KARS KEY KLICKS

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March 2015

DXing Software Aids at March Meeting

The next KARS General Meeting will be March 3rd, 7PM in the public meeting room at St. Mary's Hospital. Use the Main south side entrance.

After a short business meeting, there will be a presentation on software for DXers. Whether you are a seasoned DXer or new to the game, you will find the material useful. See you at the meeting!

Program presenter Darryl Hedges KD9AUK makes a point at the February meeting program on high altitude ballooning

UPDATED ARES ID CARDS AVAILABLE AT SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Be sure to stop by the Sheriff's Department building south of town during normal business hours and obtain a current ARES identification card.

Inquire at the front desk.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

March 2	W9IEY
March 6	KC9VDI
March 11	KC9ZKA
March 14	KC9OAK
March 20	N9RJM
March 23	N9HJR
March 24	K9BYT

Let the newsletter editors know if we miss your birthday or get it wrong

NCS FOR MARCH

March 2	N9LYE
March 9	N9RJM
March 16	N9OE
March 23	W9EJM
March 30	N9FD

Don't forget the net!
Mondays at 2100 hrs. local time

KARS KALENDAR

March 3……..……KARS General Meeting
March 7-8.....ARRL International DX SSB
March 8……..……..……Sterling Hamfest
March 15…..*NA* ***Sprint*** RTTY Rules in pdf
March 17..……..…..KARS Board Meeting
March 21-23……..……..BARTG RTTY
March 28-29…..CQ World Wide WPX SSB
April 7……..……KARS General Meeting
April 15……..……..KARS Board Meeting
April 19……..ARRL Rookie Roundup SSB

The Kankakee Area Radio Society operates repeaters on:

146.34/.94	*107.2 PL Access*
449.8/444.8	*114.8 PL Access*
145.130	*107.2 PL Access*

Additionally, KARS sponsors:

144.39 2 Wide Area APRS digi-peaters
145.53 KARS DX Cluster

WEATHER SPOTTER TRAINING CLASSES

by Ed W9EJM

For those that area interested, and that should be just about everyone, here is the link to the local and area weather spotting classes in Kankakee and surrounding areas for February, March and April…
http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lot/?n=spotter_talks

Also, here is the link to the Anything Weather Store site with all kinds of Skywarn merchandise…
https://www.anythingweatherstore.com/

NAVASSA DXPEDITION A SPECTACULAR SUCCESS!

With about 140,000 contacts in the log, K1N (KP1) goes down into DX history as one of the greatest rare DX operations to date. Number 2 on the most wanted lists, Navassa is about as rare as a contact with North Korea (P5).

An ATNO (All Time New One) for most active DXers, it was an operation about ten years in the making.

The leaders and operators of this expedition deserve a hearty congratulations for the huge amount of paper work, red tape and general wrangling it took to get the necessary approval of the various government agencies to land and operate from this protected island.

No strangers to complex, difficult and expensive expeditions, these people pulled off a world class operation so that the DX community could work a rare one. Thanks guys!

It's time to plan your Dayton agenda!

KARS HOMEPAGE— WWW.W9AZ.COM —KARS HOMEPAGE

HIGH ALTITUDE BALLOONING

by John K9BYT

What could be more fun than getting up before the Sun on a crisp winter Saturday and standing out in the cold for an hour and a half? OK, I could come up with a list, but some things are worth the effort. I recently had the pleasure of assisting a fellow HAM with his hobby of High Altitude Ballooning.

The mission starts weeks before. While the basic functionality is the same, each balloonist has different motivations and different equipment requirements so all of the equipment must be acquired and the payload containers must be customized to securely hold each of the components. Each setup includes some common basic components, such as a balloon, a parachute, and some type of tracking device (like an APRS tracking computer and transmission radio). Other options include flight recorders that collect information about location, altitude, temperature and other flight data. Most payloads include video cameras which capture the spectacular images seen from the 60,000 to 100,000+ foot heights reached by many flights.

Success depends on everything working as planned and that implies that there actually is a plan. Days before the launch, a website, managed by Cambridge University in England, is used to predict the flight path and landing area. The accuracy of the site is very uncanny, but we'll come back to that in a minute.

