



The TARC Reflector for September 2012

Hi Folks,

Wow...has August come and gone already? 2012 is flying by and we're already getting in range of the Holiday Season.

Coming back from the TARC "Summer Vacation," we did what everyone does in August...we went "back to school" for our second session of 2012 Upgrade Classes, which are set to run every February and August.

This session was a bit less well attended than the one in February, but that's not unusual as a lot of prospective students are also going back to regular school, and adding our classes at this time of year is sometimes too much.

But we had three good groups who really poured their all into asking questions and getting better prepared for taking the test they wanted to pass. We ended up with one new Extra, two new Generals, and 2 new Techs.

Alan, KG4GAV, had gotten his General upgrade back in February and wanted to finish his run to the top. He did well on the test and also is adding himself to our VE Group.

Ray, KK4JRL, who is from Moultrie, and **Gary, KK4KBA**, who is from Albany, had no problems getting their General Upgrade. Ray got his Tech license back in February, and I believe Gary got his at the Albany "Hamcram" a few weeks back.

As soon as Gary had his CSCE in hand, he headed to the coast to prepare his boat for the possible approach of then **TS Isaac**.

Jeff Norman came down from Ocilla to get his license. He's a model airplane enthusiast and needed the license to run some of the frequencies we're allocated to control the plane, and to pass video back to the ground. His new call is **KK4LIK**.

Last, but certainly not least, **Kyle** finally made the jump from "KE4RWR Jr." to **KK4LIJ**, getting that new call on August 30th, which was also his 10th Birthday.



Kyle at this year's Field Day exercise

Kyle has been in the Tech class since I started teaching it a few years ago, and it'll be odd to not have him running around during class. But you know what? I'm really glad he finally got his license and was also thrilled to be his first contact on the Net that night. Hey Bud... I'm really proud of you!

Thanks also to the great group who make this event happen twice a year. **Bill, Dawn, John, and Dana**, plus others like **Leann and Brian**, come together and make sure we don't get hungry while we study (can't learn anything on an empty stomach...right?)

John, KE4RWR, arranges the classrooms and keeps us going with the audio-visual gear.

The Instructors are also busy and this time we had **Lowell, NY4D, Thomas, W4TBJ, Theresa, KJ4NBG, Gina, W4GNA, Terry, N0TW, Mary, KI4JOO, Andy, KK4HYC**, and me making things happen. This is Andy's first outing as a new member of the group, and Lowell said he did great! By the way, Andy is an Instructor at Moultrie Tech. **Bud, KWOLC**, also sat in on both Tech and General to see what we were doing.

The VE Team had **Steve, KJ4UKR, Kerry, AI4CW, Alan, N4KGT, Gina, W4GNA, Lowell, NY4D, Andy, KK4HYC, Bill, KW4EF**, and me (the "bad penny" making another appearance) handling the test session.

There were a number of other students who didn't take tests. They felt a bit more study was in order before committing the \$14 test fee, and that's as it should be. No point in spending money if you're not sure you're ready.

It was another great effort by a lot of dedicated TARC members and everyone's contributions are appreciated!



We had a scare late in the month from Matt Kornegay, who was really sick and there was worry that it might be West Nile virus (he'd been hunting in the woods quite a bit). After a rough few days, thankfully he got better, and as I've heard no more from William, it wasn't West Nile.

Matt, we have two words for you...INSECT REPELLANT!!...and we're glad you're OK.

We hope September will be a quieter month, with only the Midmonth Breakfast and Test Session both occurring the week after the regular meeting (which is a week late) on September 15th. The Breakfast will be at 8:30am at Seminole Wind, and the Test Session will be at the Thomas County EOC at 10am.

Steve, KJ4UKR, has been making the rounds of the Grady County Fire Stations where he installed new antennas and has been hooking up to them and checking them during our Nets, as well as on 146.55 MHz. simplex afterwards. They have performed flawlessly well so far and will stand in good stead when they are needed for a real event. Great Job Steve!

The ARES group is also gearing up for the **2012 SET exercise**, which will occur on October 6th at 8am and run for several hours. The scenario for this year is a widespread pandemic, which allows us to work with our healthcare partners.

