

The Starved Rock Radio Club (SRRC) meets on the first Monday of every month, unless otherwise scheduled, at 7:00 p.m. at the SRRC clubhouse in Leonore, Illinois. Club nets are held on the SRRC repeater (W9MKS) every Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. The W9MKS repeater is located at the SRRC clubhouse in Leonore, Illinois, and it operates on a frequency of 147.120 MHz (+103.5 PL). The Starved Rock Radio Club was organized in September of 1933, and has remained an ARRL affiliated club since 1934.

The mission of the Starved Rock Radio Club has continually been to give faithful, co-operative service and assistance for the betterment of amateur radio, in the promotion of interest in amateur radio communications, for the advancement of the radio art, for the use of amateur radio for public service and welfare, and for the maintenance of fraternalism and the promotion of good fellowship along with a high standard of conduct. Visit us on the web at www.qsl.net/w9mks

SRRC is now a Special Service Club

During the month of September, the Starved Rock Radio Club achieved the status of "Special Service Club" as an ARRL-affiliated club. What does it mean to be an SSC? It's more than just getting to use a distinctive logo on our stationery and web page, getting certain mailing lists, and being able to appoint an Awards Manager. Here's what the ARRL says about SSCs on their web page: "The ARRL is especially proud of our affiliated clubs that excel in their activities. Clubs that go the extra mile to provide on-going training and support for the benefit of their community, fall into our Special Service Club

category. These extraordinary groups actively pursue all aspects of Amateur Radio: New Ham Development and Training; Public Relations; Emergency Communications; School Club Support; Technical Advancement; Operating Activities; Annual Reports, and more."



SRRC Secretary Frank Carraro, KF9NZ, detailed the Club's qualifications in the application he sent to the League. With regard to New Ham Development, Frank wrote, "...we are very active in Field Day and JOTA, which we see as prime entry points for seeking out pro-

spective new hams." Let me take this time to put in a plug for Jamboree on the Air, which is rapidly approaching on October 16th and 17th. As usual, it is being held at Chief Shabbona Park, north of Ottawa.

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Officers

President:
Steve Michalski KB9UPS

Vice President:
Kurt Clausen KB9RKU

Secretary:
Frank Carraro KF9NZ

Treasurer:
Francis Kmetz WB9VLW

Directors:
Nick G. Sotiriou KB9PUT
Mark Gebhardt K9ZQ
Eldon Akers KB9PZA

Static Editor:
Dirk Wolgast W9QA

Amateur Radio Operators Shine in Crises

By Glenn Bischoff

Reprinted with permission from MRT Newsletter

It's common—almost startlingly so—to hear about total strangers banding together in times of crisis. For some unclear reason, basic human instincts governing compassion and charity that usually are suppressed by the dog-eat-dog world in which we live are unleashed when disaster strikes, and people who normally wouldn't even acknowledge each other's

presence stand shoulder-to-shoulder to help those less fortunate, and often each other.

Such a scenario is playing out as Hurricane Frances bears down on the state of Florida. As you read this, a cadre of amateur radio operators are providing whatever assistance they can to those who might be affected by the storm.

Some are plying their craft at WLO Radio in Mobile, Ala., the nation's sole provider of high-frequency ship-to-shore radiotelephone and data traffic services to ships at sea, which it has been doing since 1948. WLO also makes space available to an amateur radio club consisting of 10 members.

See Crises, page 2

From the President's Desk

Steve Michalski, KB9UPS, SRRC President

Hello everyone,

Many things are going on this month. The tower is up and the difficult job of getting the antennas and repeater to work right are well under way. Please be patient as we work hard to try many different configurations of the repeater. I want to remind everyone that this is a "team effort" and Frank can use help in getting the repeater set up right for our needs, so lend a hand in our final goal of solid communications. If you don't understand how or why, don't complain, "ask", Frank will be happy to explain what he is trying to get done and you could always ask to help too. We have much more to do than most of you know.

