

January 2007

(www.k7id.com)

P.O. Box 5222 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816

REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS:

January 8

Sheprock Building

7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

Program: ARES/RACES:

Past, Present and Future

Speaker: Jim Linden, N7JIL

Refreshments: Bob/Bonnie
(K7CGA/KE7FPA) Kesson

February 12

Sheprock Building

7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

Program: "DXpedition on a Sail
Boat" building, operating and
testing a 20 Meter HF station
for -mail and keeping contact
with local hams (us) on the high
seas to the South Pacific.

Speaker: Mike Alfonso,
N7MCA

Refreshments: Chris (N7ZUJ)
Monroe

March 12

Sheprock Building

7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

Program: Using the simplex
IRLP node "3111" in CdA.

Speaker: Ron Hardin, K7BRH

Refreshments: Steven (K7ALS)
Armstrong.

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

FCC DROPS CODE!

NEWINGTON, CT, Dec 19, 2006 — The FCC has issued the complete *Report and Order* (R&O) in the "Morse code" proceeding, WT Docket 05-235. The *R&O* follows fast on the heels of the Commission's December 15 public notice announcing the elimination of the Morse code exam requirement for all Amateur Radio license classes. The *R&O* also addresses the ARRL's request to eliminate the disparity between "Tech Plus" licensees (Technicians with Element 1 Morse credit) and Technician licensees — present and future — who have not passed a Morse code test.

"In summary, we believe that the public interest will be served by revising the Amateur Service rules to eliminate the telegraphy testing requirement," the FCC concluded in the *R&O*, released today. "We also believe that these rule changes will allow Amateur Service licensees to better fulfill the purpose of the Amateur Service and will enhance the usefulness of the Amateur Service to the public and licensees."

The FCC took the opportunity in the *R&O* to act on the League's *Petition for Partial Reconsideration* in the "omnibus" proceeding, WT Docket 04-140, to retain the 3620-3635 kHz segment for automatically controlled digital stations. "We conclude that the expansion of the 75 meter band should not be so limited," the FCC said. "We agree with the ARRL, however, that the Commission did not intend to reduce the amount of spectrum available for automatically controlled digital stations."

To rectify the "unintended consequence" of the rules adopted in the omnibus proceeding, the Commission amended §97.221(b) to authorize 3585 to 3600 kHz for automatically controlled digital stations.

Finally, the Commission said it would conform the Amateur Service rules to reflect that the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) has reduced from two to one the number of Amateur Radio license classes.

The Commission is amending §97.301 "to authorize Amateur Extra class privileges to all individuals who have been issued a CEPT radio-amateur license by their country of citizenship, and who satisfy other requirements in the Commission's rules."

No Effective Date Yet

(Continue on page 2)

Today's *R&O* spells out the specific Part 97 changes going into place once the new rules go on the books and indicates that the effective date will be 30 days after the document appears in the *Federal Register*. Publication likely will occur in January, with the new rules going into effect in February.

Reprising the History the Morse Decision

Delegates at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) effectively eliminated the international requirement to demonstrate Morse proficiency to gain access to HF bands, the FCC recounted in discussing how it reached its decision in the Morse issue. A dozen and a half petitions for rule making — most calling on the Commission to simply eliminate the Morse requirement — in the wake of WRC-03 gave rise to the “Morse code” proceeding. A flurry of comments followed.

“The record reflects a division of views in the Amateur Radio community regarding this proposal,” the FCC's *R&O* said. “Many of the comments from individual Amateur Radio operators support eliminating the telegraphy proficiency requirement.” Others suggested dropping the requirement for General applicants while keeping it for Amateur Extra applicants, the FCC noted.

“Others argue that the present telegraphy examination requirements should be maintained because any reduction in these requirements will be detrimental to the Amateur Service while providing no long-term benefits,” the Commission continued.

The FCC proposed in 2005 to drop the Morse examination requirement altogether, although the ARRL was among those who felt the Commission should retain it for Amateur Extra class applicants. The FCC remained unconvinced.

“We nevertheless believe that the public interest is not served by requiring facility in Morse code when the trend in amateur communications is to use voice and digital technologies for exchanging messages,” the FCC said. “Rather, we believe that because the international requirement for telegraphy proficiency has been eliminated, we should treat Morse code telegraphy no differently from other Amateur Service communications techniques.”

