



# KARS KEY KLICKS



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Editors: K9QT, K9NR Photos: AK9F, K9NR  
Contributors: AK9F, KC9FAV, WD9AYI, WB9QZB

March 2007

## D-STAR Presentation at March Meeting

The next KARS general meeting will be Tuesday, March 6th, 7PM at St. Mary's Hospital. The program will feature a presentation on D-STAR by Mark Thompson, WB9QZB. For a more complete description of this exciting new technology, see page 2, column 3.

### NEW HAMFEST DATES

KARS and Fox River Radio League have announced firm dates for their respective 2007 Hamfests.

FRRL's hamfest is scheduled for July 8th and KARSFEST is scheduled for July 15th.

The hamfest committees of both clubs worked closely together to avoid a conflict in dates and special appreciation is extended from KARS to the FRRL for juggling their calendar so that KARS would be able to use the only weekend available at the Will County Fairgrounds. FRRL...a class act!

### EXAM SESSION RESULTS

KARS first VE exam session under the new rules was held February 28th. We extend congratulations to:

- Bill Dau, N9QXZ a new Extra!
  - James Kelly, WB9SRS a new General!
  - Orville Thomas, KB9LNE a new General!
  - Tim Springer, KC9SPR a new General!
- Nice work one and all!

### NCS FOR MARCH

- March 5th KC9FAV
- March 12th K9BYT
- March 19th K9BAC
- March 26th KE9MG

Don't forget the net!

Mondays at 2100 hrs. local time

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- W9IEY March 2nd
- W1ZZL March 15th
- KB9PXB March 18th

If we miss your birthday, or get it wrong, please let us know!



Ken, W9YNI describing some of the advantages of Software Defined Radio at the KARS February Meeting

### KARS KALENDAR

- Mar 3-4.....ARRL SSB DX Contest
- Mar 6.....KARS General Meeting
- Mar 11.....NA Sprint RTTY
- Mar 20.....KARS Board Meeting
- Mar 24-25.....CQWW WPX SSB Contest
- March 28.....Weather Spotter Seminar
- May 18,19, 20.....Dayton Hamvention
- June 23, 24.....Field Day
- July 8.....Fox River Hamfest
- July 15.....KARSFEST

The Kankakee Area Radio Society operates repeaters on:

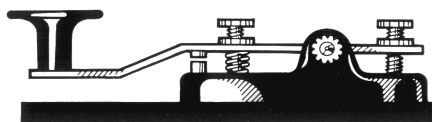
- 146.34/94 107.2 PL Access
- 449.8/444.8 114.8 PL Access

Also, co-sponsors:

- 145.130 107.2 PL Access

Additionally, KARS sponsors:

- 144.39 Wide Area APRS digi-peater
- 145.53 KARS DX Cluster



# W9AZ

### 2007 DUES ARE DUE!

All members/users of the KARS repeaters should have paid their 2007 dues by now. We need everyone's help to fund KARS equipment and activities.

## KANKAKEE COUNTY SEVERE WX SPOTTER SEMINAR

The National Weather Service in cooperation with Kankakee County ESDA is again sponsoring a severe weather seminar on Thursday, March 28, 7PM at the Kankakee Community College Auditorium.

This seminar is open to all. However, ham radio operators, law enforcement personnel, fire fighters and other first responders are particularly targeted.

All KARS members are strongly urged to attend to keep their status as a trained spotter current.



### Ray Flesher, WB9RCA SK

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Ray Flesher, WB9RCA on February 8, 2007. A longtime member of KARS, Ray was known to many in and around the area. A past president of KARS, Ray participated in most club activities and attended club meetings whenever he could arrange transportation. He was a regular check-in on KARS Monday night Nets. Even though Ray had lost his sight, he remained active and was an instructor at the Hadley School for the Blind. He was credited with helping the Daily Journal establish an audio line for the blind to hear the daily news and additionally was a highly regarded member of the Lions club and the Rotary Club. At the last KARS meeting several members recalled fond stories of Ray and the friendship that he shared with all of us. Ray was buried on Valentines Day, Wednesday February 14. He will be missed by all! 73 Ray!!!

