

Section Manager
Mike Douglas, W4MDD

Assistant Section Manager
SM Emeritus
Darrell Davis, KT4WX

Assistant Section
Manager Executive
Ben Henley, KI4IGX

Assistant Section
Manager Administrative
Randy Payne, K4EZM

Assistant Section Manager
Legal Affairs
Biff Craine, K4LAW

Assistant Section Manager
SM Emeritus & Tampa Bay Area
Dee Turner, N4GD

Assistant Section Manager
PIC/ACC Assistant
Steve Muller, KM4VRK

Assistant Section Manager
Publications
Jim Weslager, K3WR

Affiliated Club Coordinator
Open

Public Information Coordinator
Rich Kennedy, N4ESS

Section Emergency Coordinator
Ben Henley, KI4IGX

Section Traffic Manager
Doug Williams, N2DW

Section Youth Coordinator
Christine Duez, KK4KJN

Technical Coordinator
Darrell Davis, KT4WX

SECTION MANAGER'S MUSINGS

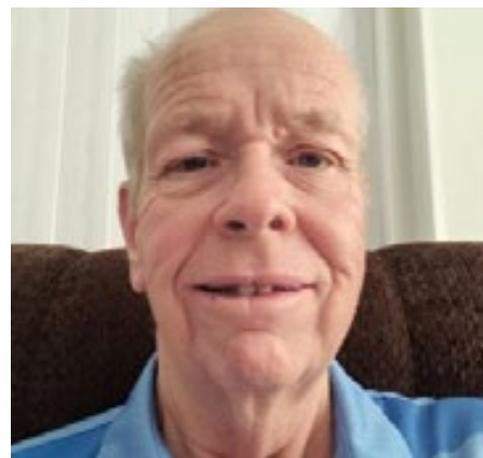
BY MIKE DOUGLAS, W4MDD
ARRL WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA SECTION MANAGER

HELLO FELLOW AMATEURS

Already, the second month of the New Year where does the time go? I am extremely glad I got back from the Chicago area before the snow came. According to my brother up there, there has been 2 feet of snow, burr!

Those of you that participated in the virtual Hamcation, I hope it was an exciting experience. I understand due to the Pandemic that was the only option, but I was so looking forward to attending. It would have been a new experience for me, as Section Manager. I would have been enjoying the camaraderie through a different lens.

Also due to the Pandemic, the 7th Annual TECHCON will be a remote meeting. I know



Darrell, KT4WX, our past Section Manager, and others were really hoping for the in-person forum. Hopefully that awful bug will die, and things can get to normal.

For now, 73

Mike, W4MDD

7TH ANNUAL TECHCON TO GO VIRTUAL - FRIDAY AFTERNOON WORKSHOP CANCELLED.

“The 7th Annual TECHCON which was scheduled for Friday February 26 and Saturday February 27, 2021, to take place at the Polk County EOC, will transition to a virtual conference to be held via the Section Zoom account

Darrell Davis KT4WX, Chairman of TECHCON, made the following comments about the 7th Annual TECHCON going virtual, “I deeply regret this decision and it was not made easily. After consulting with those who are scheduled to speak and our Section Manager Mike Douglas W4MDD, I decided it was in our best interest to have the 7th Annual TECHCON as a virtual event, due to rising numbers of COVID-19 infections in the State of Florida, and also due to the reservations that many of our presenters and even some of our attendees had expressed in doing TECHCON in person. This will allow for continuity and not put us into the position of not having TECHCON in 2021 at all.”

As of February 16, that due to logistical difficulties, and other circumstances beyond our control, that the Friday Afternoon Workshop scheduled for Friday February 26, 2021 is cancelled. We apologize to all for this inconvenience.

The speaking schedule, brief description of presentations list, and Zoom Meeting information for the 7th



Annual TECHCON are now published on the TECHCON page on the Section website at <http://arrlwcf.org/wcf-special-events/wcftechconference/>.

The Saturday General Presentations will start on Saturday February 27th at 0900 and go through 1200, with a break for lunch from 1200 until 1300, and then start again at 1300 and go until 1700. The Zoom meeting room will open at 0830, and attendance will be limited to 100 attendees due to the terms of our Zoom account. The Saturday General Presentations will be recorded for later viewing, and the link to that recording will be published on the TECHCON page on the Section website.