The Commission said its reasoning “applies equally” to both the General and the Amateur Extra class licenses. “We are not persuaded that the Amateur Extra Class being the highest license class is a sufficient reason alone to retain a requirement that we conclude is otherwise inappropriate and unnecessary.” At the same time, the FCC said, its action doesn't preclude Amateur Radio licensees of any class “from pursuing and/or continuing to pursue Morse code proficiency should they so desire.”

The FCC said its rules don't require applicants to pass practical examinations to demonstrate proficiency in non-telegraphy communications techniques, and it feels the current regime of written examinations is “sufficient to determine whether a person is qualified to be issued an Amateur Radio operator license.”

No Special Advantage to Retaining the Morse Requirement

In today's *R&O*, the FCC cast aside arguments that Morse ability is advantageous in emergency communication situations. “The Commission previously addressed the essence of this argument and concluded that most emergency communication today is performed using voice, data, or video techniques,” the FCC said. The Commission also turned away assertions that retaining a Morse code requirement would help in keeping out the bad apples.

“The record is devoid of a demonstrated nexus between Morse code proficiency and on-the-air conduct,” the FCC observed. “As a result, we concur with the observation that ‘maintaining the code requirement does not purge Amateur Radio of bad operators. Education and self-policing does.’”

The Commission further reiterated its belief that the ability to demonstrate increased Morse code proficiency doesn't necessarily indicate an applicant's ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art. “A number of commenters agree that the Morse code requirement ‘keeps individuals that would enhance the hobby from getting a license,’ and that there is ‘no relationship between an individual's knowledge of Morse code and that individual's knowledge of radio regulations and practices and skills necessary to operate an amateur station.’”

Eliminating the Technician Disparity

The FCC also reviewed how it changed its mind regarding requests to eliminate the distinction between Technician and so-called “Tech Plus” (Technician with Element 1 Morse credit) licensees. In its *Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM)* in the proceeding, the FCC said it wanted to maintain the status quo. The League was among those asking the Commission to reconsider.

“Based on our review of our rules, we agree,” the FCC explained in its *R&O*. “Consistent with our decision herein to eliminate the Morse code requirement, we are eliminating this disparity by amending Section 97.301(e) to afford Technician and Technician Plus licensees identical operating privileges.”

The rule revision will mean Technician and so-called “Tech Plus” (Technician with Element 1 Morse credit) licensees will get voice and telegraphy privileges in four HF bands

that are identical to those of Novice class licensees. "In eliminating this disparity between Technician and Technician Plus licenses, we are simplifying the Amateur Service licensing structure and promoting regulatory parity," the FCC said.

No Additional Changes

The FCC again denied requests — including one from the ARRL — to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license along the lines of the old Novice ticket. Pointing out that the rules it's adopted grant Technician licensees additional operating privileges in four HF bands, the Commission said it didn't see any need for additional changes. The FCC also declined the League's request to grant Novice and Technician licensees voice and image privileges in certain segments 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters.

"Our action today giving Technician class licensees the same privileges as Technician Plus class licensees does effectively provide some of the relief ARRL seeks because Technician class licensees now have voice and digital privileges in the 10 meter HF band," the FCC said.

The Commission expressed concern that giving Novice and Technician holders voice privileges on other HF bands "would be a disincentive for these licensees to improve their knowledge and skills and attain a higher class license."

Web Site Resource

The ARRL is posting all information relevant to the FCC's actions in WT Docket 05-235 on its Web site.



Greetings to Club members and friends!

An unlikely combination of FCC action and the Space Weather forecast have created a special opportunity for Technician Class licensees, as well as future Hams. Please read below for details.

FCC Action: At the close of business on 12/15/06, the FCC announced they will drop the Morse code requirement for all Amateur Radio licensees. This is expected to take place in mid-January 2007, when the details are published in the Federal Register. At that time, all "Tech" licensees will automatically get a late holiday present and be upgraded to "Tech Plus" class. If you are a Tech Plus licensee, you may operate on SSB voice on a portion of the Ten Meter band (to "get your feet wet" on "short wave radio"). It's also a good time to start studying for the General Class license, in order to take advantage of what's expected to happen over the next eleven years, as explained below.



