

Propagation

Kootenai Amateur Radio Society (KARS) Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2006

More satire for your amateur radio buck

PLUTO ATTACKS EARTH!

MILLIONS AFFECTED--FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Continued Social and Business Activity at KARS

Dear KARS members and Friends,

Recent Happenings:

Ice Cream Social: A total of 36 KARS members and guests attended this annual event on 08/12. It was good to see many old friends and meet several new ones, all at the very nice home of our gracious hosts Bob (K7CGA) and Bonnie (KE7FPA) Kesson. Thanks Bob and Bonnie for such a nice setup.

Club Business:

We were pleased to hold Ham Tests before the last Club meeting. Two applicants sat for testing, and both passed, so our ranks now include one new Technician and one new General class licensee. If you would like to take a Ham Test, or know someone who is interested, contact John (N7JU) Hollar – n7ju@arri.net. We want to make the Ham Testing process easy for the applicants, and we think that offering tests prior to Club meetings is a good idea!

In order to move several Club Business items forward, committees were formed at the KARS meet-

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VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT--N7JU

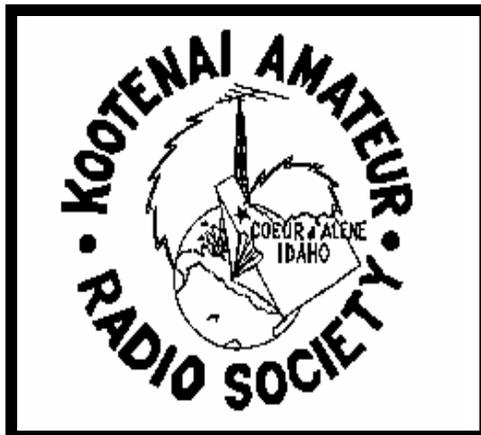
First of all our congratulations to new general class licensee, Sean Cunningham, KE7CWS; and to new technician-class licensee, Doug Sampson KE7ITJ for their successful participation in the new KARS VE testing program last month. If you hear them on the air give them a shout and a hearty welcome. With the help of our KARS VE's we'll be doing it again at the September 11th. KARS meeting. We already have a reservation for a new technician applicant. The session starts at 6:00 PM, so spread the word on "nets" and "eye-balls." The KARS offering provides an alternative to the scarcity of testing sessions. The exam study process takes a lot of time and hard work, thus applicants should not have to wait a months to test (or re-test). Good luck to those who are going to give it a try. Call N7JU-John, 765-5470 to make a reservation.

In my role as VE Team Leader, for the ARRL/KARS Volunteer Examination process, I'm beginning to appreciate the fact that we have a small number of hams both members and friends who are struggling with the Morse code.

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- *War of the Worlds*
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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
11 September at 7 p.m. (Monday)	KARS monthly meeting	Kootenai County Airport (Shep Rock Building)
18 September 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, 11 September 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

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ing as follows:

- The Club Assets committee includes Lee (AA7AF) Hopkins and Brad (KA5PER) Kasper. Lee and Brad are making a list of all of the Physical Assets that are owned by the club.
- The Badge committee includes Randy (KB6YAV) Carlson and Larry (K6SPP) Telles. They are charged with getting two or three badge designs together, along with price estimates, for presentation to the Membership at a later meeting.
- The Constitution Update committee is responsible for evaluating our current KARS constitution (last updated in 1986), and comparing it with various model constitutions from other organizations. This committee consists of Gary (KE7IAT) Roth, John (N7JU) Hollar, Larry (K6SPP) Telles, and Ed (AI7H) Stuckey. We expect to make a progress report to the Club at the October meeting.

Upcoming Events:

Club Meeting 09/11/06: Our guest speaker for this meeting will be Lamar (WA7LT) Ray. Lamar will present "How High Should Your Antenna Be", with special emphasis on NVIS antennas. Join us to get some great ideas on how to improve your antenna farm!

Highway Cleanup Program: 09/16/06, 9:30 to 11:30 AM (approximately). Randy (KB6YAV) Carlson is event coordinator. Contact him direct - kb6yav@cet.com for more details. After the Cleanup, the work party will proceed to a local restaurant for lunch (courtesy of KARS).

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VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued from page 1)

Unfortunately, attempts in the past may have met with some frustration. The natural tendency is to say "the heck with it" and move on. For sure these folks are being held back from upgrading because of the code requirement (Element 1). I see this as an opportunity for all of our "challenged coders" to get together with some special help and techniques designed to help them break the "code barrier." In my 50 years as a ham, making me a golden member of the ARRL, Old Timer's Club (or is that just an *old buzzard*?) I've discovered that initial and undisciplined code learning habits can actually cause serious problems later on. Not so much at five WPM but when one truly wants to break the 20-25 WPM barrier! For one thing, many can't write letters that fast. Try writing the alphabet as many times as you can in one minute. If you can do it twice you might just barely be able to copy five WPM as you have to decode each letter in your head and then write it down. I can manage about five or six times (but I'm the only one who can read it). I suppose that's why I feel comfortable at 20 WPM not much beyond that. Anyhow, if you would like to join our proposed group of "challenged coders" give me a call or e-mail and we'll try a *get together*.

