Signals from SARA

WØJH

Program: Dialogue - Choosing your first radio

Mark Lindberg, KEØQQN

My name is Mark Lindberg and I have had my ticket (KEØQQN) since March of 2018. I am a S.A.R.A. member, and also on the club's New Ham Help Team. I will be leading the session on "Choosing your first radio". I can clearly recall the difficulty when trying to decide what radio I should get. It can feel overwhelming at times not wanting to make a mistake. The premise of this session is not to lead you to a particular brand and model, but will assist you in identifying the factors that are important to your personal situation. Once you answer a few key questions, the quest should become more manageable. Hopefully this will guide you to focus on a particular type of radio, and then let you compare features within that type. In the end, most people in the hobby end up with more than one radio. The 'right rig', is the one that gets you to key the mic and join us on the air. 73, Mark

For this meeting, forget about driving and instead fire up your computer. Due to the ongoing pandemic and related health & safety guidelines and protocols for senior care facilities, Boutwells Landing remains unavailable for public use. Boutwells Landing staff foresees that will be the case into 2021. We will therefore continue to hold the monthly Saturday meeting virtually using the SARA WEBEX conference room. Meetings will begin at 9:00 AM., but Joe, KCØOIO, will open the WEBEX room around 8:15 AM for "Morning Coffee" each month.

Announcements

The regular monthly meeting returns on October 10, 2020 via Webex.

Meeting: Choosing your first radio - Mark, KEØQQN, discussion leader

Current Members will receive a meeting invitation via email from Joe, KCØOIO.. This meeting is only open to SARA Members. If you DO NOT receive your invite, send an email to:
President@radioham.org

SARA On the Air
Phone Round Robin Ragchews & Net
(All Times are Local - Central)
> Daily "Lunch Room" Crew: 12:00 - ? SARA 2m Repeater* ... Weekdays
> Daily Top Band Crew: 20:00; 1.966 MHz LSB or USB +/- QRM (alternates: 3.966 +/- MHz, 50.166 MHz)
> Monday 75m Crew: 09:00; 3.856 MHz LSB +/- QRM
> Tuesday (TMT): 19:00; SARA 2m Repeater*
> Wednesday Informal Net: 21:00; SARA 2m Repeater*
> Sunday Digital Net: 19:00; 3.584.15 MHz USB (500-1000 Hz) on waterfall (Mode announced via email)

Can't Find Us On the Air?
... Monitor SARA Repeater!

*SARA 2m Repeater: 147.060 MHz; Positive Offset; DCS/DTCS 026 Normal)

A Portable Operating Weekend
Collin O'Connor, KEØIYN

This past weekend, October 3rd and 4th, was a brand new contest, the Portable Operating Contest. It's tailored for those who often wind up being outclassed by folks with QTH-based stations, with their big antennas and even bigger amplifiers! The contest introduced a scoring metric of "Kilometers per watt" or KPW, which would have made it fun. As someone whose QTH is an apartment that offers limited HF options, I was all for this – getting out, using a battery and my trust ICOM 706 MKII-G and an end-fed antenna and have some fun!

Due to other events I decided to operate on Sunday, rather than Saturday. I spent a week in preparation, charging and testing my gear, packing and repacking, determining what would go, getting a logging program that would support the contest… I was hyped! And Sunday dawned sunny and chilly but otherwise perfect. So out to Valley View Park in Oak Park Heights I went.

I got my antenna up. I got my radio up. Tuned up greatly, power was fine, and there were contest calls all over 20 and 40m. There was just one eensy, itsy bitsy teeny weeny problem…

… The contest wasn't for the portable operating contest, but the California QSO party.

D'OH!

In about five hours of operating I made a big fat 0 on the portable operating challenge. But on the bright side, I did get ahold of Pennsylvania and California, and didn't do at all bad for 40 watts. So I'll just chalk it up as a great day outside and a good practice for deployment.

Better luck next time I guess!

Collin O'Connor, KEØIYN

Bandwidth from the President

Greetings from my shack, de Joe KCØOIO.

