



# ***GULF COAST AMATEUR RADIO CLUB***

## ***Newsletter***

[www.gulfcoastarc.com](http://www.gulfcoastarc.com)

## ***AUGUST 2025***

### ***From the DESK of the President***

I want to talk about one aspect of our hobby that is special to me, its operating QRP. Yes, I did have a time in the ham career that I owned two Alpha 374's and contested in the "High Power" category. However, most of my time has been spent doing the exact opposite. I rarely run more than 50 watts and most of the time I typically run 5-10 watts. It is exciting to break a DX pileup with only 5 watts and a wire antenna. Recently, I participated in the 13 Colonies Special Event and was able to work all 13 states and the three bonus stations with only 5 watts on my Elecraft K2. One thing that operating QRP does, is it forces you to make sure all the "other" components of your station are operating at the best they can be. As an example, I feed my wire antenna with Times Microwave LMR-600 cable which many would say is overkill, especially at the \$2.25/Ft price tag. When you are only running 5 watts, you really want all 5 watts available at the feed point of the antenna. I live in an HOA, and I need to be careful with the visibility of my antenna from the street. The last thing I want is the HOA police to see my antenna when they do their drive by. So, another way I maximized my station's performance is that I have elevated the feed point of my EFHW to about 30 feet, which was the highest I could go, without it being visible from the street. Again, every little thing helps. Another aspect of QRP that is attractive is there are many low power rigs on the market with very reasonable price tags. For example, you can get one of the uSDX HF QRP radios for under \$100. If you are a Yaesu fan, you can get a used Yaesu FT-817ND QRP radio for around \$400. The Xiegu G90 can do up to 30W but is a nice QRP rig for the \$400+ price tag. My recommendation is the rig offered by QRP Labs, the QMX+ 160-6m, 5W multi-mode rig for about \$250, assembled or build it yourself for under \$200. Additionally, any of these rigs can be easily taken mobile or portable with a POTA activation. All I can suggest is try it, find the power knob, turn it counterclockwise, can call CQ. You might be surprised.

As I mentioned last month, at the end of August I'll be stepping down as President. Again, thanks to the many great friends that I have met within GCARC. Only being 2 hours away, I'm sure I'll be able to make the occasional POTA event.

73 Mark, N1MT dit dit

## Member Meeting Upcoming Presentations

<i>Month</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
<i>August 2025</i>	<i>Building a Balun /Unun</i>	<i>Group build - M. Toussaint</i>
<i>September 2025</i>	<i>Lightning Protection / Grounding</i>	<i>Karl Schulte</i>
<i>October 2025</i>	<i>ARES Presentation / Q&amp;A</i>	<i>Dave Rockwell, ARRL assistant section manager</i>

## GCARC NEWS

First, on behalf of all the members of the Gulf Coast Amateur Radio Club, I would like to welcome our newest members,

Karl (KR4FFY) and Penny (KR4FFX) MacNeir.

Tomorrow, Aug. 2, we will be hosting a “club POTA” at Starkey Wilderness Park. A map to the location we will be setting up at is on our website and on our facebook page. We will be setting up around 9:00 am going for as long as we can last. Everyone is welcome!

At the July meeting, Pam gave a great presentation on GMRS radio. I would like to thank Pam for all the presentations she has made for the membership.

The 50th Annual Tampa Bay Hamfest & Electronics Show will be held December 12th & 13th at the Strawberry Festival Grounds in Plant City. The GCARC will have a table to promote the club. Check out the info flyer below.

## Club Membership

*Gulf Coast Amateur Radio Club offers 3 levels of memberships.*

*Individual, Family and Junior. Applicants need not be licensed to become members.*

*Membership runs for 12 months, beginning on January 1 and ends December 31.*

*For more information, email [membership@gulfcoastarc.com](mailto:membership@gulfcoastarc.com) .*

*All memberships are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors!*

**Regular & Associate Membership\* \$25**

**Junior Membership \$15**

**Family Membership\* \$30**

## Amateur Radio Helps Locate Missing Mother and Son

07/25/2025

Amateur radio had a crucial role in locating a mother and her 9-year son lost in California's Stanislaus National Forest. On Friday July 11, 2025, the pair was reported overdue from a day trip to Camp Wolfeboro, a popular scout camp in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, according to a news release.

