

**The Brandon Amateur Radio Society
Newsletter**

OVER 42 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE BRANDON AREA
BRANDON, FLORIDA, USA

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Society Officers:

President: Scott Irwin

Vice President: Ron Perrett

Treasurer: Jim Moorehead

Secretary: Jeff Dick

Repeater Trustee: Tony Stone

brandonhamradio.org

http://fb.me/brandonhamradio

http://www.twitter.com/

New Member News

Welcome James Stocks KK4CWO



A New Member Certificate was presented by our President, Scott Irwin to James Stocks at our September monthly BARS meeting. By way of background, Jim was born in Atlanta Georgia and raised in Cincinnati Ohio. He retired from the US Army after serving 22 years working in the Dental and Military Intelligence fields. Jim moved to Brandon in July 2014, after living in the Woodbridge Virginia for 18 years.

He is currently working at MacDill AFB doing IT as a Systems Administrator. Jim earned a Technician license through self-study in June 2011 and he received his General license in June 2019. He enjoys learning Astronomy, Photography and Amateur Radio. He says he is interested in working with ARES/RACES one day.

Jim has been married to Melanie Stocks for 16 years and they have 2 cats. He has travelled to Korea, Japan, Hawaii, Germany and the Caribbean.

- Continued -



Welcome James Stocks KK4CWO - Continued

He also wants to re-visit Arizona, Colorado and the Florida Keys at some point in the future.

Jim has a small collection of green (Military) radios consisting of a US Army PRC-77, British Clansman PRC-320 (HF) and 2 PRC-351 (FM-VHF) radios. He is currently working on building HF and VHF go-boxes. His operating radios consist of a Kenwood TS-50 (he says he needs help with this one), a Yaesu FT-857d, a Kenwood TM-281 (mobile) and a Leixen 898 VHF/VHF for the go-box. He's planning on using the FT-857d in a go-box as a portable base station. Jim states that he has no antennas erected yet. He hopes to setup a radio shack one day. **Welcome Jim! Thank you for your interest in our Society!**



Angie Vazquez

Member Activities



Karen Jacobi

On September 28th, Hillsborough ARES RACES sponsored a Technician Licensing Class to train 18 new amateur operators. BARS members Angie Vazquez and Karen Jacobi gave a wonderful presentation regarding the benefits of membership in the Brandon Amateur Radio Society. They handed out BARS brochures and brought their own personal experiences to their presentation.

THANK YOU Angie and Karen for representing BARS at this event!

Long Wire Antenna Installation



Here is Ken Watts during a recent tower climb to install a long wire antenna at his station.

Congratulations Ken!



Member Activities - Continued

AR-101 Class



On Saturday, October 5th, BARS again offered the course: AR-101, Amateur Radio for the Newly Licensed. The course was taught by Skip Argoe and Dana Perrin, with support from Scott Irwin and Angie Vazquez. Designed by Ron Perrett for new amateur operators who want to learn the basics of UHF / VHF operation, the course helps new operators become comfortable using their radio to check into a net or join a roundtable. We usually offer this course shortly after the Hillsborough ARES RACES licensing class.

Thanks go to everyone who helped make this course a success!

BARS Mentoring Breakfasts

Pete Parish (right) is shown helping Wayne Thorn (left) troubleshoot Wayne's Yaesu hand held radio at a Saturday morning BARS Mentoring Breakfast at Steak 'n Shake.

Mentoring is a wonderful part of being a member of BARS!

Thanks Pete!



The Venerable Society of Crusty Curmudgeons of Cards

(Meets some Thursday afternoons at Starbucks in Winthrop)

There were reports of a very tense drama after the cribbage championship just before the undercard Hearts game on 9/19

This is a pretty intense group!

