

P.O. Box 2217

St. Petersburg,

Fl. 33731

www.sparc-club.org



SPARC CALLS:

WA4AKH REPEATERS

W4GAC CLUB STATION

W4TA CONTEST GROUP

SPARC GAP

January — March 2014



A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

In the month of December, we participated in the Tampa Bay Hamfest at its new location in Plant City. It was great to see a number of SPARC members supporting this event. We also held our first Executive Board meeting with the new club officers. The 2013 ARRL Field day results were also published in December, with SPARC placing a respectable 25th out of 169 entries. This puts us in the top 15% in this "non-contest."

The club was contacted by a local resident that had an antenna and tower which she wished removed. An antenna party consisting of Donn, N4KII;

Bobs, WB4MCF and N2ESP; Hal, W1EES; Tom, KI4RVU and tower climber Clayton, KJ4RUS was held. The antenna and tower were successfully removed and put in storage. Anyone needing antenna or other assistance should make their needs known to the club.

Typically our contest group operates in the ARRL RTTY Round Up from the club station, W4TA. Due to last minute antenna issues, many of us operated individually from our home stations. It was fun to see and/or work the following club members on the air, rather than side by side at W4TA: KP2N (at KP2D), KR4U, W4TSP and WA4EEZ.

January featured our "After the Holidays Party" Guests of honor were Woody, K4SCL, and Fran, K4RXO Huddleston. Woody was presented with a plaque from the club for all his contributions to the club over the years. Santa's helpers Sam (N4SLT) and Dee (N4GD) Turner showed up with a bag of goodies for the members. As usual, the staff at Kristina's did their usual fine job getting everybody fed. Everyone enjoyed themselves; remember, we can enjoy each other's fellowship at any time by scheduling a picnic or other event.

Woody has retired as Wednesday night net controller. Woody's departure leaves an opening for a 2M net controller. Contact Johnnie, W4TSP, if you are interested in filling this position.

The relocation committee has investigating three leads our station. One location on 38th Avenue N., the second on 90th Avenue N, and the third on 1st Ave N. We are actively investigating the 90th Ave North location, as it offers the most flexibility.

The home brew program at February's meeting displayed a variety of different projects. Thanks to those that participated.

It was nice to get everyone together in Orlando for the traditional SPARC noon time photo. Thanks for enduring the poor weather. If you look closely, you can probably see the rain drops on my glasses.



73,

Bob – N2ESP

P.S. A funny for this issue: Every calendar's days are numbered.

Contesting – Who Me?By Bob N2ESP

Those of you unfamiliar with Radio sport or “contesting” probably think it’s a competition between all the big and powerful stations on the air. While that may be true for the top few winners, there are many categories in which a small station can effectively compete. When contesting from W4TA, we have the advantage of high power and good antennas. When I contest from home, it’s with 100 watts, wire and vertical antennas. Can you be competitive with such a simple station? The simple answer is yes. While you may not win the top prize, you can put wallpaper in your shack. I submit as evidence two certificates I picked up in 2013. My secret....you gotta be in it to win it. Just enter. Remember, once the big guys talk to each other, the only way for them to make points is to talk to lots of us little guys.

Working a contest will improve your operating skills, increase your knowledge of propagation and geography, and put a few new QSL cards in your collection. Want to get your WAS (Worked All States) certificate in 24 hours....enter a contest. Looking for new entities for your DXCC award...enter a contest. Want the gratification of seeing your call on an award certificate...enter a contest.

Need help in getting started? Come join us at W4TA during our next event. Sit and watch, help us log, or join in the action. Have questions about contesting software, terminology, or equipment; need a mentor to help you get started? Just ask me or one of the many testers you see mentioned elsewhere in this issue.



RTTY and 2Tone.....By Bob N2ESP

New (and free) RTTY software written by David, G3YYD is now available. Known as 2Tone, this software uses a new algorithm to *decode* RTTY signals. Studies indicate 2Tone works well with weak RTTY signals. 2Tone is not a standalone application, and as it is only a decoder program, 2Tone must be run under a logging program such as N1MM Logger, WriteLog, DX Labs WinWarbler, Logger 32, etc.

A survey by K8UT of a wide variety of RTTY operators that used both MMTTY the de facto standard and 2Tone yielded 150 responses (see www.w0ytk.com under Dayton RTTY for specifics). A summary of those surveyed indicated:

- Both MMTTY and 2Tone are fine programs, but there are differences.
- 2Tone is the best choice if you can only operate one RTTY decoder.
- If you can operate two or more decoders, run both MMTTY and 2Tone.

I have found it extremely useful to run both decoders simultaneously. I am running DX Labs WinWarbler software which uses MMTTY but also includes 2Tone in its latest versions. Simply enable 2Tone, adjust a few settings, and I had the advantage of viewing the received signal in two different windows. It was definitely worth the effort. By using two windows, I also retained the ability to use FSK transmission.

For those interested in adding 2Tone to their RTTY configuration, help is available as follows:

DX Labs WinWarbler: It's built in; simply enable 2Tone on the RTTY Configuration tab.

