

THE EAGLE

**BULLETIN OF THE
OTSCHODELA
COUNCIL
AMATEUR
RADIO GROUP**



VOLUME SIX NUMBER 5

JANUARY 2006

Scouting hams and hamming Scouters --

Otschodela Council Amateur Radio Group (OCARG) is dedicated to the enhancement of the Scouting program through amateur radio and to the advancement of amateur radio in Scouting. Membership is open to any and all Scouters, amateur radio operators, Scouting and ham clubs and organizations, and all individuals, each with an interest in the Boy Scouts of America, World Of Scouting Movement, Girl Scouts of the USA, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and other youth organizations as they relate to amateur radio. While originally intended for Otschodela Council, Oneonta, New York, OCARG has expanded into a worldwide organization with members in more than twenty states and provinces, and seven nations. There are no membership dues, no officers, no constitution, no newsletter charges, no commercial advertisements, and no organized meetings. All communications are via email or ham radio. All that's required to join is an interest in ham-Scouting and an email to k2frd@arrl.net requesting membership. OCARG is an FCC-licensed Amateur Radio Club Station with the callsign KZ2BSA. The *EAGLE* in PDF format is best read with the latest version of Adobe Reader v.7 (activates hyperlinks) available at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

Copies of the *OCARG EAGLE* are sent to many interested persons in addition to OCARG members. If you feel that you have received this newsletter in error or no longer wish to receive it, kindly sent a message so stating to the above address.

The online edition of the *OCARG EAGLE* may be found at: <http://homepage.mac.com/k2frd/ocarg.htm>.

VENTURING CREW 73, K5BSA, TX MEMBER LICENSE NEWS

This article should have been in the December edition of the *EAGLE*. I goofed: even though I had correctly filed it in its proper folder, I missed it when I put the December *EAGLE* together. I deeply and sincerely apologize to Crew 73 and to Eric. I don't like making mistakes like this.

de K2FRD

From Eric Wolf KG4VPV:

Venturing Crew 73, K5BSA of Circle Ten Council, Richardson, TX has had 2 of our members get their ham radio licenses! Also, we had one of our associate advisors successfully pass her upgrade to Extra. Please welcome our two newest YL's, Mandie, KE5GDW, and Stevie, KE5GFR, to the amateur radio service, and congratulate Katherine, KB8DAA, on her upgrade. We are all very proud of their accomplishments.

On another note, certainly not to be least of the two, Stevie also has attained the Venturing Ranger Award! This is

the highest award that Venturing has to offer.

Until Next Time,

73 and YIS,

-Eric Wolf, Advisor, Venturing Crew 73, Dallas, Texas

Editor's Note: It should be pointed out that Venturing Crew 73 K5BSA should not be confused with Scout Troop 73 of Voorheesville, NY KA2BSA. Both are Scout units specializing in amateur radio and both are members and contributors to the OCARG EAGLE. Some 2000 miles separate the two "73s" and we are very pleased and honored to have both! K5BSA's (Texas) website is: <http://www.qsl.net/k5bsa/> while KA2BSA's (New York) website is: <http://members.aol.com/ka2bsa/> .

HAM-SCOUTERS AND KATRINA, RITA RELIEF

OCARG EAGLE subscribers responded to the request for news and stories related to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita relief efforts and their participation in these efforts either at the sites of the affected areas or from back home (say, relaying message traffic). While we received several inquiries for more details, the short timing of the request only resulted in two stories although I hope others will submit more examples. This is not a time-limited subject, so I encourage others to send in their experiences. Send in any format: email, Word, PDF, or most any format. Pictures are always welcome. Send material to: k2frd@arrl.net.

So, despite my efforts to the contrary, you'll have to hear about my story (below).

JON BLATMAN N3VZG IN LOUISIANA

Jon Blatman N3VZG, an EMT from Malvern, PA responded to the request for Katrina and Rita experiences from the ScoutRadio Group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ScoutRadio/> and also subscribed to the EAGLE:

"I spent 2 weeks in Louisiana with my employer (a large Ambulance Company) and never made contact with a ham group.... I did bring my 2m and 440 HT's, but never used them."

Jon Blatman
N3VZG
EMT-B

THE K2FRD KATRINA STORY

My tour of duty for Katrina relief was not, I hope typical of other hams who worked on relief efforts.

