

THE MUSE



-----January 2025-----

The newsletter of the MUSICK POINT RADIO GROUP (INC.) NZART BRANCH 86
Incorporating The Society for the Preservation of Amplitude Modulation (SPAM)
and **Green Radios On The Air (GROTA) News.**

Musick Memorial Radio Station, Bucklands Beach, Auckland. Call Sign-ZL1ZLD.

BRANCH 86 NZART NET- TUESDAYS, 7.30PM, 145.775 MHz, Musick Point Repeater. All welcome!

SPAM WEB SDR Remote Receiver - <http://spamnz.zapto.org:8901/>

SPAM KIWI SDR Remote Receiver- musickpoint.ddns.net:8073/

Musick Point Website- <https://musickpointradio.org> Webmaster-Neil ZL1NZ.

SPAM ZL6AM or ZL1ZLD AM Nets- Fridays 8.30PM, 3.850MHz, Wednesdays at 11.30Hrs, 7.125MHz

Museletter Editor- Martyn, ZL3CK.

Meeting- Second Sunday of the Month (Except May-Third Sunday, to avoid Mothers' Day)

NEXT MEETING- **Sunday January 12th at 1pm. Coffee and tea provided. Talk next meeting-**



View from the north deck of the Musick Memorial Radio Station. The Waiheke Car Ferry is in view.

From the Chair

In an effort to appease the editor, I have been 'inspired' to sit down and have a go at this before I have the opportunity to put it off. It was a mad rush up to Christmas day and then the day itself was a manic mash-up of food preparations, drinking beer, getting the charcoal going in the Weber, drinking beer, preparing the turkey while the charcoal failed to get up a good burn, rebuilding the charcoal over yet more firelighters and lighting it, drinking beer, and finally managing to organise the very hot charcoal into the side 'pockets' and setting the turkey in place and closing the lid. My normal cooking time for a turkey is three hours but I was dubious that the recommended "best" charcoal briquettes were about as good as the last ones I experienced. I was correct because, on checking on progress after about 75 minutes, I found that there was lots of ash and not too many briquettes left. A quick fill-up was executed, with a few more extras for 'support'. Anyway, after three hours, the turkey was duly carved and ready for our enjoyment. What a great day and a good meal, too.

I thought that I was a good person, but the way I react when people drive slowly in the right lane would suggest otherwise.

Last week, when I arrived at Musick Point, Rob, ZL4ROB and Harry, ZL1BK had a fibreglass pole erected and were hoisting and lowering yet another of the many variations of aerials. This one was a sort of variation of the flowerpot type but intended to be elevated – a good thing with most aerials. Lots of measurements were observed, on the Mini VNA, and discussed each time the aerial was hoisted, and the occasional pruning was also provided by Rob.

A while later, Rob and Harry were to be found tracing a coax to the tuner cabinet for the Marconi and testing it for suitability to use for a receive aerial for the Kiwi SDR. The results were rather pleasing and provide us with the opportunity to move whatever we use as the SDR's aerial far enough away from any source of RF, which has been a very real issue for quite a while now. With that being satisfactorily resolved, most of us retired to the "coffee room" for a wrap-up of the day's activities.

I just saw three people jogging past outside and it inspired me to get up and close the blinds.

At home, I have had a couple of issues with my "Not DX Commander" multi-band vertical antenna, so will be pulling it down in the next few days so that I can give the whole thing a good 'servicing'. There are a few elements that I will be replacing because the insulation has deteriorated and is flaking off. In fact, I will most likely replace them all so that everything is new. Thank goodness I noted all the element lengths when I built the antenna, and brought each element into a good place resonance-wise (I don't like the term 'tuning' because it is NOT). I can make up the new elements in advance, as well as the various cords and bungies that keep the elements taught. Then it should be a simple task to drop the pole and replace everything in a short time.

Some days the supply of available swear-words is insufficient to meet my demands.

With Christmas just behind us, we have the New Year celebrations to endure, and then New Year's Day brings us our own "Park On The Air" event in the West field from about 9am. Bring your portable gear and set up for a day of fun talking to like-minded 'idiots' all over the radio waves. I hope to see you all there. If you are unaware of the fact, Musick Point is an actual registered park (NZ0241) for those of you who chase the POTA points.

I recently signed up for an online workout course that I discovered was too advanced for me, so when the instructor said to "do a plank and then bring your knee to the opposite elbow," I did a modified version, where I turned off my computer and made pancakes instead.

