



# www.w9az.com

## MY FIRST TIME ON THE AIR

By Brandon, K9BAC

After Howard, AK9F, passed away I started thinking how he got me into Ham Radio. I can remember back in 2003 I was a junior in high school, and I volunteered at the varsity football practice. Howard called me and I asked me if I wanted to go to a picnic for the ham radio club he was part of. I agreed.

I asked Howard where it was and he told me that we were going to the air field to teach me how to jump out of an airplane but Howard somehow got me convinced that I was jumping out of an airplane and it was in fact the picnic. Howard stopped and grabbed some steaks (I think) for dinner and we went to the air field. We had a great time and got to know some great people.

Howard and I left and on our way back to drop me off Howard started talking to Don, K9NR, on 94 simplex. Don was telling Howard that it was nice that I was able to join them and asking if I was going to get my license. Howard handed me his radio and told me some guide lines and what to do to talk and I could talk using AK9F. So I talked to Don for a minute before I started getting out of range. Howard told me what to do to switch the radio to key up the repeater. So I started to talk to Don for another few minutes before Don got to his house. So I signed and Howard started to explain to me how a repeater works, what 73 meant, and some other general information of what ham radio is about.

Howard explained to me that also for what I want to do (Meteorology) ham radio will help quite a bit. Within the next couple of years Howard and Sue took me along with them to the Dayton Hamfest. During the trip I found a handheld radio like the one that Howard had and I got it.

Howard found out that I tried to get my license on my own. I took the test and barely missed it by 3 questions.

Howard sat down with me and helped me study for the test again so when I took the test again, I would have passed. Sure enough I passed my next test. A couple weeks after, I got a voicemail from Howard to call him when I got a chance regarding my license. I called him back after I got out of class at KCC and Howard told me that one of the other people that passed their test same day that I did got their call so he told me to go check

and see if I got mine too.

When I got home I looked it up and sure enough I got my license. I called Howard to tell him to turn his radio on so he could be my first contact. Howard did and I made my first contact with my own call sign to AK9F.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

December Birthdays

- Dec 1 WD9AYI
- Dec 7 N9LCX
- Dec 20 WA9WAQ, KF9IK
- Dec 22 N9OE
- Dec 28 K9JLK
- Jan 4 N9TAJ
- Jan 7 N9IOQ
- Jan 17 WD9FYF
- Jan 20 K9XM
- Jan 25 W9LIZ
- Jan 27 W9KK

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

## NCS FOR DECEMBER

- Dec 5 N9LYE
- Dec 12 N9OE
- Dec 19 N9FD
- Dec 26 N9LYE

## NCS FOR JANUARY

- Jan 2 N9LYE
- Jan 9 K9NR
- Jan 16 N9OE
- Jan 23 N9FD
- Jan 30 N9LYE

[Mondays at 2100 hrs. local time](#)

## KARS ANNUAL AUCTION

As usual, KARS annual auction was a well attended event. The auctioneers provided lots of laughs, while members scored some impressive purchases.



Craig N9FD, Don K9NR, Bill N9OE, and Don KC9QPM compare notes on their purchases while waiting for the totals to be tallied.



Auctioneers extraordinaire Dan



Donations by SK AK9F were hot sellers. Note Rollie N9RJM in the background ready to make a bid.



Tallying the totals: Bookkeeper Clay N9IO and Treasurer Francis KE9MG, accept money from John N9LYE, while auctioneer Dan WA9WAQ observes.



How will Rollie N9RJM ever explain all these purchases to Jane???

Archives by  
Clay N9IO

# From the KARS archives circa May 1978

Don Kerouac K9NR, Ken Buser W9YNI (Now W9IE),

Todd Ostrihonsky WB9RDI, Dell Koerner W9NKR (sk) and Ed Drolet W9IBU / W9IM (sk) were all interviewed in a fabulous full page article by the Kankakee Daily Journal Newspaper in May 1978.

Todd Ostrihonsky WB9RDI now of Oviedo, FL was KARS Secretary at the time of this article.

Don Kerouac K9NR and Ken Buser W9YNI are both past presidents of KARS and currently serve on it's board of directors.

