News from

The GLORIOUS SOCIETY OF THE WORMHOLE

May 2018

Hello Worms

Hi Worms,

This month the meeting falls on the same weekend as the MS150 bike ride, now called the Citrus Tour, so I'm not gonna make the meeting. Mike will handle the meeting well so everyone play nice. Thanks Mike.

Don't forget the Wormfest is May 26. Tell your friends, your enemies, other clubs you are members of and any nets you check into.

Talk-in is on the Wormhole repeater system. For those coming to the meeting who cannot hit the repeater we will also monitor the Honeywell club repeater on 443.050 +141.3. Bring a folding chair if you have one.

* ARRL: HOW CAN WE HELP? *

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Recently, I received this email from a reader:

"Hi Dan,

"Hope you're doing well. I have a couple of questions about the ARRL. I've been reading your blog and other sources, and it's clear that the ARRL is in a little trouble. I have to say, though, that as soon as the current administration in D.C. notices that some of their friends can make money off of amateur radio bandwidth,

the whole amateur radio service is in very serious jeopardy. The only way I can think of to counter that would be an organization like the ARRL, and I think there's really only one organization like the ARRL. Is that not true? If it is, how can we help?"

I replied that it is true that there's only one organization like the ARRL. In the past, there have been groups that have tried to compete with the ARRL, but they've never really taken off. It's an incredible amount of work to set up an organization like the ARRL and none of the alternates have been able to get to critical mass.

The second question—How can we help?—is the big question. Here are a few thoughts:

- Join the ARRL. If you're not currently a member, join. You'll have little or no influence, if you are not a member.

- If you are a member, but your friends are not, encourage them to join. The more members the ARRL has, the more influence it will have. This is common sense, but the ARRL doesn't really seem to care about this. In the past, I've encouraged the ARRL to set a membership goal of 25% of licensed radio amateurs ([link 1](), [link 2]()). I honestly don't think this is asking too much, and I've never heard a good argument for them not to do this. They continue to ignore me, and the percentage of licensed radio amateurs that are ARRL members continues to decline.

- Take an interest in ARRL matters and let your director and vice director know your views. Get your friends to do likewise. Get on the mailing lists for the board meeting agendas and minutes. To do this, log into the ARRL website, click on "Edit your profile," then "Edit email subscriptions."

- Invite your ARRL elected officials—your division director, vice director, and section manager—to talk at your club meetings. Be prepared to grill them on issues that you think are important.

- Run for office yourself. I ran for Great Lakes Division vice director twice. Unfortunately, I lost both times, but even running is a way to have an impact. I'd like to see the "loyal opposition" get organized and challenge the

status quo, especially in divisions where I think the current director is making bad decisions.

Having said all that, there are ways to make an impact besides playing ARRL politics:

- Get on the air. It's easier to lose bands if we're not using them. Encourage others to be active.

- Be an Elmer to those that need it.

- Teach classes to help those who want a license get a license and to help those who are already licensed to upgrade their licenses.

- Be an ambassador for amateur radio, especially to related groups, such as the "maker" groups that have sprung up around the country. Make sure that they know about your amateur radio club and the classes and exam sessions that you offer.

I'd love to hear any other thoughts that you all may have on this. I really do think that at this point, we need to inundate the ARRL Board and staff with input from the membership. While they may have a long history of ignoring the membership and just going about their own merry way, now is really a time of change, and this might be the right time to set the ARRL on a better path.

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When he's not getting all worked up over ARRL politics, Dan blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, teaches amateur radio classes, and works CW on the HF bands. He's the author of the *No Nonsense* amateur radio license study guides and *The CW Geek's Guide to Having Fun with Morse Code*.

IMPROVE YOU STATION AUDIO QUALITY –PART 2

The last article gave suggestions on noise at the antenna end. What can be done at the radio to improve reception?

Start with the speaker and audio circuit of the radio. Even the high end radios can be lacking in this area. How so?

