



# Q R M

MARCH 2006

KEATING FLOYD (KC4HSI) EDITOR

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OF INTEREST:

- It's TARC Membership Renewal Time!
- Prepare your go-kit—Hurricane Season only 90 days away!
- General License class upcoming, March 11th & March 25th. Mail [elmer@hamclub.org](mailto:elmer@hamclub.org) for more info.
- TARCfest XV on April 15th.

## LEGACY TOWER PROJECT COMPLETED (PART 1)

According to Julio Peralta (W4HY) and Warren Elly (W1GUD), our leaders for the

Legacy Tower Project, IT'S DONE! More to follow in upcoming issues!

FROM THE CHAIRMAN *Biff Craine, K4LAW*

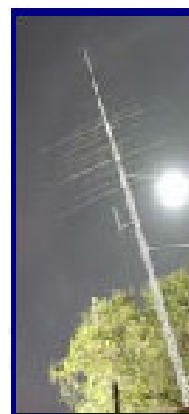
TARCFest XV, "Florida's Friendliest Tailgate," is just around the corner. The date for the Tampa Amateur Radio Club Tailgate is Saturday April 15, 2006, with setup for tailgaters beginning at 7:00am, and trading opening up at 8:00am to the public. The tailgate usually runs until about 1:00pm or until the last lie is told or last boatanchor is sold. Talk-in will be on the 147.105 repeater. All are welcome.

TARCFest XIV in August 2005 was a huge success, with near record numbers of sellers and even more buyers. This April

all the traders will once again gather under the shade trees at our clubhouse to wheel and deal.

Admission will be \$2 per person with children 12 and under free. Those who wish to set up for tailgating will be charged an additional \$3. Plenty of spaces will be available in the tailgate area for sellers. And, of course, free parking for the buyers. There are a limited number of spaces inside with indoor tables at \$15.00.

For additional details please see [www.hamclub.org](http://www.hamclub.org).



111 feet up, and standing proud!

## NEWCOMER ADVICE

*Keating Floyd, KC4HSI*

There are over 100 new hams in the area this year. First of all, if you are one of those new hams, WELCOME! Second of all, if you know a new ham, let him or her know there are places to go for help.

This column is here to help you. In this issue, we'll talk

about radios and what configurations might make sense for a new amateur radio operator.

How much does it cost? That's an often-asked question. The answer does not have to be "all you have." It is possible to get ham radio equipment for something approaching reason-

able prices, although you can also spend "all you have!"

There are basic needs that every ham should be able to cover. You should have a handi-talkie, and extra batteries. You should do what you can to have some sort of mobile VHF radio,

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## A TRIP TO THE '025 REPEATER

Lu Romero, K4LVR

The Tampa Amateur Radio Club (TARC) has two repeaters, both signing N4TP. Not only do we have our 147.105 VHF repeater, but we also own a UHF repeater with the same call sign on 443.025MHz, with positive offset and PL of 146.2

The N4TP UHF repeater is located at a pretty famous place. You have HT coverage within because of the machine's location. Just look at the big pirate ship above the North end zone of Raymond James Stadium. See the antennas? We are one of only two

Tampa Bay ham repeaters featured on national television! (the other is the Shriner's K4FEZ machine.)

The '025 system consists of a 1981 vintage General Electric Mastr-II (yes that's spelled right) "genuine half rack repeater" system that formerly saw service with the Sarasota Sheriff's department.

The system features a 4-channel capable 1-watt exciter, a power amplifier running at 49 watts and a 4-channel capable receiver. The receiver fea-

