



# THE COMMUNICATOR



Mailing Address: P. O. Box 976, Nokomis, FL 34274

W4AC Repeaters: 444.100 MHz (DMR) & 146.805 MHz (-) (PL100Analog)

Incorporated 1984

<http://www.tamiamiarc.org>

February, 2019

## In this issue:

- President's Message:** ..... 1
- Meeting Notice:** .....1
- Meeting Minutes:** ..... 2
- Minutes & Tips:** ..... 3
- DX Jack's Page:** ..... 4
- W2XYZ:** ..... 5
- Lighthouse On The Air:** ..6-7
- SRQ Ares:** .... 8
- Winter Field Day:** ..... 9
- Noise:** ..... 10
- Club Calendar:** ... 11
- Membership Application:** . 12

## President's message.....KB1HIP

Our club had three fun activities last month: First, on January 3 we activated the Boca Grande/Gasparilla Light House (USA 910) as part of the Amateur Radio Light House Society. We set up three stations and three antennas. We learned a lot from this experience that we can use in the future.

Second, we held an auction at the January 9 monthly meeting of equipment that was donated to the club. We had standing room only with over 45 attendees. The club netted \$ 1067, which was turned over to our treasury. Thanks to Jim Shortill, KJ4NDO, chief auctioneer, Steve Phillips, WA1ZKN, technical support, and Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ, payment and accounting.

Third, the Club participated in the Winter Field Day (WFDA) event on January 26 at the North Jetty Park in Nokomis. We set up the TARC tent, three stations and antennas, including a vertical, a long wire, and a two element Yagi beam. Unfortunately, we had to curtail the event early due to the bad weather. Thanks to Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR, for coordinating this event and to Frank, W2XYZ, who submitted our score. Please see the monthly minutes in this issue for details of all the events.

We recommend that all of our members attend the 2019 HamCation, the Amateur Radio and Electronics show that will take place on February 8, 9 and 10 at the Central Florida Fairgrounds and Expo Park in Orlando. It is the second largest amateur radio convention/hamfest in the country.

We have several members who have not paid their dues. We don't want to lose any members, however, there is a two month grace period after which we will be forced to remove you from the roster and the TARC Communicator distribution. We would prefer not to do that.

We are now preparing our plan to monitor the Sharkstooth 10K race which will take place on Saturday, March 2, 2019. Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ, is coordinating this activity. Please see him or me to sign up.

I hope everyone has a good February. *VY 73 to all, de Andy-KB1HIP*

### Next Month

**Orlando  
Hamcation  
Report**

**No Dues -  
NO Commu-  
nicator!**

## Next meeting February 13, 2019

Our meeting will start at **7:00 PM** on Wednesday, **13 February, 2019** at the Coast Guard Auxiliary Training Center, 1200 South Harbor Drive.

**TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB** *Minutes of the 01/09/19 Meeting*

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Andy Durette, KB1HIP. The pledge to the flag followed. Introductions were made by name and call sign.

**MINUTES:** President Durette requested a motion to accept the minutes of the December 12, 2018 meeting as published in the Communicator. Motion was made, seconded and approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ, reported an ending balance of \$4,597.95 as of December 31, 2018.

**SUNSHINE:** N/A

**VE TESTING:** Steve Phillips, WA1ZKN, reported that there were nine candidates for the January VE session: two took the Tech exam, one passed and one did not; one passed both the Tech and the General examinations; four upgraded from Tech to General, and two passed the upgrade from General to Extra. Steve also reported that this larger than normal testing session went smoothly.

**LIAISON TO QCWA:** QCWA meeting was held at Denny's Restaurant on Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, FL at 11:00 AM, January 7th. There were 26 members, spouses and guests present. Stan Robinson, W9SMR, presented a program on corn, its current industrial and daily uses.

**REPEATER / TECHNICAL:** Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ, reported that both the digital and analog repeaters are working well. The frequency for digital operations is 444.10 MHz, talk group TAC 311. The club 2 meter analog repeater is 146.805 MHz (-) PL 100. The digital net opens Tuesday at 7:30 PM. The 2 Meter net opens Thursday at 7:30 PM. The 10 meter net on frequency 28.450 MHz, upper side band, begins immediately following the conclusion of the 2 meter net. This 10 meter frequency was chosen so Novice/Technician licensees could participate.