Most radios come with a low power audio amplifier. It is driving a small speaker that may not have a high acoustic quality. I have heard it estimated that even the high end receivers has as much as 8% distortion.

Now comes the fun part. Rather than listen to your receiver with the stock audio system, add a relatively high power amplifier. This is not for the purpose of blasting your ears off, but to amplify the receiver audio with little distortion. Also, adding a good quality speaker is needed.

Most amps will have a base and treble control. Some will have an equalizer and others will have a full blown Digital Signal Processor (DSP). Which ever you use, it will be helpful.

You can adjust the base and treble, or the equalizer between 300 and 3,000 cycles per second response. Also, customize it a little to your ears. By doing this, you will find that the unwanted noise will start to take a back seat.

The DSP unit will be able to adjust the audio in minute detail. Even notching out narrow areas of the spectrum. The frequency response can be made sharper. If you are having a bit of hearing loss, you can customize the DSP for what you need.

Have you tried a good set of head phones. Not the ear wax diggers, but the full size ones that block out your surrounding noise. It also is a big improvement.

Adding this simple feature is easy and will improve the best receivers.

There is more you can do with the radio itself. This will be covered in up coming articles.

73,
Ralph WD0EJA

* NEW RANSOMWARE DEMAND: PLAY GAME *

by John Lister on April, 11 2018 *INFOPACKETS*

A newly unleashed ransomware attack doesn't force victims to pay money to regain access to files. Instead, it demands they play a video game.

It's not clear yet what the point of the attack is, though it's most likely the work of a prankster who wants to test their skills at creating and distributing ransomware without doing any permanent harm.

Ransomware is a form of malware that encrypts files on a computer and normally only unlocks them if the victim pays a fee. In most cases every file on the computer is encrypted, meaning that victims are locked out of their systems and unable to access their files. Victims are left to decide between paying the ransom (and hoping the scammers are good for their word) or wiping their hard drive and reinstalling both the operating system and their files from a backup, if one's available.

The new 'PUBG Battlegounds' ransomware isn't quite so bad. The only files in encrypts are those on the Windows desktop (including files inside any folders stored on the desktop). It then adds the file custom file extension .PUBG.

One way to decrypt the files is to play the game PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds. While this will cost around $30 to acquire if the victim doesn't already have it, there's no link to buy it, so the ransomware author isn't out to make any commission from affiliate links.

There's also a couple of factors that make this element of the ransomware less painful that it might otherwise be to non-gamers. One is that although the 'ransom demand' says victims must play the game for an hour, it appears the files decrypt after just three seconds.

The other is that the only way the ransomware checks if the victim is playing the game is to see if the file TslGame.exe is active on the computer. While this will indeed be the case if the game is played, it should also be possible for more advanced users to create and run a harmless file of that name. (Source: vice.com)

The ransom demand also offers an option to simply cut and paste an unlock code (included in the demand) into a text box rather than play a game. It appears this will actually work. (Source: bleepingcomputer.com)

While this ransomware is more of an irritation than a menace, it could also serve as a wake-up call as it shows the victim needs to plug a gap in their computer's security.

* ALEXA, HELP ME WITH HAM RADIO *

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I have had an Amazon Alexa for nearly a year now. Mostly, I just use it to listen to internet radio stations or tell me a joke, but I think it has more potential than that. For example, I've written before about how I'd like to develop an Alexa skill to control my IC-7300. I haven't gotten around to that yet, but, Joe, N3HEE, has just published an Alexa skill called Continuous Wave. It's designed to help you learn Morse Code.

To use this skill, you have to first enable it. Once enabled, say, "Alexa, open Continuous Wave." This opens the skill at the main menu. You can then say any of the following at any voice prompt…

*Learn
*Practice
*Alphabet
*Common words
*Random words
*Words
*Sentences
*Call signs
*Contest
*Quick Brown Fox
*QSO
*Help

*Stop – To end your session.

I've just played around with this app for a short time, but I've found it to be quite entertaining. It does, however, have one big drawback. You can't set the speed. It's currently limited to sending at 20 words per minute only.