Following my application for relief duty on the AB2M site about 4 September (five days after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf States), I received my marching orders from Dave Patten NN1N at ARRL headquarters. After a hasty pack-up of my 20' travel trailer (I'm a fulltime RVer and live in it), I departed upstate NY early Wed 7 Sep, observed hurricane damage as I traveled through northern Alabama, arrived at the American Red Cross (ARC) staging area in Montgomery, AL on Fri afternoon 9 Sep and reported to the AL Section Manager Greg Starratt W4OZK. The ARC was in an empty K-Mart building for the disaster, but it was obvious that the whole relief effort was still being built up: phone cables were still being unreeled, portable internet satellite dishes were only just being set up, and ham radio and other communications equipment were only just arriving; much equipment already on site was personally owned.

After a long wait with two other hams who had arrived with minimal equipment and after a brief interview, I was sent to Salvation Army (SA) HQ in Jackson MS where I arrived late the next morning after some 300+ miles. Although Greg W4OZK had stated I was going directly to the coast near Gulfport MS because of my ability to be fully self-sustaining (with trailer, HF-VHF-UHF ham radios, antennas, and all support gear plus two generators and two weeks' worth of gas, water, and food) and operate independently with 9/11 experience (the reason I was activated so quickly), I had to go through the SA Div HQ to obtain an SA ID tag. However, upon my arrival, the head ham at SA HQ had never heard of me nor of the national coordinator at ARRL HQ nor of the ham in Montgomery with whom he

had talked to at length the previous afternoon. Worse, he said the SA didn't need any more hams. So, in disgust, I headed west to Shreveport LA to make contact with the South Texas Section of hams who were doing so much for the Louisiana relief effort. Through email (wi-fi at Flying J truck stops), I was quickly and happily received by the South TX hams (gotta love those Texans!) and directed to go to SE Louisiana and make contact on two meters with the fielded Texans.

By now, this was Monday (12 Sep) morning and I had driven quite a few hundreds of miles through the affected areas in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana looking for an assignment. Lots of storm damage, mostly due to wind (virtually all the flooding was right next to the coast and, of course, in New Orleans): trees down, power and communications cables down all over. However, the closer I got to SE LA, the more damage I saw: thousands of trees down (mostly uprooted rather than broken off) on top of houses and businesses, even more cables and power lines down, cars smashed, roads blocked, roofs blown off houses, signs blown miles away. In many instances, they didn't bother cutting up the trees; they just bulldozed them out of the way; these were HUGE trees, some 3' - 4' DBH. I reported in by 2m radio about 1400 Monday PM to the Texans' net control in Covington (they were headquartered at the Red Cross in both Slidell and Covington and were jointly serving as a clearing house for incoming hams). They had me head directly up to Riverside Hospital in Franklinton, Washington Parish, some 40 to 50 miles north of New Orleans where the hospital had requested ham radio service because they were having problems getting message traffic in and out; I was tasked to make an assessment and report back. Road traffic was heavy since many roads were still closed off, even almost two weeks after Katrina went through, but after awhile, I finally made it to the hospital.

Due to the 98 degree temperatures in the 98% southern humidity and having to change a trailer tire near Covington, I wasn't feeling so good with heat exhaustion and dehydration, but I reported into the hospital anyway. I asked my contact, the hospital plant manager about their communications requirements: only local and intermittent phones, poor radio contact (they were on the Public Service 155 mhz band with several frequencies which they used), no internet, and only infrequent cellphone service. Their specific request of me was to operate my radios on their frequencies. I backed my trailer into the narrow space between two buildings where they told me to park and told them what I could and could not do (I cannot legally operate on the Public Service frequencies, especially with my unmodified TM-707G radio; the FCC had terminated the official state of emergency) and set up my 2-meter J-pole antenna on a 20' mast on the hospital roof. I made contact again with the Texans and advised them of the hospital's communications situation and it was decided I should remain there as primary backup (I could get the hospital's messages relayed through our ham Net Control) until they could reliably get back at least one of their systems; my task was to assess, analyze, monitor, and report on the hospital's commo situation. I monitored and maintained contact with the Texans' 2m emergency net and, at the same time, started organizing inside my trailer for extended HF and VHF operations but taking frequent air conditioning breaks in the Jeep, rehydrating myself, and regularly checked back with the hospital on their commercial communications status.

