



# WATTS

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## Pretoria Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

Website: [www.parc.org.za](http://www.parc.org.za)

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*WATTS Monthly Magazine of the Pretoria Amateur Radio Club*

## Women In Ham Radio



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To every reader, supporter, and contributor who’s tuned in to Watts—thank you. Whether you’ve shared a story, sparked a laugh, or simply kept the signal strong by reading along, you’re part of what makes this frequency worth broadcasting.

We’d love to hear more from you. Got a quirky club tale, a burning question, a bright idea, or a moment worth amplifying? Send it our way at [watts@parc.org.za](mailto:watts@parc.org.za). The mic is always open, and your voice keeps the airwaves alive.

Stay curious, stay connected—and keep the dial on Watts. 73

## Stay Connected

- WhatsApp Group: Contact any committee member
- Bulletins: 145.725 MHz (Sundays 08h45)
- Relays: 439.025, 438.825, 145.725, 7.066 MHz + Echolink
- Swopshop: 2m & 7.066 MHz live after bulletins
- Rebroadcast: Mondays 19h45 (2m)



# Birthdays | Verjaarsdae, Joys and Sorrows | Lief en Leed

## Members' Birthdays — April | Lede Verjaarsdae — April

Date	Name	Callsign
07 April	Henk Badenhorst	ZS6BA
10 April	Nic Louw	ZS6NWL
16 April	Andre Roux	ZS6ARX
19 April	Etienne Naude	ZS6EFN
24 April	Jaco Steyn	ZSL6119
28 April	Elias Tibane	ZR6T

Wishing you loud signals, clear frequencies, and zero interference on your special day. Happy birthday!

## Spouses' Birthdays — April | Gades Verjaarsdae — April

Date	Member	Callsign	Spouse
10 April	Graham Reid	ZS6GJR	Joey
15 April	Dylan Foord	ZS6TDK	Tali Foord
15 April	Evan Seligmann	ZS6ELI	Joanne
16 April	Marike Roux	ZS6MRX	André
16 April	Andries Lombard	ZS6ABL	Tania
18 April	Elias Tibane	ZR6TT	Sarah
25 April	Dave Bingham	ZS6AAI	Ansa
29 April	Vincent Harrison	ZS6BTY	Heather

May your celebration be filled with laughter, love, and new adventures. Enjoy your special day!

## Members' Birthdays — May | Lede Verjaarsdae — Mei

Date	Name	Callsign
01 May	Cobus Kruger	ZS6TLX
03 May	Andries Schoombee	ZS6SCH
06 May	Christopher Coetzee	ZU6CC
11 May	Ray Smith	ZR6JNJ
12 May	NEELS HEYDENRICH	ZS4CFH
14 May	Johan Momberg	ZS6BPB
15 May	Jaco Nieuwenhuis.	ZS6JLN
15 May	Christoff Havenga	APOLLO84
17 May	Vincent Harrison	ZS6BTY

Date	Name	Callsign
21 May	Outie Dorfling	ZS6LMD
24 May	Sybie Van der Spuy	ZS6SY
25 May	Tjerk Lammers	ZS6P
26 May	Vitor Gouveia	ZS6VG
30 May	Dave Gough	DAVEP
31 May	George William Ellis	ZS6TA
31 May	Gawie Basson	ZS6GJJ

### Spouses' Birthdays — May | Gades Verjaarsdae — Mei

Date	Member	Callsign	Spouse
30 May	Louis Coetzee	ZS6GLC	Marita

### Wedding Anniversaries April 2026 | Huweliks Herdenkings April 2026

Date	Member	Callsign	Spouse
05 April	John Bernard Olivier	ZR6GV	Esta
07 April	Jacques Coetzee	ZS6RFJ	Jacqueline
10 April	Evan Seligmann	ZS6ELI	Joanne
12 April	Maria Schroder	ZS6SLR	Lukas
12 April	Louis Coetzee	ZS6GLC	Marita
30 April	Graham Reid	ZS6GJR	Joey

### Wedding Anniversaries May 2026 | Huweliks Herdenkings May 2026

Date	Member	Callsign	Spouse
01 May	Peter Smith - Curren	ZS6PJ	Ria
22 May	Marcel - Ruaan Van Wyk	ZS6MRM	Cindy

### New Members | Nuwe Lede

- Graeme Van Schalkwyk
- Jaco Schoeman
- Morkel, Johann

*We're really glad to have you with us. Whether you're brand new to amateur radio or bringing years of experience along, you're among friends here. PARC is about learning together, sharing what we know, and enjoying the hobby as a community. We look forward to getting to know you and having you be part of the journey.*

# Contests and Events | Kompetisies en Gebeure

## April 2026

- 2 April — SARL 80 m QSO Party Thursday 17:00 20:00
- 4 April SARL QRP Contest Saturday 13:30 15:30
- 7 April — Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest (0100Z - 0159Z)
- 11 April — Africa FT4 DX Contest Saturday (1500Z – 1800Z)
- 12 April — ZS4 QSO Party Sunday (1400Z - 1500Z)
- 14 April — Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest (0100Z-0159Z)
- 16 April — SARL March Equinox 6m DX Challenge - end Thursday 2026/04/16 23:59
- 18–19 April — World Time Zone Challenge (1200Z, Apr 18 to 1200Z, Apr 19)
- 21 16 April — Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest (0100Z - 0159Z)
- 25 April — SARL Saturday 40 m Club Contest Saturday 2026/04/25 15:00 16:00
- 28 April — Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest (0100Z - 0159Z)
- 30 April — End of ISS Contact Session Thursday 2026/04/30 23:59

## May 2026

- 2 - 3 May — ARI International DX Contest (1200Z, May 2 to 1159Z, May 3)
- 3 May — Antique Wireless Association SSB Valve QSO Party (1300Z – 1700Z)
- 5 May — Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest (0100Z-0159Z)
- 9, 10 May — CQ-M International DX Contest (1200Z, May 9 to 1159Z, May 10)
- 12 May — Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest (0100Z-0159Z)
- 13 May — Early Morning Coffee QSO Party (0400Z - 0500Z)
- 16 May — ZS SOTA Activity Weekend - start 0000Z
- 17 May — ZS SOTA Activity Weekend - end 2159Z
- 17 May — ZS3 QSO Party (1400Z – 1500Z)
- 19 May — Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest (0100Z-0159Z)
- 20 May — SARL Wednesday 80 m Club Contest (1700Z - 1800Z)
- 26 May — Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest (0100Z-0159Z)

The Pretoria Ammateur Radio Club does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of contest details listed above. For verification and more information, please visit the SARL website, [www.sarl.org.za](http://www.sarl.org.za), as well as the WA7BNM international contest calendar at the following website: <http://hornucopia.co>

