



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 MHz(+) both w/100 Hz PL



-- SEPTEMBER 2006 --

-- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE --

Thus far, we should have few complaints about the Sarasota County "reverse-snowbird" season. Hurricanes have held off although Ernesto gave us some concern until it favored the east coast, not the Sun-coast. It seems the northern states have been hotter than down here—Helena, Montana hit 117 degrees!

The core TARC faithful who choose to remain full time here in "Paradise" have been enjoying breakfast gatherings at both Peach's and Mel's while awaiting the return of the rest of our vacationing members.

I'm sure you will agree with me that the work of Stew Haag's son, David-W4HAG, in setting up communications in one of the most remote regions on Earth is a most moving and inspiring story, and one in which Amateur Radio has played a big part. As has been said many times before, we enjoy the world's best hobby.

VY 73 de Konrad-WA3RRS

-- SEPTEMBER MEETING --

Our next TARC meeting will be at 7:00 PM on 14 September 2006 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. After the business meeting, the "Ins and Outs of QSLing" will be discussed. Come out and show support of your club.

-- TARC WEEKLY NETS --

The TARC Simplex Net meets every Tuesday at 7:30 PM on 146.580 MHz; the TARC Net is held every Thursday, except on meeting dates, at 7:30 PM on our 146.805 W4AC Repeater (- 600 Hz offset and 100 Hz PL tone required).

-- UPCOMING DARN ACTIVITY --

The Diocese Amateur Radio Network (DARN) will conduct communications exercises at 11 AM and 7 PM on 11 September, and TARC members are encouraged to check in when prompted by the Net Control. As the DARN will be using our W4AC Repeater, please avoid use of EchoLink during the exercise period. Thanks!

-- GIVING THEIR TIME FOR OTHERS --

Twenty-four members and friends attended the 13 April TARC meeting, at which David Haag-W4HAG and Marcella Mills gave an excellent presentation of their 2005 *Airwave Missions* project in Indonesia. David and Marcella were married this June in the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia.



While awaiting procurement of equipment for their next *Airwave Missions* project in Indonesia, David and Marcella were active with *Habitat for Humanity*. Then, in early August, they returned again to the isolation of Indonesia's Papua Barat Province on the island of New Guinea. The guiding philosophy of these two young people is that giving of one's time is the most valuable thing a person can offer. See inside for captioned photos of their Indonesian efforts.

-- REGIONAL HAMFESTS --

- 23 Sept Suncoast ARC Hamfest at First Lutheran Church, 6416 Delaware Ave., New Port Richey TI: 146.64, Info: Ron-N9EE, 727-376-6575
- 23 Sept Amateur Radio Unit of Bahia Shrine Hamfest, Bahia Shrine Center, 2300 Pembroke Dr., Orlando. TI: 147.39 (103.5 Hz), Info: Warren-W4WHH, 407-365-6682

(From <http://bellsouthpwp.net/k/kb4vol>, the Web site of Bill Britton-KB4VOL and September 2006 *QST*)

TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Minutes of the Meeting

10 August 2006

President Konrad Owens-WA3RRS called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and led the pledge of allegiance. John Watson of Nokomis, who will go for his Technician license 12 August, and Mike Schwartz of Venice, who is interested in obtaining an amateur radio license for use on shipboard, were welcomed as visitors. Introductions were then made all around.

MINUTES –Peter Pesa-N4RD moved that the minutes of the 13 July 2006 meeting be accepted as published in the August 2006 issue of *The Communicator*, seconded by Diana Gregory-KI4GRF, and passed.

CORRESPONDENCE – Jack-W4JS reported on the following correspondence:

* Received letter from University of Florida ARC, inviting potential students to visit the club and UF.

* Sent letter to Mrs. Sally Lester, acknowledging donation of HF equipment of Frank Lester-W4AMJ; SK.

* Sent letter to Garrett Eelman, acknowledging donation of mobile Spider Antenna.

* Received e-mail letter from Jeff Watson-KI4QDY, requesting consideration for use of Frank Lester's equipment.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Treasurer Don Gray-WD7A reported that the 13 July starting balance was \$4578.29. Receipts were \$9.00 from the July 50/50 drawing. Expenses were \$41.00 for one month's Internet service at the W4AC Repeater site, and \$204.74 for property insurance on the equipment at our W4AC Repeater site, totaling \$245.74. The ending balance is \$4341.55. Peter-N4RD moved acceptance of the report, seconded by Charlie Covell-W4DB, and passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SUNSHINE – No news of any illnesses.

