

# Watts News

## Monthly Newsletter of the Olympia Amateur Radio Society

December 2017

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# Club Information Page

OARS Officers			
President	Bruce Montgomery	WA7BAM	259-9300
Vice President	Dennis Niles	WV7S	(808)283-3208
Secretary	Rue Palmer	W7RUE	790-5633
Treasurer	Ed Fitzgerald	N7WW	491-2289
Member at Large	Artt Taylor	KL7SK	578-0162
Key Contacts			
RFI Committee	Ghery Pettit	N6TPT	867-0756
Repeater Committee	Fred Baker	W7SIX	791-2444
Repeater Committee	Ken Dahl	K7TAG	534-9357
Club License Trustee	Duane Braford	WB7ROZ	412-1902
Information Net	Lee Chambers	KI7SS	951-2538
ARES Net	Tom Bohon	W7BHN	456-6260
WebMaster	Ray Goble	K7KVB	253-344-3408
Newsletter	George Lanning	KB6LE	438-5797
Classes	Lee Chambers	KI7SS	951-2538
License Exams	Klaus Neubert	AC7MG	280-2428
Equipment Custodian			
OARS Website: <a href="http://olyham.orgolyham.blogspot.com">olyham.orgolyham.blogspot.com</a>			

Membership Application	
<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	
Date	
Call	
Name	
Address	
City, State	
Home Phone	
Cell Phone	
email	
<b>Annual Dues: \$ 50 single or family</b> <b>Pay to Treasurer at any meeting, or mail to:</b>	
<b>OARS</b> <b>PO Box 2861</b> <b>Olympia WA 98507</b>	

**License Exam Sessions**  
 6:00 pm before each monthly OARS meeting  
 Walk-ins allowed  
 To apply contact Klaus Neubert  
 280-2428  
[oars-ve@comcast.net](mailto:oars-ve@comcast.net)  
**In an effort to provide the best testing environment possible, the examiners request non-candidates remain outside for the duration of the exam session.**

**OARS Net Check-ins**

The following stations checked in one or more times on the OARS General Information Net in November 2017:

AC7MG	KC7GRM	KI7FKQ	W7NN
AF7IO	KD7PLJ	KI7QCL	W7PLC
AG7BA	KD7SQU	KL7SK	W7RUE
K3AL	KF7ANA	N7GQP	WA4RAY
K7HTZ	KF7MJI	N7TLF	WA7BAM
K7TAG	KG5RTQ	N7WW	WA7SH
K7TUM	KG7HBE	NW7J	WB4LWQ
KB7ED	KG7OQS	W6EGV	WB7JIM
KB7HPR	KI7CQ	W7BRR	WV7S
KI7SS *			

\* Net Control Station

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.

## President's Message

The November OARS meeting brought the election of 2 new officers: Frank, KF7HXV is the new secretary and Phil, W7PLC the new member at large. Thanks to them for stepping forward to fill these vacancies. Thanks also goes out to Rue, W7RUE for his long run as secretary and Art, KL7SK as member at large. While Rue and Art will no longer be board members on January 1, they have already volunteered for new tasks so expect to be seeing them remain active in the club. Previously elected board members continuing on are Ed, N7WW as treasurer; Den, WV7S as vice president, and Bruce, WA7BAM as president. Thanks to all.

I have read that your amateur radio license is really just a license to continue learning. There is a lot not mentioned in the licensing manual that you are expected to learn on your own, and the 'Google is your friend' statement, while true, often only takes you so far. This is why local radio clubs become the heart and soul of this great hobby. Whether asking questions on Tuesday nights nets or listening to the educational program during most meetings, this hobby is so large and diverse that the learning never stops. New or veteran hams alike, be sure to ask your questions.

Another great place to renew your education is the OARS website with links to truly great podcasts with interviews covering every radio related topic from amplifiers to Zepp antennas, different operating modes, new equipment, websites and software that makes operations more automated and much more. I just discovered links to members weather stations including one without a call sign on Delphi Road. Wonder who that ham may be. Not enough thanks can go to Ray, WA4RAY for his continued efforts. This fall not a week goes by without an email reaching me from someone interesting in the radio hobby from either the OARS website or Facebook pages maintained by Jeff, NW7J. As a result our club is increasingly recognized from our greater community, and my sense is that the clubs membership is growing. We had our first new member join via the new on-line application.

