

Propagation

Kootenai Amateur Radio Society (KARS) Newsletter

AUGUST 2006

More satire for your amateur radio buck

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We Appreciate Your Input

Dear KARS members and Friends,

The club officers have received a lot of input from members via the Suggestion Box. This is a good format for member communication, as it allows for simple to complex inputs, and the suggestion may be anonymous, if desired. The suggestions received during 2006 are listed below, in the order that they were received:

KARS Suggestion List

- Create / Update the KARS Scrapbooks
- Publish Meeting info in CDA Paper (Calendar / Events Section)
- Learn More about New Members and Visitors during Club meetings
- Hold a Kit Building Class
- Brownie Scout Troop Help with Highway Cleanup
- Set Up "For Sale" Table at Club Meetings. Club take 5% Commission on Sales
- Establish a Rotating Refreshment Committee (Done, 04/06)
- Establish an Elmers Board
- Update the Club Constitution
- Establish a Club Library

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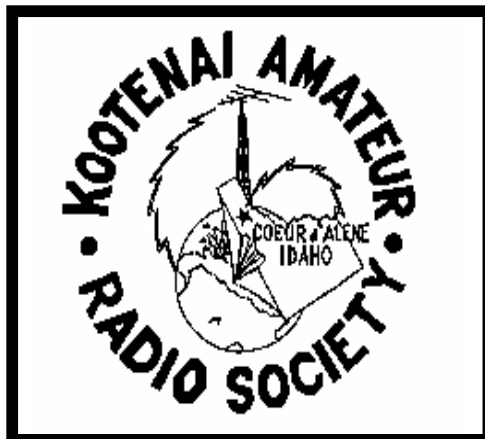
VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT--N7JU

Many thanks to Steve, WO6LF for *filling in* an otherwise blank space (is that so bad?) in the *Veep's* report for July. I had a week's visit with my new grandson, Peter, and enjoyed seeing my daughter after many years. Family comes first of course. I also appreciated all the participation by KARS members and guests at Field Day. Since moving here, I always seem to have that guilty feeling the last weekend in June. Field Day? ...Ironman?... Field Day?...Ironman?...oh heck who needs a T-shirt...FIELD DAY! One of the many joys of this year's field day was working with the DX gurus from Spokane, a great bunch. I was particularly impressed with Randy, K7TQ who had the *hook up* for kicking off our joint field day operations. At precisely 11:00 AM he was given 15 minutes to work 5 QRP (low power) cw (code) contacts on 20 meters, using a 2 watt mini-rig and ONLY solar power (no batteries). If he could do it, we'd earn 500 points. Well, he did it in 13 minutes and we earned 500 points right out of the box. It's a pity however that the sun could only provide power and not propagation as conditions during this near sunspot minima (October 2006) were as bad as I have ever experienced in my 50 years of hamming. Also, I think we missed some fun by not using PSK31, a mode that was passed over by the Spokane DX club in favor of straight cw and ssb contacts. (Lots of digital recorders and memory keyers in use however...hum?) I set up my Digipan scan on 14.070 MHz. when I got home and logged close to 500 calls working FD.

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would be worth It
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Propagation is published monthly by the KOOTENAI Amateur Radio Society (KARS). The club is located in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho and serves the North Northern Idaho and the Spokane, Washington areas

KARS operates voice repeaters on 146.980 and 444.775 MHz and a packet repeater on 145.510 MHz. KARS normally holds meeting at 1900 hrs, on the second Monday of each month in the Shep Rock Building at the Coeur d' Alene Airport.

Anyone interested in Amateur Radio is welcome to join. Dues are \$12.00 (individual) and \$18.00 for a family membership. Contact the Treasurer (see page 6) to join KARS.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE/TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
14 August at 7 p.m. (Monday)	KARS monthly meeting	Kootenai County Airport (Shep Rock Building)
21 August at 7 p.m. (Monday)	ARES/RACES meeting	Kootenai County Sheriff's Department
Every Wednesday at 8 a.m.	Donut Day	Rathdrum Super 1 store (on Highway 53)
Second Saturday each Month, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.	NW Traffic Net Coffee Klatch	Old European Breakfast House in Post Falls

Next KARS Meeting:

**Monday, 14 August 2006 at
7:00 p.m. In the Shep Rock Building at
Kootenai County Airport**

Directions to the KARS meeting:

Take U.S. Highway 95 to Miles Avenue (Miles is about one mile North of Hayden Avenue). West on Miles to the Airport gate. Through the gate (requires access code--see KARS president), bear left to the Shep Rock Building.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

(continued from page 1)

Modify the Drawing Rules as follows: Free Ticket for any new attendee, and a free ticket for the person who invited or brought the new attendee.

