

ARCS6 (Amateur Radio Club Service 6 meters)

By John R. Shupe K7DJO

ARCS6 was formed in the early 1960's by a local group of ham radio operators mostly from the general membership of the Ogden Amateur Radio Club. At that time, most of us were Technician class operators with interests in VHF but had no particular group to associate with. We had been friends in



High school and were meeting others from our age group at the Ogden Amateur Radio Club meetings. OARC meetings were held at

an office building located at the Ogden Airport. Later, the meetings were moved to the Utah Power & Light Co. auditorium. Some of us had a common desire to further our use of our Technician privileges (VHF phone) while working on our skills and code speed to upgrade to a General class license.

The core members of the Ogden Amateur Radio Club were mostly older hams, more experienced than ourselves. Their interests were focused more on traditional morse code and AM phone using the HF bands rather than VHF bands. At that point in history repeaters were unheard of.

Some of the charter members of the ARCS6 group were John Gaz (K7DOT), Val Campbell (K7HCP), Aaron "Vin" Farr (K7JIV, now W7HJK), Mack Gilbert (K7HEN), John V. Merrill (K7NJY, now SK), Earl Fisher (WA6WFG/7, now SK), Larry Walker (K7LQZ), Alan Reed, (K7SOJ), Doug Giles (K7QQK, now W6NNF), Craig H. Jensen (K7AWY) and myself, John R. Shupe (K7DJO).

ARCS6 Formed

ARCS6 was in existence during the mid 60's. During those years we all started out using 6 meters from our cars and homes but most of the time we loved being out in our vehicles doing evening cruz'in around town with our girl friends and guy friends, visiting with one another from car to car. Mobile communications, for the average person, was a novelty at that time as there were no car telephones, no citizen band radios (CB) and certainly no cell phones. About the only people utilizing vehicle to vehicle communications were military, police, fire, taxi cabs and a few other commercial vehicles.



ARCS6 Members Meet

This for sure was unique and interesting to many people we'd encounter on the roads or in parking lots. It must have been a curiosity for the citizens of Ogden, seeing young adults talking to others using a microphone from behind their steering wheels. This we learned was a fun way to meet people especially young women who wanted to be part of our fun. Sometimes if we were out by ourselves and didn't have a date or friend riding with us we'd strike up a conversation with an attractive group of women on Washington Blvd or in some parking lot near by. When they would see how we could chat with each other from car to car they eagerly wanted to join us in our cars so they could visit with their friends riding in other cars. We each went our own way driving around town; sometimes these willing participants would even go on an adventure of a fox hunt with us and sometimes the bunny would have the company of a young lady spending perhaps a couple hours while hiding in some secreted location waiting for the foxes to arrive. More about our fox hunts later.

Recalling some of the vehicles we were driving at that time



Left to Right: Jerry Warner W7VSS, John Merrill K7NJY, unknown visitor, Pleasant Figgins WA7ENF, Carl "Rudy" Ruthstrom W7GPN, Mack Gilbert K7HEN, Val Campbell K7HCP

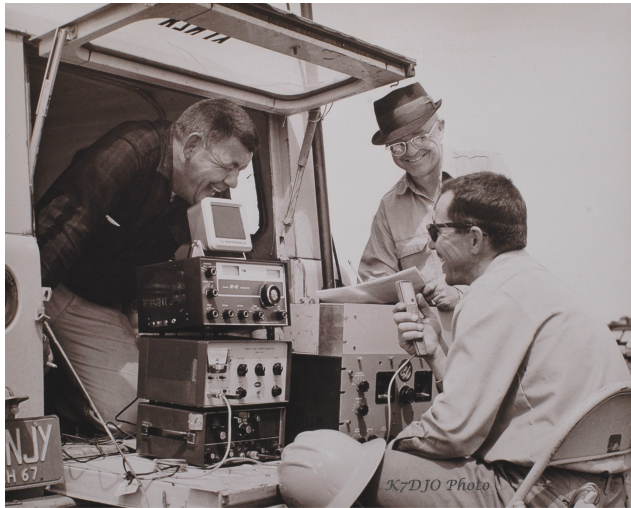
Going Mobile in the Sixties

John Gaz (K7DOT) was driving a two-tone green 1956 Chevrolet. He was using an International Converter into his AM radio for the receiver and had a Harvey Wells Bandmaster powered by a dynamo for the transmitter. Yes, a dynamo, a generator of sorts. For an antenna he used a bumper-mounted 60-inch whip.

