



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
Web Site -- <http://tamiamiarc.tripod.com>
W4AC Repeaters – 146.805 MHz(-), 444.100(+) both w/100 Hz PL



-- OCTOBER 2005 --

-- VOLUNTEERISM --

(President Matt Klap-W2EQV is packing up and getting ready to head back down to Venice, so your editor has the following to offer.)

The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines “voluntary” as something done of one’s own free will...unpaid...and not prompted by a promise. Likewise, a “volunteer” is one who participates in voluntary activities. *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* also defines “voluntary” as being done freely and without compensation. The Fire Department in my home town (pop. \pm 7,000) was a volunteer organization, and when that fire siren sounded, the members dropped what they were doing and headed for the fire station, without any thought of compensation. Likewise, we had an Auxiliary Police group, who assisted during parades, carnivals, and watched for troublemakers on Halloween. They paid for their own uniforms and received no financial benefits. If you ever watched the movie “Witness” you saw how the Amish literally raised a barn—neighbors helping neighbors, with the only compensation being the community sharing food with the workers. These, then, are the definitions and examples of true volunteerism.

It, therefore, came as a shock to read in *The ARRL Letter* of 16 September 2005 that the ARRL has “established a set of ‘Ham Aid’ reimbursement procedures so radio amateurs **volunteering** (emphasis added) to provide emergency communication in the field during the Hurricane Katrina disaster can recover some of their out-of-pocket expenses.” It seems that the Corporation for National and Community Service (a quasi-federal government operation) has provided \$177,000 to the ARRL to help fund Ham Aid. Furthermore, Ham Aid is a “new League program to support Amateur Radio **volunteers** (emphasis added) deployed in the field in disaster-stricken areas. The current limit on reimbursement is \$25/day for four days, e.g., \$100.

In the **true spirit** of volunteerism, no one should expect to receive any recompense. This Ham Aid program runs smack into the face of the long-established record of radio amateurs giving freely of their time in public service. Indeed, Section 97.1(a)

of the FCC Rules and Regulations recognizes the “value of the amateur service to the public as a **voluntary** (emphasis added) noncommercial communication service.” The program, however, seems indicative of the attitude that is becoming pervasive in the nation, viz. “what can the government do for me?” And now, even the ARRL has succumbed to the promises of largess from the feds. It seems no one is immune anymore.

-- OCTOBER MEETING --

Our October TARC meeting will be at 7:00 PM on 13 October 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. Following a short business meeting, the program will be a demonstration on the use of the EchoLink mode on our W4AC Repeater.

-- REVISED QUESTION POOL SKED --

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) has announced a revised schedule for introduction of updated license exam question pools. This decision was prompted by recent FCC announcements, changes in radio communication technology and recommendations from the VECs.

The new Technician Class (Element 2) pool now is due for release 01 January 2006 and will become effective 01 July 2006. The General Class (Element 3) pool, previously scheduled to take effect 01 July 2008, will now be released 01 December 2006 and become effective 01 July 2007. The Extra Class (Element 4) pool that was to come out in late 2005 will now be released 01 December 2007 and become effective 01 July 2008.

Of the 12 VECs attending the NCVEC’s annual conference, the Question Pool Committee consists of representatives from the Anchorage VEC, ARRL VEC and W5YI VEC.

(From *The ARRL Letter*, Vol. 24, No.36)

“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” – Edmund Burke

TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Minutes of the Meeting

08 September 2005

Secretary Jack Sproat-W4JS called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and the pledge of allegiance was recited. Introductions were made all around, and George Oberg-W9NRE of North Port, Ruth Arona of Nokomis and Richard O'Donnell of Venice were recognized as visitors. Frank Arona-W8FAA of Nokomis was welcomed as a new TARC member.

SPECIAL ELECTION – Jack-W4JS reminded all that, as announced in the September issue of *The Communicator*, the resignation of Vice-President Don Fontaine-N4ET has necessitated that a special election be held in accordance with Article IV, Section 4 of the Articles of Incorporation. Konrad Owens-WA3RRS has expressed his willingness to serve in that position. Upon hearing no nominations from the floor, Charlie Covell-W4DB moved that the nominations be closed. Al Howes-KT4IO moved that the secretary be directed to cast one ballot signifying a unanimous vote, seconded by Charlie-W4DB and passed. The secretary cast said vote and Konrad-WA3RRS assumed the chair.

