



# ARASWF

## NEWSLETTER



Vol. XXI No. 8 The Journal of the Amateur Radio Association of Southwest Florida August 2005

### Club Information

Meeting Time:  
4th Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.  
Red Cross Chapter House  
Northbrooke Plaza Dr.  
Naples FL  
Club Repeater:  
K4YHB—146.670 (-600)  
EOC Repeater:  
WB2WPA—147.030 (+600)  
Club Home Page  
<http://www.araswf.org>  
Club Officers/ Chairmen  
President: KB4ETT  
Corey Mugas  
Vice President: KI4AI  
Carl Pacini  
Secretary: KG4ZLB  
David Worboys  
Treasurer: K2ZEL  
Bill Reynolds  
Past President: WB2QLP  
Jordan Mash  
Technical Director: WA9ZIF  
Carl Foust  
Ops. Director: KI4DBI  
Rodney Smith  
Public Info. Officer: KI4HQP  
Elio Hernandez  
Awards Manager: KD4VRZ  
Gary Randall  
VE Liaison: AA4RX  
Howard Roux  
Newsletter: WD8RFL  
Mike Welsh  
Webmaster: KI4AIM  
Rik Conklin  
Social Chair: W2JQ  
Sigi Boernet

### *From the Presidents Shack:*

The ARASWF is working hard (and progressing) at several projects. Our club repeater has a new component, an antenna donated by Ray LaRue, W4BYG. The antenna was well 'received' (hi, hi), by the club, and an attempt to install this unit was temporarily delayed due to lack of room in the elevator at the repeater site. A work party formed, and lifted the antenna to the roof of repeater site building, some 240 feet, by means of a long rope. This event was executed in a safe manner and resulted in the placement of one more 'piece of the puzzle' into our clubs' contribution to communications in Collier County.

There are still a few operational issues with the repeater that will be addressed at our next club meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, August 23, 7:30 PM. at the Red Cross Building. I thank all the members of the work party for their hard work, attention to safety, willingness, and to Ray LaRue for his generous donation to the club, and really to the communication endeavors of this county.

At our last club meeting, we heard about 'NASA Nights', which will be held September 19 and 20, at Immokalee High School, and Pine Ridge Middle School, respectively. These events bring our communities attention to the NASA program, our school students participation, and to our clubs' ability and willingness to provide radio contact between Collier County Public School students and the International Space Station.

Our role in 'NASA Nights' will be to set up communications between each school and other NASA radio stations in order to highlight the capability of Amateur Radio Communications. Ann Rowe, speaking at our last club

meeting, stated that this event will bring in approximately 3,000 to 4,000 people.

Please attend the next club meeting to see how you can contribute to this event which will provide exposure of our hobby and expertise to Collier County.

73,

Corey Mugaas KB4ETT  
President ARASWF

**Late Breaking News re: NASA Nights from Sharon Lea on 8/5/05:**

Ann Rowe told me that your organization will be attending the PRMS & IMS NASA Nights! Thank you very much. Yesterday, NASA changed the dates to Tuesday, September 27 for Pine Ridge Middle, & Thursday, September 29 for Immokalee Middle. On September 27 the PRMS PTA is holding a Carrabas spaghetti dinner before the evening event. Any ARASWF members attending will be treated to dinner. On Thursday, we'll all dine on pizza before the event! We want you to know that we really appreciate you!

About the ISS radio downlink, as soon as I hear anything, I will let you know. Thank you for your continued interest in this project.

Regards,  
Sharon

***Minutes from the July Meeting, from David Worboys, KG4ZLB:***

**Amateur Radio Association of South West Florida**

**Club meeting held at the Red Cross Building, Naples, FL on Tuesday July 26<sup>th</sup> 2005.**

**In attendance:**

Corey Mugaas, KB4ETT- President  
G. William Reynolds, K2ZEL – Treasurer  
Rodney Smith, KI4DBI – Operations Director  
Jordan Mash, WB2QLP – Past President  
David Worboys, KG4ZLB – Secretary

**Apologies:**

Carl Foust, WA9ZIF – Technical Director  
Carl Pacini, KI4AII – Vice President

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**MEETING MINUTES**

Corey, KB4ETT (President), acted as Chairman of the meeting and there being a quorum present, called

the meeting to order at 7.30pm. Introductions were made by all members present for the benefit of visiting guests.

