



# Q R M

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KEATING FLOYD (KC4HSI) EDITOR

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Bill Bode, N4WEB

TARCFest XVII, "Florida's Friendliest Tailgate," is just around the corner. The date for the Tampa Amateur Radio Club Tailgate is Saturday April 14, 2007, 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 boat anchor is sold. Talk-in will be on the 147.105 repeater. All are welcome.

TARCFest XVI in August 2006 was a huge success, with a record number 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 avail-

able 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 our website at [www.hamclub.org](http://www.hamclub.org).



Can you believe all this good STUFF????!!!

## NEWCOMER ADVICE

Keating Floyd, KC4HSI

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- It's TARC Membership Renewal Time!
- Prepare your go-kit—Hurricane Season less than 90 days away!
- Classes coming up: Technician, General, and ARECC Level 1. Get on the email by sending an email to [tarc-subscribe@hamclub.org](mailto:tarc-subscribe@hamclub.org).
- TARCFest XVII on April 14th.

Listen, listen, listen. You've heard those words, but no one seems to be listening! Every time you try to check into a net, you can't get a word in edgewise.

Pretty frustrating.

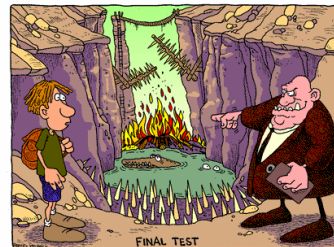
As you listen to various nets, you'll see that there is a pattern and a flow to the way checking-in happens. The Net Control Station (NCS) most always says the same things ("Stations please call now" or "Station calling, give your traffic") and the net seems to have ebb and flow.

You're right – it does. Each NCS

is using a script telling them what to say, who to call on, and when to do what for a net. Each NCS might mix it up a little, but you'll start to feel how they run their nets.

What can you do to check in? It's a rhythm! Wait until someone has unkeyed their microphone and the repeater pauses, then jump right in "This is" (unkey that mic, lest ye be judged as you have judged!) "KC4HSI, Tampa, with info" (or whatever message and call sign you need for this net.)

Do it within the flow of your par-



ticular time to check in. The NCS often looks for people who don't check in very regularly, or are shy (gasp – how terrible!) to help them get in the water. We all had to learn this! The tradition of hams helping hams stretches back pretty far, so don't worry – go with the flow!

## REVIEW - MFJ-993B

Lu Romero, W4LT

By necessity, I have a "classic" HF station. My tower dates from the 60's. My antenna and transceiver date from the 80's. I was going to get a new transceiver this year, but alas, the Air Conditioner at home had other plans. As I have a new college student on board, and another one two years away, my Ham Radio budget is limited.

I have a decent Tribander in my Thunderbird Junior. But, because of the smaller traps, it has to be set for either Phone or CW portions of the bands it covers. Same with my trap dipole for 80 and 40. My 30 meter antenna is better, but it also is a bit narrow in bandwidth being made out of two mobile whips. I like CW, Digital and SSB, so a tuner of some kind is a requirement for my station.

I have two very good antenna tuners in my small SST T-2 and my Heath SA-2040. They work well, but this being the beginning of Contest Season, I decided to get something that might make it simpler for me to QSY faster.

In researching my purchase, I settled on the MFJ 993B. I briefly considered the LDG AT200PC. I was disappointed to find out that this model, even though it is simply a black box with a serial connection, is MORE EXPENSIVE than the ones with the

display!

The MFJ-993B tuner arrived well packed. Good information in the manual, although it seems to have been edited by someone with advanced A-D-D. First impressions being what they are, the black box has its quirks... The opening for the LCD display seems to have been cut with a dull blade. The paint seems poorly applied and doesn't cover the bottom of the top cover or the inside of the LCD cut out. A "Staples-bought" Avery red dot with a signature says it passed QC... This ain't

I removed my trusty Heath Roller Inductor transmatch and inserted the MFJ.

The manual warns about the racket the thing makes when the relays are looking for a match... It does sound a bit like a machine gun, but I don't find it objectionable.

On 20 cw, where my antenna is most resonant, the device looked for about 12 seconds and gave up, telling me I had a 1.2 to 1 match with no inductance and no capacitance. Moving to 20 phone, I found things a bit different, and the tuner took about 20

for an automatic antenna tuner. It will take more watts than the competition can (300). It has a built in digital power meter, a dual needle wattmeter and the LCD gives lots of information as to what it is doing to match your antenna to your transmitter. It even sends CW messages (not enough power to tune results in QRO on its beeper)! It has brought me kicking and screaming into the 21st century. The build quality is OK, and if it holds up as long as my Heath tuner did, I will be happy.



no Lexus in build quality!

But would it work?

Plugging it in to a 12 volt power supply and hitting the power button brought it to life! Having had infant mortality issues with MFJ hardware before, I let it sit overnight powered on. It was still alive the next day!

seconds to find a match, but matched my antenna to 1.5 to 1. I manually adjusted the L network and brought that down to 1.0 to 1, with the transmitter putting out a whopping 110 watts on the included digital RF power meter.

All in all, I can recommend this product if you're looking

But I am keeping the SST T2 just in case.

MFJ Model 993B  
"Intellituner" Automatic Antenna tuner

List Price \$259.95 (\$229.95 at R&L Electronics)

## DID YOU KNOW?

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) is the national membership association for Amateur Radio operators. The League represents Amateur Radio

interests to regulatory bodies, provides technical advice and assistance to Amateur Radio enthusiasts and supports a number of educational pro-

grams throughout the country. ARRL is a non-profit organization.

The ARRL was founded in 1914 by inventor Hiram

Percy Maxim.

