

# THE SPARC GAP

St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

## The President's Key-board

The January 1999 *After Holidays Party* was enjoyed by many SPARC members and their guests! Thanks to Emmett, WA4AKH, and Margie, WA4TVL, the Four Coins restaurant was ready for our Fourth Annual Party! There are some pictures of this event in this issue of the GAP. Thanks to all those who attended the event. Without you it would not have been a success!

## A Note About Safety

The days are starting to get longer for a change. More daylight means more time to spend out doors in the cool temperatures to work on towers and antennas. If this is the time of year that you choose to do some maintenance, please remember to observe all of the safety items that you have ever heard, including:

1. Watch out for power lines.
2. Make sure the transmitter cannot be activated while you are in contact with any antenna components.
3. Try not to do any extensive maintenance by yourself. Ask for some help if the work is beyond what one person can safely accomplish.
4. Talk to a fellow HAM about your proposed work. Maybe you have overlooked something....could it be possible?
5. Wear protective clothing including gloves, eye protection, and proper shoes.
6. Have all the items and tools available that you may need. Be sure that you are satisfied with the condition and proper operation of these items.

I am sure there are more items that should be

on a list like the one above. The point is to put some thought into what you are about to do. Take a little extra time to plan out your work so that the work can be done safely. This is a fun hobby/service. Working safely will help assure that your time after the work will be spent enjoying a QSO on the air, not trying to figure out how to work the key or mike button with a bandaged hand!



## Thank You

Please join me in saying thank you to those HAMS that help keep the club going.....All the board members, station trustees & engineering teams, our newsletter editor Pete, KD4ETS, and those that help out whenever they can. If you can, have an eyeball QSO with them, shake their hand and say *THANKS!*

73's Cecil, KE4EYI

.....  
: Thanks again to Donn Davis,  
: N4KII, for the great pictures!  
: .....

## REPEATER TIPS

Submitted by Emmett West, WA4AKH

Greetings and salutations to all members of SPARC! Once again father time has changed, no more is he the experienced "old man" of 1998 but the new "infant" of 1999. Along with the change comes new learning experiences and reinforcements of old habits, new resolutions and the prospect of many fun filled times on the air. Here are a few helpful tips and suggestions to help make using the SPARC repeater(s) fun and enjoyable.

*Know your radio.* In order to transmit and receive properly on a repeater you have to know what offset that is used. SPARC is on 147.060 with a + 600 offset. Check the squelch and volume control on your radio. You must be able to hear a received signal or the absence of voices on a frequency to determine if that frequency is in use. Don't just turn your radio on and broadcast, someone may be using the frequency, or repeater, and is in the middle of a QSO. Give yourself some time, wait a few seconds and then broadcast.

Always remember that what you transmit *listeners will hear*. Think what you want to say and what kind of image that you want to project.

When accessing the phone patch/autodial remember to identify your station *before* using the patch, make your call, identify when you close the patch and identify when you clear the repeater after your patch. Weak signals result in poor phone patch operations. If you want to experiment with the tone features of the repeater don't forget to identify *before* you experiment and after you are finished.

Remember that a repeater extends the range of a hand-held, but the signal from the hand-held must first reach the repeater. Give your radio a chance; use "a real antenna" not just "a leaky dummy load" (J-pole, quad, hot rod, mag. mount) just about anything is better than a hand-held antenna and if you don't have any other antenna, then find the area that your radio receives the best and chances are that your radio will transmit the best in that location (hot spot). A weak signal received on a repeater is retransmitted as a weak signal.

When hearing a QSO in progress and you decide to join the QSO, wait for a pause in the con-

versation (hopefully there will be pauses) and give your call sign or comments that pertain to the existing QSO. After all, you want to join in, not dominate their QSO.

If you need to use the repeater for a quick call, just ask the parties involved in a QSO for a "break" to make a quick call, make your call and then turn the repeater back to the ongoing QSO.

I guess this could all be summed up by using the Golden Rule: "*Do unto to others as you would have others do unto you.*"

Thanks for your cooperation and enjoy the use of the SPARC repeater(s)!

