

 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">FISTS DOWN UNDER</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Newsletter – November 2012</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Editor & QSL Manager for ZL: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX, P.O. Box 15078, Otaki 5542, New Zealand. - Tel: 06-364-6339</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter Distribution & QSL Manager for VK: Chris Thompson, VK2CTN, P O Box 65, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Membership/Awards Liaison: Ralph Sutton, ZL2AOH, 12c Herbert Gardens, 186 The Terrace, Wellington 6011, New Zealand Tel: 0-4-473-0847. Fax: 0-4-473-0848</p> <p style="text-align: center;">QSL Manager for ZL6FF: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX at address above. QSL Manager for VK2FDU: Chris Thompson VK2CTN at address above</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Address e-mails for all persons above to: <fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz> Web site --: <www.fistsdownunder.org></p>	  <p style="text-align: center;">FISTS 25th Anniversary</p>
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SUGGESTED FISTS CLUB CALLING FREQUENCIES

1.808 MHz (160m) – 3.528 MHz (80m) – 7.028 MHz (40m) – 10.118 MHz (30m) –
14.058 MHz (20m) – 18.085 MHz (17m) – 21.058 MHz (15m) – 24.918 MHz (12m) – 28.058 MHz (10m)

Members are reminded that the above frequencies are suggested calling frequencies. If they are busy, it is suggested that once you establish contact with a station, it may be prudent to change frequency down the band, avoiding other calling frequencies of known clubs.

NEW MEMBERS

This month we welcome back **VK2AXL/MM0AXL-Jack Cook #9666**. Jack's former call was VK2CJC. Jack has recently resumed on-air activity having been QRT for some time. He resides in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales

We welcome new member **VK2GAZ-Garry #14151** from Richmond., New South Wales. Richmond is about 65 km to the northwest of Sydney; probably best known for being the home of a major Royal Australian Air Force base. Garry writes this about himself:-

First licensed as Novice in 1986 with the call VK2MGC and upgraded in 1987 to Full Call with the new call VK2AGC. Now hold VK2GAZ and VK2YA.



Photo: - Altona town centre

Mark writes: - Returning Ham originally from Wellington where I was registered as an Amateur in 1983. I moved overseas but didn't have the time, room or opportunity to practice my hobby anymore until I settled down in Melbourne, Australia. I wanted to take up CW again as I believe it is an art which takes time to be proficient. Aside from the fact that it gets through when other signals fail. That makes it strategically important and deserves to be considered.

Ex Royal Australian Air Force member, so moved about a fair bit but settled in Richmond NSW about 17 years ago.

Gear consists of FT-101E, FT-7B, FT-817 and FT-897 with assorted power supplies, antenna tuners and of course far too many Morse keys. Antenna system is 80-meter dipole, Windom cut for 40 meters and squid pole for 20 meters.

We also welcome **VK3DEE-Mark Brandwood #14152** an addition to our growing number of Victorian members. Mark lives in Altona that lies 18 km to the west of the Melbourne city centre.

MEMBERS NEWS

Thanks to these members for enclosing a donation with their subscriptions:- **ZL3GIL-Gilbert #14102, ZL1PY-Rod #9622 and ZL1BLR-Len #9061.**

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in November 2012, most of which will be of more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to WA7BNM Contest Calendar <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Nov 2
Ukrainian DX Contest	1200Z, Nov 3 to 1200Z, Nov 4
ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW	2100Z, Nov 3 to 0300Z, Nov 5
High Speed Club CW Contest	0900Z-1100Z, Nov 4 and 1500Z-1700Z, Nov 4
NZART Straight Key Night	0700z-0900z, Nov 4 (See below)
ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400Z, Nov 6
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Nov 9
OK/OM DX Contest, CW	1200Z, Nov 10 to 1200Z, Nov 11
Kentucky QSO Party	1400Z, Nov 10 to 0200Z, Nov 11
SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	0000Z-2359Z, Nov 11
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Nov 14 and 1900Z-2000Z, Nov 14 and 0300Z-0400Z, Nov 15
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Nov 15
NCCC Sprint	0215Z-0300Z, Nov 16
LZ DX Contest	1200Z, Nov 17 to 1200Z, Nov 18
All Austrian 160-Meter Contest	1600Z, Nov 17 to 0700Z, Nov 18
RSGB 2nd 1.8 MHz Contest, CW	2100Z, Nov 17 to 0100Z, Nov 18
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0200Z-0400Z, Nov 19
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Nov 23
CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Nov 24 to 2400Z, Nov 25
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Nov 28
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Nov 28 and 1900Z-2000Z, Nov 28 and 0300Z-0400Z, Nov 29
QRP ARCI Topband Sprint	0000Z-0600Z, Nov 29
RSGB 80m Club Sprint, CW	2000Z-2100Z, Nov 29
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Nov 30
ARRL 160-Meter Contest	2200Z, Nov 30 to 1600Z, Dec 2