MINUTES – Diana Gregory-KI4GRF moved that the minutes of the 11 August 2005 meeting be accepted as published in the August issue of *The Communicator*. Blake Hudson-KE4SGK seconded the motion, and it passed.

CORRESPONDENCE – Jack-W4JS reported receipt of an e-mail from Bob Schroeder-KB9BYE, including a description of an indoor antenna he's using as the condominium board denied his request for an outdoor antenna.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Treasurer Don Gray-WD7A reported that the 11 August starting balance was \$4952.83. Receipts were \$6.00 from the August 50/50 drawing and \$8.00 dues from Chuck Lingo-KA8SQE. Expenses were \$14.25 for newsletter postage and printing, and \$19.21 for printing of membership cards. The 08 September ending balance is \$4933.37. Bob Avrutik-N1RA moved acceptance of the report, seconded by Jack-W4JS, and passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SUNSHINE – Nothing to report.

VE TESTING – Jack-W4JS commented there would be a regularly scheduled exam session this Saturday, 10 September, with one known candidate.

REPEATER/TECHNICAL – Stew Haag-W4MO reported that the W4AC Repeater is operating properly.

PACKET/GATEWAY – Bob Avrutik-N1RA reported that software is being prepared, by an amateur on Florida's east coast with known packet expertise,

which will give us 2-meter packet access to the Internet, the DX Packet Cluster, BBS, etc. before the end of this year. Bob has requested 145.610 MHz as the connection frequency.

CLUB PROPERTY – Charlie-W4DB and Bob-N1RA offered copies of the TARC equipment list, commenting that there is a need to dispose of many of the items in the near future. Bob and Charlie will determine what equipment the club should keep for potential use and what will be made available to the members.

PUBLICITY/MEMBERSHIP – Diana Gregory-KI4GRF reiterated that we need TARC members to volunteer to model in photos for our final publicity brochures. Don-WD7A has given the contact information for the *Venice Herald Tribune* to the secretary, and our meeting notices will be published prior to the October meeting.

EMERGENCY COORDINATOR – Chairman Peter Pesa-N4RD was out of town.

NET OPERATIONS – Net Manager Bob Murphy-WA1UHG was not present.

LIAISON TO EARS – Englewood ARS president, Marty Horowitz-N4FA reported that EARS is looking for officers for 2006. A new EARS member is a teacher at Englewood Elementary School, where she hopes to set up a radio station and initiate ham radio training.

LIAISON TO QCWA – Jack Sproat-W4JS reported that eight Chapter 53 members and friends attended the 07 September lunch at the Panda Pavilion in Venice. The October luncheon/meetings will again be held at Denny's on Bee Ridge Road in Sarasota.

CLUB HISTORIAN – While this position remains vacant, Marty-N4FA described some of the items of record on hand, and presently stored at the home of Jack-W4JS.

OLD BUSINESS – In response to the proposal that the Friday breakfast be moved to Tommy's Restaurant, Marty-N4FA volunteered to go there for his Friday breakfast, with a report back to interested parties. Marty also reminded all that the TARC Christmas Party will be held 10 December at the Boca Royale Country Club in Englewood. Marty has the menu from which the Board of Directors will select the entrees to be offered.

NEW BUSINESS – Nothing offered.

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR – Konrad-WA3RRS reminded all to support our web site by submitting personal information, photos, suitable articles, etc. to Webmaster John Fyke-VE6AIV.

