

Our chairman, Kevern – ZR2BK gives us his take in "From the chairman" and we round out the Club section with the birthdays and anniversaries.

For the DXers we have "Your Dose of DX" and among the highlights this month are expeditions to several islands – not the least of which is Tuvalu (T2). The list is not a very long list – and is certainly not complete – it is intended to entice you to try Dxing if you are not already hooked.

In the Focus on Contests section, we have the contest calendar and an interesting article covering the SARL HF contests. Once again, just enough information to get you to try something new.

The "Rule Book" section covers regulatory articles and this month we look at the new ICASA's 2026 Draft Amendments.

The technical section has two interesting articles for you. The first is from Kevern ZR2BK and tells you all you need to know about All Star and Echolink. The second article is from Dave and gives some practical tips on reducing noise in the shack.

We round out this edition with the regular back page. Some humour, some activities, and a taste of what is to come next time.

Enjoy!

Editor

Dave
ZS2DH



BULLETINS



Sunday SARL and Monday Evening PEARS Bulletins

PEARS provides a local reading of the SARL bulletin every Sunday morning at 8:15 in Afrikaans read by **Kevern ZR2BK** and at 8:30 in English read by **Rory ZS2BL**, transmitted through the Lady's Slipper Repeater on 145.700MHz.



PEARS Bulletins are transmitted on Monday evenings at **19h00** through the Lady's Slipper repeater 145.700MHz.



REPEATERS



PE Town VHF 145.650 MHz



PE Town UHF 438.650 MHz



Lady Slipper VHF 145.700 MHz



Lady Slipper UHF 438.700 MHz



Longmore VHF 145.625 MHz

Viewlands UHF 438.675 MHz

Cockscomb UHF 438.600 MHz



Stay connected.
Stay informed.



Thank you for keeping our frequencies active and our community connected.

73!

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Members,

Thank you for reading our latest edition of QSX. There is some important information in this edition so please read everything.

The next PEARS monthly meeting will be on the 18 th of August 2026 at the German Club in Port Elizabeth. We will be having a trivial pursuit trivia after the general meeting, thanks to Gert, ZS2GS.

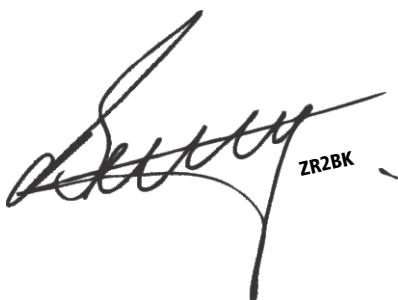
The PEARS monthly meeting for September will be on the 15th of September with a special guest speaker. On the 24th of September, (National Heritage Day), we will be hosting a fox hunt followed by a bring and braai social. The venue will most likely be the Sunridge Scout Hill.

The weekend of the 8th , the club will be doing communications for the Transbaviaans. The route had to be changed due to the flooding in the kloof, and will now be along the Groot Rivier. A new communications plan had to be drawn up, as all checkpoints had to be relocated. The Cockscomb repeater will be the primary means of communication for this event. Thank you to all the members going out, this one is a big deployment.

The weekly bulletins of PEARS on a Monday night will now be moving from 20h00 to 19h00 on the Lady Slipper Repeater. This will be from the 10th of August 2026.

Thank you to all the contributions for QSX this month, and of our course to the designer and our editor. Many thanks for your hours of dedication.

**73,
Kevern**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kevern', with the call sign 'ZR2BK' written in small capital letters below it.



MINUTES

PEARS MONTHLY MEETING

PEARS Monthly Meeting

Held at the German Club on the 21st July 2026 at 19h30

Welcome: Chairman Kevern ZR2BK welcomed all present.

Attendance: ZR2BK, ZS2GV, ZS2VR, ZS2ALN, ZS2AFB, ZS2DK, ZS2AG, ZS2ECH, ZS2DH, ZS2BO, ZS2RT

Apologies: ZS2AAW, ZS2MIC, ZS2PTY, ZS2OD, ZS2GS

Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes:

Proposed: ZS2BO | **Seconded:** ZS2AFB

Matters arising: None

Finances:

ZR2BK reported all is in good standing.

Next event will help to boost savings.

Events:

TransBaviaans on the 8th and 9th of August. Tony still looking for volunteers.

RAE:

• Starting again 22 July | 7 candidates confirmed

Kevern:

- QSX editor is ZS2DH
- Sub committee to handle news bulletins, socials and QSX. Subcommittee needs volunteers, please assist Dave ZS2DH!
- Kevern put to the meeting on the thoughts of moving the Monday night bulletin to 19h00. The meeting agreed as the members said that 20h00 is too late and there will be better participation in the bulletins. Agreed that the bulletins will now be at 19h00.

Dave:

- Dave asked for members to submit news items for the bulletins, it was suggested that the bulletins have different segments, and each person could give a voice recording report on Propagation, DX, Satellites, Hamnet, Weather etc. Contributions can be in the form of voice notes even.
- Once the format has been decided upon the bulletin will be easier for the reader, with different news segments.

Field Day:

- September. Club will cover the camping fees etc.
- Krantzklouf was announced as the venue for field day.

Social:

- The next social event was announced for the 24th of September (Braai Day) including the Fox Hunt.
- The November meeting will be a social with Trivial Pursuit, to make things fun.

• **Repeaters:**

- Slipper was visited, Allstar and Echolink was re-established.
- Town repeater still needs a visit for the upgrade.

General:ZS2DH

Dave gave a talk on the plan of the news committee and what is all planned to streamline the bulletins etc.

Speaker:

None

Closure:

Meeting ended at 20h15

Next meeting 18th August 2026





MESHCORE

CONNECT . COMMUNICATE . ANYWHERE

by Tony, ZR2TX



Meshcore - Setting up your first device

Following on from the introduction last month, we will now look at setting up your first Meshcore device.

LET'S BREAK THIS INTO THESE STEPS

1

Choosing your device

2

Flashing your device

3

The initial setup

4

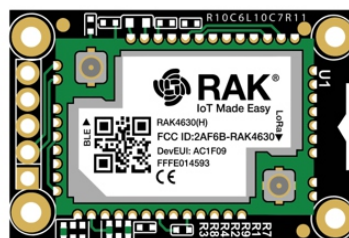
Advertising!

CHOOSING YOUR HARDWARE

There are many devices for which Meshcore firmware is available - and a steady stream on new devices getting added all the time. The official Flasher webpage currently lists 59 items so there is a wide variety from which to choose.

The most popular manufacturers are Heltec, LillyGo, RAK and Seeed Studio. As mentioned last month I have tried a number of these and have decided on RAK as my hardware of choice.

Specifically, the RAK4631 LoRa module and RAK19003 baseboard, which have proven to be stable and reliable with very low power consumption.



RAK4631 LoRa Module



RAK19003 Baseboard

Once you have decided which hardware meets your requirements it is time to flash the firmware. No matter which board you decide to use the basic process is the same.



The main Meshcore page can be visited at <https://www.meshcore.io> and contains a wealth of information about the project, as well as providing the link to the flasher webpage.

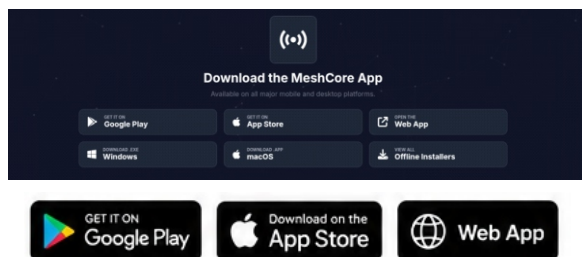




MESHCORE Initial Setup - BLE Companion



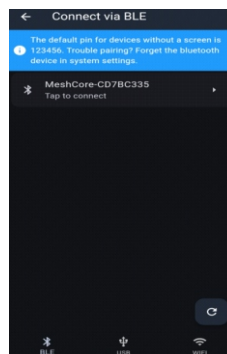
1 DOWNLOAD THE MESHCORE APP



Other selections are available in case you want to use the USB option to connect to your PC. You are free to try those but remember you need to flash the USB firmware version in the previous step.

Installation is the same as any other app so should be straight forward.

2 CONNECT VIA BLUETOOTH



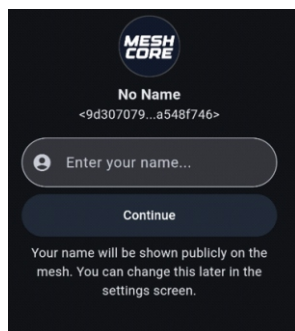
Once the app is installed, open and select "Connect" on the top right. Just ensure that the blue LED is flashing on the board, indicating that it is waiting for a BLE connection.

Your device should then appear with the name MeshCore-xxxxxxx (8 characters)

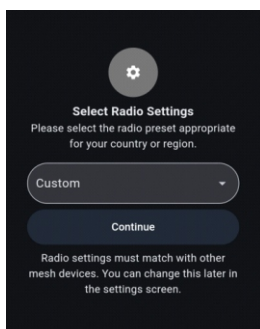


You will then be asked to pair using default pin 123456.