Space Weather: The experts at National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provide regular earth weather forecasts, as well as short and long range "Space Weather" forecasts. The NOAA folks are excited about the next eleven-year Sunspot cycle, known as "cycle 24", which will begin in 2007. As you probably know, long range "short wave" communications depends on a lot of Sunspots, and the forecast is that cycle 24 will be a doozy! This means that appropriately licensed (General, Advanced, Extra Class) Amateur Radio operators with modest equipment will have many opportunities to talk with other hams, worldwide, over the next several years.

In summary: I recommend that all Tech and Tech Plus Club members upgrade to General so that you can experience the thrill of old fashioned short-wave radio!

73 to all,
Ed Stuckey, AI7H
Club President

**COFFEE & DONUTS
EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING**



**8:00 A.M.
TIL
10:00 A.M.**

**RATHDRUM
SUPER 1 FOODS**

Bring a writing instrument. Super 1 supplies napkins for our breakfast table engineering!

**2007 DUES ARE
NOW DUE!**



...a tempest in a teapot...or, is it?

American Red Cross *Scrutiny*

Looks like we're not the only ARES affiliated club that is *honked* about the apparent *background & credit checks* allegedly being imposed by the American Red Cross (ARC) an organization whose past history during 911 was not so "squeaky clean". What is this all about? Pure and simple, you won't be able to volunteer your services via KARS or ARES or RACES to the ARC unless some *third party vendor* that ARC has contracted with, *looks into your credit and past criminal history*. Rather than me getting it wrong, read what Gordon Pugh, W2NH, has to say: *It is an invasion of privacy with way too much potential for identity theft. It's costly too.* I wonder what would happen if a well meaning ARC employee left his laptop on the front seat an official ARC van (in a traumatized zone) and gets it *pinched*. No matter that **your** name, call, address, phone, e-mail, social, and credit score and security information are in there along with a couple thousand other amateur radio volunteers. Can't happen you say?...happens all the time! What's worse, who **are** the folks that input this data at the security company and how much do they make an hour? I'm sure the vendor is not a *Wackenhut* (the largest private security organization in the world) because it is really *MyBackgroundCheck.com LLC* (MBC)! To quote a famous line in the movie Dirty Dozen: *Never heard of it!* What is the short term solution? **Don't volunteer for the ARC!** for any activity including contributions.



KARS plans to put a face on this issue by inviting Kerren Vollmer, new Kootenai County Red Cross District Director to our KARS April Meeting to clarify the situation and address how we, as a newly formed non-profit corporation might fit into the mix. Don't be hard on Kerren as she is very aware of the problem and from a personal interview,

will make **our** opinions known to the ARC big shots. She is also a candidate for an FCC Amateur License and has expressed a lot of interest in joining KARS/ARES as well. This is good!

As the ARRL reported recently: "The American Red Cross (ARC) attempted to clarify its policy to require background checks of its employees and volunteers, at least as far as the policy applies to possible credit checks. After the ARC announced the policy in July through its regional and local chapters, Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) members who support Red Cross disaster relief and recovery efforts began expressing concerns to ARRL". (*that's an understatement - N7JU*) "In some past incidents - most notably the 2001 World Trade Center terror attacks and the 2005 Hurricane Katrina response - ARES volunteers have had to *badge in* as Red Cross volunteers. In a statement to the ARRL November 9th 2006, Laura Howe, the ARC's director of response communication and marketing, stressed that, to do *background checks, the applicant must* (also) *give permission to conduct a credit check, ...the ARC has no intention of conducting them across the board.* (Then why do it? -N7JU). Howe continued. "But please rest assured that credit checks are only run in **rare instances** and are not a part of the routine minimum basic check the Red Cross performs on employees or volunteers." Howe told the ARRL "that the *standard minimum check* verifies the applicant's Social Security number and a search of the National Criminal File (NCIC) for the past seven years. (Huh? N7JU)

ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, urges ARES and other ham radio volunteers to *treed cautiously and read very carefully what they are giving MBC permission to collect on behalf of the Red Cross*, especially given the wide net being cast. Howe acknowledged that by "signing the consent form, applicants **do give** MBC permission to conduct a credit check **or other** investigation into an individual's background." ARES members are not obliged to submit to a background check, however; the choice to do so is a personal one. Not to mention they won't be allowed to volunteer their services to the ARC.