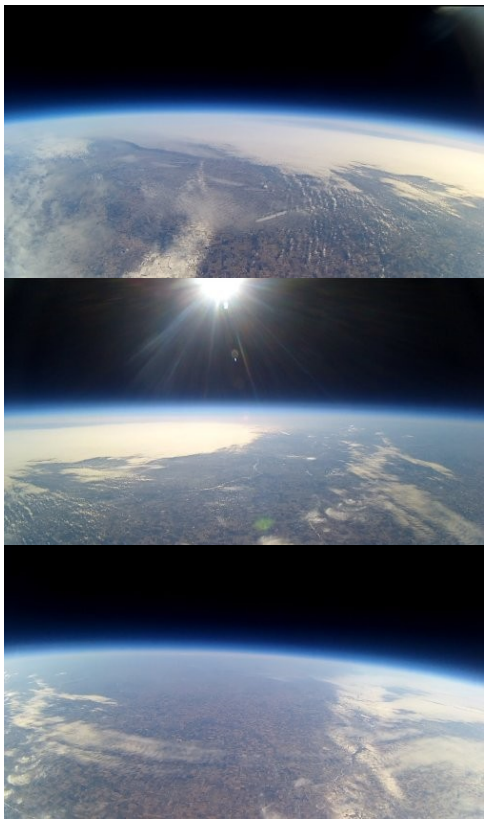
The morning starts with meticulously going over multiple checklists multiple times, checking and double-checking rigging lines and batteries. Redundancy is important since a single point of failure can turn a beautiful day into a discouraging loss of investment which could range from not getting a good video to the complete loss of all of the equipment. Once the payload is prepped, attention moves to the balloon. The balloon is placed on a blanket to avoid contamination and spread out to prevent kinks. A flexible hose is used to connect the balloon to a helium tank regulator and weights are attached to assist in the filling process. A large weight is used to provide ballast and prevent the balloon from floating away, and a smaller weight is used to indicate when enough helium has been added to create the lift necessary for the flight. Once the balloon is inflated, it is connected to the payload and released. It pulls its cargo into the sky and slowly fades from sight. Now is when the chase begins.

We pack up the chase vehicle and head towards the predicted landing site. A successful flight will travel nearly 20 miles vertically and 20 to 150 miles or more horizontally, based on the jet stream and wind conditions. Launch days are often chosen for their shorter recovery distances. A typical flight will ascend for 90 minutes and descend for another 30. Just long enough to grab a bite of lunch on the way to the recovery area.

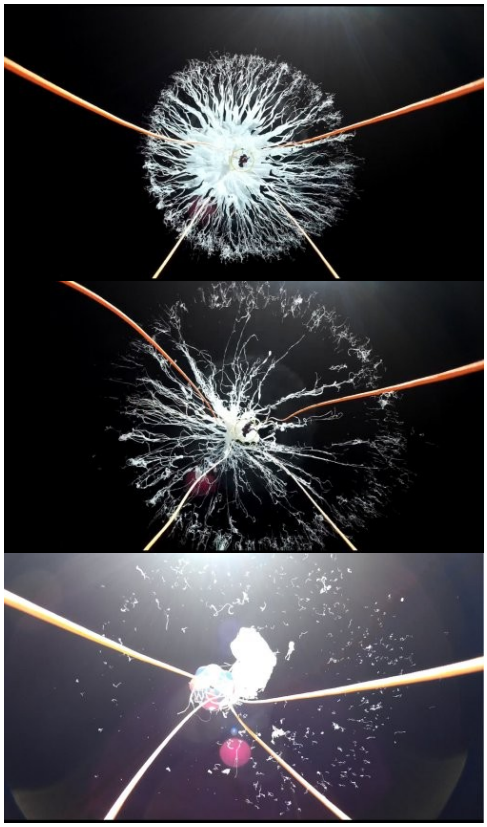
The APRS unit we used to track the balloon sends data about every two minutes, giving the chase team a trail to follow. Once the balloon reaches maximum altitude, the atmospheric pressure causes the balloon to burst, and the return to Earth begins.