By John, WD9AYI

# KARS HOMEPAGE— WWW.W9AZ.COM —KARS HOMEPAGE

## THE POWER OF CW

by Brian, KC9FAV

Interestingly enough, I have found that the use of CW is and has become a popular mode of operation. It seems that the mere mention of the FCC taking the CW portion out of the testing sessions and not making it a requirement for using HF and the General class license, has brought out more and more "fans" of the somewhat considered "old and outdated" mode. As for me, Morse Code was the thing that piqued my interest in upgrading to General. I have found it to be relaxing, fun and interesting. As for a few other hams, the code is challenging. Some feel that since it is outdated, why keep it around? Well, simply put, CW is still a mode that is very useful and very effective in communicating. In fact, I would like to humbly mention that some of the early rescues that were made during Hurricane Katrina were brought on because of the use CW. When there were not many ways to alert the rescue teams where they were needed, Morse Code became important. I am pretty sure that those people that were rescued feel the same way about Morse code.

You see, CW has a tight bandwidth. As quoted from the NAQCC in comparing CW to SSB—"CW takes up about 100Hz of spectrum whereas SSB uses about 2000Hz. The average power density for CW, given the above values, is 1 Watt/Hz and for SSB .05 Watts/Hz. So if we compare the two modes we could say that gain in using CW over SSB is  $\text{Gain(dB)}=10 \cdot \log(1/.05)$  which is equal to 13dB. What does this mean? It means that 5 Watts of CW is as efficient as 100 Watts of SSB. Just a little food for thought."

This looks like a good place to put a Segue. (Not that fancy single person scooter that you see the security guys riding at the mall.) I must add to this by saying that I use QRP a whole lot. Why? because it is enjoyable to me to work a station out in California on 5 watts and then work another one in Virginia and then Florida. I get signal reports of 569, 579 and 599. Then at times I will get 459, 479 and 489.

If we look at the chart of RST reporting, we see the "R" stands for readability with a score if you will, of 1 being unreadable and 5 the best - perfectly readable. "S" is Signal Strength. 1 = faint signals, barely perceptible and 9 = Extremely Strong signals. "T" stands for Tone. 1 = 60 cycle A.C. or less. Very rough and broken and 9 = Perfect tone, no trace of ripple or modulation. I would very much accept a 447 report. Which is pretty much readable with fair signals and near perfect tone. I have gotten the very bad report that I was totally unreadable, but with the condition the bands have been lately, things weren't in my favor at that time.

The flip side of the coin though...just recently I worked a station in France on 5 watts. I was pretty excited about this contact as it sounded like he was only a few states away. When I first heard him, I could have sworn he was in Texas or Virginia or someplace like that. I was very surprised that he even heard me, so that is proof, to me anyway that QRP works. A funny thing about QRP is, that when I share that I am running 5 watts, the guy on the other side gets real tired and has to go or they are getting a phone call and must go, or some silly excuse to exit the conversation. Most of the time I get their power levels at 75 watts or better. I think that most of them are at 100 watts to start off with.

I have also read online, that being a QRP operator is not just running 5 watts or less, it is also the thrill of being in a group of the best CW operators. I am not saying that I am one of the best, I know that I can still stand some work to get better but I do know that I strive to be as courteous as possible when I operate.

Brian - KC9FAV

## FOR SALE

|                                  |         |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Yaesu FT-1000MP (mint condition) | \$1,400 |
| National NC-109 Receiver         | \$50    |
| Hallicrafters S-108 Receiver     | \$50    |
| Radio Shack Scanner              | \$30    |

If you are interested in the above equipment, email Carol at:

grncabbage@aol.com

## D-STAR PRESENTATION

(continued from page 1)

By Mark, WB9QZB

D-STAR is a digital protocol developed by the Japanese government and Japanese Amateur Radio League. Icom is the first manufacturer to manufacture D-STAR-compatible radios, although the protocol is open to anyone.

D-STAR enables simultaneous digital voice and data transmission. At present, digital voice can be sent on 144, 440 & 1.2 GHz (4800 bps) concurrently with low speed asynchronous data (950 bps) in a narrow 6.25 KHz channel. High speed data (128 kbps) can be sent concurrently using TCP/IP on 1.2 GHz in a 130 KHz channel.

D-STAR repeaters are connected via the Internet, which enables worldwide connections across the D-STAR network. Imagine having a broadband Internet connection via your mobile rig.

Among the many possible applications, D-STAR promises enhanced emergency communication handling - the efficiency of simultaneous voice and data communications, as well as graphic and other large file transfers that are difficult or impossible with current packet technology.

