

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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## Florida State Parks on the Air to be April 4

Jim Smith (K4PPK)

The fourth annual "Florida State Parks on the Air" event sponsored by the Lakeland Amateur Radio Club will be held April 4, 2020 and the Brandon Amateur Radio Society will again participate.

We will operate from the Alafia River State Park on County Road 39 (see map). The event will get underway around 10 AM Saturday and we plan on operating until two or three o'clock or when ever you or our batteries quit.

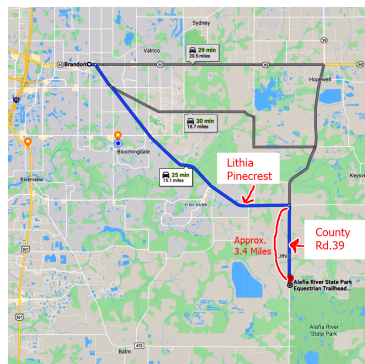
Hamburgers and Hot-dogs will be served along with a good portion of RF energy. While the event is a Florida Parks on the Air event, we will also be operating as part of the larger national "Parks on the Air" (POTA) pro-

gram. That should result in significantly more radio activity since we will be able to "spot" ourselves on the National Parks on the Air website.

We will operate a single side band (Voice) station as well as a digital (FT8) station. So plan on coming out for a fun event.

Operating is open to all who want to participate but I really encourage newly licensed Hams and Technician class license holders to participate and see another side of Ham Radio by joining in the fun of talking with Hams all around the country.

A final reminder, Florida charges five dollars per car to enter a state park or four dollars per individual. So join up with a friend, go in one car and save some money.



## March Meeting is "Repeater Meeting"!

Dana Perrin (KM4DTJ)

As you may know, there have been many new cases of Covid 19 virus reported in Florida.

One of these cases is in Brandon.

In consultation with the BARS officers, we have decided to cancel this Thursday night's monthly meeting.

In place of the physical meeting, we will instead have a radio meeting net on the 2 meter BARS repeater (147.165 (+) PL 136.5) at 7:30 pm this Thursday, 03/19/20. Agenda and minutes were sent to the 'BARS Reflector.'

Please continue to check your email for information regarding other BARS nets and activities.

**Next Meeting**

**March 19, 2020**

**7:30 PM**

This meeting is on the VHF Repeater.

Bring a Friend!

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### From The President's Desk

*Dana Perrin (KM4DTJ)*

I hope you are all recovering from the Daylight Saving Time change. If I fall asleep at our next meeting, I hope you will forgive me!

Mark your calendars! We have two, count 'em TWO great events coming up!

Don't forget that Florida State Parks on the Air is set for Saturday April 4th. This is a great time to make contacts across the US. It's an event where new members can get one-on-one mentoring with how to make HF contacts.

At 10 am on Saturday, March 21st, we will gather at the American Victory Ship in Tampa. Ron Perrett has put together a wonderful tour of the ship including a chance to learn a little about the history of World War II from a docent guide. We will also spend some time in the radio room on the deck where the Radio Officer's cabin is located.

Watch for more details from Ron Perrett and Jim Smith on these two events. We thank them both for organizing!

I want to take a moment to congratulate and thank J.R. Calvert, Jim Moorehead and Jim Smith

for helping Jim Stocks install his Hustler 6BTV 6 band vertical antenna. It's a great job in progress! This is one thing that amazes me about our club, that we help each other.

I will close by asking for a Team Leader to lead our efforts this June with the ARRL Field Day. If you have any interest in this or if you would like more information, please let me know.

"Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."  
--Vince Lombardi

**WSPR Watch allows you to see WSPRnet, PSKReporter and Reverse Beacon Network spots right on your Apple device.**

### Mobile App of the Month: WSPR Watch

*Scott Irwin (W8LFD)*

Apple users get the App of the Month spotlight this month as we feature an app called [WSPR Watch](#). Android users will get the spotlight next month.

The application allows you to see WSPR, PSKReporter, or Reverse Beacon Network reports on a list or a map. You can tap on a station to see details of the spot, get callsign address information,

and filter the spot list to that callsign.

You can also go into the settings of the application set the band, network you wish to get reporting from, the duration (history), and the number of spots you want to collect. Finally, you can search for a specific transmit callsign to see all the stations they have contacted.