**Tip: Always verify contest details on SARL and WA7BNM calendars.**

# PARC Flea Market | PARK Snuffelmark

**Snuffelmark**  
FORGE AGEHWY & LABS

**NEXT FLEA MARKET**

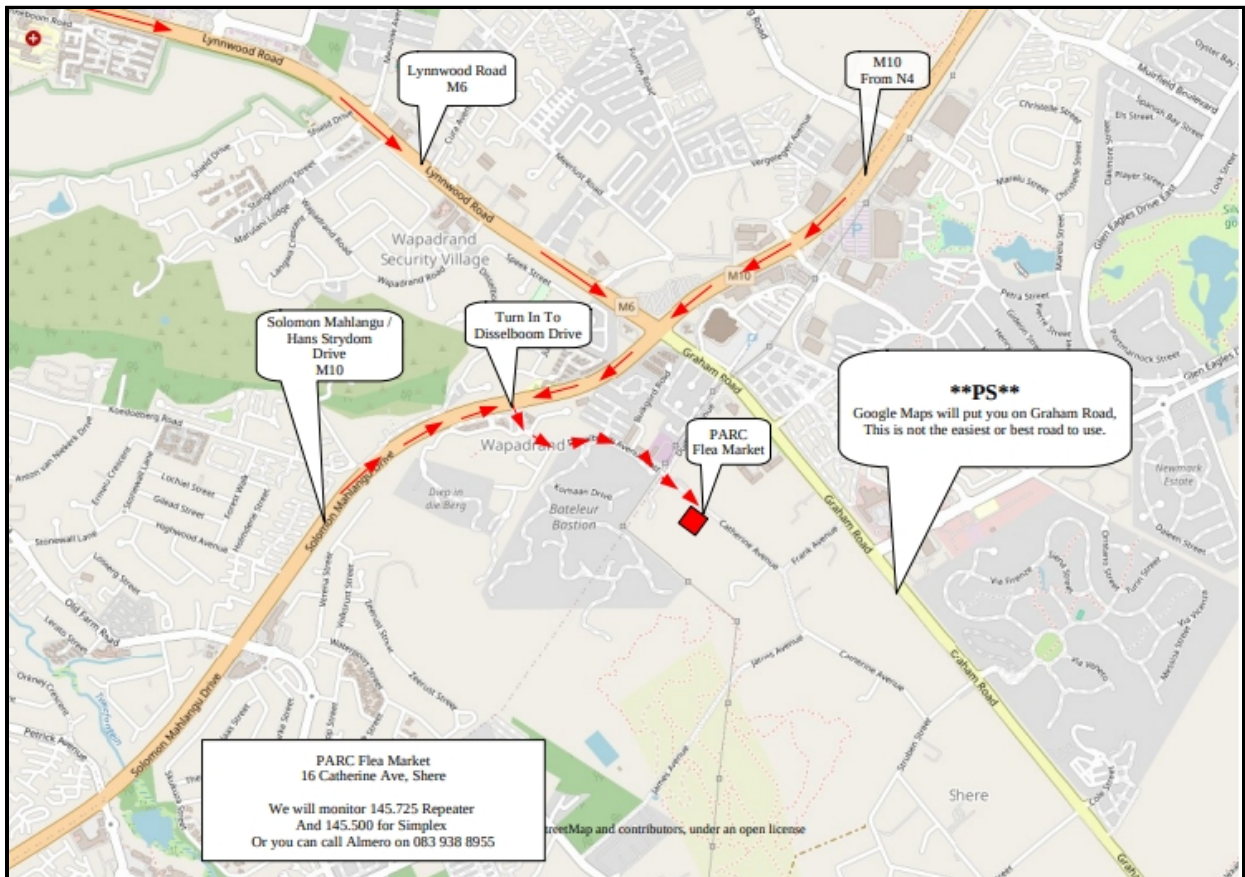
**June 6**

📍 16 Catherine Rd, Shere

**BOOK YOUR TABLE:**  
Almero du Pisani | 📞 083 938 8955 | 📧 almerodps@gmail.com

**JOIN US**

📍 16 Catherine Road, Shere, Pretoria East



## Next Flea Market Date: 4 April / Volgende Snuffelmark Datum: 4 April

**CONTACT PERSON: Alméro Du Pisani**

**(T) 083-938-8955**

**(E) [almerodps@gmail.com](mailto:almerodps@gmail.com)**

**\*\* Please take note: the price of a table at the fleamarket is now R30 per table.**

**\*\* Neem asseblief kennis: die prys van 'n tafel by die vlooiemark is nou R30 per tafel.**

### Upcoming Dates — 2026

- 6 June 2026 — PARC
- 1 August 2026 — PARC
- 5 December 2026 — PARC

### Other Clubs — 2026

- 30 May – West Rand Boot Sale
- 29 August – West Rand Boot Sale
- 3 October – East Rand Boot Sale



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WhatsApp orders to 0832326146 or email  
[zs6pie@gmail.com](mailto:zs6pie@gmail.com)

## PARC RAE Preparation Training

The Pretoria Amateur Radio Club (PARC) is thrilled to announce that we are officially hosting **RAE (Radio Amateur Examination) preparation training** at our very own **registered exam centre**. This marks an exciting milestone for our community: we are fully equipped with **HF trainers, a qualified invigilator, and all the resources needed** to help aspiring radio amateurs succeed.

At PARC, we believe there is always room for learning, growth, and new voices on the airwaves. Whether you're just starting your journey into amateur radio or looking to sharpen your skills, our training sessions are designed to be **inclusive, professional, and supportive**.

We're ready to get started—and we'd love for you to be part of it. If you're interested in joining our RAE preparation training, simply send us an email at [RAE@PARC.ORG.ZA](mailto:RAE@PARC.ORG.ZA)

Or you can visit our PARC web page <https://www.parc.org.za/index.php?page=rae>

Let's make 2026 the year you earn your amateur radio license and join the vibrant world of radio communication. The airwaves are waiting—are you ready to answer the call?



RAE Preparation training now available  
Email [rae@parc.org.za](mailto:rae@parc.org.za) for details

# RAE

## RADIO AMATEUR EXAM

Pretoria Amateur Radio Club



**RAE May 2026 RAE exam entries close Friday 17th April 2026**

## Is a Remote Station Still “Your” Station?

### Remote operation simply means this:

the radio and antennas are in one location, and the operator is somewhere else — connected through the internet, controlling the station through software instead of sitting in front of it.

For some, that “somewhere else” is the next room.

For others, it’s across town.

Sometimes it’s across the country.

Not long ago, operating meant being physically present in your shack. You could hear the relays click. Feel the warmth from the finals. Reach over and adjust the knob.



