



# 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>

September, 2022

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## President's message - NS4P



Patti and I recently had an opportunity to attend the Huntsville, AL hamfest - the third-largest hamfest in the US. We especially liked the indoor flea market (or boneyard as they call it), although some of the asking prices were a bit on the optimistic side. Being able to search for treasures without getting drenched, sunburned, or frozen was a nice change of pace. It's smaller than Hamcation or Hamvention, but that's not a totally bad thing. It's a bit of a trip from the Suncoast, but not a bad drive at all. Plus, you can visit the nearby U.S. Space and Rocket Center and nerd out on space hardware while you are there.

While we were at Huntsville, Mikey Baker, Director for the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Southeastern Division, indicated he wanted to come and speak at a future TARC meeting. We are working on finding a mutually agreeable date so look for an announcement coming up. On the subject of ARRL, if you are not a member of the ARRL, please consider joining. The ARRL is our representative at the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) and the organization that lobbies on behalf of US amateurs at the FCC and Congress. Make no mistake, commercial interests lust for the small pieces of radio spectrum that we have, and the ARRL is really the only group that can effectively defend our interests. ARRL is also our outgoing QSL Bureau and one of the organizations that supports the Volunteer Examiner program in the US. ARRL also hands out a lot of money in the form of grants and scholarships for clubs and youth programs to try and build up ham radio throughout the US.

Also at Huntsville, I had a short chat with Will Jourdain of Icom America. He passed along some interesting information regarding how Icom is dealing with shortages of certain components in their radios. Icom has spent much of the last two years sourcing substitute components (identical functionality, but different part numbers) and making the engineering changes needed to use the new components. One of the side effects of these changes is that the radios that get the new parts need to be recertified for the FCC and get a new serial number sequence – a lot of effort for no change in functionality, but necessary to enable them to produce radios to sell. According to Will, this has been going on for radios throughout the Icom line. I suspect this is happening at the other manufacturers also. As we have all noticed, several manufacturers have recently announced new products, and availability of existing designs seems to be improving so hopefully we are starting to come through some of the supply chain issues.

That's all for this month. I hope to see you at the September meeting, and look forward to the return of our seasonal members. Keep an eye on the weather as we are just coming to the busy part of hurricane season for the Suncoast. **73 - Steve**

### Next Issue

**Traveling Editor's Summer Summary**

**Next meeting 7:00 PM, Wednesday, September, 14, 2022 at Venice Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 825 The Rialto, Venice, 34285**

## TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB *Minutes of the 6/08/22 Meeting*

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm, followed by flag salute.

### Introductions:

**Visitors** - Bob Sepot, KC9JBA

**New members** - Rich Greenspan, KQ4APW and Scott Smith, KO4SQQ

**Remaining Introductions** - Introductions from all remaining people

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Steve Phillips, NS4P -- Motion was made by Nancy Heinrich, N4ZM and seconded by Paul Aubuchon, K1YOU to accept the minutes of the May 11, 2022 meeting as published in The Communicator. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Gary Youngberg, W8SKI—Mentioned email seeking station setup assistance and QSL cards that were forwarded to Jack Sproat, W4JS.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ—Reported for the period from 4/30/2022 thru 5/31/2022, Beginning balance of \$15,651.61. Receipts were \$167.79, Expenses were \$241.00. Ending balance for the period was \$15,785.40. A motion was made by Steve Froggatt, KN4NFX to accept the treasurer's report for filing and was seconded by Nancy Heinrich, N4ZM. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**SUNSHINE:** Jim Shortill, KJ4NDO—Was not present due to Covid illness and is improving. Don Watson, K9DDO of QCWA had knee replacement today. Dwight Sullivan's, KT4DDS, daughter Sophie is getting married in a couple of weeks.

**VE TESTING:** Steve Phillips, NS4P—Reported that the next testing will be on Saturday, June 11 at the W.H. Jervey Jr. Library with four candidates expected.

Steve noted that original CORES at FCC will be retired soon, and that CORES2 is taking its place and that new CORES account will need to be established by the licensee in the future.

**LIAISON TO QCWA:** Al Culbert, K0AL-- Last meeting for QCWA was on May 2, and that the chapter will recess its meetings till October.

