

# QRM de TARC

June 2003

## Special Interest Articles:

- Letter from the President.
- Letter from the HF Director
- Letter from the VHF Director
- Repeater Status

## TARC Meeting Schedule:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Monday – HF Council
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday – VHF Council
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday – Technical
- 4<sup>th</sup> Monday – Program night
- 5<sup>th</sup> Monday – General

Club opens 6:30 – Meetings 7:30

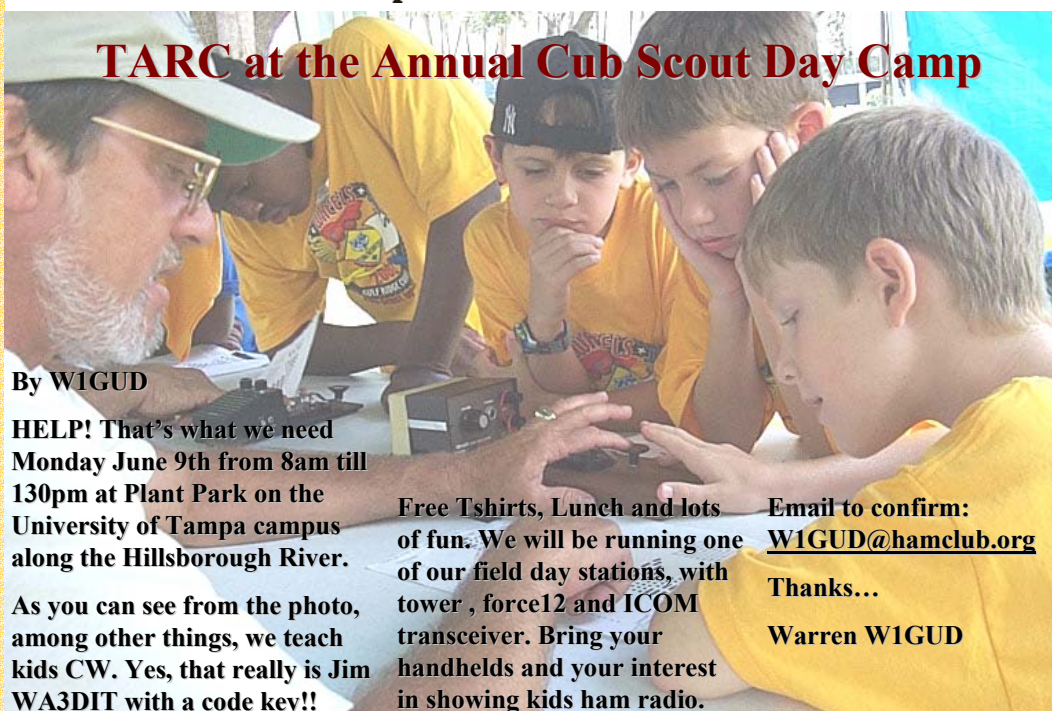


## Individual Highlights:

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## TARC at the Annual Cub Scout Day Camp



By W1GUD

**HELP! That's what we need Monday June 9th from 8am till 130pm at Plant Park on the University of Tampa campus along the Hillsborough River.**

As you can see from the photo, among other things, we teach kids CW. Yes, that really is Jim WA3DIT with a code key!!

Free Tshirts, Lunch and lots of fun. We will be running one of our field day stations, with tower, force12 and ICOM transceiver. Bring your handhelds and your interest in showing kids ham radio.

Email to confirm: [W1GUD@hamclub.org](mailto:W1GUD@hamclub.org)

Thanks...

Warren W1GUD

## Letter from the Chairman

Remember the old days where TARC would suspend its meetings for the summer because there wasn't much going on and lots of people were out of town? Those days are clearly over and have been for several years now. Summer comes and finds us incredibly busy at a variety of activities all for the advancement of the hobby.

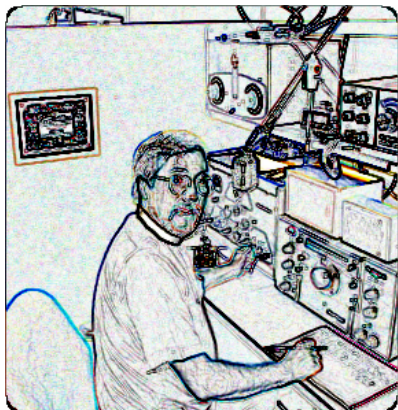
In June we have scout demonstrations, emergency preparation activities, and the big one, Field Day 2003.

Information on all of these activities are set out in this month's QRM elsewhere so I won't take up much space with those things, except to say we hope everyone will be participating in many of these events. TARC presents a great variety of opportunities for amateurs to participate in to learn or share their knowledge with others. Take advantage of these opportunities.

So with most things that we have upcoming in June covered

in these pages, I will use this space this month to set the table for upcoming events





By Jim Gerhart – WA3DIT

One of the distinctions of ham radio is that there are so many ways to enjoy the hobby. There are those who really get into contests in a big way. Over the years I have operated many contests and while I don't find the idea of locking myself in the

## Letter from the HF Director

shack for a weekend and having someone shove food under the door for sustenance, I do enjoy what can best be called the "social contests". Coming up at the end of this month is Field Day. The purists will tell you that Field Day isn't a contest but if it walks like a duck; talks like a duck; and looks like a duck; it's probably a duck. You will read more in this issue about Field Day and our plans and aspirations.

