



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>

March, 2022

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President's message.....NS4P

As I write this, it appears that "winter" is now over here on the Suncoast and we are headed into spring. I've been watching the birds from my lanai, and it does appear that love is in the air – one of our resident pairs of sandhill cranes have hatched two adorable colts and the other water birds are busy nesting on the banks of the pond. It is truly the best time of the year here on the Suncoast.

In addition to all the pheromones floating about, there is also a lot of DX (distant stations, usually meaning stations in a foreign country) in the air. After two years of Covid restrictions impeding travel to remote places, it looks like DXpeditions are finally getting back on track. Rare (to me at least) call signs are on the air, and the Interwebs are full of announcements of more planned operations. Combined with a sunspot cycle on the rise, it's an exciting time to chase DX.

Old-timers will say that DXing is much easier these days, and they are correct. Instant availability of DX "spots" (reports of DX stations on the air) via the internet is far, far superior to the days of one-ring telephone trees, DX packet clusters and other medieval methods of telling other hams that you found a rare one (I think some of our club members may have used smoke signals HiHiHi).

Drift-free solid state radios with VFOs accurate to 1Hz have eliminated the

guesswork of zero-beating that station. Working split is now a trivial push of a single button. Confirmation of that "new one" can happen in near real time, instead of waiting months or years for that postcard.

Guess what – I don't care that it's easier now. Although I have been licensed for quite a while, I am new to the DXing game, and I am having the best time. Even in the face of HOA restrictions, it is possible to make contact with stations in very remote places on a regular basis. Just this morning I snagged a "new one" and I will have a smile on my face all day. As with many things, ham radio or other activities, it's all about setting your personal goals and expectations.

There are as many facets to the DX game as there are hams. You can just chase a total number of entities using any band or mode. You can specialize, and pick single band and/or mode. Some operators like to collect the QSL cards while others are thrilled with an electronic confirmation. It's all about deciding what you want to accomplish.

I will admit that jumping into a big DX pileup can be intimidating, and that I have heard some truly awful behavior in some of these radio scrums, but do not be deterred. First of all, not all DX re-



Continued on page 6 >>>

Next Month

**Shark's Tooth
10 K report
An April
Special**

Next meeting 7:00 PM, Wednesday, March 09, 2022 at Venice Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 825 The Rialto, Venice, 34285

TAMIAMI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Minutes of the 2/09/22 Meeting

New Meeting Location

Venice Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall (Room 10). 825 The Rialto, Venice, FL 34285

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Vice President, Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR.

American flag salute and the pledge of allegiance followed.

Introductions

Visitors – Walt Kline, WB8WNF, Englewood; Scott Bicknell, W1BIC, Sarasota; Mike Litsky, KN4PRQ, Rotonda West.

New members – Doug Griffin, WA1KRX of Venice.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR - Requested a motion to accept the minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting as published in The Communicator. The motion was made by Chet, KG4IYS, and was seconded by Bob, KN4RKE, and as passed by unanimous voice vote.

CORRESPONDENCE: Gary Youngberg, W8SKI, made mention of letter dated 2/1/2022 received from Peter Boers and Patti Phillips, informing that the financial audit was successfully completed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ – gave the Treasurer's report with a beginning balance of \$16,290.08, receipts of \$1,004.00, expenses of \$391.36, and an ending balance for the month of January, 2022 in the amount of \$17,069.72. A motion to accept the report was made by Paul, K1YOU, seconded by Nancy, N4ZM, and was passed by unanimous voice vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SUNSHINE: Jim Shortill, KJ4NDO, reported no report of illnesses at this time. Paul, KN4BAR, expressed his appreciation to the club during his recent medical concern.

VE TESTING: Paul, KN4BAR, said the next test session will be at the Venice Library on Saturday, February 19, 2022.

LIAISON TO QCWA: Nancy Heinrich, N4ZM, reported that 23 members attended the last QCWA meeting in Sarasota.

REPEATER / TECHNICAL: Frank, W2XYZ, reported that repeaters are working normally, problem with EchoLink is now corrected. 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.