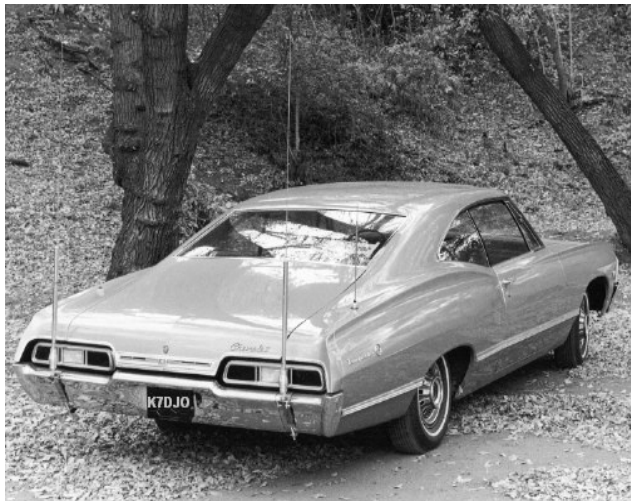
Aaron "Vin" Farr (K7JIV) was driving a 1958 Pontiac. Later, he purchased a 1961 Pontiac Tempest. On board was his 6 meter transceiver and sporting a 6 meter halo.



Val Campbell (K7HCP) was driving a brand new 1967 Oldsmobile 442 with a Heathkit 6'er and a bumper-mounted whip. Val was elated to have a new car with a 12 volt system after previously struggling with his old vehicle which had a 6 volt positive ground system that made it extremely difficult to adapt radio equipment to mobile operation.



John Merrill (K7NJY) drove a white International Scout decked out with 6 meter mobile equipment. However, in this photo, John's vehicle is shown with ham friends (left to right) Doug Murphy (WA7IAW), Alvin Phillips (W7HS) and Pat Buller (W7RQT) with some state of the art HF Field Day equipment.



I, John Shupe (K7DJO), was driving a two-tone blue 1955 GMC pickup truck, a straight 8 engine and a Hydro-Matic transmission. As I recall, the truck had a 6-volt electrical system that powered The Allied Radio Lincoln 6 meter transceiver. The antenna was mounted originally on the right front bumper and I later installed it to the back of the cab. Later I switched to driving a 1967 Chevy Impala 2-door sedan that was much more comfortable during those long hours of mobile operation.

In Mack Gilbert's (K7HEN) car was installed a Lafayette HE-45 putting out 25 Watts.

ARCS6 Membership Waxes

Aaron "Vin" Farr (K7JIV) and John Gaz (K7DOT) recall that the ARCS6 club was organized by Earl F. Fisher (WA6WFG/7). Earl had just moved from California with his wife into the Ogden area and was interested in having fun with some of the local hams. He visited the OARC meetings and intimated to many of us that he thought the club officers were not all that interested in what he wanted to do. The OARC officers were mostly from the "old school," and couldn't see much value in VHF at that time perhaps because of the limited geographical range of communication.

Popular topics at the OARC club meetings would focus on Field Day, the Beehive Net, and Civil Air Patrol (CAP), etc. Shortly after Earl's first visit to an OARC meeting he suggested that we technicians and others interested in VHF form a special-interest group (SIG). The newly formed ARCS6 group chose 6 meters because technicians could use voice on the VHF bands and 6 meters seemed to work out well because these bands were not being used much. It also helped that equipment was readily available and not too expensive. Mack Gilbert (K7HEN) said, "Another of the advantages of 6 meters at that time was the band was occasionally hot which made it possible to work a lot of DX from time to time."

Almost everybody that became involved with ARCS6 had little interest in going back to OARC meetings and this caused some concern to the older members of that group. The OARC club was significantly impacted by the departure of so many club members. Many of the ARCS6 members had 6 meter rigs in their homes but due to the challenges of TVI, preferred to be operating from their cars. As John Gaz (K7DOT) said, "We worked 6 meters from our homes until the neighbors got tired of us." Mack Gilbert (K7HEN) said, "The one thing I really liked about our group was that it was so active. There seemed to always be someone to talk with any time of the day or night."