**MEMBERSHIP:** There are 74 regular members, 22 first year free, 0 Student, 7 life and 1 comp, for a total of 104 members.

**PUBLICITY:** Tom Porada, W4IEE, has resigned from his publicity responsibilities and as a director due to the demands of his HOA commitments. Tom agreed to continue with the ongoing business of securing the second tent. He requests members forward QSL cards to him for the creation of a QSL backdrop as can be seen on the first tent. Tom requests that members who had their QSL cards used for first tent do not send in duplicates. Please send cards to Tom ASAP.

**OLD BUSINESS:** 1. January's Winter Field Day will be held on the 26 and 27 of January from 2:00 PM Saturday until 2:00 PM Sunday at the North Jetty Park. Set-up begins at 9:00 AM Saturday. Six operators have already signed up, but more are welcomed. If you are a new Technician, or an old hand, plan to come and learn about winter radio operations from the comfort of our new tent. We'll teach you how to be good operators.

2. The Boca Grande Light House Radio Operations: Andy Durette, KB1HIP, reported that this event, held on January 3rd and sponsored by the Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society, was an operational pleasure. Club members put up two antennas and operated three stations from the space under the Boca Grande Lighthouse. Our stations operated from 9 AM till 3 PM. Andy reported that the lighthouse staff members were helpful and supportive of this initiative.

3. ARES Update: Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR, reports that it is the intention of the Sarasota EOC to replace the Sarasota County Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) with a formal Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) organization for the County. The ARES organization will be independent of any specific amateur radio club, but will look to amateur radio club members for expertise, and to volunteer their services to the new ARES organization. Paul will advise the Club on this matter as details become available.

**NEW BUSINESS:** 1. Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR, advised that the Club would be initiating an amateur radio General license class during the last three weeks of March and the first two weeks of April. The classes will be held during the week nights and also during Saturdays to provide the general public a greater opportunity to attend.

Continued >>>>>

## Minutes, con't

2. Information for new members: New members who want to buy a TARC polo shirt should contact Gary Hagens, K6OC with size and quantity information. Shirts are \$33.00 each. For engraved plastic name tags, please contact Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ. Cost is \$8.00 each.

The 50-50 drawing of \$22.00 was won by Bob Marchese, K1NOK.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.

There were 45 members and visitors present.

**The annual club auction of experienced radio equipment followed. Bidding was vigorous, and spirited discussions occurred concerning the true value of specific items. At the end of the evening a good time was had by all, and a total of \$1,091.00 was earned for the club.**



A full house eagerly awaits the start of bidding.

## Tom's Tips - Terminating flat braid ground wire

Connecting ham gear to a single point interior ground, then out to a good earth ground is common practice. It can be done with many wire types and sizes, with or without lugs attached at the ends. Flat braid is easy to work with and very flexible. The one truism about terminating wire is, the larger the wire, the more expensive the wire and the lug. Flat braid lugs are both expensive and not easy to find, but there is a solution.

I use 5/8" flat braid that I buy on Ebay – recently I bought a 50' roll for \$40. Here are a few tips for terminating the braid without using lugs.

**Cut a piece to length and solder** - Mark the braid before cutting it, then solder a thin line across the braid. Using liquid rosin (from Amazon) makes the soldering a whole lot easier as does a 100/140 watt Weller soldering gun. Once the solder sets, cut through the solder with shears and you will end up with an end that will not unravel.



One end, or possibly both, will be fitted over a #10 or 1/4" post with washers and nuts. Normally you either crimp a lug on the wire, or simply wrap the wire around the post. Here's how I do it with the flat braid without a lug.

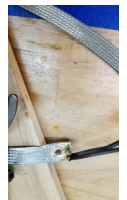
**Make a stud hole then solder around it** – Before proceeding, make sure both ends of the braid have

been soldered as above to keep them from fraying.



About 1/2" - 3/4" from the braid end push a pointed tool thru the braid so that it is slightly larger than the stud it will go over. Use a tool to tap on the hole to flatten the braid that was displaced with the pointed tool. Again, resize the hole, flatten the braid, repeat.

Now solder around the hole. Again, resize the hole, flatten the braid, repeat. Flattening the braid this time will be a little harder because you will also be flattening the solder; you may have touch up the solder.



That's it. You now have a flat braided ground wire with a built in lug.