**Treasurers Report:** Bill, K2ZEL presented the Treasurers report for the period to July 26<sup>th</sup> 2005. During the period the club had gross receipts of \$63.50 made up of membership subscriptions, and the proceeds of last months 50-50 donation. Expenses for the period amounted to \$358.82 made up of Field Day expenses, work party expenses; an update to the Club's logging program and the renewal of the tags on the Club trailer. The net total in club funds amounted to \$2975.08

**Meeting Minutes:** Due to Field Day, no June Club Meeting was held.

#### **Other Business:**

Bill advised the meeting that he had updated the ARRL Club details and that all information held with the ARRL is now correct.

Bill provided a Field Day summary, most of which was produced in the July Newsletter. Additional information included the fact that there were 55 sign-in's including the previous day's work party. There were a total of 761 CW QSO's and 774 phone QSO's and 259 GOTA contacts. Bill wished to express thanks on behalf of the Club to Martin, AD4TR for his outstanding work on 20m CW during Field Day which accounted for a large proportion of the CW total.

**Guest Speaker:** Corey introduced Louis Piche of Metro Crime Prevention of Florida who explained that he was going to talk about how we could "keep Law Enforcement helping" us. Louis advised us that it took a criminal approximately 6 seconds to gain entry to a property and would spend between 3 and 8 minutes actually in the house. One way of preventing entry was to fit deadbolt locks, specifically "double key" or "double cylinder deadbolt" locks. If your property has crank type windows, take the crank off when not in use but do not leave it on the window sill! For sash type windows, consider fitting sash locks or secondary window locks. The number one entry point is the sliding glass patio type doors where a flat iron in the right hands could be used to lift the door clear of the frame – in this instance a sliding glass door pin should be fitted. To protect glass, solar film should be fitted. This will not stop the glass from smashing but it will allow it to fragment in the frame and be held in place by the film. 3M, Lumar and Johnson are the recommended manufacturers of window film.

Louis explained that the cheapest way to keep criminals out of your property is to buy a "Beware of the Dog" sign and hang it conspicuously outside your property. Next you should buy the biggest dog bowl you can find and possibly a collar and lead and leave them where they can be seen from the front door. In this way, bogus callers looking for ease of entry will be under the impression that a dog is in the premises.

Louis advised that safes should be bolted to the concrete slab of the house and another way to keep small valuables is by purchasing false bottom cans that blend in to the normal domestic appliances etc.

As regards your credit, Louis advised that it is essential to regularly obtain a copy of your credit report to ensure that no one is using your credit without your knowledge. Turning to the internet, Louis advised that no personal information should ever be given when considering items or services offered through "pop-up" advertisements. Any spam websites could be reported to [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov) and a complete information package was available from <http://www.ftc.gov> When mailing bill payments, it is advisable to physically take the envelopes to the post office rather than leaving them in your mail box for collection. This is because criminals can empty mail boxes in an effort to discover personal information that could be useful to them and highly detrimental to you.

Advertisements for credit cards that you do not wish to receive should be shredded, not just thrown in the trash.

Louis advised that home alarm systems should wake you up and make the criminal flee! Many

householders were being charged by the Sheriff's Department for false alarms and one product which he advised was effective was the Sun coast Guardian Acoustical Alarm System which worked on air pressure. Louis gave an effective demonstration of this when he exited the building and the alarm system went off with a piercing shriek. This system retails for nearly \$1000 and full instructions are given with the product, not in Spanish!

As regards personal safety, 80% of personal thefts occur in the parking lot and we should check for safety before heading towards the vehicle and once there check for shadows in and around the car. Park near adequate lighting is always a good idea. Do not carry cash or credit cards with your car keys when approaching the vehicle; make sure these are put securely away.