Also, the learn function could use a little refining. When you give the command "learn," it asks you for a character, sends that character three times, and then asks you for another. If you could set the speed at which the skill sends characters, it could teach a character like the K7QO Code Course, first sending the character slowly, then ramping up the speed.

Overall, though, I think this is a great first shot at a usable Alexa skill for teaching Morse Code. I hope this is the first of many versions of this skill.

Other ham radio skills
While I was poking around on Amazon, I decided to see what other amateur radio skills might be available. Here are a few that I found:

*[Ham Exam](). Ask Alexa to ask you questions from the Technician Class question pool.
*[Ham Lookup](). Allows you to look up amateurs by call sign. Information is provided from the callbook.info database.
*[Ham Radio Propagation Forecast](). Reports the latest forecasts directly from HamQSL (run by N0NBH).
*[ARRL Audio News](). Adds ARRL Audio News to your Alexa flash briefing.

Building your own voice app
The Continuous Wave Alexa skill was developed using tools found at [VoiceApps.Com](). Two other websites—[Pullstring]() and [StoryLine]()—also have tools to help you build voice apps. And, Amazon has an [online tutorial]() that will teach you how to build an Alexa app. I'm just getting started with these tools, so I can't recommend one over the others, but they do look like they'll make developing voice apps easier.

Since I'm currently in the process of updating my *[No Nonsense Technician Class License Study Guide]()*, it occurs to me that I should also develop an Alexa skill for

drilling students on test questions. I guess you could call them audio flashcards. Stay tuned for that.

When he's not trying to figure out how to build voice apps, Dan blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, teaches ham radio classes, and operates CW on the HF bands. Look for him on 30m, 40m, and 80m. You can email him about the voice apps that you like at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

CLUB MEETING

The next club meeting is May 5th . We meet on the first Saturday every month at 11:00 Saturday morning at the Minnreg Building located at 6340 126th Ave N, Largo. Members are welcome to come in the rear area through the fence gate on the southeast corner of the property. Talk-in is on the Wormhole repeater system. For those coming to the meeting who cannot hit the repeater we will be monitoring the Honeywell club repeater on 443.050 +141.3. We will keep an eye peeled for you. We will take advantage of the cooking facilities with an after-the-meeting Social and Wormdog picnic.

CLUB NETS

Check in on the club net Thursdays at 1930. 442.625 + with a 146.2 tone or the 2M side at 146.850 – also with a tone of 146.2. We are always looking for volunteers to be the net control operator. Anyone interested, talk to one your club officers.

LOCAL NETS

MONDAY

1730 147.030 + Receiver sites and tone info http://www.qsl.net/wd4scd/ St Pete Yacht Club ARC

1830 147.060+ no tone   St Pete ARC daily net   St Petersburg

1900 144.210 USB   CARS, vertical polarization
      Clearwater

1900 147.135 +146.2   Zephyrhills ARC
      Zephyrhills

2000 147.165+ 136.5   Brandon ARS   from Brandon

2000 50.135   Pinellas ARK
      Pinellas County

2030 NI4CE system   EAGLE Net, NTS traffic net,   NI4CE system

2030 145.450	Pinellas ARK	
Pinellas County		

TUESDAY

1830 147.060 no tone	St Pete ARC daily net	from St
Petersburg		
1900 50.200 USB	6M net	
Brandon ARS		
1900 28.450	WCF section net	
Clearwater		
1900 NI4CE system	WCF Section VHF ARES	NI4CE
system		
1930 145.170 & 442.4 both pl 156.7	Pinellas ACS net	Clearwater
1930 444.900 +141.3	Sheriff's Tactical ARC	Tampa
2000 NI4CE system	WCF Skywarn net	NI4CE
system		
2000 147.105+ 146.2	Tampa ARC net	from
Tampa		
2000 28.365 USB	simplex	Brandon
ARS		
2030 NI4CE system	EAGLE Net, NTS traffic net	NI4CE
system		
2100 28.465 USB	10/10 net	from Orlando