Have a Happy New Year all and I will see you on the other side, in 2025.

Until next month: 73, and call CQ. David, ZL1DRV

Christmas BBQ and H Night Report from ZL1ZLD-

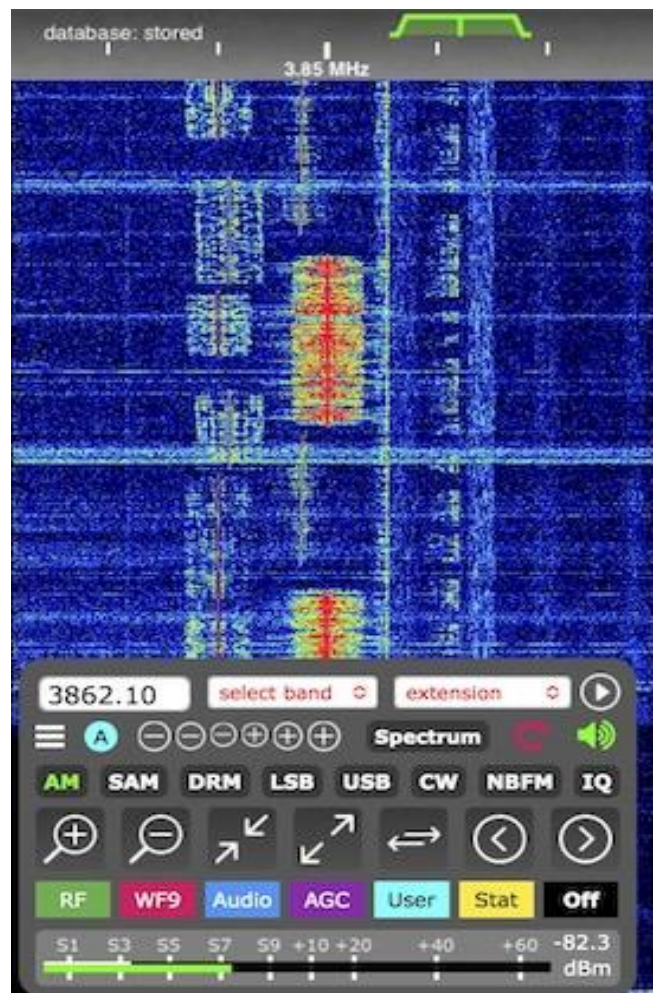
A fine day gave us pleasant conditions for the annual December meeting, Needless to say, there will be no minutes for December! **Dave ZL1DL** and Chef **Mark ZL2MOH** made a highly efficient team to provide about 20 of us an excellent lunch with lots of variety and healthy food.

A select group of dedicated AM operators remained on-site after the MPRG annual Christmas BBQ, so they were fairly weary by the time the contest was over at 10PM. The actual 'contest' went well, with about 40 contacts over the night and 102 points claimed. There were more vintage stations on this year which made for a good score. We worked entirely on the vintage equipment, giving all our contacts three points in each half hour session. **Rob ZL2IW** will send a report and collate the scores as previously, thanks Rob!

The RCA/NZPO 1309 transmitter was fired up, the first time for some weeks as we had 'gone' from 80 meters to 40 for the weekday net some time ago. However, the old girl was happy to be pushing out her usual 241 Watts of pure plate-modulated crystal locked AM on 3.850MHz.



RCA 80 meter Vintage Transmitter at Musick Point



AM activity seen on the ZL1ZLD "Kiwi" SDR receiver

Operators at ZL1ZLD were- **Dave ZL1DL**, **Maurice ZL1MPU**, **Steve ZL1FS**, **Rob ZL4ROB** and **Martyn ZL3CK**. We made about 40 contacts in all. The leftovers from the BBQ lunch meant the operators did not go hungry at all!

Rob ZL2IW was operating **ZL6H** putting in a reasonable signal up here all the way from Wanaka, where he was operating portable in the camper van with a linear, giving him the necessary "oomph" to get signals 1002 Km (as the crow flies) to Musick Point from Wanaka.



Maurice ZL1MPU with Dave ZL1DL manning the vintage station desk at ZL1ZLD on H night.



No! Not me! ZL4ROB (R) scribing for Steve ZL1FS (visiting from Whatawhata) on "H" night.



Dave 'supervising', with Steve on the Collier & Beale 1941 Rx, Mark "Chef" ZL2MOH hiding in the "modern" room..