Additionally, never carry your Social Security card or any other document that would reveal your number, such as a Medicaid card. Other personal protection products include pepper spray, mace is now not recommended as research shows that it is largely ineffective against criminal under the influence of narcotics or mentally disturbed criminals. Always buy "police strength" pepper spray from a respected personal safety retailer rather than a high street chain which may have had the product in store for a period of time. Pepper spray only has a two year effective life. Should you be driving along in a darkened street and an unmarked car with police lights comes up behind you, do not stop. If you have a cell phone, dial 911 and ask the dispatcher to check whether the car behind you really is a police vehicle – do not take chances.

And finally, if you are in bed and you hear a sound, don't be a hero, call 911!

Corey, on behalf of the Club thanked Louis for his quite entertaining presentation.

**ISS Contact:** Corey introduced Ann Roe who is a volunteer director for the NASA Explorer Schools Program and who works closely with Sharon Lea. Ann explained that the NASA Explorer Night, of which Collier County holds two out of 100 in the whole US, is an opportunity for parents, local residents and other interested parties to see what the children are currently doing in the Explorer program. Immokalee High School would be holding a NASA night on September 19 and Pine Ridge Middle School on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Some three to four thousand people attended last years Nights and Ann felt that as the Club was helping in the planned future ISS contact, it would be a good idea to having a working amateur station set up and operating on both nights. Jordan, WB2QLP, suggested that a committee be set up to organise these events, he would be able to supply a tower trailer and would need 4 or 5 other members to make the vent a success. Ann advised that, in the event of a Hurricane, both nights would be cancelled.

**Club Repeater:** Corey asked for volunteers to help transport the newly donated repeater antenna to the antenna site and to assist in hauling the antenna up the side of the building to the roof level. This was because the antenna was too large to either it in the lift or up the stair well. The Thursday following the meeting had been chosen to effect the transfer, and we were just waiting for permission from the condominium association to take the antenna up the side of the building. Permission was expected the following morning and information would be passed on during the Club's regular Wednesday evening VHF net.

**Previous and future events:** Rodney, KI4DBI, advised that more emergency radio operators were required and he was looking for any ideas as to how to get people motivated and interested. He asked that if anyone was interested, could they provide names and e-mail addresses after the meeting to him.

**50/50 Raffle:** The 50/50 raffle was drawn by our guest, Ann Roe and was won by Maurey, KI4HEV

A motion to close the meeting was proposed by Anthony, KB2SFA, and seconded by Allen, KI4IMA, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9.00pm.

David A. Worboys  
KG4ZLB  
Secretary

***Report from Vice President, Carl Pacini, KI4All:***

My wife and I recently returned from a vacation trip to Nova Scotia. Our trip included a visit to the Marconi Museum in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia (at the eastern tip of Cape Breton Island). The museum commemorates the place where Marconi made the first west-to-east transatlantic radio transmission in 1902. He and his associates constructed four 210-foot wood towers that were connected by copper rope at the top. Hundreds of strands of copper wire were strung downward in the shape of an inverted pyramid for the station's antenna. The station contained four generators that collectively produced 75,000 watts of power. The transmitter was based on "spark gap" technology. It was time well-spent as it reminded me of how far radio technology has come in just 100 years. Also, Marconi was a practical genius.

Also, I recently checked with the ARRL to determine the criteria that must be met for an island to become a separate entity for radio reporting purposes. I had the thought of trying to get a separate call prefix for Marco Island or Sanibel. Club members could have a blast if such were the case. Just think of the pileups we each could have by making a short trip to Marco or Sanibel. Anyway, I now know that it is impossible. One of the criteria for an island is that it be a minimum of 350 kilometers from its parent entity. This criteria even eliminates Dry Tortugas.

