



# THE COMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the TAMAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Incorporated 30 November 1984 – Venice, Florida

Mailing Address: 1419 E. Manasota Beach Rd., Englewood, FL 34223-6341



-- APRIL 2005 --

## -- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE --

### "Venice 145.130 Repeater History"

In 1983, at the request of Lloyd Phaler-W8SKL, Ed Allen-WA4ISB and Dave Cladin-K4CGX of the Sarasota Emergency Radio Club (SERC) coordinated and built a repeater from the excess equipment of the 146.730 repeater in Sarasota. At that time, the 146.730 repeater was the only repeater on the air from Tampa to Ft. Myers, and Mr. Phaler thought that Venice could use a repeater, but did not have the resources to build a repeater.

With the help of Lloyd-W8SKL and Don Fontaine-N4ET, the repeater was installed in Lloyd's garage for about a month and tested before being installed on a tower at the old South Venice Fire Station.

In 1986, the repeater was moved to the roof of the (then) Venice Hospital, where it stayed until Bon Secours purchased the hospital. The new hospital manager did not want other people's equipment on their building. The repeater was then moved to the WAMR AM radio tower off of East Venice Avenue for about two years. That station was sold to new owners, and the repeater was once again required to find a new home.

In 1996, the 145.130 Venice repeater was moved to the Anderson electric tower near the Venice Airport. In the first two months at this location, the repeater took a lightning strike and was replaced by a Motorola mobile, a small controller card, and some cavities wired together. During this time a ham named R. B. Wyatt was doing the maintenance on the 145.130 and 146.730 repeaters. His garage caught on fire, which destroyed the original repeater located there, and soon afterward he died from a heart attack.

During 1997, I came on the scene and started doing the maintenance on both repeaters. I built a new Motorola Micor Repeater with a Scm 5K controller, and donated it to the Tamiami Amateur Radio Club for the 145.130 repeater. It is still in operation today and doing great. In 2003 Stew Haag-W4MO donated a new duplexer for the repeater, and in 2004 he donated a new antenna for the repeater. In 2003, Bob Avrutik-N1RA donated a battery charging controller.

In 2002, I started working with the Clear Channel Communications people about getting on a new tower

to be built at the intersection of US 41 and SR 681 in Nokomis. Today the repeater is on that tower and in their building with no cost to the club for upkeep. A special thanks to the others that have donated their skills for this repeater.

SERC still coordinates this repeater and is the trustee of the repeater.

73, Eddie-K4JP

## -- APRIL MEETING --

The April meeting will be at 7:00 PM on 14 April 2005 in the Community Room of The Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, 601 South Tamiami Trail (Business US 41), across from the Venice Regional Health Center (formerly Bon Secours Hospital). No formal program is planned, however, you are encouraged to attend.

## -- REGIONAL HAMFESTS --

- 16 April Tampa ARC Hamfest at TARC Amateur Radio Operations Center, 7801 N. 22<sup>nd</sup> St. Take Hillsborough Ave. exit (US 92) off I-4, go west to 22<sup>nd</sup> St, turn north and go to end of road. TI: 147.105 (PL 145.2); Info: Biff-K4LAW, 813-265-4812
- 23 April Gainesville ARS Hamfest at Alachua County Fairgrounds, 3400 NE 39<sup>th</sup> Ave. (SR 222). TI: 146.820 (PL 123); Info: Ray-W4YTC, 352-371-0654
- 01 May Free Hamfest at Lake Maggiore Park, 9<sup>th</sup> St. South & 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. South, St. Petersburg. TI: 147.060

(From April 2005 *QST* and Web site of KB4VOL, <http://bellsouthpwp.net/k/b/kb4vol>)

## -- NEXT VE SESSION --

The next scheduled VE Exam session for new or upgrading licenses will be held at 9:30 AM, 09 April in the Conference room of the Venice Public Library, 300 So. Nokomis Ave. These ARRL coordinated exam sessions are conducted by members of both the Tamiami ARC and the Englewood ARS. If you know anyone interested in attending a license exam session, have them contact Jack Sproat at 475-1929.

## TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

### Minutes of the Meeting

10 March 2005

As this was the date of our Annual Auction, there was no business meeting held. A total of 38 attendees purchased the \$2.00 tickets to bid on the variety of items offered. Treasurer Peter Pesa-N4RD prepared a Treasurer's Report which follows:

The Starting Balance in the checking account was \$4,312.55. Expenses prior to the meeting were \$22.83 for printing and postage, and \$5.97 for purchase of a roll of 50/50 tickets, totaling \$28.80. Income at the meeting (auction) was \$150.00 in membership dues and \$678.00 income from the auction, totaling \$828.00. The current account balance is therefore \$5,111.75.

### -- NEW FCC CHAIRMAN --

FCC Commissioner Kevin J. Martin has been nominated to chair the FCC, replacing Michael Powell, who stepped down in March. Martin, a 38-year-old North Carolina attorney with close ties to the Bush regime, has served on the Commission since 2001. Last July, ARRL CEO Dave Sumner-K1ZZ and ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay-W3KD met with Martin to discuss their fears about radio interference from BPL systems. When the FCC unanimously adopted new Broadband over Power Line (BPL) rules last October, Martin acknowledged Amateur Radio's concerns, said he would take them seriously, and expressed confidence that the Commission would take the necessary steps to address BPL interference.

However, of note, upon learning of Martin's nomination, BPL manufacturer Ambient Corporation promptly issued a news release hailing the appointment of Martin as "a vocal proponent" of BPL systems and citing segments of Martin's laudatory comments about the technology following the FCC's 14 October 2004 adoption of new BPL rules. *Looks like the fox is guarding the hen house!* (From *The ARRL Letter*, Vol. 24, No. 11)

### -- CALL SIGN STATUS --

As of 13 February 2005, call signs issued sequentially in the Fourth District were up to:

<u>Extra</u>	<u>General/Technician</u>
AI4JA	KI4ISF

(From April 2005 *WorldRadio*)

*"There is no 'slippery slope' toward loss of liberty, only a long staircase where each step down must first be tolerated by the American people and their leaders."* – Alan K. Simpson, US Senator, 26 Sept 1982

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### -- BILL ROCKWOOD-KE4ZAK; SK --

The Tamiami ARC lost one of its most motivated members with the passing of Bill Rockwood-KE4ZAK on 28 March 2005 at the age of 79 years. A "Celebration of Life" in honor of Bill was held 31 March at the residence of Dona and John Fyke-VE6AIV, attended by Bill's wife, Betty, and their daughter Kathy McCarty and her husband, neighbors, and numerous members of both the TARC and Englewood ARS. Knowing that his time on Earth was drawing to a close, Bill had written some personal thoughts which Kathy read to all. Jim Halliday-NX2II offered additional personal comments on Bill, who was one of the first persons he and Ora met when they moved to Englewood.

Those of us who were even fairly close to Bill knew that he had a knack for telling tales of his past experiences, as well as the ability to memorize numerous jokes—of varying humor! While on the road, Bill had a passion for counting plastic pails (usually blown from the open beds of trucks) along the highway. The success of a trip was measured by the number of pails counted. Joe Kato-KE4WVA has commented that he and Bill competed in pail counting, but that Bill was the undisputed President of the Pail Counting Association while Joe never rose above Vice President.

Bill was a faithful member of the Snowbird Net and was quite distraught when his HF station wasn't functioning. Bob-N1RA, Peter-N4RD, Marty-N4FA, John-VE6AIV and Hermann-VE3IRX helped get Bill's station running up to snuff, and Bill continued to check into the net for as long as he was able.