3 PERSONALISE YOUR NODE



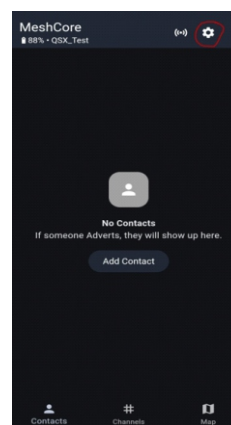
You now enter the name that you would like shown on the mesh.



Then select the drop-down option and scroll to the **EU 433MHz** (Long Range) setting.

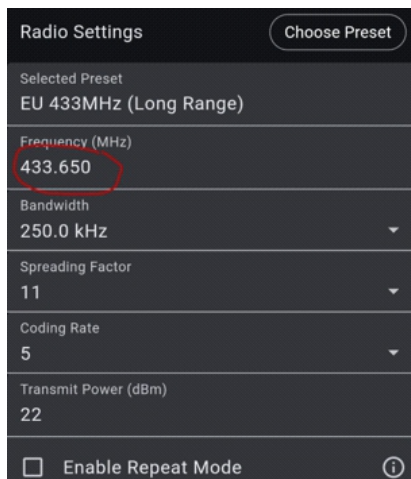
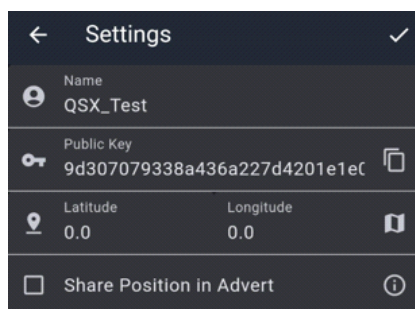


4 COMPLETE SETUP



Once selected press "**proceed**" and you will see this screen. We need to go into settings and change the frequency. While we use the **EU** default settings our frequency is **433.750**.

5 SET THE CORRECT FREQUENCY



Change the frequency to 433.750 and click the tick option (top right) to save.

Initially you will see no contacts in your list, but after a while repeaters should start appearing. These advertise themselves every 12 hours so just be patient.





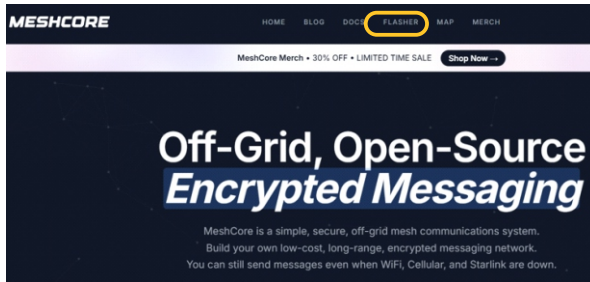
MESHCORE

Flashing your device

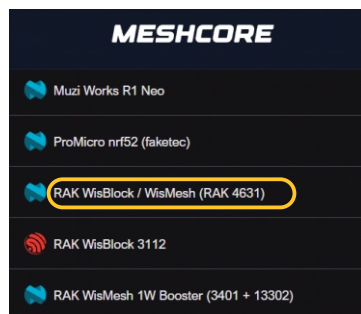


1 OPEN THE FLASHER

Open the MESHCORE browser and click on FLASHER



You will then be able to select the correct firmware version based on your chosen hardware. I used the one supplied by RAK and have had no problems. Plug in your device using a good quality USB cable.



2 CHOOSE ROLE

You are now presented with several options. Meshcore firmware is broken down into specific roles; this keeps the code lean and specific to the required task which leads to efficient design.

Basic functions are:

Companion Device :

this is used to connect to your Cell phone (BLE) or PC (USB) and allows you to send text messages.

Repeater:

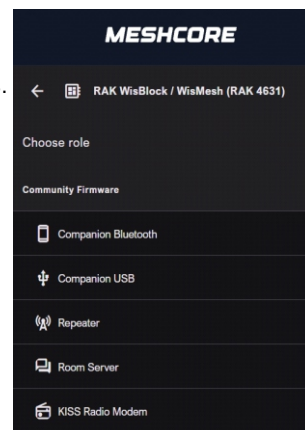
This is exactly what it says, a device that acts as a repeater.

Room Server:

This role allows you to leave messages for people who are offline, they can log in later to upload.

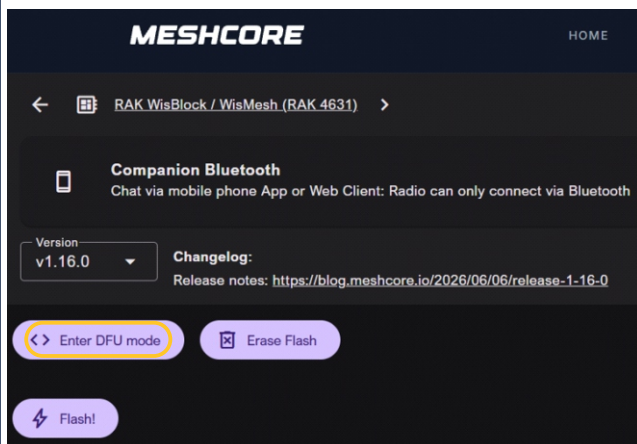
KISS Radio Modem

I see a new addition, which I have not yet tried so cannot comment at this stage.

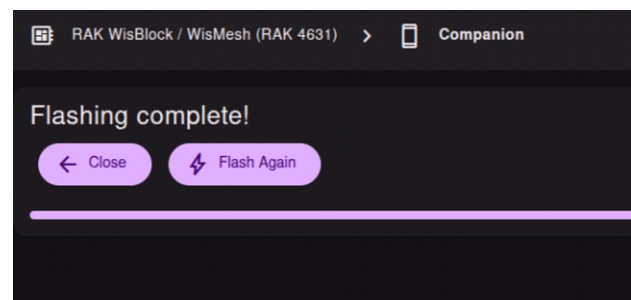


3 COMPANION BLUETOOTH

Select the Enter DFU mode. This will bring up a box to select the serial port associated with your device.



Once DFU mode is active you select Flash and if all goes well the latest firmware will be flashed to your device.



You can now disconnect the USB and move on to the initial configuration.





MESHCORE ADVERTISING

Share your presence. Build the mesh.



Much like Whatsapp you need to exchange your contact details with anyone you wish to message.



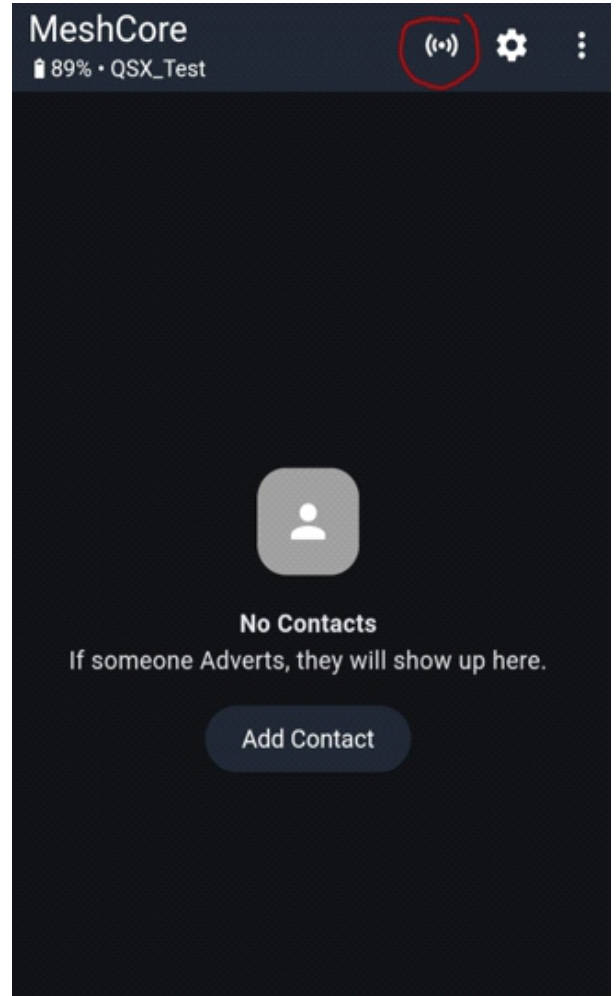
Pressing the marked icon will send out an advert packet. This will add you to the address book of anyone who receives it.



The same will happen when you receive an advert packet from them.



These packets are not sent automatically so it is good practice to send one maybe once per day to ensure you are received by everyone on the mesh - especially new joiners.



I do hope this process goes smoothly for you!

Should you hit any issues feel free to give me a call and I am sure I can talk you through it.



Next month we will look at the functionality of the **Cell phone application** in detail.

73,

Tony ZR2TX

MEMBER PROFILE

ZS2DL



PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Where and when were you born and where did you grow up?

Born in Uitenhage in 1972, I spend my youth there being educated at Muir College matriculating in 1990.

What do you do for a living?

After University I spent 3 years with a short term insurance company and then 11 years as a sales manager for an industrial plastics company. However in 2005 Ham Radio Outlet-South Africa was born and I am proud to say this year marks 21 years in business and I still look forward to going to work everyday.

What is something about your early life that people might find surprising?