The entire article is an excellent read and great representation of the amateur radio community of that era. The page has been split to fit the next two pages into this newsletter format for your review. (Page 1 of the article)

The Sunday Journal, Kankakee, Illinois, May 7, 1978

## Spectrum

Experiments of hobbyists have put amateur radio in the vanguard of electronic communications since the '20s

# Ham radio points the way for industry

By CARL HULSE  
Journal Writer

Don Kerouac sat in his office at WKAN Radio a few weeks ago and held a conversation with his friend Ken Buser, who was on a flight to Indianapolis.

Mental telepathy? Nope. Modern amateur radio, better known as ham radio — not to be confused with citizens band radio.

Ham radio, which grew out of experimentation with the wondrous new gadget, radio, during the 1920s, is thriving these days. And its adherents are still experimenting with things that may become common someday, when the electronics industry picks up the hams' lead. Historically, that is the way it often works.

In comparison, CB is a limited medium. Amateur radio has generally been known for the ability of its practitioners to communicate around the world. And they are still doing so. But today's ham operators can bounce their signals off satellites that their organizations around the globe have built and put into orbit. They even bounce their signals off the moon.

What's more, ham operators have developed a means of communicating over a large local area on clear channels, using low power radio equipment, as did Kerouac and Buser, two local ham enthusiasts. If they want, they can call you on the phone from their radios.

"TRADITIONALLY, when people think of ham radio they think of communicating around the world. And that still goes on to a great degree," explained Kerouac, assistant chief engineer at WKAN. "But ham radio is so diversified," he added.

Kerouac and Buser, who is head of data processing at WKAN, were talking ground to air via one-watt handi-talkies using a radio repeater, operated by the local amateur radio club, as a go-between. Without the repeater, the pair might have had better results conversing through telephony.

Members of the Kankakee Area Radio Society, like ham clubs all across the country, are enthused about the repeaters — high power, automatic radio transceivers that can take signals sent at around the two-meter ham band and relay them in radius of 100 miles or more, depending on how high the location of the repeater.

In the West, they put repeaters on mountain-tops. Presently circling the earth are OSCARS (Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio) built by hams and sent into space as ballast on government projectiles. Kerouac says these are really "repeaters in the sky," with a range of all the earth that is visible under them.

The first KARS repeater, which was constructed by club members, went into service about four years ago. Now the club has two repeaters, one of commercial extraction, both of which transmit from 200 feet high in Kankakee County. Local hams, and those just passing through, have an easily recognizable local band. This was not always the case.

"FOR A WHILE MOST ham radio equipment was these big, giant, heavy boxes," noted Kerouac. "If you went mobile you had what we called deskcrushers and they were well over 100 pounds a box, many of them. Lots of tubes. Jillions of knobs, which was keen but was not that neat for a local get-together real quick.

"We had so much frequency spectrum that we didn't have a common monitoring group," he recalled. "It was possible for a ham to be in the area for many years and not even be known by the other hams. You just didn't bump into each other."

It would have been hard to miss Buser, who said that in high school he attached a 30-foot

antenna to his car to accommodate his "mobile" unit.

That was before the days of integrated circuits and the new two-meter band "rigs," which have shrunk ham radio down to a more manageable size while broadening the range of ham activities.

A network of club-sponsored and private repeaters has sprung up, say Kerouac and Buser, making long-range communication possible from the wide open spaces of America with surprisingly little power. Close to 4,000 repeaters are operational in the United States.

"I drove from here to Toronto and only one time I was in about a 15 to 20 mile area where I was out of reach of a repeater," said Buser.

Kerouac said that not long ago while on a vacation trip through South Dakota he hit a 10,000-foot-tall Colorado repeater. "It was around 300 to 400 miles away and I was just running a little 10-watt mobile unit," recalled Kerouac wistfully.

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE of the repeaters is their capacity to make an automatic telephone patch. Handi-talkies of the variety carried by Buser and Kerouac have a regular push-button phone panel. Signal the repeater, announce calling intentions, dial, then talk to the person you called. Phone without wires.

But before any businessmen run out to make a quick investment in radio gear, don't forget the subject is amateur radio. —As in "not for profit."