This is a really hot issue...and it is not over yet. One ARES group turned their holiday dinner party into a debate concluding that "ARES works under government emergency management, not the Red Cross. In the EOC, the Red Cross has its own ESF Number" (stands for a FEMA Emergency Support Function - in this case defining ARES) - N7JU. "A shelter is opened by emergency management, requesting it under the Red Cross ESF. Communications is provided to that shelter under the Communications ESF at the request of emergency management to the local EC. Untested yet, Red Cross doesn't seem to be in a position to demand clearance of persons working in shelters under control of the EOC. At

least that's the current thinking of this group of ARES amateur radio operators.

Now that I've bored you with the issues, how about a solution? Obtaining a **concealed weapons permit** in our country is not an easy task. All the background checks and records reports affidavits and other issues such as *child support, tax evasion, citizenship, residency, and vehicle infractions* **are** all included. Costs a bundle too. But, once you have one, you are good to go. So if you want to work as a volunteer for the American Red Cross, carry a concealed big expensive firearm that you bought on credit! - hi hi -
John, N7JU

EDITORIAL

Paper Clips, Chewing Gum and Bailing Wire

Do you remember your first car? Or maybe it was a truck! Which ever one you had, it was a first. It didn't matter how much you polished it, this vehicle wasn't reliable. Your parents felt that you were driving a hazard. Your girl friend didn't like the smell of gas and oil driving down the road, nor did she like the fact that you didn't have a heater that worked. Your buddies felt it was a cool street machine, while you felt inwardly, "how do I keep this thing running?"

How many paper clips, how much chewing gum, and how many feet of bailing wire does it take to keep something running 365 days a year? I'm not talking about that old car of yours anymore, I'm talking about the KARS 146.98 repeater. It isn't fair to Jim Monroe to make so many trips in the last few months to repair a dead horse. Once the ground turns white, Jim isn't going to be able to get near the site. The transmitter appears to have output when it gives the correct time. The duplexer appears to be working as well as the controller. It's the receiver that's beyond the pale.

The receiver seems to activate on a real signal and from any one of the thousand field mice living and belching on the mountain top site. Some days the receiver operates and never releases. Some days it sound's like it's very cold and its teeth are chattering. Why no PL? Isn't there an FCC rule that states you must be able to shut down a repeater from a remote location? It sounds like our shut down method is to remove the A.C. line cord from the wall plug at the repeater site.

Half of the KARS members hold a Technician Class license. With no repeater, why belong to KARS? But are we a repeater club?

So what's the answer? Buy a new repeater! Install it! Then you can forget it! How much are we talking about? \$800 is a good round figure! We are a social club three times a year, (Pancake Breakfast, Ice Cream Social and Christmas Party), a contest club once a year, (Field Day), and have a swap meet in Rathdrum once in June. Then what are we the remaining seven months a year? Come to the meetings and sit on your hands group! Simply put, "do nothing!"

A new repeater with a state of the art controller can change that. Announcements, auto-patch, plus more features than I have room for here. Techs, Generals and Extras could use the repeater together as one group of amateurs since the band is common to all license classes. This new repeater would also be a guaranteed operational backup for 147.08 in case of emergency. Let's put away the paper clips, chewing gum and bailing wire. That's what you use on Field day. Yes, \$800 is a lot of money. But, right now it's sitting in a bank account doing much of nothing. Besides, a year from now it will probably cost more than \$800 to replace our boat-anchor repeater.

When I joined this organization a few years ago I heard talk about a KARS 440 repeater. I like 440. Every time I ask about it, members want to change the subject! I'll keep at it and one of these days I'll get my answer.

Now that I have had my say, it's your turn. Write a letter (email) to the editor. I'll print all that I receive (if they can be read in mixed company).

If you don't want to write, then wait around a couple of months. I told Ed that I would do this newsletter until the new officers are elected.