A complete rundown is available on www.gaares.org if you'd like to have a look. If you want to be involved, and you aren't an ARES member, you're still welcome to take part and sign up afterwards if you like what you find. We'll call it an ARES "test-drive."

The local plans will be discussed on the SW District ARES Nets on Thursday nights at 9pm on the 145.17 repeater. Check in there with John and he can point you to where you need to be to help out.

As noted in last month's meeting, October 6th is also the date for the Spaghetti 100 Bike Race, which due to the SET; we won't be taking part in as a club. If there are some of you who do want to help though, let me know and I'll pass it on to the folks who are handling this event.

And that's enough of me for this month. I hope you'll join us at the Plaza on September 8th for the regular club meeting. Plan to arrive at 6pm if you want to have supper, and the meeting will commence at 7:30pm.

I hope to see YOU and your family there! 73,

Mike



The following members of our Radio Family have September Birthdays:

Peggy Bochkay – Sept. 2th

Amy Swicord – Sept. 4th

Mo Wright – Sept. 6th

Pat Wittenborn – Sept. 7th

Thomas James – Sept. 11th

Roy Alligood – Sept. 20th

Tommy James – Sept. 22th

Leann Doering – Sept. 24th

Don't see your birthday? Let us know at w4ucj@arrl.net



[A+ Test Results during the August Classes!](#)

The VE Team held test sessions following the classes held in August. The following folks got new licenses or upgraded their current license:

Kyle Swicord – New Tech – KK4LIJ

Jeff Norman (Ocilla, GA) – New Tech – KK4LIK

Ray Strickland - New General – KK4JRL

Gary Reid (Albany, GA) – New General – KK4KBA

Alan Slaughter – New Extra – KG4GAV

Alan also filled out paperwork to become a new VE for our group. The next test session will be held at the Thomas County EOC which is located at 1202 Remington Avenue in Thomasville. Time will be 10am on September 15th.

You don't have to pre-register...Walk-ins are welcome!



Field Day Kids hard at work!

The TARC Kid's Net is looking for more Check-Ins!!

Would you like to see YOUR kids become involved in Amateur Radio?

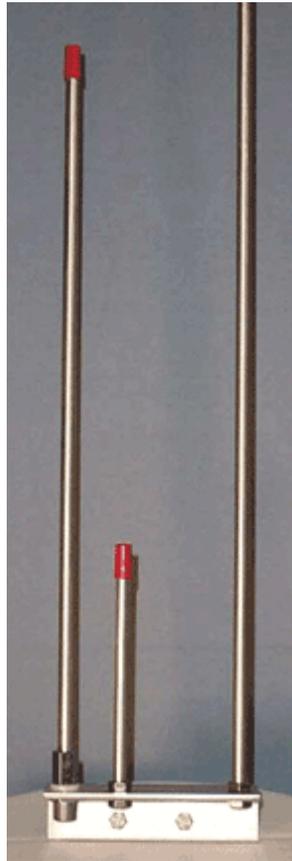
TARC sponsors a net for kids, hams or not, on Tuesday Nights at 8pm on the 145.17 repeater. Our Net Control, Tommy, KJ4SWI, wants to help your child overcome their "mike-fright" and be more comfortable with sitting down behind a radio.

If you're a "Ham-Parent" with non-licensed kids, they can also take part as third party check-ins with you as the control operator.

The Family that "hams together" has FUN together!!



Tommy will be looking for YOU and your kids on Tuesday Nights!!



Hello Lady and Gents,

Just to bring you up to date on the progress of the antennas. They are ordered and according to UPS they will be delivered to me on the 7th of this month.

WOW....what great timing. I will have them at the TARC meeting on Saturday the 8th. Just a reminder, they are \$33.00 each. Check or cash will be fine.

If you were to buy one from ARROW it would cost you \$54.00 with shipping included. We are saving like \$21.00 per antenna. All the antennas in this order have been claimed, but if you know anyone who might like to purchase one let me know, and we can get another order together.

73,

Steve, KJ4UKR

TARC Minutes, August 4, 2012

Mike, KE4FGF, opened the meeting at 7:30pm, welcoming everyone present and then making the following announcements:

- * The Midmonth Breakfast is cancelled because of August classes.
- * The Upgrade classes will be August 18th and 25th with a Test Session following each of these. If anyone needs a study guide, they need to let Mike know as soon as possible. The club passed a motion that the club will purchase the books for the instructors, and in the future will pay for any study guides ordered so that Mike doesn't have to do it.
- * The regular monthly Test session is cancelled due to the two sessions which follow class days.
- * The September meeting is one Saturday behind due to Labor Day, and will be on September 8th.