**REPEATER / TECHNICAL:** Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ— Repeaters working normally, with good performance. Upcoming Nets, DMR Digital Repeater on 440.100 with Talk Group 310442 opens Tuesdays @ 7:30pm. Analog FM 2M 146.805- 100PL, on Thursdays @ 7:30pm; HF 10M net on 28.460 USB begins when the 2M Net concludes.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR-- There is a total of 133 TARC members. The breakdown is 111 regular, 1 associate, 9 first-year, 11 life and 1 comp member.

### OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Repeater Maintenance Committee:** Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR—Mentioned firmware flash on an AREDN node.
- 2. Remote Station Update:** Tom Shrilla, W8QJF-- Is performing well, not needing maintenance at this time. A donation was made from a member appreciating its use. Antenna height is 125 feet,
- 3. Jerry Spears Memorial Update:** Frank Wroblewski W2XYZ – New Auto Tuner, LDG AT1000 Pro II, 1 Kw, has been purchased, \$489.00 (no tax) at discount, at the Xenia Ohio Hamvention, and arriving shortly.
- 4. Storage Space:** Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ – Public storage rental expense is about \$200.00 monthly and not in current budget. Discussion showed interest in seeking possible free storage space at Villa San Marcos Church. Also discussed was considering placing an appropriate size storage shed at the repeater site. The repeater site owner has indicated he is receptive to this idea.
- 5. Field Day, June 24 - June 26:** Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ--Our Field Day event will be at the Venice USCG auxiliary station and will begin at 2pm on June 25, finishing on June 26 at 2 pm. No amplifiers will be needed as transmit power is limited to 100 watts. Phone, CW and FTW modes will be in use. HF bands are "traditional" bands 160-10M plus a "free" VHF station
- 6. Possible TARC Special Event Stations:** Dwight Sullivan, KT4DDS - Mentioned Big Truck Exhibitors, a Sarasota event in 2023 and the Hurricane Expo in 2023.

Continued >>>>

## TARC Minutes, continued

Also discussed using station K4S for an outreach event.

### NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Summertime Club Meetings**, Steve Phillips, N4SP - Motion was made by Al, K0AL to suspend the membership meetings of TARC for July and August, 2022. The motion was seconded by Paul KN4BAR and was passed by unanimous voice vote.
  - 2. Holiday Party:** Patti Phillips, N4IGI—Patti is volunteering to plan the TARC Holiday Party in December. Last year's location was at Left Coast Seafood and the event went nicely with 54 hams / guests attending.
  - 3. Diversity:** Patti Phillips, N4IGI, mentioned other clubs having success in getting pre-teens involved in ham radio. If anyone knows any middle school teachers, please share contact information with Patti as she is thinking of developing a school program.
  - 4. Outreach to new management at Venice Shorepoint Hospital:** Paul Nienaber, N4BAR—Is planning to reach out to the recently changed management at ShorePoint for collaboration with TARC in public service matters as with other local facilities.
- ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn was made by Nancy Heinrich, N4ZM and was seconded by John Zenner, N3PQD. Time of motion 7:59

**50-50 DRAWING:** Winner-- Fred Zimmerman, K9WRH; Amount \$24.00 (which was graciously donated to TARC)

**Attendance:** Number of members 28  
Number of guests 1

**Program: Sarasota ARES;** By Gary Wells, WB9AYD of SERC gave PowerPoint presentation on disaster communications in Sarasota County, including co-ordination of various first responder and disaster agencies communications.

**Next Meeting Date:** Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at VPC Fellowship Hall @ 7 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Youngberg, W8SKI

Recording Secretary

### Meeting program schedule

**September 14 - Paul Toth - NB9X:**

**NXDN Digital Radio**

**October 12 - Den Speis - W2DEN:**

**Knots for Hams**

**November 09 - Open**

**December 14 - No program**

**January 11, 2023 - Open**



**NEWS FLASH - Breakfast at Peaches is back to Tuesdays at 6 AM. See calendar, page eleven.**

## TARC Member Tony Mitkowski, K04ZMN, Silent Key

With heavy heart, we're notifying you of the passing of our fellow member, Tony Mitkowski, K04ZMN. Tony was new to ham radio and was an enthusiastic learner and a good friend. He was taken by cancer on July 31, 2022, just three weeks after receiving the diagnosis.

Tony was born and raised in Manhattan, and moved to the east coast of Florida at an early age. He worked as a biomedical technician for the South Broward County Hospitals. He was a veteran of the US Air Force. He is survived by a son and daughter and three grandchildren as well as his partner, Linda Speers. Services for Tony are being postponed until next summer when they will be held at a family reunion.