73, Carl

***Of General Interest to All, from Jordan Mash, WB2QLP:***

**ARRL Field Day 2005 "Logs Received" list posted:**

The ARRL Contest Branch has announced that the complete list of "Logs Received" for ARRL Field Day 2005 has been posted on the ARRL Web site <http://www.arrl.org/contests/claimed/>. This list includes all paper and regular e-mailed Field Day log submissions, as well as entries submitted via the Web applet. If your entry is listed as a check log, it is because we did not receive adequate information from you to include it in the Logs Received listing. If you do not find your entry or you believe there is an error in your listing, contact ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND <n1nd@arrl.org>; 860-594-0232, or Kathy Allison, KA1RWY <kallison@arrl.org>; 860-594-0295.

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## ITALY JOINS NO-CODE RANKS AS FCC REVIVES MORSE DEBATE IN THE US

Italy is reported to be the latest country added to the list of those that no longer require Amateur Radio applicants to have passed a Morse code examination to gain HF access. The Daily DX <<http://www.dailydx.com>> reported this week that current IW-prefix "no-code" VHF/UHF licensees in Italy now will be allowed operate on HF. Canada eliminated Morse as the "sole additional requirement" for HF access in late July. To date, more than two dozen countries around the world--including such major players as the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia and New Zealand--no longer require Amateur Radio applicants to pass a Morse code examination to operate below 30 MHz. If the FCC's past observations on the subject are any clue, the US may join the no-code-required club in the future.

"We believe that an individual's ability to demonstrate increased Morse code proficiency is not necessarily indicative of that individual's ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art," the FCC maintained in its December 1999 Amateur Radio restructuring Report and Order (R&O) <<http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/wt98-143ro.pdf>>. "As a result, we find that such a license qualification rule is not in furtherance of the purpose of the amateur service, and we do not believe that it continues to serve a regulatory purpose."

The Commission in 1999 retained a minimal 5 WPM Morse requirement for all license classes only because of the treaty obligation then in place. World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) subsequently decided to let countries determine for themselves whether or not to require amateur applicants to demonstrate Morse ability.

In its Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O) <[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-05-143A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-05-143A1.pdf)> in WT Docket 05-235, released July 19, 2005, the FCC proposed to eliminate the 5 WPM telegraphy examination altogether. At the same time, it dismissed petitions calling for--among other things--a new entry-level license with HF privileges.

In wording that closely mirrored remarks in its 1999 restructuring R&O, the Commission said its review of the 18 petitions and comments in the proceeding showed that "the majority agree" with its 1999 stance on the Morse requirement. The FCC said it believes it should treat Morse code like any other Amateur Radio mode. The FCC further said it was not persuaded by the ARRL's petition request to retain the 5 WPM Morse requirement solely for Amateur Extra applicants.

But perhaps recalling what it also said in 1999--that few issues coming before the Commission "present such a clear dichotomy of viewpoints" as

Morse code--the FCC stopped short of making the Morse requirement disappear. Instead, it invited another round of comments.

The US Amateur Radio community has taken up the Commission's offer with great enthusiasm. As of week's end, more than 1400 comments had been posted via the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS). The majority focused solely on the Morse issue. While most tend to file brief "yea" or "nay" comments, many postings reflect the deeply emotional nature of the Morse debate.

Those favoring the Morse requirement frequently suggest that dropping it altogether will lead to a overall decline in the skill and dedication of new operators. Others cite Morse as a longstanding tradition that ought not be cast aside lightly, and a few cite its potential in emergency communication. The FCC already dismissed such arguments in 1999.

Those endorsing its elimination often assert that Morse is largely irrelevant today and that retaining the requirement is keeping a lot of people from pursuing Amateur Radio. Several commenters also have contended that Morse code should rise or fall on its own now, not be mandated for licensure. These are arguments the FCC essentially agreed with in 1999 and again in 2005.

Generally speaking, the Commission has been disinclined to revisit what it considers once-trod ground.

Following WRC-03, Switzerland became the first country to announce it was eliminating Morse code as a requirement for HF access. It was followed in short order by the United Kingdom.

In addition to Italy, Canada, Switzerland, the UK, Germany, Australia and New Zealand, the list of countries that have dropped Morse code as a requirement includes the Czech Republic, Spain, South Africa, Iceland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Kenya, Luxembourg (provisional CEPT Class 2 HF access), The Netherlands, Norway, Poland (limited), South Africa, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea and Singapore.