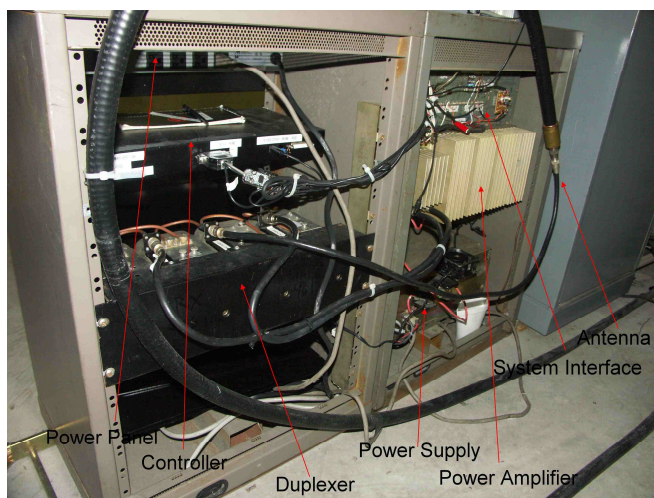
tures an AAR 15dB GaASFET preamp. The system has a control interface that interfaces to the CAT 300DXL repeater controller. It's the best sounding Mastr-II around (audio quality-wise)!

The repeater also features a rack-mounted 3-cavity notch duplexer, tuned and peaked by Dave Krauss (N4DAV) to some pretty impressive notch depths. An audio interface amplifier designed by Stephen Fischer (N0THU) interfaces the audio from the receiver to the transmitter. What this means to you is that if you use Tone Squelch on your rig's receiver, you WILL NOT hear any repeater generated audio, like repeater ID's or anything locally generated. This was done in order to manage Echo-link remotely—if the repeater ain't repeatin', you won't get a tone on the output, so your rig won't unmute.

(Continued on Page 3)



The Tampa Amateur Radio Club's 443.025 machine.



**"We are one of only two Tampa Bay ham repeaters featured on national television! "**

## WESTERN UNION DISCONTINUES TELEGRAM SERVICES

According to Western Union, as of January 27th, 2006, Western Union has discontinued all Telegram and Commercial Messaging services.

Western Union was founded in Rochester, New York in 1851 as The New York and Mississippi Valley Printing Telegraph Company.

The company changed its name in 1856 to Western Union Telegraph Company, to signify the joining of telegraph lines coast to coast.

Today, Western Union is a leader in money transfer services, helping consumers and businesses transfer money and make payments. You can find Western Union

agents located worldwide.

The end of the era of Western Union telegraphy was Friday, February 3rd, 2006, the day the last telegram was sent.

Telegrams have been called "The Victorian Internet," and there are still some companies nostalgically sending telegrams.



An 1886 Western Union Patent key. Nostalgia is wonderful!

## WHAT'S CERT?

Jodi Pecoraro, KI4FWJ

Experience being the best teacher, our past two hurricane seasons have taught us volumes about the value of being prepared for the worst.

For some of us, worrying about what might happen can bring on anxious feelings. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) can help allay your fears with training to prepare for and respond to hurricanes, and other emergencies.

We've all witnessed the aftermath of Hurricanes Charlie and Katrina, with several of us responding in person. Emergency services personnel can initially become overwhelmed, leaving citizens on their own for days. CERT training enables you to help yourself by applying basic response and organizational skills during an emergency. CERT training is conducted by local fire departments and other response

professionals. The training emphasizes personal safety for you while you help your family and neighbors. This training is offered free-of-charge, and each participant receives a training manual, CERT kit, and certificate upon completion. Meetings and other training sessions are held monthly.

Working together, having fun, and learning new skills, are all part of the experi-

ence.

Please visit our website at: [www.greatertampacert.com](http://www.greatertampacert.com) or call the Tampa Fire Training Academy at 242-5410.

How many hurricanes does it take for more people to learn that it's good to plan ahead? Why count on luck?

Don't wait for this hurricane season to catch you by surprise. Get trained, stop worrying, and have fun, too.

We hope to see you at a CERT meeting soon!

## NEWCOMER ADVICE

(continued from page 1)

with antenna and accessories for that. A dual-band mobile is best.

Several companies manufacture amateur radio gear. The "big boys" are Icom, Kenwood, Yaesu and Alinco. A google search for them + ham should bring you their websites.

A basic hand-held radio can be had for about \$125. They pretty much all have

about the same features, but I like the VX-150 from Yaesu.

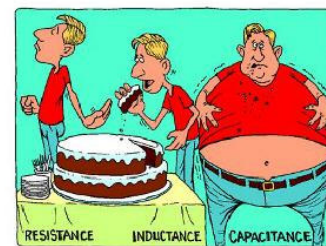
There are basic VHF mobiles from just about every manufacturer. Those typically run about \$150-\$200. I really like the audio quality of the Alinco radios.