Now, more operators are logging in through a screen. The RF leaves from one place, while the operator sits comfortably in another.

Which raises an interesting question:

When the transmitter isn't in the room with you — is it still *your* station?

If you built it, maintain it, and take responsibility for it, most would say yes.

But what if it's on leased rural property?

What if several members share it?

What if you've never physically visited it?

Amateur radio has always been about both building and operating. Remote technology doesn't erase that — but it does stretch the boundaries of what “being at your station” means.

Maybe the question isn't whether it counts.

Maybe the real question is:

What part of this hobby feels most essential to us — the physical presence, the technical ownership, or the connection itself?

*I'm not sure where I land on this yet.*

*Part of me loves the idea of radio evolving.*

*Another part wonders what we lose when we're no longer in the same room as the RF.*

*But, it is so cool.*

# The SARL National Field Day – Rain, Radios, and Resilience

Finally, Saturday **14 March** arrived — **SARL National Field Day**, *the* event of the year so far. In the days leading up to it, antennas were tested, polished, tested again, and then raised, lowered, adjusted, and raised once more... and that was all before the weekend even started.

As we packed up and headed for the field, we already knew the weather forecast wasn't promising. Rain wasn't going to be background noise on the bands — it was going to be part of the experience. I have never been more grateful to have a gazebo in the car. It rained on and off for most of the weekend, but thankfully my station — from battery to clipboard — stayed dry. Mother Nature, it seems, is not a ham. Hi hi.



If I'm honest, I was hoping for a little more activity on the bands. Still, I'm grateful to everyone who was there and took the time to make contact. Every QSO counts, especially when conditions — and weather — try to convince you otherwise.

As part of the PARC Contest Team and the PARC RAE Training Team, we decided to turn my station into a hands-on learning opportunity for our aspiring hams. A big shout-out to all the *almost-hams* who came out to support us. They tuned antennas, offered moral support, and helped keep the logbook up to date — an invaluable part of the operation.



One

of the best parts of the weekend, however, had little to do with propagation and everything to do with people. Friends and fellow club members dropped by throughout the day — some to set up their own stations and take part, and others simply to lend a hand or bring a welcome morale boost. Whether it was a warm cup of coffee, a toasted sandwich, or just good company under the gazebo while the rain came down, every visit added to the spirit of the day.



Even a few curious members of the public who happened to stumble across our little field set-up stopped to ask questions. Amateur radio has a wonderful way of sparking curiosity, and I believe we may have gained two future operators who are now planning to sit for the October RAE. If that turns out to be the case, that will easily be the biggest success of the weekend.

Sunday felt like an entirely different contest. The bands were behaving beautifully, propagation seemed friendly, yet it was noticeably quieter. Contacts were made, but there was also time to wander over to other stations, compare notes, share a quick chat, and

then return to calling CQ.

And then, far too soon — despite being thoroughly exhausted — it was over. Logs were completed and double-checked, antennas came down, and field gear found its way back into their usual places.

Field Day always reminds us that while antennas, batteries, and radios are important, the real heart of amateur radio has always been the people.

Until the next Field Day.

## PARC Flea Market: 4 April – what a day!

3 April 2026... it had been advertised, debated, re-advertised, and then re-debated on every repeater, WhatsApp group, and slightly questionable email list known to humankind. And now—finally—just one day to go.

The PARC Flea Market loomed on the horizon like a DX station calling faintly through static—close enough to hear, but just far enough to make everyone slightly anxious.

As with all things ham, planning was conducted in the only scientifically proven way: coffee in one hand, a toasted sandwich in the other. My OM and I had taken our responsibilities very seriously. Over several months, we committed ourselves to rigorous “quality control testing” of the menu—repeat trials, cross-comparisons, and, purely for consistency, multiple re-tests.



We had reached a critical impasse.

The toasted chicken mayonnaise... warm, creamy, and slightly questionable at 8am if you think about it too much.

The toasted breakfast sandwich... a glorious stack of egg, cheese, tomato, bacon, and what can only be described as *hope between bread*.

It was, frankly, an impossible decision.

So, like any rational amateur radio operators faced with a complex problem, we did the only logical thing: we got one of each and shared.

A small but determined team gathered for set-up. Tables were unfolded with the seriousness of a military operation—if that military operation occasionally got distracted by connectors, coax, and someone saying, “Wait, just quickly, look at this.”

This was, of course, immediately after visiting what can only be described as *my dream shack*.

You know the kind—the radios glow like they’ve achieved enlightenment, cables are somehow both everywhere *and* perfectly managed, and there are more monitors than a small air traffic control tower. Screens shimmered with waterfalls, logs, propagation charts, and maps—all quietly whispering secrets of the ionosphere.

Naturally, this “quick visit” lasted just long enough to completely derail any sense of urgency about the actual task at hand.

Getting everyone refocused on set-up after that was... ambitious.

Trying to focus the team made herding cats look like child’s play—if the cats were all licensed, highly opinionated, and prone to wandering off mid-task because someone, somewhere, mentioned antennas.



And yet—through coffee, laughter, mild chaos, and the occasional firm “oi, focus!”—progress was made. Tables stood upright, cables found destinations (more or less), and the hall slowly began transforming.

It would be a treasure trove of radios, parts, stories... and just enough magic in the air to make you wonder what might happen when everything finally powers on.

And before we all headed back to our respective homes—like the responsible hams *and* drivers we proudly claim to be—we squeezed in one last essential operation: coffee and cake.

Because no successful set-up, partial set-up, or even *attempted* set-up is ever truly complete without a proper debrief... preferably involving something sweet.

All of us looking forward to tomorrow—when the doors open, the tables fill, and the real magic begins.

And so, 4 April peeked over the horizon—and just like that, it was the day we had all been waiting for: **PARC Flea Market day.**



And out front, the club banner stood proudly—no confusion, no second guessing—just a bold, unmistakable declaration that yes, you were exactly where you were meant to be.

For those arriving, it was the first signal lock. A visual beacon cutting through any uncertainty, confirming that this was the place—the home of wires, waves, and wonderful chaos.

You could almost imagine it transmitting:

“CQ Flea Market... you have arrived.”

Tables stood ready like well-disciplined operators on frequency. Parking was (miraculously) planned, vendors were proudly stationed by their tables, and visitors flowed in from the left—drawn in like signals to a well-tuned antenna, conveniently passing right by the restaurant.

A strategic layout, clearly designed by someone who understood both radio *and* human nature.

And speaking of strategy—shout out to the restaurant for delivering a menu that was nothing short of perfectly tuned for the day. Every item hit the mark, from early-morning caffeine rescues to mid-morning “just one more bite” decisions. If menus had SWR readings, this one would have been sitting comfortably at 1:1.