During just about every weekend of the month a quick listen on the low bands will reveal a contest event of

some kind going on. Many are thankful, myself included, for the WARC bands where contests are not permitted so that we can carry on ragchews. These contests range from trying to contact as many counties in as many states as possible to attempting to contact as many DX stations as are found in a given time period. There are also special event stations. I know that we have two ex-submariners who like to contact stations that are located at submarine exhibits around the country. I'm told that you can always tell ex-submariners by the

strange glint in their eyes as a result of not seeing the sun for months at a time.

In keeping with our mission to offer a multitude of operating opportunities at the Clubhouse, we are able to provide the best in equipment, antennas, and computer support that is available. Most people are not able to have the advantages that we are able to provide mainly due to deed restrictions. If you know of a contest that you would really like to participate in, and would like to do so from the Clubhouse, please send an email to our contest coordinator, Warren Elly – W1GUD at: [w1gud@hamclub.org](mailto:w1gud@hamclub.org). If arrangements can be made for someone to open the Clubhouse and be one of the Officers in charge, I'm sure that your desire to operate a particular contest or contact that special event station to add to your certificates can be made.



By Bruce Orand – N4ZZI

Ever get a bit behind in your club dues? One thing then another keeping you from attending a

## Letter from the VHF Director

meeting to get them up-to-date? Don't fret about it, go on-line! TARC now accepts application and dues from the web. Go to [www.HamClub.org](http://www.HamClub.org) and click on the application button. After filling out the application, yes we need to have it filled out, you will be taken to a payment screen with further instructions. And you may elect to pay for your dues right there through the PayPal link that is provided!

You don't have PayPal? That's not a problem. You can pay by credit card there just as easily.

We are working hard to make life easy for you.



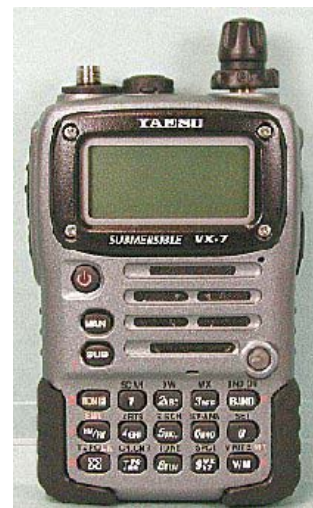
## Repeater Status

By Mike Flether-NI4M

Both TARC repeaters are operational. The 105 has experienced co-channel interference (especially in the mornings) from an un-coordinated repeater in Port Charlotte. A letter was sent to the owner of the 105 machine in Port Charlotte asking him to

contact us to workout interference issues or cease using the frequency, as of today no reply has been received.

In other news, the analog delay board has been procured and should be installed when schedules open. To be announced



**Got Radio?**





## the Chairman's letter – continued.

beyond the busy month we have ahead.

### STATION IMPROVEMENTS

We have obtained filters for the HF radios that will allow multiple stations to be on the air at the same time from the clubhouse without interfering with each other. On several occasions with the increased membership activity and the new radios that seem to be springing up often in the 5 operating positions that we have, several members have been actively operating on different bands and causing some interference with other stations operating on other bands. This is common, and the filters should eliminate any hint of another station being operated on an adjacent band. Here is how they work.

These filters are band specific and are placed in line with the transceiver being used for that band. For example, if the 756 Pro II is being operated on 15 meters and one of the 746's is being operated on 20 meters at the same time, the Pro II should be wearing the 15 meter filter on the antenna line and the 746 the 20 meter filter. The effects of these filters will be to notch the operating band and suppress signals from outside of that notch. This will allow physically proximate receivers to not detect transmissions on different bands that could interfere with the receiver. These filters will prove very useful, both in a contest environment as well as casual operating by multiple operators on a Sunday afternoon or Monday night.

The next phase of antenna improvements should occur shortly after Field Day. A second 70 foot tower will be erected and it will become home to additional HF

antennas. Specifically, we are looking at the ability to put 2 elements on 40 meters and another quality multiband antenna such as the Force 12 C31 XR, or combining both with an antenna like Force 12's C4XL. Once the second tower is up we will also be evaluating rotors for both towers. When the second tower goes up, the first tower will become the home to the current KT34XA as well as VHF/UHF arrays covering 6 meters through 23 centimeters.

Also, once the second tower is up we expect more wire antennas will be put up for 160 meters, 80/75 meters and 40 meters. In addition to the windom that is up, we have acquired a broadband folded dipole which will be deployed on Field Day and permanently installed thereafter. There is no substitute for wire on the lower portions of the HF spectrum.

Following the antenna phase will come station automation. The logging program that we have installed has the capability of controlling radios and rotors with the click of a mouse, and is an operating convenience that truly enhances the enjoyment of the tuning around the bands. Since the logging program is new, we will have some training sessions on the use of the program in the very near future to make sure that we totally eliminate the need for any paper logs in the shack. The old paper logs will be transferred to the computer also as soon as people step up to work on that effort. During the course of the 100/100, those who participated in the effort that snagged 62 countries in very little operating time during the Memorial Day weekend, were give a glimpse of what power is there through the logging software that we have. Our goal will be to

fully automate each operating position that is capable of interacting with the computer system to make logging, rig and rotor control computerized functions.

