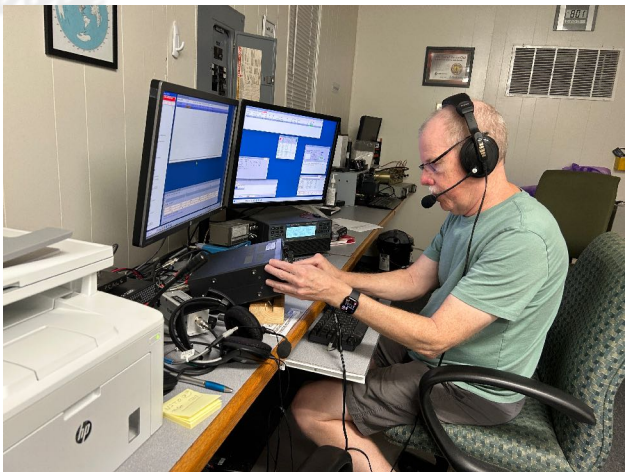
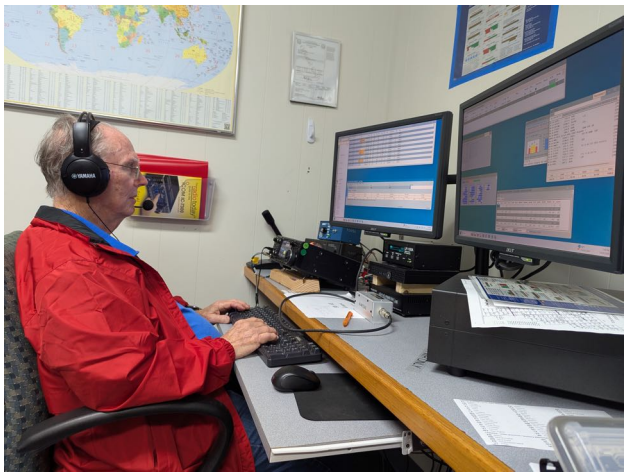
SERVING ALL OF SOUTHERN BREVARD COUNTY ON FLORIDA'S SPACE COAST

www.pcars.org

PCARS *at Work*



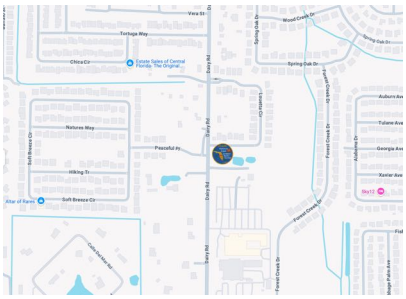


Next Meeting November 9, 2026

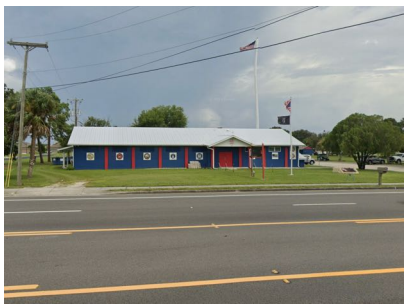
Affiliated Club

Meetings - 2nd Monday, 7:00pm

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 4206
3201 Dairy Road
Melbourne, Florida

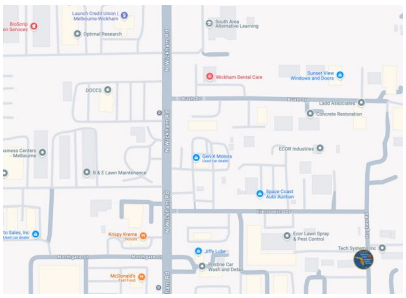


Click Map for Directions



Club Station - W4MLB

1980 Hughes Rd
Melbourne, Florida
(off Electronics Drive, across from Krispy Kreme)



Click Map for Directions

Mailing Address

Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society
PO Box 1004
Melbourne, Florida 32902

Published monthly by the
Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society
Submit news to the editor
***Deadline**: third Wednesday of the month*

Editor: David Self, K8SSN
k8ssn@pcars.org

Reprinting, from *The PCARS Newsletter* is granted to amateur radio publications provided credit is given to the original author and *PCARS Newsletter*.

PCARS Officers & Committee Chairs

PRESIDENT: Walter Aucoin, K5LD
VICE PRES: Rodger Boogren, AK4MI
SECRETARY: Jeff Stewart, KX4NM
TREASURER: Phil Tso, W7TSO
DIRECTOR: Steve Melachrinos, W3HF
DIRECTOR: Greg Seaman, N4KES
DIRECTOR:Garth Lubey, W4GPL
DIRECTOR:Jim Uram, AC4JU
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: Clyde Spencer, KD8AN
IMMEDIATE PAST PRES: Phil TSO, W7TSO
CUSTODIAN: Vince Weal, K4JC
HAMFEST CHAIRMAN: Bruce Streger , WB2ADF

ARRL: Vacant
Education Chairman: Bob Luken, W3RDL
Emergency Coordinator: Jimmy Mooney, WJ4DX
Field Day Chairman: Jin Uran, AC4JU
Hospitality: VACANT
Interference: Dan Fisher, AI4GK
Membership: Steve Melachrinos, W3HF
MREN (Thursday Night Net): Chuck Green, AD4ES
Public Service: Al Chan K1ALC
QSL Manager: Vince Weal, K4JC
Contests: Greg Seaman, N4KES
Repeaters: Clyde Spencer, KD8AN
SKYWARN®/ Weather Net: Jimmy Mooney, WJ4DX
Sunshine: Mark Burke, W9MGB
Training: Clyde Spencer, KD8AN
Laurel VE: Vince Weal, K4JC
Newsletter Editor: David Self, K8SSN,
Webmaster: David Self, K8SSN