See MINUTES, page 5

---000---

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
Kure Is – K7C	Now to 05 Oct	298	05-12	03-14	02-15	19-01	20-23	20-23	2100	NO
East Kiribati – T32EJW, T32S, T32Y	Now to 15 Oct	267	04-12	02-13	01-13	17-01	17-23	18-21	18-21	NO
Bhutan – A52SY	03 – 10 October	8	23-00	22-01	00-02	13-15	14-15	NO	NO	NO
West Malaysia – 9M2/PF5X	03 – 10 October	352	11-12	10-13	12-13	14-19	15-19	18-19	18-19	NO
Mayotte – FH/F6AML & TX5M	10 – 14 October	85	22-03	21-04	21-01	17-21	18-19	16-18	1730	NO
Bhutan – A52FH & A52CDX	18 – 29 October	8	23-00	21-02	12-14	13-19	NO	NO	NO	NO
Galapagos Is – HC8/EA9CP	20 Oct – 01 Nov	196	23-13	00-24	12-01	14-23	15-22	16-21	18-21	NO
Tanzania – 5H2AG	22 – 31 October	83	22-04	21-05	20-00	16-22	16-20	16-19	17-19	NO
Papua New Guinea – P2/G3KHZ	23 Oct – 06 Nov	283	08-12	07-13	12-14	13-17	NO	NO	NO	NO
Christmas Is – VK9XG	24 Oct – 07 Nov	334	11-12	10-13	12-14	14-17	15-16	1600	NO	NO
Glorioso – FR/G???	Oct – Nov	82	22-03	21-04	21-00	17-21	16-19	16-18	16-17	NO
Norfolk Is – VK9BRW	02 – 09 Nov	250	07-12	05-13	04-14	13-15	14-16	21-23	2230	NO
Samoa – 5W???	04 – 07 Nov	257	05-13	04-13	08-15	17-00	18-22	19-21	19-21	NO
Temotu – H40???	05 – 11 Nov	270	06-12	05-14	05-15	13-19	19-22	20-21	20-21	NO
Cocos Keeling – VK9CC???	07 – 21 Nov	3	NO	22-00	22-00	14-19	15-17	15-17	NO	NO
Niue – ZK2???	07 – 30 Nov	252	05-13	04-14	07-15	14-00	18-23	19-21	19-22	2100

Updated 01 October 2005, based on 28 September 2005 *QRZ DX*, 26 September 2005 *The Weekly DX*, and *DX Alert Issue 23*

Note: **Time in bold** = Best Band(s) for opening; ??? = Call Sign not yet known; ++ = Phone Only; ** = CW Only; NO = No Opening forecast.
Long Path bearings and opening times are underlined. All forecasts are calculated using *W6ELProp V.1.03* propagation software, available at <http://www.qsl.net/w6elprop/> by Sheldon C. Shallon-W6EL. Solar Flux and K-index vary in accordance with NOAA 27-day forecast.

-- SEPTEMBER SOLAR ACTIVITY --

During September, the Solar Flux ranged from 72 up to 119, with a mean value of 90.8 (vs. 103.1 for September 2004 and 112.3 for September 2003). The A-index was ≤ 10 on 10 days.

September was a very unsettled month for HF propagation. The month started with an A-index of 25 due to high speed solar wind and a south-pointing Interplanetary Magnetic Field (IMF). The IMF is from our Sun, and the point where it contacts the Earth's magnetic field is called the magnetopause. Earth's magnetic field protects us from solar wind, and the Earth's magnetic field at the magnetosphere usually points north. But when the IMF points south, it is opposite Earth's magnetic field, and the two link up. This carries energy from the Sun directly into Earth, causing aurora, geomagnetic instability and generally poor HF propagation. (From *Propagation Forecast Bulletin 37*, Tad Cook, 02 September 2005)

Sunspot 808 returned the week of 04 September, releasing several powerful X-class solar flares, with the 07 September flare being among the largest on record. Although these flares were not aimed directly at Earth, they caused geomagnetic instability. The A-index was 15 on 07 September, rising to 90 on the 11th, and remaining in double digits until 21 September. Low band and 6-meter activity were prevalent during that period.

-- OCTOBER PROPAGATION --

During October, solar activity is expected to be at very low to moderate levels. No greater than 10 MeV proton events are expected. The greater than 2 MeV electron flux at geosynchronous orbit is expected to be at high levels on 05-06 and 18-22 Octo-

ber. The geomagnetic field is expected to range from quiet to minor storm levels. Otherwise, expect quiet to unsettled conditions. The Solar Flux should range from 75 to 95 during October. The best propagation period during October should occur from 04 to 18 October.

(From *NOAA Weekly Highlights and Forecasts, 27 September 2005* and *NOAA 27-day Space Weather Outlook Table, 27 September 2005*)

-- "CASS" CASSISDY-WA6AUD, SK --

A true DX icon was lost 09 September with the passing of Hugh "Cass" Cassidy, the creator, editor, typist, printer, circulation manager, advertising manager, etc. of *The West Coast DX Bulletin* (1968-1979), at age of 88 years. In the days before home computers and the Internet, Cass, his wife Virginia and their daughter published a mimeographed 6- to 8-page bulletin every week—some 600 times! Despite little advertising, the WCDXB grew to a subscriber base of over 3200.

For his efforts, Cass was inducted into the CQ DX Hall of Fame in the early 1980s.