REMOTE STATION:

Current HF antenna is a dipole at 125' agl, and runs 100W, plans are to add an MFJ AV-680 vertical 9 band antenna with a remote means of switching antennas. Mentioned HF remote station is reserved for TARC members.

MEMBERSHIP: Paul, KN4BAR, reported membership total of 162 members. Explained newly examined members enjoy free membership for the year in which their license was granted. Noted that the roster has 10 life members and 3 associate members. Informed that 40 members have dues outstanding. Noted risk of membership terminating come March 1. Payment possible by mail, credit card, PayPal and cash in person

OLD BUSINESS:

Repeater Maintenance Committee: Frank, W2XYZ, explained that a tower-climbing specialist is being sought so an AREDN transceiver can be installed.

Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network

(AREDN): Paul, KN4BAR, explained that AREDN is a ham radio digital communications mode on the 2, 3, and 5 GHz bands with channels reserved for ham radio use only. Mentioned development of AREDN links between the SERC and TARC clubs over the last 12 months to provide AREDN in the South County. Paul will do a program featuring AREDN for the TARC Club meeting in March.

Bus to Hamcation: Frank, W2XYZ, said bus will leave the USCG Venice Station on this Saturday at 6:30 AM, stopping at SRQ Red Cross at 7:15 AM, arriving at Hamcation approximately two hours later. Will depart for trip home at 5 PM. So far 26 signed up. TARC has a table spot for sale of equipment. Club members are asked to bring a 2M HT on 146.805 MHz simplex.

Continued >>>>

TARC Minutes, continued

Jerry Spears Memorial Update: Frank, W2XYZ, informed that seeking original second amplifier likely not feasible since WFD now has a 100W maximum. He suggested changing to seeking a hi-power auto antenna tuner in its place. Resulting was a consensus motion to seek an auto antenna tuner, which was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Winter Field Day: Frank, W2XYZ, reported that 12 members participated in WFD, was a cold day, and was conducted from home QTH's, duration 24 hrs. New rule noted, 100W max Xmit power.

Shark's Tooth 10K Run at Rothenbach Pk. Mar. 5 and 6. Steve NS4P, is requesting course monitors, 8 - 9 hams expected, several more needed. SERC repeater 147.39 authorized for use during the event.

NEW BUSINESS:

Shark's Tooth Arts Festival: Paul KN4BAR, was unable to find any current information on the Special Olympics event (normally held in April), apparently no longer planned or active.

Florida QSO Party will be held on the last weekend of April.

Upcoming Events. Discussion ensued about Summer Field Day, and Parks On The Air (POTA), popular with Canadians, CW frequently used. Considering a club program on POTA.

Recording Secretary's Note by Gary W8SKI,

Thank You Cards were signed and will be shared with the VPC Administration for their making it possible to meet in the Fellowship Hall. The setup of tables and chairs was managed and finished by club members. A spread of cookies and snacks brought by Patsy and Chet Fennell, KG4IYS, was enjoyed by many.

The club logo was able to be displayed by the projector during the meeting, and the P/A system was used for the meeting and program. San K3SY was thanked for making this possible through his request to VPC.

A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Chet, KG4IYS, and was seconded by Dwight, KT4DDS, and was passed by unanimous voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT: Time of motion 7:50 PM

Attendance: Number of members 25. Number of guests 3

Program: "Four Short Stories about Electrical Failures" by San Yoder, K3SY, A Multi-Media Presentation.