VE TESTING – Jack-W4JS reported that about seven candidates are known to be coming to the 12 August VE session.

REPEATER/TECHNICAL – Stew Haag-W4MO reported that our W4AC Repeater is operating satisfactorily.

CLUB PROPERTY – Konrad-WA3RRS commented that we now have three HF radios that could be made available to members who would make use of them. Jack-W4JS will send out an e-mail to the membership, advising of this opportunity.

PUBLICITY/MEMBERSHIP – Don-WD7A reported that we now have 76 members, including three Life Members and ten first year free members.

EMERGENCY COORDINATOR – Emergency Coordinator Peter Pesa-N4RD reminded all that the DARN will have two practice sessions this coming Monday, 14 August, at 11 AM and 7 PM, and asked for participation by the TARC members.

LIAISON TO EARS – Konrad-WA3RRS did not attend the July meeting of the Englewood ARS.

LIAISON TO QCWA – Jack-W4JS reported that 11 Suncoast Chapter 53 members and friends attended the 02 August lunch at the Panda Pavilion, US 41, in Venice. The next lunch will be 06 September and all are invited.

OLD BUSINESS – Don-WD7A reported that the inventory of the equipment at our W4AC repeater site is valued at \$13,649. Following comparative price discussions with our liability insurance carrier, Don purchased the ARRL insurance coverage for all the equipment at an annual premium of \$204.74. There is a \$50 deductible/item/incident for replacement or \$25 deductible/item/incident for repair.

NEW BUSINESS – Peter-N4RD reported he had received word that Jack-W4JS had lost the receipt for the printing costs of the August newsletter, and that Jack was covering the cost on his own. Peter then added that, over the years, Jack had been using ink cartridges, preparing the newsletters and other club documents without any reimbursement. Peter then moved, and Charlie-W4DB seconded, that the club give Jack \$20 for general reimbursement. The motion passed with one dissenting vote—from W4JS.

ADJOURNMENT – A motion to adjourn at 7:25 PM was made by Peter-N4RD, seconded by Charlie-W4DB, and passed. There were nine members and two visitors present.

PROGRAM – A video of the 2005 FT5XO DXpedition to Kerguelen Island was shown.

Jack Sproat-W4JS

Secretary



Jack-W4JS is QSL manager for Lebanese amateur, Michel Homsi-OD5TX, who lives/works in Dubai.

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 (GMT)							
			80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10
Greenland – OX3PG	Now Active	13	--	--	--	12-02	--	--	--	--
Iceland – TF/DL2RMC & DO3MSH	Now to 06 Sept	28	00-08	22-02	12-23	13-00	NO	NO	NO	NO
Vietnam – XV3DHY & XV3EKK	Now to 07 Sept	348	NO	11-12	11-12	13-17	14-16	NO	NO	NO
Mayotte – TX5NK & TX5T	Now to 11 Sept	85	23-03	22-03	21-00	18-22	20-21	16-17	NO	NO
Egypt – SU/KJ9I	Now to 18 Sept	54	23-04	22-05	21-02	13-21	16-20	16-20	NO	NO
Monaco – 3A/F5RBB	02 – 10 Sept	50	23-06	21-07	20-00	14-20	17-20	NO	NO	NO
Gibraltar – ZG2FX	02 – 10 Sept	61	23-07	21-07	20-04	13-00	17-20	17-20	NO	NO
Lesotho – 7P8WO, 7P8DJ & 7P8JF	03 – 12 Sept	110	23-05	22-06	21-03	17-19	17-18	17-18	NO	NO
Seychelles – S79RC	03 – 16 Sept	68	23-03	23-03	21-00	18-23	18-22	20-23	NO	NO
South Cook Is – E51KH	07 – 22 Sept	246	04-12	02-13	02-12	17-01	18-00	18-22	18-22	NO
Market Reef – OJ0LA	08 – 14 Sept	31	23-06	21-08	19-22	14-19	14-19	NO	NO	NO
Namibia – V5/G3RWF	14 Sep – 07 Oct	107	23-05	22-06	21-03	17-20	18-19	18-19	NO	NO
Malawi – 7Q7CE	18 Sep – 06 Oct	90	23-04	21-05	21-02	17-20	16-17	16-17	NO	NO
Mayotte – TX6A & TX8A	05 – 17 October	85	23-03	22-03	21-00	17-21	18-19	16-18	NO	NO

Updated 30 August 2006, based on 30 August 2006 *QRZ DX*, 28 August 2006 *The Weekly DX* and *K1XN's DX Alert #609*

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 varied in accordance with NOAA 27-day forecast.

