

P.O. Box 2217

St. Petersburg,

Fl. 33731

[www.sparc-club.org](http://www.sparc-club.org)



Repeater Frequencies

147.060 224.660 444.475

WA4AKH Repeaters

W4GAC Club Station

W4TA Contest Group

# SPARC GAP

## Last Issue 2017



### A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Thanks again for re-electing the entire administration. With club officers such as ours, our club continues to run like a Swiss watch. Our challenges for the year are to provide interesting activities for the membership as well as increasing participation in these events. We are always looking for new club activities, so if you have any ideas, let me know.

Hurricane Hermine tried to mess up the Labor Day weekend. Fortunately, most of the severe damage was north and east of us. There was much amateur activity along the east coast as well as on the Hurricane Watch Net.

As fall approaches our northern friends, the WX in SPARC Country gets better and better. St. Pete was the site of the ARRL/TAPR Digital Communications Conference. Reports indicate that the conference was a success and the participants enjoyed downtown.

Our new tower has been installed. First, we engaged a professional engineer to draw up plans for the proposed installation. With the plans in hand, we were able to secure a permit for the installation. Finally, our contractor dug the foundation hole into which the re-bar cage was installed. Finally, concrete was poured and the "bolts" that hold the tower to the concrete were embedded in the wet mud. Once the tower was installed on the base, the rotator, mast and log periodic antenna were transferred to their new lofty location. Early reports indicate all the effort was well worth it.

Under perfect weather we demonstrated our hobby at the St. Petersburg Science Festival, which is held on the downtown waterfront. We focused on CW this year, and to our surprise, our dits and dahs attracted the attention of lots of kids. Hopefully we sparked the interest of few potential hams.

November followed with SPARC Fest offering lots of goodies to enhance our stations. I was hoping to buy a bucket of propagation, but there was none available.

Taking advantage of our new antennas, W4TA participated in both the CW and SSB ARRL Sweepstakes, We were able to recruit a few new operators; everyone agreed we had a great time exercising the new station configuration.

In December, equipment sales at the Tampa Bay Hamfest in Plant City further enhanced the club treasury. In January W4TA participated in the ARRL RTTY Roundup and we enjoyed good food and fellowship at the After the Holidays Party.

Finally, we note the passing of members  
Arthur Chartier, KG4TGR  
Colonel Craig Hook, Ret, K4YTB (ex KE4VPK)  
Dick Keller, KF4NS  
Ken Hopkins WA9WCP  
RIP OM.

73,

Bob – N2ESP

P.S. A funny for this issue: I tried to catch some fog. I mist.



## JT65 under poor conditions by David Trewin, KR4U

As most of our members know SPARC participated in the Saint Petersburg Science Festival late last year as we have done for the past several years. We had planned to demonstrate two modes CW and PSK-31. We used an ICOM-706MK2G and my 20 meter ground plane antenna mounted on a tripod. In order to keep things simple and easy to setup we used a laptop computer running Digipan software. This system had worked very well for us in previous demonstrations. A good size computer monitor was setup so the visitors could see QSO's as they were being made. I set the radio on 14.070 MHZ and started to look for some activity, the results were very disappointing as only one or two signals were on the waterfall and they were not very strong. I decided to try CW, again not many signals but I managed to work a couple of stations both from the west coast. These poor conditions continued for the rest of the afternoon, quite poor results for our visitors.

The next day was Sunday so I thought I would again take a look at the PSK waterfall from my home station. There were a few more signals but most were weak with heavy QSB. I decided to take a look at JT65, I brought up WSJT-X and set the radio to 14.076 MHZ. The result was amazing as there were stations from one end to the other on the waterfall with very workable signals. Within a short time I had QSO'S with Alaska, several west coast and Midwest states and several DX stations. By the way the sunspot numbers that day were the same as the day before at the festival. The point of all of this give JT65 a try for something new, you might really enjoy learning about and using a new mode. The most popular software seems to be WSJT-X, easily downloaded for free and has excellent help files to get you started. The ARRL has an excellent publication called "Work The World With JT65 And JT9" which provides history of the mode and tips for installing the software and operating. I hope you will give this very efficient mode a try...ENJOY

73 de David KR4U

**Note: Contest information for any month or the entire year is readily available, simply GOOGLE WA7BNM and select the contest calendar.**