The application also allows you to utilize your QRZ XML data

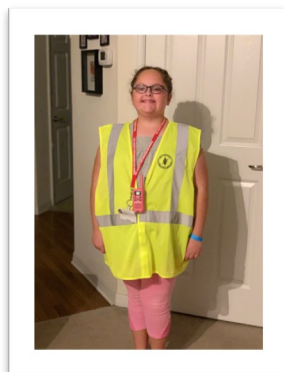
subscription and export/share data to other applications or users.

You can learn more about the application at <https://blog.marxy.org/2019/03/new-features-in-wspr-watch-ios-app.html> and you can download it from the Apple App Store.

### Ham Radio Meets "Dress Your Future"

*Skip Argae (KD4IDF)*

Many schools have theme weeks where students dress to different theme each day. March 6 was "dress for your future" day. Giada, Skip's Granddaughter, said she will be an Emergency Radio Operator one day. The school resource Officer said she would be a great first responder!



Giada, Skip's Granddaughter as an Emergency Radio Operator



## Solar Weather Corner: Connecting Amateur Radio and Astronomy

*Kelly Anderson (KE4GS)*

It all starts with alchemy ... the kind of alchemy that works. Nuclear fusion, melding hydrogen atoms together to create helium, is what our sun does. And that creates a lot of heat, which started the whole process and got out of control. So we have space weather in the form of a stream of charged, subatomic particles.

This “solar wind” is a mixed blessing. For openers, it’s nasty, fatal if over exposed, and can cause a variety of phenomena that we’d rather do without. Run around uncovered on the beach in summer for a couple of hours and tell

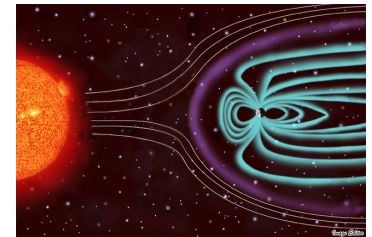
me how you feel. Sunburn is a form of radiation poisoning that, in extreme cases, can be fatal. Over the long term it’ll definitely mess up your skin. It can also mess up our communications satellites and electrical power systems and convince your car’s GPS that you’re in the middle of Lake Superior. It gives us the aurorae, the Northern and Southern Lights. I guess that part’s not so bad.

The Sun’s ultraviolet radiation creates a protective layer of electrons and highly charged atoms that envelops the Earth from about 30 to over 600 miles in altitude. This “ionosphere” reflects radio waves (mostly in the High-Frequency range) back to

Earth and allows us to contact fellow Hams literally around the world.

The “solar wind” is a flow of mostly hydrogen and helium. The sun’s chemical makeup is 98% of those two gases, but other elements are taken for a ride as well. We’re being constantly bombarded with sun-stuff that has been highly energized, causing electrons to drift away from their nuclei. This particular form of sun-stuff is “plasma.”

After traveling about 20 million miles, the Sun’s magnetic field weakens to the point where the electrons and the nucleic material begins to become a bit more orderly, but it’s still pretty chaotic when it arrives at our ionospheric barrier.



Courtesy [Image Editor, Flickr](#)



L to R: Marian Hoff (N5TVL), Richard Hoff (AA5NT), and Jim Moorehead (WF4AC)

## Welcome, Dick (AA5NT) and Marian (N5TVL) Hoff!

*Scott Irwin (W8UFO)*

At our February meeting we welcomed three new members to the club by unanimous vote.

Richard “Dick” (AA5NT) and Marian (N5TVL) Hoff reside in Brandon. Their daughter, Kim Keller (KM4QAA) was also accepted. Prior to living in Brandon they lived in Anna, TX, a suburb of Dallas.

Dick is an Extra Class licensee and retired from Eastman Kodak after 34 years

of selling motion picture film to the movie industry and doing film instruction. He worked for Ham Radio Outlet in Plano, TX after retiring. His favorite form of operating is Contesting and DXing.