With the new tower up, we have the two remaining towers and the antennas that we have been using. They need work too! If we are to get our club station up and going for activities and emergency communications we need, number one, a plan. We have talked about the BBS and APRS, well it won't happen all by itself. I have been listening to many complaints, but don't see



Steve Michalski KB9UPS

K9JKW photo

these people when its time to do something about "there" complaint. I ask that we build a written plan and start following it.

October is "Jamboree on the Air" and I'm seeing a little more interest this year. We should be able to make JOTA just as great as Field Day, so find your

local scout group leaders and get them worked up about kids, fun and radio!

October is also time for the Illinois QSO Party. Several members have been active with this event and this year is no exception, I'll be there too.

Last but not least you've heard talk about becoming a Special Services Club with the ARRL, well, "Great Job Starved Rock" you did it! The application that Frank/kf9nz turned in with proof that the members of SRRC truly care about our communities and neighbors has completely overwhelmed the ARRL, we have been recognized, in there words, "for its extended efforts on behalf of Amateur Radio and service to its community". We can't hide it now, everyone knows that all Starved Rock Radio Club members do give of themselves. I for one am not afraid to say, "I proud to be a member of the Starved Rock Radio Club", how about "you". Make a positive difference.

73's and introduce someone new to amateur "fun" radio...

Crisis, continued from page 1

Support also is being provided by the Maritime Mobile Service Network (www.mmsn.org), which consists of 68 members scattered about the country who voluntarily monitor the 14.300 MHz frequency in the 20-meter amateur band on a rotating basis from 12 noon to 10 p.m. eastern time. The organization was formed in 1968 by Navy Chaplain A.W. Robertson to handle phone-patch traffic during the Vietnam War and today still handles third-party traffic for military personnel stationed overseas, according to Rene Stiegler, co-owner of WLO.

When an event such as a major hurricane occurs, the MMSN is "deluged with requests for information," Stiegler

said. "It's usually ships at sea that are looking for the latest hurricane advisories and long-range forecasts."

Should one of the volunteers pick up a distress call, he or she connects the call via a phone patch to the U.S. Coast Guard; they also provide location information. "That frequency definitely has become a calling frequency for help, especially for vessels at sea," Stiegler said.

The service provided by the MMSN is especially critical for smaller ships (under 300 gross tons), which are not required to have on board the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System. Those vessels generally place mayday calls over the 2182 kHz frequency monitored by the Coast Guard, but

propagation challenges limit the effective range of those signals to 200 miles, Stiegler said. Ships beyond range of a Coast Guard receiving station then revert to the 14.300 MHz frequency, he added.

Stiegler said the MMSN occasionally receives a distress call from larger commercial ships on that frequency, something he's not sure FCC rules allow. In times of trouble, that becomes a moot question, however.

"If you're out on a boat that's sinking, we're not going to turn you away."

E-mail me at gbisch-off@primediabusiness.com.

September Meeting Notes

Frank Carraro, KF9NZ - SRRS Secretary

The work of the last month on the new tower was explained to the members. The big antenna was hoisted to the top of the tower, and was quickly connected to the repeater as a transmit antenna only. We were putting out right at 100 watts. A UHF Ringo Ranger was bought new and attached right below the big antenna, and connected to the UHF receivers. It is working very well. Further, the VHF Ringo was put up on the tower at the do foot level for use as a local receive antenna.

There was long discussion about the configuration of the repeater antennae, and at length it was voted to connect the resonant cavity filters in place and use the top antenna in duplex mode.

KB9RKU reported that work is needed on the east tower. Much of the hardware is rusted heavily, and the guys need to be tensioned.

The hamfest Committee reported that the tickets and flyers are on hand. Listing information was sent to CQ, and Worldradio magazines, as well as the sanctioning request to ARRL.

KB9EZZ reported that we are out of luck in the use of paclink as detailed by the ARRL Emcomm group. The software requires Windows XP or 2000, and the notebook computers we have will not run these systems. Joe thinks we need to look into FNpack in more detail.

KC6VVT donated a UHF collinear antenna to the club.

Under Old Business, the constitutional amendment was passed.