2007 DUES ARE DUE NOW!

1. You can bring a check made out to: KARS for \$12.00 (single membership) or \$18 for family membership to the January club meeting.

2. You can mail a personal check made out to: KARS and send it to P.O. Box 5222, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816

Dues will be delinquent in February, 2007. The treasurers job can be made a lot easier if you pay as soon as possible.

LOGBOOK

VE Examinations:

KARS

January 8, 2007 Theregual January KARS meeting . We will setup and start testing session at 6 P.M. (By appointment at the CAP Building. Call N7JU, John 208-765-5470 to reserve your test date.

SPOKANE, WA

Testing will be January 11th at 5pm at the Trading Company, McDonald and Sprague in Spokane Valley. Please pre-register by calling me at 509-991-2192 or aa7rt@arrl.net

Mary AA7RT

SAGLE, ID

No report by press time. Check with www.k7id.com after the first of the year for times and dates.

DIRECTIONS TO KARS MEETING:

Take U.S. Highway 95 to Miles Avenue (Miles is about 1 mile North of Hayden Avenue). Go West on Miles to airport gate. Gate requires access code (call Ed, KARS President at area code 208 699-7743). Once past gate bear left to the Shep Rock Building.

KARS VOLUNTEER EXAMINER ACTIVITIES FOR 2006

I was hoping to perform a brief presentation ceremony at the KARS/RACES/ARES party on December 11th for our VE Volunteers noting their outstanding support during the year, but as fate would have it we had seven applicants taking tests at the time and weren't quite finished when President Ed Stuckey, convened his *record smashing 6-minute* Business Meeting. That being said, I really must report a very successful testing year under the KARS/ARRL VEC testing program. We held ten (10) VE sessions during the year, and were responsible for another 53 new licensees being added to our ranks. We had eight (8) General Class upgrades and three (3) Amateur Extra upgrades. I want to thank all our VE volunteers who gave of their time and talents during the year to make this program successful. During 2007 it is our hope to establish a KARS testing group serving

Bonner's Ferry and Sandpoint; and to congratulate Jerry Hopper, KA7RNX, for his new KARS testing team in Kellogg, ID.

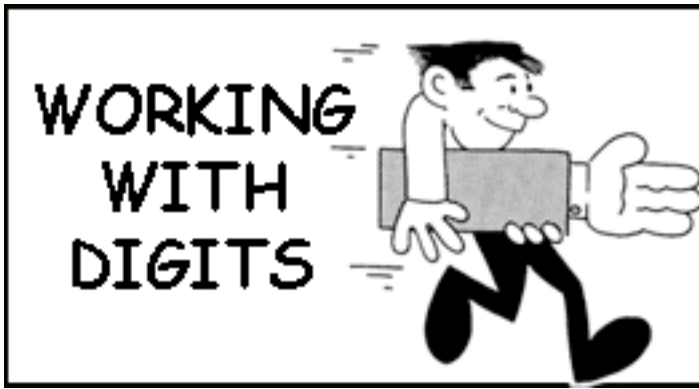
Our biggest gig was a very well organized testing session in Bonner' Ferry, administering 15 examinations on December 6th just a scant 8 days before the new questions covering the revised band edges when into effect. Three (3) applicants sat for both Technician & General class and passed. They were ecstatic to find out later that they won't be needing Morse Code to receive their upgrade to General Class. We are awaiting the actual procedures for automatic upgrading for all no-code Technician to Technician Plus (probably just an automatic action). Those having General Class CSCE credit will more than likely have to go back through the VE team to upgrade, with a fee and a VEC605 form filing. As soon as we know...you'll know. Now it seems there will be no excuse for not upgrading your license, so put that goal on your TODO list for 2007 and good luck. - N7JU, VE Team Leader.