"Amateur radio is strictly non-commercial," reminded Kerouac. "No way can you take compensation and no way can you compete in the business sector through amateur radio."

So far hams and Ma Bell understand each other on this point, said the men.

As added insurance, all the phone conversations go over the open ham frequencies and ham operators, a rule-conscious bunch, aren't likely to put up with commercial usage of the band.

So much for one of the modern applications of ham radio. There are others, like the ham transmission of television signals.

IF ALL THIS SOUNDS slightly far-fetched, remember: so did radio when the first amateurs were experimenting with primitive spark transmitters in the early years of this century.

From those humble beginnings, amateur radio has pioneered advances in the use of radio waves and radio equipment and — to hear Buser and Kerouac tell it — the broadcast industry followed close behind.

"Historically, all of the frequencies that are being used for commercial purposes now at one time belonged to the hams," said Buser.

"The hams had free run of those frequencies for many years because the hams were the only ones that bothered to play with radios," said Kerouac. "And then the government came along eventually and said, 'Well, we're going to take over.'"

Though they gripe, Buser and Kerouac concede that amateur radio isn't exactly being pushed out.

"We still have some very choice chunks of the frequency spectrum and, realistically speaking, the government does work for us frequently," said Kerouac.

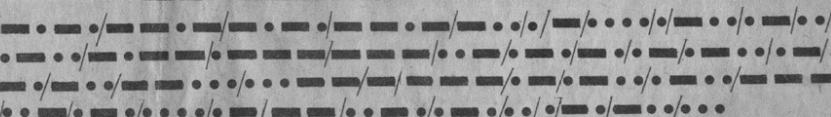
Both he and Buser credit the preservation of amateur radio in great part to the American Radio Relay League, the national ham organization founded in 1914. The ARRL protects amateur frequencies, they say.

"There were and still are a lot of interests who really couldn't give a damn about amateur radio," said Kerouac. "They have their own reasons for interest in the frequencies we use and would like very much to get their hands on them."

See Hams, page 16

Kankakee ham radio operators in their shacks

For every ham radio operator there is a radio "shack" — amateur radio slang for the ham's base of operations, often a corner of the basement or a private place tucked away somewhere out of the mainstream of house traffic. Todd Ostrihonsky, at right, works the ham bands whenever he gets a free moment.



Their signals shrink the world

Don Kerouac, sitting, and Ken Buser look over Kerouac's station. From their Kankakee residences, the hams can reach out and talk with their amateur radio counterparts around the world or across town. They can make the world a smaller, easier place electronically.

Journal photos

### From the KARS archives circa May 1978

fIDU[Y & cZ h\Y Ufh]W`YL` \][\`][\hg`h\Y`YIdYf]Yb  
cdYfUhc fg`VUW`hc`h\Y`% - &\$Đgž`8Y` `?cYfbYf`K- I  
H]h`YX` )\$`mYUfg`cZ`Z]XX` ]b[ `k]h`h\Uh`İb

## 50 years of fiddling with that 'newfangled contraption' . . .

Delbert Koerner and Ed Drolet were attracted to radio when it was still a newfangled contraption. People didn't know quite what to make of it more than 50 years back.

Neil Armstrong had already stepped onto the moon while millions of Americans watched by the time Todd Ostrihovsky became a certified ham.

Though more than a generation separates Koerner and Drolet from Ostrihovsky, they are bound together by the amateur radio fellowship, a society not restricted by age, sex or geographic boundaries.

These particular operators are tied even closer by the fact that the three entered ham radio as young men with a keen interest in electronics. It just happens that Ostrihovsky was a young man more than a half century later than the other two.

Koerner, who helped found the original Kankakee airport, and Drolet, a former Kankakee County state's attorney now engaged in private law practice, are two of the area's old-time hams.

Koerner has a license issued in 1925 but hanging on the wall of his ham shack is a group picture of those attending the second convention of the American Radio Relay League held in Chicago during 1923. He and his brother are included.

Drolet has a license from 1926 but thinks his formal involvement may go back another year or so.

Regardless, both men have fond memories of their participation in amateur radio, a hobby that has grown up in their lifetime and one which they still get satisfaction out of regularly.