We need Name Tags or Badges (In progress, 07/06)

We should have KARS jackets and / or caps.

(end recap of suggestions received through 07/06.)

It looks like we are doing well at collecting suggestions, but now what will we do with them? The club officers need input from our membership on how you would like to proceed with the list. If you feel strongly about the club adopting one of the suggestions above, you are welcome to bring it up at a club meeting when we ask if there are any New Business items to be discussed.

Upcoming Events:

KARS Ice Cream Social: 08/12/06, 2-5PM. Bob (K7CGA) and Bonnie (KE7FPA) Kesson have graciously agreed to allow the horde of ice cream tasters into their shaded yard in Dalton Gardens. Go to www.k7id.com, scroll down to "upcoming events", then click on "August Ice Cream Social", for all the latest details.

The August KARS meeting: 08/14, 7PM. Be sure to attend, and hear N7JU's presentation on "Digital Voice Radio Updates".

73 to all!
Ed, AI7H

Editor's note: I see from above that one of the suggestions received for improvement of KARS is for jackets or caps. Based on our recent weather and the ongoing threat of global warming (ask AI), I cannot fathom the need for a jacket, unless it has a self-contained cooling mechanism. In fact, I would like to add a suggestion to the list: we need a cooling suit similar to those used by the moon-landing astronauts. We could have a really neat KARS logo on the back. How about that, Ed?

SOME ALPHABET SOUP FOR HAMS

CONELRAD

CONELRAD: This may be an unfamiliar term for newer and younger amateur radio operators, and it may have only a slightly familiar ring to the older guys. Let's get historic. CONELRAD is a contraction of the phrase "control of electromagnetic radiation." In the context of cold war national security, it had to do with termination radio transmissions that could otherwise be used by an enemy (i.e., the Soviet Union) as guidance beacons during an attack on the United States. At the same time most radio transmissions would be terminated, the few that were to continue would be used to disseminate emergency information to U.S. citizens—in that sense, CONELRAD was the forerunner of today's Emergency Broadcast System. (You know—"this is a test; this is only a test of the Emergency Broadcast System. If this had been an actual emergency, you would have been advised to...") CONELRAD was in effect in the 1950s and early 1960s. If you look at broadcast radio receivers and some amateur radio receivers manufactured during that period, you will see two frequencies on the AM broadcast band marked with the CONELRAD symbol (the letters "CD" inside a triangle inside a circle—the letters were an abbreviation of the phrase "civil defense"). These two frequencies were the only non-emergency frequencies allowed to continue transmissions during a civil emergency—and they, as implied above, were to be used only for dissemination of emergency information. The termination of transmissions during emergencies applied to radio amateurs as well. In fact, part of the FCC rules governing amateur radio was a requirement that radio amateurs check the AM broadcast band every ten minutes while operating—if AM broadcast band activity was "normal," amateur radio operations were allowed to continue. But, if AM broadcast band activity had been terminated (indicating a civil defense emergency), amateur radio operations were to be discontinued.

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Upcoming VEC/VE Licensing Exams for Our Area

Mid-summer months are down-times for most volunteer examiner teams.

Exam by appointment only is available as shown below.

- 14 August (Monday) before regularly scheduled KARS meeting (meeting begins at 7 p.m.) at the Kootenai County Airport. By appointment only--no walk-ins. Exact time for testing will depend on what exam elements are covered. Contact John Hollar (N7JU) at 208.765.5470 for appointment.
- 19 August (Saturday) at 9:30 a.m. By appointment only--no walk-ins. In Sagle, Idaho. Contact Russ Arndt (AA7XM) at 208.265.4534 after 8 p.m. or russell.arndt@verizon.net

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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Also saw a few 15 meter PSK openings as well. The new FD computer logging system worked well, but in my opinion was unnerving as there was a lot that could go wrong with all the computers running ...such as RFI, processor noise, not to mention the heightened requirement for clean generated power. Oh well, the older I get the better things used to be.