When our Annual Auction was held, Bill was the Head Auctioneer, having the ability to turn a rather drab, unknown item into a seemingly gold-plated object that anyone would desire for their ham shack. Bill couldn't make our 2005 Auction, as he was then in the Venice Hospital. However, Don Ferrick-N2BAT kept an open mike on his HT, such that Bill could listen to the activities on his HT in the hospital room.

Bill was also a regular participant at the Tuesday and Friday breakfasts where he loved to tip with \$1 gold coins. Always something special—never the "usual" for Bill.

Bill had endured numerous medical setbacks over the years, but nobody ever heard him complain that life wasn't just great. Bill's favorite song was Louis Armstrong's "It's a Wonderful World" and that epitomized his outlook on life. Yes, Bill, it is a wonderful world, but it's a bit bleaker now without you.

*"The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names."* – Chinese Proverb



## CURRENT/PENDING DX ACTIVITY & PROPAGATION FORECASTS

CURRENT and/or SCHEDULED DX ACTIVITY										
COUNTRY – CALL SIGN	ACTIVITY PERIOD	BEAR-ING	HF BANDS and BEST OPENING TIMES							
			80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10
Malawi – 7Q7BP, 7Q7YL	Now Active	90	--	--	--	16-01	15-17	15-17	NO	NO
The Sudan – ST2BF	Now Active	66	<b>23-04</b>	<b>22-05</b>	<b>21-01</b>	<b>16-22</b>	18-23	NO	NO	NO
Marion Is – ZS8MI	Now to 31 May	130	<b>00-05</b>	02-06	06-07	10-11	1130	NO	NO	NO
“	“	<u>310</u>				<u>11-15</u>				
Spratly Islands – DX0K	During April	337	1100	<b>10-12</b>	<b>11-12</b>	13-17	1400	00-02	NO	NO
Dem. Rep of Congo – 9Q6MGK	Now to 15 April	88	--	--	--	<b>13-01</b>	<b>16-00</b>	16-21	16-21	NO
Djibouti – J20FH	Now to 15 April	61	<b>23-03</b>	<b>23-04</b>	<b>21-01</b>	<b>17-00</b>	17-22	17-22	1900	NO
Mauritania – 5T??? ** & RTTY	Now to 16 April	81	<b>23-07</b>	<b>21-09</b>	<b>19-05</b>	<b>12-02</b>	<b>15-23</b>	15-23	23-00	NO
Mali – TZ??? ** & RTTY	Now to 16 April	82	<b>23-07</b>	<b>21-08</b>	<b>20-04</b>	<b>13-02</b>	16-21	16-21	NO	NO
Svalbard Island – JW/F8DVD	04 – 10 April	13	<b>00-08</b>	<b>22-12</b>	<b>11-01</b>	<b>12-22</b>	18-22	18-22	NO	NO
South Cook Is – ZK1APX	04 – 12 April	246	<b>04-12</b>	<b>03-13</b>	<b>01-13</b>	<b>17-05</b>	<b>17-02</b>	<b>18-00</b>	18-22	01-02
Botswana – A2/DL7CM, A2/DM1AYO	06 – 20 April	105	<b>00-05</b>	<b>22-06</b>	<b>21-02</b>	18-20	14-17	14-17	NO	NO
Macau - XX9/JA0SC (SSTV & RTTY)	07 – 11 April	341	--	--	--	<b>12-16</b>	--	14-16	--	NO
Mongolia – JT1Y	20 Apr – 09 May	354	NO	10-11	01-12	01-04	01-04	NO	NO	NO
Svalbard – JW1ANA	21 – 29 April	13	<b>00-07</b>	<b>22-11</b>	<b>11-02</b>	12-21	14-02	NO	NO	NO
Vanuatu – YJ??? (YL operators)	02 – 19 May	262	<b>06-11</b>	<b>05-12</b>	<b>04-14</b>	<b>00-06</b>	01-04	02-05	00-01	NO
Albania – ZA2???	03 – 10 May	48	<b>00-04</b>	<b>22-06</b>	<b>21-06</b>	<b>12-00</b>	13-00	17-21	NO	NO

Updated 02 April 2005, based on 30 March 2005 *QRZ DX* and 28 March 2005 *The Weekly DX*.