Dual-band mobiles start to get pricier, with more features for more money. They can range from \$250-\$500, with the Kenwood D-700

being my choice for the most useful dual-band radio.

Hamfests like the TARCfest coming up on April 15th are good places to find used radios for much less money. You can often find older handi-talkies for \$50-\$75 or so, and sometimes (rarely) single band mobiles at around \$75-\$100.

We look forward to seeing you April 15th!



Copyright Hewlett-Packard

## A TRIP TO THE '025 REPEATER

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Tone encode and decode is accomplished by a CommSpec TS64 digital tone board mounted using a cantilevered stressed aluminum mount with self adhesive properties (spare computer backplane blank panel bent with a pair of pliers).

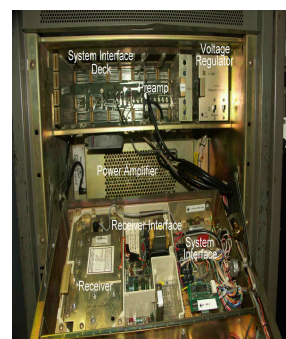
The RF plumbing for the system is fed 142 feet to a

Diamond X50 dual band antenna.

TARC has plans to modernize this repeater system, soon to include a better receiver system and more modern hardware to better match the transmission and reception capability of the system. A new antenna is also in the works, so stay tuned.

'025's capability is pretty good to the north, with some serious coverage notches to the east and west. It does a fair job to the south but you will hear it better than it will hear you.

The system works great and the Echolink node on the system gives you the capability to work stations from around the world over '025.



Repeater innards!

## FOCUS ON EMCOMM

Emergency communications has lately taken on an added sense of urgency. TARC has always participated in emergency communications—our abilities are part of why and how we have such a fabulous facility. Over the past couple of years, however, we have learned more

and more that emergency communications abilities are THE killer-app for amateur radio and emergency management. Hams have a way of arriving on scene and making rapid, quality decisions to re-route communications, set up electronics and other infrastructure in an area, so

that essential services can be restored.

This issue of QRM will devote a number of pages to emergency communications, from articles about disasters, organizations, to interesting and informative articles about what people have done

to provide emergency communications and help our neighbors, with some ideas on how you can help.

Some of these will become regular columns, as well.

If you have a tale to tell, please send your submissions to [QRM@hamclub.org](mailto:QRM@hamclub.org)

## NEW EMCOMM STATION PROJECT

At their February meeting, the Board of Directors of the Tampa Amateur Radio Club voted to start the next big project for TARC—the Emergency Communication Station project.

This project will be driven by a project manager, overseeing the completion of this

major task. Jim LaFollette (WB4WBL) has graciously consented to be the Project Manager for this project.

Jim has put together an impressive collection of choices, looking towards making TARC not just the premier contest station in the area, but also outfitting the

premier emergency communication station in the area.

Due to financing considerations, this station will be built up in stages. The plan includes a Motorola Micom 2 ES HF commercial-grade radio, a Vertex 4104 VHF FM commercial-grade radio, an SCS PTC II modem, an SGC

230 autotuner, a laptop, and other accessories designed to facilitate both in-town and remote emergency communications abilities.

We encourage everyone interested in emergency communication to prepare themselves to help others in a communication emergency.

## TEAMWORK IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS *Pete Kemp, KZ1Z*

Amateur radio operators always want to be where the action is. Public Service is part of our obligation to the community. We take this responsibility seriously.