DX Jack's page



By Jack Sproat, W4JS



## MAJOR CURRENT/UPCOMING DX ACTIVITY &amp; 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
Jan Mayen – JX/LB4MI, QRS CW & SSB	Now to October	21	02-05	23-09	22-07	20-21	NO	NO	NO	NO
Botswana – A21TX by ZS4TX	Now to ???	104	NO	23-04	22-06	20-03	19-24	17-23	12-21	15-17
Palestine – E41TM	Now Active	49	--	23-04	22-06	19-06	17-23	12-20	--	--
Tonga – A35P by JA0RQV, all modes	Now to 30 Sep	253	08-09	05-12	04-13	02-14	01-09	23-04	18-02	18-02
Solomon Is – H44MS by DL2GAC, SB/FT8	Now to 21 Sep	275	NO	07-11	06-12	04-14	13-15	1400	21-24	20-24
Guinea Bissau – J5GQA by CT2GQA	Now to 13 Sep	90	00-06	21-09	21-10	19-11	11-03	12-24	15-23	15-20
Faroe Is – OY/MM0NDX & MM0OKG	01 to 05 Sep	32	00-07	22-09	21-05	19-24	1200	NO	NO	NO
San Marino – T71GP, SES for F1 GP Race	03 to 04 Sep	48	00-05	22-07	21-08	18-02	11-21	12-20	NO	NO
Ogasawara – JD1BOW by JA0JHQ	03 to 05 Sep	317	NO	08-12	08-13	12-13	2000	21-23	NO	NO
Burkina Faso – XT2AW by DF2WO	04 to 18 Sep	83	00-05	22-08	21-08	19-10	16-02	16-24	12-23	19-22
Iceland – TF/K5KG, K4EU & K4NMR	06 to 20 Sep	28	00-09	22-10	21-11	21-24	2100	NO	NO	NO
Chatham Is – ZL7/K5WE by 2 ops, all modes	09 to 21 Sep	230	0800	05-12	04-12	02-12	01-09	23-05	20-02	NO
Kosovo – Z66XX by DL2JRM	09 to 12 Sep	46	01-04	23-06	21-07	19-02	11-20	12-20	NO	NO
Kosovo – Z68EE by OZ1BH, CW	15 to 17 Sep	46	01-04	23-06	21-07	19-02	11-20	12-20	NO	NO
Minami Torishima – JG8NQJ/JD1, CW	15 to 30 Sep	308	NIL	07-12	07-13	12-13	20-22	20-23	NIL	NO
San Andres & Providencia – 5K0T, 4 op, CW	16 to 28 Sep	177	23-12	20-15	00-24	11-09	12-02	16-24	18-23	2100
Chagos Is – VQ9SC by WB4GHY, SB/FT8	16 Sep – 16 Nov	54	NO	NO	23-02	20-03	17-23	17-22	13-17	NO
Monaco – 3A/F5LIT	17 to 20 Sep	50	00-05	22-08	21-08	18-02	11-21	17-20	NO	NO
Svalbard – JW0A by 7-op team, all modes	19 to 26 Sep	12	05-06	00-08	23-08	NIL	NO	NO	NO	NO

Prepared 31 Aug 2022 based on <https://www.ng3k.com/>, *The Weekly DX* 22-34, [info@dxnews.com](mailto:info@dxnews.com), and *Ohio/Penn DX Bulletin* No. 1577.

**Notes:** Times shown are for S-5 or better signals and 50% 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 forecast opening times are calculated using VOACAP <http://www.voacap.com/hfi/>.

## -- AUGUST SOLAR ACTIVITY --

From 01 through 30 May, the 10.7 cm Solar Flux ranged from 95 to 134, with a mean value of 114.5. The  $A_p$  index was  $\geq 7$  on 21 days during that period. Sunspot regions were visible on every day, with the sunspot numbers varying from 31 to 119. There were C-class flares on 21 days and 9 M-class flares 29 August.

## -- SEPTEMBER FORECAST --

Solar activity is expected to be at mostly very low to low levels, with a chance for (R1-R2, Minor-Moderate) flare activity, through 05 Sep and again from 11-24 Sep. Mostly very low to low flare activity is expected on 06-10 Sep.