Wisdom further suggests that when you put the cable over the stud use the following sequence: flat washer (if not against a flat surface), external tooth washer, lug with ground wire, external tooth washer, flat washer, split ring lock washer, nut. This is not overkill. The external tooth lock washers bite into the cable and washers on both sides ensuring an adequate connection being driven in by the flat washers behind them. The split ring lock washer keeps the end nut from loosening and, of course, the nut provides the pressure to make this 'system' work as it drives up the circular inclined plane.

73, Tom, W4IEE





*DX Jack's page....*

*..... By Jack Sproat, W4JS*

**MAJOR CURRENT/UPCOMING DX ACTIVITY & PROPAGATION HIGHLIGHTS**

CURRENT and/or SCHEDULED DX ACTIVITY

COUNTRY – CALL SIGN	ACTIVITY PERIOD	BEAR-ING	HF BANDS and OPENING TIMES (UTC)							
			80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10
So. Cook Is – E51DWC by OK1DWC, CW/D	Now to ????	246	08-09	03-12	02-11	16-11	17-02	17-01	20-00	21-23
Philippines – DU3/VE3OI, **, some FT8	Now to 13 Feb	327	--	10-12	08-13	22-01	23-24	2300	--	--
Rwanda – 9X2AW by DF2WO, all modes	Now to 14 Feb	81	02-03	00-05	21-07	18-01	12-23	12-23	13-22	NO
New Caledonia – FK/F6OBD, Digital	Now to 20 Feb	258	NIL	07-11	05-14	06-18	18-01	19-01	19-00	20-00
Antarctica – R1IANW by R3IW, mostly FT8	Now to 01 March	158	NIL	00-07	22-09	20-09	12-00	NIL	NO	NO
The Gambia – C5YK by ON7YK, ++, Digital	Now to 09 March	88	23-08	21-10	19-11	12-00	12-22	18-21	14-20	NO
Gabon – TR8CR by F8EN, CW/SSB	Now to 16 March	88	NIL	23-07	22-08	18-01	11-00	12-23	13-22	17-19
Sri Lanka – 4S7KKG by DC0KK, mostly FT8	Now to 01 April	<u>28/208</u>	NO	2400	22-02	<u>13-14</u>	<u>14-18</u>	<u>14-17</u>	<u>15-16</u>	NO
South Sudan – Z81D by Y1IDZ, Digital/SSB	Now to 10 June	74	02-03	22-05	20-07	17-01	12-23	12-23	13-19	NO
Papua New Guinea – P29VCX, 3-op team	31 Jan to 05 Feb	283	--	08-11	06-14	07-15	20-00	21-00	--	--
Vietnam – XV9FUD & XV9ZT, all modes	04 to 18 Feb	<u>348/168</u>	NO	10-11	09-12	23-01	2400	<u>13-16</u>	<u>14-15</u>	NO
Papua New Guinea – P29NI, 3-op team	06 to 11 Feb	283	--	08-11	06-14	07-15	20-00	21-00	--	--
Brunei – V84SAA, 13-op team, all modes	07 to 18 Feb	<u>330/150</u>	NO	10-12	09-13	23-01	23-24	<u>13-16</u>	<u>13-15</u>	NO
Svalbard – JW1QH by LA1QH, ++	08 to 11 Feb	13	00-08	22-12	--	13-22	--	--	--	--
Macao – XX9D by 15-op team, all modes	11 to 26 Feb	<u>341/161</u>	NO	11-12	08-13	23-01	2400	<u>13-15</u>	<u>14-15</u>	--
Ogasawara – JD1BLY by J15RPT, all modes	15 to 17 Feb	317	NIL	07-12	06-15	21-01	21-01	22-23	--	--
Monaco – 3A/EA4NF, 5 watts	15 to 18 Feb	50	--	--	--	12-20	--	--	--	--
Burundi – 9U4RI by M0KRI, **, SSB/PSK31	15 to 25 Feb	83	--	00-05	21-07	18-01	12-23	12-23	--	--
Gambia – C5DX by G4DJX, **	16 to 23 Feb	88	--	21-10	19-11	11-24	12-20	18-21	15-20	NO
Central Kiribati – T31EU by 6-op team	16 Feb to 05 Mar	267	08-09	04-13	02-14	00-13	17-01	18-01	18-00	19-23
Vietnam – XV9YM by DL3YM, **	16 Feb to 18 Mar	<u>350/170</u>	--	NIL	09-12	00-01	<u>2400</u>	<u>13-16</u>	<u>14-16</u>	NO
Cape Verde – D44TAQ by HB9HFD, Digital	17 to 22 Feb	89	--	21-11	19-12	11-00	12-22	12-21	13-20	NO
Vietnam – 3W9JF by F6CTF	19 Feb to 06 Mar	<u>350/170</u>	NO	NIL	09-12	00-01	<u>2400</u>	--	--	--
Senegal – 6W7/ON4AVT, all modes	20 Feb to 30 Mar	87	--	21-10	--	12-00	--	--	--	NO
Galapagos Is – HD8M by 3-op team, all mode	27 Feb to 06 Mar	196	00-14	21-15	00-24	00-24	13-01	13-00	14-06	14-23