ARRL
Southeastern Director: Mickey Baker, N4MB
Section Manager: Barry Porter, KB1PA
SFL Affiliated Club Coordinator: Sheri Brower, W4STB

W4MLB 2 M REPEATER
146.610 MHz -600KHZ TONE: 107.2 Hz
146.850 MHz -600 KHZ TONE: 107.2 Hz
Yaesu Fusion (C4FM)

W4MLB 70CM REPEATER
444.425 MHz +.5 MHZ TONE: 107.2 Hz
Yaesu Fusion (C4FM)

W4MLB 70CM Digipeater (Packet Radio)
145.090 MHZ
Node: W4MLB-2
BBS: W4MLB-4

DONATIONS TO PCARS may be tax deductible.
Contact the treasurer for information

SKYWARN® is a registered trademark of NOAA's National Weather Service.

QST de PCARS President Walt, K5LD

With the 61th Melbourne Hamfest behind us & a success, it's time to focus on next year's Hamfest. Many say, why so soon? The success of the past few Hamfests has a common theme – start early! Gone are the days of one person running the Hamfest, hoping everything comes together & getting volunteers, etc. As the Hamfest is the major source of income for the club, it's important to be able to keep it going year after year. By starting reasonably early, ideas & plans can be focused on, changers can be made early if needed, & most of all, putting together next year's team.

As it has been mentioned many times, the Hamfest Chairman is the official head of the Hamfest each year. This position is an elected one. The Hamfest Committee is a group of "department heads" that man the different vital areas of the Hamfest; Auditorium Liaison, Consignment Booth, Advance Ticket & Tables Sales, Forums Chairman, Security, Tailgate, Special Event Station, Youth Activities, Prizes Chairman, etc., just to name a few. These individuals know their areas well & keep improving the processes needed to run the Hamfest. Along with these department heads are others that simply belong to the Committee & help out where needed, often offering advice based on their years of experience of past Hamfests. Any member can join our Hamfest Committee & contribute. Many hands make for less work.

On that note, a huge Thank You again to Bruce WB2ADF, 2026 Hamfest Chairman & the entire Hamfest Committee, who put in many hours since last year, to make the 2026 Hamfest a success!!

At the September BOD Meeting, the subject of the inappropriate conversations taking place on the 146.61 repeater in the mornings was formally brought up. There was much discussion on the matter & the BOD agreed to approach it with coming up with a formal set of guidelines for not only 61 but all 3 of the PCARS repeaters. At the October BOD meeting, a draft of the proposed guidelines was introduced & formally voted on. The guidelines have been sent out via E-Mail & as this writing, we are working to get them posted on the PCARS web site.

The contest year begins to wind down, with at least 2 more major contests coming up – ARRL SSB Sweepstakes in November & the ARRL 10 Meter Contest in December. Also in early December, we (Hopefully) will be supporting the National Weather Service with SKYWARN Weekend. Stay tuned for more details on these!!

Elections will be coming here in January. It's time to get other members involved in the BOD. We have enough members that we should be able to get a new slate here in January. If you are interested in a position or would like to know more about them, please contact Phil W7TSO.

THANKS & 73

Walter K5LD

Committee Reports

MREN (Thursday Night Net)

Chuck Green (AD4ES)

The Melbourne Region Emergency Net meets tonight every Thursday evening at 7:00 PM local on 146.610. If in-op then 146.850. If both repeaters are down, try 146.58 simplex.
NOTE: If you do not hear anything consider the following possibilities: Your ability to receive has gone to zero for whatever reason or the repeater is down and you need to move to another frequency (See above), or it is not Thursday night!! We meet 7:00PM local time Thursday of every week except Thanksgiving.
The PCARS Weather Net begins immediately AFTER MREN!!!

Membership

Steve Melachrinos,(W3HF)

Some of you may remember that we ran a "Hamfest Special" on PCARS memberships last year during the hamfest. New members could join the club during the hamfest, pay for the "next year" dues, receive the rest of the current year (October through December) for free, and also receive a bonus hamfest raffle ticket. We will be running that special deal again this year, so if you have friends who are interested in amateur radio (or who are already licensed but not members), here's an opportunity to talk up a special deal on memberships.

This year, the Board of Directors decided to extend a similar deal to existing club members: Any current club member who *renews* their PCARS membership for next year during the hamfest will also receive a bonus raffle ticket.

Note that these deals are only available in-person, and must be completed during the hamfest. This is because the process of issuing the raffle ticket is a manual transaction that I have to initiate with the ticket-selling team in real time. Additionally, this must be a cash or check transaction because of the difficulty of verifying electronic payments (like Zelle or PayPal).

The link to that web page is: https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/5WVKZXAYC3XR8

Sunshine

Mark Burke,(W9MGB)

Octoberwas a slow month as no cards , notes or calls were made to members. Please reach out to me if you become aware of any of our members, that you know of, are sick, hospitalized or deceased so we may reach out to them and wish them or their families well.
Please know that our club does care about our members and we are happy to reach out to wish them well.
Feel free to contact me at 317-946-3340 (phone or text) or sunshine@pcars.org.
Thank you and 73

Club Station

Clyde, KD8AN

We have expanded the number of people that can provide training on PCARS club station equipment. We did this to make it easier for those wishing to get trained and certified on the use of the club stations.

About Certification

If you've been putting it off because it sounds intimidating — don't worry.

Certification is not a hard-core class or exam. It's simply a practical, hands-on walkthrough of the station to ensure you're comfortable operating independently. The process is straightforward, relaxed, and designed to build confidence.