The WCDXB was unlike any other DX bulletin—before or since. Not only was the latest DX news provided, but Cass supplied DXers with his editorials via a unique method of "topical vignettes." Through these vignettes, and such characters as the Palos Verdes Sundancers, Red-Eyed Louie and his cousin Sunspot Louie, the Old Timer, the newly minted QRPer, the True Blue DXers, and the dastardly Slim, Cass expounded on the current controversies in the DX community. Undoubtedly, Cass is now swapping tales with those inimitable characters.

(From *The Weekly DX, Vol. 5, No. 36*)

CONTESTS & ACTIVITIES

Contest/Special Event	Begin-End Times/Dates	Bands/Modes	QSO With	Exchange
Oceania DX Contest	0800Z 09 Oct 0800Z 10 Oct	160 – 10 Meters CW Only	Stations in Australia/ New Zealand/Oceania	R/S/T + Serial No.
FISTS Fall Sprint	1700Z 08 Oct 2100Z 08 Oct	80 – 10 Meters CW Only	FISTS Members Anywhere	Name + Power Output
North American RTTY Sprint	0000Z 09 Oct 0400Z 09 Oct	80 – 20 Meters RTTY Only	Anyone, Anywhere	Both Calls, Serial No., Name, State
Worked All Germany Contest	1500Z 15 Oct 1459Z 16 Oct	80 – 10 Meters Phone & CW	Stations in Germany	R/S/(T) + Serial No.
JARTS World Wide RTTY Contest (Japanese)	0000Z 15 Oct 2400Z 16 Oct	80 – 10 Meters RTTY Only	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/T + Age of Operator
Asia-Pacific Sprint	0000Z 16 Oct 0000Z 16 Oct	20 and 15 Meters CW Only	Asia-Pacific Island Stations Only	R/S/T + Serial No.
RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest (British)	0700Z 16 Oct 1900Z 16 Oct	10 and 15 Meters CW Only	UK Stations Only	R/S/T + Serial No.
CQ World Wide DX Contest	0000Z 29 Oct 2400Z 30 Oct	160 – 10 Meters Phone Only	Anyone, Anywhere (State-side QSOs for Zone Only)	R/S + CQ Zone
4 th Annual FISTS Coast to Coast Contest	0000Z 30 Oct 2400Z 30 Oct	80 – 10 Meters CW Only	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/T, Name, State, Power

From October 2005 *QST*

-- REGIONAL HAMFESTS --

05 Nov Titusville Hamfest at DAV Chapter 109, 435 Singleton Ave. TI: 145.490 (PL 100); Info: Bob-N6USP, n6usp@gnc.net

(From <http://bellsouthpwp.net/k/kb4vol>, the Web site of Bill Britton-KB4VOL, and October 2005 *QST*)

-- REGIONAL REPEATERS --

Arcadia	W4MIN	147.075(+)	100 Hz
Englewood	N4EAR	146.700(-)	77 Hz
Englewood	K0DGF	146.775(-)	77 Hz
Laurel	N4SER	145.130(-)	
North Port	KI4DEH	147.120(+)	136.5 Hz
Pt. Charlotte	W4DUX	147.255(+)	136.5 Hz
Punta Gorda	WX4E	146.745(-)	
Sarasota	W4IE	146.910(-)	(**)
Sarasota	N4SER	146.730(-)	100 Hz
Venice	W4AC	146.805(-)	100 Hz
Verna	NI4CE	146.805(-)	100 Hz

Notes: EchoLink available on W4AC and N4EAR repeaters.

(**) Open Autopatch; use * to open, # to close

(From 02 July 2005 Florida Repeater Council Database)

“Government is the only enterprise in the world which expands in size when its failures increase.” – US District Judge Janice Brown

---000---

-- TARC CHRISTMAS PARTY --

Our Christmas Party will be held at the Boca Royale Golf and Country Club, 1601 Englewood Road (just south of the Englewood Isles Parkway traffic light), on Saturday 10 December 2005. Festivities start at 6:00 PM. We have the private “Green Room” which seats 50 people very comfortably, and provides for dancing. Music will be provided. The all-inclusive price is \$27 per person.

We will start with hors d’oeuvres of:

Cheese, Fruit and Crackers
Swedish Meatballs
Shrimp Spring Rolls

Dinner Entrees are served with Salad, fresh Baked Rolls and Butter, Vegetable and Potato or Rice, and are:

Prime Rib of Beef
Pork Chop
Chicken Marsala
Salmon

Dessert: Ice Cream Sundae

Beverages: Coffee, Hot and Iced Tea

TARC members, family and friends are invited. Please send your reservations with dinner selection(s) to:

Don Gray-WD7A
761 Mangrove Road
Venice, FL 34293

before 01 December.

