

IN OUR 86TH YEAR



TARC
Tampa Amateur Radio Club Inc.

Q R M

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KEATING FLOYD (KC4HSI) EDITOR

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At first glance, you tend to feel respect. He's fairly trim, with a salt-and-pepper beard and moustache. Next you hear he's a minister, which you might have guessed from his kindly look. More respect. Then you find out that he's a minister with Hospice, and you are almost kneeling in respect. All this is before you find out he's a ham, a real hero!

You know who this QRM issue's Ham for All Reasons is: Jim Gearhart [WA3 DIT].

Jim is a popular fixture at the Tampa Area Radio Club's Operations Center. He can answer a lot of questions, and he does it with minister-like patience.

This is greatly appreciated by the newbies, who have a lot of questions and sometimes get on the nerves of oldies. Although most of the older members are happy to take questions from the newer members, occasionally some veteran hams answer with less than total patience after many, many questions.

Not Jim.

"QRM, Reverend? Quick Radio Message?" guesses a newbie.

"QRM?" Jim might answer.

"Well, it doesn't really stand for anything. Like most of our radio expressions, it goes way back. If it ever stood for anything, that meaning has been lost in the

Mary Floyd, KG4QGA

mists of time. But it has a definite meaning: 'Noise in the channel,' like static."

"Then why is the newsletter called QRM?" persists the newbie.

"Have you looked at an issue lately? It's kinda noisy, usually."

Newbie: "Well, I haven't had a paper copy yet. It just comes to me on the Internet. Does it sometimes have music or something?"

Jim: "We amateur radio people are accustomed to the FCC rule against on-air music from hams, so we never even thought of putting in music. But
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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The Tampa Bay Hamfest will be held on December 6 & 7 2008.
- Hurricane Season is over—but don't lose your preparedness.
- For ARES/RACES concerns, email RACES@hillsboroughcounty.org
- Club Officers want to hear from you: [callsign]@hamclub.org
- www.hamclub.org has great info!

NEWCOMER ADVICE

Shortwave Broadcast. It's what radio's for, right? There are many organizations using these "short" waves.

Our ham radio licenses give us authority to use this short part of the spectrum. CB radio uses it, too. You can also hear uncensored broadcasters and pirates!

Military organizations still use plain language shortwave radio for some communications.

Keating Floyd, KC4HSI

craft – any entity that needs to communicate over the horizon.

Not all the world's espionage services have abandoned Morse code, either.

Until recently, many groups had shortwave stations. The major news wires, ship-to-shore telephone, and others have abandoned shortwave completely.

In short, there is plenty out there to listen to – even from the comfort of your lawnmower.



Encryption is the norm here, however. Utility stations abound in this part of the spectrum. Utility, in the sense of "useful." These frequencies are used by ships, embassies, air-

USING A MAC IN THE SHACK

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

A couple of years ago, I decided to switch to the Mac for business use. (I am a freelance website developer.) I haven't regretted it for a second. The thing just seems to work better.

Last October, I decided to switch to a Mac in the shack and purchased a used, iBook G4 Mac laptop. Unfortunately, I can't say that I've never regretted this move. The reason I sometimes regret this choice is that there just aren't as many ham radio programs available for the Mac as there are for the PC, and those that are available are either more expensive than their PC counterparts or don't work as well.

For example, let's take a look at logging programs. When I first started looking, I found one that was kind of expensive (MacLoggerDX - www.dogparksoftware.com/MacLoggerDX.html); one that

was free, but didn't want to work so well (RUMLog - <http://www.dl2rum.de/rumsoft/RUMLog.html>); and one that worked OK and cost somewhere in between the first two (Aether - www.aetherlog.com/). Considering that there are at least a dozen logging programs that run on a PC, this was slim pickings.

I ended up purchasing Aether, but was never very happy with it. For one thing, it took forever to do any kind of sort or look up previous QSOs. Another pain was that it carried over none of the information from the previous contact, so you had to enter all of the information from scratch, even if you didn't change frequencies or bands. It also had an odd way of doing notes about a contact, and I was disappointed to find out that it didn't import the notes from the ADIF file I created from the N3FJP log-

ging program I used previously.

For PSK, It's CocoaModem

I had much the same experience when looking for a PSK31 program. Instead of the wide variety of PC PSK programs, I only found a couple of Mac programs that decode PSK. Fortunately, I am much happier with my choice here (CocoaModem - homepage.mac.com/chen/index.html). It's a great program, with a polished user interface, and it's free, to boot.

The only problem with CocoaModem is that it doesn't support the wide range of digital modes that some of the PC programs do. One I'm interested in is SSTV. Unfortunately, CocoaModem doesn't do SSTV.

A Happy Ending

Well, a couple of weeks ago, I'd had enough of Aether and decided to start searching for logging software again. Since RUMLog was still free, I decided to give the new version (v 3.0, March 15, 2008) a go. I'm happy to report that this version likes my computer a lot better, and I like using it a lot!

One of the coolest things is that it did import the notes from my N3FJP ADIF file properly. So, now, when I type in a callsign, the program

searches the database, finds all the previous contacts I've had with that station, and then displays them in spreadsheet style WITH the notes. If I've taken notes about a previous conversation, I can pick up right where I left off. Very cool.

It also has a very nice way of showing you what countries you've worked, on what bands you've worked them, and whether or not you've QSLed that country or not. Not only that, it shows what type of QSL you have, either a paper QSL or a Logbook of the World (LOTW) QSL. And, after you supply your user ID and password, it will download your LOTW QSLs and update the appropriate QSO records. Very cool!

