

The Brandon Amateur Radio Society Newsletter
Over 43 years of service to the Brandon Area
Brandon, Florida USA

Brandon Amateur Radio Society

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Hamvention QSO Party This Weekend—Good Field Day Practice

Scott Irwin (W8UFD)

While COVID-19 caused the cancellation of Hamvention, the largest ham radio gathering in the world, it has not dampened the spirit of hams getting together.

The World Wide Radio Operators Foundation, in conjunction with the Dayton Hamvention organizers, have created the Hamvention QSO Party, scheduled for Saturday, May 16.

The event will celebrate the Hamvention experience on the air and is in memory of Ron Moorefield (W8ILC), who never missed a Hamvention and contributed to the Dayton Amateur Radio Association until his death two days after the cancellation was announced.

The Hamvention website announced that "W8BI, the club call of the Dayton Amateur Radio

Association (DARA is the host of Hamvention) will be activated by designated DARA members from their home stations. You can add 10 points for each band/mode QSO with W8BI (12 available). So you can earn 120 bonus points (like having 120 additional QSOs)."

Here is a summary of the event:

Object: To celebrate the Dayton Hamvention by working as many Amateur stations as possible during the QSO Party period.

Contest period: 8 AM to 8 PM EDT (1200 to 2400 UTC), May 16, 2020

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters CW and SSB – You can work the same station once per band mode (12 QSOs possible with same station).

Exchange: Signal report and first year you attended Hamvention. If you have never attended Hamvention send "2020".

Entry Categories: Only single operator entries – you may use assistance such as the cluster and the reverse beacon network (RBN). No self-spotting.

Power Levels: QRP – no more than 5 watts; Low Power – No more than 100 watts; and High Power – no more than 1500 watts.

Scoring: Score is number of QSOs + bonus points = final score. There are no multipliers.

To Enter: Post your score at 3830scores.com within 5 days of the event (May 21, 2020). No logs are required.

Visit <http://www.hvqp.org/> for award details and supported logging software. To practice for Field Day, use the software the club uses: [N3FJP Software](#). Select the RAC Contest. Enjoy!

May Meeting Will Be Virtual!

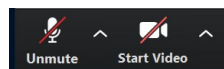
Grab a doughnut and a cup of coffee and join us for our monthly meeting. This is your change to be on the refreshment committee (hihi).

The business meeting will start at 7:30 PM and a program will follow.

Click [here](#) to register. After completing the form you will receive an e-mail with instruc-

tions to join using your computer, Android/Apple Device, or telephone.

Note: Upon joining all audio will be muted to prevent background noise and audio quality issues. If you are having audio issues you should turn off your camera.



Next Meeting

May 21, 2020

7:30 PM

This meeting is virtual. Register [here](#).

Bring a Friend!

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From The President's Desk

Dana Perrin (KM4DTJ)

It's great to see so many members participating in the Wednesday night Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom. I think we had about 15 last Wednesday. We always have a great time. Several members who had technical difficulties during past meetings seemed to have solved the problems they had. I'm still struggling with getting the virtual background feature to work! I hope more and more members participate. I really miss seeing everyone at the breakfasts and other get-togethers we would normally have during the week. We are all grateful to Scott Irwin for facilitating these Zoom meetings. Thank you Scott!

As you may know, our 2 meter repeater was down for a short time in early May. I want to take this opportunity to thank Ray

Negron and Dave Welty for their quick response to get the repeater back on line. Thank you Ray and Dave!

Our next membership meeting will be on May 21st and will be held on Zoom at 7:30 pm. We have several proposals which will require a vote. I will send out a summary prior to our meeting so watch your BARS reflector email. We also anticipate being ready to send out information regarding the incorporation of BARS, the process, the associated costs, the ongoing requirements, and the associated changes to the club bylaws. I hope each of you will take the time to carefully review these documents and come to the meeting prepared to discuss, make amendments if necessary, and reach a final consensus by voting. The future of our club really depends on it!