-- AUGUST SOLAR ACTIVITY --

During August, the Solar Flux ranged from 70 up to 89, with a mean value of 79.0 (vs. 90.8 for August 2005 and 110.1 for August 2004). The A-index was ≤ 10 on 22 days.

There were several days during August when no sunspots were visible. Propagation conditions were generally favorable during the month.

-- SEPTEMBER PROPAGATION --

During September, solar activity is expected to be at very low to low levels. No greater than 10MeV proton events are expected.

The greater than 2 MeV electron flux at geosynchronous orbit is expected to be at high levels on 04-13 and again on 17-25 September.

The geomagnetic field is expected to be at quiet to unsettled levels for the majority of the period. Recurrent coronal hole wind streams are expected on 03-04 and 23-24 September. Unsettled to minor storm periods are possible 03-04 September, while unsettled to active periods are possible 23-24 September. The Solar Flux should range from 75 to 85.

(From NOAA Weekly Forecast of Solar and Geomagnetic Activity, 29 August 2006 and NOAA 27-day Space Weather Outlook Table, 29 August 2006)

-- SWAINS ISLAND FOLLOW UP --

(The following comes from the web site of Kan Mizoguchi-JA1BK, who was the team leader for the recent Swains Island Dxpedition.)

The two teams met in Honolulu to check equipment and to fly via Hawaiian Airlines to Pago Pago, American Samoa. Equipment owned by the team

members and loaned by Larry Gandy-AH8LG and SteppIR was assembled and checked out.

The team then met with members of the family that has owned Swains Island since it was discovered and with representatives of the government of American Samoa. Typhoon Olaf had hit American Samoa prior to the team's arrival, such that the boat initially intended for charter was preoccupied with emergency use. A tuna boat, the *Tasman Explorer*, out of Rora Tonga, South Cook Islands, was chartered. Meanwhile, Typhoon Percy scored a direct hit on Swains Island. As such, the team participated in a relief effort, carrying water, food, clothing, gasoline and other supplies to the island's residents in addition to the Dxpedition equipment.



The *Tasman Explorer* gets underway to Swains Is.

Amateur Radio received a great deal of favorable publicity, with many hours of live TV coverage on TV in Pago Pago.

CONTESTS & ACTIVITIES

Contest/Special Event	Begin-End Times/Dates	Bands/Modes	QSO With	Exchange
All-Asian DX Contest	0000Z 02 Sep 2400Z 03 Sep	160 – 10 Meters Phone Only	Asian DXCC Entities	R/S + Operator's Age
Russian RTTY World Wide Contest	0000Z 02 Sep 2400Z 02 Sep	80 – 10 Meters RTTY Only	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/T + CQ Zone
North American Sprint	0000Z 10 Sep 0400Z 10 Sep	80 – 20 Meters CW Only	NA Countries, Provinces, and States	Calls, Serial No., Name, QTH
Worked All Europe DX Contest	0000Z 09 Sep 2359Z 10 Sep	80 – 10 Meters Phone Only	WAE Countries Only	R/S + Serial Number
Second-Class Operators Club Marathon Sprint	1800Z 09 Sep 2400Z 09 Sep	160 – 10 Meters CW Only	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/T + QTH
North American Sprint	0000Z 17 Sep 0400Z 17 Sep	80 – 20 Meters Phone Only	NA Countries, Provinces, and States	Calls, Serial No., Name, QTH
Scandinavian Activity Contest	1200Z 16 Sep 1200Z 17 Sep	80 – 10 Meters CW Only	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/T + Serial Number
Quarter Century Wireless Associa- tion Fall QSO Party	1800Z 16 Sep 1800Z 17 Sep	80 – 10 Meters SSB, CW, Digital	QCWA Members	Yr. 1 st License, Chapter or QTH
CQ Worldwide RTTY DX Contest	0000Z 23 Sep 2400Z 24 Sep	80 – 10 Meters RTTY Only	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/T + CQ Zone
Scandinavian Activity Contest	1200Z 23 Sep 1200Z 24 Sep	80 – 10 Meters Phone Only	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S + Serial Number
Top of Europe Contesters World Wide Grid Contest	1200Z 30 Sep 1200Z 01 Oct	160 – 10 Meters CW Only	Anyone, Anywhere	R/S/T + Grid Square

From September 2006 issues of *QST* and *WorldRadio*

-- THE MAUNDER MINIMUM --

(The following comes from Wikipedia, the Internet Encyclopedia. While we are now experiencing low sunspot numbers as Sunspot Cycle 23 winds down, just think how difficult it would have been to attempt HF propagation during the era of the Maunder Minimum—if radio had, in fact, existed back then.)