Photo courtesy of Jeff Dick



Member Activities - Continued

Sneak Preview of Our Next Monthly Meeting Presentation

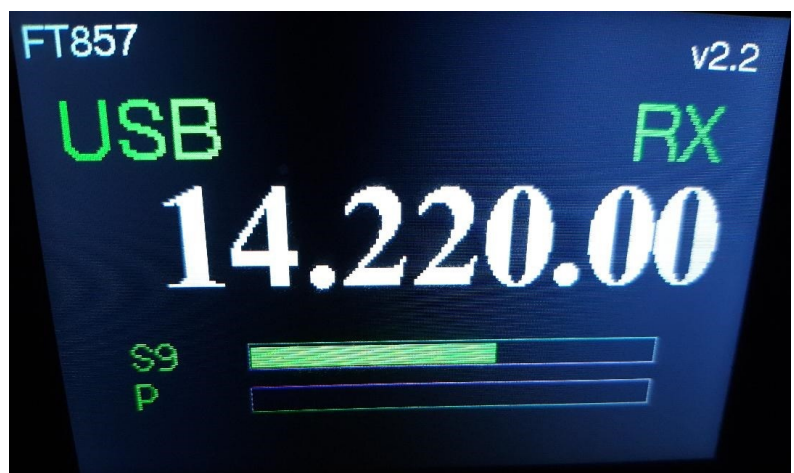
Do you have a Yaesu FT-857 or FT-817 and are tired of the small screen or your screen is old and hard to read? Want to know how to get a 3.5 inch display? Well, come to the next BARS meeting on October 17 and I'll show you how it's done. Rod Clark/KC4MMR and I are working on an Arduino project that can display frequency, mode, S-meter, power meter, transmit and receive, Hi SWR, change from FT-857 to FT-817 and even eight different color combinations. It will also save radio type and color the next time you fire up the radio. As a bonus, the project regulates voltage, prohibits reverse current flow and gets its power directly from a CAT cable connected to the radio.

The Arduino is an open-source electronics platform based on easy-to-use hardware and software. Arduino boards are able to read inputs light on a sensor, finger on a button, or a Twitter message - and turn it into an output - activating a motor, turning on an LED, publishing something online. It even has EEPROM memory for storage. So I learned how to communicate with the FT-857/817 using this little computer to send Computer Aided Transceiver (CAT) commands. Add a big 3.5 inch Thin-Film-Transistor (TFT) to this unit with visually pleasing graphics and you have one nice display.



Yes, there is a fella in New Zealand that sells a similar product for a total of \$116, BUT it has a terribly slow response time, cramped/busy display and can't change radio types dynamically. Did I say our version has 8 different color displays while his has two? Okay, so I'm biased, but you need to come to the meeting to see what I'm talking about. Hope to see you there.

Jim Moorehead/WF4AC



Member Activities - Continued

JOTA 2019

The Boy Scout Jamboree On The Air activities will again be held this year! This is a **great opportunity** to show scouts the wonder of ham radio while helping them meet some requirements for the radio merit badge.

Location: [Lithia Springs Conservation Park](#) (3932 Lithia Springs Rd., Lithia, FL 33547). Entrance Fee: \$2 per vehicle (up to 8 people per vehicle).

Time: **Saturday, October 19th**, Setup at 8 AM, Event 9 AM to Noon (If the weather is good and scouts want more operating time we could stay past noon).

Who: You! **We need** a minimum of **6 - 8 people**. **Please contact Scott Irwin to volunteer.**

How: Scouts will be given a workbook and split into groups. Each group will spend time at each station then move to the next one.



There will be a total of 6 stations with **Volunteer Opportunities**

Stations/Activity Stops	Captain	Support Staff
SSB Voice Station		
Low Power Digital Station		
Activity Stop 1		
Activity Stop 2		
Activity Stop 3		
Repeater Contacts	N/A	



SSB Voice Station (Requirement 7/9a(6)): Help scouts make voice contacts SSB voice on HF. Keep a paper station log & ensure each scout logs their contacts in their workbook.

Power Digital Station (Requirement 7/9a(6)): Help scouts make contacts on HF using FT-8 or other digital modes. Keep a paper station log & ensure each scout logs their contacts in their workbook.