Home-made spark transmitters were the most modern in radio rigs as the 1920s began and Koerner recalls that he and his comrades were happy to transmit from near Cullom to places as far away as Dwight, Streator and Pontiac.

Radio was in a rapidly advancing age, however, and distance marks were broken almost as quickly as they were set. Communication over extremely long distances became the ham radio trademark.

"The big thrill for everybody that goes through it," noted Drolet, "is the first time you make a contact. You keep trying and trying and the stuff isn't working right and you can't get out. But finally someone answers you and you shake all over and go completely panicky. You are totally rattled that all of the sudden you can be talking to someone a couple hundred miles away."

Drolet remembers having that sort of experience when he made his first contact, a conversation via Morse code with a radio engineer in Minnesota.

Ham radio today is a changing sport. Technological advances constantly improve the equipment and new ways to apply ham radio are always turning up.

"Electronics has been fantastic," said Koerner. "In the old days, if you got out 30 or 40 miles you were doing pretty good. Now they not only talk to Mars but they control the thing from here and do work and send pictures back and everything. An awful lot is due to the space program," added the aeronautical pioneer.

"It has been an interesting time to live," said Drolet. "I think these young fellows who are devising such things as repeaters are geniuses. How they figure out how to make those doggone little transistors and integrated circuits is unbelievable."

Ostrihovsky, who is 17, a senior at Eastridge High School and a ham for three years, reflects some of the old-time ham spirit.

He likes to build and design his own equipment and to communicate through code when most opt for the voice transmission.

During the Christmas season he relayed about 15 messages from a Hawaii-based military ham to some of the man's local acquaintances.

"It's all for fun," he says of his hobby. In the future that might not be the case. Ostrihovsky, who is secretary of the Kankakee Area Radio Society, plans to enter Bradley University in Peoria and major in some phase of electrical engineering.

What's he like best about amateur radio? "Talking to new people you would never meet otherwise. You're always able to talk to someone friendly on there."

It's a big world of friendly hams to choose from.

## Inside Spectrum . . .

BARBERSHOP singing has made its way into Kankakee. Rick Davis tells all about it — along with a history lesson on who got the whole thing started in the first place, where, why and when — on page 16.

"FM" is a movie about the behind-the-scenes goings-on at a major FM radio station. Rock music columnist Jim Rierdan listened to the soundtrack and pronounced it sound. Read what he has to say about it in Rock Pop on page 18.



ACADEMICALLY talented students at the Bourbonnais Upper Grade Center on a given day may be doing such things as this: forming and running mock advertising agencies, getting their World War II history straight from the people who lived it, or studying the ways handicapped people meet their challenges. It's a bewildering world, but these kids are getting an edge on understanding it. At left, Dr. Alexander von Raabe tells them what it was like serving in the German army in World War II. Pages 19 and 21.

SMALLPOX has been virtually eradicated in our country, but the disease created near-panic in turn-of-the-century Kankakee. Accounts from local papers and the recollections of Elzie Huet give us a chilling idea of why the pox was so dreaded. Thomas Lindsay brings the past to life in Up 'Til Now, page 29.

## Hams

Continued from page 15

At the rate ham radio is gaining in popularity these days, it seems to be quite safe from extinction.

Currently, there are an estimated 380,000 hams in the United States, 1,200,000 worldwide. Though hams continue to come from the ranks of those interested in electronics, some newcomers are converts from CB.

"A lot of people are introduced to radio through CB," said Buser. "And I think once you are interested in it you want to do more. And to be able to do more legally you have to get a ham radio license."

There lies the backbone of amateur radio, the licensure process. Ham radio has long prided itself on the fact that all of its ranks are certified by the federal government as radio operators.

Today there are five license classes: novice, technician, general, advanced and extra. To make novice a candidate has to be able to comprehend five words of International Morse Code per minute and have a basic understanding of electronics. Requirements stiffen as the ham moves up in license classification.

Kerouac says he has administered 150 novice tests in the past four or five years and KARS, under the auspices of the Kankakee Valley Park District, holds regular classes to prepare interested persons for the novice test. Not everyone completes the course and not all who pass the novice test stick with ham radio, say the men. Advancing as a ham requires some work. The tests are tough.