With QRP still on my mind, I broke out the FT-817 and some interesting new devices such as the Soft Rock-40 kit from AmQRP.org. As their web site states: *The SoftRock-40 is a small, low-cost, good-performing 40-meter "software defined radio" receiver that plugs into a computer USB port and delivers I-Q audio signals to the computer's sound card. It was designed by Tony Parks, KB9YIG and Bill Tracey, KD5TFD as an "SDR sampler project" for hams everywhere to easily try out software defined radio. This way a great many hams can see for themselves the incredible performance that can be achieved by having just a little inexpensive hardware working in conjunction with some powerful (free) software running on the PC. Receiver performance is simply amazing ... MDS (Minimum Discernable Signal) readings of -128 dBm are typical, with the 1 dB compression level at about -20 dBm!* Be sure to check out <http://amqrp.org/kits/softrock40/index.html> for all the information on this really neat kit and free software package. The first production of 800 units, I'm told, was completely sold out.

I also spent a little time monitoring 147.08 MHz. during Ironman/field day weekend along with some other local frequencies such as FRS and GMRS services. Wow...what a mess. Except for the fact that they ran out of *ice and bananas* (so what else is new?) Jim Linden, N7JIL did a super job. I certainly hope we'll get a chance to see how the APRS system worked (it did) at a subsequent KARS meeting. Ok, so maybe there is a use for Packet after all.

(continued next column)

Speaking of FRS, that's the *Family Radio Service*...those two-fer UHF transceivers you see in blister packs at K-Mart? I was amazed to see the emergence of the National SOS Radio Network news release that stated: *support the new National SOS Radio Network, during a crisis, ham radio, GMRS and scanner operators can monitor Channel 1 by listening to 462.5625 MHz. When a call for help is received from an FRS radio, emergency responders (is that us?) can be notified.* See the details at www.nationalsos.com. Well a few hours listening to 462.5625 around here is enough to drive you batty. Mostly kids playing Star Trek or teens jabbering nonsensically. And...who was the idiot that picked a split frequency like ".5625" try programming that into your Yaesu. Nice, try guys but no cigar.

Finally we are going to try to provide VE testing services prior to regular monthly KARS meetings. Seems we have enough VE's to provide some simple testing such as code or single exam upgrades. So starting in August and monthly thereafter, we'll be providing VE testing prior to theregularly scheduled KARS meetings but we need to know if you intend to test. The new Technician Class exam has been released effective July 1st. and the old ones have been destroyed. Also ARRL has upped our testing fee to \$14.00, we held off as long as we could. Be sure to let me know if you intend to test at a KARS meeting. Call John Hollar, VE Team Leader, N7JU at 208-765-5470. Also we have scheduled our first VE test in Kellogg, ID for August 18th. Be sure to check the K7ID website for details.

Hey what's *Radio Mondale*, IBOC, XM Radio, SCA and RDS and can a short wave broadcast station on 9.580 MHz sound as good as an FM broadcast? How does all this *digital radio stuff* work? Well... join us at the next KARS meeting for a briefing and demonstration of what's ahead in the area of *digital radio*. Gosh do you mean that crystal radio set ain't going to work any more? Yup ... AM ("Ancient Modulation") will soon go the way of the Dodo bird and the crystal radio will be silent forever!

N7JU

KARS CLASSIFIED ADS

HAM ITEMS FOR SALE - August 2006--All items sold on "make offer" basis unless otherwise indicated

- Kenwood TS-420S 10-80m transceiver (some accessories) \$265.00 OBO
- Swan Cygnet 270 Transceiver
- Ten-Tec Model 228 antenna tuner
- MFJ Model 16010 antenna tuner
- Astron 20 AMP 12 volt power supply RS-20A \$100.00 OBO
- Micronta 1.75 AMP 12 volt power supply 278S
- Heath SWR Meter AM-2
- B&W antenna switch 55C-A
- Two CDR rotor controllers (AR-1)
- 2 element 2 meter beam antenna
- 10 thru 80 meter vertical antenna
- Hustler 40/20 meter mobile antenna.

All items working and in fair/good condition. Pease contact Duane H. Chaney (KC7YUJ) at Bestland Retirement Community, 606 Best Ave., CDA - Call 208-664-0836 to see items or for additional information.

SOME ALPHABET SOUP FOR HAMS

(continued from, page 3)

At one time, the Heath company (“Heathkit”) manufactured a CONELRAD monitor specifically for amateur radio operators to make the ten-minute AM broadcast band checks easier. CONELRAD is an interesting historical tidbit for we hams. Do you, as a licensed amateur radio operator, know your obligations under current law if an emergency is declared ?