Minutes and Treasurer's Reports: Accepted as presented

Old Business

- * The Yard Sale went well, and the final funds should total around \$250. The exact total is unknown due to two final items awaiting pick-up.
- * The 195 Repeater is still awaiting repairs. John has sent many emails to Bill and has gotten no response. Scheduling everyone who needs to be present has proven problematic. Several people did report that the machine is not acting up as much as it has in the past, though there are problems to the west.
- * Website updates – Lowell reported that the suggested changes will occur in the week following the club meeting as we now have a club credit card to handle it.

New Business

* Remainder of Calendar for 2012-

Mike went over the rest of the events for this year and touched on several problems. October 6th has a conflict with the SET and the Spaghetti 100 both occurring that day. Because of that conflict the club voted to pass on the Spaghetti 100, as most folks who help are ARES members. The only other event for the month is October 27th, which is the Boston Mini Marathon. The November Fish Fry is scheduled for the 10th and will again be at the Morningside Methodist Church.

Mike then discussed making some changes to the Christmas Party in December. Rather than a restaurant meal, it has been suggested to do a family meal with smoked turkey and ham as main dishes and again hold it at Morningside. We could then all bring a side dish and have more time to enjoy being together. The idea was accepted and everyone present voted to do this. Mike has the date already set for December 8th, which is the second Saturday of the month.

* Grady Antenna Project: Steve, KJ4UKR, did a presentation on the Grady County Fire Department antenna installation.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 with 25 members and 1 visitor present.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Swicord, Secretary

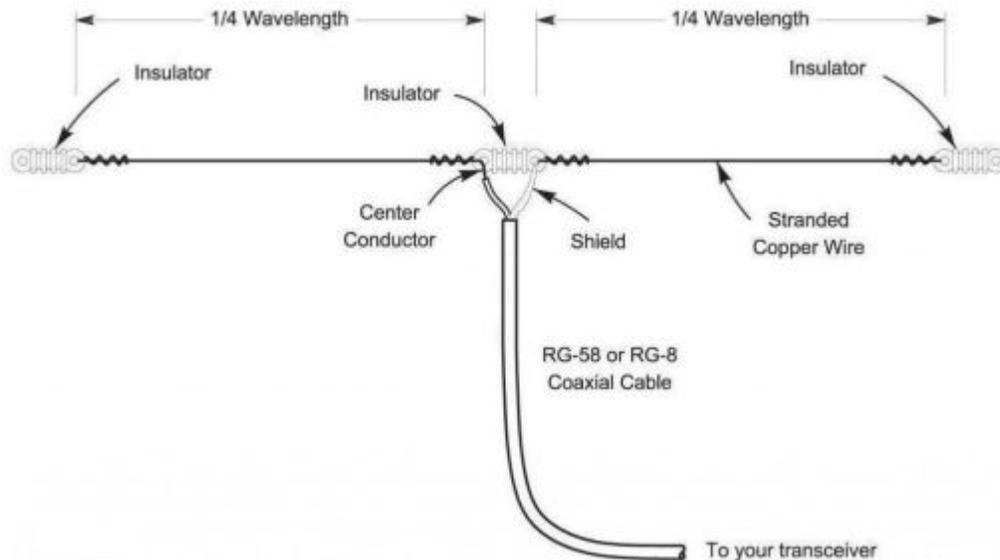
A Quick, Cheap, and Effective 10 Meter Dipole

With fall upon us we should be seeing better conditions on 10 meters. Those of you who have Technician class licenses can get in on the HF fun on a low budget on 10. And if you've upgraded to General or beyond you might find some ideas worth using in this article.

10 meters is a friendly band with lots of room and groups like Ten-Ten (contact N0TW for info) keep the activity level high. The propagation is a very interesting mix of modes. The band can be open short, which for us here in GA is the Midwest, the eastern US, and the Caribbean, on sporadic E-skip, no matter what the solar conditions. And if the MUF goes high enough on any given day you might find yourself talking to someone on the other side of the world on F-layer skip. If the band is open high power is not needed.

