SPARC GAP

St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club — November, December, 2003

First Reluctant—Then Re-Elected!

By PHIL GULICK KG4IGX
Editor

October hosts Halloween and the SPARC Club meeting that month also hosted a potential scare.

SPARC's top two officials, president Donn Davis N4KII and vice-president Dee Turner N4GD threw a pall over the members by stating neither one wanted their positions for the coming year.

It was like saying "Boo" to a room full of kids – dead silence!

"I've held this post for seven years now, and for some years in the past and I'd rather someone else took over and carried on," Davis declared.

Turner echoed that sentiment. "I think it's time for someone else to see how it is to run the club, get some fresh faces up here."

Nominations from the floor at the October meeting failed to scare up a ghost will

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New-term SPARC officers for 2004 are (left to right) Susan Dillon KD4FEZ treasurer; Cedric Harris KF4ZCG secretary; Dee Turner N4GD vice-president and Donn Davis N4KII president.

Photos by Phil KG4IGX

SPARC 2004 board members (left to right) Jim Schilling KG4JSZ; Bill Zulas WZ4GW and Peter Goldhammer W4GTO. Zulas is also the club's membership chairman.

Tampa Bay Hamfest

The 28th annual Tampa Bay Hamfest is slated Dec. 6-7 at the Manatee County Civic Center in Palmetto.

The center is located at the intersection of US-301 and Haben Blvd., north of Bradenton.

Show hours are 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. on Saturday, 9 a. m. to 2 p. m. Sunday. Admission is $7 in advance, $8 at the door.

The SPARC Club will set up two tables inside the center and members are encouraged to drop by. Members also are needed to man the tables at certain hours. Check with Dee Turner N4GD at 727-548-7474. Tailgating space also is available outside the center for the $15 fee.

Programs and forums on the ARRL, ARES, Skywarn, traffic handling and a variety of other technical topics will be presented. Exam sessions also are scheduled.

Field Day Results

By Dave Armbrust - AE4MR
ARRL WCF Section Manager

Field Day scores are out and once again West Central Florida Field Day results are among the highest filed. Included in this year's results were ten entries from WCF.

When the summer solstice arrives, thoughts of the amateur community throughout the Americas are fixed on what has perhaps become the greatest operating event each year -- ARRL Field Day. In 2003, from near the Arctic Circle in Alaska to Palmer Station, Antarctica, across the states of the U. S. and the provinces and territories of Canada, with several DX stations participating (including the first-ever joint U. S.\Cuban Field Day operation), Field Day continued in the tradition of being a premier test of our hobby's emergency communications capability.

This year the Tampa Amateur Radio Club leads Florida and the ARRL WCF Section with an impressive score of 12,596 points. The club had 4,068 contacts and 65 participants. This was a huge increase from last year's participants of 40. With 379 more contacts and a point increase of 926 from last years score of 11,670, they moved from third to second place in the 2A category. They also had a secret weapon. They had several YLs running the GOTA station with the call sign N4SEX. Man what a pileup! The Tampa club has been gunning for Sarasota for several years now.

With 65 participants, the YLs and N4SEX everything just seemed to click and this year they beat Sarasota by 328 points. Everyone has a great time as well. Congratulations, Tampa on a very fine field day.

Also worth noting is WCF's second-highest score by the Sarasota Emergency Radio Club\Florida Contest Group who was second in the 3A category with 12,268 points and 3,830 contacts. This was a decrease of 514 contracts and 920 less points than last year. Kudos to their 41 participants. I enjoyed the picnic as well, it certainly was one of the best ever!

In overall scores TARC was 11th nationally and SERC was 13th.

TARC also took first place in WCF in the number of participants for Field Day with 65 participants. Lakeland ARC took second place honors with 43 participants. Lakeland ARC also operated in the 2A category.

METRO and the St. Pete ARC had the largest number of transmitters and operated in the 5A category.

Of course, the real winners are those that took part and had a great time.