As a 17 year old I discerned the Catholic priesthood. However God Sent Rosalie along my path and the rest is history. I was also a pretty good Cricketer and played club cricket for Uitenhage Cricket club as well as PECC.

What is something you're surprisingly good at?

Well don't really like to brag about what I can do and can't do, Hi. However, seeing as though you asked, I think I am pretty good at CW. (ya'll agree? Ed) I also have been known to do pretty good restorations of old motorcycles And I can cook! HA HA.

What do you think the future has in store for the hobby?

Amateur radio is dying. It is a technological hobby and people are as a whole not interested in the science of technology. They simply want ready to use gadgets. Everyone wants to be a manager, and nobody wants to be the inventor. If we can change that mind-set, Ham Radio could flourish. But sadly, it is a world-wide trend at the moment and has become really bad since the end of COVID. The change must start with you the reader, the licenced radio ham, the members of the club. It is very upsetting to me when the club has in excess of 120 members but 11 show up for a monthly meeting. Our attitudes need to change and with that I believe growth can be achieved.

INTERESTS BEYOND RADIO

What hobbies do you enjoy outside of amateur radio?

I enjoy Sport a great deal and find myself going to watch school boy rugby quite often be it at Muir or Grey. I also have a passion for the restoration of old motorcycles. A hobby I had to give up when I received a Stoma bag as a Christmas gift in 2018. It is something I really aspire to start up again in the years I have left.

What books, music or films do you enjoy?

I enjoy books with pictures. I tell everyone I have not read a book since 1990. Music – I enjoy 80's Stuff and also a few more modern groups like Westlife. Enjoy Sting, Queen, UB40, Dire Straits. Chris Stapleton and Fr. Rob Galea are go to music for the shower.

What is your favourite way to relax?

Relaxing is something I cannot do. I have quiet time in the mornings where I try and relax with my Lord and Saviour for about an hour but the rest of the day there is no relaxation no matter how hard I try.

YOUR PEARS CONNECTION

How did you first get involved with the PEARS?

PEARS use to be the Port Elizabeth Branch of the SARL and had their meetings on a Friday night at the Congregational church hall in Kabega.

In 1987 Dad re-joined the club and I came down to the meetings with him because he was as blind as a bat at night so I was his eyes on the road.

I also had struck up friendships with Owen Wheeler and Bill Hodges which made it pleasant for me.

What do you enjoy most about being part of the PEARS?

I simply enjoy seeing and spending time with friends. Friends I would not have had if it were not for PEARS.

What would you like to see more of in the PEARS or the QSX magazine?

I would Like to see more public events where the hobby is displayed to the public. Like at hobby fairs etc. Also, A HF Contest university with an A team and a B team would really be fantastic.

As for QSX, this kind of exercise I enjoy so to get to know you fellow club member. I also enjoy Stuff Like a DX Corner where you can find info of upcoming Expeditions and QSL information.

And Also, articles pertaining to the PEARS Members DXCC Scores.



MEMBER PROFILE

ZS2DL



AMATEUR RADIO JOURNEY

When and how did you first get involved in amateur radio?

My grandfather was ZT2V pre WW2 and ZS2AN Post WW2. Dad (Jim) Was ZS2LR 1956-2016. So I am a third generation ham. After my Father suffered a nervous breakdown in 1986 and was recovering he got more involved in the hobby and I decided I would spend as much time with him as I could and what better way than to show interest in his hobby. Little did I know the bug bit and by 1987 aged 14 I was proficient in CW and kept the old man's log and performed the QSL duties of Amateur radio station ZS2LR.

What was your first callsign and your first radio?

I was licenced as ZS2DL in 1991. I learnt to tune up on a Yaesu FT101E. Valves in the finals. In 1993 the old man upgraded to a ICOM IC725. No more tune up required. But the First radios I bought with my own money was a ICOM handheld IC-2PET from HamRads in Cape Town and a ICOM IC207H from the same shop. First HF rig was a second hand Yaesu FT747GX. First new Radio was a Kenwood TS570S and then Followed by an ICOM 746PRO. I lost count after that.

Who or what inspired you to get licensed?

Apart from the obvious Family connection OM Eric ZS2CV use to have an awesome collection of QSL cards on his wall together with many certificates. One being his DXCC and the other the Fire Cracker Award. I used to drool whenever we paid him a visit.

What parts of the hobby do you enjoy most (HF, VHF,contesting,etc.)?

Even though I don't mind VHF comms my passion has always been HF Chasing DX for my DXCC, contesting in the big worldwide contests and because I am an endangered species running CW pileups.

What is your proudest or most memorable radio moment?

In order?

1. Passing my CW test at 18.
2. DXCC 1993
3. 2007 CQWW 3DA0WW Team member from Eswatini (Swaziland)
4. 2009 Team leader of First and only M2 Team for CQWPX every from Port Elizabeth Callsign ZT2V.
5. 2009 CQWW ZS9X Team member with ZS4TX and ZS6EZ.
6. 2012 Team Leader of record-breaking international Team 7P8D DXpedition to Lesotho.
7. Being first ZS2 onto DXCC Honour Roll in 2016.
8. First and only ZS2 with DXCC on 160m! 2023
9. SARL Presidents Award 2023
10. SARL Hall of Fame 2024
11. PEARS Honorary Life memberships 2025

These are some moments that stand out for me.

What is the most unusual or distant contact you've ever made?

3 come to mind.

- * P5 North Korea way back in the 90s.
- * 3Y0X Peter 1 and BS7H Scarborough reef in the 2000's.
- * And any of the last 4 in the future.

What equipment are you currently running in your shack?

Currently I have as my main station a Yaesu FT-DX101D HF Rig driving a SPE 1.3K Amplifier into a 9 Element Optibeam on a 20m Crank up lattice tower.

What project(s) are you currently working on (radio or otherwise)?

As far as the hobby goes I am still trying to restore a few Kenwood HF Radios for my private museum. And I am currently busy with some home renovations which keeps me busy during the winter when the bands are not to good.





AUGUST 2026

— STAY ACTIVE, STAY CONNECTED! —



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 AMSAT SA SPACE SYMPOSIUM ; the North American CW QSO Party  <i>Pat ZS2ATP & Gary ZS2GIN Pullinger</i>
2 SARL HF Phone Contest North American CW QSO Party	3	4  Brenda Whitehead <i>XYL of Allan, ZS2R</i>	5	6  Gavin Oosthuizen ZS2GAV	7	8 International Cat Day
9 SARL YL QSO Party Women's Day SARL HF Digital Contest	10 Public Holiday	11	12 International Youth Day, Perseids Meteor Shower	13 Perseids Meteor Shower  Odie Vosloo ZS2OD	14 Sher van Staden ZS2HR  Sher van Staden ZS2SHR	15 Lighthouse Weekend The North American SSB QSO Party SARL Youth QSO Party  Serge Smetryns ZS2SJE Mark Bernard ZS2MB Chris Knowles ZS2CK Steven du Toit ZS2SDT
16 Lighthouse Weekend North American SSB QSO Party	17	18 <u>Monthly Club Meeting</u>  Al Akers ZS2U Maggie Moore <i>XYL of Ian ZS2UT</i>	19 SARL Wednesday 80m Club Contest	20  <i>Andrew ZS2AFB & Retka Bouwer</i>  Andrew Prideaux ZS2PA	21	22
23 SARL HF CW Contest  Mike De Lange ZS2MDL	24  <i>David ZS2DH & Beverley Higge</i>  Daschell Geldenhuys <i>XYL of Johannes (Joe) ZS2UD</i>	25	26 International Dog Day  Nicole Cummings ZU2NX	27	28 Partial Lunar Eclipse	29 Worldwide Digital Contest  Teresa Joubert <i>XYL of Tim ZS2X</i>
30 Worldwide Digital Contest	31					





HAM BIRTHDAYS

= AUGUST =



Celebrating our members – on the air and in life!

Date	Ham	Callsign	Famous Connection
06 AUG	Gavin Oosthuizen	ZS2GAV	Edith Roosevelt , wife of US president Reddy Roosevelt, was born 6 August 1861.
13 AUG	Odie Vosloo	ZS2OD	Odie I think you will like this one - Annie Oakley the American sharpshooter was born in North Star, Ohio, 1860
14 AUG	Sher van Staden	ZS2SHR	Sarah Brightman will be turning 65 on your birthday! Sarah of course was that powerful soprano voice from the Phantom of the Oper.
15 AUG	Serge Smetryns Mark Bernard Chris Knowles Steven du Toit	ZS2SJE ZS2MB ZS2CK ZS2SDT	Napoleon Bonaparte the French military leader and Emperor was born on 15 August way back in 1769. But he is dead now, so you guys win!
18 AUG	Al Akers	ZS2U	So Robert Redfort, Patrick Swayze, and Al walk into a bar to celebrate their birthday. The barman says " Hey Al, who are your friends? "
20 AUG	Andrew Prideaux	ZS2PA	Robert Plant - the British rock vocalist from Led Zeppelin ("Stairway To Heaven") born in West Bromwich, England - 1948.
23 AUG	Mike De Lange	ZS2MDL	Keith Moon British rock drummer for "The Who", born in London, England 1946.
26 AUG	Nicole Cummings	ZU2NX	You keep good company - Mother Theresa, Katherine Johnson (NASA) and Malissa McCarthy share your cake-munching day!