Their station in Texas operated as a Multi-operator Two Transmitter entry, and they often won the North Texas Section (NTX). They had a 140-foot rotating tower (rotating at the 50’ level) with a Force 12 EF240 two element 40 meter beams on top;

three Force 12 C-3 Triband beams phased together at 60, 90, and 120 feet. Below the 50 foot level was a Mosley TA-33 with a 40 meter kit fixed on the Caribbean. They also had a 70’ fixed tower with a TA33 with a 40 meter kit rotating on top. Momo banders for 10, 15 and 20 meters fixed on Europe. Slopers for 80 and 160 meters were hanging off the rotating tower. They have 70 feet of Rohn R45 tower waiting to be put up.

Marian is a General Class licensee and was the cook and YL voice when they needed her. She taught Honor Physics and Chemistry for high school and college and suffered a massive stroke in 1988. As part of her recovery she decided to get her General license.

When not operating Dick and Marian enjoy movies two to three times a week.

Their daughter, Kim, is a Novice Class license holder and Program Manager for Duke Energy. She has a 15 year old daughter.

## The Antenna

### Antenna Party

*James Stocks (KK4CWD)*

Members of the club continued the tradition of helping others by installing a Hustler 68TV antenna at my house. The antenna was purchased from GigaParts with additional mounting parts from DX Engineering.



Jim "Jim 2" Moorehead (W4FAC), Jim "Jim 1" Smith (K4PPK), and Marvin "JR" Calvert (W4MIG) helped survey the property and determined that the pool cage was the best location for mounting because it would provide a ground plane, eliminating the need for radials.

A tilt-over antenna mount was attached to a 10-foot pipe and the pipe was attached to the pool cage with U-bolts.

The bottom portion of the antenna was affixed to the tilt-over mast and bonded to the pool cage using stranded braid.

When in the "down" position the antenna will be over the pool cage and not visible from the road. This is useful in protecting the antenna during storms and hide it from the HOA (sic).

More work is needed to attach the antenna to the base, set up guy wires, and tune up the antenna. Part 2 of the article will cover this along with details of first contacts. Thanks to the BARS members for the help!

*More photos on page 5.*

So what's all this have to do with HF Amateur Radio? Quite a lot, actually.

### Solar Weather Corner: Connecting Amateur Radio and Astronomy

*Continued from Page 3*

So what's all this have to do with HF Amateur Radio? Quite a lot, actually.

Increased solar wind activity excites the ionosphere to get denser and thicker, which makes it a better HF radio wave reflector. This, in turn, improves over-the-horizon communications.

One of the best indicators of the level of solar activity is the presence (or, as of the past few years, absence) of sunspots. These apparent dark areas on the surface of the sun appear in approximately 11-year cycles of maximum to minimum and back again. There's another, longer-term cycle superimposed on the 11-year thing, but that's a story for another day.

If you had looked at the sun with a telescope over the past couple of years, you would have seen a

featureless sphere, because we've been going through the bottom of the sunspot cycle. (*WARNING! Fer Pete's sake, do not under any circumstances point a telescope or any other instrument on the Sun without proper filters in place. If you do, the destruction to your eye will be severe and nearly instantaneous!*)

As we climb out of the current solar minimum we'll see increasing numbers of sunspots, and our HF bands will become more active. After we experience a couple more birthdays we'll be in tall cotton, HF-wise, once again.

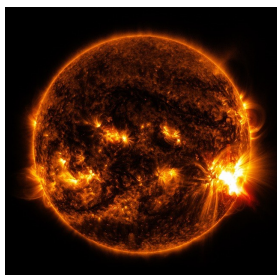
There are two wild cards in all this. They are Solar Flares and Coronal Mass Ejections. When they happen, all bets are off. More on these two jokers in the next edition.

If you'd like to learn more, here's a pretty good primer: [https://](https://science.howstuffworks.com/dictionary/astronomy-terms/solar-wind-info.htm)

[science.howstuffworks.com/dictionary/astronomy-terms/solar-wind-info.htm](https://science.howstuffworks.com/dictionary/astronomy-terms/solar-wind-info.htm).

For more advanced and detailed information, surf through the Solar Weather Prediction Center's web site, <https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/>.

I'd also recommend flipping through Chapter 19 of ARRL's Amateur Radio Handbook.



Courtesy [skeeze](#), [Pixabay](#)



## Antenna Party (Photos)



James Stocks (KK4WCO), Jim Moorehead (WF4AC), and JR Calvert (W4MIG) install the mast while being supervised by Melanie Stocks.