WEDNESDAY

1930 146.30	Hillsborough ARES/RACES	
simplex net from Tampa		
1830 147.060 no tone	St Pete ARC daily net	from St
Petersburg		

1930 52.020 simplex Petersburg	Suncoast 6'ers	from St
1930 NI4CE system system	WCF Section Digital Info Ne	NI4CE
2000 147.105 146.2 Tampa	Greater Tampa CERT net	from
2000 146.97- 146.2 Clearwater	Clearwater ARS	from
2030 NI4CE system system	EAGLE Net, NTS traffic net	NI4CE
2100 NI4CE system affiliated	Tampa Bay Traders Net	non-

THURSDAY

1800 146.52 simplex Tampa	Hillsborough ARES/RACES	North
1830 147.060 no tone Petersburg	St Pete ARC daily net	from St
1900 444.750 +146.2 Tampa	Fusion net	from
1930 146.850- & 442.625+ both pl 146.2	Wormhole	from St
Petersburg		
1930 146.6385 -127.3 Lakeland	Lakeland ARC	from
1915 224.660- no tone Petersburg	St Pete ARC	from St
2030 NI4CE system system	EAGLE Net, NTS traffic net	NI4CE

FRIDAY

1830 147.060 no tone Petersburg	St Pete ARC daily net	from St
2030 NI4CE system system	EAGLE Net, NTS traffic net	NI4CE

SATURDAY

0730 3.940 (7.281 Alt.)+/- QRM WCF	WCF Section HF Net	from
1830 147.060 no tone Petersburg	St Pete ARC daily net	from St
2030 NI4CE system system	EAGLE Net, NTS traffic net	NI4CE

SUNDAY

0800 3.933	Florida Traders Net	non-affiliated
1830 147.060 no tone Petersburg	St Pete ARC daily net	from St
1930 NI4CE system system	WCF Section Net	NI4CE
2000 147.550 simplex Pinellas County	550 Simplex Net	
2030 NI4CE system system	EAGLE Net, NTS traffic net	NI4CE
2100 144.210 USB orientation	Clearwater ARS	vertical

<h1 style="text-align:center">*FOR SALE / WANTED*</h1>

Anyone having something for sale or who might be looking for an item let me know. I will not print phone numbers or email addresses unless specifically told to since this newsletter might end up on the web. The exception is when I get the information off the web. If you are a member of the Wormhole then you have all the information you need on a club roster and if you are not a member .. why not? OK, if you are not a member you can contact me at the email address at the end of this newsletter, I will give you the information to contact the person involved.

FOR SALE, For sale: New MFJ TNC 1270X, never used in original box with manual and cables. $30. Dean Sever W8IM

FOR SALE, Mosley TA-33M 10-15-20M beam with the 40M add on kit. Antenna is on the ground and in good shape. There are several parts that need replacement. The 40M kit is new in box. Antenna is broken down into six or seven feet sections so easy to handle. Asking $400, talk to me, Bill AG4QX at arrl dot net or see me at the meeting.

FOR SALE, Cushcraft A4S 10-15-20M beam, on the ground. There are several parts that need replacement. Asking $300, talk to me, Bill AG4QX at arrl dot net or see me at the meeting.

FOR SALE, 13 element, 14.5 ft 220 beam. Wormhole property, $20, contact Bill AG4QX or any other officer. **Free to any Wormhole member or other club.** Pickup at Bill's house.

