



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>

April, 2021

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President's message - NS4P



Try new things – while this could apply to many areas of our lives, I find it is especially meaningful in amateur radio. Even in the era of radio “appliances” there is plenty of opportunity to learn or do something new, often at no cost. Learning new things helps keep our mind nimble and gives us a sense of accomplishment, which is always a good thing.

As an example, I'll start with my HF rig. I've owned it for a couple of years, but there is still much I don't know about it. “Band Stacking” is a mystery, and there are several buttons that I am not totally clear on what they do. I also need to program some macros and record some voice memos before the next contest. Each of these things is well described in the manual, or in any of several excellent YouTube videos. By investing just a little time, I know that I can improve my operations. Is there something that you have been meaning to get around to? Maybe now is the time to get after it.

Moving on to my antenna, I continue to tinker with modifications to the feed line, antenna coupler, and common-mode choke at the feed point of the vertical. I enjoy tinkering with the arrangement (which involves moving around various lengths of coax) to see what happens – I am trying to find an arrangement that will allow me to load up the antenna on both 80 meters and 10 meters – I have not yet succeeded but I continue to try. Look around your shack – is there something you can improve? Is there something you think might work better? You won't know until you try!

Even though Heathkit is largely a fond memory for many of us, there are still several interesting (and inexpensive) amateur radio related kits available. Arduino-based devices are all the rage, with the Morserino Morse

Code trainer especially popular among the CW aficionados in our club. There are also an extensive variety of transceivers, amplifiers, antenna tuners and other devices available in kit form. In doing research for this column, I found that MFJ sells a version of their 300W desktop antenna tuner in kit form (news to me!). Elecraft also sells several of their products in kit form – Patti N4IGI and I put together the linear amplifier and matching tuner that we use from Elecraft kits.

For those more adventurous types, the DIY spirit still runs deep in amateur radio. Building an antenna from scratch is often the first project for a new ham and is an excellent project for old-timers too. Need a small beam antenna for a fox hunt? You can build one for less than the cost of a Peach's breakfast. The Internet has made finding plans and instructional videos much easier than back in the old days, and many of the materials are readily available at a hardware store or online.

Beyond building things, there are also skills to learn. For example, running one of our weekly nets is an easy way to pick up a valuable ham radio skill. It's easier than it looks, and any of our regular net control stations will be happy to show you the ropes. And, of course, most of us could use a brush-up (or learn) our Morse code skills. Again, the Internet has made training tools available at our fingertips, and the CW Academy offers volunteer mentors for those who need regular encouragement (as I look in the mirror).

So as you do your spring cleaning in your ham shack, see if you can clean up that to-do list, take on a new project, or learn a new skill. Let's all get better! **73, Steve – NS4P**

Next Month
FLQ Report

Next meeting 7:00 PM, Wednesday, April 14, 2021 via ZOOM. Check Groups.io for the link to connect.

TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB *Minutes of the 3/10/21 Meeting*

The monthly club meeting was conducted on Zoom and was called to order at 7:03 PM by President Phillips, NS4P. Steve recited the pledge to the flag. Attendance was captured via the Zoom session with new club member Betty Greenspan, KO4GKT, in attendance. Life member Joy Klapp, N2WUD, who was recently hospitalized passed away on March 3 in Schenectady, NY from a fast-moving cancer. She will be remembered for hosting great club Christmas parties and spreading cheer to all members as she was the Sunshine Committee chair for many years. She will be missed.

MINUTES: Steve, NS4P, requested a motion to accept the minutes of the February 10, 2021 meeting as published in The Communicator. Motion was made by Chet Fennell, KG4IYS, seconded by Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR, and approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: Patti Phillips, N4IGI, said TARC received a QSL card from Durham, NH for a contact made during the 2020 Winter Field Day. This was forwarded to Jack Sproat, W4JS, to reply. A thank you letter was sent to Gary Wells, WB9AYD, and the entire Sarasota Emergency Radio Club (SERC) for the use of their SAR 5 repeater so TARC could provide communication services for the Shark Tooth 10K race.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Frank, W2XYZ, reported a beginning balance of \$18,326.73, receipts of \$741.51, reserve fund contribution of \$167.00, expenses of \$185.52, reserve expenditures of 177.96, and an ending balance for the month of February of \$18,871.76. Motion was made by Jim Cook, W3APC, seconded by Jesse Snyder, KW4IT, and the Treasurer's report was approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SUNSHINE: Jim Shortill, KJ4NDO, will be sending out a sympathy card to Joy's family. The club wishes Dick Engel, AA4PE, who recently had leg surgery, and his XYL, Mary, who is still having eye issues, speedy recoveries.

VE TESTING: Steve, NS4P, mentioned the three candidates that took the exams in February all passed. This weekend he has eight candidates.