If you are a member of the ARRL and live in Minnesota, North or South Dakota, you should have or will be receiving a ballot for the Dakota Division Director. The ARRL Board of Directors is made up representatives from the fifteen divisions across the US. The Division Directors and Vice Directors serve 3 year terms, and 5 Directors are elected each year. This year's election cycle includes the Atlantic, Great Lakes, Delta, Midwest and Dakota Divisions, Two candidates are running for the position of Dakota Division Director this cycle. Incumbent Matt Holden, KØBBC is being challenged by Vernon "Bill" Lippert ACØW. Vice Director Lynn Nelson WØND is unopposed. We are familiar with our current Director Matt Holden, KØBBC as he has been a frequent visitor to SARA meetings over the years. "Bill" Lippert ACØW has sent a couple of mailings to ARRL members in the Division regarding his candidacy. I urge you to participate by casting and mailing your ballot. Ballots, accompanied by a photograph and a 300-word statement (if provided) from each candidate, were to be mailed out to League members in the Dakota Division by October 1. If you do not receive your ballot by October 16, contact Carla Pereira, KC1HSX, at cpereira@arrl.org. Completed ballots are due back at ARRL Headquarters no later than noon Eastern Time on Friday, November 20, 2020.

The HF Digital Net has resumed for the season. The 1st session Sept 27 had a fair turnout, however, the next session Oct 4th saw one check-in besides the net control. I realize this is an earlier start than previous years, as we usually waited until we were later in Fall to begin the net. I hope that the net will see and increase in participation in the coming weeks as your fall projects wrap up and we find ourselves indoors more as the temps cool as we head through the seasons.

SARA's use of the WEBEX virtual meeting platforms has been proving successful. One benefit I'm going to try to leverage is reaching out further for programs and presenters from across the region, country and possibly the world. If you have any suggestions for special guest presenters you believe may be of interest to the members of SARA, please let me know. Possibilities could include Bob Heil, K9EID; Gordon West, WBØNOA; the CQ kit guy Joe Eisenberg, KØNEB (the Cat in the Hat guy at Hamvention); DXpeditioner Glenn Johnson, WØGJ and many others.

The October monthly Saturday meeting will be held virtually using the SARA WEBEX conference room. Meetings will begin at 9:00 AM. I intend to open the WEBEX room around 8:15 AM for "Morning Coffee" social gathering.

The October meeting features a program on choosing your first radio from Mark KEØQQN. We'll be inviting the students of the Technician license class to join us for this timely presentation as they will be testing for their licenses on Saturday Oct 17.

I wish you all well. Stay Safe – Stay Healthy!