The following people can provide the necessary training. Please contact this list of people if you wish to get the equipment certification.

Walter K5LD wjaucoin57@gmail.com
Greg N4KES s2@cfl.rr.com
Jeff KX4NM jstewart1237@outlook.com
Stephen W3HF melachri@verizon.net
Clyde KD8AN KD8AN50@GMail.com

Station Highlights

Our shack includes:

- Modern HF radios (ICOM IC-7300 transceivers)
- Dedicated computers for logging and digital modes
- 1+ kilowatt amplifiers
- Five selectable antennas covering multiple amateur bands
- VHF (2 meter) and UHF (70 cm) repeater control stations

Having access and usage of the club station is a very good resource for all certified club members.
Also, If are interested in getting certified please go to the PCARS WEB site and download the review the operators guide at the following URL
https://pcars.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/PCARS-Club-Station.pdf
This is located under the Members folder.

FCC Ham Radio Classes

2027 License classes

January - March, Technician - 10 weeks, also 1 day crash course, intended for those who have let their license expire or those with an engineering or technical background.

April - June, General - 10 weeks

July - September, Extra - 12 weeks

If interested contact Bob Luken, W3RDL, w3rdl@arrl.net, or 321-432-0550.

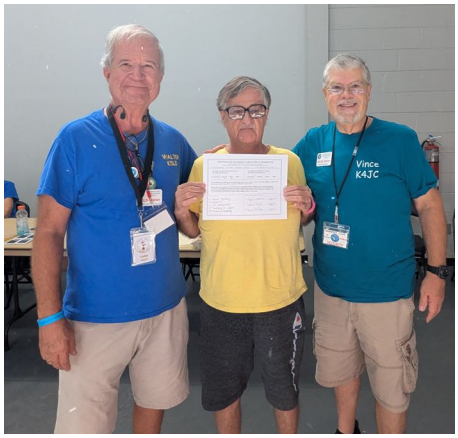
In Person and/or Online, depending on site availability.

Videos of previous classes - YouTube Robert Luken W3RDL

All classes will be based of interest

Club Activities

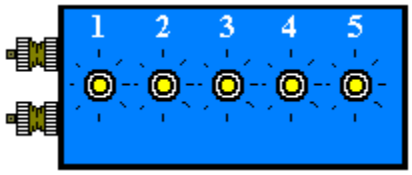
Photos From the 61st Melbourne Hamfest



TO HELP KEEP YOUR BRAIN HEALTHY

Black Box Puzzles **by Allan Hale, WA9IRS**

Here's a puzzle that's based on the old joke about how many individuals it takes to change a light bulb! The puzzle consists of a black box with 5 low voltage bulbs in sockets attached to the outside of the black box. When a battery is connected to the two terminals on the end of the black box, all 5 bulbs light. (You cannot see the wiring inside the black box but must infer it from the various bulb conditions observed).



If you individually unscrew and then rescrew each bulb in its socket you notice the following sequence:

Lamp disconnected	Lamps turned off
1	1,2,3,4,5
2	2,4,5
3	3
4	4
5	5

Based on the above, can you "wire" the circuit to achieve the indicated lamp conditions?

Puzzle rules: 1. There are no components other than 5 incandescent bulbs and sockets, hook-up wire, a battery and the black box itself. No tricks are used such as semiconductors, relays, or switches. 2. Check your solution against the schematic diagram provided elsewhere in the Mike & Key. Please disregard any consideration of voltage drop when "mentally" hooking up the lamps since the "Black Box" puzzle is more concerned with the logic paths than the cumulative voltage drop across the circuits.

Black Box Puzzles were developed by Allan Hale, WA9IRS for the entertainment and knowledge of readers of *The Mike & Key* of the Greater Cincinnati Amateur Radio Association. WA9IRS ©2ØØ3 **Answer elsewhere in the Mike & Key**

Tips for New HAMS

by WB6KHP

Amateur Activities Dxing

DXing is making long distance contacts. If you are a 2 meter operator DX to you might be as near as a few hundred miles (or less) while and HF operator when chasing DX is looking for countries outside of his or her own. Generally though DXing is considered an HF activity.

To DX you will need an outdoor antenna and a rig capable of putting out 100 watts. Although it is possible to use less power 100 is more effective. A directional antenna is useful but even a vertical or dipole and be effective.

To work DX successfully is help to listen for stations calling CQ. Pay attention to the style of operation used by the DX station and operate accordingly. If he is simply making one contact after another then don't try to engage him in a conversation when it is your turn. That will just cause frustration for everyone else. Using a DX cluster can also help you identify DX stations that you need. A DX cluster is an Internet site or packet station that reports current DX activity on the bands. DXpeditions are also good sources for new countries but be prepared to spend time getting through the pileups of other stations also attempting to call the DX station.

As you make DX contacts you will likely want to collect QSL cards. As you collect QSLs from 100 or more countries you should consider the ARRL DXCC award. Check out the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) web site for more information.

Minutes for the General Membership Meeting, October 12, 2026

The Meeting was called to order by PCARS President Walter Aucoin K5LD at 7:00 PM.
Introductions were made. Welcome to new members Rich KD4UGC, Mark KJ4FRQ, and Steve KE2GCC. Also, welcome to first-time visitors Ken and Reese.

Hamfest – Bruce WB2ADF gave a report on how our Hamfest went. It was a great success!

Bruce mentioned that only 70 volunteers participated out of our club's 300+ members. This increased the workload on our volunteers, who had to cover multiple positions and work longer shifts. We could have used many more volunteers, and this is an area we need to significantly improve upon next year.