Respectfully submitted, Gary Youngberg, W8SKI,
Recording Secretary

Share your knowledge with the club

Meeting program schedule

March 09 - AREDN, where is it and how to access it, Paul, KN4BAR

April 13 - POTA, What is it, and how do I participate? Chip, WO0S



May 11 - Using N3FJP and N1MM Logging Software, Frank W2XYZ

June 08 - Sarasota ARES, Gary, WB9AYD

September 14 - Open

October 12 - Open

November 09 - Open

December 14 - No program

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
Tanzania – 5H3EE, FT8	Resident Op	81	NO	00-03	23-04	21-06	18-01	18-24	14-23	16-21
Wallis & Futuna – FW1JG by F4CIX, SB/Dig	Resident Op	260	0900	05-12	04-13	02-10	2100	18-02	23-02	00-01
Mauritania – 5T5PA by PA5X, FT8 (so far)	Now to ???	83	23-08	22-10	21-11	17-04	12-24	13-22	2100	17-19
St. Barthelemy – FJ/DK6AS, CW/SSB	Now to ???	113	22-12	20-13	00-24	00-24	12-07	12-01	13-24	18-23
Egypt – SU9VB by UA4WHX, CW/SSB	Now to ???	53	01-03	23-05	22-06	19-03	17-20	13-18	1700	NO
Antarctica – ZS7ANF, CW	Now to ???	159	NO	00-07	00-07	22-04	2100	1300	NO	NO
Nepal – 9N7AA by S53R (ex-T6AA), FT/CW	Now to ???	13	NO	NO	NO	0100	1400	NO	NO	NO
Senegal – 6W/ON4AVT, SSB/Digital	Now to 10 Apr	87	23-08	22-10	21-08	18-04	16-24	13-21	NO	16-20
Namibia – V51WH by DK2WH, CW/SB/FT8	Now to 31 Mar	107	01-03	23-06	22-07	20-07	19-24	17-23	12-20	13-18
Sint Maarten – PJ7AA by F4CIX, SSB, Digi	Now to 26 Mar	113	22-12	20-13	00-24	00-24	12-07	12-01	13-24	19-23
Maldives – 8Q7MM/8Q7WX by OK ops	Now to 08 Mar	40	NO	00-01	23-02	20-01	18-23	13-22	1900	NO
St Vincent – J88PI by GW4DVB, SSB, FT8	Now to 08 Mar	121	--	20-13	08-24	00-24	11-07	12-02	13-01	13-24
Curacao – PJ2/DK5ON, CW/SB/Digital	01 to 17 Mar	137	22-12	20-14	00-24	00-24	12-07	12-01	13-24	18-24
Austral Is – FO/SP5EAQ (covid permitting)	01 to 31 Mar	239	05-11	03-13	02-13	00-15	16-09	16-04	17-03	21-02
Malawi – 7Q6M by K6ZO	02 to 15 Mar	93	NO	00-03	23-05	21-06	19-01	18-23	15-22	15-19
Antigua & Barbuda – V2Kk by AA3B, CW	03 to 10 Mar	113	22-12	21-13	00-24	00-24	12-07	12-02	13-24	14-24
Maldives – 8Q7CQ by G0VJG, mostly SSB	04 to 18 Mar	40	NO	00-01	23-02	20-01	18-23	13-22	1900	NO
Belize – V31BN by W0BCN, CW/SB/FT8	05 to 10 Mar	211	22-12	20-16	00-24	12-03	14-24	18-23	NO	NO
Saba & St Eustatius – PJ5/K3TRM, all modes	06 to 12 Mar	114	--	20-14	00-24	00-24	12-04	12-01	13-24	18-23
Uganda – 5X1XA by G3SWH, CW only	07 to 14 Mar	78	NO	00-04	23-05	20-06	17-01	16-24	13-23	17-19
Turks & Caicos – VP5/K0KQ, FT8	07 to 21 Mar	116	22-13	00-24	00-24	12-02	14-24	20-24	NO	NO
Gambia – C56DF by G3XTT	09 to 18 Mar	88	00-07	22-10	21-10	18-03	16-23	13-23	NO	NO
Mayotte – FH/K6ZO	18 to 23 Mar	85	NO	01-02	00-03	21-05	20-01	18-23	16-21	19-20
Comoros – D6OAB, by K6ZO	24 to 29 Mar	84	NO	01-02	00-03	21-06	20-01	18-23	16-21	19-20

Prepared 25 February 2022 based on <https://www.ng3k.com/>, *The Weekly DX* 22-08, info@dxnews.com, and *Ohio/Penn DX Bulletin* No. 1546.