OUR VK MEMBERS SHOULD CONSIDER JOINING THEIR FELLOW ZL FISTS CLUB MEMBERS IN THIS ENJOYABLE ANNUAL EVENT - SEE BELOW.

RULES NZART STRAIGHT KEY NIGHT 2012

When: 4 November 2000-2200 NZST in two one-hour periods

Band: 80 m (3.5 MHz) only

Mode: CW sent with STRAIGHT KEY i.e. characters formed manually, no system of automatic dots, dashes or spacing permitted.

Divisions: 1. Vintage QRP, 2. Vintage QRO, 3. Open QRP, and 4. Open QRO.

Explanation: Vintage receivers and transmitters or transceivers using valves, no solid-state devices in the signal line permitted. QRP: 5 watts or less RF output.

Exchange: 1. RST, 2. QTH, 3. Operator's name (one word), 4. Key used (e.g. ZC1, P&T), 5. TX type (e.g. ZC1, T1000, homebrew), and 6. TX power (watts). (Except for DX stations (i.e. non-ZL mainland) only RST, operator's name, and QTH need be exchanged.)

Scoring: ONE Point per QSO.

Stations may be worked once in each one-hour period, CW to CW only. All stations submitting logs MUST use a straight key throughout, but straight key stations may QSO stations using bugs, electronic keyers or keyboards.

Multipliers: 1. Vintage QRP multiply total points by 2, 2. Open QRP multiply total points by 1.5, 3. Vintage QRO multiply total points by 1.2, and 4. Open QRO multiply total points by 1.

Logs: Suggest using standard NZART log pages (not contest log sheets).

Each log QSO entry to show for station worked 1. Time (NZST or Z), 2. Call sign, 3. RST, 4. QTH, 5. Name, 6. Key type, 7. TX type and 8. TX power.

Calculate total score then multiply by the appropriate multiplier to give total score claimed.

Logs to have associated data sheet giving entrant's 1. Name, 2. Call sign, 3. QTH, 4. Age (optional),

Full description of equipment used including 5. Key, 6. TX/RX, 7. TX power, and 8. Antenna.

Send logs by mail by 30 November to: **Ken McCormack, ZL1AIH, 181 Ararimu Valley Road, Waimauku, AUCKLAND, or email z1aih@xtra.co.nz**

Note - All (including DX stations) who send a log will receive a certificate. Special certificates will be issued to the top three in each division. Annotated certificates e.g. Best ZC1, Youngest/oldest op, etc., at manager's discretion.

Any photos of operators and/or equipment gratefully received.

TRAWLING THE WEB

An interesting contest log viewer and analyser - <http://logqso.com/>

In 1994 the BBC programme "Arena" broadcast a 24 minute segment featuring amateur radio - http://www.southgatearc.org/news/october2012/ham_radio_on_bbc_arena_tuning_in.htm

VIEWS ON CONTESTING

Ralph's last month's tongue-in-cheek essay on contesting has stirred some interest. Contributions received to date are-

From: - ZL2AIM-Ian #9683. Last month Ralph ZL2AOH #1073 asked is Contesting Fair? He puts up quite a few points that I would like to address, bearing in mind that I am NOT a contester. I enjoy the odd QSO Party and enjoy getting involved in the Straight Key Night. So therefore, please consider the fact that I don't speak from experience as a contester, but rather as one who might envy those who enjoy the contest.

