



# THE COMMUNICATOR



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

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

Incorporated 1984

<http://www.tamiamicar.org>

October, 2017

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

**O**ur thoughts and prayers go out to all TARC members who were affected by Hurricane Irma. To those of you who experienced it in person, we hope you made it through with minimal damage. To the TARC members who watched anxiously from up North, we hope your homes survived with little damage.

As all the TARC snowbirds, including myself, return to Florida, it's a good time to start thinking about what additional things we should be doing to make our club interesting to be part of, and to attract new members. As we discussed last year at this time, there are several ways we can make a contribution to our community and to our hobby. We have a running start with our monthly Volunteer Examiners (VE) Amateur Radio Testing program, our Sharks Tooth 10K race monitoring and our K4S Special Event Station operation. We can also increase our participation in the TARC nets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and in the monthly DARN emergency drill.

A few ideas for discussion would be:

- 1) Help the local Boy and Girl Scouts achieve their electronic badge and perhaps a ham radio license.
- 2) Be more active supporting the local High school ham radio program and perhaps help establish radio clubs at some of the local junior high schools.
- 3) Put together an electronics introductory course for our community with a goal of getting more people interested in the hobby.
- 4) Activate the local Gasparilla light house or the DeSoto National Park as an operating activity.

Last year we participated in the Florida QSO party and the ARRL field day. These were the first in my memory for the club.

So please think and suggest some activity that you would be interested in participating in, and we can discuss, select, and plan some activities at the next TARC meeting. We should strive to participate in one activity per month.

I hope everyone has an enjoyable October.

VY 73 to All, de Andy, KB1HIP

## October Meeting

Our meeting will start at **7:00 PM** on Wednesday, **11 October, 2017** at the Coast Guard Auxiliary Training Center, 1200 South Harbor Drive.