Because now—it was no longer anticipation.

It was happening.

The sellers arrived early, full of excitement about the new venue. Tables were thoughtfully arranged beneath large trees, whose shade created a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere from the start.



The flea market team operated like a well-oiled machine—efficiently guiding sellers to their spots and even offering buyers convenient golf cart rides to the designated flea market area. The enthusiasm around the venue, the set-up, and the day ahead was unmistakable.

Once set up, sellers had a chance to enjoy a coffee and reconnect with one another before the buyers arrived. A special mention goes to the restaurant staff, whose attentive service—bringing refreshments directly to the sellers’ tables—was truly appreciated.

As buyers began to arrive, the atmosphere quickly became electric, filled with a lively buzz of activity. The golf cart was in constant motion, ensuring easy access for everyone and adding to the overall energy and enjoyment of the day.



We were especially delighted to welcome the smiling faces of Nico van Rensburg, ZS6QL, SARL Chairman President, and Guy Eales, ZS6GUY, SARL Vice President. They were warmly received by another distinguished guest, Dr Gary Immelman, ZS6YI, along with his grandson Leslie, who joined us for the flea market at our invitation.



Our guests were taken on a tour of the venue, and it was difficult to say which part sparked the most interest and excitement. Between handshakes, shared stories, and cappuccinos, the atmosphere was one of genuine enjoyment. Everyone had a wonderful time and expressed high praise for the event, the venue, and PARC's continued achievements.





The atmosphere throughout the day remained one of true camaraderie between clubs, filled with smiles, light-hearted banter, and the constant sharing of stories. From the gentle hum of conversation in the restaurant, to the shaded tables beneath the trees, and across the bustling flea market area, the venue was alive with happy hams enjoying the day.



Everyone appreciated the welcoming atmosphere, and we could not have asked for a better event.



Long after the flea market had come to a close, many hams chose to stay on, lingering to enjoy the beautiful surroundings and the wonderful atmosphere of the venue.

Centurion Club said it the best in a WhatsApp message:



In closing, PARC would like to thank everyone who contributed to making this event such a success. Rather than naming individuals, it is perhaps best described as a 500-piece puzzle—yet, on closer inspection, it may well be a 1000-piece puzzle—where every single piece played its part.

From the leadership of the SARL to even ZS6TIM's little dog who came along, each presence added something special to the day. Everyone contributed to the bigger picture, and without even a single piece, the puzzle would not have been complete.

C/O NELSPOORT & 801 MALMESBURY STR, WINGATE PARK, PRETORIA [S25.49.36 & E28.16.07]

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The advertisement features a large, complex antenna system with many vertical elements, mounted on a tower. The background is a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the image in white and black boxes.

## Shack Talk by Vernon - ZS6AIG (Part 5)

### Women in Ham Radio



In the previous article I discussed how women have played important roles in amateur radio; in the PARC we are fortunate to have two women that drive and support amateur radio. In the February Watts we read about Irene Myburgh ZS6IEA that is the club secretary and provides radio communication to the Motor Rally community.

Another woman that comes to mind is Martie ZS6MV, after experiencing the new face lift off the Watts magazine I managed to interview her.

#### **Martie, what first sparked your interest in amateur radio?**

My first real exposure to radio was not amateur radio at all — it was emergency services.

Back in matric, I started helping in the Fire and Ambulance control rooms, and before long I was working full time in an ambulance control room. That is where I learned very quickly that radio isn't just chatter — it is lifelines. In a crisis, it's the difference between chaos and coordination. Voices on a radio suddenly matter a lot. So, radio always meant something important to me.

Then fast forward about thirty-ish years... **(This said with a smile on her face)**

My OM, ZS6HFE, had a radio in his car and in the office, and I found myself completely fascinated listening to him chat to people — just random voices appearing out of nowhere. One minute you're driving along, the next you're talking to someone across town... or across the country. It felt a little bit like magic. The lingo intrigued me too — all the Q-codes and shorthand. It sounded like a secret language.

But what really hooked me was the 8AM Net. Every morning I'd listen in while we worked, hearing the same familiar voices checking in, laughing, helping each other out. It felt like this warm, slightly nerdy, wonderfully friendly club...

...and I desperately wanted to say "hello." **(I wonder if she was not one of the mic keyers hi hi)**

Eventually curiosity won — and here I am.

#### **What is your callsign, and is there a story behind it?**

My callsign is ZS6MV. Officially, the MV comes from my names — Martie Venita — which works out very neatly on paper... but if I'm honest, "Megavolt" showed up long before the paperwork did.

For some reason that nickname just kept popping up everywhere. And once you've worked around radios long enough, "Megavolt" feels pretty on brand — lots of energy, a bit of spark, and occasionally lighting things up in the shack.

Then it clicked: MegaVolt... MV. **(Nice CW tone)**

So ZS6MV it became — and Megavolt just stuck.

#### **When did you get license, and what was your proudest moment on the air?**

I got licensed in May 2025 — still very much the "new kid on the band."

My proudest moment happened almost immediately. I made my first HF contact... and somehow landed straight in the middle of a pile-up. No gentle welcome, no easing in — just full chaos. Call signs flying, noise everywhere, and me thinking, "Well... this escalated quickly."

But I took a deep breath, pretended I knew exactly what I was doing, and just went for it.

Miraculously, it worked. Honestly though, the best part wasn't the QSO — it was the look on my OM's face watching it all unfold. Equal parts pride and mild panic on my behalf.

I'm pretty sure the ink on my licence was not even dry yet.

### **Every Ham has one, who was your biggest mentor or influence in your ham journey?**

There are honestly so many. One of the things I love most about this hobby is that every ham you meet teaches you something — sometimes technical, sometimes practical, and sometimes just how to be a better human on the air. But if I had to name the biggest influences, two stand out.

My OM, ZS6HFE, without question. He's my mentor in about everything in life, not just radio. He's my go-to shack tech, problem solver, and steady voice of reason. I often joke that he is my "moral SWR meter" — if I'm drifting off frequency, he gently tunes me back in.

And then there's Kobus, ZS6KBS. He just hams — properly. The kind of operator who lives and breathes the hobby. Watching his enthusiasm, skill, and the way he connects with people reminds me what amateur radio is about. Between the two of them, I've learned more than any manual could ever teach me.

### **What modes do you enjoy most—voice, CW, digital, or something quirky?**

Voice, without a doubt.

For me, radio has always been about people and stories, so there's nothing quite like hearing someone's voice come through the speaker. Accents, laughter, the little pauses — it just feels more human. That's where the magic lives for me.