First you'll of course need an HF rig. Maybe you've already made the plunge and have a rig with 10 meters on it. If so, you're ready. But even if you're on a low budget, the Radio Shack HTX-100s and HTX-10s can be picked up on the online swap pages for around \$100 in good condition. So, all that is needed is some coax, an antenna, and a place to hang it, and you are ready to join in the HF fun.

One of the great things about 10 meters is that good antennas are relatively small and easy to make. Some wire, some insulators made from PVC fittings or pieces, and some rope are all you're going to need, along with enough coax to reach back from the antenna to the shack, which brings us to the dipole.



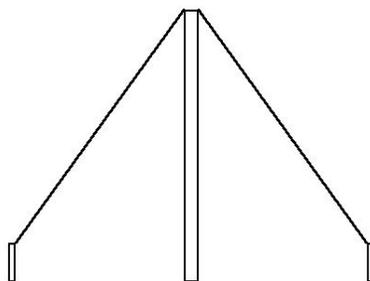
The half wave dipole is the basic antenna building block. So let's make one. The formula we had to learn for our test, $468/F$, using 28.4 MHz (the center of the Technician phone section) for F , gives us 16.48 feet for the antenna length. So let's call it 16.5 feet. Add about 6 inches at each end so we can have some extra length for fastening our end and center insulators, so we're at 17 and a half feet of wire. Double that wire back on itself securely and cut it into two equal lengths. Drill a couple holes at each end of a short piece of PVC or a straight PVC coupler for the end insulators for each end of your dipole.

For a cheap and easy center insulator, a 1/2 or 3/4 inch PVC Tee fitting works great, and at 50 cents or so is not going to break your budget. Drill some holes at each end to loop your antenna wire through so the Tee fitting takes the mechanical strain off the electrical connection to your feedline. To do this, assuming you are using RG8x coax, drill a hole through the top of the center of the Tee large enough to pass your coax and loop it around back to itself below the insulator. A wire tie here around both sections will keep the coax connection from bearing the strain of the coax drop from the center insulator.

Make sure you have the shield braid of your coax connected to one side of your dipole, and the center conductor to the other. You may want to use extra wire for this instead of stripping your coax long enough to reach. Whichever way you go, make sure the open end of the coax is not open to the weather as the braid will wick moisture into the coax and ruin it over time. So please weatherproof the exposed coax. Liquid electrical tape, the kind that comes in a can and you can paint on, works great for this.

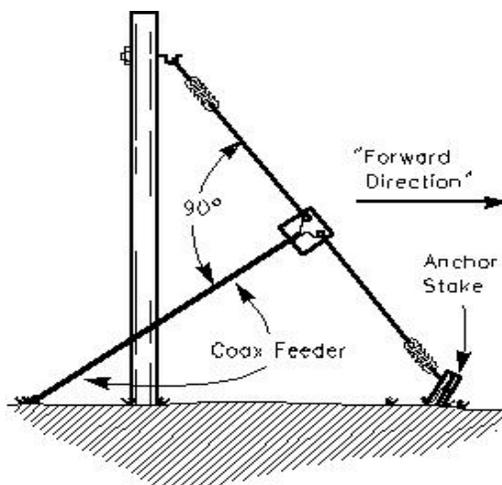
So now we have a dipole. Let's get it up in the air. The theory books tell us that a great height for a horizontal antenna is a full wavelength. Luckily on 10 meters that is only 33 feet or so. A couple of convenient trees will do the trick. If you are lacking trees but have "A" tree, then you can use this dipole as an "Inverted Vee" or "Sloper."

As an "Inverted Vee," the center included angle should be at least 90 degrees, as a sloper the angle to ground somewhere around 45 degrees.



Inverted V

Hung as a dipole the antenna will favor the directions broadside to the wire. As an Inverted Vee, the pattern becomes rounder but still favors the broadside directions.



Sloper

If you mount it as a sloper it will favor the direction it points to, but will have useful gain in most directions except 180 degrees from the way it is pointed. If hung as a sloper, then the feedline needs to come away perpendicular to the plane of the antenna for at least a half wavelength (16 or 17 feet.)

