



80+

SPARC  
Years



GAP



**St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club  
P.O. Box 2217 St. Petersburg, FL 333731  
November — December 2012**

## A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Thank you for electing me as your new President. One of the great things about SPARC is the opportunity to make new friends. Occasionally, we must say goodbye to old friends. Sadly, I report the passing of the following armatures:

Bruce "Blackie" Blackburn, W4TA SK. Blackie was a long time member, a superior CW operator and a valued contributor to SPARC. RIP OM..

Aldo Lovisalo, husband of Gina Lovisalo, KK4CMD. RIP Aldo.

St. Petersburg resident Robin Walbridge, KD4OHZ SK, captain of the HMS Bounty replica was lost at sea as a result of Hurricane Sandy. RIP OM.

Our condolences to the families of these Amateurs.

I must thank Ron, KP2N, and his administrative team for turning over the club in such great shape. These are big shoes to fill, and I hope I can rely on your experience and expertise in the coming year.

The end of the year is always busy. SPARCFest was a great success. Our sales of food and equipment added a tidy sum to the club treasury, and many folks took home a new treasure. Ron, KP2N built us a new solid state 440 repeater to replace our aging tube model. He, Dee, N4GD and John, KI4UIP quickly installed it. Only a few minor adjustments need to be made...thanks guys. W4GAC was active for both ARRL Sweepstakes events, the oldest contest in amateur radio. The CW team managed to work all 83 ARRL/RAC sections while the SSB team..... Previously, the team worked the Makrothen RTTY contest, scoring over 3 million claimed points.

SPARC has been fortunate to have been on a high for many years, thanks to those who held this office ahead of me. I am of the opinion that it is the diversity of the membership that makes SPARC great...all of you. We have the requisite technical folks of course, but also the budding journalists that contribute to and edit our newsletter, the SPARC GAP. Folks with a business and accounting background help with the books and paperwork. We are fortunate enough to have a few cooks among us to provide some homemade goodies at our meetings and the occasional picnic

We operate with different styles. Some of us like to talk with our fingers using a keyboard or telegraph key. Others grab a microphone and talk around the world. During hurricane season, there is a dedicated group of individuals that give up the safety and comfort of their homes to assist the county Emergency Management Department by manning shelters and government offices. CQ CONTEST CQ CONTEST. Our fully equipped station W4GAC has enabled SPARC to successfully compete worldwide and bring home many awards, as well as make contact with new friends at distant DX stations for that new QSL card. There are members with a room full of equipment and years of experience and those whose newbie's whose entire radio inventory can be worn on a belt. All this diversity is what makes SPARC such an outstanding organization. Please help me to continue on the path set by those who went before me. Volunteer, submit new ideas, write an article for the SPARC GAP, and participate. Many hands make light work and a great club.

Finally, happy holidays and good DX to all.

73, Bob – N2ESP



P.S. A funny for this issue: Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.

## SPARCFEST 2012by Tom / AI4QP

It was a beautiful Fall day and SPARC-FEST 2012 was about to begin. I think the early crew got there around 6 AM to secure the favorite spot for the SPARC-FEST and start with the set up. I didn't get there until 6:30 and it was looking like busy beavers at work. Dave ( KR4U ) was getting the SPARC table set up for sales and Mike ( K4ZPE ) was working to get the shelter up and the testing shelter for the VE Team. Ron ( KP2N ) our Chef for the Burnt Offering Grill had the charcoal burning. He already had the coffee brewed and folks were ready for that. There were some low-cal donuts there to go with the coffee so it was a great start, and just as they were getting down to the last few Roger ( K4SHI ) and Leslie ( WA4EEZ ) showed up with 4 more boxes of Dunkin low cal and healthy donuts which were greatly appreciated.

The tail gaters were setting up and everything was going well by 8 AM. All the club members that showed up to set things up made all this happen and I thank all. A lot of folks that came to sell said they did well and were happy. Folks got lucky and picked up just what they needed and some said they could not believe they found that special item they were looking for.