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/hf/>.

-- FEBRUARY SOLAR ACTIVITY --

From 01 through 25 February, the 10.7 cm Solar Flux ranged from 93 to 130, with a mean value of 110.7. The A_p index was ≥ 7 on 19 days during that period. Sunspot regions were visible on every day, varying from two to eight groups. There were 118 C-class flares over 20 days and three M-class flares on three days during the period.

-- MARCH FORECAST --

Solar activity is likely to be at low levels, with a slight chance for R1 (Minor) events to 06 Mar due to flare potential from regions of flux near and just beyond the E limb. Very low levels are expected from 07 Mar-19 Mar.

No proton events are expected at geosynchronous orbit.

Geomagnetic field activity is expected to range from quiet to G1 (Minor) geomagnetic storm levels. G1 conditions are likely on 03-04 Mar, 11 Mar and 19 Mar; active conditions are likely on 12 Mar, 21-23 Mar and 30-31 Mar; unsettled conditions are likely 05-06 Mar, 13 Mar, 18 Mar and 24 Mar. All elevated levels of geomagnetic activity are anticipated due to multiple, recurrent CH HSSs. The remainder of the month is expected to be quiet.

The solar flux should range from 93 to 115, and average 101.9 for the month of March.

From *NOAA Weekly Highlights and Forecasts*, 21 February 2022, *NOAA 27-day Space Weather Outlook Table*, 21 February 2022, and *45 Day AP Forecast*, USAF, 21 February 2022.

-- FATHER OF SUNSPOT NUMBERS --

In 1848, Rudolph Wolf (1816-1893) of Switzerland devised a daily method of estimating solar activity by counting the number of individual spots and groups of spots on the face of the sun. Wolf chose to compute his sunspot number by adding 10 times the number of groups to the total count of individual spots, because neither quantity alone completely captured the level of activity. Today, Wolf sunspot counts continue, since no other index of the sun's activity reaches into the past as far and as continuously.

An avid astronomical historian and an unrivaled expert on sunspot lore, Wolf confirmed the existence of a cycle in sunspot numbers and determined the cycle's length to be 11.1 years by using early historical records. Wolf, became director of the Zurich Observatory, discovered the coincidence of the sunspot cycle with disturbances in the earth's magnetic field.

The cycle's spot count takes on the average about 4.8 years to rise from a minimum to a maximum and another 6.2 years to fall to a minimum once again. The largest annual mean number (190.2) occurred in 1957 (*It was great!*).

The Adventures of Winter Field Day

by Jim Shortill, KJ4NDO

Winter Field day is scheduled for the last weekend in January to test the capability of amateur radio operators to communicate under adverse conditions. Our club usually sets up tents and portable antennas and transmits outdoors throughout the 24 hour period from 2 PM Saturday to 2 PM Sunday. Unfortunately, the Covid flu caused substantial changes. For this Winter Field Day operators were allowed to operate from their home stations, using their home antennas. What follows is a tale of lessons learned...the hard way.

I have a great transceiver, an ICOM 7610. My antenna is an AV-680 deployed about 60 feet high. I designed the base of the antenna to allow me to lower this antenna as necessary.

The weather forecast for Saturday, the start of Field Day, was for strong winds with gusts 20 to 30 MPH. I wondered if the forecast might be a little strong, so I monitored the winds and weather on Friday evening. At 8 PM the air was dead still and I congratulated myself on out thinking the weather service. I figured I could start operating at 2 PM Saturday, the start time for the contest.

At 9 PM Friday, the palm tree branches were beginning to stir. At 10 PM Friday, the palm tree branches were standing straight out from the trees and the wind was heavy and gusting. Time to strike the antenna and get it lowered. Ever had the fun of lowering a 60 foot long flexible antenna in the dark, loosening the guy lines and throwing them in the bushes so they would not tangle, in the black of the night, under really gusty wind conditions? Got the antenna down in one piece and secured about 11 PM.