On Saturday July 12, the Calaveras County Volunteer Search and Rescue Team (SAR) was conducting its monthly training exercise along the Stanislaus River when members received notification that Tami and son Stirling had been reported missing since Friday afternoon and were not answering their cell phones.

The SAR team set up a command post at Black Springs Off-Highway Vehicle riding (OHV) Recreational Area and quickly began initiating a road-based search using four-wheel-drive vehicles and air support from the California Highway Patrol.

Joining the search was a Deputy and a Forest Service Law Enforcement Ranger who responded to 911 texts from campers in the area that a vehicle possibly matching the description of the pair's missing car had been found. The SAR team began to find handwritten notes posted near a remote Forest Service road and then another about a mile away that included a telephone number and the names of the missing individuals. Just before 6:00 PM, the car and the lost mother and son were found. But the rescue was not over.

SAR team members were unable to communicate with their command post using conventional frequencies and cell phones from their deep woods location. So they used amateur radio frequency to report their emergency traffic. The call was immediately answered by a retired El Dorado County communications supervisor, who is also an amateur radio operator, monitoring from his home. He contacted the El Dorado 911 center, which provided the information to Calaveras County Dispatch. The SAR command post was notified, and the mother and her son were transported to waiting family members.

Young Stirling also had a hand with the rescue. He used his scout whistle to blow SOS, the internationally recognized Morse code distress signal, to give searchers a better chance of locating their position.

## Board of Directors

NAME / CALL	BOARD POSITION	EMAIL
Mark Toussaint, N1MT	President	n1mt@arrl.net
Chuck Miller K5KAZ	Vice President	chuckmk5kaz@gulfcoastarc.com
Al Ekblad, AJ4JA	Secretary	aj4ja@icloud.com
Gary LaMunion, W8GLL	Treasurer	w8gl18@gmail.com
Chris McCullough, KC3CJU	Director	kc3cju@gmail.com
Barry Keaveny, N2NVP	Past President	keavbv@msn.com
Chuck Martin, KA4CEM	Director	chuck33@tampabay.rr.com

# Why the HF Bands suck right now

In the Northern Hemisphere often degrades during the summer months due to several factors related to the ionosphere.

## D-layer absorption

- **Increased Solar Radiation:** Longer days and a higher sun angle during summer in the Northern Hemisphere result in increased ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun reaching the ionosphere.
- **Enhanced D-Layer Ionization:** This increased radiation leads to greater ionization in the D-layer of the ionosphere, located at a lower altitude (approximately 60-100 km) than the E and F layers responsible for refracting HF signals.

**Signal Absorption and Attenuation:** The D-layer, particularly at lower HF frequencies (below 10 MHz), absorbs or attenuates radio waves, preventing them from reaching the higher, refractive F-layer. This is analogous to a blanket blocking signals from reaching the higher layers.

- **F2 Layer Expansion:** Increased solar radiation during summer also heats the F2 layer of the ionosphere, causing it to expand.
- **Density Decrease:** This expansion spreads out the F2 layer, decreasing its electron density.
- **Weakened Reflection:** The decreased density weakens the F2 layer's ability to effectively reflect HF radio waves, further contributing to poorer propagation.

## E and F1 layer blanketing

- **Summertime F1 Layer:** The F1 region of the ionosphere is primarily a daytime and summertime phenomenon caused by strong solar UV radiation.

**F1 and E Layer Blanketing:** The F1 layer (and the E layer present year-round) can act as a "blanket" for higher angle signals, while the E layer blankets lower angle signals, preventing them from reaching the F2 layer for long-distance propagation during the day.

## Atmospheric noise

**Increased Thunderstorms:** Summer brings an increase in atmospheric noise caused by thunderstorms, which can significantly affect the lower HF bands and make communication more difficult.

**In summary,** the combination of increased D-layer absorption, F2-layer expansion and density decrease, and blanketing by the E and F1 layers leads to the phenomenon known as "summer doldrums" in HF radio propagation in the Northern Hemisphere

Visit our website  
**GULFCOASTARC.COM**  
For the latest info and updates!