Installed mast and tilt-over base.



Stranded braid used to ground the antenna, mast, and tilt over base to the pool cage.



Tilt-over antenna mount with Braid going to the pool cage.

## Hamfests & Conventions

03/20/2020 - 03/21/2020  
 Fort Walton Beach Hamfest 2020  
 Fort Walton Beach, FL  
 Playground Amateur Radio Club  
<http://www.w4zbb.org/>

03/21/2020  
 45th Annual Stuart Florida Hamfest  
 Stuart, FL  
 Martin County Amateur Radio Association

03/21/2020  
 ZAARC Ham Fest  
 Zephyrhills, FL  
 Zephyrhills Area Amateur Radio Club  
<http://zaarc.org/>

04/04/2020  
 Daytona Beach ARA Tailgate  
 Daytona Beach, FL  
 Daytona Beach Amateur Radio Association  
<https://www.dbara.org/>

04/18/2020  
 Gainesville Hamfest  
 Waldo, FL  
 Gainesville Amateur Radio Society  
<http://www.gars.club/hamfest/hamfest.pdf>

04/18/2020  
 TARCfest  
 Tampa, FL  
 Tampa Amateur Radio Club  
<http://www.hamclub.org/>

04/18/2020  
 West Volusia Amateur Radio Tailgate  
 DeLand, FL  
 Westvars Amateur Radio Society  
<http://https://westvars.org/>  
 More at <http://www.arrlorg/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 Events

- > March 19, 2020  
 BARS Club Meeting  
 7:30 PM at Arise  
 Assembly of God at  
 Brandon. 401 Pauls  
 Drive, Brandon, FL  
 33511
- > March 21, 2020  
 American Victory  
 Docent Tour & Lunch  
 Contact Ron Perrett  
 (K4FZU for details)
- > April 4, 2020  
 State Parks on the  
 Air  
 ~9:00 AM at Alafia  
 River State Park  
 (details in this issue)
- > April 4, 2020  
 BARS License Exams  
 11:00 AM at Arise  
 Assembly of God at  
 Brandon. 401 Pauls  
 Drive, Brandon, FL  
 33511
- > April 16, 2020  
 BARS Club Meeting  
 7:30 PM at Arise  
 Assembly of God at  
 Brandon. 401 Pauls  
 Drive, Brandon, FL  
 33511
- > 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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Brandon, FL, 33509-2307



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



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



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

## New HF Operators: Things to Do—Morse Runner

Reprinted from [March 2020 ARRL Contest Update](#) (Brian Mora, N9ADG, Editor) with Permission of ARRL.  
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To get better at CW Contesting, there's no substitute for participating in real contests -- but the next best thing is a simulation of real contests. [Morse Runner](#) by Alex, VE3NEA, is a CW Contest simulator that provides a realistic contesting experience, including "lid" (poorly behaved) operators, varying band conditions, robot operators that make sending mistakes - everything you might find in a real contest. It's available any time on your Windows computer. It has an

integration with [N1MM Logger+](#) that has been steadily improved by the [N1MM Logger+](#) development team. With the latest improvements, you can practice for the [CQ WPX CW](#) contests using [N1MM Logger+](#) - just in time to get in a lot of practice before the next one May 30-31, 2020.

The Phone "leg" of the [ARRL International DX Contest](#) [was March 7-8]. The exchange for DX is signal report and power. On phone, you'll probably hear "five nine 'kay" an aural (oral?) cut number equivalent of "59 1000."

You may [have hard] a lot of CW contest activity the weekend of March 14, but US op-

erators should [have] sit this one out - it's the RSGB Commonwealth Contest (also known as BERU), only open to the UK and Crown Dependencies ([UK&CD](#)), and [Commonwealth and Mandated Territories](#). Contacts with US amateurs don't count.

Also on the weekend of March 14 [were] the [Oklahoma, Idaho, Wisconsin](#), and [QCWA](#) QSO parties, and the 4-hour long [North American RTTY Sprint contest](#).

*From The Editor:* Want to get ready for other CW contests, including Field Day? Check out Morse Runner and get on the air for the next [contest!](#)



Submit your articles & photos for the next edition of *The Antenna* by April 16, 2020!

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