Another great way to keep the education going is to join the American Radio Relay League

(ARRL). When I first joined the ham fraternity I remember hearing negative comments about the ARRL monthly magazine, QST. The League has been working hard to modernize the articles and from the comments I am reading now they are succeeding. Remarks like 'the magazine is worth the cost of membership' plus much more is available via the ARRL website.

Don't forget one of our greatest local assets, the Timberland Regional Library. A quick search for 'amateur radio' produced 50 results with only a few not related to this hobby. Any thrifty ham looking for information to improve his or her station would do well with this book collection. I find rainy weather the perfect compliment to reading so 'tis the season as they say.

We are both 'the custodians and distributors of this knowledge' states Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, the CEO of the ARRL in a recent QST article. Lets all work hard to accomplish this challenge as we move forward.

—Bruce, WA7BAM, president



## Minutes of November 15 Meeting

1800 hrs. We had two candidates show for testing; both passed: one Tech and one General.

1900 hrs. Bruce – WA7BAM called the meeting to order. We had 26 present in the meeting. Our presenter was SFC Richard Little, the Joint Operations Center Supervisor, Washington Military Department of the National Guard; Joint OPS for Multi-Missions, including the Emergency Management Department. SFC Little and his wife 1Lt. Little gave a power point briefing on the role of the Washington National Guard, how it interfaces with other state and federal organizations, to include recent wildfires and the general plan the state has for the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake.

2017 – 2037 hrs. Break with a buy and sell of donated Ham items for the Club.

Rue – W7RUE read last months minutes for the 18 October Meeting.

Ed – N7WW gave the Treasurers Report:  
General Account \$2112.20; Repeater Fund  
\$1053.92

2038 hrs. Elections; the following were  
unanimously elected as next years club officers:

President Bruce Montgomery – WA7BAM

Vice President Dennis Niles – WV7S

Member-at-Large Phil Cornell - W7PLC

Treasurer Ed Fitzgerald – N7WW

Secretary Frank Hamilton – KF7HXV

Frank and Phil presented a possible club logo  
and talked about the various options for apparel.

Bruce - WA7BAM led a discussion on the need  
to coordinate Tech classes with the LDS  
community; the future status of HamWAN, Digital  
SIG nets, and MT-63. Field Day antennas, the  
upcoming ARRL International Grid Chase event  
link on the OARS website, and the status of the  
OARS booth and the four tables with a 10%  
charge to cover the costs. He also covered the  
December 20 meeting; desserts and drinks and  
the cutthroat gift exchange with a \$20 limit.

1900 hrs. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rue Palmer – W7RUE*

*Club Secretary*



## Treasurer's Report

As of November

GENERAL FUND (checking account)

Previous balance .....	\$ 2,044.96
Income .....	75.16
Expenses .....	0.00
Ending balance .....	2,120.12

REPEATER / PACKET FUND (savings account)

Previous balance .....	\$ 1,053.92
Income .....	0.00
Expenses .....	0.00
Ending balance .....	1,053.92

— *Ed Fitzgerald, N7WW, Treasurer*



## Magic Closet

A family from the country hills was visiting the big  
city for the first time. They stayed in a high-rise  
hotel with a big brass elevator right off of the

lobby. The mother and daughter stared at it in  
amazement, wondering what it was.

After staring at it in awe for a few minutes the girl  
looked up at her mom, "Ma, what do you reckon  
that there thing is?" she asked.

"I don't rightly know, girl," the mother replied.

Just then an old, frumpy man in a robe with  
messy hair walks up, steps in the elevator and  
the doors shut behind him. After about 30  
seconds the doors opened again and a  
handsome, muscular young man in tight work-out  
clothes comes out.

The mother leans over to her daughter and says,  
"Girl, go and get your Pa!"



## Reminder

OARS membership dues are payable on January  
1 of each year. Please remember to make your  
payment.