*DX Jack's page....*

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



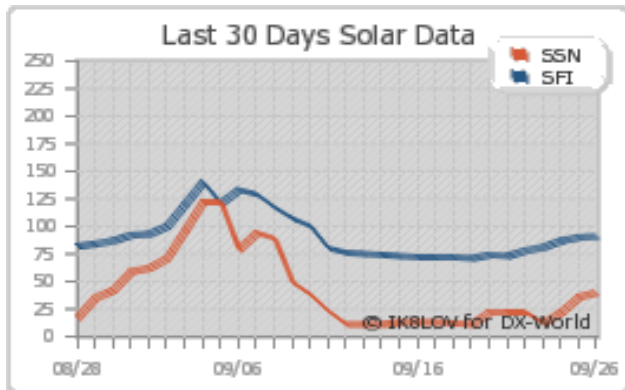
**MAJOR CURRENT/UPCOMING DX ACTIVITY & PROPAGATION HIGHLIGHTS**

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
Micronesia – V63FKR & MLO, all modes	Now to 02 Oct	293	<b>07-12</b>	<b>06-14</b>	05-14	<b>13-16</b>	14-16	14-16	21-23	NO
Malta – 9H3I & 9H3QQ, all modes	Now to 09 Oct	55	--	<b>20-07</b>	19-09	<b>13-20</b>	<b>15-18</b>	16-18	16-18	NO
So. Shetland Is – HF0ARC, SSB, JT65, JT9	Now to 10 Oct	169	--	<b>23-10</b>	--	23-03	--	--	--	--
East Timor – 4W6RR by ZL1BQD, WSJT-X	Now to 10 Oct	300	--	<b>08-13</b>	--	<b>13-16</b>	--	--	--	--
Mauritania – 5T5OK by 6-ops, all modes	Now to 26 Oct	81	<b>22-08</b>	<b>20-09</b>	18-11	<b>13-23</b>	<b>15-21</b>	16-20	16-20	NO
Burkina Faso – XT2AW by WF2WO	Now to 30 Oct	83	--	<b>20-08</b>	20-09	<b>13-00</b>	<b>15-20</b>	16-19	17-18	NO
Bhutan – A5A by 3 ops, all modes	29 Sep – 08 Oct	8	NO	<b>23-00</b>	No	Other	Open-	ings	Fore-	cast
Reunion Is – FR/ON6KE, CW & Digital	29 Sep – 10 Oct	91	<b>23-02</b>	<b>22-03</b>	NO	22-01	NO	NO	NO	NO
Temotu – H40GC by LZ1GC, 160-10m	30 Sep – 20 Oct	270	<b>06-12</b>	<b>05-14</b>	04-15	13-16	23-01	20-22	20-22	NO
Christmas Is – VK9XI by 4 ops, all modes	02 to 10 October	334	<b>1100</b>	<b>11-12</b>	No	Other	Open-	ings	Fore-	cast
Christmas Is – VK9XGJ by W7GJ, 6m EME	02 to 19 October		Aim	For	the	Moon	and	Hope		
Dodecanese Is – SV5/DK7TX	03 to 13 October	49	<b>22-05</b>	<b>21-07</b>	20-08	<b>14-18</b>	14-18	15-17	NO	NO
East Kiribati – T32AZ by KH6QJ	05 to 10 October	267	<b>04-12</b>	<b>02-14</b>	00-16	<b>17-01</b>	<b>17-23</b>	17-22	18-21	NO
Guantanamo – KG4HH by W2DZO	06 to 09 October	135	<b>00-24</b>	00-24	00-24	<b>16-21</b>	17-21	NO	NO	NO
Guantanamo – KG4LA by KQ4LA	06 to 13 October	135	<b>00-24</b>	00-24	12-09	16-21	17-20	NO	NO	NO
Guantanamo – KG4HF by W6HGF	06 to 20 October	135	<b>00-24</b>	00-24	12-03	15-21	18-20	NO	NO	NO
Maldives – 8Q7BI by MM0VEG, SSB/PSK	07 to 15 October	41	--	--	--	21-00	--	--	--	--
Cocos Keeling – VK9CI by 4 ops, all modes	10 to 17 October	3		No	Open-	ings	Fore-	cast		
Palau – T88UR & T88WM, all modes	11 to 17 October	306	<b>08-12</b>	<b>07-14</b>	06-14	14-17	14-17	NO	NO	NO
Bhutan – A52SJ by N6SJ	12 to 19 October	8	<b>2330</b>	<b>22-01</b>	No	Other	Open-	ings	Fore-	cast
Sao Tome & Principe – S9CQ by EA5IDQ	12 to 21 October	90	<b>22-06</b>	<b>21-08</b>	19-01	<b>15-22</b>	15-20	15-20	NO	NO
Laos – XW4XR by 3W3B, CW & FT8	12 to 24 October	353	NO	<b>11-12</b>	No	Other	Open-	ings	Fore-	cast
St Helena – ZD7VDE by G0VDE, all modes	14 to 21 October	110	<b>22-07</b>	<b>20-09</b>	19-10	<b>13-23</b>	16-20	16-20	no	NO
Bangladesh – S2??? By 6 ops, CW/SSB	15 to 18 October	8	--	23-00	No	Other	Open-	ings	--	--
Minami Torishima – JG8NQJ/JD1, CW/RTY	15 Oct – 15 Dec	308	<b>07-12</b>	<b>05-14</b>	04-14	13-16	20-23	2100	NO	NO
Mauritius – 3B8/IW2NEF	16 to 23 October	88	<b>23-02</b>	<b>22-03</b>	23-02	20-00	20-21	NO	NO	NO
St Barthelemy – FJ/AI5P & FJ/N0KV; 4 ops	17 to 26 October	113	<b>21-12</b>	<b>11-03</b>	12-10	<b>15-20</b>	16-20	NO	NO	NO
Palestine – E44WE by SP9FIH, SSB/PSK63	18 to 29 October	49	--	--	20-07	--	--	14-17	1600	NO
Tuvalu – T2??? By 3D2AG, all modes	20 to 27 October	267	<b>05-12</b>	<b>04-14</b>	03-15	13-15	<b>18-23</b>	19-22	19-22	2000
Seychelles – S79KB by DL2SBY, focus RTY	20 Oct – 01 Nov	68	<b>23-02</b>	<b>22-03</b>	22-02	20-00	20-00	18-20	19-20	NO
Botswana – A25A by NJOF	20 Oct – 05 Nov	105	<b>23-04</b>	<b>21-05</b>	20-06	<b>17-23</b>	16-23	15-20	15-20	1900
Bangladesh – S2??? by 6 ops, CW/SSB	21 to 25 October	8	--	<b>23-00</b>	No	Other	Open-	ings	--	--
Cocos Keeling – VK9CZ by 2 ops, CW/SSB	22 Oct – 06 Nov	3		No	Open-	ings	Fore-	cast		
Bhutan – A52SJ by N6SJ	26 October	8	<b>0000</b>	<b>23-01</b>	No	Other	Open-	ings	Fore-	cast
Cyprus SBA – ZC4MK by G0KOM	27 to 31 October	48	--	<b>21-06</b>	20-08	<b>13-17</b>	14-16	14-16	NO	NO
Liberia – 5L3BI by 5 ops, CW/SSB	31 Oct – 04 Nov	92	<b>22-07</b>	<b>20-09</b>	19-10	<b>13-22</b>	<b>15-20</b>	16-19	17-19	NO