LIAISON TO QCWA: There was no meeting this month.

REPEATER / TECHNICAL: Frank, W2XYZ, reported both the digital and analog repeaters were working

well. The digital net is held on the club 444.100 DMR repeater using Talk Group TAC 315. The digital net opens Tuesdays at 7:30 PM and on average a dozen people check in. The club 2m analog repeater frequency is 146.805 MHz (-) PL 100. The 2m net opens Thursdays at 7:30 PM. Hams can participate on the analog net via EchoLink using a computer, an iPhone, or an Android system based phone. Click on W4AC-R (Node 513309) on the EchoLink directory screen to establish EchoLink contact. Note this is a new node for EchoLink. Recently we had 25 people check in. The 10m net is on frequency 28.450 MHz, Upper Side Band, and begins immediately after the conclusion of the 2m net.

Tom Wilson, W1ICU, continues to host via Zoom a Virtual Breakfast gathering on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM. For details, please refer to the Groups.io site.

MEMBERSHIP: Paul, KN4BAR, mentioned that the cutoff date for membership renewal was March 1. A number of first year free members did not renew. He reported there are now 112 regular members, 3 first year members, 3 associate members (no call sign), 8 life members, and 1 comp for a total membership of 129. San Yoder, K3SY, suggested that we update the roster with the date members joined the club. Please email paul9aber@gmail.com the date you joined the club.

OLD BUSINESS: 1. Repeater Maintenance Team Update. Chet, KG4IYS, mentioned that everything is working well. It was reported that Jim, KJ4NDO could reach the repeater from Cape Coral about 48 miles away! The tower guys will be coming back to install a solar tower light, replace existing VHF coax with hard line, re-tension the guy wires, and remove the old coax. Tom Porada, W4IEE, is cleaning up the access panels.

2. Club Remote Station. Chet, KG4IYS, stated the remote station is working on all bands and the new antenna has made a big difference. Paul, KN4BAR, said he used it for a few hours and made contacts throughout the U.S. and Caribbean on 20m. Chet and Frank, W2XYZ, will research some intermittent noise. The club is looking for some beta testers so if you are interested, please contact Chet at chet.fennell@gmail.com.

3. Shark Tooth 10K. Steve, NS4P, stated the Shark Tooth 10K race held on February 27 and March 6 at Rothenbach Park was a huge success thanks to the

Continued >>>>

TARC Minutes, continued

participants and the use of SERC's SAR 5 repeater. We had two members, Betty Greenspan, KO4GKT, and Don Spivey, KO4KVS, participate in their first community service event. The race organizer, Karen, was extremely thankful for TARC's support.

4. Regional Fox Hunt. Paul, KN4BAR, mentioned the regional fox hunt will be on October 30 and the initial planning meeting is on March 14. A local fox hunt will be planned in the next couple of months.

5. License Classes. Paul, KN4BAR, said the Tech class finished on March 7 with three students completing the course and signing up for the exam.

NEW BUSINESS: 1. Paul, KN4BAR, mentioned on the Groups.io web page we have sub-groups such as Board of Directors and VE Testers. If you want to start a special interest group under Groups.io contact Paul and he will create the initial group for you. You can then invite and add members to the group.

2. Jim, KJ4NDO, is leading a YL Outreach team in an effort to get more women involved. His first initiative is to send out an email regarding the VE Testing the club offers.

3. Steve, NS4P, proposed Guenther Hennig, AJ4QX, and San Yoder, K3SY for Honorary Life Membership

for their exemplary service to the TARC. Guenther was a long-time board member, instrumental in obtaining permission for the club to meet at the U.S.C.G.A. and club call sign trustee. Motion was made by Jesse Snyder, KW4IT, and seconded by Tony DiCenzo, KX1G. San is a long-time board member, was Treasurer for three years, handles special printing for club awards and cards, and has been the editor of The Communicator for many years. Motion was made by Chet, KG4IYS, and seconded by Tom Babcock, KN4ONE. Both proposals met with unanimous approval.

4. Gary Wells, WB9AYD, mentioned that the SERC Hamfest in the fall is up in the air right now. If a location can be secured, he will provide an update.

5. If you are looking to socialize and have a good breakfast, beginning Tuesday, April 6, some TARC members will be gathering at Peach's weekly at 6:00 AM to chat and place breakfast orders at 7:00 AM.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM. There were 24 people at the meeting.

Program: Tom Babcock, KN4ONE, facilitated "Show and Tell".



Please note corrections to two items in the February Communicator:

The correct call sign for Joe Wyatt, Silent Key, is K2SQM.

The article on VHF Propagation on page 8 should have been attributed to Tom Shrilla, W8QJF.