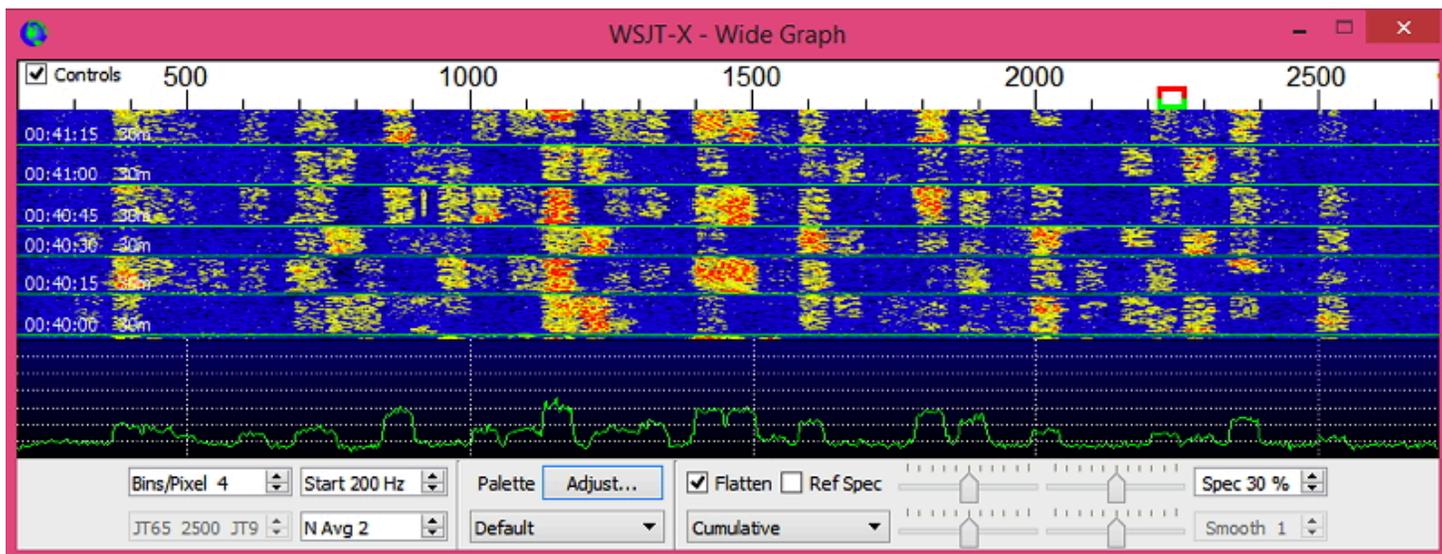
## FT-8: I'm not really feeling the magic

*By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU*

Partly out of curiosity and partly because my  
friend Jeff, KE9V, shamed me into it, I set up my  
Signalink interface, downloaded WSJT-X from  
[https://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/  
wsjsx.html](https://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/wsjsx.html), and started operating FT-8, the latest  
"shiny object" (as the ARRL dubbed it) from the  
K1JT team. As you probably know, this mode has  
really caught on with the digital crowd, and the  
waterfall is chock full of FT-8 signals. Part of the  
reason for this is that it has some of the  
characteristics of JT-65, but is not as  
excruciatingly slow.

Over the past couple of days, I've made 32  
QSOs, including a couple of DX contacts. It's  
been fun to try something new, but to be honest,  
I'm not really feeling the magic.

Part of it is that I don't feel like I'm really doing  
anything. I downloaded the software, plugged in  
my digital interface, fooled around with the  
settings a bit, and then, the computer started  
making contacts. I have to click a few on-screen  
controls to make contacts, but even that's a step  
that could be easily programmed in by the WSJT-  
X developers. (In fact, I wonder why they haven't  
done that already!)



A waterfall display generated by WSJT-X at 7:30 pm, 11/23/17.

Take a look at the screenshot above to see how a typical contact happens. When a CQ appears in the “Band Activity” window, you double click on it. When you do this, the software begins listening for signals on that frequency. In this case, I double-clicked on the CQ by WA9THI. When I double-clicked on the CQ, the program began decoding signals on that frequency and display the transmissions in the “Rx Frequency” window.

Then, I clicked on “Enable TX” and the program began the contact sequence, sending “WA9THI KB6NU EN82.” EN82 is my grid designator. This is shown as the first yellow line in the Rx Frequency window. The transmissions that I sent are highlighted in yellow. The transmissions sent by WA9THI are highlighted in red.

The sequence of transmissions shown there comprise a complete contact, and that whole process takes less than two minutes. And, once WA9THI received my first transmission, the sequence is all automatic. You just sit there and watch the two computers talk to one another.