<h1 style="text-align:center">*HAMFESTS*</h1>

May 12   **EPARS Tailgate,** Dade City, Church Ave Park, 37746 Church Avenue, **Talk-In on** 146.880 146.2, Admission $5, tailgate free, **contact** Chris Bloxsom , AA4CB 727-484-8099, go to http://eparsonline.org/

May 26   **WormFest 2017, Pinellas Park, admission FREE, tailgate free, Freedom Lake Park, 9990 46th St N, southeast corner of US 19 and 49th Street, 33782. Park opens at sunrise for**

vendor setup, hamfest starts at 0800. Talk-in on 442.625 + or 146.850 – both with a tone of 146.2. For a map and directions see http://www.TheWormholeSociety.org **.**

August 18   **TARCFest**, TARC Clubhouse, 22nd St at the river, $4 entry plus $3 to tailgate, inside tables $15 in advance, talkin on 147.105 +146.2, more info at http://hamclub.org/

November 3   **LARC Hamfest**, Lakeland, Revolution Church of Lakeland, 7315 Kathleen Road, Talk-In on 146.685 tone 127.3, For info contact Kevin Rought , N4KWR 863-393-4336 http://lakelandarc.org

November 10   **SPARCFest**, Pinellas Park, SPARCFest, admission FREE, tailgate free, Freedom Lake Park, 9990 46th St N, Southeast corner of US 19 and 49th Street, Talk-in on 147.060+ no tone. VE testing at 0900. For more information go to http://www.sparc-club.org/sparcfest.html

December 7 & 8 **Plant City, the 2018 Tampa Bay Hamfest is the West Central Florida Section Convention, Friday and Saturday, at the Expo Building in the Strawberry Festival grounds, advanced admission $9, at the door $10, for information contact Bill Williams AG4QX,** chairman@fgcarc.org **or go to** http://www.tampabayhamfest.org **or you can just ask me, Jim or Dee at a meeting ;-)**

Mid January   Frogman swim in Tampa Bay.
               http://www.tampabayfrogman.com/
Last full weekend January   Winter Field Day,   http://www.spar-hams.org/index.php
Late January   Gasparilla celebration

Late February	West Central Florida Tech Conference
http://arrlwcf.org/wcf-special-events/wcftechconference/	
March/April	MS Walks
March/April	Mass Casualty Exercises
Late April	Southeastern VHF Society Conference,
http://www.svhfs.org	
Late April	March For Babies (was March of Dimes)
https://www.marchforbabies.org/Registration/Events	
Late April	Florida QSO Party
Early to Mid May	BikeMS Citrus Tour bike ride
http://www.citrustour.org/register.php	
Mid-May	Annual Armed Forces Crossband Test
Mid-May	Florida Hurricane Exercise
Late May	Wormfest
Early June	Museum Ships on the Air
Fourth weekend in June	Field Day
http://www.arrl.org/contests/announcements/fd/	
July 3/4	Midnight Run in Largo
http://www.kiwanismidnightrun.com/	
August	International Lighthouse/Lightship Week
https://illw.net/	
October, 3rd weekend	JOTA, Scout Jamboree-on-the-AIR (around 14.280MHz)
Early December	ALS bike ride in Walsingham Park
December, first full weekend	Ride & Run With The Stars in Fort DeSoto Park
December, Second weekend	Tampa Bay Hamfest http://www.fgcarc.org/

YOUR WORMHOLE OFFICERS

Bill AG4QX is President and editor of this newsletter, Treasurer is Jim KD4MZL, Paul KA4IOX is the Secretary, Dee N4GD is the Repeater Trustee and Mike K4ZPE is both our club Vice President and webmaster.

YOUR WORMHOLE REPEATERS

442.625 + PL 146.2

146.850 - PL 146.2

The Wormhole repeaters are both now dual mode Yaesu DR-1X.   FM analog as always and now Yaesu Fusion, a C4FM/FM digital mode. The repeater crew updated the software on May 3, 2016.

The Wormhole website is at: http://www.TheWormholeSociety.org.

West Central Florida Section website: http://www.arrlwcf.org/.

The ARRL website is at: http://www.arrl.org/

This newsletter is written for The Glorious Society of the Wormhole, an ARRL affiliated amateur radio club located around the Seminole section of Pinellas County Florida. Anyone wishing to be added or removed from The Glorious Society of the Wormhole mailings please write to me at the address below and thy will be done.

73,
Bill Williams
AG4QX
ag4qx AT arrl DOT net