To file on-line comments on the FCC NPRM&O in WT Docket 05-235 or to view others' comments in the proceeding, visit the ECFS site <<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>> and click on "Submit a Filing" or "Search for Filed Comments."

In either case, type "05-235" in the "Proceeding" field, being careful to include the hyphen but not the quotation marks. Directions for filing comments, which can be in the form of an attached document, are on the ECFS

site. Click on "Getting Started" to learn more.

The FCC is not expected to release a Report and Order in WT Docket 05-235 until late this year at the soonest.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Hide Your HF Vertical in Plain Sight

[1. Scott \(N4ZOU\)](#) on July 22, 2005

[View comments about this article!](#)

Hide your HF vertical in plain sight

So you moved into a HOA controlled property or worse, your wife won't allow an "ugly" antenna! You need to hide it but just how are you going to do that without dropping it out of sight during the daylight hours? Well my friend, you need to do a little foam and fiberglass work and produce a flag or light pole that contains your vertical antenna. Working with the blue insulation foam board available at most building supply stores is easy. You may saw it or use a hot wire cutter you can easily make yourself. Working with fiberglass cloth and resin is a little harder but it's well within the neophyte's capability to learn how to do it. If you don't want to do it all you can find help in your local area very easily. Any good boat or automotive body shop will have people with years of experience working with fiberglass and would be more than happy to take your money to produce your custom flag or light pole.

Lets start with the design requirements. Will your HOA allow a flagpole? Most people that sit on HOA boards are liberal types that like to control every aspect of your life and waving a flag (especially here in the USA) reminds them we live in a free country which limits there power and so the last thing most of them want is a reminder of that and consequently they ban blatant patriotism, flag waving, and worst of all a (horror of horrors) flag pole that could be used for the display of a flag! In these cases you will want to produce a light pole, which most HOA's will allow. In either case the production of the pole will be the same except for the "decoration" used at the top of the pole. A flagpole will have a rope and pulley system and the light pole will have a light housing and bulb.

Lets start working on the pole. You will need to make the interior of the pole hollow so your vertical antenna may be placed inside. Square tapered poles are common and for our use and this design makes construction easy. Measure your HF vertical and figure out the space requirements. Now you need some way to hold the foam in position as you construct the pole. Use the cheapest OSB or plywood obtainable or even multiple layers of cardboard will work fine to produce the required form. Below is a drawing of a form that would work just fine for producing our square tapered cavity. There will be no resin used in form so it should pull easily from the completed pole. If you're worried that some resin could infiltrate the cavity simply use wax paper around the foam supports to prevent the resin from gluing the foam supports to the foam.

If you need a round pole this is not a problem. Simply add more foam to the sides and form the foam into a round or any other shape you require. No dimensions are given as this depends on your choice of antenna. The taller your antenna the more foam supports you will need. Also the support rod is very important! After you finish the pole the support rod and foam supports must be pulled out of the cavity. If you want a monoband HF antenna you do not need to worry about making a cavity for your antenna element. Simply use some copper wire as the antenna element between foam sheets, no form required! Don't forget the required decoration for the top of the pole. Your HOA requires pre-approval of every part of your existence on your (or there?) property. Be ready to supply this information in the form of a product brochure and the placement of the pole on your property. This requires that you copy a design for your pole. Here is a very good example of a generic pole design that you could submit to the HOA or your wife.

<http://skp-cs.com/poleproducts/hingepoles/hingedpoles.asp>

If you get the ok for a flagpole then your pole construction effort will be easy. Here is a link to a site that has flagpole hardware and decoration.

<http://www.flagpolewarehouse.com/accessorie.htm>



## **RADIO AMATEUR LOSES LIFE INSTALLING EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS ANTENNA**

An Ohio radio amateur died July 30 while attempting to perform a public service for his county's RACES/ARES program. Preble County RACES Radio Officer Robert W. "Bob" French II, N8EHA, of Eaton was on a tower at the New Paris fire station installing an antenna for the RACES/ARES program when an element came into contact with a power line. The shock knocked French from the tower, and he reportedly fell some 40 feet to the ground. French's son Aaron, KA8VUS, Al Stone, KB8RPO, and other members of the work party administered CPR to no avail.