The WCF Scores breakdown was:

1 N4TP 12,596 2A 4,068 2 N4SEX 65 Tampa ARC
2 NJ4M 12,268 3A 3,830 2 NE4AA 41 SERC/FCG
3 KB4VC 3,508 1A 1,115 2 5 Clear Channel Comm.
4 W4BPH 3,368 5A 693 2 10 METRO/SPARC
5 K0RK 3,354 1A 1,003 2 28 Loop Group
6 K4LKL 3,120 2A 630 2 WD4BEK 43 Lakeland ARC
7 K8ONV 964 1A 270 2 23 Englewood ARS
8 WA4GDN 826 2A 263 2 32 Gulf Coast ARC
9 KR4IZ 22 1D 11 2 1
10 KT3TV 14 1D 7 2 1

Entries are grouped according to total score..

Freddie KF4FCW, SPARC net manager, chats with Emmett WA4AKH, repeater manager
Photo by Phil KG4IGX

Scholarships offered from Amateur Radio Foundation

The Foundation for Amateur Radio, Inc., a non-profit organization with headquarters in Washington, D. C., will administer fifty-eight (58) scholarships for the academic year 2003-2004 to assist licensed radio amateurs. The foundation, composed of more than 75 local area amateur radio clubs, fully funds seven of these scholarships with the income from grants and its annual Hamfest. The remaining 51 are administered by the foundation without cost to the various donors.

Licensed radio amateurs may compete for these awards if they plan to pursue full-time course of studies beyond high school and are enrolled in or have been accepted for enrollment at an accredited university, college or technical school. The awards range from $500 to $2,500 with preference given in some cases to residents of specific geographical areas it the pursuit of certain study programs.

Additional information and an application form may be requested by letter or QSL card, postmarked prior to April 30, 2003 from: FAR Scholarships, PO Box 831, Riverdale, MD 20738-0831.

Leslie WA4EEZ (left) and Scott N4RI work the keys during the FISTS Day at the SPARC station recently. John KU4BT ran the show.
Photos by Bob KC4SXO

Elections 2004

(Continued from page 1)

ing to take on the chore of managing the 210-member club. Several possible candidates flatly turned down possible nominations and the room again went silent.

Finally, as if to scare the goblins away, Davis and Turner threw up their hands and conceded.

They were re-elected by default.

A member broke the gloom and chased away any remaining goblins by remarking, "Well, hell, you guys are doing such a great job, no one wants to change. Besides, you've been running the club by default all these years anyway."

So it is that Davis and Turner remain at the SPARC helm and that's fine. Davis has a not-so-subtle management technique that puts members and visitors alike at ease. He's jocular, friendly, warm and right on the point. Turner's laid-back style endears him to most club members with an encyclopedic knowledge of amateur radio that remains a consistent and reliable source for baffled members.

With the top two dogs in place, the November meeting did see bona fide elections of board members, a new secretary and an incumbent treasurer.

Peter Goldhammer W4GTO and Jim Schilling KG4JSZ joined incumbent Bill Zulas WZ4GW as board members, Zulas retaining his job as membership chairman. Schilling makes the long drive from Orlando for SPARC Club meetings and functions.

Cedric Harris KF4ZCG replaces his mother, Grace KG4CTG, as club secretary.

Susan Dillon KD4FEZ retains her post at club treasurer.

Emmett West WA4AKH is the club's repeater manager and Freddie Luneburg KF4FCW remains the club's net manager. Ann Shaver WH2E continues as the club's radio station (W4GAC) trustee and Ken Hopkins WA9WCP is the club's special events co-ordinator.

So, November chased away the ghosts and goblins that might have haunted the club's entry into the New Year.

And I say thankfully, to one and all, a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Key to FISTS Day was a corps of fine fingers

By JOHN STARK KU4BT
(See related story on page 5)

We started by working on some paddles. Blacky W4TA brought down two, and Tom KG4HGP brought down one. After we adjusted these, we were able to get down to work in the FISTS event at the SPARC station. The bands were more open than they have been in months and we spent most of the day on 15 meters.

The most exciting QSOs came when we worked the known code station, KN0WCW/9 (This is a special call that is moving from one place to another. Working it is worth five points in the FISTS awards) and we also were finally able to work Nancy WZ8C, the editor of World Radio and the Keynote, who was so helpful when we got our article about the K4E expedition published.

This was the first time conditions were right to find her on the air, and we worked her with the W4GAC station call. We made about 2,500 points in the event. Of course, as always at the FISTS events, we spent some time elmering. The number of FISTS members in SPARC continues to rise, the latest addition Scotty, N4RI.