So we can see that this one antenna can be hung three ways. And by now you may be asking, what about the SWR? Why didn't we check it? Well now that we have decided where to put it, we can check

it. Remember that your ground characteristics, terrain, and surrounding objects can all affect the antenna swr. And the characteristics will be different if installed as a dipole vs. inverted vee vs. sloper.

So hang it and check. If you find your swr less than 1.5 to 1 at your frequencies of interest, then just leave it alone. Since we started with this antenna a tad long (easier to cut than add wire) you may need to trim a few inches off each end equally.

If it turns out you have to add wire, clip some short lengths on the ends with alligator clips and see what needs to be added. The extra length can just be "tacked on" to the ends and left hanging down.

With luck your antenna will be close enough on the first try and you can get on the band and start operating. One of the great things about the half wave dipole is that it won't require an antenna tuner on the frequency it is cut for. At meaningful heights it is a great performer.

You'll notice I haven't mentioned the word balun? There may be a case where one is necessary on one of these antennas. I haven't found one in 48 years of building these types of antennas but that doesn't mean you won't. Beads or an "ugly" coax choke are the cheap way to go if you decide you need one.

So here you have a cheap to make, yet very effective antenna to get you on 10 meters. Here are some final comments to help you on your way. Use good quality, name brand coax; For 10 meters use at least RG8X. Get your antenna in the clear. Measure twice, cut once.

Thanks to Robbie, KK4FGM for the inspiration to do this topic. His excitement about his new 10 meter contacts using his home made dipole is contagious. And thanks to NOTW as well. You can find many great antenna ideas in his past columns by searching the back newsletter pages on the website.

As always, any questions to ny4d@arrl.net

73, *Lowell*

A "DX Report" from Costa Rica

I recently traveled to Costa Rica to operate in the 10-10 Summer QSO Party. The attached photos show some of my operating conditions. Operation was from the QTH of Keko, TI5KD, which is located just 15 minutes from the San Jose airport.

The first thing that happened was that Keko was not there to pick me up. I did not take his phone number with me and there was no internet service outside of the airport after I had cleared security. So

I hired a cab who took me to an internet cafe where I searched and found Keko's phone number and called him up.



Keko, TI5KD

He drove to the internet cafe and picked me up and took me to his QTH. Next stop was the super market and I bought \$100 worth of groceries that was only about 3 sacks of stuff! Wow. Welcome to Costa Rica where prices are supposed to be cheap but they are not!

Gasoline is \$6 per gallon. License for a small motorcycle is \$200.



Keko's station consists of 7 towers, all in the 80 to 100 ft height. He has an assortment of beams, loops, dipoles, and quads. Most of Keko's radios are not operational and I had to have one that gave me headphone capability for the contest.

I ended up using an Icom 706 which did not have a VOX that worked - so I used a hand mike the entire contest and typed into my logging program with my right hand. This got to be quite an exercise as I ended the contest with 781 QSOs for 1198 points. My closest competitor in the USA had 500 QSOs.

Costa Rica is composed of many small shops located very close together. Many lots are (I'm estimating) 1/10 of an acre in size. There are many pedestrians out walking on the streets and lots of motorcycle traffic that weaves in and out of traffic.

There are fast food restaurants in San Jose but not in the smaller surrounding cities. We searched for two commonly found items here in the states – Never-Seize and NO-OX used to prevent oxidation on aluminum wiring. We could find neither product.

Keko said that the interest rates for credit cards run 53%!

Hope you enjoy the photos. I have more photos but did not want to send a large quantity at a time.

Enjoyed emails from Chantal as she used to live down there and enjoyed the outlying parts of the country very much.

I got to talk to several hams in Tallahassee, **K4BNF**, **KK4HHL**, **WN4N**, **KA4KOE**, **WA6POZ**, **AJ4RJ** and I'm sure I've left out some others from this area.

I had a ball playing with Keko's Rat Terriers and also got to attend a radio club meeting in San Jose. Was able to locate a 6m repeater here from KBOY and we are going to ship it down to Keko to install. It will be the FIRST and ONLY 6m repeater in Costa Rica.

