



Watts News



Monthly Newsletter of the
Olympia Amateur Radio Society
P.O. Box 2861, Olympia, WA 98507

July 2008
email: oars@comcast.net

Edited by KB6LE (George Lanning) 360-866-2185
website: <http://olyham.org>



Hello Everyone —
I would like to start by thanking everyone who participated in Field Day. I hope everyone who came out whether to set up and or tear down, operate, or just to visit had an enjoyable time. I came out and

helped set up the vertical 40 meter beam antenna as well as applying caution tape to that antenna and the horizontal 80 meter beam antenna. I also might have held part of the satellite antenna as it was being adjusted. I did walk around during the day speaking with some of our visitors who included our section manager, Jim Pace, K7CEX. I was also pleased to see that of the sites he visited, we were one of two that had satellite stations.

I returned home Saturday evening intending to have a nap for about two or three hours, then return to operate during the night. Unfortunately, when I awoke from my nap, my clock indicated it was about 0600 Sunday, so I did not get to operate. I did hear that once again we received proof the sprinkler system on the Capitol Campus lawns are fully functional, even if those controlling them apparently are not. (The last part of the last sentence is deliberately

ambiguous, so feel free to make your own interpretation.)

I did get the renewal application submitted for our Special Services Club status. I am grateful to Ken, K7TAG, for his assistance in this — both in providing the paper copy, as well as another copy in PDF after I misplaced the paper copy. Throughout the application, I tried to stress the service we provide. I indicated the communication service we provide for various functions from Road Rallies to parades, marathons, etc, as well as in emergency situations. I also mentioned the training support we provide to

local groups holding licensing classes, the fact we hold licensing examinations on our meeting nights as well as other times as requested. Lastly I mentioned the technical support we provide to hams and non hams on various aspects of radio communications and the assistance we provide in setting up equipment and programming radios. I thank each of our members for all of the services he or she provides, often without consciously considering it as a service, or at least considering it to be a bother. I am pleased to be a member of such a “giving” group as it encourages me to give more myself.

On a sad note, we had two local hams go silent this last month. First was Judge Clifford “Kip” Stiliz, K7KIP, who went silent on

Watts Inside

- ! Silent Keys 2
- ! A Summer of E-skip 2
- ! The Helpful Wife 3
- ! Hands-Free Operation 4
- ! The Music Lover 4
- ! Handheld Battery Packs 5
- ! Rogue Radio Signals 5
- ! OARS Net Check-ins 6
- ! Treasurer’s Report 6
- ! August OARS Calendar 7

June 23 and William Eric “Ben” Bennett, N7IVM, who went silent on the following day, June 24. I do not recall ever having met Judge Stilz, but do remember on occasion having the OARS meeting in his chambers when we had been displaced from our normal meeting room up at the courthouse.

I do remember getting to meet Mr Bennett a few months ago at an OARS meeting. I had been hearing his British accent and callsign as he checked into the Tuesday evening nets for a number of years prior to actually meeting him. I am glad to have met him, and to have had him at some of the OARS meetings, I would have liked to have had a chance to just sit down and chat with him to just get to know him. I hope we can put a little more effort into getting to know one another better and maybe even pick the brains of our “old timers,” many who have been around since the days of having to build their own equipment from scratch or at least having to modify existing equipment because there was no “ham gear” available off the shelf.

73,

— Klaus, AC7MG

— . . . —

OARS OFFICERS FOR 2008

President	Klaus Neubert	AC7MG	753-1493
Vice President	Ken Julian	K7VOX	951-6352
Secretary	Paul Taylor	KC7LA	866-0683
Treasurer	Ed Fitzgerald	N7WW	491-2289
Member at Large	Mark Dempsey	KE7JTU	943-0165

KEY CONTACTS

RFI Committee	Ghery Pettit	N6TPT	412-1340
Repeater Committee	Larry Watkinson	KC7CKO	943-4352
Club License Trustee	Duane Braford	WB7ROZ	412-1902
Information Net	Duane Braford	WB7ROZ	412-1902
ARES Net	Tom Bohon	KE7EJJ	456-6260
OLY Packet Node	Larry Ikenberry	K7APT	943-7208
	Rick Taylor	K7CAH	943-6793
Packet BBS	George Lanning	KB6LE	866-2185
Newsletter	George Lanning	KB6LE	866-2185
OARS Website	George Lanning	KB6LE	866-2185
Classes	Lee Chambers	K17SS	866-0236
License Exams	Klaus Neubert	AC7MG	753-1493
Equip. Custodian	Larry Watkinson	KC7CKO	943-4352

REPEATERS: 147.36 MHz 224.46 MHz 441.40 MHz

PACKET: 145.07 MHz OLY Node 147.40 BBS

Membership is open to all interested radio amateurs.
Yearly dues are: \$20 for individual, \$25 for family.