Geomagnetic field activity is expected to reach (G1-Minor) storm conditions on 05 Sep and 30 Sep. Unsettled to active periods are expected on 04-10 Sep, 13-17 Sep and 24-26 Sep due to recurrent CH HSSs. Mostly quiet levels are expected for the remainder of the outlook period.

The solar flux should range from 98 to 130, and average 114.5 for the month of September.

From *NOAA Weekly Highlights and Forecasts*, 29 Aug 2022, *NOAA 27-day Space Weather Outlook Table*, 29 Aug 2022, and *45 Day AP/10.7cm Flux Forecast, USAF*, 29 Aug 2022.

## -- ICELAND DXPEDITION --

The Iceland DXpedition shown above comes close to home as the three ops are local/regional members of the Florida Contest Group: George Wagner-K5KG (Siesta Key), Steve Hawley-

K4EU (Venice, and TARC member), and Tom Small-K4NMR (Dade City).

The trip was originally planned for the Scandinavian Activity CW Contest. Although the SAC was cancelled, the team kept their plans and will be there working one-to-one Q's, various contests, CWTs, state QSO parties, etc.

K5KG initiated the trip by contacting Oskar-TF3DC. Oskar put George in touch with Benni-TF3T, who is building up the large TF3D station in the barren "moonscape" some 70 km from Reykjavik. Benni has been enormously helpful with the logistical arrangements and building and installing monoband yagis for the station. Helping Benni with the efforts is his brother, Gudmi-TF3SG.

This will be George's 6th operation in Scandinavia. Steve-K4EU is a veteran of countless DX and contest operations, and Tom-K4NMR likewise has numerous DX operations under his belt from his Navy and Coast Guard days.

(From *Ohio/Penn DX Bulletin* No. 1577)

## -- A QUERY REGARDING INTEREST --

In consideration of the current size of the TARC membership, it seems reasonable to wonder how many members work HF DX and find this page to be of interest/value. If you are in that category, please confirm same via e-mail to [w4js@juno.com](mailto:w4js@juno.com). If a distinct minority results, San-K3SY can use this page for items more of interest to the majority. This OM (Old Man) is getting tired. VY 73 to All, Jack-W4JS

# Working DX With Split Personalities

By Steve, NS4P

If you've spent any time chasing DX or looking at DX spotting clusters, you might have seen or heard something like "3Y0J 14.023 UP 1" or "P5A9 28.305 QSX 28.310" or "QRZ BS7H listening up" and wondered what the heck they are talking about. It's called "working split". It's a clever way of operating that makes life easier for the DX and the hunters alike.

In simple terms, working split means that the DX is transmitting on one frequency and listening on another. By convention, the DX typically listens to a frequency slightly higher than their transmit frequency (i.e., "up"). Normal splits are 1-2 KHz for CW and 5-10 KHz for SSB. QSX is CW shorthand for "I am listening on <frequency>".

So – What problem are we trying to solve?

The issue is that any highly sought-after DX or Special Event station very quickly attracts a lot of callers – resulting in what we call a "pileup". If you have ever run across one of these big pileups, you may have noticed that it's not a lot different than a pileup on I-75 – everybody ends up on top of each other. You can imagine literally hundreds of stations all trying to call at the same time on exactly the same frequency. The DX will hear nothing except a wall of noise. Hunters trying to find an advantage will "tail end" the pileup so that it becomes a continuous cacophony of callers. The DX can't pick out any stations, and the hunters are stepping all over each other so nobody can hear the DX.

The solution is to move the pileup and spread it out so the DX stays in one place (e.g., 14.149 MHz) and the hunters work "up 5 to 10" - from 14.154 to 14.159 MHz. The DX then calls on a supposedly clear frequency and tunes around in the pileup picking out stations and answering them. Note that in this example, the DX is transmitting in the less crowded Extra portion of the band, and the hunters are transmitting in the General part of the band.

This sounds great! What equipment do I need?

Nowadays, even entry level radios such as the IC-7300 have split capability built-in, making split operation very convenient. But – the RTFM (Read the Free



Manual) principle applies. You must practice split operation so that when you get DX fever you don't end up making a mistake that literally hundreds of other hams will hear. Look in the manual for "Split Operation" and carefully review the instructions and practice putting the radio into split mode then returning to simplex.

Another thing that can go wrong is a certain percentage of operators don't get the message. Invariably some stations will just tune their rig to the DX frequency and start calling simplex (on the same frequency as the DX). These operators

end up stepping on the DX and causing all sorts of chaos – but since you are reading this excellent article, you won't be "that guy". More on that chaos later.