John Gaz (K7DOT) Recalls

One night John Gaz (K7DOT) and his girlfriend were driving on Washington Blvd. in his 1956 Chevrolet. They were threatened by five guys in another car. John, accepting their challenge, asked them where they wanted to meet up and the belligerent guys choose the back parking lot of Weber High School (then located at 11th and Washington Blvd.)

John Gaz (K7DOT) played it cool and when the group was out of sight he put out a call to the ARCS6 group that he knew were out and nearby and explained about the challenge to a fight and where it was going to go down. Well, there must have been a dozen of us in the downtown area that heard the call so we all headed toward the school parking lot. We let John know we were all on the way and he said he would buy us a few minutes to arrive before they did. We decided to park our cars out of sight in a circle around the perimeter of the lot, our cars all pointed to the center of the parking lot and our headlights turned off. Soon John arrived, drove to the center of the lot and the tough guys following behind him. There they came to a stop side-by-side. It was then that we all turned our car lights on flooding the

scene with light. We all exited our vehicles walking toward the troublemakers, each of us carrying a baseball bat or something we had handy. When confronted with all of us John Merrill (K7NJY) stepped up to their car, opened the driver's door and yelled "Why are you messing with us?"

These guys could see they were out-numbered and must have been confused how they had chosen the meeting place only to find a small army waiting for the confrontation. They all looked defeated and drove off slowly, surely hoping they could escape without any more humiliation. Mack Gilbert (K7HEN) said, "These guys later must have gotten the word out to not mess with anyone around town with a sixty-inch whip antenna on their car." We never had any more confrontations from that night on.

We would sometimes puzzle police officers when they'd see us circling in parking lots with our direction finding loop antennas outside the car windows. We would be trying to find the direction the "bunny" was transmitting from and we would sometimes, rather than stop in place and rotate the antenna, would drive in a circle. Sometimes the police just had to ask... they would pull up and ask us what was going on? We'd explain. They usually would say something like "interesting... carry on" and that was that.

TVI Memories

We sometimes noticed as we drove about on the residential streets, passing houses in the evening, the flickering of a rolling picture on an occasional TV set screen as we'd pass by. If we were moving it would likely only last for a few seconds but back then, in my opinion, TV engineering was lacking and it was more a short fall of the design of the television sets than having much to do with the construction, tuning or installation of our radios.

RFI Nightmares



KLO's Bob Payne remote broadcast booth at Rusty's Drive-In

Our usual hang out was Rusty's Drive-In, 3955 Riverdale Road. During those days KLO Radio Station had a broadcast booth set up at the far South end of their parking lot. Customers parked in stalls facing in toward the center of the business and car hops would deliver orders from the kitchen area to the people in the parked cars. A few of us would decide via QSO to meet there for some drinks or food and would visit from car to car while we waited for our food to arrive. One evening I was in the parking lot QSOing with others when the Disk Jockey by the name of Bob Payne came running out of his broadcast booth and frantically told me the following: "This evening we have a new client who purchased a radio spot on their radio station." It had been prerecorded earlier that day and was being played for the first time that evening. The new clients were listening in on the KLO broadcast only to hear the first part of their ad covered over with our transmissions (QSO's) coming over the AM radio. In an excited voice, he told me our QSO had just ruined their advertising. I was the only one there that the DJ knew so he asked if we would all stop transmitting, as one of our car's 6 meter radios was feeding into their telephone lines or remote broadcast equipment. I got the word out and we all went QRT until we got a few blocks away. We didn't go back to Rusty's so much thereafter. We chose other drive-ins such as The Blue Onion at 1265 E Country Hills Drive or Combe's at 385 E. 12th Street. Those other drive-ins didn't have remote broadcast booths or a TV set running and we never received a complaint of broadcasting over their jukeboxes.

Vin's (K7JIV) Injury Accident

One evening Aaron "Vin" Farr (K7JIV) was driving a 1961 Pontiac Tempest down a mountain road above Ogden. He had driven up earlier in the late afternoon to gain some altitude as the band was open to DX. As evening came he was descending back into town on this dirt road and high-centered the undercarriage of his vehicle on a tall protruding rock in the road. That abruptly stopped his vehicle and Vin was flung forward and jammed his face into the car's steering wheel. In this event he lost six teeth and ended up under the dashboard of his car. He reached for his microphone and called for help. Several of us were, as usual, out and about and several of us rushed to his aid. He said the response was fast and very organized. "I don't remember now who took me to the Dee hospital but I got a ride there. Some of the others took my car home and left it there for me. I wish I could remember who all was there as I don't know if I got a chance to thank everyone involved."