License Exam Sessions

6:00 pm before each monthly OARS meeting
Walk-ins allowed
To apply contact Klaus Neubert 753-1493
oars-ve@comcast.net

Silent Keys

We note with great sadness the passing of two OARS members:

Ben Bennett — N7IVM

Kip Stilz — K7KIP

A Summer of E-skip

Tired of the lousy conditions on the HF bands? Come join the crowd on the “Magic Band.” Each summer regardless of where the sunspot cycle is, sporadic E — or E-skip — blooms on 6 meters and sometimes even on the bands above that. What often appears to be a dead band jumps to life with signals — some relatively close, only hundreds of miles away — but some representing worldwide DX on 6 meters.

This year is no different. After a slow start, the 6 meter band came into its own in May and has been open in some direction from almost every location in the US almost every day. Sporadic E peaks around the summer solstice, on or around June 21, with a minor peak around the winter solstice, on or around December 21.

Each summer season has unique characteristics that are not predictable, but make the band so fascinating to follow. This year, the emphasis has been on paths to the west and northwest, extending much further east and south than normal. According to VHF expert and conductor of QST’s “World Above 50 MHz” column Gene Zimmerman, W3ZZ, there have been several strong openings from Hawaii to the mainland that have included many areas other than the West Coast. Stations in the Mid-Atlantic, the Southeast and the Midwest have had good shots at KH6 in both May and June.

Zimmerman said that summer has brought a nice surprise: "The highlight of this season has been repeated openings to Japan that have mostly bypassed the West Coast and settled in the Southwest, the Southeast (especially Florida) and the Midwest; Japanese stations have even been heard, but not worked, on the East Coast. The latter is a very rare occurrence indeed."

Calling conditions to the Caribbean "outstanding," Zimmerman said that stations in that part of the world have been working the US and Canada, as well as many stations in Europe. "Ted Jimenez, HI3TEJ, in the Dominican Republic has even worked Japan, a tough path even on 10 meters. Inside the US, stations up to 1500 miles away have been easy to get, and there have been lots of openings where the West Coast and the Pacific Northwest worked the East Coast and the Southeast."

Six meter operators should be alert for very short E-skip that indicates a rare increase in the maximum usable frequency (MUF) to a point where 2 meter E-skip — or very, very rarely 222 MHz E-skip — is possible. Zimmerman said there have been several 2 meter sporadic E openings and one 222 MHz E-skip opening this summer: "On May 29-30, 2 meter contacts were reported from Maine to Ohio, south to the Mid-Atlantic, to the Northeast, to South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana in the south and Michigan, Western Tennessee and Southern Illinois to the West. The longest was 1477 miles from Maine (David Olean, K1WHS) to Louisiana (William Kemp, K5EMP)."

After small 2 meter E-skip openings on June 3-4 from the Northeast to the Midwest, Zimmerman said the bands blew wide open during the ARRL VHF QSO Party on June 15 with a report of two 222 MHz contacts: John Butrovich, W5UWB (EL17), of Orange Grove, Texas, to Vince Pavkovich, N0VZJ (EN35), of Big Lake, Minnesota; and Paul Trotter, AA4ZZ (EM96), of Charlotte, North Carolina, to David Rush, W5DDR (EM84), McAlister, New Mexico. "This extremely rare event has happened less than half a dozen times in the last 60 years," Zimmerman said. "Two meter E skip was everywhere: Texas; all over the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic; New Mexico to West Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee; Colorado to Florida, West Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Texas, Mississippi, Arkansas; Idaho, Oregon and Washington to the Midwest; Wyoming

to Illinois, and Nevada to Iowa, North Dakota and Minnesota."

Zimmerman said that conditions are likely to continue to be very good until the middle of July when the E-skip traditionally begins to wind down. "Most areas of the country have not had good conditions to Europe, so that may still be something to look forward to," he said. "Two DXpeditions to rare Caribbean countries are coming up later in June — to San Andres (HK0) and to St Barts (FJ). If you have an HF/VHF radio that covers 6 meters, put up a dipole or try your 80 meter antenna — it should work on 6 meters as well — and have some fun. You never know what you may work next."