I don't want chaos - how do I make this work?

The first step is to set the radio to receive on the DX frequency in the correct mode. Start by tuning to a clear frequency a few KHz away from the DX operation (pay attention to the frequency limits for your license class) and make any tuning adjustments to your station on that frequency – this includes antenna tuners, amps and anything else. Doing a tune-up on or close to the DX frequency is one of the worst mistakes you can make; operators listening intently to a weak DX station are subjected to an ear-splitting carrier – not the way to make any friends. Remember you will not be transmitting on the DX frequency anyway, so tuning up there is really pointless – tune up above the pileup and then move down.

Make sure you can hear the DX (there is no point in calling if you can't hear them in the first place), and then set up the rig for split operation. In my experience, the "Main" or "VFO A" is set to your receive frequency (the DX station's transmit frequency) and the "Sub" or "VFO B" is set to the frequency you are transmitting on - usually 5-10 KHz up for SSB. Most modern radios have a button or menu option marked "Split". On the Icom radios, if you push and hold the "Split" button the radio copies the band, frequency, and mode from the VFO A to the VFO B and turns split mode on (indicated by a nice orange icon saying "SPLIT" on the display). Some of the Yaesu radios I have played with work the same way. You then need to tune the VFO B to your transmit frequency (5 to 10 up) – usually by holding in a specific

Con't >>>

## SPL - - - IT DX ... continued

button and turning the big tuning knob. The display should then show your receive frequency (VFO A), your transmit frequency (VFO B), and a "SPLIT" indication. Rigs with waterfall displays may be able to show cursors in different colors for the transmit and receive frequencies. As I mentioned earlier, the manual is your friend here so open it up and take a look. There are also many useful YouTube videos for every make and model of radio to help you out with the process.

Now comes the fun part – listen, listen, and listen again. Be sure the station you are hearing is the station you want. Sometimes the DX cluster has incorrect information for the call or frequency. Busy DX stations do not give their call during every contact so you may have to listen for several minutes to be sure you have the correct station.

Remember that while working split you only hear one side of the conversation unless you specifically turn on receive for the 2<sup>nd</sup> VFO. You should hear nothing while the DX is listening to the pileup for an intelligible signal. Get used to the rhythm of the DX station – good DX operators work at a steady (and fast!) pace and you can get used to the DX station's fist (on CW) and voice (on SSB) so you can be ready to jump in. Listen to how the DX responds so you know what to listen for. Double check that "SPLIT" is on, and that the transmit mode and frequency is set appropriately.

Now it's time to try and break through the pileup. Here are a few hints:

- ◆ Call only when the DX station indicates they are listening – Typically by saying "TU", "QRZ", or "QRZ up"
- ◆ Call using only your call sign phonetically – do not include the DX call. One call should be sufficient, definitely not more than twice. The DX is working very fast and typically responds to the first station they hear. Long repetitive calls are not heard because the DX will be working someone else.
- ◆ Call with your complete call sign. Many DX stations explicitly state they will not respond to suffix-only calls. Calling with the suffix forces the DX to ask you for the complete call, which is an extra transmission, wasting his time and the time of the hundreds of others waiting.
- ◆ You do NOT need to say the DX station's call – they know their callsign and there is no legal requirement for you to identify them. There is only one station on the frequency so there is no confusion.
- ◆ Tail-ending is usually a waste of time. The DX will usually pick up a call sign at the beginning of their

listening window and if you tail-end the DX won't hear you because they are already talking to someone else.

- ◆ Listen to and follow the DX station's direction. If they say, "The station ending in Bravo" and your call ends with "Zulu", do NOT call. If the DX says they are working "By the numbers" (W1s, followed by W2s, etc.) they are working by call sign, not location. If the DX is working W2 and you are a W4 in New York, you need to wait until he gets to the W4s. If the DX is working "EU only" and you are in North America, be quiet. Failure to follow the DX station's direction will result in you being ignored, or even worse, they will work you (to shut you up) but "forget" to log you.
- ◆ Unless the DX gets your call wrong, do not give them your call again. Repeating your call makes the DX think they got your call wrong and that leads to going back and forth multiple times. If they have your call correct, don't repeat your call.