73 es CUL de KCØOIO

Remote Base Station Update - Security Manager

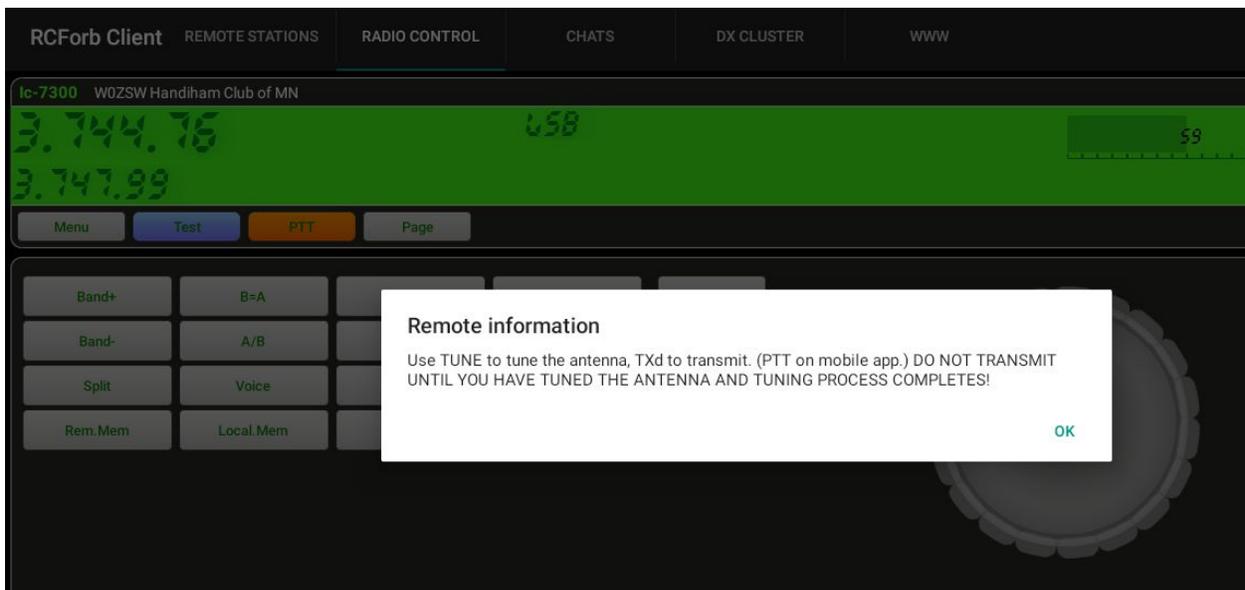by Patrick Tice, wa0tda@arrl.net

As we rocket toward winter here in the middle of North America, we are losing daylight rapidly and scrambling to get outdoor chores done before the weather turns cold.

Antenna work comes to mind, and we have maybe a couple of weeks to get things in order before things get ugly. Now is the time to inspect the part of our stations outside the ham shack - things like feedlines, guy wires, towers, rotor systems, wire antennas, grounding, and anything else that might be difficult to repair when the daily weather report includes windchill temperatures.

The remote base stations w0zsw, w0eqo, and wa0tda are all up and running. Although there are no towers and rotating antennas to maintain, some HF remotes on the Remotehams system do have these features. The RCForb software does support them, as you may have noticed if you have looked around the interface. All of our stations employ simple wire antennas, and there's a good reason for that. It makes maintenance a heck of a lot easier, and station operation a lot more straightforward. The users of the stations may or may not have much HF experience. Keeping the choice of antennas out of the picture cuts down on mistakes! The antenna systems at w0eqo and
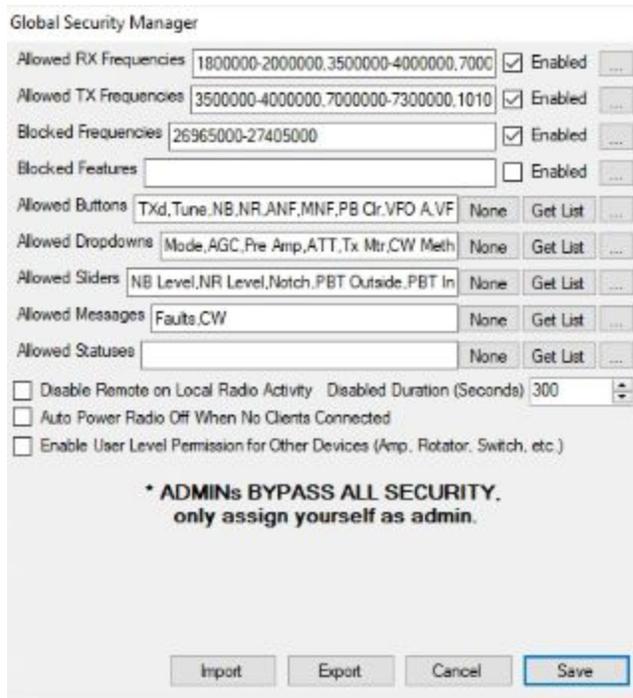
wa0tda allow for operation pretty much throughout the 160 through 6 m bands with a few minor exceptions. The OCF (Off-Center-Fed) dipole at w0zsw doesn't tune for transmit on 160 m, but works well on receive for that band.

You may wonder how it is possible to inform all of the users of these stations about what works and what doesn't for any given station. Each station's radio is controlled by a host PC running Windows 10 and the RCForb host software. The RCForb host software includes several ways to message users about the station's capabilities. For example, when a user logs on to a station, a message appears that requires a user response. This can give some basic information to the user before access to the station is allowed.

In this informational message on station w0zsw, users are informed to use the TXd button to transmit. There is also information about antenna tuning, a critical function that must be completed before transmitting on CW or SSB.

Behind the scenes, the RCForb host software has a "security manager" that allows the station admin to configure a variety of station features, such as which features show up on the user software interface and which frequencies of operation are allowed and disallowed.