I am learning CW... slowly. Very slowly. Let us just say it is still more "guessing not so confidently" than copying smoothly. But I'm determined — it's such a beautiful, timeless mode that I really want to get there. *(I believe I need to get you a CW key, you don't know what you are missing)*

### **Having listened to you a few times do you prefer rag chewing, contesting, experimenting, or other comms?**

I'm a rag-chewer at heart.

For me, every contact leaves a little print. Every QSO comes with a story, a tip, a laugh, or a memory. That's the part of radio I love most — the human side. Connecting with people across towns, across countries, sometimes across generations. It starts to feel less like a hobby and more like this wonderfully oversized family.

But... I won't lie — contesting has its place too.

If rag chewing is a slow cup of coffee with a friend, contesting is espresso. Fast, loud, slightly chaotic, and over way too quickly. That rush when the rate picks up and the pileups start? It's addictive.

So mostly rag chewing for the soul... and a little contesting for the adrenaline.

### **This is a tricky question with the band not that good, what's your favourite band or frequency to hang out on?**

I tend to split my time between 40 m and 2 m — they've both kind of become "home" in different ways.

40 m is where the magic happens for me. It's perfect for long, relaxed chats, especially in the evenings when the band stretches its legs a bit. There's something special about hearing voices roll in from all over — near and far — like the world just got a little smaller.

And 2 m is my local coffee shop. That's where the familiar voices are, the quick catch-ups, the daily nets... it feels like popping in to say hello to friends.

And then, of course, there's DMR. I really enjoy DMR. It's my reliable go-to when propagation or weather isn't cooperating — press a button and suddenly you're chatting to someone halfway across the country. Hard not to love that.

So between 40 m, 2 m, and DMR... I'm pretty much always somewhere on the air.

### **Any memorable DX contact or QSO that stands out?**

Two, for very different reasons. The first was actually my very first QSO — the day I got my RAE results. The first person I spoke to on the air was my OM. It felt like the most fitting full-circle moment... from listening to him for years to finally keying up and saying, "This is ZS6MV." That one will always be special. And then there's the complete opposite end of the spectrum — proper DX magic.

I once found myself chatting to a Russian rescue helicopter pilot while he was flying a training exercise between the mountains in Russia. Mid-flight, mid-mountains... and there we were having a conversation like it was the most normal thing in the world.

It caused quite a stir on their end — lots of curious voices jumping in — and I'm pretty sure it was the first time I ever heard a Russian giggle over the airwaves. Hi hi.

Moments like that still amaze me. Only in ham radio can your day go from local shack chat to "hello Russia" in seconds.

### **What is your current setup like—rigs, antennas, shack quirks?**

It's a bit of a mix between practical, portable... and "slightly addicted to radios."

In the car I run a QYT dual-band with a mag-mount — simple, reliable, and perfect for chatting on the move. For handhelds, I have got an Anytone D168UV, and... if I'm being honest... a couple of Baofengs floating around too. Every shack seems to multiply those when you're not looking.

At the office there is a trusty Kenwood TK-705D keeping me company.

The shack is where it gets fun. My main rig is a Yaesu FT-847 with the original desk mic — and I absolutely love that mic. There is just something about the sound of those older mics that feels like "real radio." I also have a Kenwood TS-130S and TS-120S, which still get plenty of love. I've got a soft spot for the older gear — it has character.

Antenna-wise, I'm running an EFHW and constantly experimenting with various field antennas. Half the fun is testing and tweaking.

### **Any homebrew projects or Franken-rigs you're proud of?**

Absolutely.

I have a Kenwood TS-130S that was never meant to live again.

I was originally gifted it as a donor rig — spare parts to keep another Kenwood going. It was supposed to be the "organ donor," not the patient.

But one thing led to another, and somehow... it came back to life.

So naturally, I named him Frankenstein.

He may not be perfect inside, but he works — and honestly, bringing an old rig back from the dead is ridiculously satisfying. There's something special about hearing a radio talk again after everyone has written it off.



## What piece of equipment would you never part with?

My OM. Hi hi hi.

He's definitely my most valuable piece of "equipment" — my built-in tech support, chief problem solver, and the one who keeps everything in the shack running when I start pressing buttons with confidence I probably shouldn't have.

But seriously... do we ever really want to part with any radio?

Every rig has a story. Each one remembers a contact, a late night, a first QSO, or some little victory. Radios stop being equipment quickly — they become old friends.

So the honest answer is probably: all of them. My shack might get crowded, but nothing is leaving any time soon.

## The one question I love asking, what is your ham radio superpower—or your funniest operating blunder?

My radio superpower is... me.

Now hear me out before you roll your eyes...

Being a YL does make my voice stand out on frequency, but I've come to realise it's more than that. We all carry something unique onto the air — our tone, our rhythm, our energy. Radio is still such a human thing. You can hear someone smile, you can hear their nerves, you can hear their heart.

That's my superpower — just being authentically me behind the mic.

As for blunders... oh, there are plenty.

During my very first contest — the newbie contest, no less — my brain completely left the chat. I didn't forget my call sign... I forgot my name. Several times. And when I did remember it, I somehow gave my OM's call sign instead of mine. So yes... confident on the mic, occasionally confused about who I am. Keeps things interesting.

## I have two shack mascots, do you have any mascots in your shack?

Oh, this one is easy.

A very caffeinated squirrel... slightly chaotic, permanently busy, covered in glitter... clutching an Astatic D104 mic like it's hosting its own net.

Basically, me on most days.

Always tinkering, always talking, always chasing the next shiny radio project — and running entirely on coffee and enthusiasm.

And of course, it has to be holding a D104... because that is my dream mic. *(As a new ham you have good taste)*

Now that I think about it, that mascot might be a little too accurate.

## Have your fellow hams given you any nickname yet?

To my face? Megavolt — or just "Mike Victor" on and off on-air.

Those seem to have stuck solidly.



**I know you very much involved in promoting the RAE, what advice would you give to a newcomer?**

Get on the radio.

Honestly, that's it. Don't wait until you feel "ready" or think you know everything — none of us ever really do.

Key up, make the call, make a few mistakes, laugh it off, and key up again. That's how you learn. Every single one of us has stumbled over a call sign or forgotten what we were about to say. It's practically a rite of passage. Hi hi.

Ask questions. Listen to the more experienced hams — they've been there, done that, and most of them genuinely want to help. And of course, follow the protocol and be respectful on the air.

But mostly... just get on the radio. That's where the magic happens.

**What do you hope to see in the future of amateur radio?**

More people. More laughter. More voices.

I'd love to see more YLs, more young people, and more newcomers finding their place on the bands. The hobby feels strongest when it's diverse, welcoming, and full of different perspectives.

I'd also love to see even more camaraderie — that real sense of community where we help each other, share knowledge, and celebrate the small wins together.