Lessons Learned: When the forecast is for winds that exceed the build strength of your antenna: 1.) Get that big boy down on the ground. 2.) During the daylight. 3.) So you don't have to hold a flashlight in your teeth to see what you're doing in the dark.

All day Saturday the wind howled and my antenna stayed snuggled to the dirt. Sunday, the forecast was for moderating winds. I had to be thoughtful about putting my antenna back up as my neighbor's house was about 10 feet from the base of my antenna. Their bedrooms were opposite my antenna. I did not want a 6 AM grind of my electric winch lifting the antenna, disturbing their Sunday sleep.

Lessons Learned: Happy neighbors support my antenna placement. Be considerate.

Got the antenna up and guyed and ready to go about 11 AM on Sunday. I was concerned that I would not be able to contribute contacts to our club totals. I resolved that I would operate continuously until 2 PM Sunday, the close of the contest.

Fired up the IC 7610, made sure my power was set at 100 Watts, set up my computer with the latest N3FJP Winter Field Day program, (Purchased the latest program a week prior to make sure I knew how to operate it. - HA! stay tuned.), and was ready to go.

Thought I'd start out on 10 Meters as it was a friendly frequency that I used every week. Started listening at 28.3 MHz and listened to that happy static sound as I tuned all the way to 29.7 MHz, and heard NOTHING. When my transceiver does things that I don't expect, my first thought is: what did I do wrong? I'm waiting for the smell of smoke or the big blue, electrical flash. Nothing happened. The radio patiently looked back at me. OK. Did not hear a human voice on 10 Meters. Thought I'd try 15 Meters. Surely there would be traffic on 15 Meters. Started listening at 21.2 MHz. Got silence. Slowly turned the tuning dial to 21.225 MHz, then 21.275 MHz. Stopped at 21.300 MHz. Nothing heard.

So I sat there and said to myself: Fool, what have you missed? In cases like this I check every element of my radio: dial by dial, touch screen display, bit, by bouncing electron bit. In the middle of the IC 7610 touch screen there is a blue box with rounded corners. If you touch that blue box, a screen comes up that is titled "Mode." The operator can select the mode by touching the mode abbreviation. When I initially looked at my mode box it cheerfully read "CW." No wonder I heard nothing on 10 Meters and 15 Meters. My radio was set on CW mode. I set it to SSB - Upper Side Band and heard the glorious sound of the world talking.

Lessons Learned: I had started late in the contest and was pushing myself to make contacts. I had target fixation on getting contacts, to the exclusion of sound radio operating procedures. Every time you turn on your set, check every element of the touch screen and the dials for proper settings.

Con't >>

Winter Field Day, *continued*

I followed the Andy Durette method of finding a free space on the 15 Meter frequency band and started making CQ Winter Field Day calls. Pile ups followed pile ups. I could not keep up on my logging computer, so I wrote the data down on a pad. By 2 PM Sunday I had five full pages of contacts - 103 to be exact.

I was tired. I needed lunch. I promised myself that I would get all of my data logged into the logging program that day, so I could transfer the data properly to Frank. I had every data entry entered into the N3FJP program by 10 PM.

Lessons Learned: Always check your logged data. You will find that some of the data are wrong.

While I was logging the data into the N3FJP program I noticed a string of mode errors. 2 Meter contacts were listed as 15 Meter contacts. I also found that a few call signs did not match the paper copy, probably due to thick fingered mistakes in transposing call signs. I was lucky to have my paper record so I could correct the call signs.

A day or two later Frank, W2XYZ, came over to my house to show me how to properly transmit the data to the Winter Field Day organization. The data submission went in smoothly, and my 103 entries were just as quickly and smoothly rejected. But why?