FAMOUS HAM BIRTHDAYS

There are no famous ham birthdays that I could find in the month of August.
Well, that is not entirely true - there is *Uncle Al ZS2U!*





SPOUSE BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST

Celebrating the special people behind the Hams!



DATE

SPOUSE

FAMOUS CONNECTION

04
AUG

Brenda Whitehead

X4L of Allan, ZS2R

Brenda, you celebrate with
Louis Vuitton French founder
of Louis Vuitton brand of
leather goods. Louis was born in Anchay,
France in 1821.

18
AUG

Maggie Moore

X4L of Ian ZS2IJ

Maggie, **Robert Redford**
shared a birthday with you!
Robert was born in 1936.

Al Akers ZS2U
also shares your birthday!

24
AUG

Daschell Geldenhuys

*X4L of Johannes (Joe)
ZS2JO*

Daschell you celebrate
alongside **Yasser Arafet**
of PLO fame and a winner
of the 1994 Nobel peace prize.
He was born in Cairo, Egypt
in 1929.

29
AUG

Teresa Joubert

X4L of Tim ZS2X

Teresa, you share your
special day with
Michael Jackson
who was born in 1958.



Anniversaries

Celebrating LOVE on and off the airwaves



01
AUG

*Pat ZS2PJP &
Ginny ZS2GIN Pullinger*

♥ Wedding bells rang out for John McEnroe (1986),
Michael Schumacher (1995), Dave Stewart (1996),
and Mark Wahlberg (2009).



20
AUG

*Andrew ZS2AFB &
Retha Bouwer*

♥ Andrew and Retha tied the knot on
the same day as Sting (of Police fame)
who wed in 1992 in Wiltshire, England.



24
AUG

*David ZS2DH &
Beverley Higgs*

♥ Peter Sellers of Pink Panther fame
wed in 1970,
♥ and Patrick Dempsey in 1987.



YOUR DOSE OF DX

DX-ing is the only hobby where grown adults willingly wake up at 3 a.m., stare at a silent waterfall display, and convince themselves that the faint wobble on 14.195 simply must be a rare island calling them.

It's a world of **glorious triumphs** — like finally logging that elusive Pacific station — immediately followed by **heartbreak** when you discover you worked the wrong op or busted the call.

Yet we keep coming back, headphones on, coffee in hand, chasing signals that are usually weaker than our **selfcontrol** at a ham flea market!

And honestly, we wouldn't have it any other way.

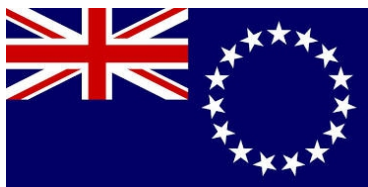




DX WATCH

STATIONS ON THE AIR

SOUTH COOK ISLANDS



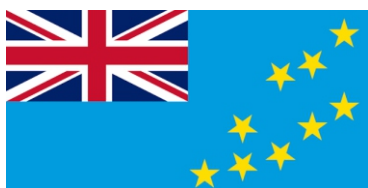
E5/S. Steve ZL2KE as E51KEE and Steve ZL4CZ as E51CZZ will be active again from Rarotonga (OC-013), South Cook Islands, as follows: 22 July to 14 August – E51KEE CW and some SSB and 26 July to 6 August – E51CZZ SSB. E51KEE is likely to concentrate on 40 and 30 metres, “unless propagation improves”. They will not use other digital modes. QSL for both call signs via IK2DUW (direct); QSOs will be uploaded to Club Log and LoTW.

WILLIS ISLANDS



VK9/W. Sands, VK4WXW has returned to Willis Island (OC-007) and will be stationed at the Australian Bureau of Meteorology's weather monitoring facility until late October or early November. After recently returning to the air, he expects to become increasingly active as VK9WX in the coming weeks. He operates SSB and digital on 40, 20, 15 and 10 metres with a vertical antenna, though he plans to add an inverted L for lower-frequency operations soon. QSL via M00XO's OQRS.

TUVALU



T2. Aki, JK1JXZ will be active again as T2JK from Funafuti, Tuvalu (OC-015) from 30 July to 7 August (or 14 August, should his stay be extended). He will be active on 80 to 6 metres, “all day” during the weekend and after 17 (local time) during the weekdays. QSL via LoTW.

AZERBAIJAN



4K. Jan, DL4XT will be active holiday style as 4K/DL4XT from Azerbaijan from 23 July to 8 August. He will operate SSB, CW and digital on 20 to 10 metres. QSL via LoTW, Club Log's OQRS and QRZ.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



9Y. Ishmael, 8P6PE will be active as 9Y4/8P6PE from Trinidad & Tobago between 25 July and 9 August. He plans to operate from several POTA references. QSL via LoTW, eQSL and QRZ.



Lord
— grant me the —
SERENITY

to accept the
QRM I cannot change

The **COURAGE**
to work the **DX** I can hear

And the
WISDOM
to never say 'QRZ?'
during a pileup



DX LOG

DATE	UTC	CALL	BAND	RST	MODE	QTH
01/05	1412	ZL1AB	20m	59	USB	NZ
01/05	1425	JA1XYZ	20m	59	USB	JA
01/05	1443	VK2XYZ	17m	59	USB	OZ
01/05	1501	VE3DX	17m	59	USB	CAN
01/05	1518	EA5ABC	15m	59	USB	FR
01/05	1542	9A5ZZ	15m	59	USB	BR
01/05	1603	PY2AA	15m			

Great DX today!
73 & Good DX!





FOCUS ON CONTESTS



CONTESTING

The Challenge is On!



Contesting is a fun part of the hobby with its own set of challenges. In this month's edition of the QSX we have a list of the upcoming local contests and some more detail about the SARL HF Contests - the three big SARL contests.

Do enjoy!

TEST
YOUR STATION
SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS
ENJOY THE HOBBY!
73!

Contest calendar

	SARL HF Phone Contest	Sunday	2026/08/02	14:00	17:00
	SARL YL QSO Party	Sunday	2026/08/09	14:00	15:00
	SARL HF Digital Contest	Sunday	2026/08/09	13:00	16:00
	SARL Youth QSO Party	Saturday	2026/08/15	12:00	13:00
	SARL Wednesday 80 m Club Contest	Wednesday	2026/08/19	17:00	18:00
	SARL HF CW Contest	Sunday	2026/08/23	14:00	17:00
	SARL National Field Day	Saturday Sunday	2026/09/05 2026/09/06	08:00 - end 10:00	
	Africa FT4 DX Contest	Saturday	2026/09/12	15:00	18:00
	SARL September Equinox 6m DX Challenge	- start Wednesday - end Friday	2026/09/16 2026/10/16	00:01 - -	
	ZS SOTA Activity Weekend	Saturday Sunday	2026/09/19 2026/09/20	00:00 - end 21:59	





THE SARL HF CONTESTS



*Three Weekends, Three Modes,
One Big Celebration of HF Radio!*

Every August, South African amateurs take to the HF bands for a trio of classic contests: Phone, Digital, and CW. These events form the backbone of the SARL HF contest calendar, offering operators of all skill levels a chance to sharpen their technique, test their stations, and enjoy fast paced radio fun. And of course these are the big trophies and awards from the SARL themselves.

Whether you're a seasoned contester or a casual operator looking to dip your toes into HF competition, the August contests are friendly, accessible, and designed to encourage participation across the country.

Everything you need to know is available in the SARL Blue Book – the contest manual available as a free download from the MySARL.ORG.ZA website.

While you start downloading that in the background, here are the highlights.



PHONE CONTEST

First Sunday
of August
2 AUGUST



DIGITAL CONTEST

Second Sunday
of August
9 AUGUST



CW CONTEST

Third Sunday
of August
16 AUGUST



Time: 13:00 – 16:00 UTC
on a Sunday in August



Bands: 20, 40
and 80 metres



Exchange:
RS(T) and
your province



THE GOAL IS SIMPLE:

Make as many valid QSOs as possible with South African stations on 20, 40, and 80 metres and work as many different provinces as you can.



These contests are designed to encourage local HF activity, so the focus is on ZS to ZS contacts.



Each contest takes place between 13:00 and 16:00 UTC on a Sunday in August.



Contest bands are 20, 40, and 80m, and the exchange is RS(T) and your province.



First up is the Phone contest which takes place on the first Sunday of August every year. This year it is the 2nd of August.



Next is the Digital contest on the second Sunday in August. In case you don't have a calendar nearby, this year that will be the 9th of August.



Finally, the CW contest on the third Sunday in August. In case you have not figured the pattern out just yet, this year that will be the 16th of August.



MULTIPLIERS – A MAGICAL WAY TO INCREASE YOUR SCORE

Each South African province worked counts as a multiplier. So, for each province you work you multiply your QSO points. There are nine provinces, so the maximum multiplier is 9. Note this is NOT the 6 ZS-zones.

