



75
SPARC
Years



GAP



St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 2217 St. Petersburg, FL. 333731
February – March – April 2010



From Our President

Hello Everyone,

As you know, I am not the most active, knowledgeable, member of this club. My inbox assures me that the club is doing well, nevertheless.



Yes, I feel this way even with the repeater being down recently. It is not as if that sort of thing does not happen. I am confident that Dee is doing what is necessary to have it operational again, and keep it that way. He has done an outstanding job over the years doing just that.

Dave and Ron, continue to be a blessing for the club. They have put in a lot of time and effort making a comfortable new shack for us at the SA.

The messages I have received tell me that many members of the club care about what is happening. Whether you have physically labored to help put up antennas for the club station, or simply sent a post regarding what is going on, I appreciate the effort you are able to make to support SPARC.

Another opportunity for you to do so is just around the corner.

It is one of my favorite club activities our Lake Maggorie hamfest.

This is a pleasurable event. It looks like I will be able to attend it this year. I hope to see you there.

73,

Grace, KG4CTG



We are on the Web!
www.sparc-club.org

Field Day from the Old Timer's view



By Ron Hall, KP2N

Part 4

In 1960 I had the good fortune to be hired by the Heath Company in Benton Harbor, Michigan. My title was Junior Design Engineer and I was assigned to the Marine Electronics Department.

Back then Heath produced 2 - 8 MHz AM transceivers for boats. These units were designed and manufactured at the Heath plant. The main Heath plant was located on Hilltop Road in St. Joseph. Benton Harbor and St. Joseph are twin cities separated by the St. Joseph river.

It didn't take long to get introduced to all the hams that worked at Heath. There was a ham club and we had the call W8HTX. There was a monthly meeting held at the plant and we had speakers come in to give some very interesting programs. The big item was Field Day. This was our one and only ham event since we didn't have a club station setup.

The company backed the hams for Field Day by letting us use a company panel truck to haul all our equipment plus use of the Marine Department's portable 6 KW Onan generator. The Heath Employees Recreation Association furnished gas for the generator and many food items.

In 1961 we setup on a farm in Baroda, MI, just about 10 miles south of St. Joseph. Stored at the plant were tri-band beams, pushup masts, Rohn 25 sections, and all the RG-8U cable we wanted. We got the truck on Thursday and parked it in one of the truck bays in the warehouse.

Friday was spent loading and making lengths of coax with PL-259 connectors. Needless to say most of the Engineering department's regular projects were put aside until the following Monday.

All of our receivers/transmitters were Heathkits. Some of the rigs were experimental and in the prototype stage. On 6 and 2 meters we had a Pawnee and Shawnee AM transceivers. The CW station had a prototype SB 300 receiver and a Marauder transmitter. For SSB it was a very early SB 100 transceiver. In fact there was two SB 100's on hand in case one failed. Remember, its 1961.

In case the CW and SSB stations failed we had a Collins KWM-2 as a last resort. We always joined forces with the Blossomland ARC and used their call W8MAI. That year I think we were class 6A. Heath even sent out a professional photographer to capture all the Heathkit unit used in Field Day. We even made the front page of the local newspaper, pictures and all.

We had operators from all over the plant. Remember, there were a lot of hams at Heath. Our Service Manager was our mess cook and we had food and drink at all times. We sometimes had to show a new operator how to use a rig since the face plate may be bare metal with labels sticking to it showing what all the knobs were. That year the CW station was setup in a large army tent furnished by the local Civil Defense office. We even had a solid state keyer that one of the ham engineers built for his own use. It was later approved as a project and could be seen in the Heath catalog.

The highlight for me was working Dick Spencley, KV4AA, in the US Virgin Islands. I was working CW at daybreak Sunday and here comes this loud signal with the perfect fist calling me and giving us the West Indies section for the log. In future Field Day's you would find KV4AA in our log all the time.

In my next column I'll get into some of the highlights for the Heath Field Days up to 1970. There are some great stories to tell like using a hubcap to cook breakfast in.