The Florida Gulf Coast Amateur Radio Council Presents:

The **50th Annual**

# TAMPA BAY HAMFEST

## and Electronics Show

ARRL West Central Florida Convention  
Second Largest Hamfest in Florida



**Expo Building**  
**Strawberry Festival Grounds**  
Parking behind 301 N Berryfest Pl (was N Lemon St)  
Plant City, FL 33563

**December 12th-13th, 2025**  
**Friday, 1PM to 6PM—Saturday, 8AM to 3PM**

Talk-in Brandon - 147.165 +, PL 136.5

For up-to-date information visit [www.TampaBayHamfest.org](http://www.TampaBayHamfest.org)

ARRL-VEC Exam and Commercial license testing  
WAS, DXCC, IARU, VUCC Card Checking


Forums and Programs are updated regularly on website

Admission at the gate	\$13	Under 12 accompanying a paid admission	FREE
Advanced ticket purchase	\$10	Public service/military in uniform	FREE
Student with ID	\$5	Bulk Tickets Sales	10/\$92
Indoor tables, 8ft	\$20	No vehicles of any kind in building	
Booth, 10ft x 10ft with 2 8ft tables	\$60		
Electric	\$10		
Tailgate space	\$10		
Camping	\$20	See website for details	
Club table, 1 free for club activities	\$0	No selling allowed	
Club tables	\$15	Each for selling	

Everyone entering the parking/tailgate/inside area must have a ticket visible.

See webpage for more information—[www.tampabayhamfest.org](http://www.tampabayhamfest.org)

# AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
				10M HF NET 7:30 PM 28.430Mhz USB		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	<b>Fusion Net</b> 7:30 145.350Mhz	<b>GCARC</b> Info & Trader Net 7:30pm 146.670Mhz	<b>SKYWARN</b> NET 7:30 PM 146.670Mhz	10M HF NET 7:30 PM 28.430Mhz USB		<b>TEST SESSION 10:00AM</b>
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	<b>Fusion Net</b> 7:30 145.350Mhz	<b>GCARC</b> Info & Trader Net 7:30pm 146.670Mhz		10M HF NET 7:30 PM 28.430Mhz USB		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	<b>Fusion Net</b> 7:30 145.350Mhz	<b>GCARC</b> Info & Trader Net 7:30pm 146.670Mhz	<b>SKYWARN</b> NET 7:30 PM 146.670Mhz	10M HF NET 7:30 PM 28.430Mhz USB		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	<b>MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING</b>	<b>GCARC</b> Info & Trader Net 7:30pm 146.670Mhz		10M HF NET 7:30 PM 28.430Mhz USB		

**POTA! Tomorrow, Starkey Park!**

**Next test session, Sat Aug 9th 10am! Contact Al AJ4JA@ICLOUD.COM**

# August Tuesday Night Net Controller Schedule

**AUGUST 5 PAMELA KQ5IOT**

**AUGUST 12 BARRY N2NVP**

**AUGUST 19 CHUCK K5KAZ**

**AUGUST 26 NICK KN4IKR**

*The club is looking for members to be Net Controllers*

*The Tuesday Night Net is an important function of the GCARC, and the Nets must have a controller to keep the flow of information orderly. Right now we need more Net Controllers, so the same few people aren't holding the Nets week after week.*

*Being a Net Controller is fun, you get to practice your on-the-air skills, and you get to use your radio equipment in a live exercise. And you are helping the club by donating about 30 minutes of your time for maybe one night a month. You will even be furnished scripted dialogue, so you don't have to ad lib.*

*If you are a member in good standing, and you have a radio rig that can reach the club repeater clearly and reliably, you can let us know if you'd like to be a Net controller by several means: you can post a message on our Facebook site, or send us a message through the "contact us" link on the web site, or just say so during a Net.*

*Please give it some thought. We'd love to have you join us as a Net Controller.*

*Nick*

*KN4IKR*

*stewartnick@erols.com*

# MONDAYS DIGITAL NET



7:30pm 145.350Mhz

## TUESDAYS



INFO & TRADER'S NET  
7:30pm 146.670Mhz  
PI tone 146.2hz



## THURSDAYS

7:30PM

10M 28.430MHZ SSB



## SKY WARN NET

1st & 3rd WEDNESDAYS  
and as necessary

7:30pm 146.670Mhz  
PI tone 146.2hz

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# 145.350Mhz Repeater

## is now

## WIRES-X

## Capable!

# Wa4gdn - Florida