Cheers! *Terry*, T15/N0TW

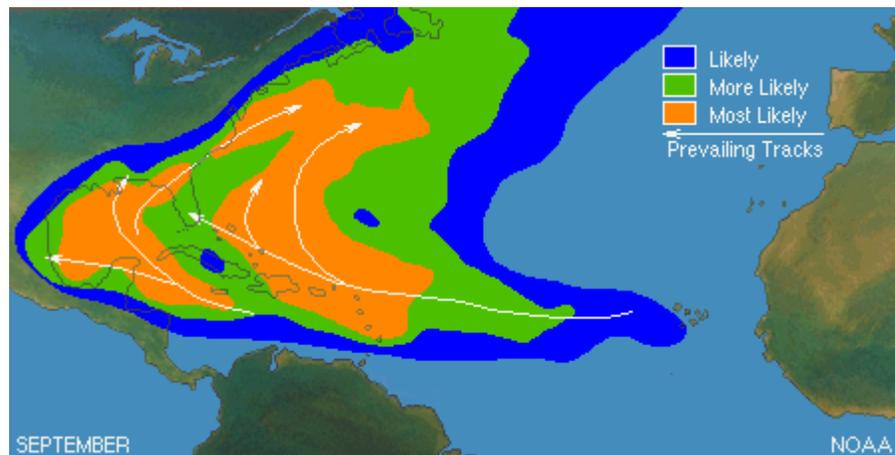


Weather Center

The month of September marks the heart of the hurricane season and this year has already proven relatively busy with 13 named storms to date. When we compare this to 50 year average totals of 11 named storms in a year and 6 named storms by September 1st it shows just how active the first half of the hurricane season has been.

Historically the most active portion of the season begins in the middle of August and last until the end of October with a peak around September the 10th. With the bulk of this peak season still ahead of us, the potential certainly exist for this year to be a significantly above average season in terms of the total number of storms.

During September conditions are often optimal for tropical storm formation with low wind shear values and very warm sea temperatures to fuel the storms. Tropical cyclone formation can occur



just about anywhere in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico.

Tropical Storm Debbie and Hurricane Isaac were both good reminders that although the high winds of these storms are certainly destructive, water both in the form of a storm, high waves as well as copious amounts of rainfall from slow moving tropical systems can cause wide spread flooding treats as well. Also, tornado formation on the right side of approaching storms can be a significant threat as well with several confirmed tornadoes in the NWS Tallahassee forecast area from rotating storms in the outer bands of Isaac when the storm was making landfall in Louisiana. This helps to illustrate the fact that the impacts are often well removed from the center and landfall areas, particularly with large storms. This is a key reason we should not focus on the actual forecasted landfall locations when considering the impacts and our level of preparation with a tropical event.

Stewart Chandler

KJ4GOJ



Don't forget the Ragchew Breakfast!

Every Friday Morning at 8:30am at Seminole Wind!



Southwest Georgia ARES

We've been having some good discussions on the ARES Net at 9pm on Thursday nights. If you're not checking in here, you might want to think about it.

Recent discussions have centered on what you'd do if faced with rough weather. If faced with a hurricane and a mandatory evacuation, would you go or stay? What if your weather radio went off at 3am and told you an F3 tornado was only a few minutes away from your home...what do you do next?

You don't have to be an ARES member to participate, and you may find that your interest will grow if you listen in.

The Simulated Emergency Test (SET) is on October 6th, and deals with handling traffic from the Health organizations around the state following an outbreak of Pneumonic Plague. The scenario itself is available for viewing at <http://www.gaares.org/documents/2012SET.pdf>

Getting involved with this exercise will give you a chance to see what ARES actually does, and will also be good training for understanding more about Amateur Radio in general, and again, ARES membership isn't mandatory.

Give it some thought...we'd love to have you in the group!

The Importance of Being "Elmer"

I got the idea for this while sitting at a local restaurant waiting for my mother to join me for supper. A car pulled up outside the glass doors and a woman, most likely a nurse, two teenagers, and a slightly built elderly woman got out of the car. Once inside, the elderly woman had a seat next to me and announced to the nurse that she wanted to sit down, catch her breath, **and wait for Elmer**, who was parking the car.

They left her sitting there and in a moment, "Elmer" came in the door, helped her up from the chair and into the dining room. For a moment, I was taken back to the scene in the movie "Driving Miss Daisy" when she tells her driver and companion, Hoke, "You're my best friend...you are."