While I can certainly appreciate the thought and the work that went into the design of the protocol and programming to implement it, sitting and watching the computers talk to one another just doesn't excite me. On the other hand, if you're one of those guys who wants to make contacts, but doesn't really want to talk to anyone, than this is the mode for you!

Here are a few more notes about FT-8 operation:

- Not surprisingly, synchronizing your computer with the other stations computer is very important. To do that, you need to get your computer to use the network time protocol (NTP). I failed to do this when I first installed WSJT-X,

and while my waterfall was full of FT-8 signals, WSJT-X just wouldn't decode them.

- I got my PC laptop to talk ntp by installing Meinberg NTP software (<http://www.ntp.org/ntpfaq/NTP-s-def.htm>). Once I did that, WSJT-X magically started decoding transmissions.

- Most of the cool guys seem to be using Meinberg NTP, but there are other options. One of the guys in our club is using a program called Dimension 4, for example.

- Apparently, you don't have to limit your power output as you would with PSK-31. At first, I set my output power to 10 W. I had a bit of success at 10 W, but I expected more. When I asked on Twitter how much power other guys were using, most of them said that they were using more than that.

- For the last couple of sessions, I've been setting my output power to 25 W, and I've been having more success. I've now worked several Europeans on 30m.

- Even at 25 W, my signal reports are more often than not not as good as the signal reports I'm handing out. I haven't figured this one out yet. This doesn't happen to me when I'm operating CW, so I don't think it's my antenna.

- When I'm operating, I write down the calls of stations I've contacted. The reason for this is that while WSJT-X does have a logging function, it doesn't have a log window, so unless you have a great memory, you could end up working guys two or three times a session. That's probably not a big deal since contacts are so quick, but I'd rather avoid doing that if I can.

- WSJT-X works “split.” While most contacts take place on the same frequency, a station can call you anywhere in the passband of your receiver and WSJT-X will decoded the signal and

begin a contact. This threw me the first time or two that this happened, and I tried to change my transmit frequency to match the other station's. In doing so, I messed up the sequence. I now just let the contact proceed normally, and it works out great.

- When I work the other digital modes, I set my IC-746PRO to the USB-D mode. In this mode, the receive passband is narrower than for working phone. When operating FT-8, however, you don't want to limit that passband. Signals will appear across the entire 2.6 kHz of the USB signal, and if you narrow the passband, you won't be able to work those stations.

- WSJT-X checks the validity of call signs. This afternoon, there was a guy who had typed in his call as "WAMAD" and was calling CQ. WSJT-X wouldn't let me answer that CQ.

- Operating this mode opens up the possibility of working more stations whose callsigns spell words and adding those QSL cards to my collection. I have, for example, already worked K1GUY, N4HER, and N5SLY. I'm guessing that these guys don't operate CW.

All told, I've found this to be an interesting foray into a new digital mode. While I'm not feeling the magic that some others seem to be feeling when operating FT-8, it certainly will be a change of pace to operate this mode from time to time. Give it a shot and tell me what you think.

*Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides and blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. When he's not working FT-8, he teaches ham radio classes and operates CW on the HF bands. You can email him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.*



## FCC Chairman Recognizes Amateur Radio in Praising those Assisting Puerto Rico

11/07/2017

Wrapping up a 2-day visit to Puerto Rico on Monday, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, recognized Amateur Radio volunteers in praising those who turned out to help the stricken Commonwealth in the wake of Hurricane Maria.

"The worst of tragedies can also bring out the best in people. I saw that firsthand during my 2 days in Puerto Rico," Pai said. "Everyone is pitching in: The people of Puerto Rico helping

It doesn't matter what other people think - the important thing is that you believe in yourself



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their neighbors, hardworking Federal Emergency Management Agency staff — including communications personnel in Emergency Support Function #2 — the dedicated regulators of the Puerto Rico Telecommunications Regulatory Board, and the FCC's own Roberto Mussenden, who has spent the past month away from his family on the mainland in order to help the island where he grew up."

"Additionally, Amateur Radio operators, broadcasters, cable operators, fixed wireless companies, wireline carriers, and mobile providers have stepped up to the plate, working overtime to connect the disconnected," Pai continued. "All of this work reflects the ethos I saw on many signs and t-shirts during my time on the island: 'Puerto Rico Se Levanta' [Puerto Rico is Rising]."