Updated 25 September 2017 based on 25 September *The Weekly DX* and <http://www.ng3k.com>

**Notes:** Time in bold = the Bands with 75-100% opening; ??? = Call Sign not yet known; ++ = Mostly SSB; \*\* = Mostly CW; NO = No Opening forecast. Long Path bearings and opening times are underlined. All forecasts calculated using *W6ELProp* propagation software. Solar Flux and K-index varied by dates in accordance with the NOAA SWPC 27-day Space Weather Outlook Table and USAF 45 Day AP Forecast.

**-- SEPTEMBER SOLAR ACTIVITY --**



(From DX-world.net)

**-- OCTOBER FORECAST --**

Solar activity is expected to be at low levels, with a slight chance for M-class activity (R1-R2, Minor-Moderate), from 01 - 07 Oct and from 20-21 Oct. This is primarily due to the flare potential from Region

2682. Mostly very low levels are expected from 08-19 Oct.

No proton events are expected at geosynchronous orbit.

The greater than 2 MeV electron flux at geosynchronous orbit is expected to be at high levels on 01 - 09 Oct and 12-21 Oct due to CH HSS influence. Normal to moderate levels are expected for the remainder of the outlook period.

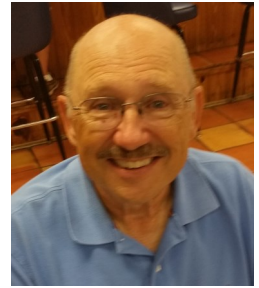
Geomagnetic field activity is expected to be at unsettled to active levels with G1 (Minor) storm conditions expected on 11-14 Oct and 24-26 Oct, and disturbed levels 22 and 27 Oct due to recurrent CH HSS activity. Mostly quiet conditions are expected for the remainder of the month.

The 10.7 cm Solar Flux should range from 71 to 95, and average 86.0 during October.

(From *NOAA Weekly Highlights and Forecasts*, 25 September 2017, *NOAA 27-day Space Weather Outlook Table*, 25 Sept 2017, and *45 Day AP Forecast*, USAF, 25 Sept 2017.)

## Digital Frank's page

### FT8 Wizardry By W2XYZ



I hope I have your interest in hearing more about FT8, ja' know, the thing I wrote about last month. It's that new digital mode developed by Franke and Taylor that allows Hams with minimal antennas to work the stations across the nation and DX around the world. We all know CW is more effective than SSB primarily because of its narrower bandwidth. With CW you focus your 100 watts or whatever into a space of about 80 Hz. On Phone your 100 watts is spread out over nearly 3000 Hz. That plus your brain is able to do error correction on dits and dahs better than trying to figure out words being spoken.

The mode FT8 is a little different than what most of us are familiar with. There is no rag-chewing with FT8, in fact, a microphone and/or key is not used--FT8 uses computers. Ouch! Computers...a bad word for many. It's not as bad as you think. After all, we became Hams because we were interested in how things work and have at least a moderate interest in technology.