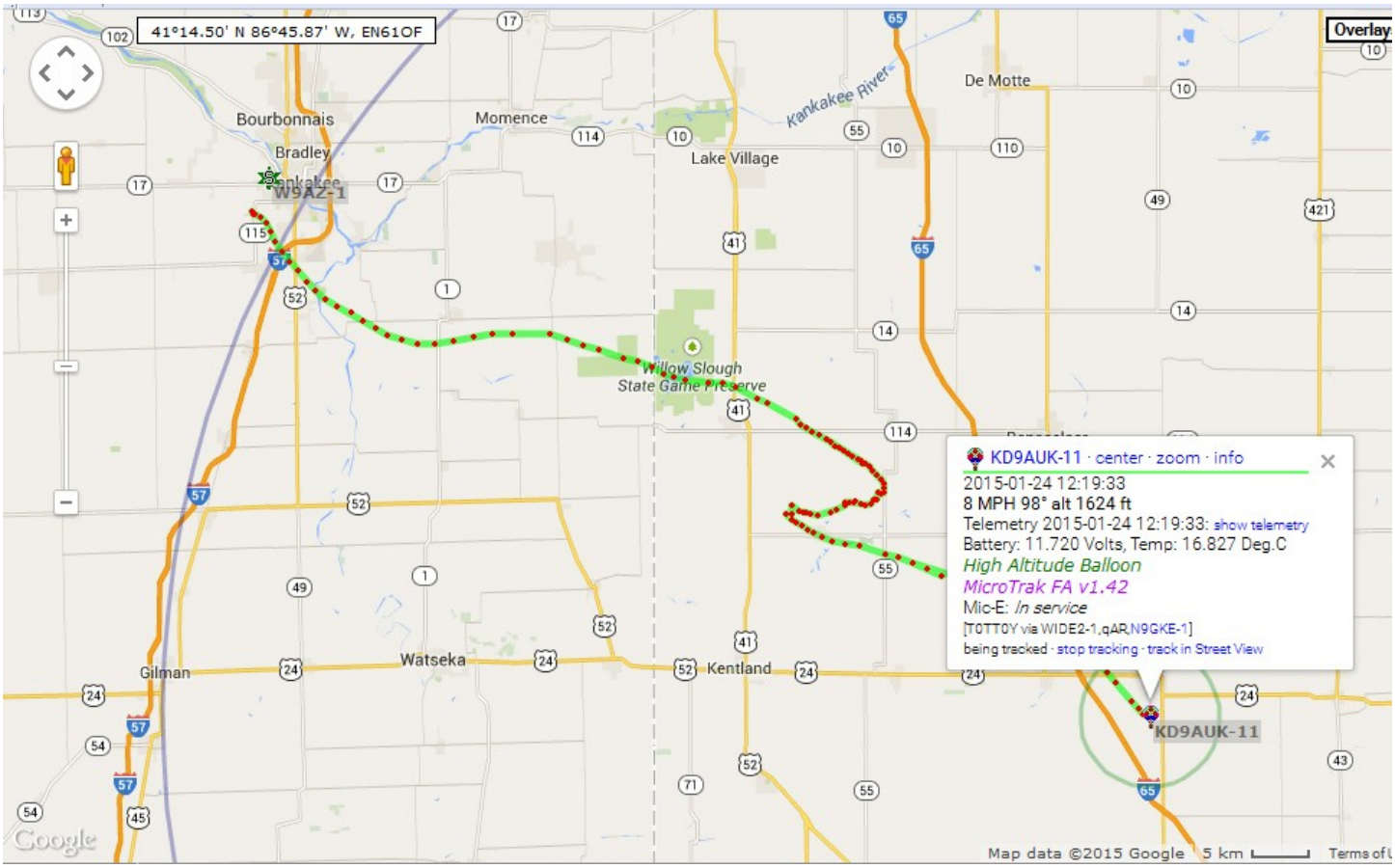
Patience is critical as the ascent plays out. Winds change direction at different altitudes and as the chase team watches the path on the map, a great deal of uncertainty sets in and there is a strong urge to second guess the landing site and move to what appears to be the expected path. Once the altitude has dropped below 5,000 ft, the path becomes more stable and predictable. This is where the tornado spotter skills come into play, only instead of avoiding the target, we are trying to intercept it. During each of the three launches I have been part of, we have been fortunate enough to get close enough to observe the last few hundred feet of the descent. Two of the three were kind enough to land in an open field within a hundred yards of the nearby road. From my perspective, the most amazing point is that each of the landings has occurred within a 5-mile radius of the spot predicted 24-48 hours earlier.