Pai said recovering from Hurricane Maria will require an all-hands-on-deck effort, and the FCC "remains committed to doing everything we can to help restore communications networks as quickly as possible." He also expressed his belief that that "more funding will be needed" in the months ahead.

In October, the FCC granted ARRL's request to waive current Amateur Radio rules to permit data transmissions at a higher symbol rate than currently permitted, in order to facilitate hurricane relief communications between the continental US and Puerto Rico. The temporary waiver is

limited to Amateur Radio operators in Puerto Rico using PACTOR 3 and PACTOR 4 emissions, and to those radio amateurs in the continental US who are directly involved with HF hurricane relief communications involving Puerto Rico or the US Virgin Islands, the Commission said at the time.

During his stay in Puerto Rico, Pai visited various parts of San Juan and towns along the northeastern coast. He also inspected a tower site and associated infrastructure on mountains in El Yunque National Forest. That infrastructure serves a critical role in providing connectivity in the eastern part of Puerto Rico, particularly for first responders. While there, he met with President Sandra Torres López and Associate Member Alexandra Fernández Navarro of the Telecommunications Regulatory Board, attended a briefing hosted by FEMA and attended by staff from ESF-2, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Weather Service, the Small Business Administration, and others, and with representatives from numerous communications entities, including fixed wireless providers and broadcasters.

“The path to recovery has met several challenges, most notably the lack of power and functional infrastructure,” Pai said. “One thing is clear: Overcoming these challenges won’t be easy.”

## CW Gets the Message Through in Wake of Hurricane Irma

10/27/2017

Any CW operator worth his or her salt will tell you that CW is the mode that gets through when all others fall short of the mark. CW certainly did the job for Chet Hogue, N3BK, who handled dozens of messages for residents of Florida’s Lower Keys in the days following Hurricane Irma in September.

“A message from a Big Pine Key man to his girlfriend, who evacuated with their young daughter and was waiting to hear how he weathered the storm, was one of about 80 sent out over the airwaves by ham radio enthusiast Chet Hogue in the days following Irma’s destruction,” reporter Katie Atkins wrote in *The Keynoter* in [describing](#) Hogue’s activity.

“Things here are still incredibly a mess!” Hogue told ARRL this week.

The Summerland Key charter captain, known as “Captain Chester,” weathered the storm in place.

He noted that the primary frequencies handling traffic were quite busy, so he got on CW, which, he told Atkins, allowed him “to relay messages clearly.” He operated from a station at his home as well as from his boat.

According to the news report, Hogue would transmit message traffic gathered from residents trying to get in touch with family and friends outside the area. He urged anyone interested in Amateur Radio to visit the ARRL website. “It’s just neat, this system,” he told Atkins. “With a piece of wire and a car battery, you can talk around the world.”

Hogue told ARRL that he “escaped” to the Keys in 2010 after recovering from an injury suffered in a vehicle accident. “I haven’t been active in some time, but have kept my ‘bug-out bag’ ready for just this situation,” he said. “[This] was my first emergency, as it was for many who passed traffic for me.”

Hogue’s father — also Chester — is N3VA, and his dad and some of his friends got him interested in Amateur Radio. Hogue entered the military as a teenager and, he said, realized the vital importance of communication.

Hogue used a 100 W radio powered from deep-cycle marine batteries, a G5RV antenna on shore and a fiberglass vertical antenna on his charter boat. He kept a handwritten log on a piece of cardboard.

“This is a good reason for all of us to learn CW and use it on the bands, and become skilled at sending and receiving CW,” remarked Whitey Doherty, K1VV, a CW stalwart who shared the news story with ARRL Headquarters. — *Thanks to “Captain Chester” Hogue, N3BK, The Keynoter, and Whitey Doherty, K1VV*



# **O A R S Meeting**

**Wednesday, December 20, 7:00 pm**  
**“Desserts And Drinks And Cutthroat Gift Exchange”**

**South Sound Manor Event Center**  
**455 North Street SE**  
**Tumwater**

**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. Please complete the membership application found elsewhere in this newsletter and mail it to:**

**OARS**  
**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**



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