The first time you sat in front of a radio, you may have known how to turn it on, but probably little more than that. Tune the station, select the sideband, adjust the passband, turn on the noise filter, what's this RIT thing do again? Peak the grid, dip the plate, adjust the tuner, is the mic gain turned up enough? There was a learning curve that needed to be learned to operate in Phone and CW was even more involved than that. Learning to operate your station was actually fun, and FT8 can be fun, too.

There are those purists (not any of us, I mean those other guys) who say, "Digital modes are not real radio. You're having a device (computer) do it all for you." Most CW operators don't touch two wires together to activate their transmitter, they use a tool called a key, and in many cases, an electronic keyer. Phone operators use tools too. Microphones to change their voice to electrical impulses, some even tailor their vocal qualities with tools such as equalizers and compressors.

Then there is another bunch of guys (not any of us, but may or may not include some of the purists I just spoke about) who say. "It's not really contacting anyone because you are not having a conversation with the other station, in fact you don't even exchange names." I say, big deal. Most CW DXers transmit their callsign and when the distant station acknowledges them, they reply with "5NN TU" and that's the end of the QSO. Contesters are much the same. Are DXers and Contesters not really operating either??A

Now that we put some of these myths to bed, let's get down to what FT8 is really all about and why the radio world is going crazy over it. As mentioned, FT8 is a digital mode. There are dozens of digital modes out there with RTTY and PSK31 being the most famous...until now. FT8 only came on the scene in July of this year. Already it is by far the most widely used mode in operation on all the HF bands today. On any ordinary day you can hear more people operating in the 2 kHz segment allocated for FT8 than the entire CW and phone band put together. That is quite a statement and I know it's true because I counted them myself.

A nice long rag-chew with a Ham across the country, or better yet with someone in a foreign land, is a most enjoyable facet of our hobby. Unfortunately not much of that has been happening lately. We are somewhere around the bottom of the 11 year sunspot cycle and it will be several years until it makes any significant improvement. Even when (if) it peaks, it may be a dud of a cycle like we've had before. Some scientists (and I hope they are wrong) are even predicting we may be in a Maunder Minimum, which we know occurred once before where there were essentially no sunspots for 70 years. 70 years, yikes! I can't wait that long for good propagation.

Continued >>>>>

## FT8 Wizardry, con't . . .

Then there is the other elephant in the room. Many, if not most, of us live in developments that limit or prohibit radio antennas. Being ingenious, plus sneaky as we are, find ways of erecting minimal antennas that get us on the air, but nothing worth bragging about. So along comes the hero of amateur radio, FT8. This mode takes up less than 50 Hz of bandwidth and copies absolutely perfectly signals 20db or more below the noise level. How is this miracle possible? Only its creators know that for sure, but what I can understand of what they tell us is concentrating your transmitter power into this tiny bandwidth gives lots of watts per Hertz, or whatever you want to call it. Plus, the computers are synchronized exactly in time for transmitting and receiving and then does some fancy decoding with complex algorithms that figures out what is noise and what isn't and it does forward error correction with more computer tricks.

Where's the proof that it is that good? How many QSO's did you make last month? I have a friend in NJ that called me last week and said, "Frank, congratulate me?" I asked why. He said, "I just completed my 1000<sup>th</sup> FT8 QSO today." A thousand??? Most Hams don't work that many in a year, maybe excluding contests. Yes, he made a thousand contacts in roughly two months. I know of a member of our own club that has over 500 FT8 contacts and he too has been at it only a short time (remember it only came out in July). As far as DXing, well the truly rare ones are not (yet) on FT8 as far as I know, but there are enough stations on the air to get WAS or even DXCC.

Let me tell you how it works. You install WSJT-X on your computer and connect your computer to your radio with an interface such as the USB Signal Link. An accurate computer clock is also needed. If you haven't already installed one of the many time applications on your computer, like "D4" or "Time.Is" you need to do so. Then run the WSJT-X software and select from the many modes available, FT8. If your radio is able to be tuned by your computer (CAT operation) you merely select the band you wish to operate. If you are not using CAT, you tune the radio to the

frequency displayed in the program window (often 74 kHz from the bottom of the band). In-sure your radio is in USB or USB-Data mode (depending on the brand of radio) and slide the cursor of your mouse to an empty spot on the waterfall.