### CLUB STRUCTURE

Discussions will continue by the Board of Directors on submitting a package of amendments to our Articles and Bylaws which will conform the club structure to the way in which the club has evolved. Less distinction will be given to formal separation of HF and VHF council functions and decision making in these two interest areas will become more interlaced as the club continues to function more as a single entity. Most of those distinctions have been so blurred now that distinct lines are difficult to see.

By moving to a unified structure, there will be little change in the way in which the club practically conducts its business or its meetings.

### MORE FUN!

Times are good and as our operating abilities continue to increase, there will be more operating activities such as the 100/100 effort and contest participation. There are many little things that we can do better. QSL card management after the cards have been returned is one of those. We do not have a way of managing the QSL cards that we have gotten for the stations over the years and that should change. We have worked lots of very cool DX and need to start following up those contacts with QSL cards to get the club station awards such as DXCC (confirming 100 dx entities) and WAS (worked all states – which we have done each of the last three field days). We have worked them; we might as well have the paper on the wall showing that we worked them. If anyone has a particular interest in getting these things organized, please step up to the mike!

For now, that is a brief look ahead. We have a lot to do in June so read on!



## Product Review – Sigma 5 Antenna by Force12

Jim Gerhart – WA3DIT

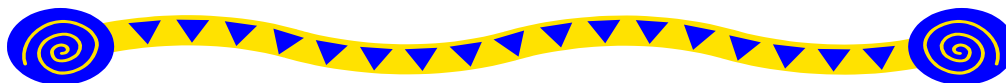
Based on the excellent reviews from those who have used the Force 12 beams, I was hoping that it would carry over to their vertical antennas. Living in an apartment my HF activities would normally be very limited to sticking something out from the balcony and hoping to find a reasonable resemblance of an RF ground or heating up my attic by running a lot of wire around the perimeter. Luckily I have an apartment that has a fenced in backyard and it's a two story. What made it even more attractive was that the Sigma 5, that covers 20-10 meters including the WARC bands, is only 9 foot tall. It is a true vertical dipole so you don't have to worry about radials and such. I say that it

covers 20 – 10 meters but I discovered that with the internal antenna tuner in my Kenwood TS-440S I was able to tune the antenna on 40 meters. What's even more interesting is that it radiates on 40 meters. All of us have known or used antennas that will provide a 50-ohm load to the radio but in reality it is nothing more than a dummy load on a stick. The Sigma5 does not fall in this category.

The antenna went together very easy. In true Force12 tradition all the elements are marked not only with letters that correspond to the next letter but also arrows pointing to each other to indicate which hole matches up with its mate. From start to finish it took me 15 minutes to put it all together. Then I

read the assembly manual just to make sure I had done it right from the markings on the antenna. Who needs the book when everything you need is written on the antenna itself. I haven't seen anything that easy since before Heathkit and their brilliant tech writers went out of business.

While the Force12 beams go together using rivets the Sigma5 uses wingnuts, lockwashers, and bolts. When they advertise that it's a no tool assembly they aren't kidding. The Force12 people have also discovered something that Cushcraft still hasn't figured out -- stainless steel hardware -- so don't look to have to use a hacksaw if you have to disassemble it after a few years. There are two cables to run from the antenna into the shack, coax and the control cable. The control cable is



for band switching and you need a 13.8 volt source in the shack to change bands on anything but 20 meters which shouldn't be a problem for most hams. More on this later.

After putting the antenna together and 'planting' it in a five-gallon bucket filled with concrete I walked across the complex to look at the antenna. What antenna? You really have to look to see it especially when it's turned on the side so that the side arms are pointed toward you.

But no matter how easy to put together or how ascetically pleasing an antenna may be, if it doesn't radiate, it doesn't matter and the only thing it will be good for is to hang your outside plants on.

I'm very pleased with the antenna's performance. While it may not outperform a beam, I have worked Russia, Europe, the Isle of Crete, California, Washington State and up into Canada with ease.

The only negative about this antenna is the control switch used to switch between the bands. At first I thought it

was only the control switch that was with my antenna. I, after all, had purchased it used from someone who had upgraded to a larger Force12 vertical. Then I saw the antenna at the Orlando Hamfest and low and behold my control switch housing wasn't a fluke. After all the precision that was put into the manufacture of the antenna itself, the control switch and mount is something you'd want to be sure to put a bag over if anyone came to visit your shack so they'd never see it. It's basically a one-piece open top and side chunk of plastic with a knob on the front and all the wires associated with the switching exposed in the back. The indicator has to be hand labeled. It couldn't take too much to make an indicator box that looks professional. This one is something reminiscent of what used to come out of a Cracker Jack box. Hopefully down the road they will upgrade this to be of the same quality as the antenna. The control cable, which is a cat5 cable, connects directly to the antenna while the coax connection has a pigtail with a SO-239 connector. I plan on purchasing an aircraft type waterproof connector for the outside and providing

the control cable with a pigtail also.

With the exception of the band change switch housing, which has nothing to do with the efficiency of the antenna, this is a good antenna for those of us lacking real estate and facing deed restrictions. At nine feet tall in the back yard I can't conceive of anyone getting in trouble with the deed restricted Covenant Nazis. I'm very pleased with its performance and even brought it down to the Clubhouse to test it in a more favorable environment. While it didn't outperform the KT-34 (pileup buster), it was comparable with the Windom and the GAP.