— from the ARRL Letter

— . . . —

The Helpful Wife

A police officer pulls over a speeding car. The officer says, "I clocked you at 80 miles per hour, sir." The driver says, "Gee, officer I had it on cruise control at 60, perhaps your radar gun needs calibrating."

Not looking up from her knitting the wife says, "Now don't be silly dear, you know that this car doesn't have cruise control."

As the officer writes out the ticket, the driver looks over at his wife and growls, "Can't you please keep your mouth shut for once?"

The wife smiles demurely and says, "You should be thankful your radar detector went off when it did."

As the officer makes out the second ticket for the illegal radar detector unit, the man glowers at his wife and says through clenched teeth, "Dam it, woman, can't you keep your mouth shut?"

The officer frowns and says, "And I notice that you're not wearing your seat belt, sir. That's an automatic \$75 fine." The driver says, "Yeah, well, you see officer, I had it on, but took it off when you pulled me over so that I could get my license out of my back pocket."

The wife says, "Now, dear, you know very well that you didn't have your seat belt on. You never wear your seat belt when you're driving."

And as the police officer is writing out the third ticket the driver turns to his wife and barks, "WHY DON'T YOU PLEASE SHUT UP??"

The officer looks over at the woman and asks, "Does your husband always talk to you this way, Ma'am?"

"Only when he's been drinking."

— submitted by Klaus, KC7MG

— ... —

Hands-Free Operation

California hands-free law to go into effect July 1; ham radio not affected says counsel.

A new California hands-free cellular telephone law goes into effect July 1, 2008. It, like many others around the country, prohibits using mobile telephones while driving, unless a hands-free device is utilized. ARRL has received numerous questions about its application to the use of mobile Amateur Radio stations by licensed amateurs. The law, in relevant part, states as follows:

"23123. (a) A person shall not drive a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone unless that telephone is specifically designed and configured to allow hands-free listening and talking, and is used in that manner while driving."

ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, advises that "The definition of prohibited behavior in California's recent statute does not include a prohibition of operating a mobile, licensed Amateur Radio station while driving, because Amateur Radio transceivers are not telephones. While ARRL cannot guarantee that this statute will not be interpreted by law enforcement officers or the courts of California more broadly than that, it is our view that a fair reading of the statute excludes mobile operation of Amateur Radio equipment by licensed radio amateurs.

"That said, it is obvious that drivers should pay full time and attention to driving. To the extent that operating their amateur stations while mobile is a distraction to them, they should consider, if possible, pulling over safely to the side of the road and conducting their amateur communications while stationary."

ARRL Regulatory Information Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, adds that while the statute on its face does not apply to Amateur Radio mobile operation, problems could still arise: "Law enforcement officers are not telecommunications experts and may not understand or be concerned about the difference between a cellular telephone and a ham radio. If you do get stopped, be polite and state that you were operating a mobile Amateur Radio transmitter as specifically authorized by the FCC and not a wireless telephone. Don't engage in an argument if the officer issues a citation — that won't help your cause. If cited, you will need to follow the instructions about contesting the citation in traffic court. As ARRL General Counsel Imlay notes, the language of the statute does not appear to include amateur mobile operation. Unfortunately, you could have to go through the inconvenience of appearing in court to contest a citation."

ARRL will continue to monitor the application of this statute relative to radio amateurs.

— from the ARRL Letter

— ... —

The Music Lover

Two explorers, camped in the heart of the African jungle, were discussing their expedition.

"I came here," said one, "because the urge to travel was in my blood. City life bored me, and the smell of exhaust fumes on the highways made me sick. I wanted to see the sunrise over new horizons and hear the flutter of birds that never had been seen by man. I wanted to leave my footprints on sand unmarked before I came. In short, I wanted to see nature in the raw. What about you?"

"I came," the second man replied, "because my son was taking saxophone lessons."

— from *ajokeaday* via internet

— ... —

Handheld Battery Packs

"THE DOCTOR IS IN"

This week, ARRL Letter readers are in luck! The ARRL's very own Doctor, author of the popular QST column "The Doctor Is IN," answers a question from his mailbag:

Question: Don Christensen, W8WOJ, of Midland, Michigan, asks: I am not a frequent user of 2 meters yet; however, I do want to be available for emergency activity. I have a 2 meter handheld transceiver at the ready, but wonder what the preferred procedure is to ensure that my transceiver's nickel-cadmium (NiCd) batteries are charged and ready for service.