Let's say you get 5 points in the Phone contest and all of them were ZS2s. Your total stays 5 points. But if you had worked ZS1, ZS2, ZS3, ZS4, and ZS5 in your 5 contacts, then your score is a whopping $5 \times 5 = 25$. Multipliers are definitely the way to win contests!



CATEGORY – OPERATORS TYPICALLY ENTER IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- Single Operator either High Power or Low Power
- Multi Operator
- Club Stations
- Portable / Field Stations

Portable stations often do very well thanks to low noise floors and efficient antennas.



LOGS NEED TO BE UPLOADED TO THE MYSARL.ORG.ZA CONTEST PORTAL.

The SARL Contest Committee publishes results and commentary shortly afterward.



WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME?

The SARL HF contests are:

- ✓ **Short** (only 3 hours each)
- ✓ **Friendly** (local operators, familiar callsigns)
- ✓ **Skill building** (each mode teaches something different)
- ✓ **Great for clubs** (easy to run field stations)
- ✓ **Perfect for newcomers** (simple exchange, easy scoring)

They're also an excellent way to test your antenna performance across three weekends, build your operating skills, and have a lot of fun. Yes, you are allowed to enjoy it!



WINNING JUST ONE OF THESE CONTESTS GETS YOU AN AWARD AT THE SARL AWARDS DINNER AND, OF COURSE, EPIC BRAGGING RIGHTS!



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ Check band conditions early — 20m may open nicely in August.
- ✓ Use efficient antennas — even a simple dipole works brilliantly.
- ✓ Keep your exchange short and clear — speed matters.
- ✓ Log carefully — multipliers make a huge difference.
- ✓ Try all three modes — you might discover a new favourite.



Three weekends. Three modes. Countless QSOs. See you on the bands!



The RULE BOOK

REGULATIONS AND REGULATORY INFORMATION

ICASA'S 2026

DRAFT AMENDMENTS: WHERE WE STAND NOW

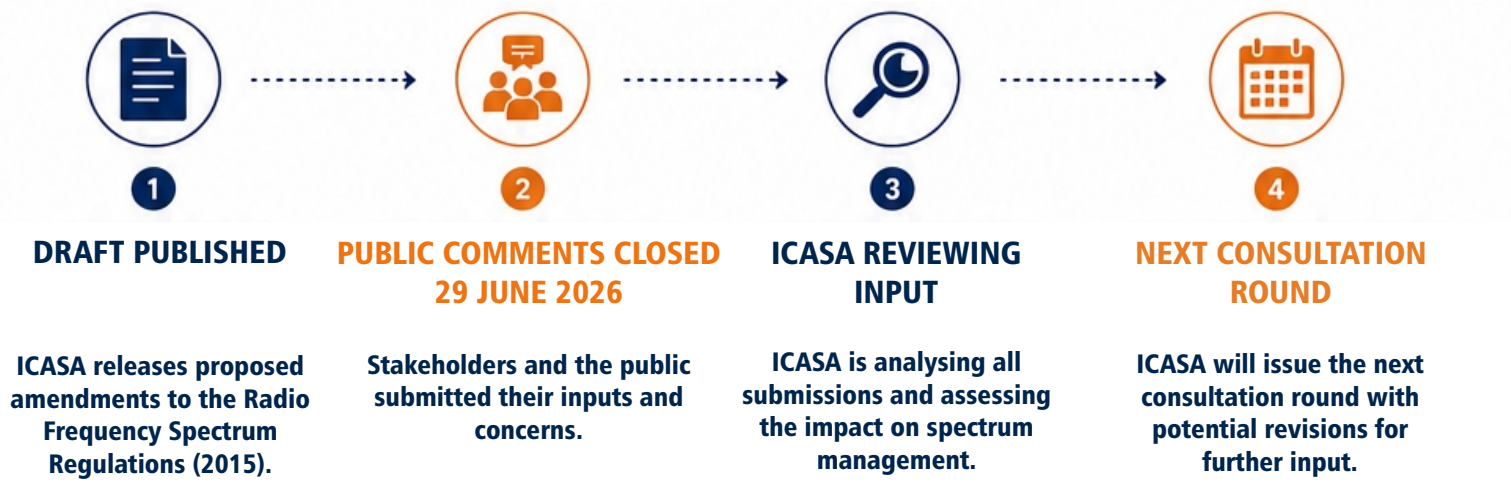
ICASA has released proposed amendments to the **Radio Frequency Spectrum Regulations (2015)**, signalling a tightening of South Africa's spectrum governance. Although the draft does not directly alter amateur allocations, it reshapes the regulatory environment in which we operate — especially for satellite enthusiasts, microwave experimenters, and operators near astronomy protected regions.

The amendments introduce new definitions, strengthen protections for radio quiet zones, and formalise monitoring requirements for satellite terminals. Public submissions closed on **29 June 2026**, and ICASA is now reviewing stakeholder input before issuing the next consultation round.

For amateurs, this is a reminder that spectrum pressure is rising. Commercial satellite networks, scientific installations, and national spectrum management priorities increasingly overlap with bands we share or neighbour. Staying informed and engaged is essential.

In future segments we will look at how ICASA is tightening up on definitions with a view to tightening up the legislative framework as a whole. While the framework does not focus exclusively on Amateur Radio, it does impact us in a very real way.

THE PROCESS - WHERE WE ARE



HELP KEEP OUR BANDS ALIVE!

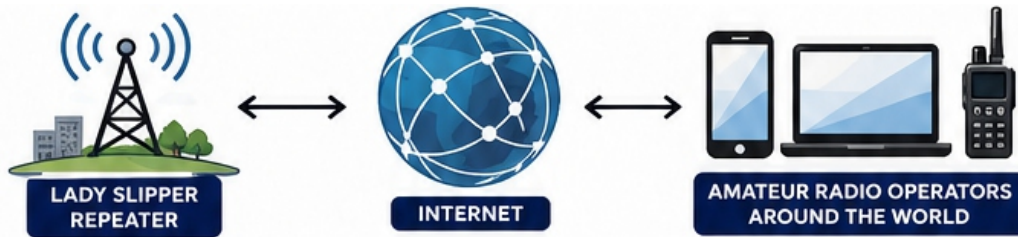
BE INFORMED. BE INVOLVED. BE HEARD.



ALLSTAR & ECHOLINK

CONNECTING AMATEUR RADIO BEYOND THE REPEATER

NOW AVAILABLE ON THE LADY SLIPPER REPEATER



Allstar and Echolink is now available on the Lady Slipper Repeater. But how does one use Allstar and Echolink? What are they?

This article will hopefully give you a better understanding of Allstar and Echolink and provide you with the necessary information to use them.

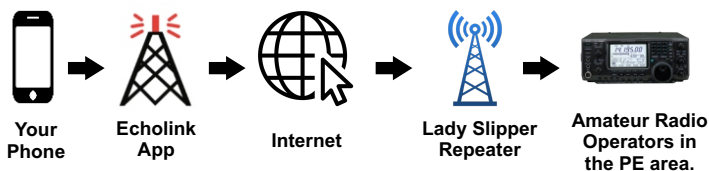
1 ECHOLINK



What is Echolink?

Echolink allows licensed amateur radio operators to communicate with one another using the internet, linking amateur radio stations, repeaters and operators around the world.

How does Echolink work?



Imagine this

You are on holiday in Germany, but you still want to listen to the PEARS bulleting on Monday evening.

With the Echolink on your phone you can:

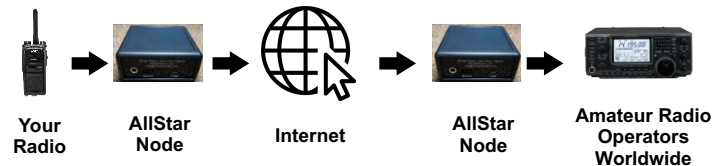
- ✓ Connect to the Lady Slipper Repeater
- ✓ Listen to the Bulletin
- ✓ Transmit back through the repeater
- ✓ Communicate with amateurs in the Port Elizabeth area

Distance is no longer the limitation!

2 ALLSTAR

What is AllStar?

Allstar is another system that links amateur radio repeaters and operators together using the internet. It uses digital voice network (VoIP) to connect repeaters, nodes and users worldwide.



Key Points about AllStar

- ✓ Operate through AllStar Nodes
- ✓ Accessible via your radio using DTMF commands
- ✓ Links to other AllStar nodes and Echolink
- ✓ Allows communication between repeaters and operators across the globe.

Accessing AllStar on the Lady Slipper Repeater

- * The Lady Slipper Repeater is connected to the AllStar network.
 - * Using your radio's DTMF keypad to connect to different nodes.
 - * Common commands:
 - * 22 - connect to AllStar Node
 - * 23 - Disconnect
 - * List available nodes
- (Refer to the repeater's command list for a full guide.)