In a perfect world, a typical DX contact goes something like this:

(DX) QRZ up

(You) November Sierra Four Papa

(DX) November Sierra Four Papa – Five nine (or 5nn)

(You) Roger - Five nine (or 5nn) Thank you

(DX) Thank you – QRZ up

That's it – no discussion of your station, weather, pets, or anything else. Unless the DX engages you in an actual conversation (very rare), it's signal reports and thank you only. And yes, everybody gets a "Five-nine" even in the worst band conditions. It's all about getting your call in the log and moving on to the next station as rapidly as possible.

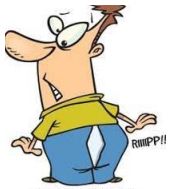
Common mistakes and how to avoid them:

- ⇒ Working the wrong station – Listen, listen, and listen again. Make sure the station you are hearing is the station you want. DX spotting clusters are frequently wrong (usually typos).
- ⇒ Not following the DX instructions – As discussed above – listen to the DX – if they are working EU only, don't call unless you are in the EU. Look at the QRZ page for the DX, sometimes specific instructions are posted there. Failure to follow the DX instructions almost guarantees you will not get in the log.
- ⇒ Not being split mode – In this case, you end up calling on the same frequency **More >>>>**

# More spl - - - it DX

as the DX. If you do this, a couple of things will happen:

- o The DX will NOT hear you. They are listening up and they never listen on their transmit frequency.
- o The “Up Police” will jump all over you. If you let off the mic and you hear several stations saying “UP! UP! UP!”, “He’s working split”, “NS4P is stupid” or something like that, check your rig again. Now, I agree that the Up Police can and do contribute to the chaos but stations calling on the DX frequency are a real problem also. If you hear “UP! UP! UP!” check your settings. If you continue to call on the DX frequency one of the Up Police will “work” you (NS4P – five nine!) so you think you made a contact and shut you up. Obviously, you will not be in the DX log. In general, don’t be the Up Police. there are already plenty of them.



- o Note that you get the same result if you are in split mode but leave both VFOs set to the same frequency.

⇒ You are in split mode, but you left VFO B on the wrong frequency – This happens if you are jumping around the bands and you leave VFO B set to the frequency for the last DX station. You end up calling on a frequency way off (maybe another band!) and obviously the DX you are trying to work won’t hear you. You are also causing QRM on whatever frequency you are transmitting on. Again, check your settings carefully before you key the mic.

There are many more points we could discuss (such as how to position yourself in the range of frequencies the DX is listening to) but this is enough to get started. So, get out there and split your radio’s personality!

73 & Good DX!

Steve

## Word Finder

Create words by using adjacent letters horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. The same letter can be used only once.

Find at least seven ham radio related terms. Answers next month.

Z	O	R	H
U	T	N	E
L	U	E	M
Q	B	A	D

## ... A Tech Tip from Facebook

Always hire a licensed contractor. A real professional would never install a white face plate on a beige outlet.



# My First Technology Love/Hate Relationship

by Tom K7ONE

At about 4 years old Santa brought me a fantastic toy! A small slot car road race set. It was about 1963 and long before the birth of the wall wart. Power was supplied by two No.6 "ignitor" batteries. Thus the beginning of my first love/hate relationship with batteries. No.6 batteries were 67mm (2.6") diameter and 172mm (6.8") tall with screw terminals on top.

The typical capacity of these carbon-zinc cells was 35 Ah. This is how, at 4 years old, I learned to series wire two cells and make it all work. I loved those batteries - until they went dead. Then I hated them!



A No.6 battery

My second battery mixed emotion technology relationship came at about 7 years old when a teenage babysitter gave me an old transistor radio. It was awesome! But, thus began my hatred of 9V batteries that exist to this day. They were expensive back then and still are today. One of my first Radio Shack purchases was a 9V battery "eliminator/charger" which was a forerunner to the wall wart.



In an attempt to repair my strained relationship with 9V batteries I recently ordered a new twist on the old foe. A rechargeable lithium-ion battery in a typical 9V body. They charge using a typical 5V micro-USB cable until the red LED turns green. The capacity is a marketing trick. It states 5400 mWh which is about the same as a 600mAh of a typical 9V alkaline battery.

They contain 2 small Lilo cells in series so the true voltage supplied will be less than 9V, but the discharge curve should be relatively flat and most devices should work

with them. Time will tell if these will be a new love. If they last, they have the potential to save a lot of \$\$.



