

PLATINUM COAST AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY (PCARS)

PCARS is an amateur radio club located in Melbourne, Florida, that serves primarily South Brevard County. The club is a Florida non-profit corporation with about one-hundred members, and it has existed for over forty years. PCARS is affiliated with the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), which is a national membership organization for licensed amateur radio operators.

PCARS amateur radio operators, often called "HAMS" participate in a wide variety of amateur radio activities. These include providing disaster communications, experimenting with things like amateur TV and satellite communications, competing in amateur radio competitions, and contacting amateurs around the world. Our members use not only voice, but many different modes of communications, such as Morse code, amateur television, radio teletype and other digital modes using computer interfaces.

The club has an FCC issued amateur radio call sign, W4MLB, and a well-equipped amateur radio station. This station has been used by club members to compete with other clubs and groups around the world in various radio sport competitions. As members of the club started winning more and more of these competitions, other teams started referring to us as those "Florida Boys," a name that has stuck with our PCARS contest group.

Two VHF-FM repeaters and one UHF repeater are owned and operated by the club. These enable consistent and effective communication over a large part of Brevard County using small hand-held transceivers. These repeaters have been very valuable in helping club members support Red Cross Shelters during hurricanes, and in supporting public service events. Most PCARS members are also members of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), and the club is a vital part of the Brevard Emergency Amateur Radio Service (BEARS).

The Melbourne Hamfest has been sponsored by PCARS since 1964. This annual event is held the second weekend in September at the Melbourne Auditorium. It draws over 2000 enthusiasts from all over the state of Florida and beyond. It's a time of fellowship, attending forums, browsing through tables piled high with communications equipment, and "eye-balling" all of the latest equipment available through retail outlets.

In addition to providing reliable communications for worthy public service events (races, parades, mock disasters, etc), PCARS sponsors regular classes to teach interested individuals the technical theory and International Morse Code required to obtain an FCC issued Amateur Radio License.

PCARS meetings are held on the second Monday night of the each month at the Salvation Army Community Center, 1180 South Hickory Street, Melbourne, Florida. There is a social time starting at 7:00PM followed by a program at 7:15PM and then a business meeting. Meetings are open to the general public. Visitors interested in amateur radio are welcome.

For additional information on Amateur Radio, or if you're interested in having PCARS provide communications for a special public service event, contact the Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society, PO Box 1004, Melbourne, FL 32902-1004. www.pcars.org