All 103 entries were rejected. They were rejected because the N3FJP program showed that the contacts were all made between 7 PM and 9 PM on Sunday night, well outside of the contest perimeters. Remember that I had a pile up of radio contacts and had used a pad of paper to copy contacts, as that method was faster than using the computer. I transcribed that data to the computer after supper on Sunday. The comput-

er logged all 103 entries as having been received between 7 PM and 9 PM. Frank and I corrected that error and the data were successfully received.

Lessons Learned: The best logging procedure is to log the contact at the time it is received. The best way to accomplish that is to use a two person team; one person runs the radio, one person logs the contact. Our club has used the two person system for many contests. Usually the recorder copies the contact in pencil and then enters it in to the logging program. Seems like double the effort for no advantage. However, there have been times when the written copy was needed to proof the logged entries and to check data accuracy. The written copy is also invaluable if the computer eliminates a portion of the data.

Lessons Learned: Re-read the contest rules before logging data. Contest rules with respect to logging data stated: "DATE and TIME:

UTC/GMT (...need not be exactly accurate. Exception: QSO's time stamped/logged outside the contest period will be disqualified)."

If I had remembered this rule I could have logged all of the data at approximately the time it was received during the contest.

We all have lessons that we've learned through pain and suffering, oftentimes self inflicted. Mine are set out above. Feel free to contribute to this knowledge-base. Our club will be the better for it and... Summer Field Day is coming.

73, Jim Shortill, KJ4NDO



President's message continued from page 1

quires navigating a big pile up. Many DX stations that are considered common may be new to you, and you can find many of these stations calling CQ on almost any day. Some even have time to chew the rag for a bit! Start off slow, listen, listen and listen again – get a feel for the rhythm of the operation. Then check your settings (is the DX working simplex or split?) and then jump in. If you are unsure, look to one of the more experienced members of the club and get some tips. I have received lots of useful advice just by ask-

ing a few questions. One piece of advice I'll pass along here – be aware of the band limits for your class of license (oops).

So – break the routine of the 75 meter morning net, and go out and get some of those interesting call signs in your log. Be careful, you may find it addicting! Good luck and Good DX!

73, Steve, NS4P



Orlando Hamcation Musings



Our Pres guarding the stock by day.



Frank, W2XYZ, checking in riders in Sarasota at the break of dawn.



Waddaya mean you're sold out?



Follow the yellow brick road.



Captain Bob, W5GJ, holding court by his land yacht.

How not to handle your handie

When planning the TARC bus trip to the Orlando Hamcation, riders were encouraged to carry a handheld transceiver programmed to operate simplex on the W4AC repeater output of 146.805. Many did, and it was helpful to keep in contact with one another throughout the hamfest. Unfortunately, upon entering the bus for the trip home, Paul, KN4BAR wasn't the happiest camper, as he had put down his HT at a vendors table and forgot to pick it up again. Oh, well, someone got an extra door prize.

Fortunately, Paul was able to post the following a few days later:

Someone found my lost HT at Hamcation and turned it in to security. It is on its way back home. Where else could you lose something of value that is untraceable and have it returned to you? I'm sure any one of us would have done the same.

Moral...put your contact info on your stuff! In this case I had a return address label stuck on the back of the HT.

*73, Paul, happy and grateful KN4BAR
[See page 10 for ID suggestion]*



After checking into the net with "no traffic" for the zillionth time, Lidar Lid was excited to receive the very first piece of traffic addressed to him - the message - "we have been trying to reach you regarding your vehicle's extended warranty".



FLSPOTA 2022 will take place April 2-3, 2022 throughout Florida's beautiful state parks. There are no rules or category updates from last

year. Full text of the rules is available [here](#).

When: Sunday April 3, 2022

Where: **Oscar Shearer State Park**, 1843 South Tamiami Trail, Osprey, Florida 3422

TARC will establish multi-operator stations all operating as **W4AC** from an open use area near the Information Center and rest rooms by the Lake Osprey shore at Oscar Shearer State Park in Osprey. We will operate on all allowed modes and bands during the contest.