Notes: ??? = Call Sign not yet known; ++ = Phone Only; \*\* = CW Only; NO = No Opening forecast; **Time in bold** = Best Band(s) for opening.

Long Path bearings and opening times are underlined. All forecasts are calculated from *W6ELProp V.1.03* propagation software,

<http://www.qsl.net/w6elprop/> by Sheldon C. Shallon-W6EL; Solar Flux and K-index vary in accordance with NOAA 27-day forecast.

### -- SOLAR ACTIVITY DURING MARCH --

During March the Solar Flux ranged from 71 up to 114, with a mean value of 89.8 (vs. 111.6 for March 2004 and 132.2 for March 2003). The A-index was ≤ 10 on 18 days during March.

### -- APRIL PROPAGATION --

During March, solar activity is expected to be at very low to low conditions. A greater than 10 MeV proton event is not expected. The greater than 2 MeV electron flux at geosynchronous orbit is expected to be at high levels on 03 - 08 April and again on 22 – 25 April. The geomagnetic field is expected to range from quiet to major storm levels. A large, recurrent coronal hole high speed wind stream is expected to produce active to minor storm levels with occasional major storm periods on 02-05 April. On 21 – 23 April, a small coronal is expected to produce unsettled to active conditions. Otherwise, expect quiet to unsettled conditions. The Solar Flux should range from 75 to 100 during the month. (From *NOAA Weekly Highlights and Forecasts, 29 March 2005* and *NOAA 27-Day Space Weather Outlook Table, 29 March 2005*)

April is one of the most interesting months for propagation, with HF activity moving up from 40 meters and down from 10 meters.

Propagation on 10 and 15 meters suffers during April and the summer months due to lower maximum usable frequencies (MUF) in the Northern Hemisphere. The MUF peaks very late in the day during the summer. Summertime MUFs are lower due to solar heating, which causes the ionosphere to expand. An expanded ionosphere produces lower ion density, which

results in lower MUFs. Short-path propagation between countries in the Northern Hemisphere will drop out entirely.

From April to June, fair to good propagation will occur on both daytime and nighttime paths on the middle HF bands. The strongest propagation occurs on paths that span areas of both day and night, following the MUF. The 17- and 20-meter bands may offer occasional 24-hour DX to all parts of the world. If you hear a lot of echo on the signal, try beaming in the opposite direction.

The 40-meter band will remain hot, and there will be occasional DX openings on 80 meters around sunrise. However, these bands are being degraded by the seasonal increase in noise.

(From “Propagation”, Tomas Hood-NW7US, April 2005 *CQ*)

### -- CROZET ISLAND UPDATE --

Jean-Paul-FT5WJ shut down 21 March after making 2,114 QSOs with 1,913 stations and was to depart Crozet 23 March. During the last week or so of his operation, propagation to North America did improve, and the Snowbird Net was kind enough to QSY off 14.278 MHz where Jean-Paul consistently showed. (*Your editor was very lucky to work him on 20 March via long path propagation.*)

### -- KERGUELEN ISLAND UPDATE --

The FT5XO operation fired up 19 March and shut down 31 March. Running low power, they were only readable locally on 20 meters.