Thanks to D & D Battery for their help in paying for this publication. Please visit them and let them know that their support is appreciated!



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## NET CONTROLLERS

Being a net controller is a rewarding experience. You get to know quite a few local hams and you get to participate in traffic handling for the NTS (National Traffic Systems). Hats off to all that have volunteered over the years to serve in this vital club function. The SPARC net is held nightly. If you are able to act as net controller one night per week, then please contact Freddy KF4FCW at 321-4670 or catch him on the net. Currently, there are several nights available to willing hams. If you have never been a net controller, this is your chance. Don't miss out on the fun!



## Lake Maggorie

Submitted by Mark Farr, N9MIU

Well everyone, once again it's time to clean out your shack, dust the boat anchors off, and paint anything that does not move (or at least move fast!). I'm talking about Lake Maggorie! The first Sunday in May is just around the corner and what a perfect way to recycle your junk, uh, I mean your treasures, and boost the local SPARC economy.

The best tailgate/hamfest starts officially at 8:00 AM on the first Sunday in May. As always, admission is FREE! I have it on good authority that there will be hot coffee and doughnuts. For those who are watching their weight, we will remove the center part and only have the round part available! I've also heard that for a small donation, cold liquid refreshment may be had. I know there are those in ham-land (like me) who really enjoy those early morning breakfast dogs. You have to be quick 'cause those babies can really run fast so you have to move real quite so you can sneak up on them.

In the past I have seen the weather do exactly what mother nature wanted, so plan on a sunny, rainy, calm or blustery day and you should be set for an enjoyable time. Do not forget to bring your wallet cause I know that there will be hams that will part with their most prized piece of equipment for a modest exchange of mutually agreed upon currency. Trading has been known to occur.

Come on down to Lake Maggorie, right around 39th Ave S. and ML King Dr. and have fun swapping lies, meeting old friends and making new friends! Hope to see you there. Talk in will be on the SPARC 2-meter repeater 147.060+ and 444.475+ repeater.

### Coming Soon to a Lake Near You

One of SPARC's Biggest Events of the Year!

**The Lake Maggorie Swap Meet**  
Sunday, May 2 Starting At 8:00 AM

#### CLUB OFFICERS

President:

*Cecil Wagner KE4EYI, Phone 394-9019*

Vice-President: *Dee Turner N2MNC*

Secretary: *Rick Rutan K4BNE*

Treasurer: *Donn Davis N4KII*

Board Members:

*Mark Farr N9MIU*

*Freddie Luneburg KF4FCW*

*Nick Nickels KM4MJ*

#### OTHER CONTACTS

Repeater Trustee:

*Emmett West WA4AKH*

Club Station W4GAC Trustee:

*Ann Shaver WH2E*

Webmaster: *Pete Stephens KD4ETS*

Net Manager:

*Freddie Luneburg KF4FCW*

Newsletter: *Ann Shaver WH2E*

*Al Shaver NH2Z*

*Pete Stephens KD4ETS*

**Join the SPARC Net at  
6:30 PM everyday  
147.060 repeater**

## Proposed West Central Florida Section

Florida's Gulf Coast Region is one of the fastest growing parts of the country and the fastest growing part of the state of Florida. *The West Central Florida Section Committee* has been formed



to promote the creation of a new American Radio Relay League Section.

The West Central Florida Section would comprise these counties: Charlotte, Desoto, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota

### What benefits will League members derive from the creation of this new Section?

#### 1. Greater contact with ARRL officials.

The proposed new West Central Florida Section area can easily be traveled in three hours or less by automobile, making it easier for Section officials to reach out to League members, ARRL affiliated Clubs, and served organizations. A smaller geographic area makes reliable RADIO contact with members on all bands, including those above 30 MHz, accessible and more reliable. The Committee also believes that greater visibility and access can encourage those Hams who are not current ARRL members to join the League and become active in League activities, including ARES. This is particularly true with, but not limited to, Technician Class operators, currently the fastest growing segment of Amateur Radio.

#### 2. Enhanced media exposure for Amateur Radio.

The ten counties in the proposed West Central Florida Section includes one of the largest media markets in the country. The Committee believes this natural overlay can help provide better coverage of news and events that affect Amateur Radio.