Global Security Manager

Allowed RX Frequencies	1800000-2000000,3500000-4000000,7000	☑ Enabled	...
Allowed TX Frequencies	3500000-4000000,7000000-7300000,1010	☑ Enabled	...
Blocked Frequencies	26965000-27405000	☑ Enabled	...
Blocked Features		☐ Enabled	...
Allowed Buttons	TXd,Tune,NB,NR,ANF,MNF,PB Clr,VFO A,VF	None	Get List	...
Allowed Dropdowns	Mode,AGC,Pre Amp,ATT,Tx Mtr,CW Meth	None	Get List	...
Allowed Sliders	NB Level,NR Level,Notch,PBT Outside,PBT In	None	Get List	...
Allowed Messages	Faults,CW	None	Get List	...
Allowed Statuses		None	Get List	...

☐ Disable Remote on Local Radio Activity   Disabled Duration (Seconds) 300 ⌄

☐ Auto Power Radio Off When No Clients Connected

☐ Enable User Level Permission for Other Devices (Amp, Rotator, Switch, etc.)

*** ADMINs BYPASS ALL SECURITY,
only assign yourself as admin.**

[Import] [Export] [Cancel] [Save]

As you can see, the CB frequencies are disallowed in this example. Although we allow SWLs to tune the stations, we don't want CBers taking the stations out of the ham bands. Of course no transmit is allowed there in any case, but we prefer that users stick to the ham bands, even for receive. The security manager also allows the admin to include or remove certain functions from the user interface. An example is the "split" button, which can be toggled by inexperienced users and left that way when they log off, causing problems for the next user.

In an ideal world all users would be experts and would never make mistakes, but we know that is never going to be the case. All of us make mistakes, so the software can help us to avoid them - at least the most embarrassing ones! Unwittingly transmitting in split mode can be one of those moments we'd like to forget. Of course split mode could be necessary for DX work or contesting. You can message the station admin to request that it be restored for a period of time.

As the daylight fades, the wire antennas come into their own, offering more opportunities to use the longer wavelength bands. Lightning interference that is common in the summer thunderstorm season fades away and bands like 160 and 80 meters open up to longer path propagation more hours as we approach winter solstice in late December. This is an opportunity to try working more stations on those bands during the cold, dark nights. You may be surprised what can be done with only 100 watts and a wire!

 73 - Pat wa0tda@arrl.net

Membership Dues

SARA Memberships run on a calendar year from Jan 1ˢᵗ to Dec 31ˢᵗ and as of 10/1/2020 we have 105 members. I wish to thank the 20 members listed below, who have already submitted membership dues for 2021, and also note that 3 of these members have also paid membership for 2022. The below memberships are good through December 31ˢᵗ of the year listed. The membership form can be found on the radioham.org website and can be mailed to either of the two addresses on that form, along with your check made out to SARA. Dues for regular membership is $20 and associate membership is $10. We anticipate having an online payment process set up through PayPal in the near future, which will offer the option to eliminate mailing a check and membership form, but will result in a $1 service fee in addition to the dues. Please send any questions as well as updates to your membership or license status to: Trustee@radioham.org

Dan	Gabrielson	no call	2021
Rich	Smith	ADØSN	2021
Al	Van Duren	AEØJT	2021
Keith	Miller	AGØH	2021
Ron	Jansen	KB9WTB	2022
Ray	Hoyt	KDØLPY	2021
Jim	Stemwedel	KIØB	2021
Carl	Lindholm	KØCFL	2021
George	Power	KØGCP	2021
Ray	Pilgrim	KØZZT	2021
Dick	Miller	N9EZC	2021
Dave	Iverson	N9JNQ	2021
Brian	Edgell	NØBJE	2021
Shel	Mann	NØDRX	2021
Mary	Mann	NØDXH	2021
Mike	Paskeuric	NØODK	2022
Tom	Voigt	NØUHR	2021
Mike	Knox	WAØKKE	2021
Lyle	Miller	WB9OKQ	2021
John	Lyon	W9LHG	2022

Go to Radioham.org, then ABOUT, then Membership Application. The PDF application has information about where dues payments should be mailed and how checks should be made out. If you are joining us for the first time, fill out the application and return with your dues. If you are simply mailing in a check, this is also a good time to let us know about any changes of address.

Thanks and we hope to hear you on the air and at upcoming meetings!