Prepared 29 January based on 28 January *The Weekly DX*, <https://dx-world.net/> and <http://www.ng3k.com>

**Notes:** Times shown are generally for 60% or better opening probability; ??? = Call Sign not yet known; ++ = Mostly SSB; \*\* = Mostly CW; NO = No Opening forecast. Long Path bearings and opening times are underlined. Propagation forecasts are calculated using *W6ELProp* propagation software and VOACAP <http://www.voacap.com/hf/>.

**-- JANUARY SOLAR ACTIVITY --**

Through 29 January, the 10.7 cm Solar Flux ranged from 66 to 77, with a mean value of 71.4 (vs. 70.0 for Jan 2018 and 77.4 for Jan 2017). The  $A_p$  index was  $\geq 7$  on 9 days. The Sun was spotless on 15 days thru 29 January.

**-- FEBRUARY FORECAST --**

Solar activity is expected to be at very low levels from 01-23 Feb. However, a chance for low levels exists upon the return of old Region 2733 on or about 12 Feb.

No proton events are expected at geosynchronous orbit.

The greater than 2 MeV electron flux at geosynchronous orbit is expected to be at moderate to high levels on 01 - 11 Feb and again on 21-23 Feb due to CH HSS influence. Mostly normal levels are expected on 12-20 Feb.

Geomagnetic field activity is expected to be at unsettled to active levels on 01 - 02 Feb and 19-22 Feb with G1 (Minor) storm conditions likely on 01 Feb and 20 Feb, all due to recurrent CH HSS influence. Mostly quiet conditions are expected for the remainder of the outlook period.

The 10.7 cm Solar Flux Index should range from 69 to 75; averaging 70.7 during February.

(From *NOAA Weekly Highlights and Forecasts*, 28 Jan 2019, *NOAA 27-day Space Weather Out-*

*look Table*, 28 Jan 2018, and *45 Day AP Forecast, USAF*, 28 Jan 2018.)

**-- D44TAQ – CAPE VERDE --**



Philip-HB9HFD will be active from San Pedro, Sao Vicente, AF-086 as D44TAQ between 17-22 February. QRV on 40-10m, Digital modes.

**-- FEBRUARY SHORT SKIP DX --**

During February, there will be a lot of Caribbean operations, including 6Y-Jamaica, FG-Guadeloupe, FM & FY-Martinique & French Guyana, J79-Dominica, PJ4-Bonaire, PJ7-St. Maarten, V3-Belize, V4-St. Kitts, VP2M-Montserrat, and VP5-Turks & Caicos. Many will be running FT8, so go get 'em!!

# Time marches on!



By Frank, W2XYZ

Occasionally one comes across a story that sounds too strange to be true. Such is the following, but I checked, and the story is accurate.

If you were in the market for a watch in 1880, would you know where to get one? You would go to a store, right? Well, of course you could do that, but if you wanted one that was cheaper, and a bit better than most of the store watches, you went to a train station! Sound a bit funny? Well, for about 500 towns across the northern United States, that's where the best watches were found.

"Why were the best watches found at the train station? The railroad company wasn't selling the watches - not at all - the telegraph operator was. Most of the time the telegraph operator was located in the railroad station because the telegraph lines followed the railroad tracks from town to town. It was usually the shortest distance and the rights-of-way had already been secured for the rail line. Most of the station agents were also skilled telegraph operators, and that was the primary way they communicated with the railroad. They would know when trains left the previous station and when they were due at the next station.