Donn ( N4KII ) was going around selling 50/50 tickets and when the time came our Pro ticket plucker Linda ( KI4RV ) did her usual fine job and pulled the winning ticket. Now I know some folks have a green thumb and they can grow just about anything easy as can be. Now SPARC has someone with a green thumb but of the good kind. It seems Tom ( NY4I ) has the ability to plant a 50/50 ticket and grow the winning number. He had the winning ticket for the SPARC- FEST and has won a few more in the past few months or so. You know what they say, " I'd rather be lucky than good any day". Tom always donates some back to the club so maybe that's the key factor.

Ron had the SPARC-DOGS and Burgers coming off the Burnt Offering Grill and that great outdoors flavor was getting in the air and bringing in the patrons. Thanks to Ron for a great job on the grill and getting up extra early to have the coffee ready.

The test session went well and the applicant passed the test for Tech. I think everyone had a great time at the SPARC-FEST and when it came time to tear down all chipped in it went as smooth as the start up. So again thanks to all. When all come together as our club seems to do when needed, things are so much easier. Til next year " Good luck in the contest" and see you then.





## Pictures of the SPARCFEST 2012



## Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) at Camp Soule by N2ESP

Members of Pinellas CO. FL ACS/ARES. The CARS and SPARC Clubs participated in the Boy Scouts of America annual Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) at Camp Soule in Clearwater. While other hams instructed scouts on the fundamentals of radio with the goal of attaining their communications merit badge, the SPARC crew set up one HF and two VHF stations for use by the scouts, as one of the merit badge requirements it to hold a two-way conversation over the radio. With scouts world-wide participating in JOTA, the sound of CQ Jamboree, CQ JOTA could be heard on all bands. Using the call sign N4BSA, our group held a marathon QSO with a group of scouts in Greenville, SC, exchanging names, scout rank, and other pleasantries with each other.

The second Station Setup demonstrated WL2K using RMS Express and a KPC3 + TNC, D-STAR, APRS, and HF Comms monitoring a Region 4 Navy-Marine Corps MARS Exercise. We also had scouts connecting to other scouts on Echolink.

We had 24 Scouts take the Radio Merit Badge with 22 of those Scouts Completing the Badge, during the class, we were able to connect into via EchoLink and listen to ISS Contact/Q&A with NASA Astronaut Sunita Williams answer questions a group of scouts in BSA HQ in Texas. Afterwards all of the scouts in the class were able to make contacts with other scouts via echo link and HF.

After Dinner, camp activities continued as the scouts were sent on a scavenger hunt type activity where Alex, WB4BSA and Chris N4BSA took the SPY VS Scout theme of the camporee further by demonstrating rudimentary Fox Hunting Skills with the K4JMH 146.970 Repeater system and a Arrow Antenna. I want to give thanks to Pinellas County ACS/ARES, and SPARC who provided stations and volunteers for the Days Activities and helped teaching the Radio Merit Badge Class. See uploaded pictures.

### Volunteers For the Weekend:

\*Chris N4BSA  
\*Alex WB4BSA  
Larry, KO4QS  
\*Neil, W4NHL  
Clayton, KJ4RUS  
Bob, N2ESP  
Doug, N2DW

\* = Wood Badge Members

We are on the Web!

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





# Pictures of the Jota



## In Memory of Bruce (Blackie) Blackburn submitted by N4BUA



BLACKBURN, Bruce Benjamin Jr. (W4TA) 91, died Nov. 1, 2012 in St. Petersburg, where he was born on April 12, 1921. Graduated SPS class of '39 and completed one year at St. Petersburg Junior College. He then transferred into Georgia Tech's co-op program of alternating three month quarters of work and study sessions and then enrolled in the Reserve Officer Training Corps and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S.