ECHOLINK VS ALLSTAR

FEATURE	ECHOLINK	ALLSTAR
Main Access	App / Internet	Radio / AllStar Node
Uses Internet	✓	✓
Connects Repeaters	✓	✓
International Connections	✓	✓
How to Connect	Via EchoLink App on your phone	Via your radio using DTMF commands
Best For	Simple, easy use, anywhere in the world	Radio-to-radio communication and linking repeaters



IMPORTANT NOTE

Echolink is available to licensed amateur radio operators. Your callsign must be validated before you can use the system.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Have your radio licence (ICASA) handy
- ✓ Respect operating procedures and etiquette
- ✓ International connections may be subject to time differences and local rules
- ✓ Ask for help on the repeater or from fellow amateurs if you get stuck!



GETTING STARTED WITH ECHOLINK

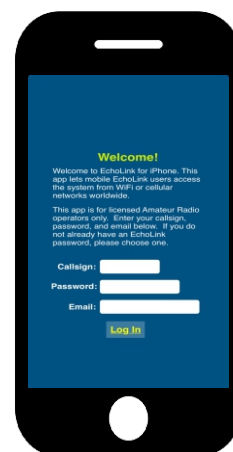
1 Download the App



2 Register your Callsign and create a password

3 Validate your Callsign Visit www.echolink.org and click on Validation. Enter your Callsign, and you may need to upload a copy of your ICASA licence.

You will receive a notification once you have been validated.

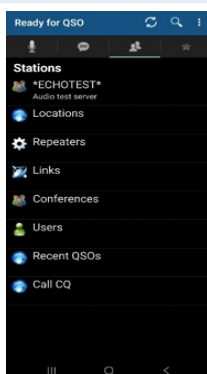


STEP GUIDE - USING THE APP

Follow these easy steps to connect to the Slipper Repeater using the app.

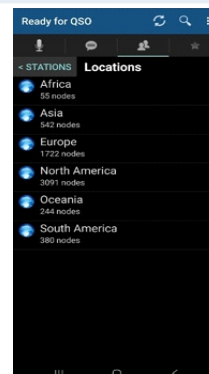
1

Once you are logged in, this is the screen you will see. Click on "Locations"



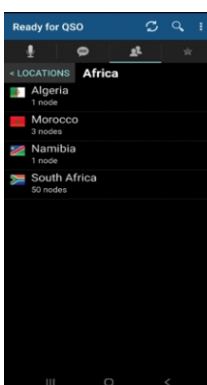
2

On the next screen you can select "Africa".



3

This screen shows the different countries in Africa with active nodes. Now select "South Africa"



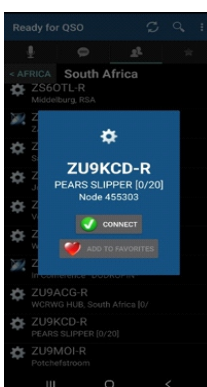
4

Once South Africa has been selected, all the online nodes are displayed in the country. Scroll down and look for ZU9KCD-R (PEARS SLIPPER). That will be the node you would want to connect to.



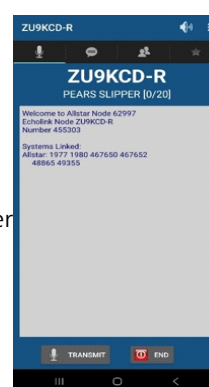
5

Once selected, tap on Connect. The App will now connect you to the Slipper Repeater



6

Once connected, you will see a screen like this. All transmissions on the repeater will be heard, and then you can talk to the repeater by using the transmit button. Should you wish to disconnect from the repeater, select "END".



ALLSTAR ON SLIPPER

How does it work?

SLIPPER ALLSTAR NODE NUMBER : 62997

Slipper is connected to the AllStar network - opening up a world of repeaters and stations via the internet!



SO HOW DOES ONE USE THE ALLSTAR ON SLIPPER?

Slipper has an assigned node number of **62997**. If you would like to connect to another station or repeater, you would need to use DTMF and know the node number you wish to connect to.

CONNECTING TO ANOTHER NODE

TO CONNECT TO ANOTHER NODE

For example, for connecting to ZS1I's hub, you would send

***3 49355**

*3 is the command to connect to another node.

TO DISCONNECT FROM THE NODE

To disconnect from the node, you would send

***1 49355**

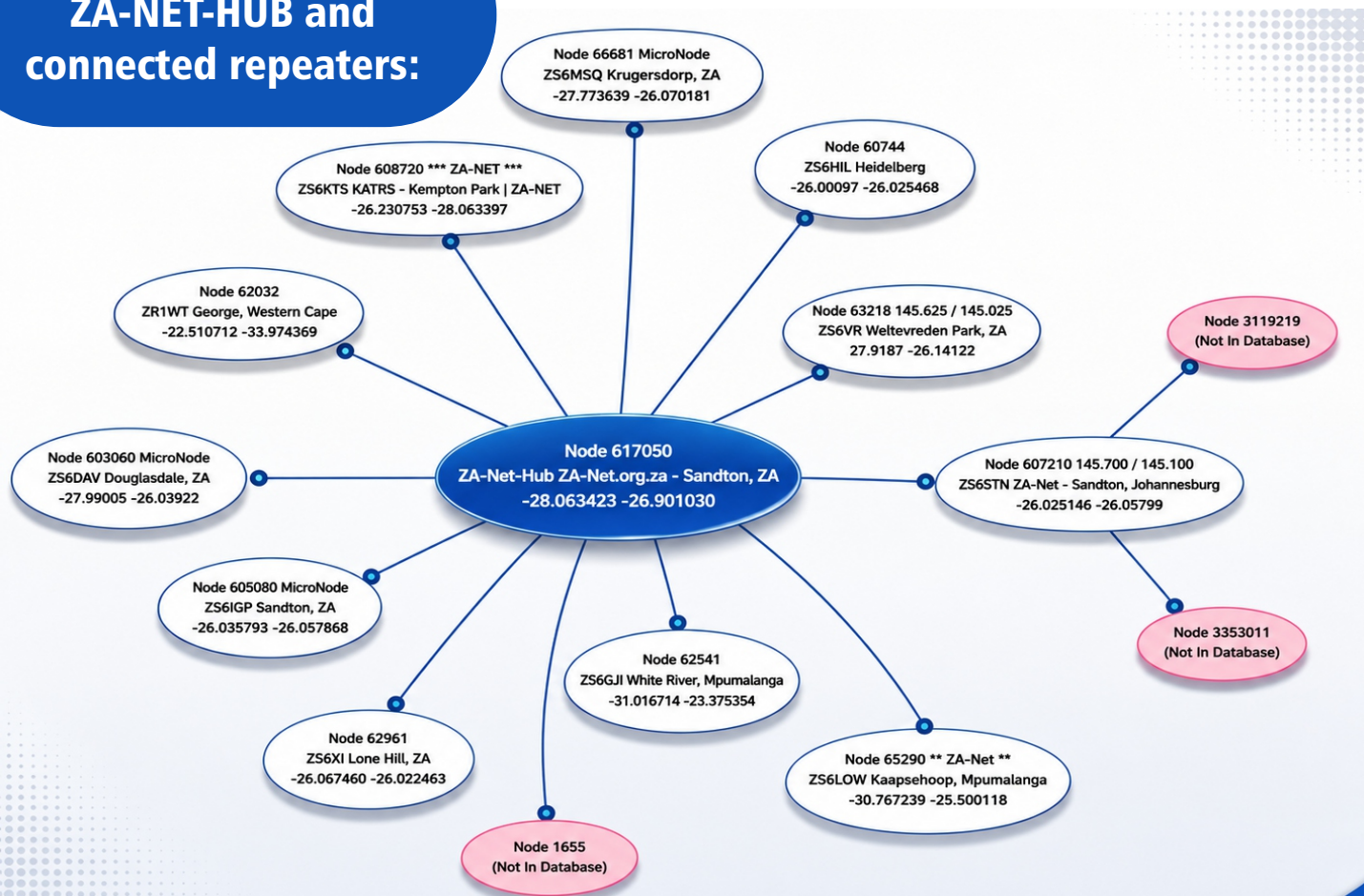
*1 being the command to disconnect.

POPULAR HUBS

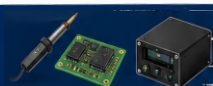
ZS1I's Hub
Node: 49355

ZA-NET-HUB
Sandton Node: 617050

Bubble chart of the ZA-NET-HUB and connected repeaters:



Please look out in the next edition of QSX for an article on
How to build your own AllStar Unit for your QTH.





PRACTICAL SHACK-LEVEL NOISE REDUCTION TIPS

A QSX TECHNICAL FEATURE

By Dave ZS2DH

Modern amateur radio operators face a challenge that didn't exist 30 years ago: noise everywhere. Solar inverters, LED lamps, routers, chargers, TVs, Ethernet cables, pool pumps, and even your neighbour's fence energizer all contribute to a rising RF noise floor. The good news is that most of this noise can be identified, classified, and mitigated with simple, practical steps — no expensive DSP boxes, no exotic filters, no magic.

This article focuses on real-world, doable changes that any ham can apply in their shack. We will look at how to identify noise, understand what type it is, and how to get rid of the problem.



FINDING THE NOISE: THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP

Noise reduction begins with detective work. You can't fix what you haven't found, and guessing usually leads to wasted time and money. Fortunately, identifying noise is surprisingly easy with tools you already have.