Still unresolved is what to use for contesting. None of the programs I've seen so far are useful for contesting, and I think that what I will end up doing is using my old PC laptop running N3FJP or N1MM software. I'm not a big contesteer, so I think I can live with that.

One thing is for sure—I'm not going back to the PC aside from some niche applications like contesting. The Mac's ease of use and ease of setup has won me over. For information on even more ham radio software for the Mac, go to www.machamradio.com.



ARES/RACES YEAR IN REVIEW

Jodi Pecoraro, K14FWJ

While we dodged the "big one" once again this year, the Hillsborough County ARES/RACES team was hardly resting on its laurels. We trained more than 35 new hams, and conducted an ARECC Level 1 class with 100% of the participants passing the exams

all around. Keating enjoys boasting about our 110% pass rate, but he's using fuzzy math like a politician, so we force him to just stick to the facts.

I'd be preaching to the choir if I hammered home the point that amateur radio is the only

reliable form of emergency communications, so I won't spend time on that with you all. What I would like to chew over with you is the importance of signing up on the ARES/RACES database so that you can share your skills with your community if and

when the need arises. All you need to do is go to <http://aresdb.ab2m.net> and fill in the blanks. I don't know about you guys, but whenever I hear about a ham helping out with communications in a disaster, it makes me proud to hold my license.

A HAM FOR ALL SEASONS

(continued from page 1)

that's a good idea – I'll have to speak to the editor about it. He's a computer professional."

Newbie: "So QSO doesn't mean 'Quaint Social Occasion' or anything like that?"

Jim: [chuckling]: "It is that, sometimes...but, again, it doesn't stand for anything. You'll get used to all this."

And the newbie does. You were a newbie once, right? Maybe Jim helped you get through those first hoops.

Although he came to radio at a very young age, Jim has had an incredibly interesting career. He got his license at 13, before even having a sender. He and his brother had a receiver, inspired by a neighbor who had "a roomful of knobs and dials." Their parents came up with a sender when he and his brother got their licenses, and it's been a fun hobby for them ever since. His brother dropped out of radio for a few years, but came back to it and qualified for his license again recently.

At 18, Jim had the thrill of singing at the Bayreuth Festival [the Wagner extravaganza] in Austria in a choir. He learned a lot about the Germans while they were there. Because of the great crowds at the Festival, they stayed in Nuremberg and took the train each day to Bayreuth.

"German trains are prompt,"

he said. "One day we were waiting in Nuremberg for the train and it arrived a few minutes early. They stopped a little away from the station and then came in right on time."

Yes, he's a minister with Hospice. But before he joined Hospice, he was in parish work for years and years, in Kentucky, Philadelphia and Florida. This Episcopal priest has such a great heart, though, that he found his true vocation counseling people near death – and their families – in Hospice.

Padre Jim, Father Jim, the Reverend Mr. Gerhart, he's called by various titles. But to us, he's WA3 DIT.

His family? He's fostered a boy since he was three-and-a-half years old when the boy's mother became too ill to care for him. She went into a nursing home and died a few years ago. Tommy is still with Jim and is now a working man of 21.

As a ham, Jim has gone several times into disaster areas. The first time he was only 19 and not yet a priest or a foster father. The hurricane was in Pennsylvania, and the Salvation Army coordinated the disaster recovery. This kind of work was relatively new and the team was disorganized. "We wasted a lot of time," he told QRM.

Although people had been warned to evacuate, many



stayed behind. Jim was posted at a junior high with 400 refugees.

"We had one generator and one Porta-Potty for 400 people," he said.

What about Katrina? "Well, you know, it wasn't just New Orleans. The levees failed there and the city was flooded. But Ground Zero was in Southern Mississippi, and that's where we went."

After assisting with communications, which were all lost in the hurricane, Jim and the Tampa team took "I'm okay" messages and relayed them back to Tampa via high frequency radio. In Tampa, volunteers telephoned families to let them know their relatives had survived the blow and would call when they could.

And Jim, as his fellow rescuers from Tampa point out, "counseled people and helped them deal with the

trauma."

Jim reports one lady who spoke flatly: "I lost my car, my house, James and Fido," she said.

"Who's James?" Jim asked. After all, Father Gerhart's name is John James.

"He's my son," she answered in the same flat monotone.

Then she went on, still flat, and listed other things she'd lost. Jim's experience with the families of the bereaved came to his rescue – and to hers.

Jim also went with the Tampa crew after Charlie made its way across central Florida. "I enjoy it," he said, "but I don't think I'll do it again. I guess I'm too old."

The reverend is still in his 50s, not old at all. Why not?

"For me camping out is at the Holiday Inn, not sleeping on the ground in the rain."

Big words. Wait'll next time.

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!



WADUGIN4TP

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 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 for current dates and times.

Have an idea for a story or article for QRM? Please send email to QRM@hamclub.org

Attach mailing label here

QRM NAME CHANGE

Mary Floyd, KG4QGA

Your TARC editorial board met recently to discuss a radical proposal: changing the name of the newsletter from QRM to something amusing that might get attention from the members.

Keating Floyd (KC4HSI), editor and chairman of the editorial board, entertained suggestions from members Jodi Pecararo (KI4FWJ) and Mary Floyd



(KG4QGA), his assistants. Jodi and Mary, junior members of the board, argued briefly for "Radio Rag."

They mentioned – and ridiculed – academic attempts to establish communication as a science instead of an art.

But Keating vetoed the name change. He explained that QRM was already amusing, or was back in the day, because it means "static" or "noise in the channel."

"I'm speaking for the old-timers," he said, "some of whom are no longer with us. We like the name. And it goes way back to when the newsletter began."