



75+
SPARC
Years



GAP



St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 2217 St. Petersburg, FL 333731
April — June 2012



A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

This spring and the start of summer has been a busy time for the SPARC nation. The Salvation Army decided to do a lot of repairs and improvements to the property. This included recovering the roof, replacing all roof mounted AC units, fresh coat of paint, re-surfacing and painting the parking area.

All this meant extra work for station engineer John Toth, KI4UIP. All W4GAC antennas had to be removed and stored. When the roof repairs were complete the antenna system was re-installed. John and all his antenna crew did a bang up job of getting the antennas back and working in time for the Florida QSO Party at Easter time.

In the FQP we used the special call W4P. Running high power we could stay in one spot and hope to be spotted and have stations come to us. Come they did. 810 CW and 1085 SSB contacts. A few newcomers operated W4P for the first time and did a great time. Check out the photos and our web page.

Field Day is over and it was wet. With Tropical Storm Debby off shore in the gulf the rains and winds increased early Sunday morning. Fearing high tide and major flooding we wrapped up the operation at daybreak and cleared out by 9:30 AM. We all owe those who braved the rain to take down the antennas and tents a big hand. The SPARC nation really came through when the going got tuff.



Hope you were in the group shot taken Saturday. A special tip of the hat to VP Tom, NY4I, for arranging the 80th anniversary cake. Also to Leslie, WA4EEZ, and Roger, K4SHI, who furnished the Saturday lunch and arranged to have the dinner served.

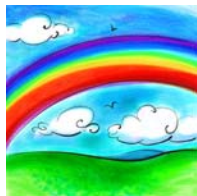
Thanks to everyone who make Field Day 2012 possible.

It's hurricane season. Have all your prep work completed and be ready to move if needed.

Keep an eye on weather conditions at all times and hope we have clear sailing for the rest of the season.

73 to the SPARC nation.

Ron KP2N



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

Field Day by KR4U

As I looked at the weather this past weekend, which was really beautiful, I thought back a couple of years to our SPARC Field Days that were rain free. We had two years with beautiful weather conditions but not without some bug problems. It sure was great to see our Female members at the site but one less Debbie showing up would have been fine with everyone.

The antenna setup session on Friday afternoon went very well and made it much more relaxed when we started equipment setup on Saturday morning. The member support was just great and I wish to THANK everyone that helped with that job. THANKS also to Roger, K4SHI, and Leslie, WA4EEZ, for once again providing lunch for the group on Saturday and ordering and picking up dinner from Sonny's for Saturday night. Our group picture turned out very well THANKS to Veronika, KC4YAW, for doing the special signs included in the photo. It was an honor to have BLACKIE, W4TA, with us for the special 80th year SPARC celebration. Once again THANKS BLACKIE for the use of your call. THANKS Tom, NY4I, for providing the wonderful birthday cake we had Saturday evening.

We started operating on time at 2:00pm with good activity on 20 meters both CW and SSB. 15 meters started very slow and never improved much as time went on, CW was slow but SSB showed more promise and they did much better as the day moved on. The 15 meter CW station moved to 40 meters and contacts started to roll in at a much greater rate. 10 meter activity was very poor and only a few contacts were made on that band. Overall our equipment did very well with no real problems. We used base tuned verticals for CW along with a half-square for 15 meters and a tri-band beam fed through the tri-plexer for the SSB operation. SSB also used the SPARC, W4GAC stealth dipole antenna which covered 80 and 40 meters and to which I added a 10 meter dipole. This antenna was erected from the 30 foot tower holding the beam. Paul KC4YDY, setup his stand alone 6 meter station but six meter conditions were very poor this year. Paul made more contacts than the worst year he ever had but less than the best year, the final numbers are not in as yet, THANKS for a great effort. For the second year Tom, KI4RVU, and CLAYTON, KJ4RUS did an outstanding job setting up and manning the GOTA station. They had quite a few customers and even held a class on operation and logging. THANKS to both of you for such a great effort for SPARC. THANKS to Tom, NY4I, for setting up his satellite station and antennas and making two contacts one of which was required to earn us 100 bonus points. Great job Tom.

We operated until about 2:00am Sunday when the weather started to act up. The wind and rain picked up and we noticed some lightening getting closer so we decided to secure some equipment and see if things started to improve around daylight. This did not happen in fact it got worse so we decided to start packing up and call it a go. Thanks to the hard working and in most cases, very wet, members the area was secured by about 10:00am.

This year we had 69 people sign our guest book and it was quite a pleasure to visit with some of them and explain the hobby. Johnnie, W4TSP, setup a visit from Channel 10, WTSP and they showed the video and did a short interview. THANKS Johnnie, you got them out there! Our longest distance SPARC member honor goes out to JOE, AK4OO, who traveled from Thonotosassa to be with us for field day. He stayed overnight, worked 20 meters SSB early Sunday morning and pitched in to help pack up. THANKS Joe! Well that about wraps it for this year. I am working on our submission package to ARRL and I will have the final results next month. I wish to personally THANK everyone who operated the radios and helped with setup and teardown you made this great event possible, how lucky I am to be member of such a great group.