Activity Stop 1, (Learn about radio Merit Badge, Requirement 1): Have scouts introduce themselves (name and city) using phonetic alphabet. Explain the difference between broadcast and ham radio (including callsigns), Choose a callsign based on out of state relative's location or city they have heard of (Use US/CA/MX callsigns to illustrate different countries). Scouts should complete questions/activities in their workbook.

Activity Stop 2, (Learn how radio waves carry info, Merit Badge Requirement 4/5): Send name in Morse code to learn about modulation, using laminated pieces of paper and string have the scouts put together a block diagram consisting of a transceiver, transmitter/receiver/amplifier, and antenna (string represents feed line/coax jumpers). Change things around (ie. pull the transceiver out and add a receiver or transmitter). Scouts should complete questions/activities in their workbook.

Activity Stop 3, (Radio Spectrum, Requirement 2): Use a receiver to try and listen to WWV and WVH. Using a pre-made atmosphere diagram have the scouts help you label the various atmosphere layers and show how they change at night. Using QSL cards or various callsigns talk about the difference between a DX and local station. Scouts should complete questions/activities in their workbook.

Repeater Contacts: We need 2 people to listen to the repeater and be ready to answer questions from the scouts.

See your BARS email for more details! We hope to see you there!

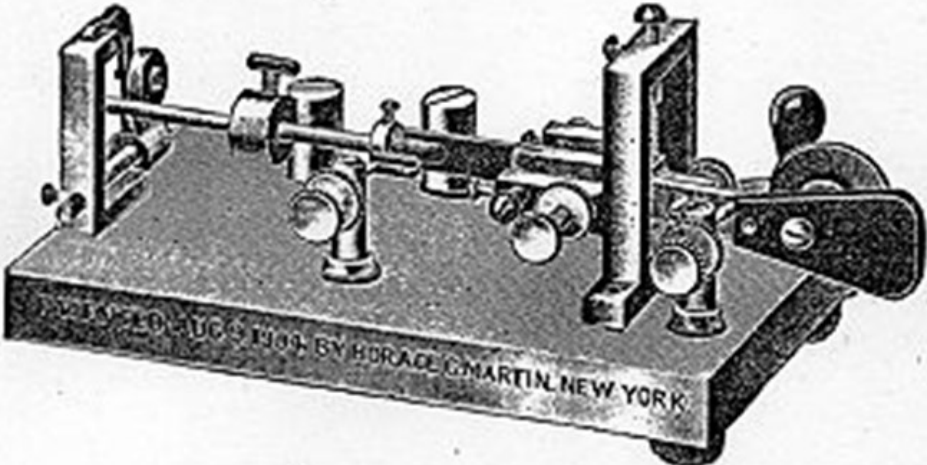
Telegraphy, Straight Keys, Bugs, Ham Radio, and My 70th Birthday

Mark Haskell WB9UJS

I think my first exposure to Morse code was in 1958 or 59 when I was about ten years old. I started learning American Morse at the local railroad tower from one of the operators, Russell Kimbrell. I started with an E.F. Johnson straight key and telegraph sounder mounted on a nicely stained and varnished rectangular piece of wood. This set up was commonly referred to as a “key on board” (KOB). Around September of 1961 I got a semi-automatic key (bug) from one of the telegraph operators at the railroad tower. The key was a Martin Junior manufactured around 1920.

Horace Martin invented the semi-automatic telegraph key in 1905. One biographer wrote that without his invention of the bug the careers of many telegraphers would have been cut short. In the early years of the telegraph, operators engaged in the daily transmitting of page after page of information by the up-and-down motion of the telegraph key developed a condition known

MARTIN'S VIBROPLEX The Perfect Transmitter



Operated without a battery; embodies all of the essential features of Martin's famous Auto-plex.
Scientifically constructed, it will carry on the longest of circuits.
Its signals can instantly be made light or heavy, slow or fast.
Its touch is easy and elastic, and adjustable to suit the sender.

IT IS EASY TO LEARN— A PLEASURE TO USE.

If you have lost your grip—
If it tires you to work the Morse key—
If you have a heavy, exacting sending trick—
If you wish to send perfect Morse at any speed,
Write for circulars containing description and testimonials.