If you worked at the Hamfest and noticed areas where we could improve, please send Bruce an email. He will be compiling a list of suggestions and holding a post-Hamfest meeting in a couple of weeks.

One of the highlights on Saturday morning was when Mayor Andrea Young of West Melbourne, who is also a member of the club, presented a proclamation for the Hamfest. We also presented her with a plaque in appreciation of her continued support for the club.

The youth program was a great success. All available slots were filled, and we unfortunately had to turn some participants away. Again, we could have used more volunteers.

We did very well with table sales, selling 152 tables. Tailgate sales were about the same as last year, with 26 spaces sold. We also sold 797 admission tickets.

Bruce acknowledged the heads of the Hamfest departments and thanked everyone for their hard work and support.

Walter K5LD reported on behalf of Vince K4JC that the PCARS table did very well, bringing in over $1,700 in sales.

Treasurer's Report – Phil W7TSO read the October report. A motion was made by Bruce WB2ADF to approve the report and seconded by Bruce K2ZEA. The motion was approved and carried.

Walter K5LD called for approval of the September General Membership Meeting minutes. A motion was made by Bob NB4C to approve the September General Membership Meeting minutes, seconded by Jim AC4JU, voted upon, and carried.
Paul W1IP announced that PCARS in the Park will be held this weekend in support of Support Your Parks Weekend. The event will take place after the Sarno Pizza Lunch, starting at 1:00 PM at the Three Forks Conservation Area. If you are new to Parks on the Air (POTA) and would like to learn more, please come out. We will show you how to log contacts and complete your first activation. Please create a POTA account at pota.app ahead of time. We will have radios set up, so all you need to do is come out and operate.

Walter K5LD mentioned that club elections are coming up soon. Several offices will be open for election. We need new members to step up and volunteer for these positions. Walter stressed that the club does not run itself and that we need members to volunteer.

The two main requirements for running for office are being a member in good standing for at least one year and actively participating in the Hamfest if elected. If you are interested in running for a position, please contact Phil W7TSO.

The two main requirements for running for office are being a member in good standing for at least one year and actively participating in the Hamfest if elected. If you are interested in running for a position, please contact Phil W7TSO.

Tonight's program on logging software was presented by Steve W3HF. Steve gave an excellent presentation on the different types of logging programs and how each is suited to different types of operations and operator preferences. The club thanked Steve for his excellent presentation.

**********B R E AK**********

Remember to contribute to the kitty for snacks. We are still looking for a Hospitality Chairman.

Committee Reports:
All committee reports, unless otherwise noted, will be listed prior to the General Membership Meeting, in the monthly Club Newsletter. Members are highly encouraged to read the reports prior to the General Meeting and be prepared to ask any questions of the various Chairmen at the meeting. This is an effort to shorten the time for reports & be able to get to more business during the meeting.

Contesting – Greg N4KES – We did very well in the CQ WW RTTY DX Contest, placing 2nd in the Fourth Call Area.

Our upcoming contest will be the CQ WW DX SSB Contest, starting October 23 at 8:00 PM and running for 48 hours. We will operate Multi-Operator, Single Transmitter, High Power. Last year, we placed 8th in the U.S. Fourth Call Area.
The next contest will be the ARRL Sweepstakes in November.

Technical – Clyde KD8AN – Clyde thanked everyone who supported the special event station at the Hamfest. We made 365 contacts this year, including contacts with Belize, Ireland, and Spain. We need more operators next year, as we only had three this year. Operators of any license class can participate, as we have control operators available.

SKYWARN/ Emergency – Jimmy WJ4DX – (Not Present).

Membership – Steve W3HF – Steve gave the VE testing report for the Hamfest. We had eleven candidates, seven of whom passed their exams. One candidate even upgraded from Novice to Technician. Hamfest vendors donated prizes for a raffle held for the candidates.

There will be another VE testing session this upcoming Wednesday.

We added 26 new members and processed 70 membership renewals during the Hamfest special. So far, 35% of our membership has renewed for next year. Our membership currently stands at 332.

Education – Bob W3RDL – (Not Present).

Custodian – Vince K4JC – (Not Present).

Old Business – Nothing reported.

New Business – Walter K5LD mentioned that there is a possibility that the Melbourne Auditorium may not be available for the Hamfest next year. This could result from the passage of Amendment 3, which could lead to cuts in City services, including the Auditorium. The BOD will continue monitoring the situation.

A similar situation could affect the tower where the 85 repeater is located. The City of Palm Bay is considering selling the tower if Amendment 3 passes. The PCARS Technical Committee, along with the Palm Bay Amateur Radio Club (PBARC), is currently working with the City on this issue. If the sale proceeds, both the 85 repeater and PBARC's 255 repeater will need to be relocated. We are currently evaluating alternative locations, such as Trinity Tower, in coordination with PBARC.

Beth KE0NRY asked whether we could still reserve our dates for next year's Hamfest. Phil W7TSO reported that we could and that the deposit would be refunded if the Auditorium closes.

Announcements –

The monthly Sarno Pizza Lunch will be held at Sarno Pizzeria, located at the corner of Croton Road and Sarno Road, this Saturday at 11:00 AM. Come join us for a slice and good company! Breakfast is also served.

Every Friday is our PCARS weekly lunch at Crystal Buffet at 11 AM, located at the corner of Wickham and 192. All are invited—come join us!

VE testing will be held this Wednesday at 7:00 PM at the Melbourne Fire Training Center. There is no need to preregister; however, applicants are reminded that they **must have an FRN**.

Bruce WB2ADF announced that we had a record number of door prizes this year. Ham Ready was at the Hamfest, and we are considering them as a vendor for our club shirts. They also offer hats, jackets, and other apparel.