ARRL NOW PART OF CITIZEN CORPS

ARRL now is an official affiliate program of Citizen Corps < http://www.citizencorps.gov>, an initiative within the Department of Homeland Security < http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/> to enhance public preparedness and safety. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, signed the formal Statement of Affiliation between DHS and ARRL during the ARRL 2003 National Convention June 21. Chief Operating Officer of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate (FEMA) Ron Castleman represented Under Secretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response Michael D. Brown at the signing. Citizen Corps Liaison to the White House Liz DiGregorio called ham radio operators the "first of the first responders."

FEMA IS JOHNNY-ON-THE SPOT FOR YOU

By KEN HOPKINS WA9WCP
Special Events Co-ordinator

As many of you may know, Beck and I work for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on a part-time, on-call basis. Since FEMA spends your tax dollars, I thought I would tell you a little about their operations.

FEMA, now part of Homeland Security, is dedicated to disaster relief much the same as the Red Cross. The difference is that FEMA has all the resources of the U.S. Treasury behind it. Here's how it works: The hurricane comes. The Red Cross, state, and county emergency management try to cope, but it's beyond their capacity so the governor of the state requests a disaster declaration from the President. A declaration is made for the specific counties affected. FEMA comes in, starts to clean up the debris, fix the water plant, and so forth. That's Beck's department. I work in Individual Assistance. Your roof was blown off by the storm. While your insurance company argues whether you had wind storm or flood damage, you register with FEMA over the phone at 1-800-621-3362.

FEMA tells you that since you can't live in your home like that, you can find a suitable hotel or apartment and sends you a check for a couple month's rent. Puts it right in your bank account if you have direct deposit. Then a FEMA inspector comes and inspects your house and enters all the damages into a computer.

In the meantime, a Disaster Recovery Center is set up in your area. You go there and a caseworker looks up your record, sees the results of your inspection and tells you that a check for $5,000 to cover the repair of your roof is on the way. The case worker asks you to return any portion that is eventually covered by your insurance and explains that our goal is not to make your home just like it was before the storm, but simply livable.

While at the DRC, you meet with an SBA loan officer who explains that they can loan you additional funds (at about two percent interest) to help with other repairs that might not be covered by the $5,000 we sent. You explain that because of the storm, your company is down and you are out of work. You are declined for a loan, but then sent to see a representative of the State Disaster Unemployment office, yet another FEMA agency, ONA or Other Needs Assistance.

Since you did not qualify for an SBA loan, you are now under the umbrella of ONA and entitled to a grant of up to $20,000 to cover furniture, clothing, transportation, medical and similar expenses. A few days later, a guy like me calls you at the hotel where you are temporarily staying to ask how your recovery is coming along. You say that you're fine, but you have talked to a contractor and it might be five months before your house is repaired.

I explain that we can extend your rental assistance and, in fact, I have a staff of people in my office calling around to rental agencies and landlords to find suitable housing. If it turns out that we can't find you a place to live, then FEMA puts a travel trailer on your property right next to your house so you are safe and can keep an eye on repairs.

Interestingly, it is the U.S. Corps of Engineers that installs the travel trailer, connects the water, sewer, and electric, and similar. You stay there until you are able to get back into your home and live happily ever after.

Your tax dollars at work!

Your property ends up like this, call Ken WA9WCP and FEMA will get to work for you.
Photo by Ken WA9WCP

Alert Ham saves lost Louisiana boater

A chilly afternoon last December and amateur radio operator Grant Jones KD5BPW of Saint Bernard Parish, southeast Louisiana, heard a distress call on the local repeater.

The station calling was jumping from repeater to repeater trying to make contact. Grant finally contacted the stranded and lost boater, a ham from Wisconsin in a small boat with engine trouble. The boater did not know where he was and seemed anxious as darkness was rapidly approaching. For a boater not familiar with the local bayous and lakes this can be a frightening experience.

Fortunately the lost boater, Dave Burt KB9MML from Kenosha, had his handy talkie with him and was able to stay in touch with Grant while the Coast Guard was contacted to search for him. Other area hams that were monitoring the operation said Grant handled the situation professionally and was very effective in keeping the boater calm and informed to the progress of the rescue team.

Grant has fished the area for many years and was able to determine the approximate location to search and passed this information to the Coast Guard rescue team. Grant is the Amateur Radio Emergency Coordinator for St. Bernard Parish and is experienced in handling emergencies via ham radio.