Apologies to Tom Shrilla, W8QJF, and friends of Tom Wyatt, K2SQM - de K3SY

TOM'S TECH TIPS: The keyboard trick to scroll quickly

Scrolling is easy when you have a fancy mouse with a scroll wheel. If yours is acting up or you have a plain-jane mouse, use your keyboard.

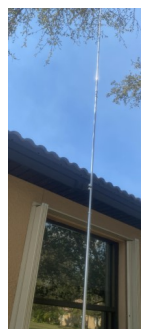
Press the spacebar with your browser open to move down the page. Want to scroll back up? Hold the Shift key and tap the spacebar again.

You can use this trick in any major browser. If you're having trouble, click on the background of whichever page you're on and try again. You may have inadvertently selected text or another element.

[Congrats to Tom on upgrading to EXTRA!!!]

Elmers Steve Hawley, K4EU and Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ responded to the call for help by Bob Miller, KJ4NLP with the installation of a multi-band vertical antenna at his home in Venetian Falls on Thursday, February 4th.

Bob is recovering from spinal surgery after some years of increasing disability. His shack currently sports an ICOM IC-746PRO transceiver.



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	BEARING	HF BANDS and BEST OPENING TIMES (UTC)							
			80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10
Lord Howe Is – VK9LF	Now Active	249	--	07-12	05-13	13-14	NIL	01-02	22-02	NO
UK Base on Cyprus – ZC4GR, Digital	Now Active	48	--	23-05	22-05	19-22	14-20	NO	NO	NO
Antarctica – VK0PD by VK2PAD	Now Active	188	NO	NO	NO	01-09	0400	NO	NO	NO
Ascension Is – ZD8HZ by TA1HZ	Now to 31 Dec	108	00-06	22-09	21-10	12-05	11-01	12-24	16-22	19-20
Benin – ZS6JSI/TY	Now to 30 June	87	01-04	22-07	21-06	18-04	11-24	13-22	17-21	NO
Minami Torishima – JG8NGJ/JD1, CW	Now to 10 June	308	NO	NO	08-11	11-13	1300	20-24	NO	NO
Aruba – P43A	Now to 15 Apr	139	23-12	20-15	00-24	11-08	12-02	16-01	19-24	2300
Maldives – 8Q7MS by RM2D, **	Now to 10 Apr	40	--	2400	00-02	20-22	13-16	NO	--	--
Wake Is – KH9/NL7RR, ++ (dates not fixed)	Now to 08 Apr	297	--	07-12	--	1300	--	--	--	--
Svalbard Is – JW7QIA by LA7QAI	Now to 07 Apr	12	06-07	08-10	02-04	2000	NO	NO	NO	NO
St Martin – TO1K by SP9FIH	Now to 05 Apr	113	22-12	20-14	00-24	10-08	12-02	16-01	19-24	2300
Armenia – EK6RL, in CQMM CW Contest	17 to 18 April	38	NO	00-04	23-04	2000	16-17	NO	NO	NO
Suriname – PZ5JW, in CQMM CW Contest	17 to 18 April	124	23-10	21-12	20-14	11-02	13-24	17-23	NO	NO
Svalbard Is – JW6VDA by LA6VDA, ++	26 Apr – 09 May	12	06-07	08-10	02-04	2000	NO	NO	NO	NO

Prepared 29 Mar 2021 based on <https://www.ng3k.com/>, *The Weekly DX* 21-13, and the *Ohio/Penn DX Bulletin* No. 1509.

Notes: Times shown are for S-5 or better signals and 60% or better opening probability. ??? = Call Sign or Date not yet known; ++ = Mostly SSB; ** = Mostly CW; NO = No Opening forecast, NIL = band is open but signals below S-5 threshold. Long Path bearings and opening times are underlined. All forecasts are calculated using VOACAP <http://www.voacap.com/hf/>.

-- MARCH SOLAR ACTIVITY --

Through 29 March, the 10.7 cm Solar Flux ranged from 73 to 84, with a mean value of 77.9. The A_p index was ≥ 7 on 18 days during that period. Sunspot groups were visible on 28 days, varying from one to two groups at a time. C-class solar flares occurred 02 and 09 March.

-- APRIL FORECAST --

Solar activity is expected to be very low for the month of April.

The greater than 2 MeV electron flux at geosynchronous orbit is expected to reach high levels on 10-13 and 17-22 Apr due to influences from recurrent coronal hole high speed stream activity. Normal to moderate levels are expected for the remainder of the month.

Geomagnetic field activity is expected to be at active to G1 (Minor) storm levels on 08-10 Apr, and 16-17 Apr, all due to recurrent coronal hole high speed stream influences. Quiet to unsettled levels are expected for the remainder of the outlook period.

The solar flux should range from 72 to 76, and average 74 for the month.

(From *NOAA Weekly Highlights and Forecasts*, 29 March 2021, *NOAA 27-day Space Weather Outlook Table*, 29 March 2021, and *45 Day AP Forecast*, USAF, 29 March 2021.)