73 de David KR4U Field Day Chairman

Pictures of ARRL Field Day 2012



ARRL Field Day 2012 by Tom / AI4QP

Another great Field Day has come and gone. Our club came together and did all that was needed to make it happen. A good group of members got together Friday and got all the antennas put up and ready for operation. It sure made it nice to get them up Friday so Saturday morning was spent on setting the radios and equipment in place. Our hat's off to Ron and Dave for pulling it all together.

I think we had a good turn out and folks had a great time operating and some just being there with the group and taking it all in. There were some Hams that said they had never been to Field Day and were quite impressed. We had a visit from a Council member from Reddington Beach, Thomas Dorgan, and he enjoyed the visit and a first hand look at what an Emergency set up could do.

We had a great group picture taken and it was good to see Blackie out there and thanks again for letting us use his call (W4TA) for Field Day. A special thanks goes to Dr. David Johnson (W4YD) for all his help in getting us our spot behind Bay Pines Hospital and the tables and chairs that we needed.

I had to leave early Saturday due to Family commitments so I hope others will put in some blow by blow accounts of the operating. A lot of pictures were taken and Dave and Veronika will go through them and get some in the SPARC GAP.

Till next year.....AI4QP / TOM



Field Day 2012 Pictures at Bay Pines



Mark, W8MP, and I often argue about what's dumber his county hunting or my collecting QSL cards from stations whose call signs spell words. It's one of those arguments that will never be won. When you get right down to it, they're both pretty dumb.

Well, one Wednesday morning, I got a call from Mark. He asked, "Hey, want to do something really dumb tonight?" When I asked what he had in mind, he replied, "Well, one of my county hunter friends, Tim, W8JJ claims to have confirmed all 3,077 counties. He needs at least two General Class (or higher) hams to check his QSL cards and sign off on his application for the USA-CA award sponsored by CQ magazine. I guarantee that this will be one of the dumbest things that you ever do in ham radio. I also guarantee that it will be a lot of fun."

After a fine salmon dinner with some very chewy noodles (that Mark claims his son, KD8EEH insisted that he make), we cleared the table, and Tim got out his box of cards. Mark then explained how we should proceed. I was kind of curious about this, as it's clearly impossible to check all 3,077 QSOs in a single evening.

Basically, what the two checkers are supposed to do is to check random contacts until they are satisfied that the applicant does indeed have a QSL from all 3,077 counties. To select the contacts, you might choose counties where you lived, or counties that you have visited. I hit on the idea of having Tim produced the confirmations of all 16 counties in Massachusetts. Clark, who is more familiar with which counties are the most difficult to confirm, asked Tim to produce cards from some rare counties in Colorado and Hawaii.

Above all, though, the idea is to give the applicant as much grief as possible during the process.

Mark came up with the idea of calling several county hunters that he had phone numbers for and asking them to verify in their logs some of the QSOs that Tim was claiming. He first phoned Jim, N9JF, and we asked him about a 44 report that he'd given Tim seven years ago. He wasn't near his logbook, but he said that he did remember that contact and even rattled off the county (Wahkiakum, WA)!

Next, Mark phoned Guff, KS5A, who confirmed a contact, but was off by almost seven minutes. A long discussion ensued regarding the details of how a mobile logs contacts while out driving. In the end, we accepted the seven-minute discrepancy.

Finally, Mark phoned Larry, W0QE, to confirm a few of the MRCs that Tim had from him. (MRCs are records of multiple contacts. Using them instead of QSL cards makes the process of managing all these QSLs a lot easier.) Mark joked that it looked like one of the MRCs had a forged signature. Larry replied that all of his MRCs are stamped.

"Aha," Clark exclaimed, "this MRC doesn't have a stamp!"

I don't know what was going through Tim's mind at this point, but it probably wasn't good. Larry then explained that he probably sent out that MRC before he got the stamp. When we confirmed those dates, I think Tim breathed a little easier.