SAREX and ARISS

Did you know that linguists and etymologists sometimes sit around and argue about the definition of the term “acronym” ? One side of the argument is that an acronym is an abbreviation using initial letters of words in a phrase, and must form a pronounceable “word” such as “NASA.” Proponents of this argument argue that an unpronounceable abbreviation such as “FBI” is not an acronym, but is only a set of initials. The other side of the argument would count all initial-letter abbreviations as acronyms, regardless of their pronounceability. I am neutral in this argument—as long as my readers know what I am trying to convey, I am happy.

The terms “SAREX” and “ARISS” qualify as acronyms even under the more restrictive definition. But, what do they mean, and why should amateur radio operators care? SAREX means “Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment.” ARISS means “Amateur Radio (on the) International Space Station.” Now, you know what they mean, and you have probably figured out why we (hams) care. You may be thinking that SAREX and ARISS are just good opportunities for us (hams) to log a cool contact, and perhaps get an ultra-cool QSL card. You may be thinking that the benefit of SAREX and ARISS is pretty much one-sided (to the amateur radio community), and that we hams should be thankful to NASA (et al) for their benevolence. Think again. There is no doubt that the two programs (SAREX and ARISS) are a boon to us (hams) because of the unique opportunities to work stations aboard spacecraft (how cool is that?). But, NASA (et al) did not go to all the trouble and cost of including amateur radio gear on multiple spacecraft, and all the trouble and cost of training and licensing astronauts just for our (hams’) thills. The primary purpose of SAREX and ARISS is to minimize “isolation” of the astronauts aboard the space shuttle and the ISS.

Regardless of their super-human reputations, astronauts are, when push comes to shove, humans.

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Isolation and disconnectedness is not a normal state for any human. The “company” of two or three other astronauts on the same spacecraft is not enough to satisfy the normal human need for contact with others of his species. Normal communications to ground control stations helps, but SAREX and ARISS tremendously expands the opportunities for astronauts in space to have contact with other humans, thus satisfying a basic human need. And, it still is ultra-cool for us—some of my fellow hams may treasure that rare DX contact more than anything else in amateur radio, but I cannot think of anything more spiffy in amateur radio than contact with a manned spacecraft—a pleasure I have not yet had.

Well—given what we have learned here, let’s go out and do our part for the space program. Get active in pursuit of ARISS (the SAREX program is considered obsolete and superceded by ARISS). All you will need is a 2-meter FM voice transceiver with 25 watts of output power and a good antenna (a circularly polarized tracking yagi is best, but even a simple vertical will work—perhaps higher output power will be required with a less capable antenna). Frequencies and spacecraft tracking information are available on the WWW. (Note: some missions are also equipped for packet radio.)

A current focus of ARISS is contact with classrooms of students with the assistance of local amateur radio operators, but un-scheduled contact between licensed hams and the ISS occur fairly often. Radio contact with a manned spacecraft seems so ultra-cool to me that I now take this opportunity to submit this question to KARS president Ed Stuckey (AI7H) for referral to the membership: Shall we (KARS) undertake a formal effort to participate with one of our local schools to seek a scheduled ARISS contact? I have the transceiver. And, am willing to work with others to build a suitable antenna. What say you, Ed? What say you VHF antenna experts? What say you KARS?

--the editor

SPECIAL EVENT

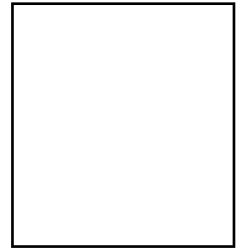
----- Mark your calendars -----

• KARS Ice Cream Social

2 p.m. ‘til 5 p.m. Saturday 12 August 2006 at Bob (K7CGA) and Bonnie (KE7FPA) Kesson’s Manse in Dalton Gardens .

For directions, go to www.k7id.com, scroll to upcoming events, click on “August Ice Cream Social.”

KOOTENAI AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
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Deliver to:

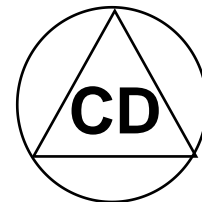
This is the August 2006 Issue.

The august (definition: grand and venerable) leaders of KARS must act soon to depose the runaway editor of this newsletter. The world depends on them now as never before.

Current KARS officers

President:	Ed Stuckey 208-457-0354	AI7H
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What is this?



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DISCLAIMER

Unless otherwise indicated, the material presented in this newsletter is fully the responsibility of the editor, and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of any other member of KARS.