Bruce also mentioned that we are looking into alternative locations for future Hamfests. If you know of a venue with at least 15,000 square feet of space and a large parking area, please let us know.

Charlie AJ9N announced that there will be an ARISS contact this Wednesday. He will send out an email with additional details.

A motion was made by Ed KK4ZWC to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Phil W7TSO. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted**,**

KX4NM Jeff Stewart, Secretary PCARS

"You never heard of a ham operator before?"

Minutes for the October 19, 2026 BOD Meeting

The Meeting was called to order by PCARS President Walter Aucoin K5LD, at 7:00 PM.

Attendees: K5LD – President, AK4MI – Vice President, KX4NM – Secretary, W7TSO – Treasurer/Past President, W3HF – Director, AC4JU – Director, N4KES – Director, W4GPL – Director, KD8AN – Technical Chairman, WB2ADF – Hamfest Chairman, Al K1ALC, Dennis K4CXX, Dan AI4GK.

Walter K5LD asked for approval of the September BOD minutes. A motion was made by Phil W7TSO to approve the September BOD minutes, seconded by Jim AC4JU, voted upon, and carried.

Treasurer's Report: Phil W7TSO read the October report. A motion was made by Bruce WB2ADF to approve the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Clyde KD8AN, voted upon, and carried.

Walter K5LD reminded all BOD members who hold a chairman position to submit their reports to Dave K8SSN for the newsletter prior to the monthly deadline.

Committee Reports: NOTE: Reports were given at the General Meeting last week. Unless there are updates, they will stand as reported at the General Meeting.

Contesting – Greg N4KES – Our next contest is the CQ WW DX SSB Contest this weekend. It will be a 48-hour contest starting Friday, October 23, at 8:00 PM. We will operate Multi-Operator, Single Transmitter, High Power, with the second station operating as a multiplier station only. A discussion was held on the high number of penalties we received during the last RTTY contests and how we can improve contest training during Elmer's Night.

Walter K5LD announced that Gary NQ0V will be taking over as Chairman of the RF Committee. Dan AI4GK, who is now the ARRL Assistant Section Manager for Southern Florida, will serve as Assistant Chairman.

A discussion was held on having an Elmer's Night focused on RF interference.

Technical – Clyde KD8AN – We have received the DR-1 repeater back from repair. It initially did not work in Fusion mode. Clyde restored the factory settings and rebooted the repeater, and it is now working properly in Fusion mode.

The Station 1 amplifier was reported to not be following band changes. This could be due to a low-level CI-V signal from the radio to the amplifier. Clyde will investigate.

A discussion was held on the rotor replacement work for the main and smaller towers. Two climbers will be needed, along with four ground crew members and a ground crew leader.

It was reported that the station printer is low on toner. A replacement will be ordered.

Hamfest – Bruce WB2ADF – A big thank you to Bruce for a very successful Hamfest and to everyone who helped make it a success!

Bruce gave a summary of the Hamfest:

- We sold 797 admission tickets, 26 tailgate spaces, and 152 tables.
- The PCARS table brought in approximately $1,700, and consignment sales generated $743.
- Our net profit from the Hamfest is estimated to be between $11,000 and $12,000. We will have a more accurate figure once all the final numbers are available.

A discussion was held on notifying the major prize winners and possibly adding prizes for volunteers.

A discussion was also held on updating the club logo.

Custodian – Vince K4JC – Not Present. Walter K5LD reported that the PCARS table made $1,100 before the doors opened for the Hamfest.

SKYWARN/Emergency – Jimmy WJ4DX – (Not Present). No report.

Membership – Steve W3HF – One new member signed up at the General Membership Meeting. Our membership currently stands at 332.

We are accepting membership renewals for next year. We received 70 renewals during the Hamfest. Of the $2,400 in advance dues collected, $2,200 is for next year's membership.

Old Business:

Walter K5LD announced that we held our PCARS in the Park event this past weekend. It was a huge success! A big thank you to Paul W1IP for leading the effort, with assistance from Jim AC4JU and Vince K4JC.

Walter K5LD announced that we could be losing access to the tower that hosts our 146.85 repeater and PBARC's 147.255 repeater. This is due to the City of Palm Bay possibly selling the tower.

New Business:

A discussion was held on the PCARS Repeater Code of Conduct policy. This policy was created to formally document appropriate use and conduct on PCARS repeaters. As noted at the previous BOD meeting, inappropriate discussions have occurred on the 146.610 repeater.

Thanks to Jim AC4JU and Steve W3HF for preparing the document. A motion was made by Steve W3HF to approve the PCARS Repeater Code of Conduct policy, seconded by Rodger AK4MI, voted upon, and carried.

The policy will be published in the newsletter and emailed to the general membership.

Phil W7TSO mentioned that we have received the contract from the Melbourne Auditorium for next year's Hamfest, and a deposit is required by October 22. It is possible that the Auditorium may not be available next year due to potential budget cuts. The deposit would be refundable if that were to occur.

A motion was made by Rodger AK4MI to proceed with the deposit to the Melbourne Auditorium for next year's Hamfest, seconded by Clyde KD8AN, voted upon, and carried.

A discussion was held on the possibility of trademarking the Melbourne Hamfest name.

Walter K5LD brought up for discussion the possibility of allowing BOD members who are out of town for part of the year (snowbirds) to attend meetings via Zoom.

Walter K5LD announced that club elections are coming up soon. The Nominations Committee, led by Phil W7TSO, is searching for candidates to run for officer and Board positions. If you are interested or know of someone who may be interested in serving, please contact Phil W7TSO.