About 2100 local, the 2m emergency net closed down for the night, I reported the same to the hospital staff, then went to bed, fortunately with my trailer air conditioner on so I could get my body temp back under control (I'd suffered heatstroke a number of years ago, so knew what to watch out for).

RIGHT: Typical wind damage in the Franklinton, LA area.

The next morning (Tues 13 Sep), I was up at 0600, sicker than before. I reported into my Net Control (NO5LA - St. Tammany ARC/ARES) at 0700, then went inside the hospital to learn if there were any positive changes in the hospital's communications status; they stated it was still poor and requested I stay. I in turn suggested they acquire/use cellphones since service seemed to be reliable on my phone, a suggestion which had not occurred to them, but if implemented would free up a ham (me) for service elsewhere. I then returned to my trailer and continued to monitor and report to Net Control. At about 1030, the hospital's plant manager who had assigned me to my parking space (which for the situation was ideal for me) told me I had to move since they



needed to install an air conditioner on the roof where my antenna was located (hospital a/c seemed to be working fine; I don't know the story behind this new a/c) . He told me he'd find me a new site to park and would let me know shortly, but I had to move now because the installers were here. After another 30 minutes working out in the heat

(now up to 95F) disassembling the antenna, mast, cabling, trailer hookup, and preps for moving the trailer, I moved out of the alley, idled in front of the admitting entrance (the only open entrance to the hospital was guarded by Air Natl Guardsmen from Maryland) and waited for the plant manager to tell me where to park. I waited more than three hours in the sun, albeit somewhat comfortably with the Jeep air conditioner working overtime, but the man never showed up indicating to me that I wasn't needed very badly. At around 1400, I went inside, learned they had adequate cellphone service, so I advised them I was departing the area. Since my antenna was down and my Jeep's mag-mount was not high enough to contact Net Control, I had no radio contact with anyone. I headed due north back to Jackson, MS to get out of the heat since I knew if I stayed in LA, I would be getting into some serious health issues. I finally notified the Net Control Station of the hospital's and my status by email from the Jackson Flying J and advised them I was heading out for health reasons after which I drove north and west toward Arizona via I-40.

In summary, although I was in the Katrina-affected area for five days, I was actually only "on the job" for about 20 hours. At least, I accomplished my mission for this one task. I also advised the ARRL that future activations should take into account the local climate for those of us who were from different parts of the country.

There's more. Gas was at \$3.49 when I departed New York State. From PA clear down through TN, gas was a consistent range of 2.79 to 2.99. Alabama and Mississippi ranged from 2.49 to 2.79, was cheapest in Louisiana at 2.49, even in the most damaged areas. At no point did I see any signs of a gas shortage (no lines, no price gouging, no "closed" signs except where the hurricane had dropped trees on gas stations).

While I saw plenty of severe storm damage in southern AL, MS, and especially Louisiana, most areas through which I traveled were back in business with power restored (most areas were without power for 7 to 10 days). Only those businesses with damaged structures remained closed. Except for New Orleans and coast regions (completely different storm problem than the rest of the inland Gulf coast which had mostly wind damage), the areas were definitely on the mend and a lot faster than most people predicted. Even while I was there, a notice went out that no more hams were needed; while the ham emergency communications people now had plenty of hams with two meter VHF equipment (the majority of those outsiders who were called up), there was still a shortage of fully-equipped self-sufficient hams like myself. It was nice to be needed, but the cost for me was too much, so I bailed out.

Among the people, the southerners from the affected areas with whom I came into contact were taking the whole disaster in stride, seemed to be compensating very well, and were very friendly and welcoming to me. They were almost embarrassingly grateful for all the help they could get from the outside. Except for the military guards at various facilities throughout the area, there was no sign of some of the lawlessness that we'd heard about in New Orleans.

de Fred K2FRD

HAM RADIO INFORMATION SOURCES

New (and old – and by this I mean tenured) Hams are always looking for sources of information about our great hobby. An excellent resource for Ham Radio information – considered by some to be the "Mother Lode" of Ham Radio hot links -- is edited by AC6V -- <http://www.ac6v.com> Navigate around this site and you'll find myriads of links to information about amateur radio that you never dreamed of.