If you are planning on attending, and have not done so already, please register at the TECHCON registration form on the Section website at <http://arrlwcf.org/section-forms/wcftechconfregistration/>.

SECTION NET INFORMATION

Here is a list of the current Section Nets that are in operation: Please feel free to check in and participate on these nets as you are able to do so.

| DAY / NET | NET | NET TIME | SYSTEM/FREQ | NET MANAGER |
|-----------|---|------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Daily | Eagle Net (West Central Florida Section NTS Net) | 2030 hours | NI4CE Repeater System | Dave Rockwell W4PXE |
| Monday | West Central Florida Section ARES and Information Net | 1930 hours | NI4CE Repeater System | J.C. Rivero K4RTC |
| Thursday | West Central Florida Section Technical Net | 2100 hours | NI4CE Repeater System | Jim Peterson AF2W |
| Saturday | West Central Florida Section ARES and Information Net | 0730 hours | 3940 KHz | Randy Payne K4EZM |

The Section ARES Information Net on 3940 KHz will start at either 0730 or immediately following the Florida Phone Traffic Net whichever is later.

For more information on the NI4CE Repeater System, including frequencies and a coverage map go to <http://www.ni4ce.org> or visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ni4ce>.

The ARRL West Central Florida Section wishes to thank the West Central Florida Group Inc. for the use of the NI4CE Repeater System for the Section Nets that are on VHF and UHF.



SECTION TRAFFIC MANAGERS REPORT

by Doug Williams N2DW
Section Traffic Manager, ARRL West Central Florida Section

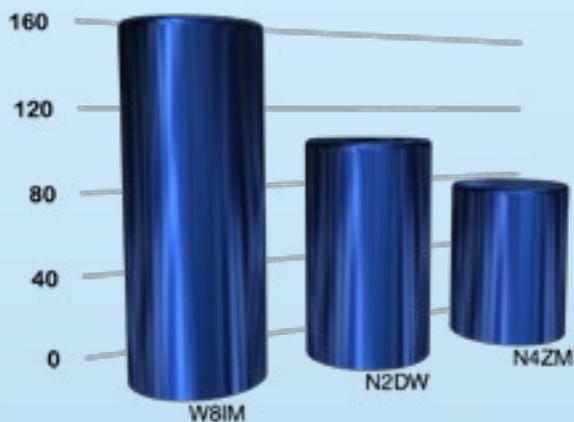
West Central Florida STM Reports
December 2020

Station Activity Reports (SAR)



| Call Sign | Originate | Receive | Sent | Delivered | Total |
|-----------|-----------|---------|------|-----------|-------|
| N4ZM | 12 | 13 | 12 | 9 | 46 |
| W8IM | 1 | 8 | 21 | 1 | 31 |
| K4EEI | 2 | 2 | 16 | 1 | 21 |
| N2DW | 0 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 15 |
| KM4BRQ | 2 | 4 | 2 | 41 | 2 |

Public Service Honor Roll



| Call Sign | Total |
|-----------|-------|
| W8IM | 156 |
| N2DW | 105 |
| N4ZM | 80 |

West Central Net Activity Reports

| Net Name | Sessions | Stations | Traffic | Minutes | Manager |
|-----------------|----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| EAGLE NET | 31 | 1325 | 35 | 964 | W4PXE |
| SPARC | 40 | 754 | 44 | 1462 | KN4LUZ |
| CERT (St. Pete) | 2 | 42 | 2 | 61 | KN4LUZ |

AN EASY TO BUILD ANTENNA FOR VHF

Chris Bloxsom AA4CB

ARRL Public information Officer

Need an antenna for on-the-go and one that is easy to transport? Or how about a project for your club to build? Since a lot of us are stuck in the house and can not go out what better to do indoors then to build yourself an antenna. I believe this is a good project for a lot of reasons. It is easy to construct and will not cost you a lot of cash. You probably have the parts laying around your shack. For me it was a case of too many radios and not enough antennas. I like to have all the radios connected to their own antenna and not have to switch between them. In addition to my main VHF/UHF base radio I have 4 Allstar/Echolink nodes setup here and an

APRS digipeater. I already have a bunch of verticals on the roof as well as up in some trees. If I put another one up, on the roof, I think the YL is going to shoot me.