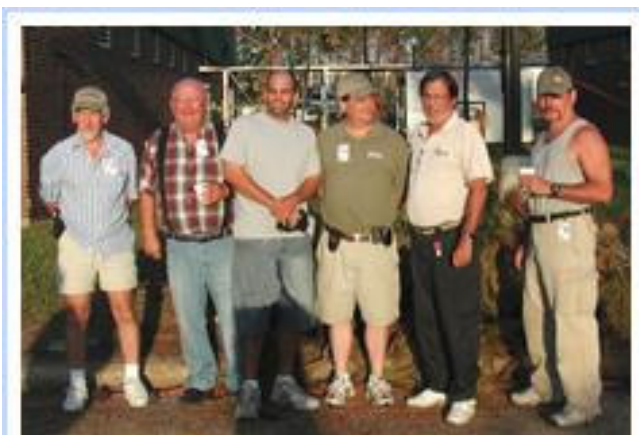
As Hurricane Katrina made her intentions known, six Tampa area hams Jim Gerhart (WA3DIT), Danny Conner (KD5UJ), Ian Renton (W4RIR), Jim LaFollette (WB4WBL), Fred Nassar (KD8AQ), and Gary Sessums (KC5QCN), were already preparing for deployment with the Hillsborough County Emergency Management Office. Others were getting

ready as relief ops, maintaining the base communications center and placing telephone calls to worried relatives and friends.

The system went into high gear when the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama asked for mutual aid assistance through the Emergency Management Assis-

tance Compac (EMAC.) Under EMAC, a disaster-impacted state requests mutual aid assistance from other states and the Federal government. Hillsborough County's Director of Emergency Management, Larry Gispert (KR4X) activated the team. Under the existing plan, Florida is responsible for five Mississippi counties.

The Hillsborough County EOC has one of nine mobile Emergency Deployable Interoperability Communications Systems (EDICS) units in the State of Florida. EDICS provides a "field link" to deployed responders. They were  
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Ian Renton, Jim LaFollette, Fred Nassar, Gary Sessums, Jim Gerhart and Danny Connor



## MARRIED TO THE HAM

*Rhoda Floyd*

Being married to a Ham has given me a different view on our state's recent tragedies. It has also given my family a way to strike back at the things that have battered us all, and a chance to see, quite personally, what emergency services are all about.

Keating went down to Hardy County with Gary Sessums (KC5QCN), Joe Tomasone (AB2M), Ron Morgan (KC4HAY), Bill Bode (N4WEB), and Mike Fletcher (NI4M), the day after Charley, to help them get communications back. The Sheriff's Department lost their 300 foot tower that connects the county's rescue and service workers. The sheriffs couldn't

talk to each other or the hospitals, the ambulances were out of touch, the fire department couldn't respond, that sort of thing. Their 300 foot tower was just...gone. It was not mangled, it was totally missing.

With him down there, we got to see that while the more financially lucrative coast got rapid help, places like cattle farming Hardy County were less fortunate. When Keating left Hardy County, it was 48 hours after the storm, and there was still no water and no food. The firemen went 24 hours without so much as a sandwich, while they pulled people out of the rubble. Hams played a beautiful role there, bridging

the gap between federal help and local need.

Skye, Keating and I spent August 21<sup>st</sup> of 2004 helping out in Punta Gorda. We went down with Jim Gerhart (WA3DIT), to work with the Salvation Army. The Welling-ton Amateur Radio Club was there, as well as TARC fellows. Those gents had been there for days, sleeping on the floor of a gym, and spending their days at the sweltering Salvation Army Base Station.

I have never seen anything like Punta Gorda was when we got there. I have never SMELLED anything like it. Fish kill in the bay there was now rotting in the August  
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Hurricane Charley Devastation

## TEAMWORK

(continued from page 4)

used during the 2004 hurricane season to assist communities with damaged communications systems. "Area hams have received emergency communications training and experience with the equipment", said Gary Sessums (KC5QCN), ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator for the county. All participants had also completed Emergency Communications courses sponsored by the ARRL.

While the Boy Scout Motto of "Be Prepared" was evident, Semper Gumby, "Always Flexible," was well integrated.

After double checking supplies and equipment, the caravan took off from Tampa, with a Suburban Fire-Rescue Vehicle, Astro Van and trailer and a pick-up truck. The first leg of the journey included a stop at the Florida State Office of Emergency Management in Tallahassee. This is



required to obtain proper credentials for entrance into staging areas and to obtain gasoline, in or near the disaster area.