You Need a
VIBROPLEX
For it makes the dots.

UNITED ELECTRICAL MANUFACTURING CO., Inc.
53 Vesey Street New York

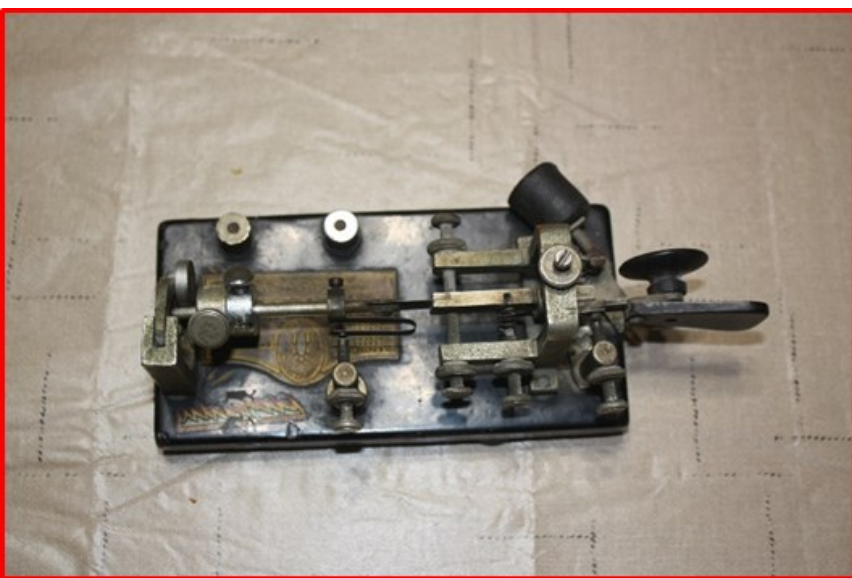
The above ad is from Telegraph Age Magazine, 1906. Source: Wikipedia

- Continued -

in those days at the glass arm or telegrapher paralysis. Today we recognize that condition as carpal tunnel syndrome.

Martin developed a key that used a side-to-side motion and allowed for somewhat faster sending by automating the dot sending function. Dashes were still produced manually. This was necessary because American Morse used dashes of varying lengths for certain letters of the alphabet and numbers: T, L, and zero. The logo for his company, Vibroplex, was a bug with lightning bolts. Some say that the logo is the reason that semi-automatic keys are called bugs today.

This is the Martin Junior model that I purchased in 1961. This key was manufactured in 1920



and was well used when I acquired it. I actually got to use in on the telegraph line a few times at the railroad tower. Landline telegraphy was in the process of disappearing from American railroads and along with that my dream of becoming a railroad telegrapher!