The Tampa Amateur Radio Club has been an enthusiastic supporter of the ARRL since 1935.

## A LARGE NAKED MAN COVERED IN BLOOD

Mary Floyd, KG4QGA

Some of us slugabed hams are not all that ready for an early-morning event on March 28.

My children, Keating and Picot Floyd, had me all primed to be on-air at 8 a.m. with eight messages, two every half-hour during the drill.

"Can you handle that, Mommy Dearest?" asked Keating.

I was all confidence. Practically saluted. "Sure, Baby!" (I call him Baby sometimes even though I'm dimly aware that he has entered his forties. You know how mothers are.)

However, my bedroom clock was moving in on 10 o'clock when I opened my eyes. My station was all set up, fortu-

nately, so I rushed to the radio. "KG4QGA!" I said, hastily, desperately, into the microphone, remembering all the rules I had memorized before taking my entry exam a few years back. Totally formal.

"Hi, Mom!" said the radio. It was Picot, I think.

I gave my 10 a.m. message, which the boys had sent out. Other hams were on the air, giving other messages, almost immediately, crowding in. It was exciting – I was loving it, sitting in the dining room with a sign over the radio that said, in big letters, "AMATEUR RADIO." Underneath, another sign said: "POD 4," reminding me that this was like a play performance and that I was pretending to be at a grocery store on East Fowler Avenue.

Hams were constantly on the air, back and forth with network control, sending and receiving, taking professional care in a situation that could happen here. Occasionally, one would give a message v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y, one word at a time, so it could be written down. That's what we'd have to do in a real emergency, so everything could be on the record.

It was a happy interplay. We really had a good time. But the purpose is so serious that it makes us think about some of the possibilities. Or probabilities: think hurricanes, in which hams have been so valuable. We needed the practice, or at least I did, as I'm not on the air all that much.

Afterwards, after sighs of

relief that it was over and criticisms of moments when we slipped, the "naked man on Dale Mabry" message got a LOT of attention. More completely: "There's a large naked man, covered in blood, walking down Dale Mabry." Or something like that.

"Walking north or south?" queried one ham later by email.

"Near which Home Depot?" asked another.

But it was the bloody nakedness that got our attention. Good for a laugh, and a fair warning for next time that we need to be very specific in our fake messages.

"Bloody nakedness?" Is that a curse word to the British? Sorry, Great Britain, but it gave us a few laughs after a tense morning.

## THE WORLD OF DX

(continued from page 4)

listen to for the answer. There have been days without any sunspot activity. Some of the new ones are displaying a reversal of the magnetic polarity that indicates we are at the bottom. NASA has a page describing sunspots at [http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2006/10may\\_longrange.htm](http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2006/10may_longrange.htm). The graph indicates we have reached the bottom and are heading back up. Good news for DX chasers.

Being a DX chaser does not mean a large array of radios, antennas and amplifiers. In

fact many stations do not operate KW stations with stacked Yagi's. Some operate long wire or vertical antennas. More important is the operators skill. LISTEN. WAIT. TIME. Did the operator give his call and a split frequency? What is his QSL Route? You worked him in a pileup. If everyone working him asks the same questions the pileup will last longer than band conditions. Check the Clusters for his route. Check a database like QRZ or Buckmaster or Pathfinder <http://www.dxlabsuite.com/pathfinder/WebClient/>

Remember the DX station is in charge not the stations calling. If he wants to rag chew then follow his/her lead. You were lucky enough to be chosen for a QSO. Give the others the same courtesy.

**Lastly QSL.** Don't wait months before sending a QSL. Part of the hobby I enjoy is collecting different cards with a color photograph of that operator or entity. We're not all going to visit every country and entity in the world. Share you small spot on the planet. A photo card is only a few cents more than a

piece of paper with letters and numbers. Some QSL card printers charge less than \$0.10 a card for a color 2-sided card. This is less than tourists pay for a postcard of vacation. You spent hundreds or thousands of dollars on you station. Don't be cheap now.

Tony N2MFT is a DXCC Card Checker and VE. He currently has 221 entities worked and 211 confirmed. He can be reached at [TonyN2MFT@gmail.com](mailto:TonyN2MFT@gmail.com).

[We'll all miss Dan. Ed.]

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!





**Tampa Amateur Radio Club Inc.**

7801 North 22nd Street  
P.O. Box 11933  
Tampa, FL 33680  
813-301-7209  
info@hamclub.org  
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

## THE WORLD OF DX

*Dan Manfre, W2NDP*

*This column was to be written by Dan W2NDP. Unfortunately Dan became a SK in Aug 2006.*

The world according to the DXCC desk became a little smaller recently with the addition of two new entities to the list. The current entity total is at 337.

**Swains Island and Montenegro.** Montenegro was added to the list on 28 June 2006.

Swains Island was added on 22 July 2006. Montenegro does not have a prefix assigned yet. Swains prefix is KH8. QSL Cards are accepted immediately for Montenegro and on or after 1 October 2006 for Swains Island. Since Swains Island was added to the DXCC list as a result of rule change, credits for Swains Island will not be accepted until that date. This criteria applies to either pa-

per QSLs or LoTW submissions

**New DXCC awards fees** changed effective July 1, 2006. The new fee schedule is posted at <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2006/05/23/3/fees-06Jul.html>

**International Reply Coupons** – The small older style IRC's are not being accepted. Current IRC's have an expiration

date of 31 Dec 2006. The new replacement IRC's have been printed. According to one source the image has changed from a girl to two fingers touching. No word on the new rate. Go to <http://www.w4fdx.com> and click on the link for IRC for more information.

**Solar Cycle** Are we at or near the bottom of the cycle or is there another year of decline? All depends who you  
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