-- THE WA7BNM CONTEST CALENDAR --

Contests are a good way to build up your DXCC totals. <https://www.contestcalendar.com/> provides detailed information about amateur radio contests throughout the world, including their scheduled dates/times, rules summaries, log submission information and links to the official rules as published by the contest sponsors.

-- THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY --

*The years keep coming and going,
Men will arise and depart;
Only one thing is immortal:
The DX that I haven't got...*

One of the local QRPers came by last week and he was not smiling. "You know," this QRPer glowered, "there are a lot of churls in this world. An awful lot." We thought this over for a bit, for one must be careful with opinions and labels these days.

"You really think so?" we said, and the QRPer was off. "I sure do. And you must wonder how that type of churl finds anyone who can put up with them. They and their inconsiderate ways. Always cutting through stop signs...always tossing litter...always ignoring other people's rights...always trying to take advantage of someone else's genuine consideration or kindness. You'd think that this type of people would not be able to live with themselves. But their churlish ways don't seem to bother them at all. Not at all."

You know something, we thought this over for a bit as we were looking for the handle on the churl. "Somebody beat you out of a new and needed one?" we asked and the QRPer sat up straight. "Say", he said. "How did you figure that out? Someone sure did."

Son of a Gun! What could we say to all of this. Only that there are always winners and losers...

(From *DX IS! – The Best of the West Coast DX Bulletin* edited and published by Charles T. Allen W5DV and James M. Allen W6OGC, c. 1981)

See <https://ncdxc.org/west-coast-dx-bulletin/> for copies of the WCDXB from 1968 to 1979.

The Inverted π Multi-band HOA Antenna (IFMHOAA) *by King Nerd 4 1*

Work has begun on the ultimate in stealth HOA antennas! The inverted multi-band flagpole. Initially versions will be available in -20' and -42' lengths. This will be a full legal limit antenna with SWR below -2:1 across all bands.

While the theoretical wavelength is equal to (Earth diameter/2), to avoid interface with stations on the opposite side of the globe, wavelength should be limited to $0.9 \times (\text{Earth diameter}/2)$. Use of this antenna on or near active volcanoes is not advised.

Optional sky rods will be available for additional un-grounding. A beneficial additional feature of the inverted flagpole is that it will rid your yard of moles and mole crickets.

The final design is expected to be completed in weeks. The initial -42' prototype shown in the photo below is currently under test at an undisclosed location.



Completed antennas will ship two to three months before ordering. Deposits (\$666) are now being accepted. Send deposits via PayPal to r.u.laffin@kn4one.com

Fine Print

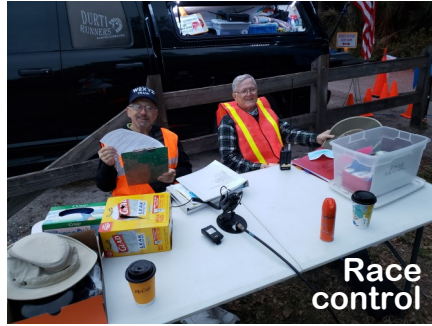
You should not use an IFMHOAA if you are allergic to electromagnetic radiation. Seek immediate medical attention if you experience symptoms related to electromagnetic radiation or severe twitching. Do not use IFMHOAA if you have a pacemaker or other neural or artificial intelligence implants. Overuse of the IFMHOAA has been associated with spousal complaining, separations, and divorce. Seek immediate counseling or mental health attention. The IFMHOAA may cause injury, disfigurement, sterility, and death. The inventors and manufacturers of IFMHOAA shall not be responsible or liable for anything at any time in any court in any universe. Ask your Elmer if IFMHOAA is right for you. If you cannot afford your IFMHOAA, the FCC may be able to help.



Shark's Tooth 10K - part 2



Setting up at dawn



Race control



The crew

TARC provided communications for the 2021 two-part Shark's Tooth 10K race held two consecutive Saturdays (February 27th and March 6th) at new venue Rothenbach Park in Sarasota. Once again TARC provided outstanding monitoring of the runners. Thanks to all who participated.

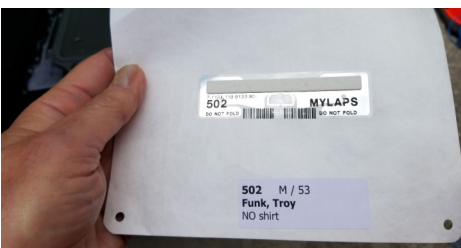
Race timing

By Tom, W4IEE

TARC just finished supporting two weekends of the displaced Venice Shark's Tooth 10K event up in Sarasota and a fine job we did. Congratulations to all TARCies!