Mark, WB9QZB, will present the D-STAR system in detail, with an update on Icom technology, the radios currently available that support D-STAR, and what is in development. Mark has been actively involved for many years in local packet and digital radio activities.

## WX SPOTTER TRAINING

Wilmington Emergency Services Agency (ESDA) will host their last weather spotter training session for the year at 7PM on Thursday, March 22 at the Wilmington City Hall.

Directions: The building is located on Rte 102 at the south edge of the city limits or if you are coming in on Rte 53, turn south on Rte 102 for 1 mile. The street address is 1165 S. Water Street.

It is open to the public. Spouses, friends, students, non-hams, etc are all welcome. No early registration required.

Further information is available from Keith (KB9LNE) via email:

okthomas1@comcast.net

(not to be confused with Kankakee County ESDA spotter training—editor)

## A “Contest-pedition” to Indiana

Yes, most hams yearn to go to some exotic place for a DX-pedition. Others are drawn to distant lands to compete in one of the numerous contests that fill the weekend calendar. But Indiana? Well, if you're going to compete in the annual Indiana QSO Party on the first full weekend in May, that's the place to go! And the result is that the AK9F+K9NR station was the Top Station in the contest for 2006. The KARS multi-op team also swept the Top Multi-Op category and Top County Station in Perry County two years running.

For the past several years Howard AK9F and Don K9NR have made the six-hour trip to Howard's farm in southern Indiana to do battle in the popular state contest sponsored by the Hoosier DX and Contest Club, headquartered in Indianapolis. The farm, located in the wilderness of remote Perry County is an ideal location for the event, with comfortable accommodations, loads of very tall trees for antenna supports, and an absence of local man-made noise and interference. Perry County, placed on the southwest corner of the Hoosier National Forest has only about a half dozen licensed hams, none active, so an operation there is in high demand during the contest.

Competing in the INQP from the southern Indiana woods is very much like a Field Day operation, with the first several hours dominated by getting antennas up in the trees. Howard and Don use the proven “potato cannon” system to erect a high 80 meter dipole up about 65 feet, fed with balanced line. This antenna is also used on 20 meters with a tuner.



Don, K9NR heaves mightily in an attempt obtain maximum altitude of the super-ultra-extreme gain dipole antenna



Howard, AK9F points out his patented “Spatula” standoff insulator carefully chosen for its critical dielectric properties

A lower 40 meter coax fed dipole is put up using Don's skill at throwing a wrench trailing a string over some tree limbs

The combination of two antennas allows instant band changes and the ability to keep operating on 40 while tuning the high antenna between 80 and 20 meters. The radio in an Icom 746 with Inrad filters.

Once underway, the 12-hour contest involves making as many contacts as possible while chasing the mobile “roamers” from county to county in order to pick up multipliers. The AK9F team also had the highest number of multipliers of any entry in the contest with a total of 137. Phone and CW contacts were fairly evenly divided with 242 and 261 respectively, a total of 502 Q's.

The winning score this year (2006 INQP) for Howard and Don was 104,718. Top Mobile station was KJ9C with 97,850, and Top Portable was W9TN with 58,710. In 2005 AK9F + K9NR took Top Multi-op with 97,133. For a complete list of the results, click on: <http://www.hdxcc.org/inqp/index.html>

The team was invited to Indianapolis on February 7<sup>th</sup>. to receive the Top Station plaque at the awards banquet of the Hoosier DX and Contest Club. Don also was the recipient of the club's 'Top Contester of the Month' award for his station's results in the January CQWW 160 Meter CW contest.

Other diversions at Howard's 220 acre getaway are a 130 yard rifle range, an all-terrain vehicle, lots of wooded trails and wildlife, and Don's favorite, several caves to crawl in. Plans are already being formulated for the contest this May. In all likelihood, nothing will be done differently as we really don't care whether we win or lose.



Howard, AK9F at the helm, piling on contacts just seconds before a mysterious red van took him out!



Driver of mysterious red van, Don K9NR, finally gets to operate!



The top stations in the 2006 Indiana QSO Party receive their plaques at the Hoosier DX and Contest Club awards banquet.

L-R: Steve Van Frank W9TN Top Portable, Howard AK9F and Don K9NR Top Score in Perry County and Top Contest Score Overall, Mel Crichton KJ9C Top Mobile



The plaque for top score in the 2006 Indiana QSO Party

## LOOKING AHEAD

Look for an upcoming article of over 350 years of ham radio in KARS.