"Bob started back up the tower, pulling the antenna up by the feed line as he climbed," Stone recounted in a message shared with ARRL by Ohio Section Manager Joe Phillips, K8QOE. "At one point Bob thrust his hand upward to grab another rung of the tower, with the feed line in his hand. The antenna began swinging, and when he went for that last rung, the antenna came in contact with [the] power line." Stone said the ham volunteers were installing two antennas on the New Paris fire station's tower as part of a project to equip every firehouse in the county with an antenna and ham radio for emergency backup communication.

French, 51, belonged to the ARRL. He was a founding member of the Preble Amateur Radio Association and very active in the club. "He was one of the biggest advocates for Amateur Radio I have known," said Gary Hollenbaugh, NJ8BB, who eulogized his friend at an August 3 service. "His leadership, organizational skills, knowledge and enthusiasm cannot be easily replaced."

Hollenbaugh says French was wearing a safety belt but not a fall restraint harness. "He was still climbing the tower and not able to secure off," he said, conceding that his friend did not follow several safety rules. He also questioned why the tower was sited so close to power lines.

ARES District 3 Emergency Coordinator Ron Moorefield, W8ILC, represented the ARRL at French's service. Survivors include his wife Cathy, KA8RWX, and their daughter and son. The family invites memorial contributions to the Preble Amateur Radio Association, 7810 US Hwy 35 E, W Alexandria, OH 45381.

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## **RADIO AMATEURS AID IN PACIFIC MARITIME RESCUE**

"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday! This is the sailboat Enamorado. Mayday, Mayday!" That's what Wisconsin radio amateurs Ed Toal, N9MW, and Ralph Henes, W9CAR, heard during a casual Sunday morning net July 24 on 14.238 MHz that also

involved Dick Mannheimer, K6LAE, in Los Angeles. Toal and Henes were able to contact the operator, Ken Saijo, KC6ORF--a California retiree--who confirmed the 35-foot sailing vessel was in trouble and needed help.

"All social chatter immediately stopped, and we declared an emergency in progress on frequency," Henes said. Then, while Toal gathered information from the operator aboard the Enamorado, Mannheimer and Henes both called the US Coast Guard to relay the boat's situation and position, which turned out to be in Mexican waters. Henes said the Coast Guard relayed their information to the Mexican Navy. Henes and Toal were able to copy KC6ORF well, although Mannheimer could not, and they maintained contact with the disabled boat.

The Wisconsin hams learned that that Saijo was accompanying the boat's skipper, Ken Scheibe, on a trip from California to Costa Rica when they ran into a storm. As a result, the vessel lost its engine and steering and both men were injured, neither seriously. Before putting out distress calls on 20 meters, Saijo had tried without success to raise help via the vessel's VHF marine radio.

Mannheimer noted that Art Rowe, K7HA, in Washington, and Tom Miller, K4IC, in Arlington, Virginia, initially kept the frequency clear. They were subsequently joined by a host of other stations in the US and Canada, some of whom were able to copy KC6ORF and help relay as needed.

Toal had to leave after a couple of hours, but Henes and Mannheimer remained on frequency. About three hours into the incident, Henes again called the US Coast Guard to see if it had heard back from the Mexican Navy. It had not, so he called the Mexican Navy himself and, after what he described as "a few tense language-barrier moments," he was connected with someone who spoke English and Spanish and told that a rescue boat and helicopter were on the way.

Henes also got the Mexican Navy vessel to come up on 20 meters. "Within minutes, they were on the frequency calling the stranded boat," he said. Unfortunately, neither Saijo nor Scheibe spoke Spanish fluently enough to understand the communicator on the Mexican Navy vessel.

Enter Jorge Lira, XE1JP, who volunteered to serve as translator. He was able to relay the foundering sailboat's coordinates to Mexican authorities. "He saved the day," said Henes, who reports he was able to hear the rescue helicopter in the background on Saijo's transmission. Saijo and Scheibe were plucked to safety from the distressed vessel, which the Mexican Navy towed to safety.