We hams tend to concentrate on our radio gear, repeaters, simplex, channels, antenna size and the like, but we hardly ever look around outside our own box. I got curious this time, and wandered around the start/finish line. I wondered how they actually kept track of the start/finish times of the runners. Here's what I found in brief.

The running association uses some fairly hi-tech equipment packaged in a neat briefcase size box with antennas, RF, bib tags, and a notebook computer.



Each runner has a bib containing a number on the front similar to ones

we've all seen before. But, on the rear is a tag containing the secret sauce – a tag with a chip in it that transmits an RF ID. The tags are designed with expandable foam tape near the tag so that if the foam senses moisture from sweat it expands to keep the chip off the body. Pretty clever!

At the start/finish line there are low-profile speed-bump like black mats for the runners to cross. Inside the mats are antennas to pick up the bib tag signals as the runners pass over them. The antenna wires run to the decoder.



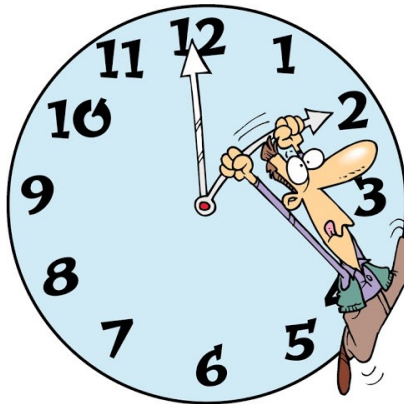
The ID signal is passed along to the MYLAPS decoder/controller (mylaps.com). This unit is pretty sophisticated, and does many jobs. Mainly it captures the runner's ID and time, and sends it to software on a notebook for processing. The decoder/controller has GPS built in

to capture timing signals in GMT from a minimum of three satellites. Pretty tough to argue about what time it is with a good GPS locked signal. Hams aren't the only ones who capture time/frequency from GPS.



Lastly in the chain is the computer and software. The operator pre-populates the database with the runners' information and bib tag ID. It then captures the signal from the decoder and populates start/end timing for each runner. Voila!





It's about time!!

By Tom, W4IEE

WSJT-X ΔT Too High?

When I am operating FT8 I occasionally notice that my ΔT goes high. Mine

normally runs 0.0 – 0.4 and is related to filtering characteristics of my Flex 6600. Occasionally I see a negative number and often I see numbers much higher. Everything other than my normal range is an indication that the other station's clock is off by some amount.

If I see my ΔT showing higher numbers than my normal range, then the problem is with my Windows PC's clock and it needs to be readjusted.

Our PCs use a time synchronization protocol that goes out over the internet looking for a time server to lock onto. For various reason the PC doesn't always sync up properly with a time server. Also note that the normal PC clock isn't very accurate anyway for our digital communications purposes.

If this happens to you, here's how to get the clock back into sync.

1. Go into Task Manager (various ways to do this. I use the key combo CTRL-ALT-DELETE)
2. Click Task Manager
3. Click the SERVICES tab
4. Scroll down to find NTP (it should say RUNNING in 4th column)
5. Right click on NTP
6. Click RESTART

That's it. The NTP Service will shut down and restart and after a few seconds you should be back in sync (or as in-sync as your PC can be) and you should start to see your ΔT back to or close to 0.0. For a further check, go to www.time.is and see if it shows you that 'Your Time Is Exact'.

For a few applications that will more accurately sync your clock, read the the article 'FT-8 requires accurate time' in the May 2018 issue of "The Communicator" available [HERE](#).



UTC - What day is it???

by Frank, W2XYZ

Reading our radio magazines usually shows contests beginning 0000 UTC on a particular day and ending 2400 UTC on a particular day. Does that mean it begins on, say, Friday 7 pm and ends Saturday 7 pm, or do they mean it begins Saturday 7 pm and ends Sunday 7 pm, or possibly begins on Friday 7 pm and ends Sunday 7 pm? It can be confusing even to the seasoned ham.

Our military marks time differently. They would have said 0001-2400 and mean exactly the first tick after midnight until the stroke of midnight. Using 0000 could be confusing as to which day you mean if you

think the last 60 seconds of the day begins at 2359. So the military uses 0001 which is clearly in the first minute of the 'next' day.

One more thing, 0001 means in the first minute of that day and not 60 seconds after the day begins. Years are counted that way too (the year Jesus was born is counted as 1 A. D. not 0 A. D.). Strangely, birthdays are counted differently. We become 1 after we lived 12 months. I'll bet programmers went crazy trying to figure out when computers around the world would have hit 2000 for the Y2K problem.



It's about time we start meeting for breakfast at Peaches again!! If you have had both your "Fauci Ouchies", and are willing to meet, greet, and eat breakfast again, Pres. Steve has contacted Peaches, and they will gladly resume playing host. Tuesday, April 6th is the magic day. For the immediate future, we will meet Tuesday only, with Fridays on hold. See you there between 6 & 7 AM.