The next segment of the trip found the intrepid group heading for Escambia County, Florida for a final replenishment. The fuel tanker trucker scheduled to be at the staging area wound up being diverted to Louisiana. Fortunately, the team had extra gasoline with them.

The first evidence of damage was pulling into Mobile, AL. The U.S.S. Alabama was listing in Mobile Bay. The

roads to Biloxi and Gulfport were difficult to pass, with a clutter of out-of-gas cars and scattered debris on the roads. The van and trailer buzzed through, and found all public service communications down. Ham radio was providing the only communications link in the area. The team was able to utilize 40 meters, checking in with MARS, SHARES, SouthCars, SATERN and the home base, W4DUG, at the Tampa Amateur Radio Club station.

No matter where the team went they had contact with the hams back home for  
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## MARRIED TO THE HAM

(continued from page 5)

sun, and most of the town had been without potties since the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Skye and I stayed at the Salvation Army base station, moving boxes, cooking, and taking care of the aide workers and our Hams, while Keating went out to one of the Cantinas and fed about a thousand people.

One lady really got to me.

Our camp was set up in a huge parking lot at the end of the bridge, beside the bay (full of dead and dying fish); with a 3 story apartment complex that was more than a block long, behind us. You could smell

that apartment building when we got there, as it has sat with people in it for a week, with no plumbing. Like a Porta-Potty in the hot sun.

At about 9am, an old lady named Esther came up. She was hoping for some food to take to her husband, and maybe something cool to drink. I got her set up with a couple of meals, got a box for her, and she started to carry it away. Well, Esther was wobbly, so I took the box back and offered to carry it for her. It turned out that she and hubby were on the 3rd floor of that powerless, sewer-less building, and though she was 83 and so

frail that she couldn't go up the stairs without holding onto the railing, he was even older and frailer, and was stuck up there without her help. They broke my heart, and I told her to stay put, from now on I'd bring her food.

Fortunately, the paramedics came though about noon and evacuated them and all the other people still in that building, but they had been on that 3rd floor, with no elevator, no anything, for six days.

Being the wife of a Ham has its downside, but Charley taught me what Hams are really all about.



MARC unit ready to deploy during Hurricane Charley

## TEAMWORK

(continued from page 5)

support. Warren Elly (W1GUD) provided phone patches to relatives. Experiencing primitive conditions everywhere, having a dependable ham link back home was comforting for all.

While waiting for final deployment, the team made a name for itself by taking on tasks assisting other agencies; making and setting up the Red Cross transceivers and antennas, cutting trees and re-erecting antennas for the Mississippi Civil Air Patrol, moving equipment from an old EOC to a "new" EOC (complete with antennas), and stringing multiple coax lines. They even constructed antenna supports with a

Rube Goldberg generator in a previously flooded wood shop. They assisted with putting a new broadcast FM station on the air, designed to transmit information to the residents. Hams are a creative group. "Semper Gumby!"

Handling Health and Welfare messages was a secondary mission. Members of the team would visit shelter areas to gather messages. These were to become known as "Hello, I'm Alive" messages. Workers in the shelters welcomed the ham radio operators, as they were clearly overwhelmed and unprepared for this aspect of shelter management. The system worked well, despite

the general confusion that existed in the area.

The sanitary conditions were deplorable. The septic and water supply systems were not functioning. Everyone was constantly reminded of decontamination procedures and practiced them.

The stories of the survivors were heart wrenching. The look in survivors' eyes reflected the shock of the experience that they had just been through. It was a good feeling to know that the team could bring help to those in need. As an added benefit, Jim Gerhart (WA3DIT) is an ordained Episcopal priest, able to counsel those in need on various levels.

**"The U.S.S. Alabama was listing in Mobile Bay."**

All members of the team had strengths in multiple areas, so challenges tended to disappear quickly. With MacGyver-like precision, the team was able to make tower masts out of the top rails of a chain link fence near a school, and antennas from scraps of wire liberated from various sources along the way. The Navy term cumshaw

(Continued on page 7)

## ARRL PREPARES GO KITS

*From the ARRL Letter*



The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) has prepared a number of "Go Kits" to deploy to disaster-ravaged areas in an emergency.