Logger 32: http://www.logger32.net/utilities.html#.Uqduh_4o7IU

N1MM: <http://www.rttycontesting.com/n1mm/n1mm-quickstart-2tone.html>

WriteLog: <http://www.rttycontesting.com/writelog/xmmt/xmmt-2Tonesetup.html>

Copies of the 2Tone software are available on rttycontesting.com using the following URL: <http://rttycontesting.com/downloads/downloads.html>

73, Bob – N2ESP

Of Interest

Kyle N4NSS just finished a beautiful Project

He just made these bookends with the help of John KI4UIP's shop and expertise. They are made with a pair of 829B double tetrode twin beam power tubes with sockets. These tubes are normally used as push-pull RF amplifier and oscillator class C telephony and/or push-pull RF power amplifier class C FM telephony in ham radio.



Here are some interesting sites submitted by Kyle

http://www.amateurradio.com/tx-factor-new-online-tv-amateur-show/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+amateurradiocom+%28AmateurRadio.com%29

<http://www.txfilms.co.uk/txfactor/index.shtml>

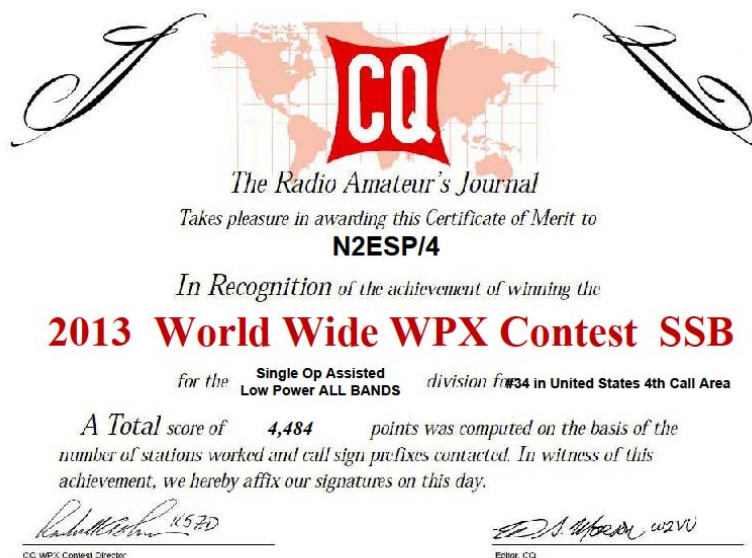
<http://www.txfilms.co.uk/txfactor/index.shtml>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Ia5TeYPdwbY

After Christmas Dinner Party at Kristina's



Congrats to Bob N2ESP

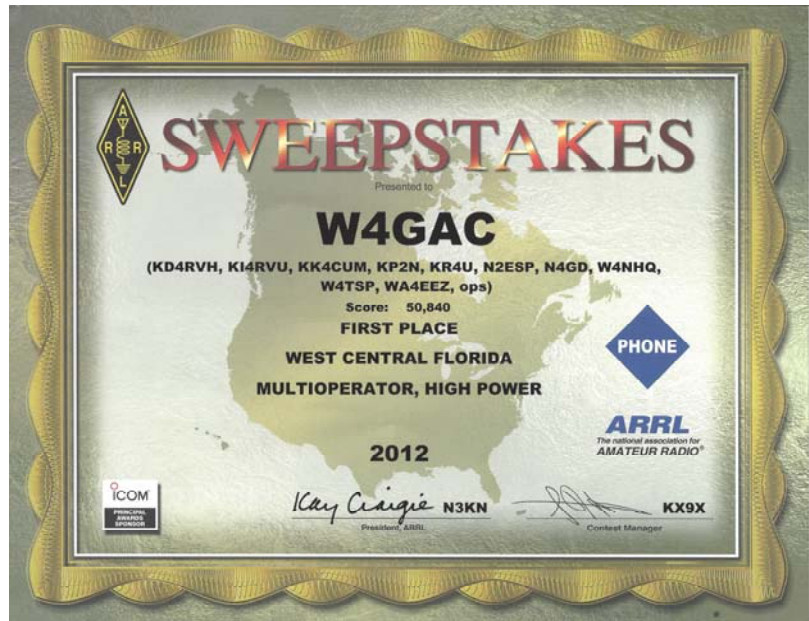


Great Job Bob and it is great that you enjoy contesting.



Congrats to the Team W4GAC

This Certificate was issued to W4GAC on January 31, 2014 for winning FIRST PLACE in West Central Florida, Multioperator High Power.



DIY Job from... Kyle N4NSS

I needed a station console for the travel trailer. I ended up using a lamp stand-bookcase as my starter cabinet. I cut off the bottom a few inches which ended up being used for a drawer at the bottom. The console with the amp and tuner stay in the trailer. The drawer holds the key and keyer paddle. I bring the K3 home. This same console can be positioned behind the driver's seat in my truck. I sit on the back seat and operate portable there as well.