The Doctor answers: Unfortunately, NiCds might not be the best choice for such an application with intermittent use.

If you run down a NiCd battery pack too low, any strong cells may reverse charge the weaker cells, damaging the weak cells. On the other hand they also don't like being constantly topped off without actual hard use — this promotes crystal formation, which can short out the cells. They are most happy in applications in which they are used until they discharge significantly, but not all the way and then are just charged until fully recharged. Thus, the idea of having a spare pack that is just kept charged up, but never actually used, is not a good plan.

If you have two packs, they will both last longer if one is used until it runs down and then you switch to the other and promptly recharge the depleted one. Perhaps you can have the radio turned on a few days a week monitoring the local repeater.

Many handheld radios offer battery cases for non-rechargeable Alkaline cells that can be used in place of the rechargeable battery. These are a good choice since they have long shelf life, generally have a longer operating life than a charge with similar sized NiCds, and are usable in field situations in which charging sources are not available.

Another choice, if you must have a rechargeable battery, is to use sealed lead acid or gel cell batteries — they love to be kept on a float charge until needed, but are bulky and require a separate cable to the handheld.

— from *The ARRL Letter*

— ... —

Philadelphia Area Hams Nail Rogue Radio Signals

When residents of a Philadelphia suburb complained <http://www.nbc10.com/investigators/16701097/detail.html?dl=mainclick> to an area television station about how their remote car door entry devices wouldn't work in the parking lot of a local department store, an investigative reporter for NBC-10 (WCAU) called everyone she could to help her discover why. No one knew anything — until she called on some local ham radio operators.

"Many people lock and unlock a car by remote and don't even give it a second thought unless it doesn't work," said NBC10 reporter Lu Ann Cahn.

"The mystery problem repeatedly occurs outside the Kohl's store in Royersford. When I went into Kohl's [to ask about this], they told me they had no idea [about this]."

Cahn said that shoppers told her that this has been going on for more than a year, and that some shoppers don't realize they might have to manually lock their doors: "One woman reported her laptop was stolen from her car after she thought she had locked it."

Shoppers theorized that it was the local power plant causing the interference, but Cahn said that officials at the plant said it wasn't them. Others thought that cellular telephone towers might be the culprit, but there are no cell towers in the area. "Police tell us that they can't figure it out either," Cahn said.

So after calling numerous places to help her out with this mystery, Cahn happened upon Reggie Leister, N3KAS, and Bob Rex, K3DBD, of the Pottstown Area Amateur Radio Club <http://www.paarc.net/>; Rex is Vice President of the club and Leister is the club's Public Information Officer (PIO). And as hams do, they were quick to volunteer to help out.

Leister and Rex accompanied Cahn to the parking lot in question. Rex built an antenna out of aluminum tubing and hooked it up to a spectrum analyzer. "Somewhere in the vicinity of this parking lot," Leister said, "there is a big source of radiation, some sort of signal." When Leister aimed the antenna in the direction of the Kohl's store, he hit pay dirt.

"There are actually two signals there. It looks like [they're] coming from the building," Rex said when he read the analyzer.

Leister and Rex moved in closer to the building and pinpointed that one signal was coming from one set of doors, while the other signal emitted from another set of doors. Rex, an engineer, said that the thing that bothers

him about this is that the signals "are running constantly."

When Cahn approached Kohl's management with their findings, she was told that "they will look into it."

"The FCC licenses radio signals and these ham radio operators say the fact that some signal is interfering with remote locks isn't good," Cahn said in her report. Rex concurred, saying, "The FCC rules are pretty clear on that. It might be something that's broken." Leister and Rex agreed that the store security sensors located at each set of doors might be the culprit.

Three days after Leister and Rex located the source of the interference, remote car door lockers worked again. "Kohl's will only say that they're working on it," Cahn said. "The FCC says it does sound like something malfunctioned and they have had reports of similar incidents in New York City and Tampa, Florida."

A few days after they found the signals, Leister explained that he and Rex did not think the anti-shoplifting detectors were the problem: "What we are guessing here is that they are probably connected to some kind of device that triggers a security camera to come on if there is a breach. Except instead of just sending out a quick 2-5 second (Part 15) blip, these seem to be on continuously and exceeding the permissible signal levels."