I absolutely love our traditions — the calls, the nets, the old-school etiquette — that's part of what makes ham radio special. But I also think it's important to make room for new traditions, new energy, and innovative ideas. The next generation should feel like they are building something too, not just inheriting it.

At the end of the day, it's a hobby. It should bring us together.

**Judging of what is happening in the world, If you could send one message to the world via ham radio, what would it be?**

I think it would be something simple.

In the end, everything will be OK... and if it's not OK yet, then it's not the end.

Life — and radio — both have a funny way of working themselves out if you just keep going.

And maybe add let's all stop the nonsense a little bit and not take ourselves quite so seriously. We are all just people trying to figure things out, after all.

Be kind.

Laugh more.

Talk to each other.

Well Martie, I really enjoyed the time spent with you and thank you for taking part in the interview. Just is just proof that Ham Radio is not just a man's world.

In the next issue of Shack Talk, I will be discussing the upcoming RAE. Stay tuned as we continue exploring the rigs, people, and stories that make ham radio such a special part of our lives. Until then, keep those signals strong and those friendships stronger — 73!



NEWS FROM THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

## FCC Deletes More Obsolete Rules in Effort to Cut Red Tape and Improve Modern Network Deployment

WASHINGTON, March 26, 2026—In its latest installment of the “Delete, Delete, Delete” proceeding, the Federal Communications Commission today voted to remove a number of outdated procedures by rescinding obsolete provisions relating to the FCC’s Office of Economics and Analytics and the Office of International Affairs, cutting unnecessary regulatory burdens so licensees can move faster and focus on modern network deployment.

The identified 18 rules targeted for removal cover over 6,400 words and more than 10 pages in the Code of Federal Regulations. To eliminate unnecessary burdens faced by the public, the FCC’s “Delete, Delete, Delete” proceeding has sought comment on every rule, regulation, or guidance document for possible rescission. The proceeding has produced overwhelming public comment and constructive feedback that will be considered both in Delete and other proceedings.

This Direct Final Rule is the Commission’s seventh in the series to modernize the Commission’s regulatory framework. In December, the Commission [approved](#) the deletion of 36 rules on long-forgotten technologies that regulate obsolete equipment like analog cable receivers and long-gone cordless phones. The Commission has been focused on eliminating outdated rules since the “Delete, Delete, Delete” proceeding began last summer which has resulted in reduced regulatory unnecessary burdens, accelerated infrastructure deployment, promoted network modernization, spurred innovation, and streamlined the regulatory process.

Action by the Commission March 26, 2026 by Report and Order (FCC 26-14). Chairman Carr and Commissioner Trusty approving. Commissioner Gomez approving in part and dissenting in part. Chairman Carr and Commissioner Gomez issuing separate statements.

MB Docket No. 24-626; GN Docket No. 25-133

###

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<https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-deletes-more-obsolete-rules-improve-modern-network-deployment>

# The Real Divide in Amateur Radio: A Culture in Tradition

Amateur radio has always evolved alongside technology—but in 2026, the hobby finds itself in a deeper transformation than many operators are comfortable admitting. Beneath the surface of contest logs, club meetings, and on-air QSOs lies a fundamental question: *what is ham radio supposed to be today?*

The answer depends heavily on who you ask.

## Three Visions of the Same Hobby

At present, the amateur radio community can broadly be understood as three overlapping but often conflicting groups.

### The Traditionalists

For long-time operators, amateur radio is rooted in human skill and direct experience. High-frequency (HF) voice, CW (Morse code), and long-form conversations—“ragchewing”—define the essence of the hobby.

In this view, operating is not just about making contact, but about *how* that contact is achieved. Antenna design, propagation knowledge, and the ability to pull a weak signal out of noise are seen as core competencies.

To these operators, difficulty is not a barrier—it is the point. The fading signal, the static, the unpredictability of the ionosphere—these are features, not flaws.

The rise of highly automated digital modes challenges that philosophy. When a contact can be completed in seconds with minimal human input, some see it not as progress, but as a loss of meaning.

### The Digital Operators

A growing segment of the community embraces a different interpretation: that amateur radio has always been about experimentation and technological advancement.

For these operators, modes like FT8, software-defined radio (SDR), and low-power digital communication represent the cutting edge of the hobby. Efficiency, innovation, and accessibility are the priorities.

From this perspective, the ability to make reliable contacts under poor conditions—using minimal power and compromised antennas—is not a shortcut, but an achievement. Technology is not replacing skill; it is redefining it.

Digital advocates also point out a practical reality: these modes allow people in urban environments, apartments, or high-noise locations to participate in HF radio in ways that were previously difficult or impossible.

What some dismiss as “button-clicking,” others see as a democratization of access.

### The New Wave

A third group—less concerned with ideology—has emerged through portable operating and online content creation.

These operators are often found activating parks, summits, and remote locations, blending traditional and digital modes without much concern for the debate. Their focus is on experience: being outdoors, making contacts, and sharing the journey through platforms like YouTube.

For them, amateur radio is as much about storytelling and community as it is about technology. The hobby is not in decline—it has simply been presented in ways that fail to resonate with modern audiences.

This group tends to sidestep the conflict entirely, prioritizing participation over purity.

### **Where the Tension Lies**

The friction between these groups is not merely technical—it is philosophical.

### **Skill vs. Convenience**

Traditionalists argue that automation removes the need for operator skill. Digital operators counter that using advanced tools is itself a skill, and that efficiency does not negate achievement.

### **Human Interaction vs. Structured Communication**

Voice and CW emphasize conversation and personality. Digital modes like FT8 reduce communication to structured exchanges.

This raises a deeper question: if there is no conversation, is it still communication in the traditional sense?

### **Effort vs. Accessibility**

Historically, effective HF operation often required significant investment—large antennas, power, and space. Modern digital modes reduce those barriers.

While this expands participation, it also disrupts long-standing hierarchies based on station capability and operating conditions.

### **Purity vs. Hybrid Operation**

The increasing use of internet-linked systems and remote stations introduces another layer of complexity.

If a signal is transmitted over RF but controlled remotely via the internet, where does amateur radio end and networked communication begin? The answer is not universally agreed upon.

### **What Is Actually Changing**

Despite the disagreements, several underlying trends are clear.

Digital modes now dominate large portions of the HF spectrum. Activity levels have increased, particularly among operators who previously faced technical or environmental limitations.

At the same time, the barrier to entry has dropped significantly. It is now possible to participate meaningfully in HF radio with modest equipment, limited space, and lower power levels.

Most importantly, the hobby is experiencing an identity shift. Amateur radio is no longer defined by a single purpose. It exists simultaneously as:

- A technical experimentation platform
- A communication service

- A preparedness tool
- A social and recreational activity

Each perspective is valid—but they do not always align.