I hope you are all staying safe and healthy during this pandemic. As I follow the CDC and Florida State websites, I do see the number of COVID-19 cases declining slowly. It will be interesting to see what happens as the process of staggered and partial re-opening of businesses, churches, and other entities begins. I am hoping for the best.

Finally, I ask that you keep Mary Ann Kramer and Mark Haskell in your thoughts and prayers. Mary Ann is recovering from surgery and Mark continues to recover from an accident.

My best wishes to you and your families. Stay safe!

*Tough times don't last.
Tough teams do.*

Adapted from a quote by Robert H. Schuller



Our next membership meeting will be on May 21st...we have several proposals which will require a vote.



April 2020 Membership Meeting



Dave Welty (N4DLW) and Ray Negron (WA6KDW) at the VHF repeater site. Photo by Dave Welty (N4DLW)

FT-4 QSO Connects Hams, Teaches Lesson

Mike Salita (KC3DA)

Reprinted with permission of author.

Here is something to consider. I was on Ft-4 the other night working Europe. I always look everyone up on QRZ to make these QSO's feel less like 2 computers talking instead of two Hams talking. I had a run of Italian hams and as I was looking them up, to my surprise, one of

the Hams was from a small town in Sicily called Caltanissetta. That's the city my grandfather was from.

I emailed Michele and told him about my family. We tried to talk on SSB but as we all know that [is] a hit and miss proposition.

We Facetimed and he called my family to see if they were OK.

The moral of this story is this: understand that digital QSOs are still two hams communicating. During these [tough] times when you can connect with someone it's great.

-Editor's Note: View the original post and comments [here](#) for additional information about how hams connect with each other as a result of automated digital QSOs.

Solar Weather Corner – Connecting Amateur Radio and Astronomy

Kelly Anderson (KE4GS)

So far in this series we've looked at the amazing alchemy the Sun performs to fuse hydrogen into more complex elements and, QBTW, it creates a whole lot of heat and other radiational products that make life on Earth possible, or not, depending upon Sol's mood. Last time we talked about the major events called "coronal mass ejections," or CMEs (gotta have at least one TLA, right?). But solar weather is a bit more complicated than that. Let's look at some of the things that make our star so interesting.

We'll start from the mildest (!) and work up.

First, because of all that nuclear alchemy going on our Sun has an extraordinarily strong, complex and active magnetic field. The material at the Sun's equator rotates a lot faster than higher elevations (north and south) causing the magnetic field to become warped. Most of this action happens below the surface, but when they reach the surface they form "filaments," long lines of magnetic force. At either end of these filaments you'll find a "sun spot," areas that are cooler and darker than the surrounding surface. Interestingly, the two sun spots thus formed are polar opposites, similar to the north and south end of a magnet.

The image to the right of this article was captured about five

years ago with my 4-inch refractor. That was back when we had such things as sunspots. Note that almost all the sunspots are in pairs. That doesn't mean the companion isn't there, it's just that, with my simple equipment there's one that we can't see. Notice the small, perfectly round, unpaired spot below center. That's not a sunspot ... it's the planet Mercury in transit across the face of the Sun. Kinda cool, huh? Well, it's actually pretty hot, but so goes the expression. At this point I should remind everyone to NEVER LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN WITHOUT PROPER PROTECTION, but since you all know that I won't. To take this image I used a sun filter that blocks out 99.9% of the light. That's why the surrounding sky is black, not because I took the picture at night.