Come out and support our club. It should be a fun time!!

-- REMINICING WITH "THE GROUCH"--

(Bob Schroeder-KB9BYE kindly sent us the following, which was written back in September 1991 by former Suncoast Chapter 53 member Lloyd Pfahler-W8FKL (SK), who was also affectionately known as "The Grouch".)

On September 22, 1931 I was granted Station and Operator's identity of W8FKL. This was announced to me by U. S. Postage (free mail), by furnishing two sheets of letter size pages, one a "STATION" license and the second, an "OPERATOR'S" license, both showing a "License No. 8-D-6518." These both were signed by James W. Baldwin, Secy. of the Federal Radio Commission. Both pages stated that this "License No. 8-D-6518" was subject to the provisions of the Radio Act of 1927.

All of this was granted because I passed the ten words per minute receive and transmit requirements, and had also passed the composition-type technical requirements. A prior examination by the "EXECUTIONER," who thoroughly examined my stubby pencil and paper and other parts of my personal belongings for crib notes. The hand written test was to describe in detail all the bits and parts and not understood some pieces as to how, why, when we thought they worked; if so of, if not, why?

These tests were inflicted on us by a Government-paid employee named Mr. Cotton, who hated everyone, starting with himself, and especially those young "snots" who had the effrontery to drive all the way from Shelby, Ohio to Cleveland, Ohio in an old Model-A Ford and disturb HIMSELF, Mr. Cotton—who was paid to do his job. Such nerve!! I shall remember "His Highness" with extreme loathing for at least thirty days after I die. I have "W8FKL" carved on my tombstone in Shelby, Ohio, so I don't forget this Public Servant!!!

My entire "station" was constructed from an old Crosley "Five Tuber"—either a 1926 or 1927 model that was relegated to the basement at 57 South Gamble St., Shelby, Ohio when my Father purchased a new "Seven Tuber"—a "much improved" model. My first receiver was a "Two Tuber" regenerative; two very shiny 201-As. The magnificent transmitter sported one 201-A. You guessed it—all from the Crosley "Five Tuber." And, of course, the beautiful dials, "Bakelite," not plastic, plus the grid leak, variable condensers (variable capacitors were invented later—HI). That Crosley was a veritable gold mine! Since I had two more 201-As left, I decided to build a push-pull exciter. This worked very well for some time and, doing some scrounging, I came up with some transformer laminations and pieces of various gauges of copper wire—the heavier ones for the primary and the thinner ones for the secondary. With an

old 280, and some other bits and pieces, I had a plate supply for the push-pull. Having no meters of any kind, the plate supply was a little more DC than the pair of tubes could handle. After a little Rag Chewing (Morse Code, that is) the plates turned a light pink, glowing in the dark—like a real "Station" should! Something had to be done. I could not afford to burn up those magnificent 201-As. I could take some windings off the secondary, but I would have to remove all that black friction tape—way too messy. So I turned the magnificent push-pull upside down, inserting the 201-As into two partly water filled Mason Jars (borrowed from my Mother). Aside from the continual bubbling, hissing, steaming and refilling, the jars all worked well. It was a shame Prestone had not yet been invented.

Anyway, this worked well, long enough for me to accumulate a pair each of 224, 324 and a 245—all purchased from the local radio repair shop; much used and for 10 cents each. On building the new all "A.C. FIVE TUBER," I was able to return the two Mason Jars to my Mother. My Father later discovered that the square hole in the new galvanized chicken coop roof turned out to be the new chassis for my magnificent "FIVE TUBER"—A.C., that is. My Mother really missed the handle on her new all aluminum sauce pan. It served very well as my "heavy duty" Morse Code key. The rest of her new sauce pan turned up as the wings and tail section of a Rocket Plane that scorched up old South Gamble Street.

The Rocket Plane was quite another happening at 57 South Gamble Street, Shelby, Ohio!!!! It has to do with why only the primers in my Father's 20-gauge Winchester shotgun fired. My—My. I never did catch that mouse! I think his name is "MICKEY."

MINUTES, from page 2

ADJOURNMENT – A motion to adjourn at 7:43 PM was made by Blake-KE4SGK, seconded by Charlie-W4DB, and passed. There were 14 members and 2 visitors present.

PROGRAM – Jack-W4JS gave an overview of "Red Cross Orientation and Training."