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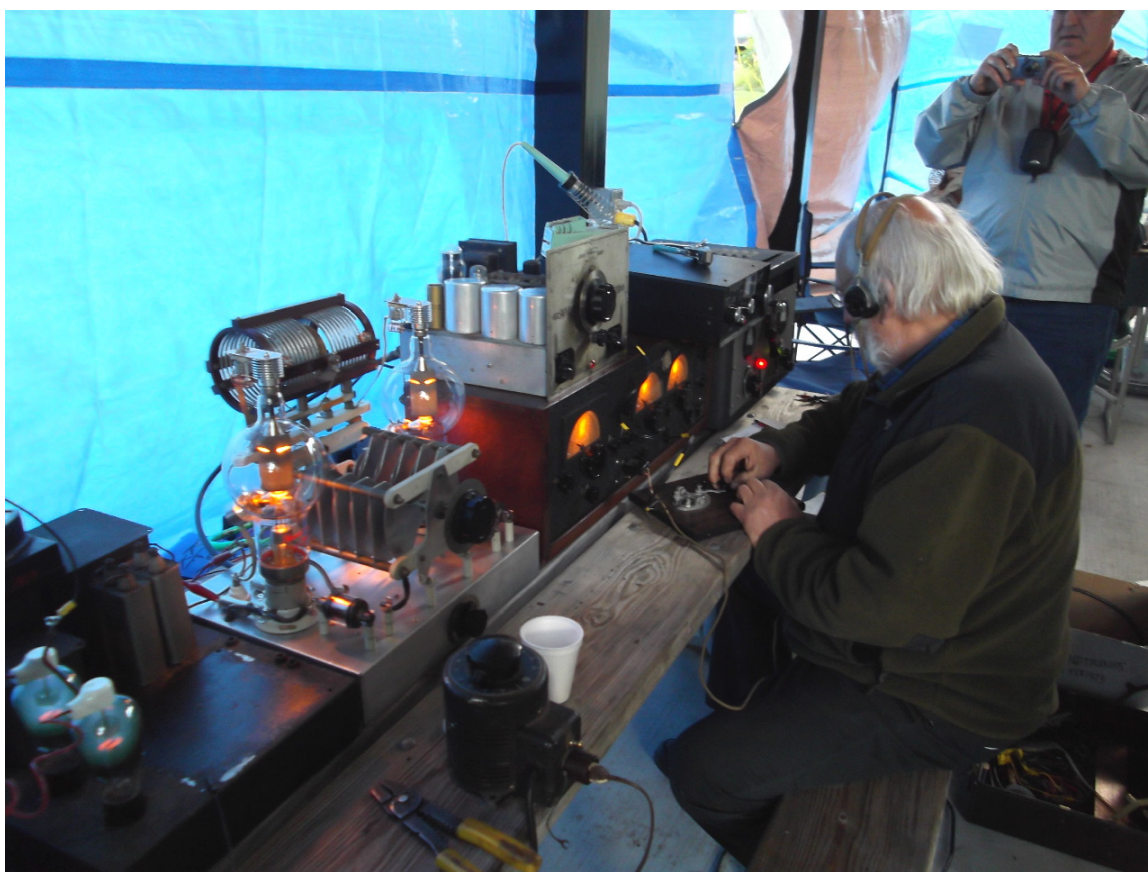
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In the end, Clark and I signed off on Tim's application. And, even though Mark and I joke about how dumb this activity is, it's really only a joke. In my mind, it's quite an achievement. It takes a lot of persistence, too. It took Tim nearly ten years to do it. Another cool thing about the county hunting sub-culture is the camaraderie amongst the county hunters. It's the nature of the beast that you'll be contacting many of them multiple times, and it's inevitable that you'll make friends with many of them.

As we were leaving, Tim said, "My wife asked me the other day if I could now get rid of all my radios since I've talked to everybody." She obviously doesn't understand this ham radio sub-culture. Tim's only just begun.

Of Interest ...by Tom AI4QP

My buddy Frank Remington K7GSE at Field day out in Seattle using 1930's style Amateur Equipment



Hmmm looks like the same weather situation!

Upcoming Contests

NORTH AMERICAN QSO PARTY RTTY 7/21-22

10-10 INTERNATIONAL CONTEST SSB 8/4-5

NORTH AMERICAN QSO PARTY CW..... 8/4-5

SARTG WW RTTY CONTEST 8/18-19

NORTH AMERICAN QSO PARTY SSB..... 8/18-19

Also see <http://www.eham.net/> then go to Operating on left side ...choose Contesting.
The calendar is at the bottom.

Upcoming Events

Tampa Amateur Radio Club Tarcfest8/18

Welcome Recent New Members

AK4OOJOSEPH WALLAUER

AL4B LARRY ANDERSON

KI4VOSWILL EVERETT

KI4ZRZLOWELL HURTER

W4DHXJOHN MAURO

Ralph's Hobbies and Amateur Radio Supply

Invites you to come to the areas only
Amateur Radio Equipment Retail Store
at

5208 66th Street N.,#D

St Petersburg Fl 33709

Monday- Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM

727-547-8607

Thanks 73 Ralph KI4SMI

SPARC Meetings

First Friday every month, 7:30 pm

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

at the Salvation Army

3800 Ninth Avenue North St. Petersburg

**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. Pete

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>
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HF, 10-10	Leslie Johnson	WA4EEZ	wa4eez@verizon.net
Classic Radio Operation	Dick Keller	KF4NS	kf4nsradio@verizon.net
New Ham Elmers	Ed Kline	N4NHO	n4nho@yahoo.com
	Kyle Jeske	N4NSS	n4nss@arrl.net



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