Cahn was quick to give on-air credit to the local hams who stepped up to the plate and helped crack this mystery: "We here at NBC10 were so curious as to why these remote car locks would just stop working, so we thought we should really try to solve this mystery. I have to give kudos to Reggie Leister and Bob Rex with the Pottstown Area Amateur Radio Club. They were so great and so excited. You don't know how many people we called — police, Triple A, car dealerships — we called so many people trying to figure this out and nobody knew anything until we talked to these ham radio operators. They were so wonderful and they knew all about radio signals. They created their own gadgets to help us figure this out. We really want to thank them for their help with this."

— from the ARRL Letter



OARS Net check-ins

The following stations checked in on the OARS General Information Net one or more times on June 10 or 17:

AA7YD	AB7PS	AD7KC	AJ3N
K7MBB	K7TAG	KB7DFL	KC7LA
KD7SQU	KD7TQW	KD7UKG	KD7YXY
KE7CQI	KE7EJJ	KE7RJJ	KI7CQ
KI7SS	N5MUR	N7JHJ	WB4LWQ
WC7I			

Net control stations reporting for the month were WC7I and KE7EJJ. Thank you for your support!!

The net meets at 7:30 every Tuesday evening on the 3 linked OARS repeaters: 147.36, 224.46, and 441.40 MHz. All Hams are invited to check in.



Treasurer's Report

As of 6/30/08

GENERAL FUND (checking account)

Previous balance	\$ 1,653.17
Income	75.35
Expenses	66.75
Ending balance	1,661.77

REPEATER / PACKET FUND (savings account)

Previous balance	\$ 1,013.42
Income	2.56
Expenses	0.00
Ending balance	1,015.98

— Ed Fitzgerald, N7WW, Treasurer



August 2008

OARS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
					<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> 7:15 AM Breakfast at Nickelby's 600 Trooper Rd 10-10 Summer Phone QSO Party N Amer QSO Party CW TARA Grid Dip Contest																																																																																				
<i>3</i> 10-10 Summer Phone QSO Party N Amer QSO Party CW TARA Grid Dip Contest	<i>4</i> TARA Grid Dip Contest	<i>5</i> 7:00 PM ARES Net 7:30 PM OARS Net	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i> Deadline for Watts News Inputs	<i>9</i> Worked All Europe CW																																																																																				
<i>10</i> Worked All Europe CW	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i> 7:00 PM ARES Net 7:30 PM OARS Net	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i> ARRL 10 GHz and Up Contest Keymen's Club of Japan Contest CW N Amer QSO Party Phone																																																																																				
<i>17</i> ARRL 10 GHz and Up Contest Keymen's Club of Japan Contest CW N Amer QSO Party Phone	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i> 7:00 PM ARES Net 7:30 PM OARS Net	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> Hawaii QSO Party																																																																																				
<i>24</i> Hawaii QSO Party	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i> 7:00 PM ARES Net 7:30 PM OARS Net	<i>27</i> 7:00 PM OARS Meeting at EOC	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> ALARA Contest SCC RTTY Championship																																																																																				
<i>31</i> ALARA Contest SCC RTTY Championship	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <caption>July</caption> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <caption>September</caption> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> </div>					S	M	T	W	T	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			S	M	T	W	T	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																																				
		1	2	3	4	5																																																																																				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12																																																																																				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19																																																																																				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26																																																																																				
27	28	29	30	31																																																																																						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																																				
		1	2	3	4	5																																																																																				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12																																																																																				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19																																																																																				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26																																																																																				
27	28	29	30																																																																																							

OARS Membership Application

▪ New _____ Date _____
▪ Renewal _____ ARRL member ? _____
Call Sign _____ License class _____
Name _____
Address _____
City, St. _____ ZIP _____
Home phone _____
Day phone _____
Email _____
Newsletter by Email? (yes/no) _____

Annual Dues: \$20 (\$25 family) — first year prorated by number of months.

If family membership, please attach above information for each family member.

Send to: OARS
PO Box 2861
Olympia, WA 98507

O A R S Meeting
Wednesday, July 23, 7:00 p.m.

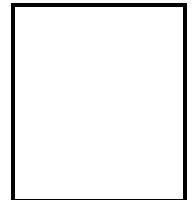
“Antennas — Part 2”
Steve Ward, WC7I

Emergency Operations Center
2703 Pacific Ave. SE

An Invitation

If you are a Ham who has received this newsletter, but are not yet a member of OARS, you are cordially invited to join us. Submit the membership application at the left to OARS at PO Box 2861, Olympia WA 98507, or bring it to an OARS meeting and see Treasurer Ed Fitzgerald.

OARS
PO BOX 2861
OLYMPIA WA 98507



If the date on your address label is marked in red, it is time to renew!