Operating note from Jim Greenleaf, K1ACT

I will be operating special event station K3FBI/1 during National Police Week from **May 9th thru May 15**. This is in honor of all law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. Will be oper-

ating all bands SSB and CW from a mountain in Hiram, Maine using a friends Flex station. Will have a MonsterStepR(10-40 mtrs) on a 250 foot tower and a full cubical quad on 160 meters. Decided to bring in the big guns because the call sign draws a lot of malicious interference from many hams around the country. There will

be several K3FBI stations (around 35) operating, and QSL cards and certificates will be sent out. All operators are either active or retired FBI employees with many years of experience in the FBI and ham radio. Hope to hear some TARC guys on the bands assuming reasonable propagation!

Thanks, Jim, K1ACT

*** CQ FLORIDA HAMS *** *by Frank, W2XYZ*

COVID has changed everything including the Florida QSO Party. In 1 B.C. (one year Before Covid) the Tamiami club participated in the Florida QSO Party from Al's (K0AL) Cottage. With Al's superior antennas, equipment, and TARC's skilled operators, the club won a plaque for being the top station in Florida with multi-operators in the single transmitter category. The 2020 Florida QSO Party (FQP) operated completely differently because of COVID restrictions. We again operated as a club with one transmitter, but we operated from our homes. Various members volunteered to take turns operating during a scheduled time-frame ensuring there was never more than one W4AC transmitter on the air at the time. It was a lot of fun coordinating operation, plus the operators linked their N1MM logbooks together so all of us were able to see how that club was doing at any instant. Although most of us have marginal antennas, I think we did extremely well overall. The results of the 2020 FQP have not been published yet, but I feel confident we did an outstanding job.


With COVID restrictions somewhat relaxed, this year's FQP will again be different. This year the club will be able to operate as a group with a club station (W4AC) from Al's Cottage, AND we can operate home stations with our own call sign and assign our QSO points to our club. The complete rules can be found at <http://floridagsoparty.org/rules> but here is a synopsis of the rules and an outline of how our club plans to operate in this event:

FQP begins at noon (local time) on Saturday April 24 and continues until 10 pm. We all get a good night's sleep and come back for a fresh start on Sunday morning (April 25) at 8 am and continue to the party's conclusion on Sunday evening at 6 pm. Operation is permitted on only four of the regular contest bands, 40, 20, 15, and 10. Notice that 160 and 80 are not being used. Modes of operation are Phone and CW, no digital modes are used in this QSO Party. Stations may be worked once per band per mode. So, technically it is possible to work the same station 8

times, once on CW and once on phone on each of the 4 bands. Club members are permitted to work other club members. Remote operation of a transmitter in Florida (such as the club's Remote HF) is also permitted.

Final score for individual (home) stations is computed by multiplying the number QSO's, times the number of location multipliers, times the power multiplier. If all QSO's are made with 5 watts or less (QRP) you have a power multiplier of 3. If all QSO's are made with 100 watts or less, the power multiplier is 2. Above 100 watts the multiplier is 1. For every different State, Province, or DX country you contact, you receive a location multiplier point. The basic operation is simple, you call "CQ, Florida QSO Party this is (your call sign)," when someone answers you tell them "59 Sarasota" to which they will reply "59 and their State/Province/Country). Enter their call sign and location in the logbook and call CQ again.

Of course the top stations in each category win an award, but it's quite possible for many other stations to win an award too, with the Spelling Bee. To celebrate the 24th anniversary of the Florida QSO Party, there will be a FQP Spelling Bee. Five stations will be on the air with a 1x1 call sign, N4S, N4H, N4A, N4R, and N4K. Work all five stations that spell the word SHARK and receive an award.

Logging can be done on virtually any of the electronic logbooks. The "N3FJP Florida QSO Party" is an excellent choice particularly for phone operation. Most CW operators prefer "N1MM Plus." If you plan to operate mixed mode (CW and Phone), again either logbook makes an excellent choice. At the completion of the event, you let your logbook generate a "Cabrillo Report." Check the report for administrative accuracy and be sure where the line that asks for a club name you enter "Tamiami Amateur Radio Club" exactly spelled out that way. When ready, upload the log to: <https://fqp.contesting.com/fqpsubmitlog.php> or attach it to an email and send it to: logs@floridagsoparty.org 

Attention Fox Hunters! Mark your calendars for May 1, 2021! Current plans are to hold the postponed hunt on 5/1/21. Check Groups.io [HERE](#) for all the latest on the rules and schedule.

