

KAUAI GARDEN ISLAND NEWS

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Hams turn out for Field Day

by The Garden Island

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Over the past year, the news has been full of reports of ham radio operators providing critical communications in emergencies world-wide. This weekend, local residents will have a chance to meet and talk with local ham radio operators and see for themselves what "radio service" is really about.

The Kauai Amateur Radio Club will hold a demonstration of emergency communications abilities at Lydgate Park Saturday and Sunday, starting at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m., respectively.

Dubbed "Field Day," the annual event is the climax of the week-long "Amateur Radio Week." Using only generators, batteries or solar power, the hams construct emergency stations to test their skills in all situations.

With a slogan like "Ham radio works when other systems don't," it's clear that it's about more than just words to the hams. They send messages in many forms without the use of phone systems, Internet or any other infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis. A KARC press release said more than 30,000 amateur radio operators across the country participated in last year's event.

"We hope that people will come and see for themselves, this is not your grandfather's radio anymore," KARC president Jerry Hill said in the release. "It may be called 'Amateur Radio' because we are unpaid, but that does not mean we're not prepared."

Over the weekend hams will be demonstrating AM, sideband, FM, digital, code and even satellite communications. Several clubs will also be experimenting with TV signals and high-frequency equipment.

KARC says there are 670,000 amateur radio operators in the United States, and more than 2.5 million around the world. American hams provide emergency communications for the Department of Homeland Security Citizens' Corps, the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Federal Emergency Management Agency, community emergency response teams and many state and local agencies.

For more information, contact Jerry Hill at 742-1730 or Richard Olsen at 822-5092, or visit www.arrl.org/newham or www.kauaiarc.org.

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Note www.arrl.org/newham should be www.arrl.org/newham.html