Jack Sproat-W4JS
Secretary

-- ARRL DUES UP FOR RENEWAL? --

Are your ARRL dues expiring in the near future? You can renew via our club, such that the TARC will receive \$2.00 from your renewal fee. Treasurer Don Gray-WD7A has the proper forms to facilitate this renewal process. See Don at the meeting for details and procedures.

-- U.S. AMATEUR POPULATION --

Last month, *The Communicator* offered some analysis of the distribution of amateur radio operators around the world (“Where Are All the Hams?”). The following is an analysis of the amateur radio population in the U.S. Data are taken from the 02 September 2005 posting by George McCouch-K3UD on the QRZ.com Web site. George, in turn, had gotten much of his information from the ah0a.org Web site of Joe Speroni-AH0A.

A review of annual license data over the past five years; total, all classes, shows:

14 May 2000	674,792
21 Apr 2003	687,860
06 Sep 2004	674,788
31 Jul 2005	663,710

The U.S. amateur radio population peaked in April 2003, when there were 687,860 licenses of record in the FCC files. The above figures indicate that the license restructuring that went into effect 15 April 2000 may have contributed to the 1.94 percent increase between 2000 and 2003, however, all of that growth was lost in the following year.

As of 18 September 2005, the breakdown of U.S. amateur licenses is as follows:

Novice	27,633
Tech/+	317,380
General	135,742
Advanced	75,098
Extra	<u>107,014</u>
Total	662,867

What is the ratio of U.S. radio amateurs to the total population of the country? The estimated July 2005 U. S. population is 295,734,134, therefore, based on the above September figures, there is one U.S. radio amateur licensee for every 446 residents. This falls well below Japan’s ratio of one amateur for every 99 residents, and trails South Korea’s ratio of 1 per 333 residents.

Assuming that the FCC will drop the requirement for Morse code testing, will this lead to a growth in amateur radio in the U.S.? The “bubble” that resulted from the 2000 restructuring only lasted three years. We are living in an era when many young people seem more willing to gaze at, and participate in, computerized animation than in gaining an appreciation of the real world around them. Amateur Radio is “real time” and is not as neatly controllable as are computer games, Internet Web sites, chat rooms, etc. We also live in an era when potential hams may be dismayed by zoning laws, homeowner association rules, deed restricted communities, etc. which prevent them from erecting outdoor antennas.

What will ham radio be like within the next several decades? It’s anyone’s guess.

--WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS --

Wireless Internet access is becoming more common in Sarasota and Manatee counties. “Sarasota Unplugged” is the free wireless Internet access medium that’s been up and running since late July. What started as wireless access in the Selby Public Library is being expanded by Sarasota County

Last summer a small antenna was placed on the library, creating a wireless “cloud” over Five Points Park. Since then, the antennas and digital transceivers providing wireless access have been installed at three other locations, with an installation planned for the roof of the Ritz-Carlton hotel.

There have been discussions between officials of both counties with the goal of covering the counties with the Wi-Fi net of the future, using equipment called “WiMAX,” now under development.

Within the last three years, the equipment needed to utilize Wi-Fi has gone from being the domain of a relatively few nerds to being almost ubiquitous. Most new laptop computers come with Wi-Fi. Owners of slightly older model laptops that don’t have Wi-Fi can buy a \$70 Linksys 802.11g wireless notebook card. The circuitry is constantly seeking Wi-Fi networks to join.

To log in, you click on a Wi-Fi icon to get a menu, then point and click at your choice. In downtown Sarasota, along with the “Unplugged” option, a computer might “see” an AT&T network that charges its subscribers a monthly fee, and a similar network offered by Verizon. At many other locations, T-Mobile offers wireless connections with a daily or monthly fee. The service offered by Sarasota County is free.

Economic development types see wireless access as being a way to attract digital workers, who more and more frequently work from wherever they want and share their work via the Internet.

Intel and others are working on WiMAX, the next leap in the wireless Internet. WiMAX’s power and range would make it cost-effective, what with one installation covering up to a 10-mile radius.

(From “One giant hot spot,” Michael Pollick, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune Business Weekly*, 26 September 2005)

--BROADBAND VIA AC OUTLETS --

Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. has developed technology to use electric wiring in the home to network computers at up to 170 Mbits/second, eliminating the use of Ethernet cables or wireless networking. Attach the device into sockets, plug the computers into these sockets and they’re linked.

(From “Chip Helps Electric Outlet Go Broadband,” Yuri Kageyama, *AT&T Worldnet Service*, 29 September 2005)