The donation of the various old ham equipment displayed in the meeting room was explained by KB9EZZ. It

had belonged to a ham from Indianapolis. His son collected the gear after his passing. The son lives in Ottawa, and donated it to the Club. Members were invited to borrow the equipment and check it out. It was voted to send a "thank-you" letter and tickets to the hamfest to the donor.

It was reported that St Mary's Hospital of Streator had ordered a complete VHF ham station with money from a federal grant. They will need help in installing it.

We voted to purchase a computer to replace the one at the HF desk for \$40.00.

The Equipment Committee will go through the remaining notebook computer stuff and dispose of the junk. KB9LNK is checking out the old Swan gear that has been in the attic.

October Meeting Notes

Frank Carraro, KF9NZ - SRRS Secretary

Attendance was light, especially considering that we had special guests, and it had been announced were to receive the SSC award. Only 15 members were present to hear Section Manager Sharon Harlan N9SH, present the Special Service Club Award. Sharon was accompanied by Eric Rademacher, K9KQB, Illinois Affiliated Club Coordinator. We were requested to consider hosting the Illinois ARRL State Convention by SM Harlan.

We should have Scouts at the JOTA outing on the 16th. KB9EZZ wants us to work on getting FN Pack working.

The ham radio equipment has been delivered to St Mary's, but there are concerns from the biomedical instrument people about interference. The

experience of a Rockford hospital and information on spectrum analysis software to make tests was promised to us by N9SH.

There was long discussion during the Repeater Maintenance report. Details in a separate report in this issue.

We agreed to purchase an 80-gigabyte hard drive for the HF desk computer.

Repeater Status Report

By Frank Carraro KF9NZ



A lot has gone on during the past month. Not much of it was very good. It was mandated at the September meeting to re-connect the cavities and use the main antenna for both receiving and transmitting, thus reducing the power (Effective Radiated Power - ERP) of the transmitter. This was done on the meeting night, and the repeater operated in this way (only one receiver) for about a week. At the end of that week the remote site receiver at K9PHW was added, and the system left to operate in that mode for about one more week. In both of these modes, the repeater worked fairly well, with certain exceptions. (Such as in my general area where it was pitiful.)

Then I attempted to add another receiver, and had a very difficult time in getting the system aligned. I finally had to leave it for several days in a very poor condition. After another few days I had time to work further on the system. I did fix a problem with the voter that made it very difficult to get stable readings. The test points were nothing more than plated holes in the circuit board. It was difficult to get solid contact with these points, so I sol-

dered short pieces of wire into these holes. I can now use an alligator clip and get stable readings.

After making this fix to the voter, I began to realign the system. When I turned the Motorola R1200 Service Monitor on, the front panel lights lit up, but it would not generate signals or measure anything. It was totally kaput. Without this instrument, any settings or measurements are just shots in the dark.

At last Monday's meeting we talked about what to do with this instrument. Replacing it is out of the question. We got quite a bargain when we bought it originally, even though it is quite old, it did function well for the last three or four years. Cost to repair is a big question. At the time we bought it, the only repair facility in this area was Cardinal Electronics in Arlington Heights. Their hourly charge was (I believe) \$125.00 per hour. Since the meeting, I have talked to the gentleman who runs this company. Their charges have been substantially reduced to \$70.00 per hour, and the calibration charge (not REQUIRED for our application) lowered to \$275.00. (I guess there is com-

petition somewhere). Before we can really do much of anything we need to have a working service monitor.

Before the meeting KB9LNK and I spent some time groping about in the dark trying to get the system in somewhat better working order. I don't know if we did any good, but I hope so. If anyone has access to such an instrument we can make use of for a few hours, we can hopefully get it straightened out. Otherwise we will have to approve the expenditure of around \$100.00 to see if it CAN be repaired, and maybe more to actually do it.

To further complicate matters, I have observed that the remote site receiver is not performing well. I can hear the transmitter direct at my QTH, and the receiver is not picking up signals as it has.

At this point I have no good news.

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Please make an effort to stop out and share your love of ham radio with the scouts.

Frank also mentioned the SRRC's efforts during the Utica tornado and subsequent award of a Certificate of Meritorious Service by ARRL Central Division Director Dick Isely, W9GIG. The Club's involvement in emergency communications, Skywarn activities, our hamfest, repeater and digipeater were also mentioned.