Although sunspots appear small on the surface of the sun, they range in size from 1,500 to 30,000 miles across, and although they are "cool" spots on the surface of the Sun, they are still over 8,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

So, sunspots cause better radio propagation, right? Well, no, they don't. They pretty much keep to themselves. But ... a big but ... they indicate by their numbers the level of electro-magnetic activity in the Sun. Our star is a variable star. It doesn't vary a lot (fortunately for us), and the variance cycle is fairly long (11 years, right? Well, as you may have guessed, it's not quite as simple as that, but close enough for this conversation). As the Sun's activity increases, so does the continuous stream of nuclear radiation (the "solar wind"). This increased activity, in turn, causes our ionosphere to become thicker and denser, which makes it a better reflector of RF energy, which improves propagation at higher frequencies, which makes QSL traffic increase,

especially the international kind. That's why we're anxiously waiting for the current sunspot low to be over.

But wait ... there's more! The solar wind is a fairly steady phenomenon that varies in approximately 11-year cycles. But this activity has bumps along the way. The two most common are solar flares and coronal mass ejections. Both have a similar cause (kinks in the magnetic lines of force so strong that they break) but the difference is in what is ejected.

Solar flares result in a sudden flash of light with the energy of millions of megaton hydrogen bombs. This electro-magnetic energy travels across space at the speed of light, arriving on Earth only 8 minutes. Especially powerful flares can disrupt communications, but they only last an average of 5 minutes. They can enhance the aurora to where it becomes an almost perfect reflector of radio energy. That's why, every once in a while, you can point your beam north and contact a ham in South America.

Solar flares occur in the vicinity of sunspots, and their frequency follows the same 11-year cycle. At the cycle's peak we can expect an average of three flares a day, most of which are so weak that they don't have much of an effect on Earthly activities.

Corona Mass Ejections, on the other hand, are a different kettle of fish. They don't consist of electro-magnetic energy, they are massive chunks of plasma, and they can cause a lot of damage to electric and electronic equipment. I refer you to last month's edition of the Solar Weather Corner for more details. But take my word for it, if you see one coming, then you'd better duck.



Photo by Kelly Anderson (KE4GS)

Let's look at some of the things that make our star so interesting.

The "Tune Up" can help you get your station ready for ARRL Field Day.

Apple users looking for a handy pocket reference should check this out...

100 Watts and a Wire "Tune Up" Scheduled for 12-13 June

Christian Cudnik (K0STH)

The [100 Watts and a Wire Podcast](#) "Tune Up" happens on June 12-14!

Since COVID-19 has forced a large percentage of U.S. citizens to limit social gatherings, we are encouraging participants to assemble a small team of operators from various locations.

For instance, K0STH's team will have operators from Missouri, Washington State, Maine, and Illinois.

Stations will set up portable antennas and will be limited to 100 watts of power. At the end of the activity, teams will submit their totals and be entered into the random drawing for prizes.

Winner will take it all!

DETAILS

Purpose: Our activities provide

operators an opportunity to exercise their equipment, practice aspects of emergency communication and prepare for Field Day.

Times: From Friday at 00:00 UTC through Sunday at 23:59

Where: Any Band / Any Mode / Any Time

If you have a portable station you can activate from anywhere. If you can't go portable, no problem. You can work from the comfort of your shack. Exercise your gear and get on the air.

Exchange: Call sign, 100WattID, State - Province or DX Country, True signal report

Point System: We use the honor system. General radio contacts = 1 Point, 100WattID Station = 2 points.

Prizes: Participating stations who make 25 or more contacts

and submit their entry no later than one week after the event ends will be entered into a random drawing for prizes, including:

- Alpha Antenna: VHF/UHF/HF EmComm Antenna Kit, 100 Gift Certificate
- MFJ: 902B Travel Tuner, Antenna 1982MP, RFI Isolator 915
- Bioenno Power: 12V 9AH Lithium Iron Phosphate Battery and Charger
- PowerFilm Solar: 20W Foldable Solar Panel with Anderson PowerPole and Extender Cable
- CQ Magazine: 1 Year Digital Subscription
- Nuts and Volts Magazine: 1 Year Digital Subscription

Learn more at the link above.