*“Honk if you love peace and quiet.”*

## CONTESTS & ACTIVITIES

Contest/Special Event	Begin-End Times/Dates	Bands/Modes	QSO With	Exchange
Japan International DX Contest	0700Z 09 April 1300Z 10 April	80 – 10 Meters CW Only	Japanese Stations Only	R/S/T + CQ Zone
YU DX Contest (Yugoslavian)	1200Z 16 April 1200Z 17 April	160 – 10 Meters Phone & CW	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/(T) + ITU Zone
Holyland DX Contest	0000Z 16 April 2359Z 16 April	160 – 10 Meters Phone & CW	Israeli Stations Only	R/S/(T) + Serial Number
ES Open HF Championship (Estonian)	0500Z 16 April 0859Z 16 April	80 – 40 Meters Phone & CW	Estonian Stations Only	R/S/(T) + Serial Number
Florida QSO Party	1600Z 23 April 0159Z 24 April	40 – 10 Meters Phone & CW	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/(T) + FL County
	1200Z 24 April 2159Z 24 April			
Helvetia Contest (Swiss)	1300Z 23 April 1259Z 24 April	160 – 10 Meters SSB/CW/Digital	Swiss Stations Only	R/S/(T) + Serial Number
DX Colombia International Contest	0000Z 23 April 0000Z 25 April	160 – 10 Meters Phone & CW	Colombian Stations Only	R/S/(T) + Serial Number

From April 2005 *QST* and April 2005 *WorldRadio*

### -- CQ ANNOUNCES "FIELD AWARD" --

With the goal of **Waking Up DXing!**, *CQ* magazine has announced a new HF operating award: the CQ DX Field. So, what's a "field" and how does this award function?

Back in 1980, a group of European VHF enthusiasts met in Maidenhead, England to adopt a standardized plan for designating "grid locators" around the world. This came about as a result of long-standing practice in Europe and Africa of determining scores in VHF contests on a distance-worked basis. Back in the 50s a system had been devised to divide Europe into a series of "grid locators" based on longitude and latitude, which made distance calculation easier—particularly so with the advent of the personal computer. The Maidenhead group divided the world into 324 blocks, known as "fields," each measuring 10° latitude by 20° longitude, and given a two-capital-letter designator between AA and RR. Each field is then broken up into 100 "squares" each measuring 1° latitude by 2° longitude and identified by two digits between 00 and 99. (for example, Venice is located in grid square EL87.)

There is quite a challenge to work large numbers of the 324 grid fields, especially as many of these fields are either completely water or located in the polar regions. It's estimated that there are 177 fields with which the active ham stands a good chance of making contact. Additional fields will require QSOs with shipboard operators and polar expeditions. So, it won't be that easy, beyond the entry level of 50 grid squares.

Complete rules and application form are available at <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/>.

### Basic Rules for CQ DX Field Award

1. Award is issued in four categories—Mixed, CW, SSB and Digital—for confirmed QSOs with 50 or more Grid Fields. Applications must be submitted on CQ Form 2504.

2. QSLs must be listed in alphabetical order by grid field (AA-RR). All QSOs must have been made on or after 01 January 1980.

3. Endorsement stickers are issued in increments of 50 additional fields between 50 and 150, then in increments of 25 fields between 150 and 300. A fee of \$1.00/sticker is charged.

4. Special endorsements are available at \$1.00 each:

(a) 28 MHz endorsement for 50 or more grid fields on the 10-meter band.

(b) 3.5/7 MHz endorsement for 50 or more grid fields using any combination of the 40-and 80-meter bands.

(c) 1.8 MHz endorsement for 25 or more grid fields on 160 meters.

(d) Additional endorsements for QRPP, Mobile, SSTV, 50 MHz, and OSCAR.

5. A fee of \$6.00 is required for subscribers to *CQ*; \$12.00 for non-subscribers.

6. Applications, QSLs and fees (check payable to B. F. Williams) are to be sent to CQ DX Awards Manager:

Billy Williams-N4UF

PO Box 9673

Jacksonville, FL 32208-0673

*CQ* has two more new activities awards awaiting introduction in the coming months—one especially intended to encourage new hams to discover DXing.

## -- LIGHTNING SEASON'S COMING --

*(We've already had a couple electrical storms this year, therefore, the following should be of interest to all who have antennas and power line connections.)*

We live in an area where there are 90+ thunderstorm-days (when one or more thunder claps are heard) per year. While an antenna at only 25' has a slight chance of getting struck once during the year, an antenna at 60' could get struck three times during the storm season. However, even stations with indoor antennas could suffer damage from a voltage surge on the power line due to a lightning strike.