I need some type of vertical antenna. Something with a bit of gain to it. Something that hides well in a tree so the YL does not give me a hard time about it. I did not want to buy another antenna. So I decided to build a J-pole antenna from 300 ohm twinlead. I did a quick Google search on twinlead antenna and came back with many results. I choose the plans from WB3GCK's website. The instructions were easy to understand and there are diagrams on what and where to cut, solder, and tape. So here is my story on how I built the 2-meter J-pole.



Tools required for this antenna build are quite simple:

- Tape ruler
- Wire cutters
- Soldering iron 15 to 35 watt
- Solder 60/40 rosin core



Following the instructions on the website, the first thing to do is cut a section of the TV twinlead to 60 inches long. I laid it out flat on the table and gave it a snip at the 60" mark.



Once that it done pick one of the ends and draw a line on the cable ½ inch up. This will be the bottom of the antenna. Remove the insulation around the wires, trying not to cut the wires. You can take the two wires and twist them together. Now warm up that soldering iron.



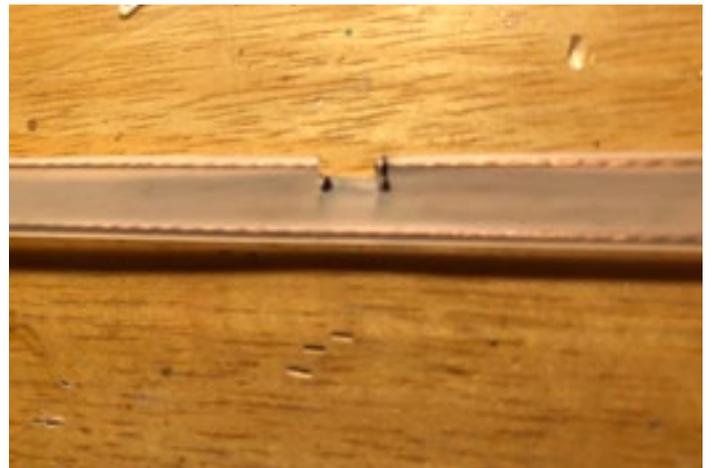
(While holding the correct end of the soldering iron.....Sorry poor Internet joke that has been around) Use the soldering iron to heat up the twisted wires and apply some solder and it should flow right on to the wires. Let it cool down for a minute and you can clip off the excess wire that is not needed.



Now for the hard part of this whole build. From the bottom of the antenna measure up 1.25 inches and mark the twinlead. You will need to remove the insulation around BOTH wires. Just the wires, leaving the insulation intact in the middle. I used a razor blade and nibbled at it until I had a quarter inch of the plastic off above the line. When you get this nicely notched, I suggest that you tin both wired with a bit of solder. This will make the wires stronger at this point as you move the antenna around you would not want it to break at the exposed area. It will also make attaching the feed line easier later.



Lets go back to the table and lay out the antenna flat again. You will need to measure 15.25 inches from where you just nibbled and tinned the twinlead wire. At this mark cut a .25-inch notch into ONLY ONE SIDE of the twinlead.



Lets make the last cut that we need to do on the twinlead. Place the twinlead back on the table and from the bottom of the antenna, where we twisted and soldered the two wires, measure up 54 inches and CUT. This is now the length of the antenna. Do not put that soldering iron away yet the most important connection is coming up. So, clean the tip of it and put it in its holder.



You will need a length of coax to attach to this antenna. I had an old magnetic mount antenna laying around the garage with a bad magnet. So I cut the cable off and used it. There was already a PL-259 connector on one end. You can make your own cable to whatever length you want and attach the connector of your choice. Some people put PL-259's on some people put a BNC. To each their own. You will need to prepare the cable so it can be soldered to the antenna. I started by removing about 1 inch of the black PVC jacket and separated the braid from the center conductor. Lightly tin the braid and the center conductor.

VERY IMPORTANT: You must attach the center conductor to the side of the twinlead that was not notched out. If you reverse them then most likely you will not be able to get the SWR down to a usable range.