Henes said he later received an e-mail from Scheibe thanking him and the

other radio amateurs for helping. Toal said later, "To me, we were just paying our dues for the right to be hams."

A TV station and a newspaper in Madison, Wisconsin, were among the news media reporting the incident and Amateur Radio's role in coming to the rescue.

\* \* \* \* \*

Antennas, Pacemakers & Defibrillators

[1. Floyd Andrew Boggs \(KB8PMD\)](#) on June 6, 2005  
[View comments about this article!](#)

# **If You've Got an Implanted Pacemaker or Defibrillator, Keep Your Distance From Transmitter Antennas!**

**By Andrew Boggs, B.A. / KB8PMD**

A few years ago, I ended up in a hospital for *Cellulitis* -- I could soak a pair of socks within an hour. When I finally returned home, I had an implanted *Defibrillator* in my chest -- a doctor discovered I had a weak heart. And yes, it went off -- two episodes -- first time when in extended recovery in a nursing home it "buzzed" me seventy-two times according to an EMS technician -- the second time, at least a dozen before the hospital emergency room was able to bring it under control. I've got to tell you, I really am very spooked by the experience. My background is broadcast news, production and a touch of engineering. So, I have a passion for communications...and a great respect as to its use.

Awhile ago in the *eHam* blog section, a reader asked whether indoor transmitting antennas were safe? There were a lot of comments as to the pros and cons of such an installation. I had made the mistake as a beginning ham with a General ticket in installing a short vertical whip in my bedroom with my transceiver, a Yaesu 767GT while living in a brick-encased apartment building. When I pressed the mike button, I got one whopping RF shock that knocked me on my rear -- thankfully I didn't have a heart Defibrillator in me at the time -- otherwise, I would have been a "Darwin Award" winner! Since then, I've had to make a lot of lifestyle changes in food I eat and keeping a distance from EMF-producing devices. My answer was from my pre-heart condition days. And while articles read that doctors and nurses inform the patient of the "*do's and don'ts*" in living with such an implanted device -- they didn't -- Medtronic's in their recent newsletter says MRI's are very dangerous, even with the device turned off. My answer back then to the ham was "don't" do it -- and my answer remains the same as of this writing.

According to the Medtronic website, it suggests such people to stay at least one foot away from cell

phones and an HT that outputs three watts of power or greater, or ten feet from a transmitting antenna with a power of two hundred watts or better. Oh well, looks like I may stay with my Icom IC-765 or look into QRP operation on HF once again. The little devices have a metal casing in order to keep EMF interference to the circuit at a minimum -- however, they are not "bullet-proof" to every form of RF-producing equipment -- even a large magnet in a speaker can cause problems. Essentially the devices are adjusted via the use of an EMF-producing probe placed over the heart -- hence the need for precautions when dealing with EMF. It comes down to installing a well-designed antenna system that's properly grounded and keeping in mind whether its yourself or a friend with a *pacemaker* or *defibrillator* to stay out of danger and away from devices producing potential harm. Please don't read this as a reason to refrain from enjoying the hobby of Amateur Radio -- just carefully use your head in the design and placement and the transmit power utilized! For more information, check out <http://www.medtronic.com>

-Andrew Boggs-

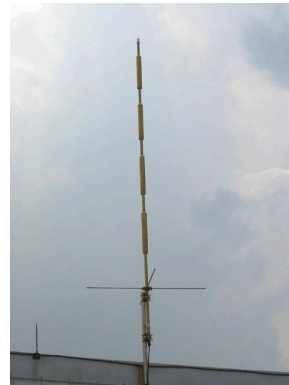
### Pictures from Repeater Antenna Party:



The Site



Old Antenna



New Antenna



The Repeater

Visit our Club Web Site at: [www.araswf.org](http://www.araswf.org)

**NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY - AUGUST 23, 2005  
7:30 PM - RED CROSS CHAPTER HOUSE**