THE THREE ESSENTIAL TOOLS

You don't need lab equipment. These three items solve almost every noise mystery:

1 YOUR BREAKER PANEL



2 A PORTABLE AM RADIO



3 AN SDR WATERFALL



TOGETHER, THEY FORM A POWERFUL NOISEHUNTING KIT.





THE BREAKER PANEL ISOLATION TEST

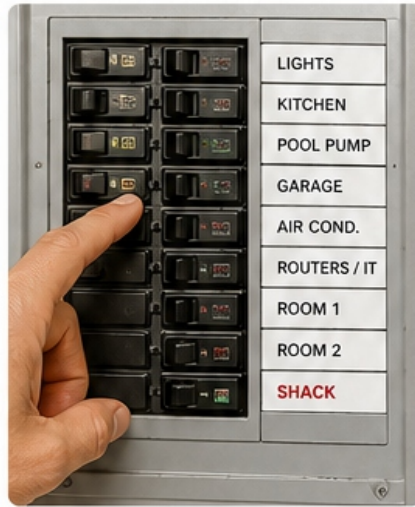
This is the single most effective technique for identifying noise circuits.

1 Turn off all breakers except the shack.

2 Listen on HF or watch your SDR waterfall.

3 Turn breakers on one at a time.

4 When noise suddenly appears, you've found the circuit feeding the culprit.



This isolates the zone of the noise. From there we start running around the house with an AM radio. The AM radio helps you pinpoint the exact device. Turning off the breakers should turn off the noise – if the noise is local to you. It will not turn off your neighbour's fence for example.



If you have the battery power to do a contest with the mains off and the house out of power (and the family escaping to a nearby mall with lights and music) it is a very pleasant little bubble to be in. My therapist recommends it!



USING A PORTABLE AM RADIO

Tune the radio between stations and walk around your home. The AM band is extremely sensitive to electrical noise, making it ideal for sniffing out trouble. This should be obvious, but a brief explanation might make it clearer if it seems a little hazy as to why AM and not FM.



AM detects amplitude variations and noise is amplitude-based. Most manmade electrical noise (LED drivers, SMPS chargers, routers, solar inverters, fence energizers) produces rapid amplitude spikes. AM receivers literally demodulate amplitude changes.



Using AM you'll hear:

- Buzzing from LED lamps and chargers
- Wideband hash from routers and TVs
- Ticking pulses from solar charge controllers
- Sharp clicks from fence energizers
- Strong peaks near wiring carrying PLC signals



Move the radio close to wall plugs, appliances, lamps, and wiring. When the noise gets louder, you've found a suspect.

Another potential gotcha is the frequency to tune to on the AM radio? Let's say you have interference on 15m. Set your radio into the 15m band, right? You might think so, but no. You tune the radio to very low frequency – frequencies typical of the culprits like LEDs.



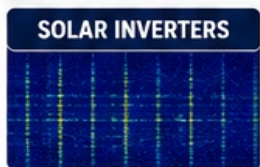
This is around 500–1600 kHz.

Why this low when the interference is at 15m? Well on 15m you are hearing the faint 300th harmonic (roughly guessing) of the actual noise. AM in the kHz zone is listening to the fundamental frequency. In short, the AM is listening to the fundamental frequency screaming at you while your 15m band is hearing the faint murmur of the 300th harmonic.

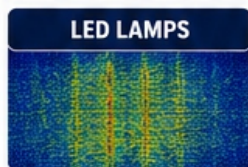


READING SDR WATERFALL SIGNATURES

Let's look at the culprits. Different noise sources create distinctive patterns:



Wide combs spaced evenly



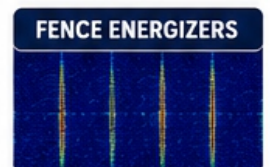
Fuzzy broadband noise



Narrow carriers at regular intervals



Hash with periodic spikes



Sharp pulses every second or two



Once you recognise these patterns, you can identify noise sources without even leaving the shack.



UNDERSTANDING NOISE TYPES

Noise comes in three flavours. Knowing which one you're dealing with determines how to get rid of it.



CONDUCTED NOISE

travels through power lines into your radio or power supply.

Typical offenders include :

LED bulbs	Solar inverter AC side
Phone chargers	Pool pump controllers
Cheap switch-mode supplies	

RADIATED NOISE

is emitted directly into the air.

Here the main culprits include

Routers	Solar inverter DC side
Tvs	Electric Fence energizers
Ethernet cables	

COMMON-MODE NOISE

is the third type of noise, and it travels along the outside of your coax, entering the shack.

This bunch of felons include

End-fed antennas without a counterpoise or RF ground	Coax running parallel to housewiring
Poor baluns	Antennas too close to the house.



Each noise type (conducted, radiated, and common mode) requires a different mitigation strategy.



MITIGATION TECHNIQUES

These are practical, everyday fixes that may deliver real results. They are ones you can apply tonight and that will not cost you an arm and a leg.

REDUCING CONDUCTED NOISE

Conducted noise rides along your power lines and into your radio equipment.



Ferrites are your first line of defence!

Ferrites (especially mix 31 for HF) are incredibly effective.

Place ferrites on:

Radio DC power cables
Power supply AC cables
Router power leads
TV power leads
Solar inverter AC output
Ethernet cables

Multiple ferrites often outperform a single one. If a device is particularly noisy, stack several ferrites on its cables.

USE A LINEAR POWER SUPPLY FOR HF

Switch-mode power supplies are convenient but noisy. A linear supply is quiet and stable — ideal for HF.



DEDICATED SHACK CIRCUIT

If possible: Put the shack on its own breaker

Keep noisy appliances on other circuits

Avoid sharing neutral paths with solar inverters



REPLACE NOISY LED LAMPS

Some LED bulbs are RF disasters. Swap them for filament-style LEDs or higher-quality brands.



REDUCING RADIATED NOISE

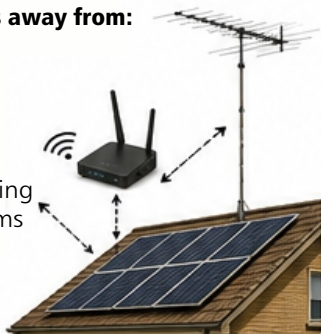
Radiated noise travels through the air and is picked up by your antenna.



DISTANCE IS YOUR BEST FRIEND
— every metre between your antenna and a noise source helps.

Move antennas away from:

House walls
Solar panels
Routers
Tvs
Ethernet wiring
Inverter rooms



USE SHIELDED ETHERNET (CAT6 STP)

Unshielded Ethernet radiates like an antenna. Shielded cable with grounded connectors dramatically reduces radiated noise.



ROUTER PLACEMENT

Move the router away from:
The shack
Coax runs
Radio equipment



SOLAR INVERTER NOISE

Solar systems are notorious noise generators.

Mitigation:

Ferrites on AC and DC lines
Keep coax away from inverter wiring
Use balanced antennas (dipoles, loops)
Add common-mode chokes at the antenna feed point



FENCE ENERGIZERS

They produce sharp pulses that we HF receivers hate. I have a neighbour with one of these and I can assure you that he does not get a Christmas card from me!

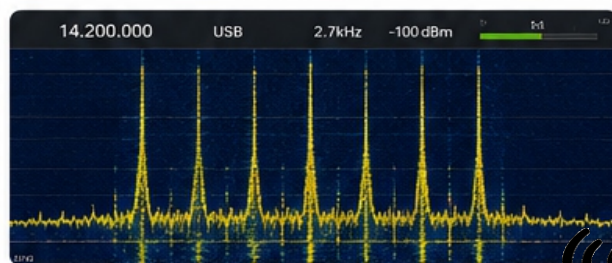
Mitigation:

Ferrites on energizer leads

Keep antennas away from fence lines

Ground the fence properly

Use your radio's noise blanker
NB works well on pulse noise

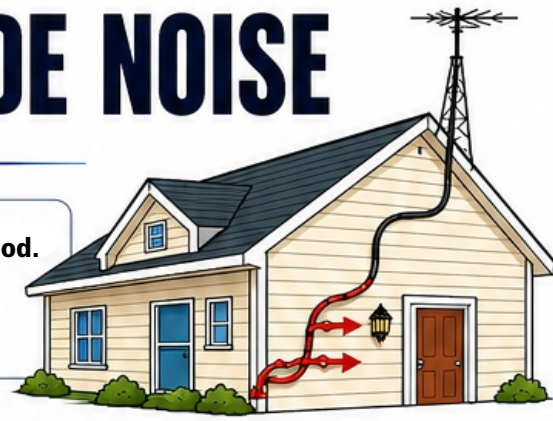


Pulse noise from fence energizer – use NB (noise blanker)!



