



**St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club
 P.O. Box 2217 St. Petersburg, Fl. 333731
 January— March 2012**



A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Lots going on in SPARC and it has been a very active spring.

Our digital crew guided W4GAC through the ARRL RTTY Roundup in January. Great effort with over 109,000 points scored. Two weeks later the newbie SSB group participated in the NAQP SSB contest. This was a first time operating contest for this crew and they nailed down 187 contacts. We have the start for a good working Field Day score.

There were 44 in attendance for the After Christmas Party on January 29th. There was plenty of good food and service supplied by the Kristina's Café crew. Sam and Dee Turner came up with some very nice gifts and there was plenty of fellowship to go around. If you did not attend you missed a good one.

After a few years delay The Salvation Army started needed repairs to the compound. Top side, all new roof covering and AC units. The outside has been painted a two tone yellow and the parking lots have been re-surfaced or painted and new parking stripes painted.

All this construction made it necessary to remove all W4GAC outside antennas. March 1, 2012, is the completion of the repairs and we will again install our hardware. We could use your help again.

When coming to the monthly meeting check in the nightly 2 meter net and see if some of our senior members could use a ride. I am sure many of our members would like to attend but transportation is a big problem.

Finally, please check our web site. We have been trying hard to keep dates correct and the Classified Ads up to date. Those of you who managed to attend the Orlando Hamcation hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. Check the photo on the web site.

73 to the SPARC nation.
 Ron KP2N

SPRING

is

Almost here



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

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

Orlando Hamcation 2012 by Tom / AI4QP

The Orlando Hamcation trip was a good one as it always is. I went with Arthur (KG4TGR) and Jim (KG4ZKK), I drove while they chatted most of the way. We had breakfast at Biffs with some of the SPARC Saturday breakfast bunch before we left.

The drive there was good and the traffic was not bad.

We got there and the crowd looked good as usual. When we got inside it was elbow to elbow and weave your way through, easy as you go. It looked like most of the Manufacturer's were well represented and there was the usual Vendors that we see at a lot of the local shows. The new radios were out for view and they looked awesome and so did the price tag. You know, good Ham gear is costly, but most hobbies that are lifelong are. If you enjoy it, it's worth it. I did not need much or I should say my budget did not allow me to use a shopping cart like I wanted. I got my few little items and went over to get a new Cap when I saw Tom (KI4RVU) and Debbie (KK4CUN) already in line about 6 people back so I jumped in line and we chatted about what we were getting as we waited.

One of the great things about going to these events is the folks you always get to see there and the fact that some are those that you don't see until these events happen. I had one fellow that came all the way from the Seattle area, Dave Archer (KA7RRA). He is a good friend of Frank (K7GSE) my buddy in Lake Stevens Washington that Arthur and I talk with on Skype. He flew down for vacation and the Hamfest. After our visit it was time to get ready for the annual SPARC photo at Hamcation. Some of the group were eating Bar-B-Que at the food court. And It looked like Ron (KP2N) and Bob (N2ESP) had sandwiches and Tom (NY4I) jumped on the Ribs. The food smelled great.

We all gathered at our usual spot and tried to squeeze in for the shot. That was a job, but we made it.

Everyone looked happy like they got the deal they were looking for or something that would do just fine. The weather was good, just a little breeze blowing but it did not feel real cold. I think there was enough pictures taken so we can fill a page in the SPARC-GAP. I hope all had as good a time as I did and we look forward to next year, and don't forget to keep a look in the mail for your notification that you won the big drawing at the Hamcation.

73's Tom AI4QP



Frank (K7GSE) & Tom AI4QP



Pictures of the Orlando Hamcation 2012



Bob N2ESP Ron KP2N

SPARC MEMBERS IN ORLANDO



Mr. & Mrs. Johnnie W4TSP



OF INTERESTsubmitted by Bob N2ESP

REWARD OFFERED

A reward of 500 microfarads is offered for the information leading to the arrest of hop-a-long capacity. This unrectified criminal escaped from a western primary cell where he had been clamped in ions awaiting the gauss chamber.

He is charged with the induction of an 18 turn coil named milli henry who was found choked and robbed of valuable joules. He is armed with a carbon rod and is a potential killer. Capacity is also charged with driving dc motor over a wheatstone bridge and refusing to let the band-pass.

If encountered, he may offer series of resistance. The electromotive force spent the night searching for him in a magnetic field, where he had gone to earth. They had no success and believed he had returned ohm via a short circuit

Author unknown

Tampa Bay Hamfest 2011 by Tom AI4QP

I almost wasn't able to make the Hamfest this year, you never know what is going to turn up, but things worked in my favor to make the trip over the Skyway bridge. The Tailgate area got cut back a little bit due to some type of construction work in the lot out back but I think they were able to work around it. There were some good forums for people to go to and I heard some folks say that the Antenna session was real good and they enjoyed it. Some of the usual vendors that we normally see were not there but I think people still found enough vendors to get what they needed. The economy is still not the best and some vendors had to cut down on some of the shows that they go to and I guess they have things that mess up their plans to sometimes.