App of the Month: Ham I Am

Scott Irwin (WBUF0)

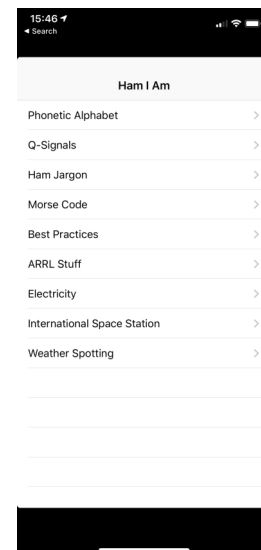
Apple users looking for a handy pocket reference should check out Ham I Am in their app store.

Written by Peter Yorke (YE7YBP), the software includes the phonetic alphabet, heavily used Q-signals, and a Morse code reference (although you should use an alternate learning method). You can also find things like a refresher on the RST system, electrical formulas, power thresholds, weather spotting reporting information, and a ham jargon dictionary.

The application even has information from the ARRL. You can find shortcuts for the ARRL Radiograms, information on the ARRL message format, and a U.S. Band Plan.

Check it out on the [Apple Store](#).

-Editor's Note: Do you have a favorite app that you use? Tell us why you like it, what phone or tablet you use it on, and how it helps you. We'll include it in a future issue.



Greater Tampa Bay Area Scouting Council Provides Roadmap to Resumption

Scott Irwin (WBUF0)

Upon review of existing federal, state, local, and Boy Scouts of America guidance the Greater Tampa Bay Area Council Committee on Program Resumption put forth a roadmap towards ensuring that program resumption is done in a SAFE, SMART, STEP-BY-STEP manner protecting Scouts, Scouting families, Scout Leaders, and Scouting volunteer and professional staff.

The plan, like that of the Governor's, is a three phase approach. The plan is contingent on agreement with the chartering organization and the State government moving to phase two or three of their plan.

In stage one, which will continue through the month of May, virtual scouting will continue, camps will remain closed and no district/council in-person activities will be held. Scouting units may, on agreement with their Chartering Organization, begin in-person activities as long as they rigidly adhere to Florida's phase one mandates.

In stage two, expected to be in June), council and district events will be rescheduled to July and a go/no-go decision will be made by the middle of the month. Rescheduled events will have limited attendance per government mandates and guidelines that will be published/

included on the registration page. Attendees will also have to undergo medical screening and no exceptions will be granted. If government mandates allow, camps will reopen, council properties will reopen, and development activities will resume, and scouting units can continue in person events in coordination with their chartering organizations.

Stage three is expected to start in July and is contingent on Florida's government moving to phase three of their plan. Council and District events will occur and scouting units can continue in person events. All events will follow government mandates in place at the time.

According to the Greater Tampa Bay Area Council Coronavirus [website](#), the roadmap is reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to adhere to the Governor's Plan for Florida's Recovery. Adult leaders should continue to monitor it and the official council social media accounts for changes and updates.



Hamfests & Conventions

05/23/2020—CANCELLED
Wormfest
Pinellas Park, FL
The Glorious Society of The Wormhole
<http://w4orm.org/>

06/13/2020 - Mid-June
Pre-ARRL Field Day Tail-Gators' Gathering
Dade City, FL
Dade City Masonic Lodge
<http://dadecitymasoniclodge.com>

06/20/2020
K4KDI Summer Tailgate
Orlando, FL
South Conway Road Baptist Church

08/22/2020
TARCFest
Tampa, FL
Tampa Amateur Radio Club
<http://www.hamclub.org>

11/14/2020
SPARC Fest
Pinellas Park, FL
St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club
Website: <http://www.sparc-club.org>

12/11/2020 - 12/12/2020
Tampa Bay Hamfest
Plant City, FL
Florida Gulf Coast Amateur Radio Council
<http://www.tampabayhamfest.com>

More at <http://www.arrl.org/hamfests/>

Note: Due to the COVID-19 outbreak some hamfests and conventions may be cancelled. Please check with the sponsoring organization for status as it may have changed after this newsletter was published.