If you're feeling nostalgic, have a look at my 67.5V battery used in a portable tube radio from my grandfather. It also uses a D cell for the filament voltage. At \$2.19 back in the day of this radio, I bet my grandfather hated these batteries. Oddly, this one has the positive snap riveted on upside down, so maybe he got a discount!



***Congratulations to Tom, K7ONE on his recent acquisition of a vanity call. Tom moved from KN4ONE to K7ONE. He's still number one, but no longer can claim the King Nerd title.***

***Tom is an avid builder of not only ham radio stuff, but all sorts of mechanical devices, and frequently shares his exploits via contributions to The Communicator. I, for one, am grateful for Tom's efforts. Keep 'em coming!***

***de, San, K3SY***



## Fw: [FCG] My RFI Story

The following item initiated by Jim, K8MR showed up in my in-box recently. It gives some insight into interference problems. Reprinted with permission. de San, K3SY

Last Thursday night I sat down at 10:30 pm for my weekly effort in the Northern California Contest Club NS Sprint, a half hour contest for CW hotshots. Things were going good on 15 meters when at 10:35 pm a strong noise suddenly showed up at my usually relatively quiet suburban QTH. It raised my noise floor by about 20db from the usual on 15 and 20 meters, perhaps a bit less on 40 and 80 where atmospheric noise was more of a factor.

After the contest ended at 11 pm, I decided to do some quick checking. I drove down the street in the direction of the noise holding an HT out the window, and found a noisy spot about a quarter mile from my house. I then went back with on my bike (well lit, on a very lightly traveled street) with the HT and a 432 yagi. I found an area within a pole or two where the noise peaked. There was no visible arcing, so I went home for the night.

In the morning I repeated the trip on the bike, and then drove back with my W1TRC ultrasonic detector. I easily found the culprit pole. Then looking around, I noticed a broken side mounted insulator on the high

voltage line, with that line laying across the service drops to four nearby houses.

I went home and called my RFI contact at First Energy, who was out of the office. But his voice mail message gave an 800 number to call in an emergency, which I did. Once I got the agent to understand that the problem was not at my house, she then wrote up a trouble ticket. By the time I came home from doing some projects at 5 pm, the issue had been repaired.

I don't have good measurements, but it seems that the noise in that direction is now somewhat less than it had been before. Had I been hearing low level leakage across a cracked insulator? That I may never know for sure.

I also wonder what the chances were that I'd be on the air when that insulator broke? And if not for me, whether I caught it immediately or at some later time when chasing noise, how long would that high voltage power line be laying across those low voltage lines? And what awful things could have happened with that?

Jim, K8MR

<<<< The broken insulator.

Down the street. Is this what electricians call a branch circuit? >>>>



As a retired utility distribution engineer who spent 33 years dealing with just such problems, I can't resist commenting on the described situation.

My research involved: 1. Looking up K8MR's address on QRZ. 2. Finding the location on Google Maps. 3. Using street view to look at other sections of line in the vicinity.

My comments:

Based on the insulator size, it appears that the line in question may be operating at nominally 4 kV – probably a legacy circuit, as most utility circuits at this relative low voltage have been converted to higher voltages. (Florida Power uses 23 kV class lines in the Venice area.)

Because of the trees in close proximity to the lines, covered wire (sometimes called "tree wire") is in place. Although the plastic covering on the wire is of value in reducing faults caused by momentary contact

with other conductors, trees, or the ground, it is not called "insulation" since it is not shielded, and is not safe to touch. Also, sustained contact, especially at higher voltages will result in tracking, carbonization, and subsequent failure of the covering, at which time a fault will occur.

So, the section of line with the broken insulator lying on the secondary voltage conductors may hang in there for days or even weeks before things burn down, but immediate repair is prudent.

The tree branch may last much longer before bad things happen, depending on how much moisture is present.

As to interference on your favorite ham radio bands, the opportunities on such lines are endless. As a matter of fact, the use of covered wire presents a whole added level of interference considerations.

de K3SY



# WHEN AM I??

by Tom, K7ONE

Digital modes like WSPR, FT8(4), JS8Call require precision timing. I find computers to be poor precision clocks. Manufacturers probably don't care about clock precision because that costs money, and Windows is typically set to sync your clock from an internet source. To test yours you can turn off the auto sync feature, then after some hours, start receiving FT8 signals and see how far off your time is in the DT column. (This is a comparison of your time to that of the decoded station, not to real exact time) Someday your internet may not work, or you may be operating from a park without cell signal, and you have no way to sync your clock!