REDUCING COMMON-MODE NOISE

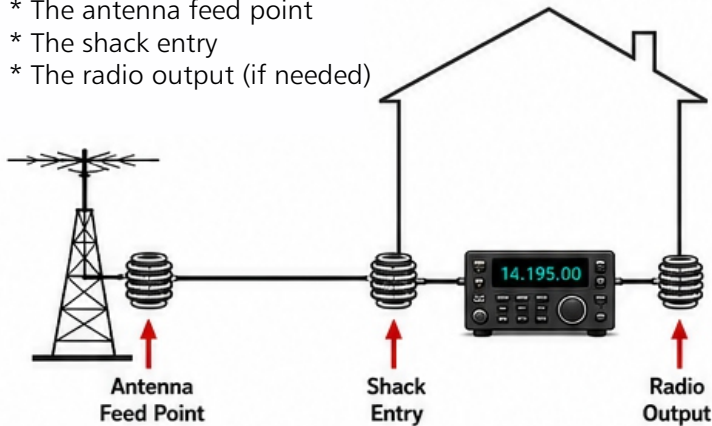
Common-mode noise is often the biggest problem — and the most misunderstood. Remember this is coming down the outside of your coax and walking in the proverbial front door – thanks to you giving it an easy way in.



USE PROPER CHOKES

Install chokes at:

- * The antenna feed point
- * The shack entry
- * The radio output (if needed)



A good HF choke uses:



- 10–15 turns of RG58/213 on FT24031 ferrite OR
- A commercial 1:1 current balun

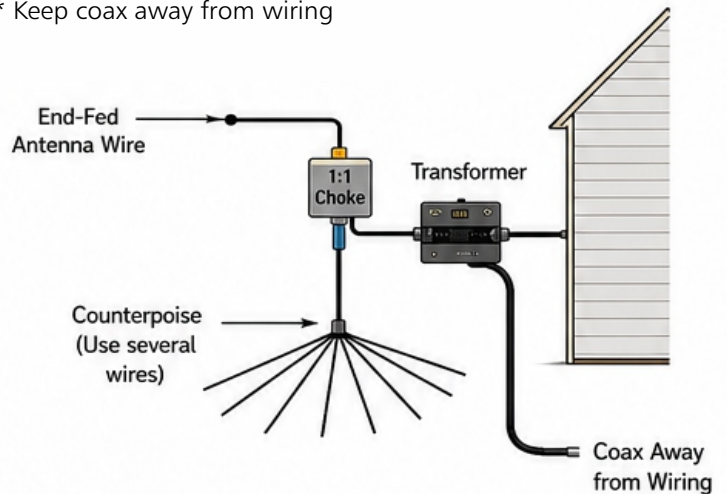


AVOID END-FED ANTENNAS NEAR THE HOUSE

End-feds are notorious for picking up noise.

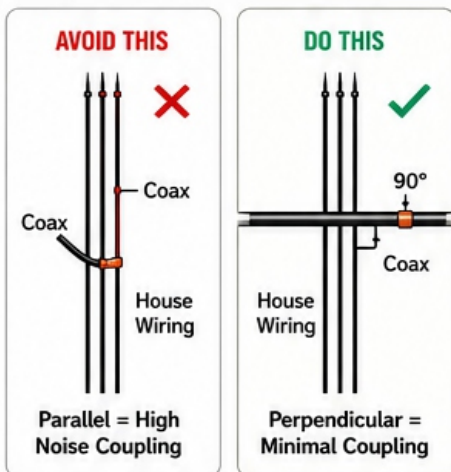
If you use one:

- * Add a proper 1:1 choke after the transformer
- * Keep the transformer away from walls
- * Add a counterpoise
- * Keep coax away from wiring



RUN COAX PERPENDICULAR TO HOUSE WIRING

Parallel runs = noise coupling
Crossing at 90° = minimal coupling



BOND ALL SHACK EQUIPMENT

Use a short, wide copper strap to a ground bus.

This reduces:

- RF feedback
- Common-mode noise
- Audio hum
- Hot chassis issues



A PRACTICAL NOISE-HUNTING WORKFLOW

Here's a simple, repeatable process that works for every ham:

- 1 Listen on HF - identify noisy bands
- 2 Use AM radio - find hotspots
- 3 Breaker test - isolate the circuit
- 4 SDR waterfall - identify the signature
- 5 Apply ferrites - reduce conducted noise
- 6 Move antennas - reduce radiated noise
- 7 Add chokes - reduce common-mode noise
- 8 Re-test - confirm improvement

 This workflow turns frustration into progress and progress into more QSOs. If only your neighbours would do the same on their side!

FINAL THOUGHTS

Noise reduction isn't about buying gadgets — it's about understanding how noise enters your station and applying simple, practical fixes. Most hams can reduce their noise floor dramatically with ferrites, better cable routing, improved grounding, and smarter antenna placement.



The result is a quieter shack, stronger signals, and a far more enjoyable time on the bands.





SOME HAM JOKES



I told my wife I'd be off the radio in five minutes.

That was three solar cycles ago!



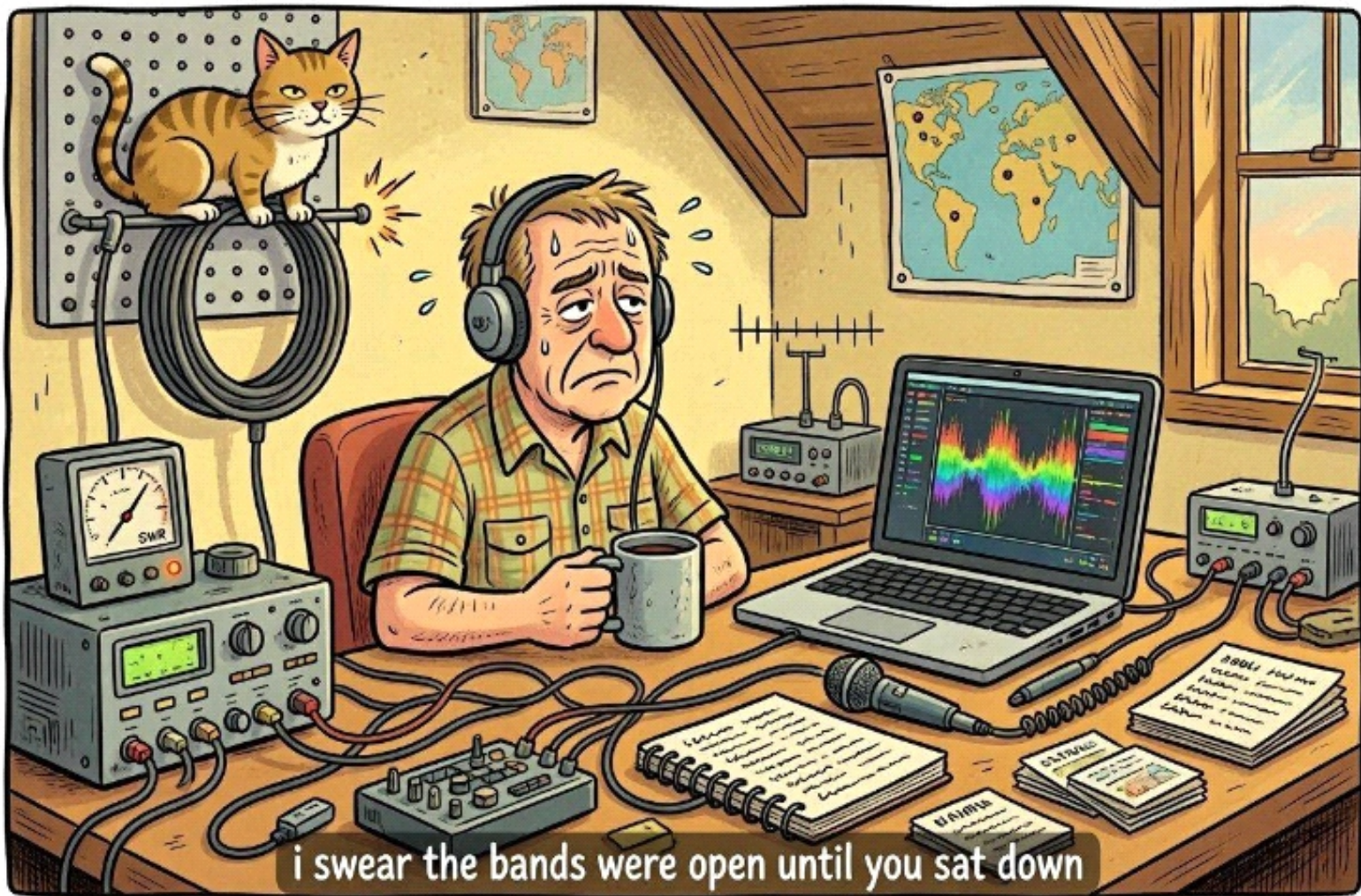
How does a ham send a break-up message?

In re-morse code 😊



HAM RADIO:
IT'S A CONTACT SPORT





A TASTE OF WHAT IS TO COME...



More club news
and updates



DX news and
adventure



Exciting contests
and challenges



Technical articles
and tips

In next month's edition you can expect more club news, contests, DX, and technical articles including all about making your own **AllStar** unit for your QTH.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCES



CAN YOU FIND 10 DIFFERENCES?



THANK YOU

Thank you for joining us for another edition of QSX. We hope this month's articles have informed, inspired, and encouraged you to spend a little more time on the air and connect with fellow amateurs near and far.

Wishing you clear skies, good propagation, and plenty of memorable contacts throughout the month ahead.

*Until September...
73 and happy DXing!*