Photos show the spectacular view from the edge of space...clearly showing the curvature of the earth. The final three shots show the balloon bursting at it's highest attained altitude...see the next page for a map of the path followed



From the Edge of Space





Flight path followed by KD9AUK-11 high altitude balloon...state line slightly left of center
The flight begun at Koerner Air Field in SW Kankakee, Illinois. Map courtesy aprs.fi / KD9AUK-11

A sample of things available at :

www.anythingweatherstore.com

Magnetic signs, etc. You can have your callsign included.

Many other storm chaser/ weather spotter items listed at their web page.

KARS BOARD MEETING

Board meeting will be held in the banquet room of El Mexicano restaurant on March 17th. Eat at 6. Meeting starts at 7. All KARS members and their guests are welcome to attend.

P. S. The food is good too!

DXpedition VENTING—OBSERVATIONS BY GREG WR9L

Hopefully all of you have been lucky enough to work the K1N DXpedition to Navassa Island. The K1N team was made up of "top of the line operators." I can't imagine the roar of the pileup that they hear on their end of the circuit! Did you notice anything about the "on the air" practices of some of our Amateur fraternity? I can think of a few words that come to mind…embarrassing, reprehensible, disgusting, ignorant, stupid, childish, etc. There are always a few attracted to any DXpedition, but they seemed to out do themselves this time.

I was surprised by the number of stations that continued to call on the DX stations transmit frequency with this DXpedition. I think it's safe to say that many of us have transmitted on the DX stations frequency when he is working split at least once in our operating history. OOPS! It happens, but to not be aware of your mistake and continue to call the DX station on the wrong frequency over and over is just inexcusable.

Many split frequencies place North American hams "out of band!" To add to the ignorance are the self-appointed "frequency police" that create more QRM to the frequency with their name calling and negative comments. The original ham just made a mistake, but these guys are transmitting over the DX and often out of band!!!! Who's the stupid one here?

Another piece of the pie is the operator that continues to transmit his call regardless if the DX station is transmitting or not. That brilliant operator might as well put on a voice recorder loop and walk away. A close cousin to this type of operator is the ham who keeps calling when the DX station is asking for a specific or partial call that doesn't even come close to his own call. Does he really think the DX station is going to stop trying to work the station he is calling and work him instead? Then we have the intentional jammer. This guy can't break the pileup so he will make it difficult for those that are still trying. He may not even want to work the DX but doesn't like what's happening on "his" frequency. These guys are out there for every DXpedition and contest!

How about the North American/European hams that keep calling even though the DX station is asking for other specific areas only. I guess they're special!!! Now that I have gotten some of my frustrations out, I'd like to share some operating tips that I would hope we all follow for these DXpeditions…

First and most important: *LISTEN!!!*
Is the DX station working split?
Find out what frequencies the DX station is listening on.
Am I set up to work split with the correct transmit and receive frequencies and mode?
Am I within my band limits?
What area of the world is the DX station working or listening for?
If he is not working North America or the propagation is not there – **don't call**!

Second: *LISTEN!!!*
Try to find the station that the DX station is working or has just worked.
After you hear him give his report, you can call on that frequency and have a good chance that the DX station will hear you.
Another chance to catch the DX station is to move up or down, depending on the DX operator,
after you hear the worked station give his report. This way you can "track" with the DX station and call where he might be listening.

Third: *LISTEN!!!*
Send your call only when the DX station is listening.
If the DX station is calling a specific or partial call, stand by unless the partial call may be yours. If he's calling for a ROMEO and you don't have an R in your call – **it ain't you!**
If you can't hear the DX station **– don't call.**

I know these are basics and the hams that need to follow these guidelines won't bother to read them, but if it helps just one ham, that's just one less station adding to the QRM and that station might have a better chance of working the "rare one."

Thanks for letting me vent!

And don't forget to LISTEN before you transmit!!!

73 WR9L
Greg