What should be readily apparent here is that what allowed the SRRC to become a Special Service Club were the collective efforts of its members. I think we

can be extremely proud of this recognition, but at the same time, I believe that we can do better. I challenge all members, myself included, to become more involved in the various projects we have going.

CHAPTER 16 – A Year of Changes

Excerpted from *Voices in the Air—The Fascination of Radio* © Robert Bonebrake

Reprinted with permission of the author, Robert Bonebrake, W9GCQ. This 174-page book is available at the Streatorland Historical Society Museum or from Francis Kmetz, WB9VLW, at \$12.95 each. The club has a copy at the clubhouse, which can be checked out. It is enjoyable reading.

The end of 1941 brought changes that influenced my shortwave radio interests as well as shaping world history. On December 7th the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, plunging the United States into World War Two. The Government ordered radio amateurs off the air because their frequencies were needed for military operations. Charlie Burt went away to the army, his experience with amateur radio getting him an interesting job in the Signal Corps.

I could no longer hear amateur operators on my shortwave regenerative receiver, but there were other interesting things to listen to. Some commercial shortwave stations were using Morse code, which I still couldn't understand. I felt that I was missing out on something, so I needed to learn the code. I resurrected my old Tom Mix Morse code set and convinced Bill Cushing, who lived next door to my grandparents, that we should string up some wires between his house and mine and send Morse code messages to each other. We found some old telephone wire in the alley behind our local telephone company building and strung it through the trees to connect the two code sets together. We had some fun with the project, but I still didn't learn the code as well as I needed to in order to understand the code I heard on the

radio. When receiving a message, we just wrote down the dots and dashes and then compared them to a chart that showed which letters they represented. This was a slow process compared to the speed needed to understand code coming over the radio. Here, it is necessary to make the conversion from dots and dashes to letters mentally, and write down the letter. Accomplished operators, of course, could hear complete words and not have to write anything at all. Thus, hearing "- - - - -" or "- - - - -", an operator thinks "the" or "and" instead of a series of dots and dashes. In some ways, learning the code is similar to learning how to type or learning a new language.

It would be several years later when I finally accomplished this feat, but using the Tom Mix Morse code set heightened my interest in communications. One day in school we were assigned the project of writing a letter to someone who was in the military service. I wrote to Charlie Burt and told

him about the code set-up that Bill Cushing and I were using. He answered my letter, and said that he was glad to hear that I was still interested in shortwave radio, and predicted that I would be an amateur operator some day. I suppose Tom Mix would also have been proud that one of his Ralston "Straight Shooters" was still using his code practice set.

Another change that the end of 1941 brought was a new kid to my 8th grade class at Garfield School. My first impression of him was that he looked funny and had red pimples on his face. But during the next few months I became friends with him and learned that he was also interested in radios. After that he didn't look funny any more, and somehow the pimples on his face seemed to disappear. We became "Best Friends" until several years later when he and his family moved out of town.

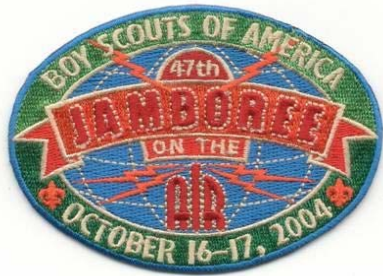
A - - -	J - - - - -	R - - - -
B - - - - -	K - - - - -	S - - - -
C - - - - -	L - - - - -	T - - -
D - - - -	M - - - -	U - - - -
E - - -	N - - - -	V - - - - -
F - - - - -	O - - - - -	W - - - - -
G - - - - -	P - - - - -	X - - - - -
H - - - - -	Q - - - - -	Y - - - - -
I - - -		Z - - - - -

**The International Morse Code used in
Radio Communications.**

THE STARVED ROCK RADIO CLUB

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Email for *Static* submissions: w9qa@arrl.net



**Remember to stop by Chief Shabbona Park
on Saturday and Sunday October 16—17
for JOTA !**