Set your transmitter power to anything you want, up to 1500 watts, although everyone, or nearly everyone, uses considerably less power. Usually 25-50 watts is enough. If your radio can take the heavy duty cycle, you could set it higher. Personally, I use 50 watts. Click the mouse and then click the CQ button. You are now transmitting CQ, your callsign, and the six digit maidenhead grid square for your location. In 15 seconds, the transceiver goes back to receive. You receive for 15 seconds where someone might respond to you. If no one responds, it begins transmitting for 15 seconds again. Assume someone hears you and responds. During their 15 seconds of transmitting and on your receive frequency, he sends his callsign, his grid square, and a signal report expressed in decibels above or below the noise level. You then transmit for 15 seconds where you give him a RRR, his callsign, and his signal report. He responds with callsigns and 73 and you do the same. Total time elapsed one minute and thirty seconds.

Okay, so you don't know the names of his eleven grandchildren, or what the doctor prescribed for his lumbago, but you did have a valid QSO. You exchanged callsigns and signal reports. Additionally you know down to about 3 miles where he lives. A logging program will provide his name, street address, county, State, etc. Is this really any worse than pushing a button on your radio or memory keyer that sends "5NN TU"-- of course not. It's just another way our hobby is evolving. Think of the Hams in the early days of radio. When AM came about I'm sure many claimed talking into that round metal thing (mic) wasn't real radio. Real radio has dits and dahs. Several years later SSB was developed. Similar arguments probably took place where some said radio was never meant to sound like Donald Duck. RTTY probably met opposition, too. Think of the big clunky teletypes and the quirky >>>



**FT8**

demodulators used in the early days of digital radio. Change is almost always met with opposition, until the next thing comes along.

Maybe FT8 is not for you. That's okay. Some facets of amateur radio are of little interest to me but others are very passionate about it. Amateur radio is broad enough to please everyone. If you would like to see FT8 in action and learn a little more about it, try watching the youtube videos from the links listed below.:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoCngsKW9tc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoCngsKW9tc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3iuPyIFhco>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyBEP53eYlg>

So, until next month. Have fun, after all Ham radio is our hobby and not our job. Enjoy it!

73, *Frank W2XYZ*

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## How did your antennas fare when Irma Came Calling?

Fortunately many of us received little or no damage to our homes/stations/antennas as a result of Irma's winds. If you would like to share your tales of damage, close calls, or escapes, I welcome your stories and photos. I would be especially interested in any emergency operating experiences any of you may have had during or after the storm.

Your editor sat out the storm in Sleepy Hollow New York – not running away, but on a trip planned to PA and NY months before. Thankfully the Auto-train was able to return us home as scheduled. A special thanks to Frank, W2XYZ for assisting my neighbors with securing my house.

As I returned to my usual routine, including working on Habitat for Humanity houses, I realized how fortunate we were to escape with no more than minor shrubbery damage when I looked out the back door of the house I was working on. There I saw the scene pictured here. Not the worst case scenario, but not a welcome sight.

