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NEWSWEST

19th May 2024

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News West

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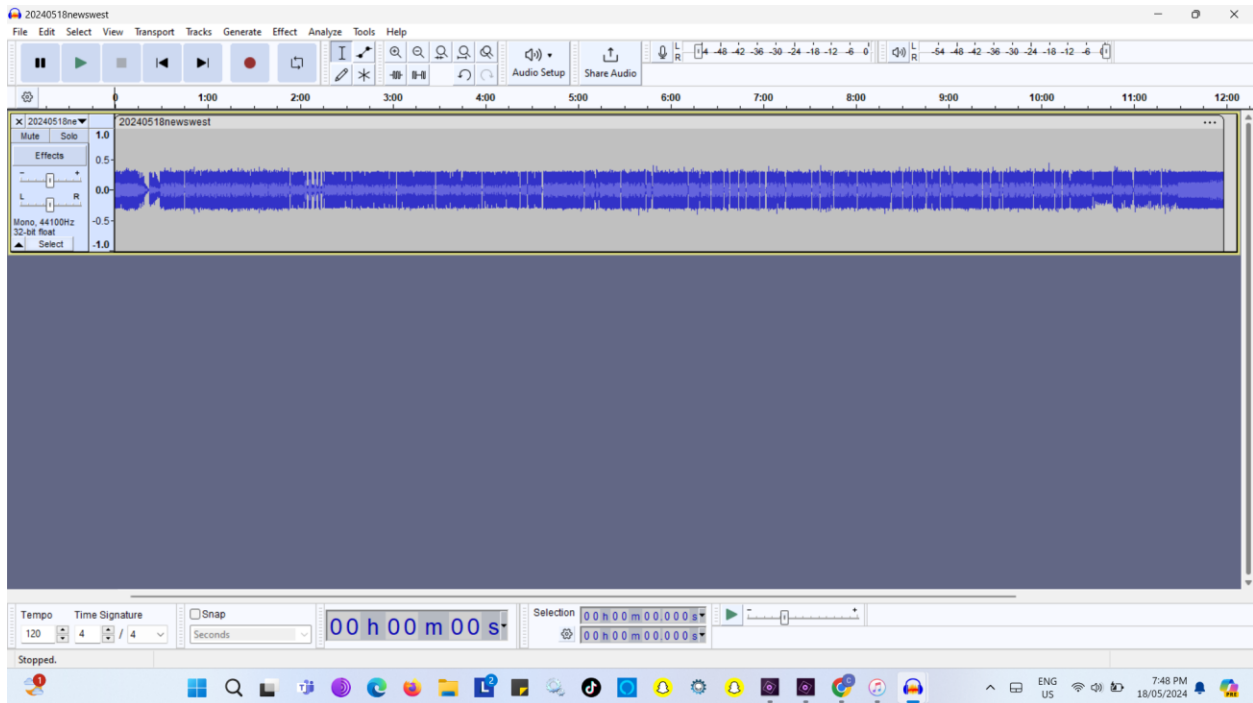


Image above for those that would whinge about audio quality.

This is VK 6 RN News West. We are a community organization and we've been serving up the best amateur radio news in Australia since 1931.

Hi there, I'm Clinton, BK6, FCC and welcome to News W for the 19th of May 2024. Now with the shot,

time is passing quickly and as the sun doesn't stop rising and setting, it's time to dust off your calendars. Grab a permanent marker and write it in. The encouraging Ham Fest is on again. Come August 25th, 2024, you won't be surprised to find the event at the Serial Jackson Rec Centre at the end of Fisher St. in Bassendean. What else do we love about Hamfests? Raffle. This year the raffle will have 4 prizes and Andrews communication voucher worth \$2000, a Yasuo FTM 300 six \$199, A Yaesu FT70DR with \$299 and if Yasuo isn't your brand, there's \$100 voucher from Horizon antennas. Tickets are \$5 per entry, available for sale across NSW, the NT, Queensland, SA, Tasmania, Victoria and of course WA. You'll have to wait another month or two for the raffle start date of the 25th of June, with the raffle ending at 12 noon on the 25th of August at the NCG Hempfest. Start saving with full details appearing on the NCRG website before the raffle starts. I'm Glenn Victor, K6PAW for the Northern Corridor Radio Group 7/3.

If you happen to listen to the right part of the 80 metre band on a Tuesday evening, you might hear something that sounds like this. The CQRS net has been running every single Tuesday for the last two years and has been unbelievably popular. There are usually half a dozen, a dozen and a couple of times up to 18 stations popping in and out. Five hours. The aim is to encourage new CW operators to have a go at slow CW in a safe and really friendly environment where slow speed and lots of mistakes are par for the course. It's all about having a go, starting with the basic call sign and RST exchange, then overtime getting better and better. The net also attracts its fair share of old timers who enjoy helping others to have a go or just to enjoy the banter. So this might be just the opportunity you've been waiting for to have a go at transmitting on CW, or perhaps just to stop the contacts rusting up on your key. Doesn't matter whether you're brand new to the code or if you're an old timer who would like to have a bit of fun and help encourage new operators by having simple, safe QSO's at their speed. We'd love to have you join in. The net starts at 0900 Zulu every Tuesday on 80 metres between 3540 and 3570 kHz, and their stations in the West East and in between. Listening out for your CQRS call For more information and to receive our weekly CQRS RAG 2 newsletter. Contact me Mark V K6QI via my e-mail address on qrz.com or you can e-mail me direct Mark dot., At icloud.com, that is MARK.k.b.osma@icloud.com, too much switch mode power supply hash on 80 meters. This might be the incentive to do something about it. With the cheap noise canceller costing less than \$100.80 meters could be easier than you think. So once again Tuesdays from 0900 Zulu until late between 3540 kHz and 3570 kHz. Cheers from Mark The K2K I and VK6Q I

hi. Just a little note about the K6R G and the WAG technical and general net having it run every Sunday morning on VK 6 RLM. That's 146 decimal 750 or channel 3 in the old money, and it starts at 10:30 AM this morning. Of course, if you're listening in the evening, it's next week.