Val Campbell (K7HCP) Remembers

Val Campbell has some great memories of ARCS6 as he recalls the following events: Larry Walker (K7LQZ) was hiding inside an unknown farmer's haystack in western Weber County somewhere. Fox hunt searchers located the vicinity quite rapidly but could not believe that the bunny was actually hiding in a pile of hay, so they kept looking, nearby, endlessly and without success. Another time Larry Walker (K7LQZ) was hiding in a cement-covered parking lot in downtown Ogden that produced strong phantom signals (echoes) in many directions, but very weak signals near the hidden bunny itself. It was very hard to find. Yet another time Larry Walker (K7LQZ) was driving up a private farm house driveway at blinding speed late one raining night, somewhere near Old Post Road, trying to be the first to locate the bunny. He missed a hard turn and ended up in the middle of a newly plowed field, taking out his drive line in his Austin Healy.

John Shupe (K7DJO) Remembers

As I recall, one of my favorite fox hunts was one night when John Merrill (K7NJY) and I drove into a culvert under the road leading to the mouth of Ogden Canyon near Rainbow Gardens. There, we transmitted as the bunny and invited all who wanted to join in to try and find us. There we sat for an hour or two chatting with the foxes. We could hear them driving back and forth over the top of us as we sat comfortably down underneath the road surface, but they never located us until we pulled up out of our hiding place. I also recall when Val Campbell was the bunny one evening and hid in an area that sold motor homes. Many of us looked and looked for

him. After some time he started to become a bit impatient and started giving us clues. He said, "You'll find me next to a "Haul-U", (note: not a "U-Haul). We didn't pick up on his clever clue and were all looking for U-Hauls all over town. It took a long time to find him and then we had a great laugh as to his clever clue!

John Shupe (K7DJO) remembers practicing Morse code many evenings with Val Campbell (K7HCP) from our respective QTH, each evening, the dinner table having been cleared, using MCW and a code practice oscillator with our Heathkit transceivers and a coat hanger antenna. We used this to prepare ourselves for our General Class 13 wpm license test exam with the FCC examiners when they next came to Salt Lake City.

ARCS6 Activity Wanes

Members of ARCS6 by the mid 1960's were moving on to new jobs. Some moving out of town, getting married, starting families, going on church missions and going to or completing college. By then many of us had earned our General or higher class licenses. At that time, ARCS6 was winding down and coming to its end of life. About that time the older members of OARC were acquiring a lot of surplus 10 meter gear and made it available to some of the OARC's remaining members to convert and put on the air. Near the end of ARCS6 existence 2 meters was used a lot in mobile installations and base stations. First, 2 meters AM and then later 2 meter FM, which led to the interest, development and installation of the various repeaters around the intermountain area.

On Reflection

After all the years that have passed since ARCS6, I find it very interesting how HF, which was once the main stay of Ham-Dom, has now taken a back seat to interest and activity on the VHF bands. When the FCC abandoned the Morse code requirement for licensing Amateur Radio operators, it met the needs of thousands of folks who wanted to contribute and share in the community service and fun of ham radio but were held back in the past by the mandatory Morse code requirements.

Older hams using the HF bands today are now actively recruiting new hams to stay with or develop an appreciation for the HF bands again. Special-interest groups are forming into various clubs around the globe to promote the preservation of Morse code. Interesting how the hobby has transformed and the pendulum has swung the other way.

Nostalgic ARCS6 Days

What fond memories we former members all have. There was a life-time of special camaraderie that developed among us all. We were sharing some of the best times of our lives!



73, John R. Shupe K7DJ0

A special thanks to those listed below for recently sharing your memories of Amateur Radio Club Service 6 Meters (ARCS6) with me. You all did a wonderful job helping me recall and verify some of the details from those glorious days. Val Campbell (K7HCP), Aaron Farr (W7HJK), John Gaz (K7DOT) and Mack Gilbert (K7HEN).