A discussion was held on how to encourage more members to volunteer for the Hamfest. Suggestions included distributing the SignUpGenius volunteer sign-up sheet earlier, providing better job descriptions, and improving the planning and allocation of volunteer positions.

A motion was made by Rodger AK4MI to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Phil W7TSO, voted upon, and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted**,**
KX4NM Jeff Stewart, Secretary, PCARS

AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS NEEDED!
2026 Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade
Saturday, December 12, 2026

Each year, amateur radio operators play an important role in supporting this incredible event. Our dedicated ham radio volunteers serve as the **eyes and ears of Winterfest**, providing vital communications support and situational awareness along the **12-mile parade route**.

From monitoring activities along the waterways to relaying important information to the Winterfest communications team, our operators help keep everyone informed throughout the evening. This is amateur radio at its best — **putting our communications skills, training, and spirit of volunteerism to work in support of our community!**

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

Please email **Carol Sjursen, KJ4AWB**, at KJ4AWB@arrl.net and include the following information:

- Full name
- Amateur radio call sign
- Cell phone number
- Preferred email address
- Mailing address (snail mail!)

Please also let us know if you're available to help with antenna installation on Monday, December 7.

PCARS POTA Adventure to the Dry Tortugas

By Walter Aucoin K5LD

Florida is one of the most POTA-populated states, with 460 parks. Activating them all is quite an accomplishment, especially since many require boats or other special transportation.

I know of at least one person who has completed all 460 Florida parks, and she is a PCARS member!

Lisa Neuscheler KC1YL began this goal in 2019, working alongside Paul Lourd W1IP. Together, they tackled the many challenging locations, including boat-access-only parks throughout the state and Florida Keys.

I met Lisa and Paul around 2021 and began doing POTA with them in 2022. They took me on my first activation, and I was hooked!

Two parks remained on Lisa's list: Key West National Wildlife Refuge (US-0244), about 10 miles offshore, and Dry Tortugas National Park (US-0023), approximately 72 miles west of Key West.

Around the same time, I became acquainted with Randy Hunter W4MIF from Merritt Island. We share an interest in digital radio, particularly Yaesu Fusion and WIRES-X. Randy also became involved in POTA and, through his frequent visits to the Keys, completed most of the parks there. He still needed five offshore parks, including the same two Lisa and Paul needed.

Randy invited Steve Whitsett K4AOQ and me to join him in the Keys. Steve and I have completed many POTA activations together, and he is an excellent POTA rove planner.

During an August trip, we activated nearly all the remaining land-based parks in one day, followed by three offshore parks using a rented boat. That left only Key West National Wildlife Refuge and Dry Tortugas.

Our original plan to activate the final two parks fell through because ferry reservations were unavailable. Trips often book months in advance. We regrouped, and Steve arranged a new date and obtained the required National Park Service permit for Dry Tortugas. We contacted Lisa and Paul, who were eager to join us. October 28 was selected, and everyone purchased tickets.

The Adventure

On October 27, we gathered at Randy's home for a final equipment check. Radios, antennas, coax, logging and supplies were all accounted for.

Unfortunately, this was also the week of a major king tide and gale-force winds. Earlier ferry trips had been cancelled, so we weren't sure ours would operate.

On the morning of October 28, we arrived at the Key West ferry terminal and were warned about the rough conditions. We decided to take our chances.

At approximately 8 a.m., Randy, Steve, Lisa, Paul and I headed out for Dry Tortugas.

Our route passed through Key West National Wildlife Refuge. Once inside the park boundaries, we brought out our Yaesu Fusion handhelds and made contacts among the five of us on 2 meters, 440 MHz and Fusion. US-0244 was activated!

Next stop was Dry Tortugas, still about 60 miles away.

The weather was rainy, windy and overcast. As we entered deeper water, the crew warned us that conditions would worsen and asked everyone to remain seated.

Then came the roller-coaster ride! We encountered 10- to 12-foot waves, and the ferry rocked considerably. Several passengers became seasick, requiring the crew to distribute airsickness bags.

Eventually, conditions improved, and we arrived at Dry Tortugas National Park.

After showing our permit to a Park Ranger, we found a spot near the camping area to set up. Strong winds made antenna placement challenging, so we used some nearby trees for shelter and a weighted pouch made by Lisa to stabilize Steve's Buddistick.

I connected Steve's Icom 7300, and we were ready to go!

Despite considerable noise on 20 meters, we found a clear frequency on 14.250 MHz and began operating. Contacts came quickly, and we took turns at the microphone.

When we reached our required 10 contacts, we stopped to celebrate. We had activated Dry Tortugas, and Lisa had officially completed all 460 Florida POTA parks!

We continued operating, eventually logging 32 contacts before a passing rain shower convinced us to pack up.

After lunch, we managed a quick tour of Fort Jefferson before boarding the ferry for the return trip. We departed at 3 p.m. and arrived back in Key West around 5:30 p.m. The return trip was much smoother, and we celebrated with dinner in town.

A Trip to Remember!

This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime adventure for most of us. It took plenty of research, planning, coordination and teamwork, but we made it happen!

Congratulations to Lisa KC1YL on completing all 460 Florida POTA parks!

A special thanks to Randy, Steve, Lisa and Paul for making this memorable adventure possible.

The team of W4MIF, K4AOQ, KC1YL, W1IP and K5LD got it done!

73!