73

Ron KP2N



Pictures of W4GAC Station in progress at Salvation Army



Antenna Party



**Happy
Easter**

W4GAC Station News

The rebuild of our club station is moving along at a steady pace. Last Saturday March 27 we had an antenna party at the Salvation Army building and put up two antennas, a Cushcraft R-7000 and a dual band J pole for 2 meters and 440 MHz. Both antennas are operating very well. The R-7000 covers all bands from 40 through 10 meters. Ron, KP2N, and I would like to thank the following SPARC members for all their help and support in this effort: W4CU Tom..KI4UIP John..N4KII Donn..N2ESP Bob..KC4SXO Bob..W4TSP Johnnie..WZ4GW Bill..KI4RVU Tom..and W1AAG George. After some careful engineering and planning all went together very well, we also had some good weather on our side. Inside the club room Ron and I have been setting up the first station. As of this writing the ground busses and wiring are almost complete, the amplifiers have been converted to 220 VAC and most of the inter connect wiring has been built and ready to install. We still have to interface the computer for contest logging and install the CW keyers and head phone accessory items for ease of station use. Our original antenna switch panel has been expanded to allow more flexible selection of future and existing antennas. A notable donation was given to SPARC from Johnnie, W4TSP. It is a high power, very high quality, BIRD 50 OHM load that will be excellent for rig and amplifier checkout and trouble shooting. THANKS Johnnie for that excellent piece of test equipment to add to our station. We will continue our efforts to complete the station in time for one of our favorite operating events the Florida QSO Party, April 24/25 2010.

73 de Dave KR4U and Ron KP2N

Guided Tour of WTSP by Johnnie W4TSP



A group from the SPARC club had the great opportunity to tour channel 10 TV station due to one of our members, W4TSP Johnnie Popwell Sr. who is an Engineer at the station. A group of us met Johnnie at the station Sat, March 6th, around 9:15 AM. Due to security Johnnie said we had to be in the gate by 9:30 so he could lock the gate. Johnnie started with us outside showing us the towers and satellite dishes plus all the vehicles that the station uses which number quite a few. We went inside and to my surprise there was only about a handful of people running the station. That was due to the fact that it was on the week end and no big current event or emergency was having to be handled. During the week the place is a bee hive. I can't even start to tell you about

all the equipment they have to do their jobs, but Johnnie sure could. He's been there so long he probably installed a lot of it. We got to meet one of the meteorologists there, Bobby Deskins, and he was one fellow who really liked his job. We got to see him do a live telecast and show us how it was done. He also showed us how much work went into forecasting the weather and how much just looking out the window helps. We want to thank Johnnie for the tour which took about 2 hours to take us through the building. It is nice to see that I am not the only one who has a lot of wires hanging loose on their equipment. (ha ha) The audio and video consoles that they have to control things like the programming are huge, and to think I have a hard time keeping the mic gain set proper. I hope you can see by some of the pictures what a great time we had.

73 Tom AI4QP

All Pictures were from KC4SXO and AI4QP



Orlando Hamcator by Tom Wedding AI4QP



The Orlando Hamcator for 2010 has come and gone. We made the trip over there Saturday the 13th of February. Arthur (KG4TGR) and myself left about 7:00 am and stopped for breakfast at Denny's and then headed to Orlando.

It was a cold day for the Hamfest but the sun did come out in the afternoon. It just made it tough for the folks who wanted to do the Tailgate section. There really was a good turnout there but that could have been because it was a little wet Friday and some folks might have held off until Saturday. We did the usual walk through and looked at all the equipment we wish we had the money to buy. I did get a 2 mtr. Watt meter put out by Jetstream. It is a Cross Needle meter and it works fine. I went by the Icom booth and told him how I was

doing all this advertising with my call sign (Always Icom 4 Quality Products) and he said thanks and keep moving. I get no respect.

We went out to the food court at noon for our photo op and it was still cold. We did get a good group of Sparksters together for a photo. After that we went to lunch at High Tide Harry's on the east side of Orlando and met with my granddaughter who is going to school at UCF. Richard (N4BUA) and Emory (KD2DN) joined us there. We had a great lunch and then made the trip home. I think a good trip had by all. We now look forward to next years trip. Hope to see you there.

Contest/Operating Event Corner

Upcoming Contests

FLORIDA QSO PARTY APRIL 24/25

Our Station will be operating in that Contest



Congratulations

Top Florida Club Plaque 2009 Presentation in Florida QSO Party



Thank you to Bob KC4SXO and Tom AI4QP for all the great Pictures taken and sent in for the Newsletter



Upcoming Events

2010

Lake Maggiore Swap Meet/Tailgate/VE Testing

Sponsored by the St. Petersburg ARC

Sunday, May 2, 2010 - 8AM-1PM

Lake Maggiore Park, Martin Luther King St S. (9th St S.) & 38th Ave S. St. Petersburg, Florida

Admission - **FREE** Tailgate - **FREE**

SPARC Meetings

First Friday every month, 7:30 pm

and

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

at the Salvation Army

3800 Ninth Avenue North

St. Petersburg

Some Members meet for Breakfast

Every Saturday, 7:00 am

At the

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

**contact Connie K4TBZ at 727-528-0071*

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

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HF, 10-10	Leslie Johnson	WA4EEZ	wa4eez@verizon.net
Classic Radio Operation	Dick Keller	KF4NS	kf4nsradio@verizon.net

New Members

We are proud to announce and welcome 2 new members.

Bill Robinson KF7HXH

Ken Jacobson KB4MZW



Club Officers for 2010

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