## The New ICOM IC-7800

By W1GUD

I haven't seen it for myself. I've only seen the pictures. Lucky guys like Biff K4LAW and Julio W4HY got to see it in the flesh, well, in the Dayton Plexiglas designed to keep the prototype away from human hands. But I've got to be square with ya...for the first time since I acquired by boat anchors, I'm actually pondering if I need ALL those old rigs! (But that's another story).

The IC-7800 rig has meters that aren't really meters. There are actually TWO radios in the box, with completely independent receivers with separate tuning dials, dual passbands, notch and noise filters and so on. And look mom! It's got a com port and VGA connectors on the back, along with an rj-45 connector and a USB port (no, we don't mean Upper Side Band!).

Operating the rig can be done in three ways at least. The conventional way, using the displays and controls on the radio, or get this, by plugging in a keyboard and a computer monitor DIRECTLY into the radio. Or, of course,

you can run it with pc software, and you don't need a level converter.

The rig also has RTTY/PSK31 encoder and decoder and compact flash card slot, for designing a personalized set up of the IC-7800's scores of user options.

All that, and 160-6 meters, two hundred watts, built in power supply, built in antenna tuner and, more stuff than we could possibly get into the newsletter.

You're getting the idea right? Check out this PDA link.

[http://www.qsl.net/n1lea/zic-7800-prototype\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.qsl.net/n1lea/zic-7800-prototype_brochure.pdf)

Put simply, the 7800 is the most advanced amateur radio ever. ICOM is claiming MILSPEC, with some interesting innovations. Of course, the rig is probably aimed at other markets, military, homeland security and so on. There is, apparently, growing interest in digital HF communications to back up the satellites, the

'secure' cell phones and the rest of the new technology. In addition to simple SSB, there are all kinds of digital modes, even scatter schemes that offer secure voice and data communications on HF. I doubt ICOM is planning on recovering their development investment in the IC-781 by only selling them to hams.

Mix well with the history of ICOM's first 'unlimited' HF transceiver, the IC-781. Now a collector's item the 781 was a giant leap, a generation ago. For one thing it was the first "fish finder". For another, the Marines bought hundreds of them, and Marines from the US allied side of the shop joined in, buying scores of them. Many were 'converted' into 'super' rigs by outsourcers.

You may also be unaware of just who ICOM is. It has always stood for the most advanced technology, and brand x and y have spent years trying, but have never caught up. Here's the record, which puts the new rig in some perspective.

40 years ago ICOM was the first to use transistors. ICOM was the first to use PLL technology in amateur equipment. The first DSP. The first use of 32-bit chips. On and on it goes.

Now, in the new century, while the competition tries to repackage the old technology with the new "mark this or that" and the "infield and the outfield" versions...ICOMs 7800 represents the next giant leap.

Rumors are rampant about price and delivery. Strong rumor at Dayton was Christmas (how appropriate), and somewhere between 6 and 10 thousand dollars. Remember, the worse the Yen does, the closer we get to our very own 7800 at the TARC clubhouse. Maybe we can get that Plexiglas case!





## Field Day 2003: Target No. 1

By Biff Craine, K4LAW

Field Day has long been a tradition of the Tampa Amateur Radio Club. Participation by TARC dates back to the earliest days of the event, in fact, an old W4DUG QSL card features a black and white photo of a Field Day operation from the 1930's.

In the recent history of TARC participation in Field Day, TARC has shown a steady improvement in the scores that we have obtained, an increasing number of FD participants and more and better food. All of this has led to more fun for everyone and a steady rise in the 2A category to last year's 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish from over 500 entrants in the 2A category.

### **FIELD DAY 2003 GOALS**

Field Day 2002 was extremely successful as our 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish in 2A showed, but we had a lot of fun as well. This year both councils have voted to make another effort at improving our score and to try and be the best in our category (2A). We are seeking to do the best with what we have and see where that gets us.

On the prime CW and SSB stations, we are going to try and match the skills of the operators with the historic peaks of the time period. We are also going to try and make sure, like last year, we do not leave any bonus points that we could get on the table.

As with last year, the GOTA station will be a priority to get those first 400 QSO's in the log by qualified GOTA operators (most of our newly licensed hams and our Techs), then the station is opened to everyone to operate without restrictions as to who the operators are. A review of the rates that we are able to get on the GOTA

station after the initial 400 will be analyzed to tell us whether it is wise for us to look at the 3A category in 2004.

And equally important is the fact that we have raised more money for food than ever before for Field Day and our bellies and our log sheets should not be empty.

Our goals are high. 1440 CW QSO's (1 per minute); 2880 SSB QSO's (2 per minute); 400 SSB QSO's GOTA; 200 QSO's VHF and 125 Satellite QSO's. If we reach this goal we should do very well this Field Day.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

147.550 will be our simplex frequency to communicate on the grounds. We should not need to lose time on the air if we have to pee in the middle of the night.

Logging will be done at all stations on TR. We will try and get the latest version of TR on all of the laptops being used well in advance of the contest so that the laptops are ready to go for field day. TR Cheat sheets should be developed to quickly instruct basic functions including editing buffer.