Army Signal Corps. In July 1944, Bruce and Martha Fowler were married in Athens, GA. He was assigned to Signal Corps operations in Europe and released from the Army as a First Lieutenant and resumed his studies at Georgia Tech where he graduated with a BSEE degree in 1947. He then returned to Florida to help his father with the operation of the Lakeview Dairy Farm while he sought a career opening in his specialty of communications. During this period, he earned his private pilot license at Albert Whitted Airport in St. Petersburg. He signed up with the newly activated Central Intelligence Agency and was assigned tours of duty in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe. He initiated the agency's co-operative student recruitment program and retired from the agency in 1972. Bruce was awarded the Intelligence Medal Of Merit. Having learned that the country of Jordan in the Middle East was lacking modern communication systems, he was able to become His Majesty King Hussein's personal communications advisor, with a charter to set up His Majesty's Royal Communications detachment, HMRC. After returning home to the states in March of 1980, Martha was diagnosed with Cancer and died in September. In May of 1986, Bruce married Judy Lynn Kirby Smith in St. Petersburg. Bruce was an enthusiastic amateur radio operator, having been first licensed in 1936 as W4DWU and later as amateur extra class W4TA and also held commercial radio licenses First Class Radiotelephone and First Class Radiotelegraph. He was a member of the St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club and a life member of the American Radio Relay League. He was a member of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club with membership #132. His overseas sailing experiences included trips from Hong Kong to Manilla, and from Singapore to Penang. King Hussein appointed him Commander of the Jordanian AL-ISTQLAL. He was a Life scout with the L.M. Tate Post 39 and a member of Central Christian Church. In addition to his first wife, Martha, he was predeceased by his father, former St. Petersburg Mayor Bruce B. Blackburn, Sr.; his mother, Beatrice Blackburn; his son, Bruce B. Blackburn, III; and his sister, Virginia Hearn. He is survived by his wife of 26 years, Judy; daughters, Linda (Dick) Gross, Stacey (Chuck) Burnite; and son, Shawn (Cindy) Smith. He has six grandchildren, Miriam (Billy) Rose, Jeff Gross, Kayla and Katie Smith, and Caleb and Megan Burnite.

Published in the Tampa Bay Times on November 4, 2012





## Contest Picture and .....

### Girls Night Out

**LESLIE, WA4EEZ, AND GINA, KK4CMD, OPERATING IN NAQP SSB CONTEST FROM W4GAC**  
(Picture taken by Ron KP2N)



If the floor at W4GAC looks exceptionally clean, it's because both the CW and SSB contest teams claimed a sweep in the 2012 ARRL Sweepstakes contest. The CW team consisting of N1XX, KP2N, N4RI, KR4U, W4TSP and W4CU braved QRM & QRN to contact all 83 ARRL/RAC sections. Faced with a sweep by the CW team, the SSB team comprised of N4GD, WA4EEZ, W4TSP, KR4U KP2N, N2ESP, KK4CUM, KI4RVU, W4NHQ and KD4RVH also swept all sections in the SSB event.

This year's sweepstakes was more difficult than usual, as the RAC has split the Ontario section into four parts, adding three new sections. This year's sweeps are especially impressive as the SSB team had a number of first time testers step up to the challenge and learn some new skills. Come join in the fun.

73 Bob N2ESP

### **NOD: A SPECIAL EVENT STATION CELEBRATING THE END OF THE WORLD!**

That's right! The end is finally near. According to one of the three Mayan Calendars, the End of the world will occur on December 21, 2012. To celebrate this—literally—once in a lifetime event, Special Event Station NOD (Now Zero Days) will be activated for three days during and possibly after the end of the world. December 20; is a celebration of the end of the world. December 21, the day of destruction, we will be on the air as long as possible. December 22...that is a little iffy right now.



Amateur radio stations around the crumbling globe are invited to contact NOD, who will be operating from a secret undisclosed location. QSL with SASE to the address in QRZ. If Doomsday actually does happen, we regret that a QSL will not be possible so hold on to your SASE until the 22nd at least.

You can celebrate Doomsday by contacting NOD directly on the air. Amateurs can also become an official Doomsday station by registering on our website. You will be given a registration number and the authority to identify yourself as an Official Doomsday Station. followed by your Doomsday number.