Super low-cost automatic antenna tuner

By Tom KN4ONE

A few months ago I came across this open source project for an automatic antenna tuner. It is called the ATU-100. It became quite popular, and similar to the NanoVNA, several Chinese sellers began offering it in kit or completed form. Since I built the home brew flag pole antenna (TARC March Communicator), I now had a need (and excuse) to try one.

I ordered a kit on eBay for \$28.88 including express shipping from China. Mine is the bare bones kit with a tiny OLED display and no enclosure. It arrived in 16 days. First impression – Wow this thing is small! The PCB is very high quality and it all came in a nice little plastic box. All of the surface mount components were already installed. The tuner is controlled by a PIC microcontroller (uC) that is preprogrammed. This is probably not a project for the novice builder, mainly because of the lack of documentation. A schematic can be found on the internet and a smattering of videos and forum discussions can be found. There is a user manual available but the translation is poor and leaves a lot to interpretation.

It is a bit tedious to wind the coils, but very doable. Assembly is fairly straightforward. One issue was that I really wasn't sure how it was going to operate. There are several configuration options described in the manual. To change the options requires reprogramming the PIC uC. I have a PIC programmer (hardware and software) but it is about 10 years old and does not support the uC used. Mine has connections for one button, but the schematic and manual show the possibility of using 3 buttons. So I had to finish it, power it up, and use it to figure out how it was going to work. The recommended tuning wattage is 10W. There is a modification to enable tuning for QRP below 5W, but it requires reprogramming the uC.

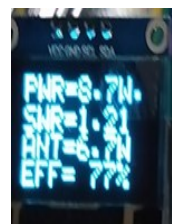
I didn't want to waste a good project box on a questionable gizmo, so I first installed it in a cookie tin. (A project has to earn a nice enclosure) For the first test it was installed behind my radio and connected to my end fed half wave. Power was applied and the little display lit up with text displayed! It's alive! It tuned the antenna to every band that the antenna normally works on. For this first test the power was kept below 50W. Tuning was done at around 10W.

I discovered the automatic tuning option is enabled, so it will auto tune whenever the SWR is above a certain level. This is a good and bad thing. Good in that it makes for easy use. Bad in that it may auto tune at higher power, either because of operator error, or something causes the SWR to go above the trigger

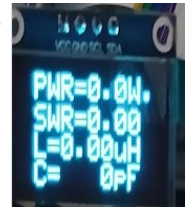
level while at high power. The trigger level is only adjustable by reprogramming the uC. The single button has two functions. A long push will manually initiate an auto tune. A short push will drop out all the relays for a no tuned state. Then as soon as you transmit, it will auto tune.

Now for the torture test. I installed the tuner at the base of my home brew OCF flagpole antenna. The short answer – It works! It did not tune well on 80M. On 10M, if tuned with 10W power, it would re-tune once the power was increased. Tuning with 20W on 10M prevented this. Sometimes it tunes in a split second, but for harder tuning situations like 80M, it may take a few seconds. I used the antenna/tuner combination up to 100W with no issues. One day I was able to make many FT8 contacts into lower South America on 10M with just 10W.

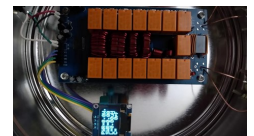
This was a good tinkering project and I would recommend it. Especially if I was waiting 6 months for MFJ to ship a tuner for my flag pole antenna.... It earned itself a nice plastic box.



Two photos of the tiny display. While transmitting it shows the power in and out. When not transmitting it shows the inductance and capacitance it last used while transmitting.



The Tuner in a cookie tin >>>>>



The tuner in an oversized plastic box, big enough for two tuners. I modified an SO239 connector by drilling out the center and fitting it with a screw running through it. This allows direct connection of the window line. I plan to put a clear plastic window in the top of the box to view the display. >>>>>>>>



Happy tinkering!

[Links:](#)

<https://github.com/Dfinitiski/N7DDC-ATU-100-mini-and-extended-boards>

https://github.com/Dfinitiski/N7DDC-ATU-100-mini-and-extended-boards/blob/master/ATU_100_EXT_board/Schematic_ATU-100%207x7.pdf

https://github.com/Dfinitiski/N7DDC-ATU-100-mini-and-extended-boards/blob/master/ATU_100_EXT_board/ATU-100_Extended_Board_User_Manual_eng.odt?raw=true

Rosemary "Joy" Klapp, N2WUD, Silent Key

Joy was a life member of TARC

Our club has received word that Joy Klapp, K2WUD died on March 3, 2021. She had been a member of this club for years, but moved back home to Schenectady, NY, about three years ago. She died from a fast moving cancer. She was a very special person and an integral part of TARC. Joy handled our Sunshine section and faithfully sent cards out to members who were sick or in hospital.

When I first joined TARC in 2009 my wife and I were newcomers here in Venice and were feeling our way in this new community. I remember that the club members invited Kathy and me to a Christmas party that December.