Foundations of Amateur Radio. Much is made in our hobby about working DX that is sending and receiving distant radio signals. How distant is up for debate. Depending on where you are, DX might be outside the continent, outside the country, or in my case, you could easily say anything outside of my state, since the nearest border is about 12140 kilometres away from here. For giggles, the distance between Albany and the southwest and Wyndham in the northeast of the state. Is 2400 kilometres and that's via radio wave. By car it's 35170 kilometres to be clear. There we are still inside VK 6. All that to say DX is in the ear of the beholder. If that's not enough, there's a group of amateurs who are of the

strident opinion that for DX account it must be a two way contact. That is, both stations need to hear each other, and as such those amateurs believe that a mode like Whisper, the weak signal propagation reporter, can't possibly be considered X, even if you can discover that your station was heard on the other side of the planet. I'm going to skip right over those who tell anyone who will listen that FT 8 isn't real radio because it's just computers talking to each other. This to give you some context, when I introduced the next idea, namely FM broadcast DX, I'm acutely aware that this isn't amateur radio. There's no two way communication. It's probably not the X and besides its computers that out of the way. Let me tell you about something I discovered. Many, but not all FM broadcasters transmit multiple signals when you tune to their station. One of those signals is called RDS or radio data systems. It's used to show you the name of the station, sometimes, what song is playing, what style of station it is, and other information like Rd. traffic alerts and emergencies. You can decode this using an RDS decoder. Recently I was browsing YouTube, I came across a video on the broken signal channel that digs into the world of FM scanning to log any RDS information for the purpose of finding DX stations. The video goes into great detail on how to set this up with Windows by copying files into various places, updating XML files, configuring sample rates, connecting virtual audio cables, running several tools simultaneously, and it goes on to demonstrate how this all hangs together. While I was impressed with the idea, the implementation didn't speak to me, since I wince at the notion of copying random files into an application installation directory. And besides, I'm a Linux user, so I went hunting. Turns out that there is an ideas decoder for Linux called Redc written by una Oscar a H2EIQ. It's on GitHub. Compiling it is pretty straightforward. Follow the instructions and it should work as advertised. You'll also need to have RTL SDR installed so you can run a tool called RTFM. Again, owner's instructions should help you out. I will add that I'm assuming that you have a so-called RTL SDR dongle. It's a cheap USB device that can be coerced into pretending to be a software defined receiver with about 2.2 megahertz of bandwidth. Based on the example shown, I immediately tuned to a local station and RDS information started filling my screen. To let you know how simple this is, you run the RTL FM tool and send its output to REDC, which decodes the information and displays it on the screen. That's it. No more moving parts, no XML files, no shenanigans with virtual audio cables and the like. Stage one complete onto stage two scanning. The RTFM tool has the capability to scan a range of frequencies. I tried this but didn't really get anywhere, since for the scanner to work you need to set the squelch in order to switch between frequencies. But if you're aiming for a weak signal, it will never be heard if your local FM broadcasters are belting away 24 hours a day. So instead I'm scanning each frequency between 87 megahertz and 109 megahertz every 10 kHz for 10 seconds to see if there's any RDS data to be heard. I send that to a file and when I feel the urge, I can go check to see what I've heard. I haven't yet put this up on GitHub

because I'm considering making it a contribution to the Red Sea project instead of a project of my own. Now at this point you might wonder what all the fuss is about. Well, the same method could be used to decode your local amateur repeater idents or DNCC XXF beacons or any other kind of interesting information. I saw one user link RTFM to multimon Ng, a tool I've spoken about before. You should also check out Oona's website windytan.com. There's a whole range of signal processing stories to be found, including dealing with flutter distortion on Steamboat Willie and a very cool spiral spectrogram. I'll leave you with one question, why haven't you installed Linux yet? I'm Honor Victor K6FLABL.

This is News W your amateur radio news on VK 6 ARN originating on the News W linked repeater network and HF relays.

You might notice that News West has been. Time for content lately, and I've been playing a lot of repeat stories, but you can help us to change that by sending your stories or contributions through to news.w@vk6.net

Hi there, it's Clinton VK 6 FCC Back with you and did you know that News W is now on YouTube? Type in.youtube.com/ at newest weekly podcast. Dash, KZ7YC, Ohh, and Before I go, I'd like to thank those watching on YouTube or a TV, the readers and you for listening. I'd also like to thank our team, the broadcasters, and those submitting content each week. Play Stand By Now for callbacks after the broadcast or head over to the Vika six.net website and fill out the forms so we know how many people are listing each week.