From the December 2006 National Weather Service

The Weather Watcher Newsletter

In 2006, I joined the National Weather Service as a *Spotter*. In return, I received some really great training from NWS staffer, Robin Fox, some nice colorful cloud charts, a really cool refrigerator magnet, and a pencil that says "National Weather Service". All kidding aside, it is a really neat program that takes amateur radio into account. For example, on December 1st 2006 the NWS sponsored a Nationwide ARES/RACES, **Skywarn Recognition Day** by sponsoring what I'll call a *weatherswapfest*. A group of 150 NWS offices around the country in connection with local amateur radio support groups, operated for 24 hours to swap local WX reports. Spokane's group logged 119 contacts including American Samoa (it was *hot and humid* there). It is also an annual event. Too bad NOAA reported **no sunspot activity** for that particular 24-hour period and thus not a whole lot of DX was worked. However, 2-meters was hopping, and I suspect a lot of IRLP links were responsible for most of the contacts.

The web site describing the activity <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/hamradio/index.php> also listed some EchoLink Node Numbers for various NWS offices around the country. I made it into a few of them ...but it seems the NWS may have been a little squeamish about providing a WiFi ISP facility for the Echolink process. (Be careful what you ask for.... you NWS -guys). Anyhow, it was a lot of fun and I hope you'll join the group in 2007. - N7JU, Spotter #93A/R.



What You Might Do Before Calling the Computer Doctor!

Shell32.dll: During the holidays you may be one of the people that stuffs yourself with too much good food. Windows XP and 2000 can do the same, but with data, corrupted data. These two operating systems store information about many of their functions in files called DLL's (Dynamic Link Libraries). Info about these DLL's is stored in the Windows Registry. When a DLL file's Registry entry is corrupted, the Operating System can balk when opening files or the OS can start causing problems. How can you be sure that's your problem? You can't, but you can re-register a DLL that was installed with Windows. A multitude of problems can be fixed by re-registering Shell32.dll, which stores information about Windows' interface and is used to open files and Web pages.

Choose Start > Run and type `regsvr32 /I shell32.dll`, then press <enter>. A message will appear telling you that the command worked. (The "i" in the command above stands for "install.")

CCleaner Tool: This is a freeware system optimization and privacy tool. It removes unused files from your system - allowing Windows to run faster and freeing up valuable hard disk space. It also cleans traces of your online activities such as your Internet history. But the best part is that it's fast (normally taking less than a second to run) and contains NO Spyware or Adware! (www.ccleaner.com/download)

ShutDownPro: This free utility can easily ShutDown, Reboot, Log Off, Power Off, Lock Workstation, switch to Hibernate Mode, switch to Standby Mode. All of the above shut down actions can be executed as force action. When you click the context-menu in the Taskbar, you switch quickly from a screen-resolution to another, can empty the Temporary Internet Files, open your CD-drives, add programs to Favorites minimizes, maximizes or closes all windows, you get information over system-resources, get a listing of all current programs running. You can fix a time for shutting down your system.

(home.tiscali.de/zdata/shutdownpro_e.htm)

If you think that Adobe Acrobat Reader is too slow, then give this free program a try.

Foxit Reader 2.0: A free PDF document viewer and printer, with incredible small size (only 1.5 M download size), breezing-fast launch speed and amazingly rich feature set. Foxit Reader 2.0 supports Windows 98/Me/2000/XP/2003.

Foxit Reader 2.0 itself is free. Advanced add-ons are non-free. For example, you can use the following functions for free:

- View or print PDF document
- Fill out PDF forms and save them
- View PDF as text

Self-upgrade: All you need to do is click on the menu item "Check for update now" and get the latest update. (www.foxitsoftware.com).

2006 KARS CHRISTMAS PARTY



47 men, women, and children attended our December 11, 2006 KARS Christmas Party. The chow line moved fast with plenty of good food and wonderful conversations at any table in the room. The business meeting lasted a lengthy six minutes.

KOOTENAI AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
P.O. Box 5222
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816



HAPPY NEW YEAR

2006/7 CLUB OFFICERS

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Legal Notice

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

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not the radio club as a whole.

KARS operates a voice repeater on 146.98 and a packet repeater on 145.510 Mhz.

Anyone interested in Amateur Radio is welcome to join. Dues are \$12.00 (individual) and \$18.00 for a family membership. Contact the Treasurer if you wish to join.

If you know of anyone interested in joining KARS, you can notify the newsletter editor as to that parties email address. A copy of this newsletter will be send with no obligation to join.

Material can be submitted for publication in Propagation. The deadline for articles, etc., is the 25th of each month for the following month's issue.