### **BONUS POINT TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Bonus points are free and easy. A lot easier than 100 QSO's on SSB or 50 on CW. This is where we have to perform 100% or we start behind. Here are some Bonus Point and general assignments. May QST has the Rules for FD 2003. There are few changes – the GOTA bonus 100 points is now given for the first 100 QSO's rather than getting the entire 400; a visit by and *elected* official gets

100 points (County Commissioner Ken Hagan will be invited) as well as the visit from the served agency official (Larry Gispert from Emergency Management will be invited). They are also on the Web at [www.arri.org](http://www.arri.org). Please review these tasks and confirm your willingness to accept these assignments.

**Emergency Power** - Mike Fletcher, Bart Houser, Bill Anderson. Someone needs to be there at all times responsible for keeping generators running/gassed. We will use the 10K generator on the MAC unit for west side power (CW/VHF) and the 15K generator assigned by Emergency Management to the club for east side power (SSB/GOTA/Satellite). We won't be lighting up the neighborhood as we did last year, but we won't be running out of gas at 4 am and losing 30 minutes of on air time either.

**Media Publicity** - Warren Elly will draft and circulate our press release (release date 6/20/03)

**Public Location** - Eddie Lopez Park (Documentation needed, statement from FD Chair)

**Public Information Table** - Bruce Orand will put out information on amateur radio that we have from the ARRL to provide to the public (documentation needed, photo of table *and info*).

**Message to Section Manager** - Biff Craine to draft, Mark Cruder to Transmit to a contact who will take to the NTS nets (Joe, W4EMI) from the VHF station during low or no activity period.

**Message Handling** - 10 Originating messages to be prepared before FD



by members to be transmitted offsite via 2 meters to a contact who will take to NTS nets (Joe, W4EMI). Mark Cruder to transmit from the VHF station during low or no activity period.

**Satellite QSO(s)** - Jim Huhta, Rich Clark

**Natural Power QSOs (5)** - Wes Jones, Brian Wenholtz will arrange to charge a battery with solar power to be used for 5 QSO's on CW station.

**WIAW Bulletin Copy** - FRIDAY to get it out of the way. Bill Bode will find someone to copy this message.

**Site Visits**— Biff Craine will draft a letter to local emergency officials, and elected official setting specific time for site visit.

## Non-traditional mode demonstration

Specific times for demos;

APRS, SSTV, and Packet - Dan McDonald, KA2TOC (ATV is another possible for demo but don't think we have anyone on that mode)

## OPERATORS

**CW Station** – Biff Craine will be in charge and needs to have enough ops to keep the shifts to 6 hours or less.

**SSB Station** – Warren Elly is in charge of the SSB operation charge and needs to have enough ops to keep the shifts to 6 hours or less.

## GOTA Station/ VHF/UHF Free

**Station** - Bill Bode has agreed to be in charge of the GOTA station and the free VHF station. The GOTA station and the VHF station will be separate stand alone stations. The GOTA station will utilize Bill's Force 12 C3E on the ARES/RACES tower. We will put up a 6 meter beam antenna and a 2 meter beam antenna on the MAC tower at 100 feet.

## RIGS

We will use the following radios:

CW HF	Icom 756 ProII
SSB HF	Icom 746
GOTA HF	Icom 746
VHF/UHF Free	Icom 746

## ANTENNAS

We will use the following antennas:

CW HF	C3, Folded
Dipole (Club's)	
SSB HF	C3E (Club's),
40 Meter Dipole	
GOTA HF	C3E (Bill's),
Folded Dipole (Bill's)	
VHF/UHF Free	6 Meter Beam,
2 Meter Beam	

## TOWERS

We will use the following towers:

CW HF	Military Mast
SSB HF	Military Mast
GOTA HF	ARES/RACES
Trailer	
VHF/UHF Free	MAC Unit

## ROTORS

We will use the following rotors:

CW HF	Ham IV (Club)
SSB HF (Club)	Ham IV
GOTA HF (Warren's fixed)	Ham IV
VHF/UHF Free CD 45 II (Biff's fixed)	

## SATELLITE

AA4MD will be in charge of the Satellite operation, which is plug (power) and play.

## LOGGING

None of the stations need to be networked, unless extremely convenient. Last year's experiment of having the flexibility to move the SSB station to CW during the overnight when rates slowed up went untried, despite having the main stations networked.

## FOOD

What can you say? Kathy Cruder, KG4KYJ c'mon down.

## WEATHER

Father James Gerhart, WA3DIT, and you know Who.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Coax and rotor cable have been obtained along with all adapters needed for the headsets.



## SSC - TARC

TARC has applied for recognition as a Special Service Club. There are only two such clubs in the West Central Florida Section of the ARRL. For more information on Special Service Clubs of the ARRL. To find out more about the SSC designation see <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/club/>.