2026/7 PCARS Club Calendar

November 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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	1	2	3	4	5

Nov 9 Monthly Meeting
Nov 21 Quarterly Tailgate
Nov 28 VE Session
Dec 9 VE Session
Dec 14 Holiday Party
(In lieu of Monthly Meeting)
Jan 11 Monthly Meeting
Jan 23 VE Session
Feb 8 Monthly Meeting
Feb 10 VE Session
Feb 12-14 HamCation
Mar 6 Monthly Meeting
Mar 27 VE Exams
April 12 Monthly Meeting
April 14 VE Exams
May 10 Monthly Meeting
May 21-23 HamVention
May 22 VE Session
June 9 VE Session
June 14 Monthly Meeting
June 26-27 Field Day
July 12 Monthly Meeting
July 24 VE Session
Aug 9 Monthly Meeting
Aug 11 VE Session
Sept 13 Monthly Meeting
Sept 25 VE Session
Oct 9-10 Melbourne Hamfest
Oct 11 Monthly Meeting
Oct 13 VE Session
Nov 8 Monthly Meeting
Nov 27 VE Session
Dec 8 VE Session
Dec 13 Holiday Party
(In lieu of Monthly Meeting)

Please note: The Calendar is subject to change. Dates listed are intended to help members know what is going on, on the bands. Decisions will be made throughout the year regarding club participation in contests.

DX Happenings . . .

2026 Nov03	2026 Nov16	Montserrat	VP2MCV [spots]	LoTW	TDDX 20261019	By KG9N fm Gingerbread Hill; HF; QSL via KG9N (B/d)
2026 Nov04	2026 Nov11	Cape Verde Is	D44PX [spots]	LoTW	TDDX 20260912	By IZ2DPX fm Boa Vista (HK86mc); 60-6m; SSB FT8 FT4; 100w; vertical, dipoles; QSL via Club Log OQRS
2026 Nov08	2026 Dec29	Uganda	5X7W	LoTW	TDDX 20261026	By SM0HPL; also using 5X1Q when running QRP; 80-10m; slow CW FT8 FT4; QRV for CQWW DX CW; QSL via M0OXO or Club Log OQRS
2026 Nov09	2026 Nov20	Mozambique	C8K	LoTW	TDDX 20260409	By OK1BOA OK1FCJ OK1CRM OK1GK OK2ZA OK2ZC OK2ZI OK6DJ; 160-6m, incl 60m, focus on low bands; SSB CW RTTY FT8 FT4 PSK; QSL via Club Log OQRS or OK6DJ
2026 Nov11	2026 Nov24	Guinea	3X4U	M0URX OQRS	DXW.Net 20260920	By 10 ON/PA ops fm Lac de Koba; 160-6m; CW SSB FT8 RTTY; 5 stns; 1kw; 2 hexbeams, phased verticals, foursquare, verticals; LoTW after 6 months
2026 Nov13	2026 Nov15	Ceuta & Melilla	EG9MM	LoTW	QPDX 20260827	By EA4GHH EA4HUK EA4IWX EA3JAQ fm Melilla; 80-10m; SSB + digital
2026 Nov13	2026 Nov20	Cape Verde Is	D44JB	LoTW	QPDX 20261001	By EI8JB fm Santo Antao I (HK77le); 80-10m; focus on SSB FT8; vertical, fan dipole; QSL via Club Log OQRS
2026 Nov14	2026 Nov22	South Cook Is	E51A	YT5A (B/d)	DXW.Net 20260929	By YT5A fm Rarotonga I; HF; CW SSB FT8; holiday style operation
2026 Nov15	2026 Nov22	Ecuador	HD4W	Club Log OQRS	QPDX 20260927	By PY8WW fm Cojimies I (IOTA SA-056); 40-6m; SSB CW FT8
2026 Nov16	2026 Dec04	Christmas I	VK9XY	M0OXO	DXW.Net 20260720	By 8 young ops, including KN4DLY KN2P VK4OTZ; 160-6m; QRV for CQWW DX CW
2026 Nov20	2026 Nov27	Cocos (Keeling) I	VK9DS	?	DXW.Net 20261009	By VK6DS; 80-6m; SSB CW FT8; logs will be uploaded to Club Log and QRZ upon his return home
2026 Nov20	2026 Nov22	Ecuador	HD4W	Club Log OQRS	QPDX 20260927	By PY8WW fm Cojimies I (IOTA SA-056); 40-6m; SSB CW FT8
2026 Nov20	2026 Dec03	Mauritius	3B8	LoTW	QPDX 20261022	By 3B8/E70A; HF; QSL via E70A (B/d)
2026 Nov22	2026 Dec02	Rodrigues I	3B9	LoTW	QPDX 20260923	By M0CFW as 3B9/M0CFW; 160-6m; CW SSB + digital; QRV for CQWW DX CW using 3B9KW
2026 Nov22	2026 Dec05	St Helena	ZD7	LoTW	DXW.Net 20261029	By G4BWP as ZD7WP and 5Z4VJ as ZD7VJ; HF, incl 60m; CW SSB FT8; QRV for CQWW DX CW
2026 Nov23	2026 Nov30	Honduras	HR5	LoTW	TDDX 20260924	By F2JD as HR5/F2JD; HF; all modes; QSL via F6AJA; QRV through Mar 15, 2027
2026 Nov23	2026 Nov30	Sint Maartin	PJ7WW	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260902	By DL1MGB; 160-10m; CW; QSL via Club Log OQRS or DL1MGB (B/d)
2026 Nov23	2026 Dec01	Surinam	PZ5KW	PE1K	DXW.Net 20261021	By PE1K fm Paramaibo; HF; FT8 SSB; holiday style operation
2026 Nov25	2026 Dec05	Honduras	HR9	LoTW	TDDX 20261001	By K6VHF as K6VHF/HR9 fm Roatan I (IOTA NA-057); 160-6m; all modes; 100w; hexbeam, longwire, delta, beam; QSL OK via Club Log OQRS
2026 Nov25	2026 Dec06	Juan Fernandez Is	XR0Z	LoTW	QPDX 20260814	By CE3VTZ XQ7I fm Alexander Selkirk I (IOTA SA-101, EF96of); 160-6m; CW SSB FT8; QSL via M0URX
CQWW DX CW Contest (Nov 28-29, 2026) Check here for pericontest activity too.						
2026 Nov28	2026 Dec04	Christmas I	VK9DS	?	DXW.Net 20261009	By VK6DS; 80-6m; SSB CW FT8; logs will be uploaded to Club Log and QRZ upon his return home
2026 Nov28	2026 Dec04	Tonga	A35TV	Club Log OQRS	TDDX 20260917	By VK2IR VK3YP SV0EG SV1DAY SV1GE HB9EB ; 160-6m; FT8 CW SSB
2026 Nov29	2026 Dec07	Br Virgin Is	VP2V	LoTW	DXW.Net 20261008	By WE9G as VP2V/WE9G fm Tortola; 160-6m; QSL via WE9G direct
2026 Nov30	2026 Dec09	St Martin	FS	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260902	By DL1MGB; 160-10m; CW; QSL via Club Log OQRS or DL1MGB (B/d)