Any and all club members are welcome to come and participate in the activation of this park and in the FLSPOTA contest. Park entry costs \$5 per car and there is no food or drink available, so bring your own! **Setup starts at 8:30 am and stations will operate until 6 pm.** This is a great opportunity for new licensees or members with no HF station to operate from a portable location.

Contact: Paul, KN4BAR, via email at paul9aber@gmail.com if you would like to participate.



QCWA Connection

Have you seen the new web site of Chapter 53 of QCWA? Steve, K4EU, has done a remarkable job of creating an interesting and informative site, including some very fascinating history of the chapter. Click [here](#) to see first-hand what Steve's been up to.

The February meeting saw anniversary certificates awarded to QCWA members, a few whom are also TARC members. Here are photos of the presentations to those in attendance:

1. Andy Durette, KB1HIP, 65 years
2. Frank Wroblewski, W2XYZ, 50 years
3. Carol Gray accepting for Don Gray, WD7A, 50 yrs.
4. David Haag, W4HAG, 45 years
5. Dan Flynn, WW3N, 40 years
6. Geoff Haines, N1GY, 30 years



Jim Zientara, W4MAN tells all about the Florida Railroad Museum.

See www.frrm.org



Solar Panels and Battery Storage By Tom Porada, W4IEE

I have been studying the use of residential solar for a good ten years, but until this past year I never pulled the trigger, however, I was tempted to do so many times. The time had finally come, so I very recently installed a Tesla system on my roof with thirty-three 340 watt panels, and two Powerwalls on the inside wall of my garage. The system has the capability of supporting my electrical needs 100%, including providing the 'fuel' for my Tesla Model Y.

So why did I take the plunge now? Not because I'm GREEN, not because there's a payback, but, because I am concerned about the continuity of supply. With the aging electrical grid, the geo-political mess, hackers, the loss of energy independence, and sure, rising prices everywhere, my crescendo of concern pushed me over the edge.

Energy wise, we are lucky to be in Florida where there is an abundance of sun and extremely mild winters. Our highest energy use is from air conditioning, and is reached during the same daily period as the highest solar energy production.

The elephant in the room – price. The system installation price was \$44,700 all in. Doing a really gross analysis for payback, if I paid \$150/month for electricity, that would be \$1,800/year. If I had no other electric bill, then $44,700/1,800$ would be about a 28.3 year payback period, not including discounting or any other factors.

The Fed still offers a 26% tax credit, which, if possible to take in year one (it usually is not possible for retired people to do this as they have little taxable income), but, if it were possible to take the credit all at once, then the \$44,700 comes down to \$35,760. So, $35,760/1,800 = 19.9$ years for payback. Not very exciting as it would probably be greater than my remaining lifespan!! One of these days I will do a real analysis including time value of money, realistic tax credits over time, sell-back credits from FPL (now at retail ~\$.11/KWH but probably going down), car fuel savings, and system maintenance.

Do the solar panels (33), inverters (2) or Powerwalls (2) impact ham radio with noise or interference of any sort? So far I have not noticed any interference that I can attribute to the solar equipment. This might be related to where the equipment is installed, or closeness to my ham equipment, or antennas. Your situation could be different.

The roof installation took two full days. Day 1 the Tesla team removed the barrel shingles (I have a stack of them in my yard), and installed the mounts, flashing, and rails. Day 2 the team installed the panels and wiring. There was about a day's worth of electrical work, both on the inside and outside walls of my garage - mostly done before the roof team arrived.

The physical installation has been complete since November, 2021, but the FPL Net Meter was only installed in late January or early February 2022. For those unaware – a net meter 'nets' out your usage, and determines if power is coming in or going out of the house. I pay for power coming in and get credit for power going out. A typical meter only reads current flow whether it is coming or going. With a regular meter I would be paying for electricity going in either direction – not nice!!

There are two types of 'storage' with solar systems. One is the credit you get for over generating that you bank with the power company. For those periods that you do use grid power, FPL will credit the power back to you that you previously banked. The other storage is from the Powerwalls, which is an onsite true uninterruptible power supply that will carry you during power outages until the sun shines again.