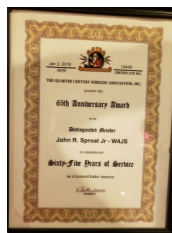
"And it was the telegraph operator who had the watches. As a matter of fact, they sold more of them than almost all the stores combined for a period of about nine years. This was all arranged

by Richard, who was a telegraph operator himself. He was on duty in the North Redwood, Minnesota train station one day when a load of watches arrived from the East. It was a huge crate of pocket watches. No one ever came to claim them. So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches. The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they asked Richard if he could sell them. And so he did.

"He sent a wire to every agent in the system asking if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit. That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph operators to offer high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travelers. It worked. It did not take long for the word to spread and, before long, people other than travelers came to the train station to buy watches. Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watch maker to help him with the orders."

The watch maker's name was Alvah and as they say, the rest is history.

Richard Sears and Alvah Roebuck left the train station and moved their company to Chicago - and it's still there. You may recognize the name of their company. It's called Sears & Roebuck and today simply Sears. 73, Frank



Jack, W4JS, receives a 65 year anniversary award from Don, K9DDO at the January QCWA meeting. The award is issued by the national QCWA organization "to commemorate Sixty-Five Years of Service as a Licensed Radio Amateur" .....**Congratulations, Jack!**

A big THANK YOU from your editor for the contributions of fellow TARC members to the content of The Communicator. In this issue alone, text, photos, and ideas were provided by these contributors: W4IEE, KB1HIP, W2XYZ, W4JS, KJ4NDO, KG4IYS, KN4BAR, W8QJF, and probably others I failed to mention. Kudos to all. I couldn't do it without you!  
TNX es vy 73 San, K3SY



# Lighthouse On The Air

By Chet, KG4IYS



**T**he W4AC club members agreed to activate/operate lighthouse # USA 910 in Boca Grande on Gasparilla Island on

Thursday, January 3, 2019 as part of the Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society (ARLHS) Christmas Lights Program, scheduled to run from December 15, 2018 through January 4, 2019. We also activated Islands On The Air (IOTA) (NA069). The call sign W4AC is now registered with ARHLS, member number 2007.

Andy Durette, KB1HIP and Chet Fennell, KG4IYS visited the lighthouse on December 31, 2018 to assess whether we would be able to use the facilities and surrounding area for radio operations. Andy followed up with a phone call to the Director of the facility to request permission before we embarked.

Participating in the lighthouse activation were Andy, KB1HIP, Chet, KG4IYS, Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ, Paul Nienaber, KG4BAR, and Tom Shrilla, W8QJF. Four different portable stations were set up during the day. Three stations were positioned underneath the lighthouse where electrical power was available. One was set up in the picnic area next door to the lighthouse, and was powered by battery with a supplemental solar panel. Another station was initially set up as QRP (5W) for CW operations, and then later powered up as a regular CW station, both operated by Frank on 20 and 40M.

Andy assisted during the day with the various setups and then activated his portable station for 20M SSB phone. Chet set up his station as an FT8 station on 20M. Paul set up his station as a 20M SSB phone operation. Tom assisted Chet in setup and tear-down and assisted Paul logging QSO's on his station.

Propagation was apparently poor for CW operations, as there were no successful contacts. Paul managed to get three QSO's while testing his setup on his own call sign, but when using the club call sign, only managed one QSO. Andy logged one QSO, a maritime mobile check-in. Chet managed to get 12 QSO's using FT8, mostly northeast corridor as far as Maine; was contacted unsuccessfully from Switzerland once. Bob Schneider, W5GJ, spotted Chet on DXSummit - listening from his home station. He indicated that several California stations heard Chet, but Chet never heard them. While propagation was apparently poor

easterly, and ok westerly, Chet forgot to turn on his preamp, which may have degraded reception sensitivity. Lesson learned!

All in all, while results were less than stellar, we learned about our equipment, antennas, receiver sensitivity characteristics, how to setup FT8 under field conditions; and we proved the value of FT8 in spite of poor propagation. The weather was excellent - a balmy 78 degrees, sunshine, light breezes. We met with the Lighthouse Director, and it appears they were happy with our operation, and we hope they will welcome us back again.

## Station configurations:

FT8 station (Chet): ICOM 7100, tuner, power supply, Buddipole antenna in the vertical configuration, 20M band.