He believes that contesting is not on a level playing field. Well I am not too sure about that – I think that most contests have categories for QRP, QRO and BIG QRO. Surely that levels the playing fields somewhat.

My guess is that most contesting operators would obey the rules of the contest (re max output per class.) although I have my doubts in the Very High Power (100 watts and over) class that the power limit of the transmitting country is taken into account! Certainly I know of contesters who used higher power than the country allowed at the time. But I guess in every sport or hobby you will get folk who will flaunt the rules.

As for RFI, you still have to live with your neighbours so that may also necessitate a drop in the amount of power that you would use. So yes, if you were in the 100 watt and under class, and you could only transmit at say 30 watts, this would put you at a disadvantage for a competition. But you could look at the other side of the coin and try and find a solution to the RFI that troubles your neighbours and see if you cannot sort it out so that you can enter competitions on an even keel with other stations in your class.

Regarding antennas, of course the operator living out in the country can put up an antenna farm that will have advantages over the operator who is living in a flat in the centre of a city. But after all, playing with radios and antennas is a hobby. Although I live on a property where I could legally put up a tower, I much prefer the fun of working with cheap antennas such as Windoms, G5RV's and long wires. Winding a unun or balun is also part of the fun of our hobby. So far this year, I have worked 100 countries on CW. I don't spend a lot of time looking for a new country, but rather enjoy spending an hour each night calling CQ and hoping that I have a nice rag chew or a bonus if I get a new country. From my point of view, I would rather have a rag chew with a local ZL station with my homebrew QRP rig and home brewed antenna, than work 10 DX stations for a rubber stamp "599 via the buro" report. Similarly I would guess that an operator in town with a whip antenna fixed to his balcony will be grateful for whatever exchanges he can get in a competition. If he is in a high QRM area, he could always go and work /P from a park or seaside area. The choice is his!

I can't fault Ralph's logic regarding the drawback of having to use a long call sign during a contest. But we still have the option of asking NZART for a shorter call sign. When I arrived in New Zealand, I had hoped to get a call sign similar to my old one of ZS5IAN. I was offered ZL1IANM but realised it would be too long a call sign for CW and when I contacted Debbie of NZART she kindly gave me ZL2AIM. Had I have had contesting in mind I would have looked for an even shorter one for CW.

Computer controlled CW vs. manually operated CW and logging. Most stations do have the use of a computer and it would be fairly easy to move from key or paddle to keyboard. Personally I will always use a paddle or key unless at some future date my hands are not capable of manipulating a paddle or key, and then I would have to opt for the keyboard. As for logging, I would not be without HRD logbook on my computer. When I operate /P I use the old fashioned paper log and transfer it to my computer when I get back to base. I believe that the average contester has the option for both without being disadvantaged in a contest.

Obviously Ralph's comments were tongue in cheek and that was very evident when he suggested that contests should limit the power to 100 watts, simple dipole and manual keying. So I can't agree with that! That would be discriminating against the QRP station. It would be discriminating against someone who is not able to have a dipole in his garden or attic, but can use a vertical flagpole etc. That would also discriminate those that can no longer use their paddle or key as maybe they have the shakes for whatever reason. It may also take away the pioneering spirit of those who like to play around with developing antennas to suit their operating conditions.

Well Ralph, you have certainly given us food for thought. I suppose it is like any form of competition. Those with unlimited budgets to have the best, most powerful equipment and antennas will of course have the advantages. But I would also like to think that those who do enter a contest would be happy knowing that they were able to do the best under their own particular circumstances.

One of the things that I find annoying is that some of the bigger guns seem to take up a lot of unnecessary bandwidth. I certainly would not be happy having a big gun next door to me! I think somewhere in the regulations it says that we should use the minimum power necessary for transmission. Whether we do or not, now that is up for debate!

From NU7T-Steve #4676. – *Steve is also a member of the Reno QRP Group – W7FST*

There are many contests being held throughout the year. Maybe more of the organizers could opt for the considerations your have enumerated. The North American QRP CW Club has yielded to its participants

The NAQCC (<http://naqcc.info>) offers categories of simple wire antennas and "gain" antennas for its monthly 2-hour sprints. Additionally, due to varying propagation and density of Ham population, competitors vie against only those within the same region.