Now, you don't hear the name "Elmer" much anymore, other than in cartoons involving "wabbit hunting", but one place you do hear it is in Amateur Radio, where it refers to a trusted mentor who helped you get going license wise and probably helped you set up your first station. How did these persons come to be known as "Elmers?" I don't know the answer to that, but I do know they fill a very important void in our hobby, for new operators both young and old.

A number of times in our own group, a youngster has decided that they wanted to be a ham, and their eyes were wide in wonder about all the things they could do in this hobby. Following along behind would be an equally wide eyed parent, not wanting to discourage the child, but also totally at a loss as to how to proceed in a hobby they knew nothing about "technically."

While our radio clubs are all about providing that kind of help, I don't totally buy into a comment from a few years back about it taking a village to raise a child. Yes, the group is important as a means of

support, but I know a lot of us had that one special person, who took the time to explain stuff and just generally be available if you got in trouble.

Questions are a lot easier to ask in front of one person than if you are in front of a crowd. I've noted that we have a few folks who come in with a lot of enthusiasm and then shortly afterward, you don't see them anymore. By the same token, there are a lot of newcomers who do stay in this hobby and I believe that a good reason why may be that a caring "Elmer," standing quietly in the background, took that person under their wing.

My own introduction to this ancient and honored custom came following one of our test sessions a few years ago. We had a young man, a preacher's son, who had started coming to the meetings and was quickly working his way up the ladder. He wanted to be able to be part of a church related HF radio net and knowing his father made just enough to get by with their large family, the young man was working around the neighborhood doing odd jobs to pay for his own equipment.

He'd made enough money to buy an older Drake radio from someone in the church. On this particular night, he'd passed both the Extra written AND 20 wpm Morse code! No small accomplishment as back then ALL the tests had more teeth to bite you with than those today. Did I mention this young man was 2 weeks short of his 12th birthday?

Following the test, one of the VEs (who was from Tallahassee and also one of my Elmers) congratulated him and the boy asked timidly what he needed to do about an antenna for his radio and also, where he might find information to make it work as the owner's manual was long since gone. Placing a fatherly arm around the lad's shoulders, they had a seat together and after a few minutes, I got called in to be the delivery man of a new antenna the VE had agreed to build for him. They'd already drawn out on paper what the design would be, putting the boy's recently acquired knowledge to work (If Elmer does it all for you, you don't learn nothin'...right?) My assignment was to get the antenna to him and help him get it up in the air.

Also, he gave us both information on how the Drake was probably set up and I agreed to help get him going there too. After the kid and his father left, I also got the fatherly arm around the shoulder and the explanation of the importance of being "Elmer" to the new young ham.

While I had resolved already to help the young man with his set-up, it did warm my heart to witness a firsthand example of "elmering" in action.

They've both moved on now, "Elmer" moved out in the Florida panhandle to look after his aging parents and the young man, Mark, moved to Tennessee when his father was accepted as pastor at a bigger church.

While I learned a lot technically from that Elmer, there were far more important lessons about life in general and concern for others that mixed in with the radio stuff and that's as it should be.

I've heard similar stories about how a person's "radio daddy" came to their rescue, In particular, a story about a car with a new paint job, and an antenna being painted chrome silver to look good with the new

car and then mysteriously not wanting to work anymore comes to mind. Again, his Elmer quietly suggested looking at the paint ingredients to see if it might be metal based (it was) and thus shorting the antenna to ground.

The best part of it all is when you have done something good, there's that smile and a fatherly pat on the shoulder or when running into that special person at a tailgate party and getting a big bear hug because he's glad to see you after so long and a handshake just isn't enough....

We've all got these people in our background and they are a large part of the ham we are today. If you haven't made contact lately, now might be the time to give back some of the time they invested in you way back when...So, now do you understand the importance of being "Elmer"?

In honor of WR4Z

de KE4FGF

Where were You?



In a few days, the anniversary of a terrible event that changed all our lives will occur...the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Do you remember where you were when you heard? Most people were stunned, and couldn't believe something like this could actually happen here in this country...

Quite simply, the world changed for all of us in that instant...



While the world has moved on, the memories are still there, and fresh...

And, like Pearl Harbor, we'll never forget what happened in this place.

Our prayers continue to be with the victims and their families...

We remember 9/11