What happened to summer? We have just a few months to secure new antennas and ready them for the winter. I was over at Steve's, WO6LF, QTH the other day and he, along with a few others would really appreciate some help in firming up their antenna installations. Not as extensive as VP Larry's K6SPP, project to be sure, but an hour or

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Upcoming VEC/VE Licensing Exams for Our Area

- 11 September (Monday) just before regularly scheduled KARS meeting (meeting begins at 7 p.m.) at the Kootenai County Airport in Hayden, ID. By appointment only--no walk-ins. Exact starting time will depend on what exam elements are covered. Contact John Hollar (N7JU) at 208.765.5470 for appointment.
- 14 September (Thursday) at 5 p.m. Trading Company store (formerly Tidyman's Grocery), 13014 E. Sprague Avenue (corner of Sprague and McDonald), Spokane Valley, WA.
Contact Mary Qualitieri (AA7RT) at 509.991.2192 or aa7rt@arrl.net
- 16 September (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
- 23 September (Saturday) at 2 p.m. University High School, 12420 E 32nd Avenue, Spokane Valley, WA.
Use far east entrance on 32nd Avenue--room location to be announced.
Contact Betsy Ashleman (N7WRQ) at 509.448.5821 or n7wrq@aol.com

PLUTO ATTACKS EARTH!

In apparent retaliation for being declared a non-planet (how insulting is that?) by the International Astronomical Union of Earth, Pluto has attacked Earth. It appears that Pluto's military forces intend to destroy their enemies on Earth by laying waste to Earth's vegetation and altering Earth's climate. The attack by Pluto was first noticed by scientists who say that vegetation in the northern hemisphere of Earth are showing subtle signs of damage. Leaves on otherwise lush-growing trees, shrubs, and brush are losing their vibrant green color, turning yellow or brown in some of the more severe cases. At first, just a few leaves on affected vegetation showed these signs, but as each day passes, more and more trees, shrubs and plants are showing yellowing or browning leaves. Scientists studying the Plutonian attack do not know how far the effects may go, but warn that no cure for the yellowing and browning of vegetation is known. The effect of Pluto's attack on Earth's climate is also a subtle one--as of now, a slight cooling of temperatures has been noticed on some days, alternating with warming on other days. Scientists have also noted a slight increase in winds in some parts of the northern landmasses. Military leaders on Earth say that they would act to defend Earth if they knew exactly how the Plutonians are acting against Earth. Scientists warn that if the effects of the attack continue, many trees and plants could be entirely denuded within the next few months, and that if the cooling of atmospheric temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere are not halted, frozen water could cover some portions of the affected landmasses. KARS will continue to monitor the situation, and will report new developments in future editions of this newsletter. See companion article below.

INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL UNION OFFICIALLY STRIPS PLUTO OF PLANETARY STATUS

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has decreed that Pluto is undeserving of its status as the solar system's ninth planet, and has therefore re-labeled Pluto as a dwarf planet. To reach the conclusion that Pluto was not a planet, the IAU developed the following definition: to be a planet, a celestial body must be in orbit around a star while not itself being a star, and must be large enough in mass for its own gravity to pull it into a nearly spherical shape and have cleared the neighborhood around its orbit. The AIU announced that Pluto does not meet this definition, and since its orbit overlaps that of Neptune, it cannot be considered a planet.

Officials at the American Museum of Natural History in New York had been at the vanguard of the movement to demote Pluto and were feeling vindicated as the IAU published its decision. This should surprise no one--New Yorkers can't stand it when anyone or anything interferes with their view of themselves as the only thing in the universe that matters. The fact that the "movement" against Pluto was led by New Yorkers is not the only issue that should have been considered before action was taken. It appears that the decision was not well-thought-out on a number of matters.

For example, what about Mickey Mouse's dog? What of a dog's ego and self esteem? What did

this poor canine do to any of you dopes in the International Astronomical Union? Did he bite you? Did he leave a "deposit" on your front lawn? Did he dig up your pansies?

On another matter, what about the plutocrats? Are they now to be demoted to mere democrats? And, what about plutonium? Are we now required to find a new name for plutonium? Naming transuranic elements after the planets is a time-honored custom amongst physicists--now what are these poor physicists supposed to do? Can you think of a better name for an element with an atomic number of 94 and a melting point of 639.5 degrees C? Plutonium! It just fits.

Also, what about NASA's Planetary Research Projects Office, which manages the New Horizons mission, which is, as we speak, monitoring and controlling the progress of its spacecraft as it makes its way from Earth to Pluto bearing the ashes of Clyde Tombaugh, who discovered Pluto in 1930?