Order your SPARC Badge from Tom AI4QP

# PSK-31 By Richard Stephens, N4BUA

## CHALLENGING AND FUN

At a monthly SPARC meeting several months ago Dave, KR4U, made an outstanding presentation on the subject of PSK-31. His presentation sparked within me an interest that I have had for some time. I already owned a Signalink USB Interface so I really had no excuse to get on the air. Several of my friends in the club had been needling me to take the plunge and join in the fun. My HF radio, a Yaesu FT-1000MP Mark V, required some fairly complicated menu contortions to set up for PSK operation, but after some study of the instructions and refreshing on the use of the radio's menu system, I got the rig to talk to the interface and vice versa. I decided to use Digipan 2.0 on my laptop to control the radio in the PSK-31 mode. I did this for several reasons. The first is that it was readily available and more importantly it was free. The second reason was that it is pretty straight forward and did not present me with a steep learning curve. A few minutes study and I was an expert in writing the macros, which are not essential, but make the experience less stressful. I have the option of typing a message to my PSK-31 contact or I can just push a button on the Digipan program and send a canned message. Usually your initial greeting and signoff will be done with a macro. The conversation in between will be most likely done using your computer's keyboard.

At first I had keyboard shyness. I just did not want to be caught looking like a newbie. Getting over that only took a contact or two and I was acting like I had been doing this for years. It did not take but a few days and one of my contacts introduced me to the PODXS Ø7Ø Club (<http://www.podxs070.com/>). Once again it had an attractive feature that I really liked. There are no dues. It is free. The only requirement is that you must have made 50 PSK-31 contacts. Once you qualify as a member there are many endorsements that you can add to your membership. Some of the endorsements are quite easy to achieve. Others are way more difficult. One of the easier endorsements is, for example, Working the Lower 48 States. Another more difficult one is called 24/7. This endorsement requires that you make at least one contact during each of the 168 hours during a week. (It does not need to be accomplished all in one week). Propagation will play a big part in earning this endorsement, but several have done it. PODXS Club provides goals that make PSK-31 more enjoyable.

Let me encourage each of you to try PSK-31. Yes, it is just another mode we can use. I find it very enjoyable and it keeps me off the streets.



## SPARC Meetings

First Friday every month, 7:30 pm

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

at DMI

6699 90th 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
New Ham Elmers	Kyle Jeske	N4NSS	n4nss@arrl.net



## Welcome To Our New Members

Lisa L Neuscheler KC1YL  
Raymond A Barsaloux N4BAY  
Zachary C Boyd KM4WND  
Charles L Roberts KM4ZDW  
Susan E Breed KE0LCI  
Peter W Denman AA4PD

Larry T Henion KM4KEJ  
Edward F Alloncius KN4AKD  
Kenneth H Boucher KB4EVT  
Stephen G Palmer NE4C  
Michael L Hembrey KV0OOM  
Dale Steven

## Club Officers for 2017

President Bob Wanek N2ESP

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Vice President Ed Erny NZ1Q

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Secretary Ron Graham KK4KRC

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Treasurer Tom Wedding AI4QP

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Net Manager Richard Niendorf KK4WTE

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Club Station Trustee

W4GAC

W4TA

David Trewin KR4U Bob Wanek N2ESP

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Past President

Ron Hall KP2N

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### Board Members

John Toth KI4UIP [boardmember1@sparc-club.org](mailto:boardmember1@sparc-club.org)

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Tom Schaefer NY4I [boardmember3@sparc-club.org](mailto:boardmember3@sparc-club.org)

## And on we go

Dear Members,

This is issue 41 of The Saint Petersburg Amateur Radio Club Newsletter and will be the last issue. Veronika, KC4YAW published the first issue since taking it over covering October, November and December of 2006 about ten years ago. In keeping with technology advances SPARC now has a good comprehensive web site and also a FACEBOOK page. It seems redundant to continue with a newsletter with those two items in place. My primary function was to secure content for the issues, I also wrote articles and reports that I thought would be of interest to the membership. The layout and design was always done by KC4YAW. Since we have such a nice website now we would encourage any member to write or send articles and/or pictures directly to the webmaster. We would like to sincerely thank everyone who submitted content throughout the past ten years to make the SPARC GAP a success.

73 To All From Veronika KC4YAW And David KR4U



**THANK YOU  
&  
GOODBYE**