**Tampa Amateur Radio Club, Inc.**  
HF Council W4DUG  
VHF/UHF Council N4TP  
Post Office Box 11933  
Tampa, FL 33680

## Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Callsign \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Class   N T T+ G A E  

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1<sup>st</sup> licensed \_\_\_\_\_ Member ARRL Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Enter desired password for your HamClub.org e-mail account \_\_\_\_\_ (already have one) \_\_\_\_\_

We are in need of people to teach and/or take classes, operate out of the clubhouse during contests and on weekends, operate during emergencies, and just help out around the club. If you think you can be available for any of these or other activities please mark them below. Thank you.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Code Proficiency        | <input type="checkbox"/> Theory Training          | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Code            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TVI/BCI                 | <input type="checkbox"/> VE Program               | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining Equipment    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antennas                | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Talks/Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Communications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a Club Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> Activities Coordinator   | <input type="checkbox"/> News Letter Editor       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project Building        | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Author               | <input type="checkbox"/> CW                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SSB                     | <input type="checkbox"/> QRP                      | <input type="checkbox"/> DX                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contesting              | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Handling         | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Day                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Modes           | <input type="checkbox"/> Repeaters                | <input type="checkbox"/> VHF/UHF Multi-Mode       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SSTV/ATV                | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> EME                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross Band Operations   | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Communications  |   |

Signature of Member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor Signature \_\_\_\_\_



## Dayton 2003: 3 Days of Peace, Love and Amateur Radio

By Biff Craine, K4LAW

*From the moment the plane's doors were shut the excitement was in the air. Florida Contest Group contesters were scattered throughout the plane, proudly wearing their "KNOW CODE" buttons. Half of the plane's occupants had their recently arrived copies of QST in hand. In Atlanta, where the Dayton connection was picked up, there were even more QSTs and name badges with call signs.*

*Yes, after 34 years in ham radio, I was going to Dayton.*

*I joined with several seasoned veterans of Dayton for this adventure. Being a Dayton "virgin" meant I had to shut up and listen to all of the advice as to how to "do" Dayton. I was roomed with another "virgin" Larry Rubin, WB1DME, who is also a long time ham that has missed the Dayton experience. The veterans taught us well. Larry and I came ready to "do" Dayton.*

*There were 10 in our group, mostly from the Tampa area or with Tampa connections, all converging on southwest Ohio for the largest Hamfest in the world. I was packed and ready to go Sunday prior to the Thursday flight, and I had done a good job of packing. Few clothes, several radios with chargers and extra batteries, comfortable shoes, all packed in a suitcase that was packed with my empty backpack inside a large 27 inch rolling suitcase in which my possible Dayton goodies would be transported back to Tampa. Good strategy. One bag up, two bags and a carry on back. So far so good.*

*We arrived in Dayton, on time and were met by Jack, K4WSB, one of the veterans of this group. We piled in the van and were off for Travelodge where we quickly established Camp Tampa on a frequency of 147.030 simplex. Once everyone but Jim, AA4MD, had arrived (Jim came in on a late plane, that was even later than scheduled prompting a call to my room at 1:30 am in the morning) it was off to Outback Steakhouse. Now I had not eaten red meat much lately, but figured I needed my strength and ordered up a filet.*

DAY ONE



The main arena at Hara, Day One.



Kenwood unveils new mobile radio covering 160 through 6 meters.

*The seasoned Dayton participants in our group who offered plenty of advice on what to do first and how to do it to the Dayton virgins. Often you take things that people tell you with a grain of salt but I knew they were experienced at Dayton because Missie, the waitress at the waffle house where we had our morning meals actually knew these guys. Knowing that there is a waitress at a Waffle House in Dayton Ohio who will remember me next year is pretty frightening. The last time I ate at a Waffle House was after a late night hearing in Hernando County. I remember it quite well because one of the patrons through his empty coffee mug against the kitchen wall in an attempt to get some more coffee.*

*Bowing to their years of experience I dutifully brought a small spiral notebook and pen with me.*

*The purpose was simple... if you see something you want to see again write it down and write down the booth number so you can find it again. This is the only strategy that works, and even if you buy what you find you probably should write it down to avoid the stupid look on your face when asked "Where did you find that?"*



*The outdoor flea market area was probably at least ten times the size of the Orlando hamfest tailgate area. Maybe even bigger. Friday was devoted to doing the flea market, or as much of it as could be done in the time constraints of a 10 hour day. Yes, 10 hours and I did not get it done. I stopped for food and went inside for several hours of jaw dropping, eye popping walking around in a daze, but left a considerable amount of stuff undone both outside and inside on Day One.*

*The rows in the flea market area are the length of a football field and a half. There is a center aisle and a numbering scheme but initially, if you are new, you have that little Gomer Pyle voice in the back of your head going "Gaaaaawley" and fail to comprehend the layout. We started at the back and worked our way up one side of the aisles and then back down the other. When you see stuff of interests you need to purchase it or on the*

next pass it may be gone, or if you are not a good notetaker you may never see it again.



The backpack is also a necessity. I chose one that had wheels, although you really cannot wheel it through the inside vendor area until late in the morning Sunday when

things are wrapping up.

With Day One coming to a close, I had accomplished quite a bit for the day. I had taken two bags of loot back to the car, talked with the Wireman about discounting our club order for cables, and managed to pick up most of the “freebies” – the ubiquitous Yaesu cap (which I did not wear in deference to my TARC cap which was much more stylish), the Kenwood “Dayton 2003” lapel pin, and the Icom plastic pig. Could there be anything more weird than grown men and women struggling to catch plastic pigs thrown by the buxom girls at the Icom booth? As I approached the Icom booth I realized that there could be something more weird. Grown men of all ages ignoring the buxom girls at the Icom booth and taking pictures of the new prototype of the Icom IC 7800 being rolled out at Dayton instead of taking pictures of the buxom girls at the Icom booth.