Helpful hint here --> You are going to want to make a small hook shape on the tinned center conductor. I found it a real pain trying to keep the center conductor wire next to the tinned twinlead and try to solder. I do not have enough hands to hold everything in place. The hook makes it a bit easier to solder them together. I cheated and used a plastic clamp to hold the coax to the feed-point. Heat up the solder that is already on both wires. Once you see them melt and merge you can apply just a bit of new solder to complete the connection. Give it a minute to cool down and do the same with the braid. Cut off any extra wire coming off the solder connections. You can now seal this connection from the weather by wrapping some black electrical tape around it tightly. Depending on if you want to make this a roll up antenna its good to use the way it is. If you want to mount this outside, I suggest putting it in a length of PVC pipe and capping the ends. Make a hole of course for the coax to come out of.



Let's go test out the antenna. I went outside and tossed the fishing line over the tree and pulled up the antenna up. Hooked it up to the MFJ 259 antenna analyzer and the results were pretty good. SWR 1.9 at 147.5 MHz and 1.4 at 146.52 MHz. So next I plugged in the HT and spun the dial to a couple of local repeaters in the area. I was able to get some good signal reports even on repeaters that were about 20 plus miles away. Looks like this will be a good addition to anybody's go-box or if you need a second antenna for 2m.

Other good sources of information for J pole antenna construction:

<https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Public%20Service/TrainingModules/jpole-dual-band.pdf>

<https://www.hamuniverse.com/2meter300ohmslimjim.html>

<https://www.k6arp.org/300-ohm-twin-lead-j-pole-antenna-design/>

<https://youtu.be/b84ZRGUw1oU>

<https://youtu.be/ql6zWMZ1dEU>

One of the things I like the most about amateur radio is that you can build and experiment with antennas. I hope that some of this information here has been useful to you. So, go ahead and give it a shot , go build this antenna or any antenna. Be active and keep the hobby alive!! I would love to see your finished antenna, email me a picture and how you did it to my email address.



Chris Bloxson AA4CB
@aa4cb_chris aa4cb@arrl.net
PIO/Webmaster/Social media manager for EPARS, GCARC, N3PER, Pasco Co. ARES. Licensed for over 30 years. Digi mode fanatic

73 de AA4CB
“build it, learn it, teach it”

MAKE THAT COAX WATERPROOF !

I mentioned that water/weather proofing your antenna connections is very important. The last thing you want is water in your feed-line. Water can take that expensive cable that you have running up the tower and screw up all that hard work you put into your station. I have a couple of cables that go out of the shack and have been extended by adding a coupler and more cable.

I used this on all my outdoor cables. You can also seal the connection on the antenna where the feed-line starts. Wrap it around the PL-259. I found this product in Home Depot for less than \$5.

The picture on the above right I sealed over a year ago.

For some professional advice on water proofing coax connections go to the DX engineering website.

<https://static.dxengineering.com/pdf/>

[WeatherProofingCoax-TechTip.pdf](#)



Peace River Radio Assoc.



W4DUX



Presents the

Charlotte County

Saturday March 6th, 2021

Starting time at 8:00 AM Coffee, Soft Drinks, Donuts available

New Location:

30337 Cedar Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33982

5 1/2 miles east on Rte 17 from the I-75 / Rte 17 interchange

Follow the posted Hamfest signs after crossing the Peace River. (Talk in on 147.255)

50/50 Raffle at 11:00 AM (your Presence is required)

General Admission \$7

Tailgating-- No Charge!

Covered open air tables available

Contact: Dave Beck (WB4GVZ) prior to event to reserve your table (A1steel@verizon.net)

Need more info? Visit our website: WWW.PRRA.club

Talk-in 147.255

Tone 136.5

Zephyrhills Area Amateur Radio Club

— SPRING TAILGATE SWAP MEET —
SATURDAY MARCH 20th, 2021

St. Elizabeth
Episcopal Church
5855 16th St.
Zephyrhills, FL

Hamfest Contact
Charles Nelson
KE7UTH@ARRL.NET



8am TO 12 noon
Vendor setup 7AM
\$5 entrance fee
Club donation
Outdoor only selling- NO inside



Amateur Radio testing at 9 AM sharp.
We will be following ALL Covid-19 rules.No mask=no test.
You MUST register for exam. NO walk-ins.
email kfex@arrl.net to reserve a seat.