The "Stew Perry 160m" contest rewards competitors with bonus points for contacting QRP stations.

The "Spartan Sprint" (www.arsqrp.blogspot.com) has stations size dependent divisions called Skinny and Tubby.

Chris VK2CTN-Chris #9057 says:-Here are some of my thoughts on the subject. I believe that a number of handicap provisions already exist within contests. These include operating with limited power (QRP), earning additional points (e.g. contacts made on 160m), and whether someone enters as a single or multi operator station.

However, after a quick review of contest rules, I can see that Ralph has raised some valid issues. On the other hand, what is wrong with trying to be the best contest station you can be? I recall my days of playing competitive ten-pin bowling. When our team lost a match, it sometimes wasn't due to our score being less than the opposing team but because their handicap got them over the line. Where is the satisfaction of winning in such a situation?

I found an interesting rule in the Remembrance Day contest, which states that the 'Use of skimmer technology with a bandwidth greater than 3kHz is not allowed'. Not being very familiar with this technology, I think it's referring to software defined radio features or band scopes, of which the latter is becoming increasingly common in modern radios. I think that contest managers would have quite a job in trying to enforce some rules, let alone the handicap provisions that Ralph has mentioned. Operating in a manner contrary to the rules is, of course, not within the spirit of amateur radio. So it really comes down to the morality of the operator.

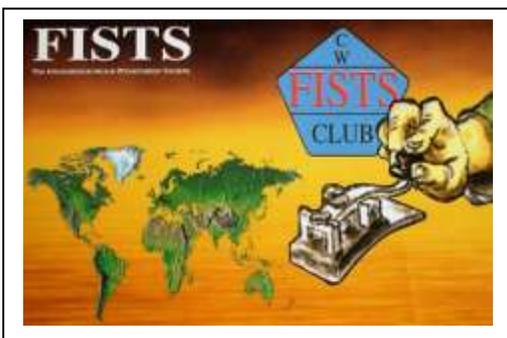
From my point of view, I'm not a die-hard contester and can't quite see the attraction in exchanging serial numbers for hours on end. But each to their own! That is part of the magic of amateur radio – there are so many different aspects to get involved in. I quite enjoy the VK / ZL contests though, as they seem more user-friendly, provide good opportunities to catch up with friends (and make new ones) and have a quick rag chew.

BLANK FISTS QSL CARD – AN UPDATE

Regarding the FISTS QSL card blanks shown in the FDU October 2012 newsletter, these are designs by Paul M0BMM, originally produced for Club Sales over here in Europe, although we now have them printed by another company. Please note that on the reverse side of the card shown in the newsletter, the contact address for FISTS in Europe is now out-of-date (should be *FISTS, PO Box 6743, TIPTON, DY4 4AU, England, UK*).

If ordering these cards from QSLers, please be aware that the prices shown in the European FISTS *Key Note* and website do not apply and that the purchaser is responsible for paying all costs directly to the printers

Thanks to Graham G3ZOD, FISTS #8385, FISTS Membership Secretary (Europe) for the update!



MEMBERS QSL CARDS

Photo Below : - An old QSL card sent in by Syd Sutherland, ZL1BRS ex P29SS from the days he operated from the Coast Radio Station P2R, in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea.



Photo Below: - The QSL card (front) of **MOTIX**, Rob Cowles FISTS #10817. (*Love the old Collins Gear – Ed*)



FISTS DOWN UNDER NEWSLETTER

Remember this is your newsletter!

Your articles, stories, photographs and items of interest are **URGENTLY** needed by your Editor. Once again, there will be a prize for the best article received during the year ending with the May 2013 issue. For the Runner Up, there will also be a Special Award of a FREE Subscription for one year to FISTS Down Under.

Articles and photographs may be submitted by either e-mail or post. Those submitted by post will be returned to the sender once dealt with. Our addresses are in the newsletter header – please use them! - Please think about it! - Start writing now for next year's prizes!