The Maunder Minimum is the name given to the period roughly from 1645 to 1715, when sunspots became exceedingly rare, as noted by solar observers of the time. It is named after the later solar astronomer E. W. Maunder who discovered the dearth of sunspots during that period by studying records from those years. During the Maunder Minimum, astronomers observed only about 50 sunspots, as opposed to a more typical 40,000–50,000 spots.

During the 1660 decade, only one sunspot was seen; none were seen in the 1670 decade, and again only one sunspot was seen during the 1680 decade.

The Maunder Minimum coincided with the middle—and coldest part—of the so-called Little Ice Age, during which Europe and North America and, and perhaps much of the rest of the world, were subjected to bitterly cold winters.

Whether there is a causal connection between low sunspot activity and cold winters is the subject of

ongoing debate. Some scientists believe that solar variation drives climate change more than does carbon dioxide. Recently published research suggests that the Sun's rotation slowed in the deep Maunder minimum (1666-1700). At our current level of understanding of solar physics, a larger and slower Sun necessarily implies a cooler Sun that provides less heat to Earth.

--VANITY LICENSE RENEWALS --

We're now within the 90-day time frame during which the initial batch of vanity licenses, issued 04 November 1996, are eligible for renewal. Several weeks ago, the W5YI VEC Inc. sent out a convenient renewal packet, charging \$7.00 over the cost of the vanity license (currently \$21.90). For holders of vanity call signs who are not ARRL members, this is a good deal, as the ARRL is charging \$14.00 to renew a vanity license for a non-member.

The ARRL has also recently sent out a renewal notice to ARRL members, offering to renew vanity licenses for a processing fee of \$5.00.

If you've registered electronically with the FCC, and have the necessary password to access your license, you can also renew directly with the FCC by using a credit card and the appropriate FCC on-line forms.

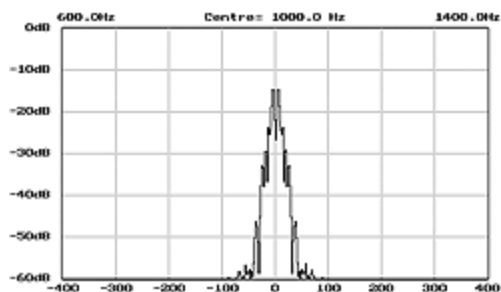
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-- PSK FOR BEGINNERS --

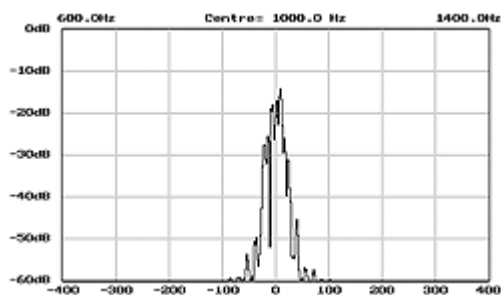
(With the low sun spot levels, and generally weaker signals, use of digital modes is a good alternative for those who want to stay active on HF with limited power and/or antennas. This article was written by Jeff Brone-WB2JNA, and was published on the ARRL Web Site.)

If you want to get started using PSK31, I suggest that you begin by listening (and watching) some PSK signals. First, go on the Internet and download the latest version of the *Digipan* program to your computer (just follow the links and instructions). *Digipan* is free and simple, so it's a good place to start.

You'll want to run a cable from the headphone or speaker jack of your radio to the "line in" jack on the back of your computer (next to this jack will probably be a drawing of an arrow pointing to the center of a circle). Keep in mind that not all computers have a LINE input (most laptops don't). If yours does not, you'll have to use the microphone input.