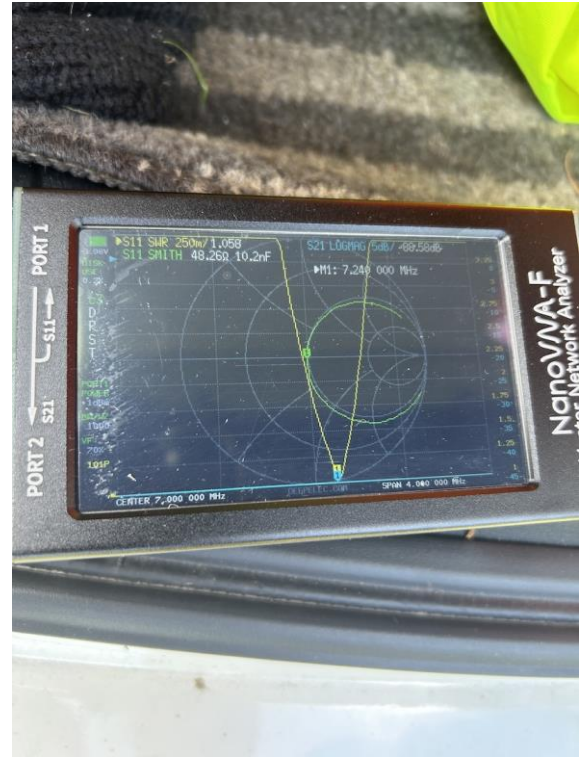
Other MPRG News-

Rob ZL4ROB and **Harry ZL1BK** were to be found in the park the other Sunday busy experimenting with portable vertical aerial poles. One question they wanted to answer was to decide if a carbon fiber pole was any different electrically from a fibreglass one, and what difference ground plane (counterpoise) wires made.

Find attached photos from the vertical antenna testing in the park yesterday. Each addition of an earth wire lowered the SWR by approximately 0.1. The end result was with three ground wires laying directly on the ground and an SWR of 1.058. Dave suggested that the optimum ground wires could be 16. We all laughed and then carried on. Without the 16 earth wires of course.

Harry put up his pole as a comparison. Harry has a carbon fibre pole of a similar length. My pole was all fibreglass. We noted that the carbon fibre pole was less effected by the wind, perhaps because of less surface area and slightly more rigid. The fibreglass pole is slightly heavier and more flexible.

We had carried out some comparison checks the week before that are also worth noting. We ran a single wire up the 11m fibreglass pole and connected a single ground. The VNA showed that it was resonating around 6.9MHZ. Bringing the 10m carbon fibre pole close to the first pole and antenna wire, saw a frequency shift of approximately 180kHz down to 6.720.



In summary:

- The fibreglass pole cost \$156.00 landed whereas the carbon fibre pole was around the \$76.
- The fibreglass pole weighs in at 2.6Kg whereas the carbon fibre half that
- The extra weight of the fibreglass pole was not really a problem, but needs more substantial support.
- The fibreglass pole was quite flexible and we used the halyard as a bit of a guy up wind for support. This may be a problem on windier days
- Introducing the carbon fibre pole next to the fibreglass made some difference though easily compensated for.

We have further tests on the fibreglass verses carbon fibre and will keep everyone posted.

Rob ZL4ROB.

AM News-

The **80 meter Friday night net** on 3.850 at 8.30pm continues to get good numbers, and is controlled by **Martyn ZL3CK** on every second week, with **Rob ZL4ROB** filling in when he can, thanks very much Rob. Rob did say "It's a difficult net to run"- thanks Rob I kind of knew that already!!

Your support for AM is appreciated- it's something different from the usual.

The **Wednesday AM net** (7.125MHz at 11.30am) continues weekly with regular support, and occasional 'visitor' check-ins too. Some have discovered 40 meter AM on their rigs actually works quite well! Older rigs need careful setting to avoid running over into SSB mode -which sounds terrible and is very hard to copy! Monitoring your signal for overmodulation is easy with an on-line remote SDR receiver, or an oscilloscope if you have one, which was the 'old' way of doing so.

Correspondence-

The extremely colourful certificate (below) has been received by **Wally ZL1JLM**, one of our regulars on the AM nets. He's often told us of his Dxing successes on the net, and sent a photo of his vertical aerial, which shows very good SWR over all the higher bands.



Multiband Vertical at ZL1JLM's QTH



QSL Card from VK2JGC and VK3OZY received by Wally ZL1JLM.