St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker (top, third from right) cuts ribbon to open the new Nature Center at Boyd Hill Nature Park in St. Petersburg earlier this month.

SPARC members (below, left to right) Race Harris KF4WRL, Richard Stephens KG4BUA and Emory Brown KD2DN helped with the parking as visitors overflowed the park during the festivities.

Photos by Tom KG4HGP

SPARC members man the parking at Boyd Hill fete

By TOM WEDDING KG4HGP

The Friends of Boyd Hill Nature Park's 23rd annual Art Arbor Festival was staged Nov. 1-2 at the park.

SPARC members provided help by parking visitors. The festival only annual fund drive raises needed funds for the park. The City of St. Petersburg owns the park, but does not provide sufficient funds to cover all its needs. Here is where the Friends of Boyd Hill help.

SPARC members manned the parking lot and communicated with the front gate to determine where to park the visitors. When one lot filled, the hams notified the front gate and another lot was utilized.

St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker was there to dedicate the new Nature Center. An old library building was remodeled to accommodate the new center.

The Festival was a great success, thanks in great part to SPARC members and their work. They were Richard Stephens KG4BUA, Emory Brown KD2DN, Dee Turner N4GD, Race Harris KF4WRL, Bill Zulas WZ4GW and C. Michael Ritchey KG4PMC.

I would like to thank all who participated to make this such a fine success.

Non-members eligible for renewals

The ARRL is providing FCC amateur radio license renewals, address changes and other license modifications to non-members.

For the $12 fee, the league will renew a non-member's amateur radio ticket (the license must be within 90 days of expiration), file an application to change address or name or request issuance of a new sequential call sign. The league's VEC will process the applications.

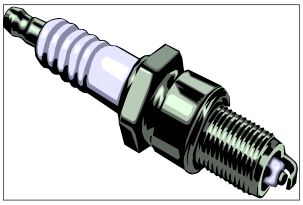
"The $12 is in line with our calendar year 2003 examination fee," said ARRL VEC manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ.

For several years, the ARRL has been handling renewals, address and name changes and modifications free for members.

It has directed non-members to the FCC's free Internet or hard-copy application options or to other providers of such services.

Members or non-members using this service should submit NCVEC Form 605 (http://www.arrl.org/fcc/forms.html) to ARRL VEC, 225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111, USA.

Make the $12 payable to the ARRL. For more information, contact ARRL VEC at vec@arrl.org.



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Mailing
Address
Goes
Here

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DATE LOG - 2004

SPARC meetings - First Friday every month, 7:30 p. m., 818 4th St. N, St. Petersburg
Testing sessions - Fourth Monday every month, Gulfport Senior Center.
Tampa Bay Hamfest, Dec. 6-7, Manatee Civic Center
SPARC Club picnic, Feb. 8, 2004, 11 a. m., Lake Seminole Park, Shelter #2.
Chester's Tailgate, 7 a. m.to ?, Jan. 10, 2004, 311 Missouri Ave. N., Largo.

AREA REPEATERS & WEB SITE

SPARC repeater: Nightly, 6:30 p. m., 147.06+, 224.66-, 444.475+.
Web site: www.qsl.net/W4GAC - Webmaster Dee Turner N2MNC.
CARS repeater: Wednesdays, 8 p. m., 146.970-, 224.940-, 444.150+, 444.450+.
Metro repeater: Mon-Wed-Fri, 7:30 p. m., 147.360+, 127.3.
WCF Section Net: Sun 7:30 p. m., Mon, Wed, Fri 9 p. m., 145.430+ & 442.950+(100Hz).

SPARC'S 2004 BOARD

President - Donn Davis N4KII 527-9636
Vice-president - Dee Turner N4GD 548-7474
Secretary - Cedric Harris KF4ZCG 894-1447
Treasurer - Susan Dillon KD4FEZ 302-0611
Board - Bill Zulas WZ4GW 725-4020
Peter Goldhammer W4GTO 866-7889
Jim Schilling KG4JSZ 381-9607
Special Events Co-ordinator
Ken Hopkins WA9WCP 525-8411
PIO & Newsletter Editor
Phil Gulick KG4IGX 392-3481

From the Editor, Officers And the Board of SPARC We wish You All A Very Merry Christmas And Happy New Year!