#### 3. Local attention to local issues.

Each year, the ARRL and its elected/appointed representatives are called on to address issues of vital importance to Amateur Radio. These include attempts to limit tower construction, tower and building access for antennas, attempts to reallocate Amateur frequencies, radio interference problems and more. These local issues deserve the local attention a West Central Florida Section Manager, Section Emergency Coordinator, Official Observer Coordinator and Local Government

Liasons can bring.

#### 4. The proposed Section overlays ARRL Served Organization Service Area.

Many ARRL members in this ten county area actively partici-



**The next meeting will be held on  
Friday, April 2nd 1999**

pate in the SKYWARN program administered by the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Ruskin, FL. This office provides Severe Weather Watches and Warnings for all counties in the proposed Section. Having Section boundaries that lie within the Ruskin Central Warning Area will allow local ARRL Section officials, including the Section Manager and Section Emergency Coordinator to focus their support of this program.

The American Red Cross has major chapters in the Tampa Bay area, Sarasota and Fort Myers. Section officials and appointees will be better positioned to serve the emergency and disaster communications needs of these chapters as well as provide closer communications between the chapters.



The Tampa Bay / West Central Florida region is home to dozens of charity fund raising events supported by ARRL members each year. Creation of the West Central Florida Section will allow the ARRL to better coordinate these activities and place Amateur Radio resources as required to fulfill Amateur Radio's Public Service mandate.

### How Can You Help Create a New West Central Florida Section?

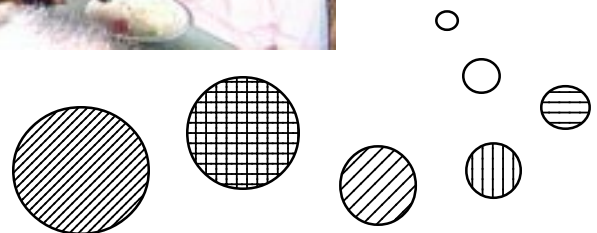
**1. Sign The Petition.** Show your support for a new West Central Florida Section by signing the Section Creation Petition that will be presented to

the ARRL Board of Directors. Where? At Hamfests, Club Meetings and other Amateur Radio gatherings that committee members will be visiting in the next few months. Clubs can show their support by passing resolutions supporting the creation of this new Section. View the text of the petition.

**2. Vote YES.** Every ARRL member will be sent a ballot and asked to vote on this proposal.

Vote YES to create a new West Central Florida Section when you receive your official ARRL ballot!

For more information, visit ge West Central Florida Section Committee web site at <http://www.qsl.net/wcfla>



### ITEMS FOR SALE

Drake Twins Receiver and Transmitter  
 R4B Receiver  
 T4B Transmitter  
 AC4 Power Supply  
 M54 Speaker Cabin  
 D104 Microphone  
 \$300.00 for it all!  
 Contact Emmett West, WA4AKH  
 (727) 526-3460

Don't Be Left Out in the Rain!

The April Meeting will be held  
**Friday, April 2nd, 1999**

The May Meeting will be held  
**Friday, May 7th 1999**

It's not the same without YOU!

We would love to publish any items you have for sale. THE SPARC GAP is here for you. If you would like to have your ad placed, please provide the details to Pete Stephens KD4ETS at 397-7157, or email [sparc@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:sparc@tampabay.rr.com). Your items will also be listed on the SPARC web site for maximum visibility. This free service is open to all except commercial dealers.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
Use this form for new memberships and renewals

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CALL: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member? Y/N ARES/RACES? Y/N

SPOUSE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CALL: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

*Membership dues are \$15.00 single member, \$20.00 family per year*

Which of the following activities could you help with?

- |                                      |  |                                    |   |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership  | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Repeater Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field Day   | <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunshine  | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Newsletter      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> Net Control   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hamfest   | <input type="checkbox"/> TVI                  |

St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club  
P.O. Box 4026  
St. Petersburg, FL 33731-4026

The club meets on the first Friday of  
each month at 7:30 PM at Red Cross  
Headquarters at 818 4th St. N.,  
St. Petersburg, Florida