If you are not yet worried about the actions of the International Astronomical Union, ask yourself what they might do next? Might they decree that Rhode Island is not a state because it lacks insufficient mass for its gravity to attract enough water around it to make it into a real island? Think about it...

---your editor

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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The KARS Picnic: Originally scheduled for 09/16, this event has been cancelled.

73 to all--Ed, AI7H

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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so of coordinated assistance to ready our respective systems for the cold months ahead. Antenna parties are fun, so how about a "progressive antenna party?" A couple of hours here, a couple of hours there, and everyone gets to share in the extraordinary help of KARS members helping each other. If you could use a few hours of antenna assistance, place your name in the Suggestion Box at the next KARS meeting. And Bob, K7CGA, bring your bow and arrow please.

We are lucky to be in "boating heaven" and from time to time we might be asked to help our boating neighbors figure out the *radio part* of the sport. Notwithstanding our boating and "pie champion" guru, K7CGA, Bob Kesson's expertise, we just might be asked to help out because of our (half?) vast knowledge of "electron behavior." Last year I got a call from Mike Alfano, KE7CQK, in Spokane who was having feedback problems with his Icom 706 and autotuner. It seems as soon as he increased the power output to more than 50 watts, his 706 "would just shut down," (turn completely off). Oh, did I mention it was on his sail boat moored at Bayview on Lake Pend Oreille? Mike and I wrestled with the problem of grounding and tuning non-resonant

(continued next column)

antenna lengths; and after a time, with what wound up being a committee of "Elmers," finally solving the problem with special attention to feed line, grounding (if you can call it that) and matching issues. It was a good thing also, just in time before commencing his world sailing tour to the South Pacific. My first solution was to stick a mag-mounted *Outbacker* on his deck and call CQ 20. It worked like a charm but not very practical in a gale condition when you are locked "below deck" and in need of a radio! Any how, there is help from a new source. An online Radio Tutorial was recently initiated by the *Boat US Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water*. The tutorial is called *Can You Hear Me* and can be found on www.BoatUS.com/mmsi. Topics covered in addition to Rescue 21, digital selective calling (DCS), radio, equipment installations, and VHF emergency procedures are many other subjects of general interest to amateurs (not only boaters). Check it out. The 35-minute lecture & slides is well worth it, its free!

Finally, as a personal note I am saddened at the loss, two weeks ago, of a personal friend (and our pastor) Bill Bracket, 60, (General Class) WB7UWL, SK. He succumbed to a rapidly advancing cancer but not before he had time to enjoy a huge family reunion. Bill was a dedicated man of God, serving 35 years in the ministry. He was good natured, loved people, the outdoors, and the Mariners. One small task left to me on his behalf, was to apply to the ARRL for a listing in the *Silent Key* section of QST magazine. It is a very dignified and organized process and my thanks to the League for providing the means and the method to notify the ham community the world over. Bill will be missed.

N7JU

KARS CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Jack McElroy (K7JMC) is in clutter reduction mode. You are the potential beneficiary.

Jack's Packet PC: Jack built up a small PC for packet, PSK-31, etc.. It is a HP Vectra 133MHz Pentium PC. It has a small 2gig HD, CD ROM drive, and is running Windows 98SE. The package also includes the Win 98SE CD and a CD with many digital Ham programs, a nearly new 17" Compaq Monitor, and (of course) a Mouse & keyboard. interested buyers can go to Jack's QTH to see it run. Jack wants \$75.00 for the package.

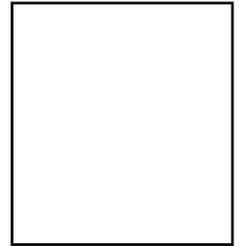
Jack's VHF/UHF Cross-band radio set:

- Yaesu FT-5100 dual band (2m & 70CM) mobile radio, with PL decoder chip installed and manual. \$225.00
- Mag mount & Larson dual band antenna. \$50.00
- Kenwood TH-78A, dual band HT, w/ over sized battery-pack, two chargers, and a manual. \$150.00

All equipment is up and running. The whole package all at once: \$400.00

Contact Jack at k7jmc@yahoo.com or at 208.687.3293

KOOTENAI AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
PO BOX 5222
Coeur d' Alene, ID 83816



Deliver to:

This is the September 2006 Issue.

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Newsletter Editor:	Steve McQuiston (<i>semper demens</i>) 208-772-4095	WO6LF
Repeater Tech:	Jim Monroe 208-687-2251	N7ESU
Webmaster:	Larry Telles 208-762-2548	K6SPP

Reminder:

The KARS picnic planned for 16 September has been cancelled.

KARS NEWSLETTER--NEXT MONTH

How about blank pages in the newsletter? KARS members who like getting a newsletter with actual letters on its pages are taking a chance that no sane person would take. It would be as if you were setting out to cross the Mojave desert in a Yugo with 200,000 miles on the odometer, with a fully gassed-up Pinto only inches in front of you--oh, yeah: both cars have Firestone 500 tires on them, and all eight tires are severely under-inflated. You need a new newsletter editor.

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.