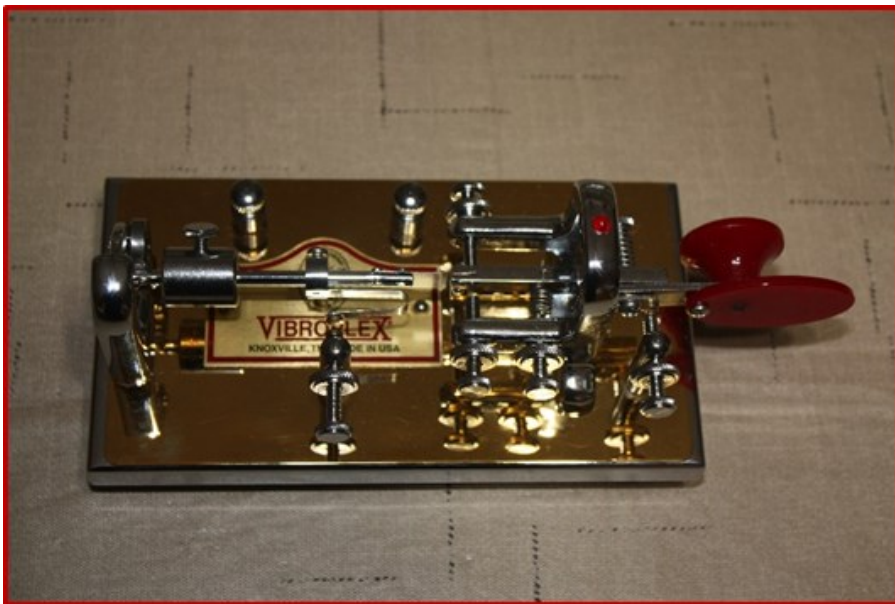
Around this same time, one of our next door neighbors told be about Amateur Radio (Ham Radio). He was not a ham himself, but knew a lot about it and told me how to get the Novice license. He told me that it would be a snap for me because I already knew Morse code. My dad knew someone who was a ham operator who could administer the Novice radio license examination. I talked to this fellow about it and we agreed on a place and time. He asked me if I had something to send code with and I assured him that I did. We actually did the examination session at my grandmother's house in the summer of 1963. I showed up with a KOB and a six volt battery. My examiner was a bit surprised, but he said we could make that do. He started sending me text from a magazine; I copied some clear words, words with numbers in the middle and other gibberish. He looked at my copy and told me I had failed. I was stunned! "How fast can you copy code?" he asked. "I can copy the wire at the railroad tower," I replied. His next question was what is the code for the letter O. I told him it was a dot space dot. After that he asked me what the code was for the letter F. I told him it was dot dash dot. He looked thoughtful for a moment and then told me:

- Continued -

“You have learned the wrong code. In radio communications we use a different code”. He then proceeded to write out the International Morse Code (Continental Code) on a sheet of paper with dots and dashes. I looked it over: C in the new code is J in the old code. R in the new code is F in the old code and so forth. I asked when I could retake the test and he told me I had to wait 30 days. I redid the exam in the fall and got my first ham radio license in the fall of 1963. I went on to get the General ticket and had that for about six years before I ever got on SSB. In the early days of my ham career, I used that Martin Junior bug on the air, but in later years I started using an electronic keyer and the bug sat on a shelf.

Morse code operating (CW) has always been the main part of my ham radio experience. In the early 1980-s I got active in radio teletype (RTTY) operation, but as band conditions deteriorated at the end of that sunspot cycle I was starting a lot of contacts in RTTY and finishing them in CW/A2. I got into PSK later and had a lot of fun with that, too. In the end, I always ended up coming back to CW. Even when I don't fire up on the air, I still like to listen to the music of Morse. On a lot of Saturday afternoons I tune in KPH/KFS on 12 MHz to copy the press and weather (WX) transmissions – just to have it on in the background; yes, I often record it to listen to it again later. Several years ago, I got the T2 telegraph ticket, too and did some operating on the commercial bands on the S.S. American Victory (KKUI).

This September I turned 70. My wife said that I should tell her something I really wanted for my birthday, not just some book or subscription. The other night while we were eating she said: “Tell me what you want.” The words jumped out of my mouth: “I want an Original Presentation Vibroplex,” I replied. We have been married for over 50 years and she has had a ham ticket for about 45 years. She knows what a Vibroplex is.



Photographs courtesy of Richard Shaffer W7RRS

Well, the birthday came and so did the bug!
Look for me on 40 meter CW!

-73-

Happy Belated Birthday Mark! Hope it was a good one!

ARES RACES News



Hillsborough ARES RACES sponsors a **weekly UHF Net** on the W4BCI repeater (444.225 (+) PL 146.2) every **Thursday Night at 7:30 pm**. All amateur operators are welcome to check in to this net. **If you would like to become a Net Control Operator for this net, please contact Dana Perrin at danaperrin@aol.com. Training/Coaching is available.**

On October 15, November 19th and December 17th, (the third Tuesday of each month), we host a monthly ARES Simplex Net at 7 pm on 146.490 MHz, no PL tone needed. The purpose of this net is to allow operators to practice relay techniques and to test their equipment should repeaters go down during a critical event. All amateur operators are welcome to check in.