From Steven ZL2UV-

I used my ZC1 on 3750, had one contact with ZL3TK, then couldn't hear much for noise. Didn't make any transmissions using QRO. I couldn't tell if there were any other stations operating, so stayed off air, Cheers, Steven ZL2UV.

From Craig Symington-

'It is with sadness (and a measure of excitement) that I have decided to return to South Africa.

I wish to thank all at the club for the hospitality and fellowship I experienced there. I hold fond memories, though I wasn't able to participate in much in my 6 years in Auckland.

Best 73 to all.

Craig Symington

Hopefully soon ZS7 (RH) again'.

Craig, we are very sorry that you will be leaving us, and our good wishes for your new life goes with you. Please keep in touch- we might manage a ZL-ZS contact sometime!- ZL3CK

GROTA Report for December from Kelvin ZL3KB-

Hi Martyn, December update below:

As it was getting near “that time of year” we chose to be sociable and hold our monthly trial all in the same paddock, and with some of our radios, keeping within shouting distance is a distinct advantage. Bryan chased the council and got the key to one of our ‘red zone’ areas near the Avon estuary, so that gave us distance from the “what on earth are you doing?” questions from passersby.



The under 30s- Braden, James, Aiden, BJ.

Nearly all our members took the opportunity to drag along every green radio they had, which made for an eclectic display of army ballast. As you can imagine, there were no DX records broken in this paddock, but Des managed to be heard on the Musick Point SDR using his Larkspur C12 on morse. Similar attempts from me on the A13HP ‘fell on stony ground’. The biggest noise would have come from Shorty’s 100W PRC47 , but being SSB it was like the proverbial bacon sandwich....

As there were radios members hadn’t seen before, we used the opportunity to do some introductions on tuning procedures, and lessons on what to look for when things go wrong. Some people believe we should be able to tune up with our eyes closed, so the “**shopping bag challenge**” was invented to test your skills at tuning a WS48 set in the dark. All participants achieve the goal! Some refused to be seen with a bag on their head!



Peter ZL3IA getting to grips with a 48 set in the dark...(gee its like a New World in here...)



Debugging a naughty ZC1 – Mike, Noel, Ray, and Shorty.



Mason ZL3MBS and proud Granddad Bruce ZL3TFM



Des ZL3AK working ZL1ZLD on his C12.



Peter ZL3IA listening hard for dx from 20m away...



Bryan ZL3BHS on the relatively modern (but acceptably green!) PRC 320.

GROTA report (contd.)

Other notable events were : we almost had a 21st century world record of five WS38 sets on the air at one time, but one set refused to receive. Also, newly licensed 13-year-old Mason ZL3MBS on his WS48 making five supervised contacts, in fact we had five guys under thirty!

Thanks to all the GROTA frolickers ZL3AK, ZL3MWD, ZL3IA, ZL3RAM, ZL3TFM, ZL3MBS, ZL3APB, ZL3BRK, ZL3KDOT, ZL3BHS, ZL4OW and ZL3LTP, who all seemed to enjoy the experience.

The final count of sets was : WS38 x5, WS48 x6, WS21, WS58 , WS62, ZC1 x6, ZC8, A510, A13HP, C12, PRC320, PRC47, totalling 24 'working' sets.

Until next year, 73s de Kelvin ZL3KB

Used and New Equipment Sales

Saturday March 8th 2025, Te Puke Amateur Radio Club Market Day branch 53 NZART

At Paengaroa Community Hall 4 Old Coach Rd. Paengaroa.

Venue opens for vendors 6.30 AM. Table (1.8 Mt) prices- presale \$20. On day of sale \$25 .
Half table \$12.00 or \$15 son day of sale.

Sale time 9:30 AM. Door charge \$2.00 per person.

For further information contact **Syd Rowe ZL1LWR** (07) 533-1029 or 0272488664

E-mail – sydrowe@extra.co.nz

Breakfast available from 7:30 AM to 11:00 AM at reasonable prices.

Note- No. 19 Set amplifier for sale on the ZLham site- see link below.

Free Amateur Radio Buy, Sell and Wanted website-

See "ZL Ham Ads" and "The Machine", the MPRG Blog-

<https://ZLham.net.nz>

<https://MPRG.zlham.net.nz>

Editor's Final - Well folks that's it for 2024, thank you all for being part of the Society for the Preservation of AM and the Musick Point Radio group. Thanks especially to those who send articles and correspondence in to make the **Museletter** interesting and hopefully relevant to your amateur radio activity. Wishing everyone a very happy, healthy, and 'radioactive' 2025.

Martyn ZL3CK