Why not do it from outer space! For \$13 you can use a USB GPS dongle with free software from

VK4ADC called GPS2Time to sync your clock, and get you location including grid square. I have been using one of these dongles for about 3 years and just got a second one for my POTA setup. They work surprisingly well. With one attached to my laptop on my radio desk about 6 feet from a window, it is still able to consistently receive 4 or 5, and as many as 10 satellites for a fix

for GPS2Time software. Every time you start it you must select the COM port. You must run it as administrator to allow it to adjust the computer clock. There are many other programs available that will do the same thing. This happens to be the one I got accustomed to.

Now you know when you are!



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## Date & time

### Current date and time

10:07 AM, Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Set time automatically

On

Set time zone automatically

Off

Set the date and time manually

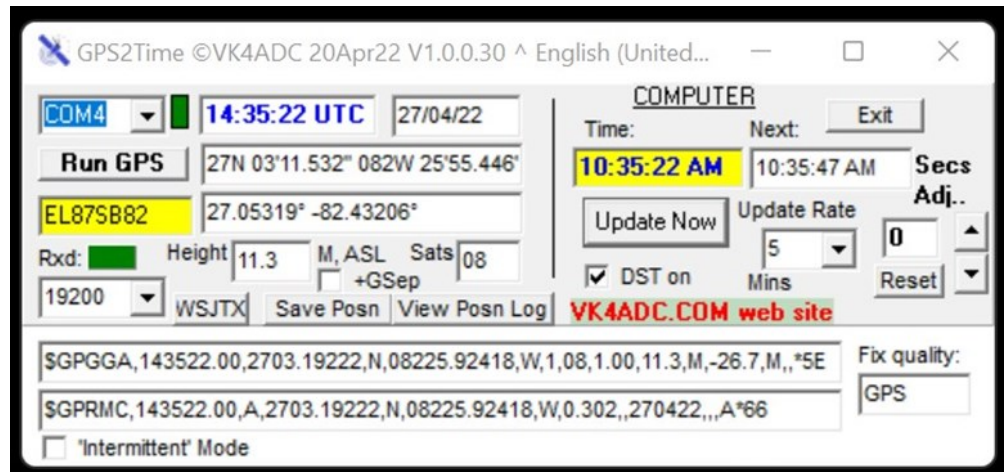
Change

Synchronize your clock

Last successful time synchronization: 4/26/2022 10:08:18 AM

Time server: time.windows.com

Sync now



GPS2 Time window.



"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right." .....Henry Ford



# ~ September, 2022 ~

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
= Breakfast at Peaches (opens at 6, orders taken at 7)		↓	~ See Groups.IO for ZOOM sign-on	1  * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net	2  Breakfast @ Perkins 9A	3  Breakfast @ DAV 9:30 A  BOD 1P
4	5	6    # DMR net 7:30 PM	7  ~ Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM	8  * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net	9  Breakfast @ Perkins 9A	10  Bkfst @ DAV 9:30  TARC VE session @ Venice Li- brary 10 A
11	12  DARN net 11:00 AM Starts on NI4CE/rpt 145.43 p100	13    # DMR net 7:30 PM	14  ~ Virtual breakfast  TARC MTG 7:00 PM @ Venice Presbyteri- an Church	15  * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net	16  Breakfast @ Perkins 9A	17  Breakfast @ DAV 9:30 A
18	19	20    # DMR net 7:30 PM	21  ~ Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM	22  * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net	23  Breakfast @ Perkins 9A	24  Breakfast @ DAV 9:30 A
25	26	27    # DMR net 7:30 PM	28  ~ Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM	29  * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net	30	

# DMR net on W4AC UHF repeater - 444.10 MHz - Talk Group 310442  
 \* 2 meter net on W4AC VHF repeater - 146.805 MHz, (-), PL 100 or W4AC-R EchoLink  
 + 10 meter net on 28.460 MHz +/- 10 MHz (depending on band activity) immediately following 2 M net.

**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](http://www.tamiamiarc.org) - Webmaster - Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR.

Editor - San Yoder, K3SY, who acknowledges and thanks these contributing writers this month: Steve Phillips, NS4P, Gary Youngberg, W8SKI, Jack Sproat, W4JS, and Tom Babcock, K7ONE.

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

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