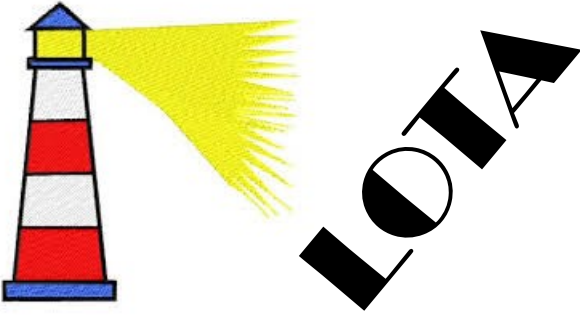
QRP/CW Station (Frank): Yaesu FT-817, homebrew external tuner, end-fed PARZ (40, 20, 15M), ATT model 1A, 1918 telegraph key, operated mostly 20 and 40M.

SSB/Phone (Andy): ICOM 7000, LDG IT100 tuner, end-fed PARZ (40, 20, 15M), and the Buddipole, primarily 20M.

SSB/Phone (Paul): Yaesu FT-450D, battery power with solar panel charging, Super antenna vertical, 20M Band.







The view





# SRQ ARES

## New Sarasota County ARES Group is Official

SRQ ARES has been officially recognized and accepted by the ARRL WCF SEC Ben Henley (KI4IGX). The groups official name is "SRQ ARES". The ARRL's Strategic Plan indicates 3 levels of ARES membership, the WCF SEC strongly recommends that ALL members obtain level 2, excluding EC-001, within a reasonable amount of time.

Level 2 qualification requires that you have completed either online or classroom training for the IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800. SRQ ARES will be giving face-to-face training classes on these four courses once the organization is stabilized.

These courses are also available on-line for FREE from the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) . Simply register to get your Student ID (SID) number, and then sign up for the courses you want to take. Upon completion of each course you will be able to download and print out a course completion certificate as proof of completion. Visit the EMI website at

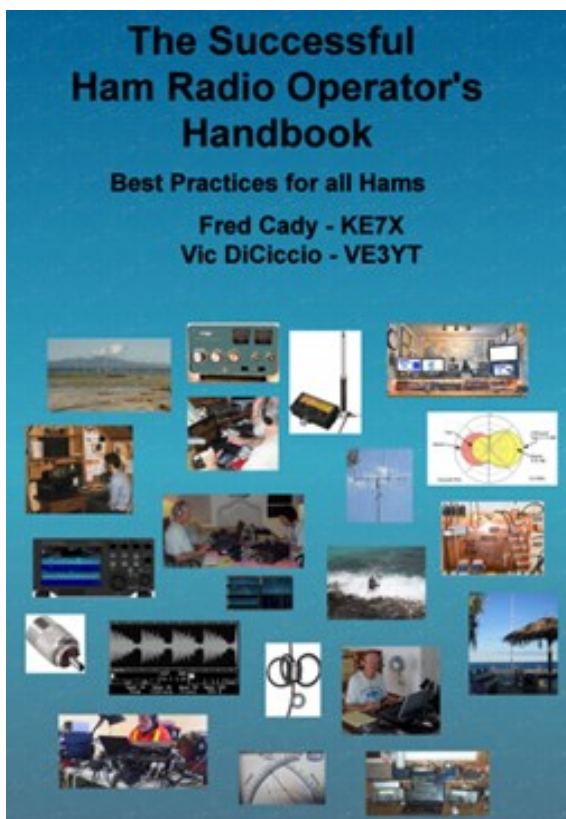
<http://training.fema.gov/Apply/>

TARC members interested in joining the SRQ ARES group should contact Den Spiess, W2DEN, by email to [W2DEN@comcast.net](mailto:W2DEN@comcast.net). Den is currently taking the lead on building a membership list for this fledgling organization.

At present, an Emergency Coordinator (EC) has not been named for the new SRQ ARES group. The group will operate as a stand-alone organization, independent of any other amateur radio clubs in the county. No club membership is required to join SRQ ARES; just a valid FCC license will do it.

SRQ ARES has decided to use the Google Groups.io application for communication with members. Anyone interested in learning more about the new group can visit this link: <https://groups.io/g/SRQARES>.