FCC LICENSE EXAMS

Laurel Exams

Fire Training Center *1980 Hughes Road* *Melbourne, Florida* *7:00PM*	*Suntree/Viera Library* *902 Jordan Blass Drive* *Melbourne, Florida* *11:00 AM*
December 9, 2026 February 10, 2027 April 14, 2027	November 28, 2026 January 23, 2027 March 27, 2027

Exam Information can be found at
https://pcars.org/wp/ve-exams

Webpages of Importance to Members of the PCARS

Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society…..www.pcars.org
PCARS on Facebook…..www.facebook.com/w4mlb
PCARS on YouTube…https://www.youtube.com/@ko4ceq/videos
American Radio Relay League…..www.arrl.org
Southeastern Division-ARRL...www.facebook.com/ARRLSoutheasternDivision/
Southern Florida Section - ARRL…..www.sflarrl.org/
Orlando HamCation…..www.hamcation.com/
Dayton HamVention…..www.hamvention.org
Shortwave listening Guide...https://naswa.net

If reading from a pdf file, clicking on the link will take you to the webpage

The Amateur's Code

CONSIDERATE.....never knowingly operating in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

LOYAL.....offering loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs and the American Radio Relay League, through which Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally and internationally.

PROGRESSIVE.....with knowledge abreast of science, a well built and efficient station, and operation beyond reproach.

FRIENDLY.....with slow and patient operation when requested, friendly advice and counsel to the beginner, kindly assistance, co-operation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the hallmarks of the amateur spirit.

BALANCED....Radio is an advocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

PATRIOTIC.....with station and skill always ready for service to country and community.

JOIN or RENEW PCARS MEMBERSHIP

Send to
PCARS Membership
PO BOX 1004
Melbourne, FL 32902

Or email to membership@pcars.org

You can also take it to the Meeting
and personally give to the Membership Chairman

Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society

New Member Application

Date: _____ / _____ / _____ FCC Licensed: Not Licensed:

Please Print Clearly FCC Call (If licensed): _____

License Expiration Date: (yyyy/mo) _____

FCC License Class: Tech General Advanced Extra

Last Name: _____ First: _____ MI: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Primary Phone Number: _____ Secondary Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____ ARRL Member: YES NO

Note: PCARS will only post your name and FCC callsign on our PCARS website public access roster. Our complete membership roster with additional member information is password controlled for members only.

PCARS yearly dues are **$20** (Regular Member). They are pro-rated for new members per the table below.

Join Date	Regular Member	Family members* of Regular Member Licensed or Unlicensed; Same household	Associate Member** Licensed or Unlicensed
Jan-Mar	$20	$10	$10
Apr-Jun	$15	$7.50	$7.50
Jul-Sep	$10	$5	$5
Oct-Dec	$5 + $20 ($25) Includes the following year	$2.50 + $10 ($12.50) Includes the following year	$2.50 + $10 ($12.50) Includes the following year

*Regular member family members, lic. or unlic., living in the same household as the applicant, and desiring membership.
**Associate Members do not have voting privileges, nor can they hold office.
Unlicensed members are Associate Members, and do not have club voting privileges, nor can they hold office.

Membership class requested by Applicant: Regular Member: Associate Member:

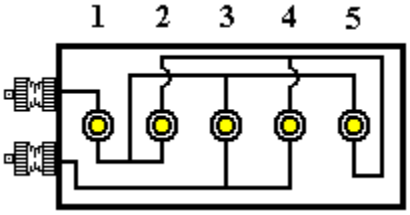
ADD (if applicable) applicant Same Household family members* incl. FCC callsign / Name / Phone / Email:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Please return this application page, along with the appropriate dues payment, to one of the following club officers: **Treasurer**, **Secretary**, or **Membership Chairperson**, or mail it to **PCARS, P.O. Box 1004, Melbourne, FL 32902-1004** (*please do not send cash through the mail*). You may also email the application to **membership@pcars.org**. Dues can also be paid via **PayPal** or **Zelle** to **treasurer@pcars.org**; *if using PayPal, please add $1 to cover the processing fee.*

Your total payment amount: $ _____ Payment method: Cash Check PayPal Zelle

(please return this page (- page 1 -) of the application) updated: Jan 8, 2026

PCARS Editor
PO Box 1004
Melbourne, FL 32902

SOLUTION