We will once again be offering both **Technician and General Level Radio Licensing Classes in November** at the Tampa Public Safety Operations Center. This is 2 day class. You must attend both days. The class is from 9am to 5pm on Saturday, November 9th and Saturday, November 23rd. Testing will take place at 2pm on November 23rd. The cost of the class is \$45 which includes book, testing fee, and any additional materials. You can register for this class on our website.

<https://hillsboroughares.org/>

We encourage operators to check out this web site often for information on upcoming events..

Solar Update - by Dana Perrin

On October 1st, after 27 days of a spotless sun, a new sunspot (AR 2749) appeared. The appearance is discussed briefly in the space weather website:

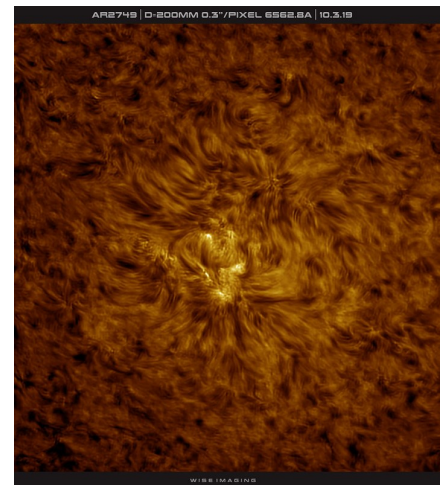
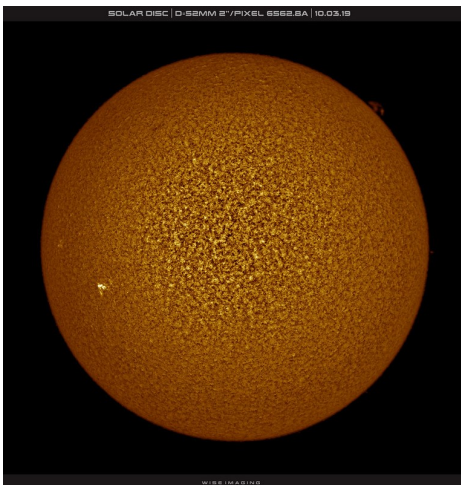
<https://spaceweather.com/archive.php?day=01&month=10&year=2019&view=view>

The photos of AR 2749 shown below are taken from a very interesting website:

<https://www.cloudynights.com/topic/678831-ar2749-proms-oct-3rd-2019/>

The unfortunate aspect of this sunspot is that because it is a nearly equatorial sunspot, it has been deemed to be from the old solar cycle (24). Sunspot AR2744 found in July, was deemed to be from the new solar cycle (25).

We seem to be moving in the wrong direction!



Calendar



Every Saturday Morning at 8 am: BARS Mentoring Breakfast at Steak 'n Shake, 10131 Bloomingdale Ave., Riverview.

Every Monday Evening at 7:30 pm: Dunkin Donuts, 950 Lumsden Road, Brandon. Come check into the BARS 2 meter net with all your friends! They have ice cream too!

Every Tuesday Morning at 8:30 am: BARS Mentoring Breakfast at the New York Diner, 2126 Jelane Drive, Valrico. Come early to be sure to get a seat!

Every Wednesday Evening at 7:30 pm: Free Pie Night at Village Inn, 1995 West Lumsden Rd., Brandon. Free pie with an entrée!

Every Thursday Morning at 10 am: BARS Mentoring Breakfast at Einstein Bagels, 660 West Brandon Blvd., Brandon. Come early to get a seat!

Some Thursday Afternoons: The Venerable Society of the Crusty Curmudgeons of Cards, at Starbuck's, 6042 Winthrop Town Center Ave., Riverview. Check with Jeff Dick for exact times and dates.

October 19th (Saturday): JAMBOREE ON THE AIR - Lithia Springs Conservation Park (3932 Lithia Springs Rd., Lithia, FL 33547). Setup at 8 am, Event 9 am to Noon. See page 4 of this newsletter for details.

<https://www.scouting.org/jota/>

October 19th (Saturday): WCF SECTION ARES MEETING - Hillsborough County EOC, Tampa, FL.