This is now a fast moving target evolving over the next few months. Stay tuned for new developments as they occur!.....Paul, KN4BAR



**T**his new book is aimed at new or returning hams to help them understand the practical aspects of the hobby, how to use their radios, build antennas and baluns, and get on the air successfully. In it you will find explanations of how the various parts of your ham radio - the transmitter and receiver – work, plus how these are being implemented using software defined radio technology. Operating techniques for VHF/UHF repeaters, HF radio DXing techniques, and the new digital modes are covered. Radio propagation, antennas, transmission lines, SWR and the mysteries of baluns are explained. Building your HF station, choosing a radio, connecting your radio to a computer, and mobile and portable operation are extensively covered.

Both the pdf and spiral-bound printed versions are available from Lulu.com, and the print copy is also sold by DX Engineering. You can find them via the links below:

<http://www.ke7x.com/successful/ordering-the-successful-ham-radio-operator-s-handbook>

Here is a link that describes the book in more detail:

<http://www.ke7x.com/successful>



# Winter Field Day

by W2XYZ



All Hams love Field Day. What could be better than Field Day? How about two Field Days? Over the past couple of years, a new activity was organized by several mid-western Hams who called it "Winter Field Day." The activity has been growing with popularity, and this year our club decided we'd give it a try. If you are a 'northerner', the sound of WINTER Field Day sends a cold chill through your spine, and a few other body parts. But hey, we're in Florida, the Sunshine State, warm winters, semi-tropical breezes and the driest winter climate east of the Mississippi. An absolute best time and place for our club to get together and frolic under antennas...or so you would think.

We (about a dozen of us) met at the North Jetty Park in Nokomis at 10 am, Saturday January 26. The skies were gray and threatening. The temperature was 48 and wind gusts felt like they were around that number too. Did that stop us—no way! First we set up the club tent (getting out of the wind was great). Next we used KN4ONE's antenna launcher and put one end of KN4BAR's end-fed antenna about 70 feet in the air. The other end attached to KJ4NDO's telescopic pole about 20 feet up. Paul, KN4BAR wheeled out his complete HF/VHF/UHF station mounted to a hand truck and set out his portable "Super Antenna" on 20m. Since it is battery powered, he was calling

CQ within minutes. In the tent we placed the club's two IC-746 Pro transceivers and connected them through the club's bandpass filters to 600 watt amplifiers owned by KJ4NDO and W2XYZ. While that was going on, we erected KB1HIP's 2 element yagi on a telescopic pole and pointed it northwest. Tom, K4IEE, cranked up (actually pushed the electric start button) on his 3 KW generator and we were ready to go before 2 PM, the official start of Winter Field Day.

You ask, how did it go??? Like gangbusters! The first hour, not so great. Lots of fumbling and knob twisting until we got down to business, but after that it was a steady stream of QSO's. We were experiencing showers all day long and heavy rains were expected overnight and all day Sunday. A high level, upper-management, top-echelon decision was made to pull the plug at 5 PM, plus we were cold, wet, and hungry. With two stations on the air, we made 182 contacts, 183 if you count the dupe (oops). That averages to 91 QSO's per station in 120 minutes. Close to a QSO every minute! Everything held up perfectly except the weather - here in the Sunshine State. The antennas we used contributed greatly to our success, but having the amplifiers made all the difference in the world. We learned a lot about operating Winter Field Day this year, and assuming the weather will be better next year, we should be able to fare far better next year, with fairer weather.

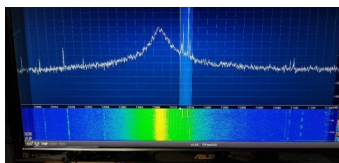




## - It can be unpleasant and hard to find

By Tom  
W4IEE

I don't know when it started. I can't say for sure. It was always there for me. I figured it had something to do with something in the neighborhood, so I simply lived with it. I worked WAS thru it, getting close to DXCC and racked up a few other small certificates along the way, so I let it slide. The noise was right on top of the FT8 segment on 40m.



Then one day I thought 'what the heck', life's too short, I'm going to figure this out.

I started buying toroids and snap-on ferrites and applying them liberally all over the shack. They are on the coax, the ethernet lines, key lines, audio lines, monitor cable, microphone cable - everywhere. And everything is grounded thru 5/8" flat braid into a single-point grounding block in the shack then out the window to the ground system consisting of 6 ground rods and >100' of bare #6 copper wire. Nothing took out the big noise.