Every year Joy organized a club Christmas party held at her house. It was this Christmas party that Kathy and I attended. Joy's house was filled with Christmas decorations, wreaths, tinsel, and a happy-looking Christmas tree that was bedecked with bulbs and twinkling lights and glittering tinsel. A model train ran around a track in the living room book case starting from a small, model station in a toy town called Santa's Village. Trays of cheery Christmas cookies were placed on every end table.

There were chairs everywhere and the scent of Christmas dinner swirled throughout the house. Soon we were elbow to elbow. I introduced Kathy to our Club members and their wives. We chatted, kibitzed, enjoyed an adult beverage and wine, and ogled the house filled with cheer and happy people. My wife

summed it best when she said, "What a lovely home filled with friendly people." Supper was called, and we all circled through the kitchen and filled our plates with the delicious food that Joy and her team of elves had prepared.

The meal was delightful. The people at our table cross talked during the meal and everybody was included in the conversation. Dessert was perfect. After supper, Kathy and I sat for a while in the living room. She looked around and smiled at everything. My wife was happy and was settling into this new town.

This was the effect that Joy created. In her home at Christmas, no matter where we were from, all of us felt that we were at home for Christmas. She created this annual homecoming for more years than I know.

Joy Klapp, N2WUD, was a lady with a loving heart who brought us all into the Christmas sunshine of togetherness as a big family, a club and a happy part of this little Florida community.

We will miss her.

de Jim, KJ4NDO



AJ4QX, K3SY recognized as TARC Life Members



Steve, NS4P, Patti, N4IGI, Frank, W2XYZ and San, K3SY met with Guenther Hennig, AJ4QX and YL Marian to present a TARC Life Member certificate to Guenther. Click [HERE](#) to read Guenther's back story as published in the October, 2018 issue of The Communicator.

A certificate was also presented to San, K3SY, the second LM elected in March.





April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
* Peaches opens at 6:00 AM. Orders taken at 7:00			# See Groups.io for sign-on to virtual breakfast	 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10M net	2 Breakfast @ Peaches *	3 Breakfast @ DAV 9:30
4	5 QCWA 11:30 AM Denny's Bee Ridge Road	6 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	7 # Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM	8 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10M net	9 Breakfast @ Peaches *	10 DAV 9:30
11	12 Darn net 11:00 AM Starts on NI4CE/rpt 145.43 pl100	13 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	14 # Virtual Breakfast 10 AM 	15 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10M net	16 Breakfast @ Peaches *	17 Breakfast @ DAV 9:30
18	19	20 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	21 # Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM	22 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10M net	23 Breakfast @ Peaches *	24 Breakfast @ DAV 9:30 FL QSO PARTY
25 FL QSO PARTY	26	27 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	28 # Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM	29 TARC net @ 7:30 PM W4AC / RPT 146.805 ** +10M net	30 Breakfast @ Peaches *	

THE COMMUNICATOR is a publication of the Tamiami Amateur Radio Club (TARC). It is published monthly; except during the summer months, the July and August issues will be combined. The Communicator is forwarded to all members via e-mail, and is available for viewing on the club's web site - www.tamiamiarc.org - Webmaster - Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR.

Editor - San Yoder, K3SY, who acknowledges and thanks these contributing writers this month: Steve Phillips, NS4P, Patti Phillips, N4IGI, Jack Sproat, W4JS, Tom Shrilla, W8QJF, Tom Babcock, KN4ONE, Tom Porada, W4IEE, Jim Greenleaf, K1ACT, Jim Shortill, KJ4NDO, and Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ.

Articles of general interest to club members are solicited and welcomed. Please submit photos and/or copy (preferably in Word) to : k3sy@arrl.net. 73, San

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NAME _____ Call Sign _____ Class _____ ARRL ? Yes ___ No ___
YL/OM or
2nd Fam. Memb. _____ Call Sign _____ Class _____ ARRL ? Yes ___ No ___
LOCAL ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____
PHONE _____ CELL _____ e-mail _____
SUMMER ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
PHONE _____ ALT. e-mail _____
Application date _____ PAYMENT: Amount _____ by: Check ___ Cash ___ PayPal ___ First year free ___

For payments by mail send to:
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accepted via PayPal [Add \$1.00 convenience fee].

Dues:

Regular member: \$20.00/year

After 6/1 - \$10.00 to year end. After 10/31 \$20.00 thru next year.

Family membership: \$25.00/year. Non-voting student: \$5.00/year.

New licensee tested thru TARC VE program:

1/1 to 10/31 - free to year end. 11/1 to 12/31 - free thru next year.

Please note: After two month grace period thru Feb., non-renewals will be dropped.

TARC web site: <http://www.tamiamiarc.org>

Contact: Secretary, Patti Phillips, N4IGI - secretary@tamiamiarc.org