Icom IC-7800 rolls out at Dayton.

Get that application in for the second mortgage.

Another good strategy for Day One at Dayton is to get whatever new rig that has just been introduced and is on sale for the very first time at Dayton on Day One.. Yaesu introduced the VX-2, a 1.5 watt slightly larger version of the VX-1. All the commercial vendors were out of these by Saturday morning.

Day One draws to a close with a van ride back to Camp Tampa at the Travelodge near the airport for show and tell, then off to dinner and rest for Day Two.

## DAY TWO

Getting up at 5:30 am is not a problem for me if I am going fishing or to a hamfest. For anything else, I am just not a morning person. At 5:30 am after the alarm woke me up, I peered out the door to see exactly what the weather forecasters on two different local stations had said I would not see – rain.

Relying on the information provided by “reliable news sources” I boldly challenged the common wisdom that it was going to rain all day. “It always rains at Dayton,” was the voice of experience. “Light showers in the early morning, giving way to sunshine and moderate temperatures through the late evening when more light showers can be expected,” was the professional prognostication. When faced with such choices as to accuracy, go with the voice of experience. In fact, it had rained every day in the month of May in the Dayton area, and there was so much water in the ground that farmers were complaining that they could not plant their fields because the ground was too wet. Just how much water was in the ground was evidenced by the number of cars that got stuck in the parking area we selected adjacent to the show at a private home.

It rained all of Day Two. Not real hard, not really a drizzle, but kind of the type of rain that comes and goes. The rain drove away the crowds in the flea market area, as well as driving down prices. If you didn’t mind a little water on your boat anchor there were some great deals out there. Especially late on Saturday after a full day of rain. Many of the outside vendors were gone by midday and many of those that remained made it clear that they were not coming back on Sunday. For a lot of this stuff, this was the last shot.

We worked hard at hitting the remaining flea market tables, but we missed very much. Even though 90% of the outside vendors had some sort of canopy over their selling areas, many booths were covered by tarps hiding all the goodies. As the rain increased in intensity, so did the size of the inside crowd and the less uncovered in the flea market area.

Inside became very crowded due to the rain. There are 5 “rooms” that are in addition to the main arena. Most of the major vendors, such as Ham Radio Outlet, Amateur Electronics Supply and R&L Electronics had people 4 and 5 deep in the main arena inquiring about prices and buying feverishly. Best I could tell, this feverish buying went on until the end of the show on Sunday. Around midday I got my call from Tampa with my marching orders for the club needs for Field Day and beyond. Having “precut” my deal with the Wireman, I simply had to go and give quantities and types of cables and cords and within minutes of the call, our order had been placed and 180 pounds of stuff was beginning the trip to the clubhouse.

Finding many of the other items was more difficult and there were somethings that just could be ordered, rather than endure the hassle of lugging things back on the plane. In fact, perhaps the best find of the entire Hamvention was finding that Cary, K4HVV, had driven to Dayton and was willing and able to bring back some of the items that would have been awkward to



transport, such as the aluminum standoffs that were purchased to hang off the 70 foot tower. If you haven't traveled by air lately, it is a real treat (thanks a lot Osama).

Soggy Saturday ended up with a group of our guys retreating early to Camp Tampa and all of us joining together for beer and pizza, the show and tell back at the camp.

## DAY THREE

Dayton Sunday started off like Friday and Saturday at the Waffle House. Some final planning as to the items I wanted to see again in the flea market. I had my list, and got organized at breakfast over something that was scattered, smothered and covered. However, of the 6 revisits that I had planned for Sunday only 1 of those outside vendors remained. Rain in the forecast and occasional sprinkles, plus the soggy Saturday sent many packing.



Not everyone heeds the warning signs at Dayton.

What mainly remained were piles of stuff in the parking lot that was not going home. The largest expense for the organization that puts on the Dayton Hamvention is the cleanup at the end. Miles of aisles have to be cleared of all of those treasures that did not sell and were too heavy to take back home. Don't worry, those items will probably be there next year. Watching the vendors pick through the Dayton rubble for items they could put on their table to sell or take on to the next hamfest was quite an amusing sight. After a bag or two was taken to the van, it was time to go inside for one last swing through the multiple halls and get brochures and talk to vendors as the inevitable tear down was beginning.

If you want to know the vendors that were inside at Dayton, just pick up a QST. Most everyone with an advertisement in QST was there. There were easily 7 major sellers there like AES, Universal Radio, HRO, etc. There were tons of computer stuff. Over 600 inside exhibitors. And we kept right on buying until 1:00 pm when the show officially ended and all of the prize drawings were held. The last purchase was the official Dayton 2003 T-Shirt, sold at closing time for \$5. As I was buying mine on the way out the door a ham from 2 land came up to the

woman that had the remaining shirts and said, "How about two for \$5? You are just going to end up eating them. They're no good after this is over."

None of us won anything. Tired, sore we all regrouped for the flight home and took turns getting to the airport. The Dayton Airport was strangely quiet. I had expected the hustle bustle of thousands of hams leaving town with every form of radio equipment jammed into bags and boxes. Oddly quiet. Rain in Atlanta, long delays and a return 3 hours late only gave us more time to talk about what fun we had just had, and how we will do it next year all over again.