I swapped out power supplies to my Flex 6500 and swapped out a monitor. I even shielded the monitor with aluminum foil as best I could - nothing changed.

Then I took out my SDRPlay, an SDR receiver I've had for a few years, built a portable dipole antenna about 8' long out of plywood scraps with an area to hold the SDR. With a notebook computer I walked around the house but nothing significant registered. Now what?



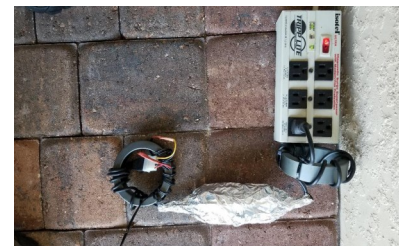
Then I did what I should have done in the first place - shut off circuit breakers one at a time and looked at the result. The last breaker - a GFCI breaker feeding the outside sockets - shut down the noise. Not possible, I thought, there's nothing outside! Wrong!

I use an SGC 230 end fed tuner in a covered plastic storage box out behind my house for my long-wire roof antenna. Since I did not have a Bias-T to power the tuner from the shack I used an old wall-wart type 12vdc, 2a supply with a short AC power cable at-

tached that was left over from some computer add-on device. I had it lying on the lanai floor, out of the weather, with a wire runner into the tuner box. Sure enough, with the breaker back on and by plugging/unplugging the wart the noise source was clearly identified as the wart.

I added a bunch of generic snap-on ferrites from Amazon with little-to-no effect. So, I looked online and purchased two 4" diameter mix 31 toroids from www.kf7p.com for \$20 each. I wrapped a bunch of turns thru one of them from the 12vdc side. A quick test revealed some noise reduction, but not enough. Then I repeated the wrapping with another 4" toroid on the ac line. Wow, what a difference! Now I was greedy, so I plugged in a Tripp Lite line noise filter/suppressor box and fed the wart from a -100db port.

At the same time I wrapped the wart with tin foil and added two more snap-on ferrites closer to the tuner on the 12v wire. The noise was history! Gone, gone, gone. It is now wonderfully quiet on the bands. I almost can't believe it. I'm not sure how much the aluminum foil and the last two snap-ons added to the noise reduction but I'm sure they helped a bit. The 4" toroids did most of the heavy lifting.





My advice, if you have noise, is to listen to everyone who says the same thing. Turn off your breakers first before looking elsewhere. There's a good chance the problem is YOU. Buy, and keep close by, a selection of mix 31 ferrites/toroids. The generic snap-ons aren't anywhere as good for ham shacks.

By the way, Santa got me a new MFJ998RT hi power tuner with a Bias-T inside, so I no longer need to worry about noise the same way, but I did have to add a mix 31 snap-on with two loops to the 12vdc line feeding the BiasT to reduce a small bit of noise on that line.





# February, 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
+ 10 meter net follows the 2 meter net at 28.450 mhz					1 Breakfast @ Peaches *	2
3	4 QCWA 11:30 AM Denny's Bee Ridge Road	5 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	6	7 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10M net	8 Breakfast @ Peaches *  <b>Orlando</b> 	9 <b>TARC VE Session @ Jacaranda Public Library 10:00 AM</b>
10  <b>Hamcation</b> 	11 DARN Emergency net @ 11AM Starts on NI4CE/RPT 145.43 pl100	12 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	13 <b><u>TARC meeting @ Coast Guard Training Center 7:00 PM.</u></b>	14 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10M net	15 Breakfast @ Peaches *	16
17	18	19 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	20	21 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10 M net	22 Breakfast @ Peaches *	23
24	25	26 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	27	28 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10 M net	Breakfast @ Peaches *	* Peaches opens at 6:00 AM, orders taken at 7:00.

\*\*The W4AC 146.805 Repeater is ANALOG, PL100. [If the 2-m repeater is down, please QSY to 146.58 simplex]

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- |   |  |   |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> E - Emergency Comm.          | <input type="checkbox"/> P - Packet      | <input type="checkbox"/> V - VE Testing     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> F - Field Day                | <input type="checkbox"/> Q - Publicity   | <input type="checkbox"/> X - DX             |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____        |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Z - QRP            |

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*The Communicator is a monthly publication of  
The Tamiami Amateur Radio Club, Inc. Editor: San Yoder, K3SY  
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