On the other hand, CB radio licenses are available to everyone and the overcrowded channels indicate many have taken the Federal Commu-

nications Commission up on its offer to operate a CB radio, especially in the wake of the 55 mph speed limit.

Though neither Kerouac or Buser has a CB in his car, both say they could benefit from one.

"By and large most hams are neutral about CB," noted Buser. "We get along and a lot of hams have CB radios. It's like a telephone, everybody is entitled to one," he said.

Though modern technology has made an impact, ham radio retains the traditions established by its founders.

Trying for distant contacts, or "DXing," as it is called, continues to be popular and most ham operators still try to work the north pole and all points south.

Camaraderie is the watchword with ham operators, whether it be on the air or at the ham fests that attract

large numbers for the exhibits and flea markets, where all hams head looking for a bargain.

Amateur radio operators still like to construct their own equipment, though it's becoming difficult to compete with the quality of commercial merchandise.

Ham radio remains a hobby that is open to all interested enough to learn the code and the electronic theory.

"We talk about all the exotic things, but not everybody has all that," commented Kerouac. "You can get in as cheap as \$150. But the sky is the limit. I'm sure there are guys that probably have \$100,000 invested between their huge towers and equipment."

And ham radio continues to provide a channel for emergency communication between distant points for both military and civil purposes.

**R. W. Linder, ordained Methodist minister, retired, is available for:**

**LECTURES • SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS  
REVIVAL MEETINGS • TRAVELOGUES**

(Including The Holy Land)

**Qualifications: Christian Youth Leader,  
Evangelist, Scout Leader, 4-H Club Leader**

**WILL GO ANYWHERE—ANYTIME!**

**\$1 CHARGE** Satisfaction Guaranteed  
Or Money Back  
**PHONE 933-1497**

A little more insight along with photo and yet another Journal article continues on the next page featuring Del Koerner W9NKR and Ed Drolet W9IBU.

## Have you been naughty or nice?



KARS HOMEPAGE **WWW.W9AZ.COM** KARS HOMEPAGE

From the KARS archives

8 Y ` ` ? c Y f b Y f ` K - B ? F ` d \ c h c ` W ] f W U

Ed Drolet W9IBU / W9IM Daily Journal article circa Nov 1957



Ú ã & c ˇ | ^ â Á | ^ ~ c Á , ã c @ Á @ ã • Á % à ^ • c  
**Ed Drolet W9IBU** (call later changed to W9IM) was  
 Û c æ c ^ q • Á Æ c c [ | } ^ ^ Á ã } Á S æ } \ æ \ ^ ^  
 Ed was KARS President from 1942-1944.  
 KARS affiliated with the American Radio Relay League  
 (ARRL) in 1942 at the direction of Mr Drolet.  
 Many great photo ops and articles were printed by the  
 S æ } \ æ \ ^ ^ Á Ö æ ã | ^ Á R [ ˇ | } æ | Á ã } Á c @  
 Ed in a civil defense communications / amateur radio  
 subject article.  
 This article from November 1957 was a light hearted  
 response to the Russian space hound launched in  
 Sputnik II.  
 Rufus is featured attempting to make contact with a  
 % { æ | ^ • @ \ æ + Á Á c @ ^ Á % Ö [ \* \* [ ] ^ Á Ü ^ á

Pictured below **Del Koerner W9NKR** founder of Ko-  
 rner Aviation on the SW outskirts of Kankakee. An  
 æ ç ã â Á ] ã | [ c Á Ö ^ | Á , æ • Á \ } [ , } Á c [ ]  
 Field Day site in his bi-wing plane says Don Kerouac  
 K9NR.  
 Ö ^ | q • Á ] ã | [ c C • Á | ã & ^ } • ^ Á , æ • Á • ã  
 of the Wright brothers.  
 Del was first licensed as a ham by the Navy in 1918,  
 at that time the FCC did not yet exist.  
 Del had also attended the second National Convention  
 of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) in  
 Chicago back in 1923.



**Merry Christmas**