Having been a ham since 1969 I had always heard talk of Dayton. I even thought about going to Dayton on several occasions recently but did not follow through. This year I promised myself early that I would go. The trip was great fun and will be required for next year and years to come. There was some speculation as to whether the Hamfest would continue to be in Dayton. This was the last year of the contract with the family that owns Hara and there was a survey of the vendors that expressed a desire to go to Columbus, Ohio if Hara is closed or the contract not renewed. Then came talk of a two year extension being signed on Saturday.

Regardless of where it is held in 2004, it will always be Dayton and I will be there.



The gang from Camp Tampa enjoying their final breakfast at Waffle House.

Back row L to R

Biff, K4LAW; Larry, WB1DME; Jim, AA4MD; Joe N3AIN; Robert, W3AF and Julio, W4HY.

Front row L to R

Jerry, WA0GLD; John, KB4CRT; Bill, KD4FRB; and Jack, K4WSB.



## Tampa Amateur Radio Club

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**We're on the Web!**

See us at:

**www.HamClub.org**



## ARRL Releases Updated "Logbook of the World"

From the ARRL Letter

"Logbook of the World" (LoTW) beta testers for the most part have reacted positively to the latest version of ARRL's secure electronic contact-confirmation system, but some users have run into difficulties. Responding to problems encountered by some early beta testers, the League has released an updated beta version of LoTW that should resolve these issues. Beta testers are encouraged to download the new version of the software, 1.02beta, from the LoTW page <http://www.arrl.org/lotw/>.

"While most installations and subsequent e-mailing and uploading of log data have gone flawlessly, as expected there have been problems," said ARRL's Dave Patton, NT1N, who's been a part of the LoTW project from the start. He says the LoTW server software failed to recognize many of the new digital mode designations, such as MFSK-16 and JT6M. This caused fatal errors while digitally signing logs.

Patton says the beta update allows users to "map" any mode designation to one of the four main Amateur Data Interchange Format (ADIF) mode categories--CW, phone, image, and digital--without changing the actual log

data. He said the beta upgrade also will correct other log data problems that caused fatal errors in signing a log, including allowing the signing process to complete the "good" parts of a log without crashing.

Beta testing got under way May 15. So far, the 1300 or so beta testers have uploaded upward of five million contacts to the LoTW database. Once it's ready later this year, LoTW will provide a way for amateurs worldwide to qualify for awards such as DXCC or WAS without having to first collect and submit hard-copy QSL cards.

One beta tester from Brazil lavished praise on the LoTW project. "I applaud the creators of LoTW," he wrote. "This will be, for sure, the salvation of DXing and award collecting. Please keep up this essential work!" For now, log data are limited to contacts made no more than five years ago (on or after January 1, 1998) to get a representative sampling, Patton explained.

Patton promised "many more bells and whistles" over the weeks ahead. One of those will meld LoTW with DXCC. He noted that a major DXCC software revision, now under way, will need to be completed first.

Logging software developers now can

get documentation and a Windows DLL library--as well as complete source code for the TQSL software--at the SourceForge Web site <http://sourceforge.net/projects/trustedqsl/>.

To join the beta testing program, visit the Logbook of the World--Getting Started site <http://www.arrl.org/lotw/getstart.html>. The beta testing period wraps up in mid-July.

All QSO data submitted to LoTW will be deleted when the beta test period ends, and users will have to obtain new digital certificates to submit log data to LoTW once it 'goes live.' As part of the security process for the live system, passwords will be mailed to US licensees at the address that appears in the FCC database. Users should make sure the FCC has their current mailing address.

Amateurs can modify their address online or via US mail by using instructions available on the FCC Web site <http://wireless.fcc.gov/services/amateur/licensing/changingaddress.html>.

ARRL members may submit license modifications or renewals through the ARRL VEC <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/forms.html>.

## Upcoming Hillsborough Co. ARES/RACES Activities

**FEMA radio exercise**  
June 2, 2003

**Governors Hurricane Conference**  
Tampa Convention Center June 9-13, 2003

**Free amateur radio seminar**  
Tuesday June 10th from 1:30 pm until 5:00 pm

**Introduction to Packet Radio Communications course**  
Saturday June 14, 2003 @ TARC clubhouse from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm

**Mutual Aid Communications (MAC) 1000 course**  
Saturday June 28th @ TARC clubhouse from 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

**Annual Hillsborough County hurricane exercise**

Tuesday July 8, 2003 from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm -- full scale activation of EOC

**Basic and Advanced Skywarn Spotter classes**  
Saturday August 16, 2003 @ TARC clubhouse

Basic class 10:00 until 12:00 PM / Advanced class 1:30 PM until 3:30 PM

Hillsborough County ARES/RACES is offering brand new 12 volt/26 amp hour

deep cycle gel cell batteries to provide emergency power for your station.

\$35.00 each or 2 for \$60.00. Each

battery comes with a trickle charger.

Additional information can be obtained by e-mailing

[races@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:races@hillsboroughcounty.org) or calling the Hillsborough County ARES/RACES

office at (813) 224-8544. Classroom courses and training opportunities are

offered by Hillsborough County ARES/RACES throughout the year. Read QRM,

check the TARC e-mail list, attend TARC club meetings, or check into the

Tuesday night TARC net for specific class dates.