Since scouting and amateur radio have a close connection to emergency preparedness, I'd also recommend the EMCOMM MONTHLY which can be found at <http://www.emcomm.org/em/>. You can register to receive this excellent newsletter via email or just visit the web site on a regular basis. This newsletter is written for the West Coast states and has a bias to Morse Code operating; however, every month has some great ideas that can be used almost anywhere.

Even though many of us don't participate in contests, you'll find the ARRL Contestor's Rate Sheet a great source of technical and operating tidbits. There's some philosophy sprinkled in with hints and kinks and some links to new and useful software and hardware. Plus, you may find some contests that may interest you. You'll find the Contestor's Rate Sheet at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rate-sheet/>. If you're an ARRL member, you can have the Rate Sheet delivered to you via email the same day it's published. Just log in to the Member's Only section and update your member options.

And, while on the subject of the American Radio Relay League, check their web site frequently for the latest news concerning amateur radio. <http://www.arrl.org/> Members can have bulletins and the weekly ARRL Letter delivered via email. Many folks are eagerly anticipating an announcement from the FCC regarding a reduction or elimination of Morse Code for the General and/or Extra Class licenses. The ARRL will probably have the news first.

Happy New Year everyone – and, since it's the new year, why not make a New Year's Resolution to accomplish

something significant or meaningful related to amateur radio in 2006. A license upgrade, building something, putting up an antenna, earning an award, participating in a special event, etc. Probably the most meaningful is to "Be Prepared" -- prepare yourself and your station for an emergency.

73 de Frank KR1ZAN / Garland, TX

EDITOR'S NOTE: Frank Krizan KR1ZAN is a dedicated ham-Scouter and frequent contributor to the EAGLE.

WATCHING FOR A NEW LICENSE? HERE'S THE BEST WAY

The following URL takes one directly to the FCC's license lists. If one knows a new or upgraded license is due to be issued, one may check in frequently at this site and beat the standard license databases by anywhere from eight to 24 hours: <http://gullfoss2.fcc.gov/cgi-bin/ws.exe/genmen/licensee.hts>

Enter: last name; Scroll down to `HA` (Amateur Radio); NO `Wildcard`

Then (next page): click on ULS Database. Look for name(s), new callsign.

Canadian new licenses are searched in a different manner since specific callsigns may be requested upon examination. Use the Royal Amateurs of Canada homepage <http://www.rac.ca/> and <http://www.rac.ca/acl/> (search by Province).

UPCOMING VE SESSIONS

Knowledge of dates and locations of VE sessions is important to those ham-Scouts and Scouters who wish to earn their amateur radio license or upgrade their present license. For persons in the United States, this information is available at <http://www2.arrl.org/arrlvec/examsearch.phtml>.

SCOUTMASTER'S MINUTE

"We never fail when we try to do our duty, we always fail when we neglect to do it."

- Lord Robert Baden-Powell

Editor's note: These Baden-Powell quotes are available from the following sites:

<http://twc-woodbadge.freesevers.com/bpsays.htm>

http://en.thinkexist.com/quotes/sir_robert_baden-powell/

The OCARG EAGLE is published monthly on or about the 15th except publication is suspended for the summer months. If you feel you have received this newsletter in error, please send an email to K2FRD@arrl.net.

Subscriptions are free; there is no spam, no ads, no solicitations. Each edition is addressed via Blind CC to reduce the size of recipients' headers and to prevent spammers from receiving a ready-made spam list. Subscribe to: [OCARG EAGLE \(k2frd@arrl.net\)](mailto:k2frd@arrl.net). OCARG's mailing list is NEVER sold nor otherwise made available to spammers nor anyone else. Since the EAGLE is a subscriber contribution newsletter, a message is sent out about the first of each month requesting news.

Permission is hereby granted to copy, republish, and/or quote any part of this newsletter if credit is given to OCARG™ KZ2BSA and W. Frederick Stevens K2FRD, Editor-Publisher.

Further information regarding Otschodela Council Amateur Radio Group may be found at: <http://homepage.mac.com/k2frd/ocarg.htm>.

©2006 by OCARG™ KZ2BSA, James LeBaron WA2IAX Trustee and W. Frederick Stevens K2FRD, Editor-Publisher