Orlando Hamcation 2014

The Orlando Hamcation arrived with a wet beginning. It put quite a damper on the tailgating and made it a little messy moving around outside. It was good to carry an umbrella around but a bit of a pain since you already had enough to carry. It was still great to be there and see all the new equipment and everything you wish you had. When you first walked in, the ARRL booth was right there to your left so you had to try and get your Centennial ARRL coin celebrating their 100 years. They had some cute gals up there trying to help but when Donn asked for his Gold Doubloon the gal had no idea what he wanted. (I guess you had to be there) It is a nice looking coin.

It looked like all the vendors were there and doing well but I am sure better weather would have enhanced the turnout. They did have more food vendors and covered areas with more seating and that was a plus. A lot of folks were set up in the tailgate area but with the rain some tables were covered to protect things from the weather and that made it rough to see what they had. It didn't seem to be coming down hard but enough to put a crimp on things. People were still finding that bargain and that was the idea of being there.

You also enjoyed seeing the folks you only get to see at these type of events. I like that part of the trip as much as looking for that item you needed. I think the staff did a great job and as we were walking in they were greeting us and apologetic for the weather. It's Florida and better than Snow!

We all tried to gather at noon for the group photo but the weather hindered things a bit but we did get a photo with those that made it there. We got a five minute gap in the drizzle so we quickly took the shot. I hope that those that did make the trip found what they needed and had a good time looking. Hope the weather is better next year and hope to see you there. Til next year.....AI4QP Tom

Get you Pin Badge from Tom



Pictures of Hamcation & Plantfest Courtesy of AI4QP & N4NSS



Upcoming Contests From WA7BNM Contest Calendar

SKCC Weekend Sprintathon 3/8-9

SKCC Sprint 3/26

North American Sprint RTTY 3/9

CQ WW WPX Contest SSB 3/29-30

BARTG HF RTTY Contest 3/15-17

North American Sprint SSB 3/16

QCWA Spring QSO Party 3/22-23

Contest/Operating /W4GAC Station Activities

Last Tuesday February 25 A group consisting of N2ESP, KP2N, KI4UIP and KR4U went up to our station location in Clearwater and brought equipment back down to our possible new location on 90th Avenue North, Pinellas Park. Our purpose was to set up an all mode high power station, put it on the air on SSB CW and RTTY and see if we would interfere with the electronic equipment at the facility. The next day, Wednesday, we assembled the station and started our testing. We used one of our field day vertical antennas, ground mounted with a tuner at the base of the antenna. We located the antenna adjacent to the west side of the building and fed it through about 250 feet of good quality coax cable. Using high power with our Heathkit SB-220 amplifier we put the station on the air using all three modes. We made several good quality contacts and did not interfere with the facility electronics to any serious degree. Some personnel at the location provided feedback to our team during the testing. The equipment we brought down remains stored at the facility pending a final decision to make the move. The owners are very receptive to our presence and will allow us to erect any antennas that we require for our station operation. In addition we would have ample storage space for less frequently used club items.

73 de David KR4U, W4GAC Station Trustee.

We are on the Web!

www.sparc-club.org

SPARC Meetings

First Friday every month, 7:30 pm

***Testing :** Third Tuesday every month 6:30 pm

at First Assembly of God

6380 62nd Ave. N Pinellas Park

***contact** Mike Scott K4ZPE at 727-492-6454

Some Members meet for Breakfast

Every Saturday, 7:00 am at the

Biff Burger 49th St. & 38th Ave. N. St. Petersburg

SPARC Purpose:

1. To further and promote the social benefits and technical advancement of the radio arts.
2. To acquire, organize, establish and maintain facilities for social and emergency communication, both mobile and stationary.
3. To assist and cooperate with authorized agencies in any emergency of local, state or national scope.
4. To further fellowship among radio amateurs, potential radio amateurs and other parties interested in amateur radio.

ELMERS

<u>Specialty</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
Digital, CW, and Antennas	Dave Trewin	KR4U	trewins@aol.com
PSK	Dave Trewin	KR4U	trewins@aol.com
RTTY, Repeaters	Ron Hall	KP2N	kp2n@arrl.net
HF, 10-10	Leslie Johnson	WA4EEZ	wa4eez@verizon.net
Classic Radio Operation	Dick Keller	KF4NS	kf4nsradio@verizon.net
New Ham Elmers	Kyle Jeske	N4NSS	n4nss@arrl.net



Welcome To Our New Members

Sandra Anderson WA4SKA

Alfred Jorgensen KK4YCN

Dennis Starr K0DLS

Van Baker (KK4QOO) Now KV4VR

Richard Niendorf KK4WTE



Club Officers for 2013

President Bob Wanek N2ESP

president@sparc-club.org

Vice President Clayton Parrott KJ4RUS

vice-president@sparc-club.org

Secretary Hal Chase W1EES

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Treasurer Tom Wedding AI4QP

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Repeater Trustee Ron Hall KP2N

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Net Manager Johnnie Popwell W4TSP

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