**SARA Special Event
Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald
November 6, 7 & 8, 2020**

2020 marks the 16th consecutive year, the club is sponsoring and conducting this Special Event. This year, in keeping with COVID-19 social distancing requirements, we will operate from our individual QTHs … not from Split Rock Lighthouse State Park.

Although all SARA members may participate, we strongly suggest only those with Special Event or Field Day operating experience take part. Managing and taking charge of "pile ups" where multiple stations are calling you at the same time, is essential.
(If you aren't sure you can cope with ~10 stations calling you at once, this event may not be for you.)

General
SARA will be using what we call a "Distributed Operating Stations" (DOS) format for our operation at this event. Each operator will be scheduled to participate from their own QTH. Each Op will have agreed upon time(s) when and where they can operate. Each Op must operate in accordance with their license class and use one of the approved call signs, WØJH (phone) and WØF (CW & Digital). We will have multiple stations simultaneously using the same call sign, as they are operating on different bands.

Organizers* & Current Potential Operators
WØOXB*, WØGAF*, NØDRX*, KCØOIO*, AGØH*, VE3MXJ*, AAØU, KEØN, W9LHG, KØGW, KEØIYN, KEØQQN, NØBJE, KØHAS, KØAIF, KØVOB, NØBM, W8VS, NØMR, NØODK, KAØOBI, N5JLZ, KDØHRM, KØSON

When, Where & What
- Days: Nov. 6, 7, 8 (Friday – Sunday)
- Times: 0900 – 1759 local; 1500 – 2359 UTC (some variations depending on mode & band)
- Bands/Frequencies: Anywhere (Published: 80m (3.860), 40m (7.260), 20m (14.260), 15m 21.360))
- Modes: SSB, CW & Digital

Operator Scheduling
Members who have not already indicated a desire to operate will still have an opportunity. Online sign-up will be available after October 12.
A SARA Broadcast will be sent to all current club members on Oct. 12 … it will contain complete instructions, including a link for online sign-up.

Upcoming events

- What? Wait! You haven't paid your 2021 SARA dues yet? Get out the checkbook right now and get it done.
- October Meeting: Saturday, October 10 - Virtual meeting via Webex.
- Split Rock Lighthouse "Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald" special event station - Operating from home QTHs: November 6, 7, 8.
- November Meeting: Saturday, November 14.
- December Meeting: Saturday, December 12.

READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE

A Note from the Editors

This edition of the 2020 -2021 Signals season is produced on a new platform, Google Docs. It replaces Microsoft Publisher, which has served us well for many years, because it has new features that make editing easier and more universally accessible. We can now accept your article submissions as .docx (Word-compatible) files complete with embedded graphs and photos, something that was a real headache in the old system. Anyone can use their word processing software to create a compatible doc file for submission.

Formats for submission of articles

- Microsoft Word or compatible formats, with file extensions .doc, .docx, etc. Embedded pictures and graphics are okay (and preferred) in this format.
- Text files, either plain text or rich text; .txt, .rtf, etc.

How to submit articles

It's easy to just create your document and send it to wa0tda@gmail.com as an attachment if you like. If you have been using Dropbox to submit in the past, you may continue to do so.

More about Google Docs

Google Docs also employs advanced AI to recognize errors, going beyond simply finding spelling errors. Editing the newsletter happens in real time, with everything being keyboarded also being saved on a cloud server. Documents can be set with permissions for multiple editors, and it is easy to create copies on the cloud server to experiment with layout or to just work on a copy while preserving the original. Since everything is web-based, any computer or device capable of use as a writing tool can edit as long as the internet is available. It is as easy to edit with Linux or Apple as it is with Windows. No specialized publishing software is needed. The final copy can be converted to the universal format PDF, also completely accomplished by Google Docs in the cloud.

The look of your October Signals from SARA is a clean, less cluttered one. The new typeface is calibri, which is similar to the old arial font, but uses less ink when printed, assuming any of us can still get our printers to work.

I recommend using Google Docs for most anything you had used other "office-style" software packages to do. The continuous updating of your work assures that you will not lose what you have been working on. The access to all your files from a web browser, regardless of your operating system, is a definite plus. And updating your old software could run into money, but not so with Google Docs.

73 - Pat

WAØTDA

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Radioham.org