Submitted by Bob N2ESP

## Upcoming Contests

ARRL 10 METER CONTEST DEC. 8-9

NAQP CW CONTEST JAN. 12-13

SARTG NEW YEAR RTTY CONTEST JAN. 1

NAQP SSB CONTEST JAN. 19-20

PODXS 070 CLUB PSKFEST JAN. 5

BARTG RTTY SPRINT JAN. 26-27

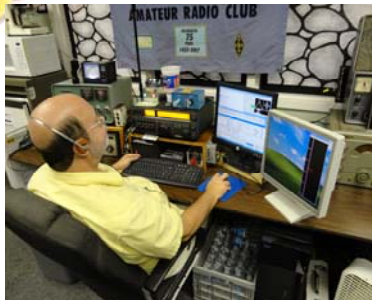
ARRL RTTY ROUNDUP CONTEST JAN. 5-6

## Contest/Operating /W4GAC Station Activities

By David KR4U W4GAC Trustee

Well here we are very near the end of 2012 and I am happy to report that the club station is working very well and has been used for several good events this year. We have also made several improvements such as the purchase of a complete set of band-pass filters for contesting and field day use. We also added a fine remote antenna switching device to allow antenna selection from either station 1 or 2 without having to manually change coax switch positions. In the antenna area we installed our 40 meter 1/4 wave vertical after adding a 30 meter element to it and it works very well. We were happy to see some new folks participate in the North American QSO Party SSB, the Makrothen RTTY Contest and the ARRL November Sweepstakes events for CW and SSB. In the new year we hope to encourage more club members to take part in station activities. Our radio room has been a bit cramped this year but we have been able to sell quite a lot of donated and silent key equipment and generate a good amount of money for the club. THANKS to all that helped with that effort. We are looking forward to a good 2013 and hope to see our station put to good use.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL, 73 de David KR4U





# Ten Commandments for Contesters

## Log every QSO

Not logging a QSO just because it is a zero-pointer for you (or you think it is a dupe) is rude, unfair to the other op, and ultimately self-defeating.

## Play by the rules

Use your national rules, and the rules of the contest, even if you think they are stupid.

## Ask before CQing

A CW "QRL?" takes about 2 seconds at 30 wpm, and listening for an answer before launching your CQ takes another second. On phone, it's just as quick.

## Repeat on Request

Repeats are a fact of life. Repeat only what information is requested. Everyone knows they are 59/599.

## QRS?

Speed kills. If someone isn't copying you at 40 WPM, and it's usually easy enough to tell, QRS for them. Why go through multiple repeats when one at 26 will do the trick?

## Listen for YOUR callsign

If the station you are calling says "The Whiskey Five again", and your callsign doesn't contain "W5", don't say a word. Standby! You will only cause QRM and slow the rate for everyone.

## Operate Lots of Contests

We all have our favorite contests, but if everyone only operated their favorite contests there would not be many people on the air to work. Even a short appearance in a contest that might not be that important to you will help make it a better contest for those who are serious in that contest.

## Do not ask to be spotted on DX Cluster or self-spot

It is an easy to do thing, but in most contests it is breaking the rules

## Give your call sign frequently while running

If not every QSO, do so at least every third one. There are many operators in the unassisted category listening for it. Many packet spots contain errors in the call. This means that people may try to work a station based on incorrect call sign data resulting in duplicate contacts. Signing your call often can prevent these needless dupes.

## Call with your complete call sign

Calling with the "last two" is a bad habit, wastes everybody's time, and probably violates regulations somewhere.

Submitted by Bob – N2ESP



Badges available contact Tom



## New Officers for 2013



From left to right

STEVE KK4CUM Board Member, MIKE K4ZPE Board Member, HAL W1EES Secretary, BOB N2ESP President, CLAYTON KJ4RUS Vice President, TOM AI4QP Treasurer ..... not present for picture is John Toth KI4UIP

### 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*

### 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

Donald V Callahan KG4YTH

Donald Hennessey KB1WJL



## Club Officers for 2013

President Bob Wanek N2ESP

[president@sparc-club.org](mailto:president@sparc-club.org)

Vice President Clayton Parrott KJ4RUS

[vice-president@sparc-club.org](mailto:vice-president@sparc-club.org)

Secretary Hal Chase W1EES

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Repeater Trustee Ron Hall KP2N

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Johnnie Popwell W4TSP

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Club Station Trustee

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Web Master

Dee Turner N4GD

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David Trewin KR4U

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Past President

Ron Hall KP2N

[pastpresident@sparc-club.org](mailto:pastpresident@sparc-club.org)

### Board Members

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Mike Scott K4ZPE [boardmember2@sparc-club.org](mailto:boardmember2@sparc-club.org)

Steve Hampshire KK4CUM [boardmember3@sparc-club.org](mailto:boardmember3@sparc-club.org)