MORE>>>>>

...of Solar Panels and Powerwalls, continued

Cloudy days and evenings are when the Powerwalls kick in – and, yes, they work great in contests as alternate power!! Two Powerwalls provide plenty of power for overnight power, getting down to ~50% before the sun comes up again during this recent winter period. For long periods of cloudiness, more than a day, it can be difficult to keep the Powerwalls charged.

Tesla software is real interesting. On my cell phone with the Tesla app, I can determine how much power is being generated by the panels, how much is coming from/going into the grid, how much is coming from/going into the Powerwalls, and household



power consumption at any time. The app lets me set a charge rate for my Model Y, beep the horn, open the trunk and many other things.

Other than ham radio, a few things to become knowledgeable about before investing in solar include: Your mounting position relative to South, roof or ground mount panels, and the degree of reliability you want. If very high reliability is your forte, then consider microinverters on each panel, as any panel or panels can fail without taking down the whole system, as can happen when they are configured in a series 'string'. For a lesser level of reliability consider more than one string inverter so that if one string fails you will still have the other string(s) to carry on.

I am enjoying the solar system, although I still am working one issue with Tesla that will eventually be corrected, I'm sure. I find myself checking on Powerwall charge and the amount of energy our house is using. Last month our power bill was down to \$16 and should go a bit lower until we hit the minimum fee.

Anyone who is curious, feel free to contact me for a tour.

73, Tom Porada, W4IEE



Over the years I have used various methods to ID portable equipment, ranging from using a rotary tool to etch my call inside the cases of rigs, to a simple label stuck to the outside. When we moved to FL, I purchased a roll of 1000 clear address labels, which I have been using to quickly ID my stuff. The labels are inconspicuous (but readable in the proper light), easily applied, and have a pretty good survival rate.

de K3SY





~ March, 2022 ~

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>Peaches opens at 6 AM. Orders taken at 7</i></p>	<p>~ See <i>Groups.io</i> for ZOOM sign-on</p>	<p>1 Breakfast @ Peaches 6 - 7 AM # DMR net 7:30 PM</p>	<p>2 ~ Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM</p>	<p>3 * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net</p>	<p>4 Breakfast @ Perkins 9A</p>	<p>5 Shark's Tooth 10K PRRA Hamfest DAV 9:30 A BOD 1P</p>
<p>6 Shark's Tooth 10K</p>	<p>7 QCWA 11 AM @ Denny's Bee Ridge</p>	<p>8 Breakfast @ Peaches 6 - 7 AM # DMR net 7:30 PM</p>	<p>9 ~ Virtual breakfast TARC MTG 7:00 PM @ Venice Presbyterian Church</p>	<p>10 * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net</p>	<p>11 Breakfast @ Perkins 9A</p>	<p>12 Bkfst @ DAV 9:30 TARC VE session @ Venice Library 10 A</p>
<p>13 </p>	<p>14 DARN net 11:00 AM Starts on NI4CE/rpt 145.43 pl100</p>	<p>15 Breakfast @ Peaches 6 - 7 AM # DMR net 7:30 PM</p>	<p>16 ~ Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM</p>	<p>17  * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net</p>	<p>18 Breakfast @ Perkins 9A</p>	<p>19 Breakfast @ DAV 9:30 A</p>
<p>20 </p>		<p>22 Breakfast @ Peaches 6 - 7 AM # DMR net 7:30 PM</p>	<p>23 ~ Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM</p>	<p>24 * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net</p>	<p>25 Breakfast @ Perkins 9A</p>	<p>26 Breakfast @ DAV 9:30 A</p>
<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 Breakfast @ Peaches 6 - 7 AM # DMR net 7:30 PM</p>	<p>30 ~ Virtual breakfast via ZOOM 10 AM</p>	<p>31 * 2 meter net 7:30 PM followed by + 10 meter net</p>	<p>PLEASE NOTE NEW LOCATION</p>	

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 - Webmaster - Paul Nienaber, KN4BAR.

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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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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>

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