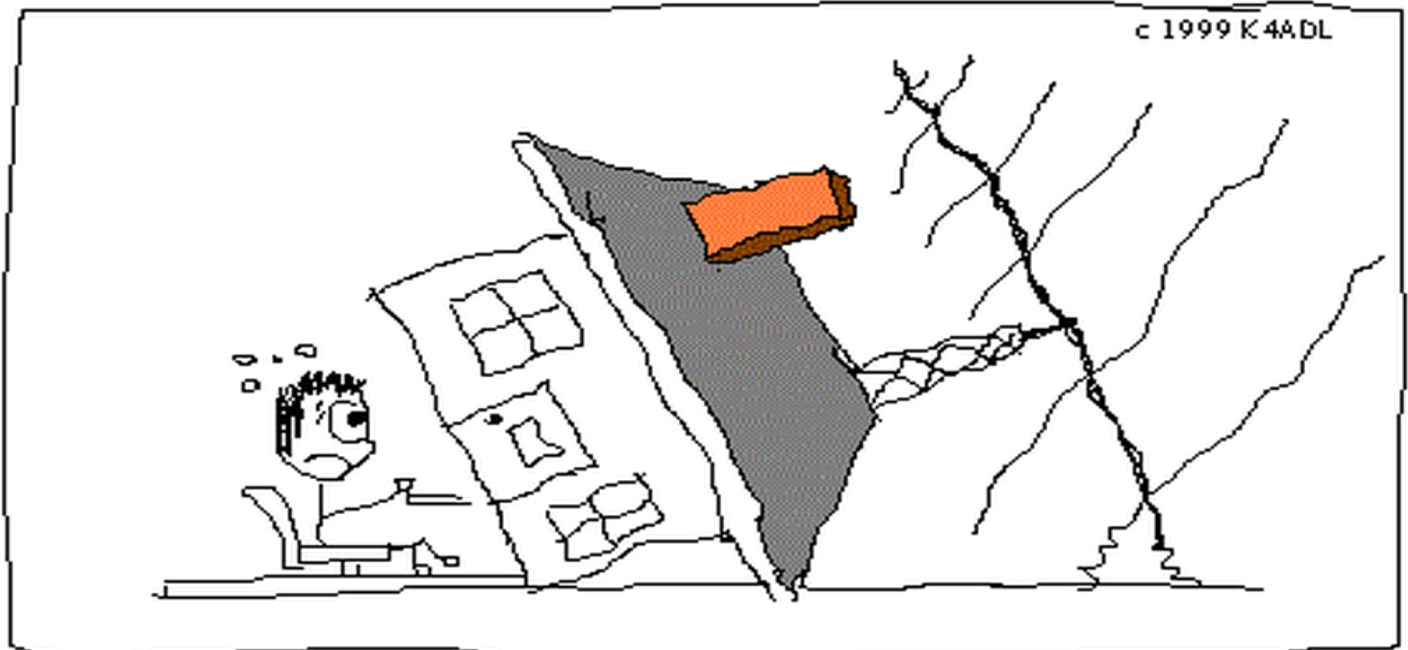
73, *San,  
K3SY*



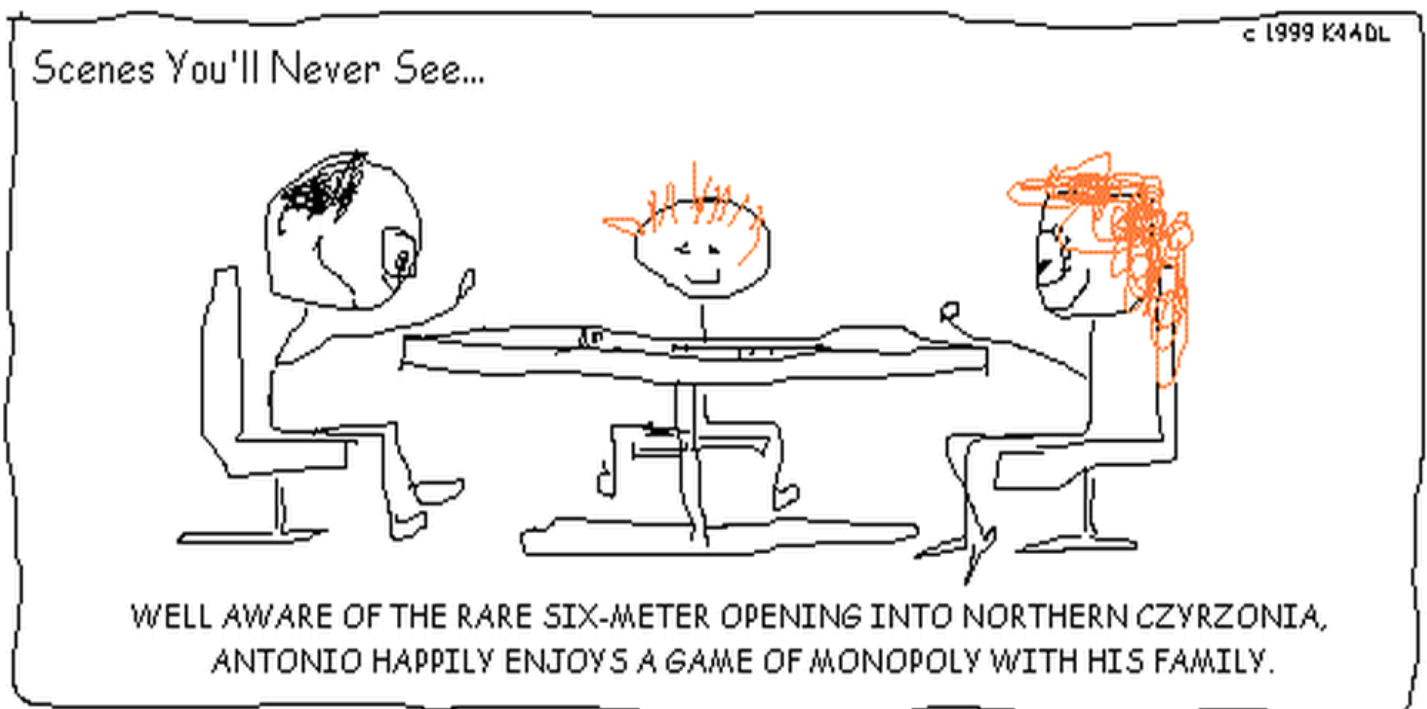
# HAM RADIO ON YOUTUBE

President Andy in his message urges us to look at ways to promote our hobby with younger people. Here is an excellent video on YouTube from Great Britain which can surely give us some good ideas. Worthwhile watching! Go to this URL:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x6x\\_6mDVIQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x6x_6mDVIQ&feature=youtu.be)



DONALD HAD BEEN WARNED TO CENTER THE 40 METER BEAM ON HIS ROOF.



WELL AWARE OF THE RARE SIX-METER OPENING INTO NORTHERN CZYRZONIA, ANTONIO HAPPILY ENJOYS A GAME OF MONOPOLY WITH HIS FAMILY.

# October 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <i>* Peaches opens at 6:00 AM, orders taken at 7:00.</i>	2 QCWA 11:30 AM Denny's Bee Ridge Sarasota	3 Breakfast @ Peaches *	4	4	6 Breakfast @ Peaches *	7
8	9 DARN Emergency net @ 11AM Starts on NI4CE/RPT 145.43 pl100	10 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	11 <b>TARC meeting @ Coast Guard Training Center 7:00 PM</b>	12	13 Breakfast @ Peaches *	14 <b>TARC VE Session @ Jacaranda Public Library 10:00 AM</b>
15	16	17 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	18	19	20 Breakfast @ Peaches *	21
22	23	24 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1	25	26	27 Breakfast @ Peaches *	28
29	30	31 Breakfast @ Peaches * DMR net @ 7:30 PM W4AC 444.1				

\*\* The W4AC 146.805 Repeater is now DMR. DMR net meets on TAC 311 on the 444.1 repeater

**TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call sign \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL, (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Summer Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Alt. E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Application Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check items of interest:**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A - ATV/SSTV                 | <input type="checkbox"/> L - Echo Link   | <input type="checkbox"/> S - Special Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C - Contests                 | <input type="checkbox"/> N - Net Control | <input type="checkbox"/> T - Training       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D - Digital (DMR, PSK, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> O - Computers   | <input type="checkbox"/> U - VHF/UHF        |
| <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             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I - RFI/TVI                  | <input type="checkbox"/> R - Repeater    | <input type="checkbox"/> Y - RTTY           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____        |  |   |

**MAIL TO: TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.  
PO Box 976  
Nokomis, FL 34274**

**2017 TARC OFFICERS:**

President:	Andy Durette	KB1HIP
Vice President:	Gary Hagens	K6OC
Secretary:	Jim Shortill	KJ4NDO
Treasurer:	Frank Wroblewski	W2XYZ
Directors:	Peter Boers	KV4LR
	Larry Bryan	W8LIG
	Don Jansen	KI4VGE
	Tom McDermitt	W3GXV
	San Yoder	K3SY

**Dues:**

Regular member	\$20.00/yr.
After 6/1 -	\$10.00 to yr. end
After 10/31	\$20.00 thru next yr.
Family Membership	\$25.00/yr
Non Voting Student	\$5.00/yr
New licensee -	first year free.

*The Communicator is a monthly publication of  
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<http://www.tamiamiarc.org> Webmaster: Dave Gill, K4JDG*