Upcoming Club Events

- > May 21, 2020
BARS Club Meeting
7:30 PM Online.
Register [here](#).
- > May 27, 2020
Virtual Coffee Hour
7:30 PM Online.
Register [here](#) (one registration works for all instances).
- > June 3, 2020
Virtual Coffee Hour
7:30 PM Online.
Register [here](#) (one registration works for all instances).
- > June 10, 2020
Virtual Coffee Hour
7:30 PM Online.
Register [here](#) (one registration works for all instances).
- > June 3, 2020
Virtual Coffee Hour
7:30 PM Online.
Register [here](#) (one registration works for all instances).
- > Mondays, 8 PM ET
VHF Net (147.165 MHz)
- > Tuesdays, 7 PM ET
6 Meter Roundtable (50.200 MHz USB)
- > Tuesdays, 8 PM ET
10 Meter Roundtable (28.365 MHz USB)
- > Fridays, 7 PM ET
80 Meter Roundtable (3.830 MHz LSB)

The Brandon Amateur Radio Society (BARS) has been serving Brandon, Valrico, Mango, Seffner, Palm River, Gibsonton, Riverview, and the East Tampa area for over 43 years providing public service and emergency preparedness communications as well as license classes and radio operator training programs.



Thank you to the members and staff of Arise for their kindness

In allowing BARS the use of their facility!

Our Repeaters

147.165 MHz (+ offset, 136.5 Hz PL Tone, Analog FM) - N4DLW-R Echolink Node
443.500 MHz (+ Offset, 127.3 Hz PL Tone, Analog FM, C4FM) - N4DLW/R Wires X



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<http://www.brandonhamradio.org/>



<http://www.fb.me/brandonhamradio>



<http://www.twitter.com/brandonhamradio>

K4PPK Makes Frequency Measurement Test Results List

Courtesy ARRL Website

The results of the spring 2020 Frequency Measuring Test (FMT), conducted on April 24, have been posted. Coming in at the top of the list for stations entering readings of both the 40-meter and 80-meter frequencies was Steve Cerwin, WA5FRF. His average error rate was 0.004902 parts per million (ppm). The Top 10 looked like this, with average error rates in ppm.

1.	WA5FRF	0.004902
2.	WA2IKL	0.005584
3.	N7WS	0.005636
4.	N9CIF	0.006999
5.	NJDU	0.007051
6.	N80BJ	0.007655
7.	AD5MT	0.008415
8.	KB3UMD	0.008415
9.	WB6RJH	0.008492
10.	AB4RS	0.009174

Bill De Carle, VE2IQ, has posted a ranked [list](#) of participants who submitted readings for both frequencies, and our very own Jim Smith (K4PPK) made the list at position 75!

Today's FMTs are conducted completely online, with no manual log-checking or intervention. Connie Marshall, K5CM, provides Bruce Horn, WA7BNM, with the precise actual frequencies, participating individuals submit their measurements, and machines handle the rest. A total of 140 radio amateurs took part on the April 2020 FMT, with 98 submitting readings for both frequencies to better than 1 a ppm on average. The next FMT will take place in November.

Taking part in the FMT does not require special laboratory equipment. Modern HF transceivers

can measure frequency quite accurately, and SDR-based receivers and available software can enable precise frequency measurements. Today's FMT leaders are able to accurately measure beyond the number of decimal places (out to 5) that a typical transceiver will display, however. One station participating in the 2019 spring FMT used an Elecraft KX3 and Spectrum Lab audio software. Another employed his Elecraft K3 transceiver and tuning forks to get within 1 Hz of the mark on both bands.

[Some information](#) on how to measure the frequency of a carrier is available on Marshall's website as well as in past articles in QST. Visit the [FMT-Nuts](#) discussion group on [groups.io](#).



Submit your articles & photos for the next edition of *The Antenna* by June 08, 2020!

Send electronic submissions to
w8ufo (at) arrl (dot) net