These kits contain various types of radio equipment,

packaged in rugged Pelican 1650 containers. There are currently 4 different kits: an HF Kit, a VHF/UHF Kit, a Handheld Transceiver Kit, and a Support Kit.

According to the ARRL, making these kits available

will help cement Amateur Radio's position as a community resource.

TARC has requested some of these kits for preparation and training purposes during the week of 21-26 June 2006.



Harry Abernathy (AB1ER) at the ARRL headquarters with some of the Go Kits.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SENDS HELP

In addition to the TARC radio operators who went into the storm area after Katrina, Hillsborough County's Emergency Operations Center sent another valuable team in February to Hancock County, MS. The coastal area is still struggling from the crippling impact of Hurricane Katrina last summer.

The team includes an employee of the Clerk of the Circuit Court who specializes in inventory control systems, and one from the Office of Management and Budget to assist with recovering funds and applying for reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

"This is the leading point of

our efforts to help them get their county government reestablished and their government services back up and running," said Larry Gispert, Director of Emergency Management.

Once there, the team will also determine if there are other areas in which Hillsborough County can provide support or expertise.

## TEAMWORK

*(continued from page 6)*

comes to mind, a very resourceful group.

Mealtimes were a thrill a minute. You never knew what to expect. If you love rice and chicken, you would be in heaven. The firemen really had the food drill down, with the military running right behind. They knew how to get your calories restocked.

Living in a shantytown, sleep was a luxury. Four hours of shut eye, if lucky, with the high temperatures, humidity, insects and stench is not anyone's idea of a summer vacation. Another basic to be addressed is a simple

shower. The word grunge takes on a special significance after five days of hustle. Even the rain shower was a relief.

The primary mission of our ham team was to set up EDICS. The state of Florida deserves high marks for its portable interoperability system. Most of the base camps had initial difficulty communicating. All of the experience we had with hurricanes last summer proved valuable. The team finally got the mission to deploy the equipment. The team relocated to Stennis International Airport until they were cycled out, with

other Florida relief operators assigned.

For a team to function successfully it has to have members who are adaptable, willing to take on tasks independently for the common good of all. Interpersonal relationships extend to working with other organizations and individuals. The task isn't always easy, when people are frustrated.

All plans change when reality hits. The ability to react appropriately, for the mission's success, evidenced by all of the groups involved in the rescue, recovery and

rebuilding aspects of this project.

Teamwork is special term. Knowing that you are part of a group that made a difference for others, without any concern for yourself, is a special feeling.

As a show of appreciation, the team's extended family in Tampa welcomed the group home with a picnic. The local print and broadcast media provided excellent coverage of the group's adventures during their stay.

Amateur radio proves yet again, when all else fails, ham radio works.

Easy to get to! Take 22nd street north till you run out of road, look to the right and then up! We are at the bottom of the towers!





**TARC**  
Tampa Amateur Radio Club Inc.

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www.hamclub.org  
Since 1922




**THE SOUTHEAST'S  
PREMIERE AMATEUR  
RADIO CLUB!**

The Tampa Amateur Radio Club holds meetings at the TARC Operations Center every Monday night at 7:30pm.

On the first Monday of the month, regular business meetings are held. The second Monday features training & mentoring for new hams. The third Monday of the month features presentations on topics of interest to the club membership. The fourth and fifth Mondays are usually informal and are a great time to chat and play with the radios. TARC also holds licensing classes and hosts VE Testing.

Please check [www.hamclub.org](http://www.hamclub.org) for current dates and times.

Attach mailing label here

## BUG-OUT FIELD DAY

*Bill Bode, N4WEB*

For Field Day 2006, the Tampa Amateur Radio Club will "Bug-Out!" This Bug-Out will be an exercise to demonstrate the Club's ability to be called out in a time of emergency and deploy to a location away from the

operation center grounds in an extremely short time frame. This exercise will show our capabilities, pre-planning, and ability to improvise.

The structure will be centered around a prepare and call-out to de-

ploy scenario, not too unlike what would happen if we were requested to offer communications assistance to a neighboring county in the event of an emergency.

Stay tuned for more!



Field Day