### **A Cultural Shift, Not Just a Technical One**

The current divide is often framed as a debate over modes or operating styles. In reality, it reflects a broader cultural transition.

Technological change has altered not just how amateur radio is practised, but how it is *understood*. Modes like FT8 have not simply added new capabilities—they have reshaped expectations of what operating looks like.

This is why the conversation feels unusually charged. It is not just about preference; it is about identity.

### **The Question Moving Forward**

As the hobby continues to evolve, one issue remains at the centre of the discussion:

#### **Who gets to define what amateur radio becomes?**

Traditionalists seek to preserve its human and skill-based roots. Digital operators push for innovation and accessibility. The new wave focuses on engagement and visibility.

Amateur radio has always adapted to change—but rarely has it had to reconcile so many competing visions at once.

What emerges next will not be determined by any single group, but by how these perspectives coexist—or fail to.

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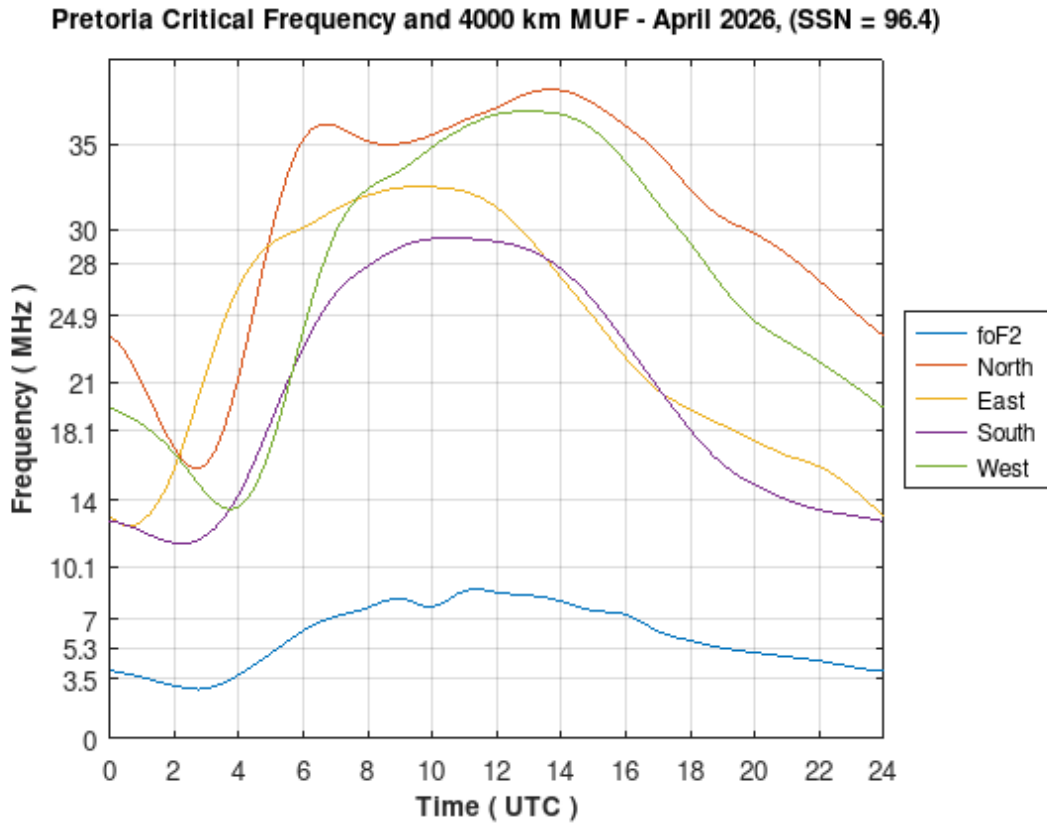
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# Long Term HF Propagation - April 2026 By Vincent, ZS6BTY

The graph below shows the predicted [1] F-layer Maximum Usable Frequency (MUF) for Pretoria using monthly sunspot numbers from SILSO [2].



Local Propagation (up to 500 km): The F or F2 critical frequency ( $f_oF2$ ) is the MUF for short range, near vertical incidence sky-wave (NVIS) propagation.

Long Distance Propagation: The MUF for a first hop of 4000 km in the cardinal directions are labeled North, East, South and West. They indicate the direction that propagation may be expected.

Worldwide Propagation Maps: <http://www.parc.org.za/index.php?page=propagation>

“Prediction is difficult, especially when dealing with the future”. . . Danish Proverb

73 Vincent, ZS6BTY

[1] FTZMUF2: A simple method of estimating the ionospheric parameters of  $f_oF2$  and  $M(3000)$  with the aid of a home computer - Thomas Damboldt and Peter Süßmann, Deutsche Bundespost, December 1988.

[2] Silso 12-month forecasts of the monthly sunspot number ( <http://sidc.oma.be/silso/FORECASTS/prediML.txt>)

# All Tar Gerotek Rally 21 March 2026

The All Tar Gerotek Rally took place on 21 March 2021. Despite the rainy weather, it turned out to be a highly successful event. What words can't fully capture about the rally, the photos below certainly will.

The teams were: Graham and Joey, Hendri and Martie, Piet and Irene, Willie and Annelie, and Roy and Helen.





The graphic features the Shield Racing logo at the top, which includes a checkered flag and the text 'SHIELD RACING'. Below the logo is the title '2026 RALLY SEASON'. The main content is a vertical list of seven rally events, each presented in a black rectangular box with a white tab on the left side. The white tab contains the date and month, while the black box contains the rally name in yellow text. The background of the graphic shows a yellow and black rally car driving on a dirt road, kicking up dust.

Date	Rally Name
21 MAR	ALL TAR GEROTEK
24/25 APR	SWARTLAND RALLY
29/30 MAY	TZANEEN RALLY
10/11 JUL	ALGOA RALLY
21/22 AUG	TGRSA ERMELO RALLY
25/26 SEPT	FOURIESBURG RALLY
25/26 OCT	TRACN4 DULLSTROOM



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## MSA NATIONAL RALLY-RAID CHAMPIONSHIP CIRCULAR 1 OF 2026

Affected parties are hereby advised of the following amendment to the 2026 MSA National Rally-Raid Championship Calendar, effective immediately, as approved by the MSA SA Rally-Raid Championship Promoter:

DATE	NAME OF VENUE	PROVINCE	ROUND	STATUS
<del>6 – 7 Mar 2026</del>	<del>Stella</del>	<del>North-West</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>POSTPONED</del>
8 – 10 May 2026	Outeniqua	Western Cape	2-1	
19 – 20 June 2026	Parys	Free State	3-2	
24 – 25 July 2026	Bronkhorstspuit	Gauteng	4-3	
28 – 29 August 2026	Reserve	Reserve	5-4	
9 – 10 October 2026	Vryheid	KwaZulu-Natal	6-5	
13 – 14 November 2026	Thabazimbi	Limpopo	7-6	

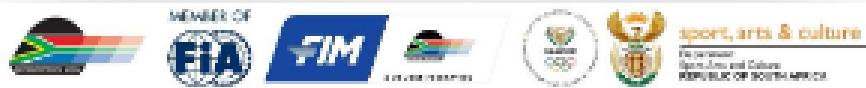
A revised 2026 SA Rally-Raid Championship calendar will be communicated to all stakeholders once finalised.