<http://arrlwcf.org/event/wcf-section-ares-meeting-fall-2019/>

October 26th (Saturday): EAST PASCO AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY - FALL TAILGATE - Church Street Park, 37746 Church Ave., Dade City, FL.

<http://arrlwcf.org/event/east-pasco-amateur-radio-society-fall-2019-tailgate/>

November 2nd (Saturday): RADIO LICENSING EXAM SESSION - 11 am at Arise Assembly of God Church, Brandon, FL. For more info: http://www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/brandon-fl-33511-8

November 5th (First Tuesday of each month): THE AMATEUR RADIO ELECTRONICS UNION (AReU) MONTHLY MEETING - at 7 pm at Bell Shoals Baptist Church. Also an AReU 6 meter net is held every Wednesday at 7 pm on 50.2 MHz. For more info, contact: rhaynes5@tampabay.rr.com.

See also: <http://www.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/areu>

November 9th (Saturday): SPARCFEST 2019 - Freedom Lake Park, Pinellas Park, FL.

<http://arrlwcf.org/event/sparcfest-2019/>

November 9th and November 23rd (both Saturdays): TECHNICIAN AND GENERAL LICENSING CLASSES - 9 am to 5 pm at the Tampa PSOC. Registration is encouraged at the web sites below:

Technician: <https://hillsboroughares.org/event/12764/2019-11-09/>

General: <https://hillsboroughares.org/event/general-class-amateur-radio-licensing/2019-11-09/>

November 16th (Saturday): TARC-FEST (re-scheduled from August rain out) - 7 am set up, 8 am trading begins. <https://hamclub.org/wp/>

December 13th and 14th (Saturday and Sunday): 44th ANNUAL TAMPA BAY HAMFET – Strawberry Festival Grounds, Plant City, FL. <http://arrlwcf.org/event/44th-annual-tampa-bay-hamfest-day-one/>

January 25th and 26th (Sat and Sun): WINTER FIELD DAY. <https://www.winterfieldday.com/>

February 21st and 22nd (Friday and Saturday): 6th ANNUAL WCF TECHCON 2020 - Charlotte County EOC, Punta Gorda, FL. <http://arrlwcf.org/news/2019/07/22/wcf-section-press-release-19-23/>

Our Next BARS Monthly Membership Meeting

The next meeting on Thursday, September 19th will be at our regular meeting location:

Arise Assembly of God Church, 401 Pauls Drive, Brandon, FL 33511.

Our President, Scott Irwin, will bang the gavel to start the meeting at 7:30 pm. After a brief Business Meeting which will include the presentation of the Slate of Officers for 2020,

we will feature a presentation by Jim Moorehead regarding:

**An Arduino Based Display Upgrade for the
Yaesu FT-857 or FT-817 (see article on page 4).**

JOIN US!



**We thank the members and staff of Arise for their kindness in
allowing BARS to use their facility.**



ARISE
ASSEMBLY OF GOD AT BRANDON

BARS General Info



Mondays, 8 pm: 2 meter Net on the K4TN Repeater
and Echolink node N4DLW/R (Brandon, FL)

Tuesdays 7 pm: 6 meter Roundtable on 50.200 USB

Tuesdays, 8 pm: 10 meter Roundtable on 28.365 USB

Fridays, 7 pm: 80 meter Roundtable on 3.830 LSB

Acknowledgements:

We thank the following contributors to this edition of the Antenna Newsletter: Mark Haskell (for the article and Richard Shaffer for photos: Telegraphy, Straight Keys, Bugs, Ham Radio, and My 70th Birthday), Jim Moorehead (for the article and photos, Rod Clark for technical support: Arduino Based Display Upgrade), Jeff Dick (for photos), and Nancy Lessard & Scott Irwin (for proofreading this newsletter)!

We WELCOME articles and photos for inclusion in this newsletter. We also welcome any constructive feedback (positive and negative) from our readers. Please submit them to: danaperrin@aol.com

Thanks and -73-