**Identify what is to be protected** – The first step toward protecting your equipment is to establish a “zone of protection” within the radio room. Identify what you want to protect, and then prioritize these items to reduce the cost and time involved. Make up a block diagram of the equipment, showing all input and output (I/O) connections. This would include power, antenna cables, rotator control cables, telephone lines, computer, etc. Every I/O line must be protected, or your plan is flawed.

**Protecting each I/O line** – Each I/O line represents a potential source or sink for lightning strike energy. The best I/O line protectors are installed in series between the surge and the circuit being protected.

**Coaxial cable** – Each coax line leaving the “zone” must have an appropriate coaxial protector. There are three manufacturers of such arrestors, and all are different. **Industrial Communications Engineers, Ltd. (I.C.E.)** uses a 3-component system with a central high-voltage rated blocking capacitor allowing the flow of RF energy through the arrestor but blocking DC and low frequency AC voltage. An inductor on the antenna side of the unit is the primary neutralizing agent. Voltage development is quickly shunted to ground through the DC shorting nature of the inductor/RF choke. If large currents of a fast-rising nature are presented to the arrestor such that a back-EMF develops across the inductor, then the companion paralleled gas discharge unit ignites, but its only workload is to collapse the short-lived magnetic field of the inductor. **Polyphaser** uses a 2-component system, where a high voltage blocking capacitor allows the flow of RF but blocks DC and low frequency AC. A gas discharge is used on the antenna side of the capacitor to shunt DC voltages in excess of 400 volts to ground. **Alpha Delta** uses a 1-part system consisting of a gas discharge unit rated at 400-1000 volts between the coaxial center conductor and an external ground connection. Of the three types, the I.C.E. units are superior to the others and are recommended for local use. They're available from <http://www.arraysolutions.com/>.

**Rotator cable** – Since most rotator control circuitry is relay-based, a shunt type protection device should be installed on the control cable.

**AC power** – Do not put any faith in these power strips from hardware stores, Staples, etc., as they depend on the safety ground wire to carry away the surge energy. While the safety ground may provide a DC path to ground, the #14 AWG wire commonly used is too inductive with respect to the rise time of the currents (RF energy) in the strike that it must conduct to ground. Only a commercial quality in-line AC power protector that matches your equipment's voltage and current requirements is acceptable (and they are not cheap). All AC-powered equipment must be plugged into this protector, which must then be externally grounded (see SPG, below).

**Telephone** – While there are protectors with modular connectors (RJ-11, etc.), they are useless against common surge currents. Only an in-line protector should be used.

**Single Point Ground (SPG)** – The SPG is the *one and only point* in the radio room where a ground connection is present. All protection devices must share this common ground.

**Establishing a good ground** – Coaxial cable should be grounded at both top and bottom of the tower. Install numerous ground rods, spaced at twice their length connected with 1½” copper ribbon, and connected to the SPG and the power line ground. A perimeter ground around the house will minimize ground potential differences under the house.

(From “Lightning Protection for the Amateur Station” by Ron Block-KB2UYT in the June, July, August 2002 *QST* and I.C.E. *Technical Publication #33* and *#33a*)

## -- LETTER TO THE EDITOR --

In the Land of Oz, a Radio Amateur was given a used vehicle. It was his responsibility to refurbish the vehicle and to maintain it. He was happy to receive this vehicle, and he spent significant funds getting it into top operating condition. However, although he could operate this vehicle, it was licensed to another, unrelated person, and garaged at that person's location. If that person said, “No, you cannot operate the vehicle today as I need exclusive use of it,” the Radio Amateur could only sit and ponder the situation. He would love to get his Amateur Radio call sign on the vehicle's license plate, but he could not do so, as the vehicle was licensed to the other person. Again, he would sit and ponder, “What on earth did I get into?” Could it just be that such a situation has occurred here?

Lee Darby-K4GCV