MSA apologises for any inconvenience caused by this change, but it is due to circumstances beyond MSA's control.

For any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Charmaine Fortune - [charmaine@sarallyraid.co.za](mailto:charmaine@sarallyraid.co.za)

**CARMEN HILL**  
**SPORTING SERVICES MANAGER**  
27 January 2026

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**For More Rally information please contact the following Radio Marshalls:**

**Graham Reid ZS6GJR at: 083-701-0511 or [greid@wol.co.za](mailto:greid@wol.co.za)**

**Irene Myburgh ZS6IEA at: 082-462-6001/ 084-544-0618 or [irene.myburgh@outlook.com](mailto:irene.myburgh@outlook.com)**

# PARC Sunday Bulletins | PARK Sondag Bulletins

PARC Bulletins are presented on Sunday mornings at approximately 08h45, after the SARL Bulletins in English and Afrikaans, from 08h15. The Bulletin Presenters for the following two months are presented below.

Please do contact the applicable presenter beforehand if you wish to contribute to the Bulletin. PARC Bulletins are broadcast on the 2-meter repeater on 145.725 MHz, and 70 cm on 438.825 and 439.025 MHz. Relays are done on 7.060 MHz by Pierre ZS6PS and Corlia ZS6CHS Smit and on Echolink by Johan Lehman ZS6JPL.

A re-broadcast of the Bulletin is done the following Monday evening at 19h45 by Louis de Wet ZS6SK.

PARK Bulletins word op Sondag oggende aangebied om 08h45, na die SARL Bulletins in Engels en Afrikaans, vanaf 08h15. Die Bulletin aanbieders vir die volgende twee maande word onder aangedui.

Kontak gerus die toepaslike Bulletin leser indien u 'n bydrae tot die Bulletin wil maak. PARK Bulletins word uitgesaai op die 2-meter herhaler op 145.725 MHz, en 70cm op 438.825 en 439.025 MHz. Herleidings word gedoen op 7.060 MHz deur Pierre ZS6PS en Corlia ZS6CHS Smit, en op Echolink deur Johan Lehman ZS6JPL.

'n Heruitsending van die Bulletin geskied die opvolgende Maandag aand om 19h45, en word behartig deur Louis de Wet ZS6SK.

## PARC Bulletin Presenters: March 2026 – April 2026

Date	Presenter	Date	Presenter
5 April 2026	Alméro Du Pisani ZS6LDP	3 May 2026	Louis de Wet ZS6SK
12 April 2026	Louis de Wet ZS6SK	10 May 2026	Alméro Du Pisani ZS6LDP
19 April 2026	Alméro Du Pisani ZS6LDP	17 May 2026	Louis de Wet ZS6SK
26 April 2026	Louis de Wet ZS6SK	24 May 2026	Alméro Du Pisani ZS6LDP
		31 May 2026	Louis de Wet ZS6SK



# Housekeeping



***Want to stay in the loop with PARC?***  
 If you'd like to join the PARC WhatsApp group, simply share your contact details with any committee member — we'll make sure you're added and welcomed aboard!

## PARC ANNUAL CLUB FEES: PARK JAARLIKSE LEDEGELDE

<b>Bank</b>	<b>First National Bank</b>	<b>Ordinary Members / Gewone Lede : R200</b> <b>Spouses and Pensioners : R100</b>	<b>Your call sign must appear as statement text!</b>
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Please Note : If your Club fees are not paid up to date, birthday details cannot be displayed in Watts

### Membership Fees & Financial Year Reminder

To help members stay in sync with club commitments, please note that our financial year runs from **1 July to 30 June**. Membership fees are payable annually during the month of July, marking the start of our new financial cycle.

We encourage all members to renew their subscriptions in July to ensure uninterrupted participation in club activities and communications.

**\*\* If membership fees remain overdue for three months, the membership will automatically be marked as inactive.**

**Each member is responsible for updating and maintaining their personal information on the website.**

## PARC Committee Members | PARK Komiteelede

Name & Callsign	Portfolio/s	Email Address	Mobile No
Graham Reid ZS6GJR	Chairman   Treasurer   Rallies	<a href="mailto:greid@wol.co.za">greid@wol.co.za</a>	083-701-0511
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Hendri Ehlers ZS6HFE	Website & Social Media   ICASA Liaison   Repeaters	<a href="mailto:zs6hfe@gmail.com">zs6hfe@gmail.com</a>	083-460-5586
Louis de Wet ZS6SK	Club Historian   Awards   SARL Liaison	<a href="mailto:louis.zs6sk@gmail.com">louis.zs6sk@gmail.com</a>	072-140-9893
Martie Venter ZS6MV	Watts Newsletter   RAE Training   Club Membership	<a href="mailto:zs6mv73@gmail.com">zs6mv73@gmail.com</a>	072-273-1370

## Co-opted Committee Members | Gekoöpteerde Komiteelede

Name & Callsign	Portfolio/s	Email Address	Mobile No
Alméro Du Pisani ZS6LDP (Hon.)	Flea-markets   Swop Shop	<a href="mailto:almerodps@gmail.com">almerodps@gmail.com</a>	083-938-8955
Pieter Myburgh ZS6PAM	Repeaters	<a href="mailto:wooden@mweb.co.za">wooden@mweb.co.za</a>	076-140-7562
Pierre Holtzhausen ZS6PJH	Contests	<a href="mailto:zs6pjh@gmail.com">zs6pjh@gmail.com</a>	082-575-5799

To every reader, supporter, and contributor who's tuned in to Watts—thank you. Whether you've shared a story, sparked a laugh, or simply kept the signal strong by reading along, you're part of what makes this frequency worth broadcasting.

We'd love to hear more from you. Got a quirky club tale, a burning question, a bright idea, or a moment worth amplifying? Send it our way at [watts@parc.org.za](mailto:watts@parc.org.za). The mic is always open, and your voice keeps the airwaves alive.

Stay curious, stay connected—and keep the dial on Watts. 73