PSK31 in bspk mode



PSK31 in qspk mode

percent and is not muted. When you double click the tiny speaker, you'll see the VOLUME controls, which control transmit audio, not the RECORD controls that you need to adjust for receiving. To get the RECORDING window, you have to click on OPTIONS in the upper left corner of the VOLUME window, then click OPTIONS, then PROPERTIES, then RECORDING, then OK.

Next, open *Digipan*, tune the radio to about 14.070 MHz, adjust the radio volume until the program's computer screen shows a neutral dark color and maybe some noticeable trails of signals that stand out clearly from the background. You are now looking at

Next, adjust your sound card controls (double click the little speaker icon at the bottom of your computer screen) so the "line in" volume is at about 75

the "waterfall display." You also can try listening on or around 7.070 or 21.070 MHz.

You may need to tune the radio a few kHz either way to get a good signal to read. I find it best to tune the rig so the signal you're monitoring is around the "1000" marker on the waterfall display. PSK signals sound like high-pitched warbling, and they appear very thin and individual on the display. Use your mouse to double click on a trail, and the words being sent should appear on the larger receiving box on *Digipan*. You are now reading PSK signals, which should keep you busy for a while. Notice the friendly tone that the operators use and the relaxed feeling of most exchanges. This is something most PSK ops seem to enjoy a lot.

You'll want to send some signals and talk to other operators. Do a dry run practice session first. Connect the speakers (or a headset) to your computer and adjust your sound card to make sure you have moderate volume coming out of them. Then type some text in the smaller "transmitting" box and click the "T/R" button at the top of *Digipan*. You will hear a signal coming out of the speakers and see the text you would be transmitting scroll across the screen. If you again click the "T/R" button at the top while this is happening, the program will automatically finish sending the whole text before going back to receive (this trick will come in handy later). Play around with this for a bit and see how it feels. In fact, spend some time getting used to using the program in this "practice" mode.

You may need an interface, and there are several on the Internet if you'd like to build one, or you can always buy one. Many *QST* advertisers, like West Mountain Radio, MFJ, Tigertronics, and RigExpert sell them, as well as other companies like MicroHAM and MixW. Remember: Watch the ALC or you could be generating a horrible signal and interfering with others.

-- A WORD OF CAUTION --

(The following advisory comes from Dan Schaaf-K3ZXL, who received it from another member of the Fox Tango [Yaesu owners] group.)

Over in New Orleans they've started crushing abandoned vehicles into scrap, but first the dealers are removing any ham radio equipment that was in those vehicles. They clean up the outside of these rigs and offer them for sale, usually with the pretense, "I was given this radio but I don't know anything about amateur radio."

If you should see any such ads on *eBay* and are still interested, insist on seeing several photos of the inside of the radio before making any commitments.

-- A MISSION OF HELPING OTHERS--



Soon after arrival in Wamena, Papua Barat Province, David spoke to the congregation of some 200 at the Agape Church in Wamena. Sue Trenier, who has lived there for 25 years, translated David's message to the congregation. David and Marcella then departed via helicopter to the mountainous villages.

It was slippery going as they traversed the rugged terrain, helped by the local Papuans. An 8-hour trek covered only a few miles.



The Welcoming Committee. Kids will be kids!



There were rivers to cross!

While the helicopter could access certain villages, David and Marcella had to hike to others. The local people built a bridge over this raging water.



David-W4HAG conducts a training session with the men selected by the village to be responsible for installation, operation and maintenance of the communications equipment.



There were mountains to climb!



The village attends the antenna raising party! No shortage of assistance to get the pole-mounted omnidirectional antenna up into position.



Putting the training to use.

One of the local men who will be responsible for the radio equipment develops his skills by connecting up the solar panel.



The solar panel is installed.

Proper installation of the solar panel is essential, such that the battery which will power the UHF station will be fully charged when it is needed.



A typical completed station, ready for use.

Following the outside work, the Kenwood transceiver is connected to the battery and voltage regulator.



On the Air!!

The village of Kwelena is so inaccessible that two village natives were given extra training and entrusted to make that installation on their own, without David's assistance. When their first call was made to Sungoklah, and answered, the operator's voice could not be heard above the joyous shouting of the Kwelena natives. The village leader came on the radio to give his thanks. Then the pastor spoke, thanking God for bringing their village out of darkness.



Translator Yely Wenda, David, and Marcella

A brief time to relax after a job definitely well done. Four radio systems were installed in an area of the world where few foreigners have trod. Now those villages are not as isolated from one another.