It is always good to see the folks that you don't get to see but at these functions. It just seems that if there is a reason for Hams to gather, they will come out. I want to thank all that helped to set up the SPARC table and man it for the weekend. I always enjoy that because you get to meet some interesting people and we got some new members or folks that haven't joined in a few years. Folks commented on the nice set up that we had to let people know about the club and thanks to those that made the flyers and booklets for that purpose. The club table also moved a few items and that helps the club out also. I picked up a 2 mtr 440 J-Pole antenna and a few small connectors you always need. Over all, things went well and we hope to see everyone again next year.



Johnnie W4TSP
Tom KI4RVU



Johnnie
W4TSP
Ron
KP2N

Leslie WA4EEZ
Roger K4SHI
Manning the SPARC
Booth



Donn N4KII looks like a happy camper

Upcoming Contests

NORTH AMERICAN SPRINT RTTY MARCH 11
SKCC WEEKEND SPRINT CW MARCH 11
BARTG HF RTTY CONTEST MARCH 17-19
CQ WW WPX CONTEST SSB MARCH 24-25
FLORIDA QSO PARTY APRIL 28-29



Contest/Operating /W4GAC Station Activities

By David KR4U W4GAC Trustee

Our station has been quiet for a while since the antennas had to be removed for the roof and air condition work over the gym area. We have been notified that work is complete and we can proceed to reinstall our antennas. A work party will be assembled as soon as possible to get us back on the air. I am working on two rotor wiring jobs which will be complete by the time our antennas are back in place. All of our equipment remains in good shape and ready to go. Now for some really GREAT NEWS: The Florida Contest Group has notified SPARC that W4GAC has been awarded a plaque for winning the "TOP FLORIDA CLUB" in the 2011 Florida QSO Party. I am so happy to have been a part of our team and wish to thank all club members who came out and used our club station to make this award possible, THANK YOU ALL. The 2012 Florida QSO Party is scheduled to take place on April 24 and 25 and I would like to encourage club members to come out and take part in this great event. SPARC has been invited to take part using a special event call "W4P" for 2012. All 67 Florida Counties will be on the air for that weekend so it is a good time to work needed counties if you are working for awards. I would like to stress again that if you have never worked in a contest or club event that we will make every effort to get you started with experienced people and provide you with a fun experience.

73 de David KR4U



Back to the past – Malpelo 1969 By Ron KP2N

In January and February, 2012, there were 4 or 5 Dxpeditions on the bands. Calls like C21HA, TN2T, VP6T, ZK2C and HK0NA. Here was some most wanted countries put on the air by some very savvy operators. Hopefully, you managed to put some of these calls in your log.

I had a special interest in working Malpelo because I knew one of the operators who went in 1969. Bob Denniston, W0DX/VP2VI was a close friend of mine for many years. I first met Bob at his Smugglers Cove 4 room hotel back in 1972. I was lucky to have been able to spend a week on Tortola, West End, BVI, and get to operate as VP2VDZ running QRP with a Heathkit HW-8 into a 1200' long wire. Later, I traded the call in for VP2VAA and I still have the license.

When we moved to St. Thomas in 1978 Bob and I became neighbors. He came to St. Thomas every Tuesday to shop and pickup his mail. We would meet for lunch with other local hams and the result was the formation of the Virgin Island ARC. We elected Bob as our first president and he kept that office until he became a SK. After many years the VIARC still meets for lunch on Tuesdays on St. Thomas. Tom, NY4I, was just a recent visitor.

It was hard to realize that Bob had been President of ARRL at one time and had started what has become the modern times DXpeditions. He told me many stories about going to Clipperton Island, FO8AJ, in 1968 and having to be rescued by the Mexican Navy. In 1969, he headed a group of US and Columbian hams in going to Malpelo. Two of the party fell into the water while trying to land and one was very seriously hurt. There was a 8mm film shot by Don Blankedship, W4PUL. A one hour movie was made and I have been making efforts to locate this film.

To really get to know Malpelo look up Don's call on QRZ.com. He has the full story and photos. In 1969 there was nothing on the island except crabs. Today there is a Ranger station with internet connections and a place to off load supply ships. Oh yes, there are still plenty of crabs.

73

<http://www.aquatours.com/cocos/malpelo-island.htm>



Meet a Member & Friend..... KK4CUM



Steve with his first HF Radio



I am KK4CUM Steve in St Pete; I was born July 21, 1982, at All Children Hospital. I attended Lynch Elementary, Meadow lawn Middle School, & North East High School. I currently work at Gulf Coast Garden Center. This is a family business that has been open for over 20 years. I enjoy hiking and anything else outdoors.

I received my technician ticket in June of 2011. Then upgraded to general in August of 2011. I also joined the St Pete Amateur Radio Club in August of 2011. I found my way into amateur radio through school. I am currently enrolled at ITT technical Institute, graduating in March of 2012. I was taking Communications 1 when I began to have interest. The aspect of communicating with people around the world by sending certain frequency's into certain atmospheres, and bouncing back to earth to communicate. I was blown away by this subject, and soon consumed by this theory.

Since then I have built a AM/FM stereo kit, to understand receiving and tuning Amplitude Modulation and Frequency Modulation. After that I built a transmitter that transmitted on CW on the 20M band. The transmitter that I built was called the Iowa High Altitude Balloon Project. Recently I also built my capstone project for school. It consisted of a VHF 2m receiver, with a homemade 3 element antenna. The antenna was secured to two servo motors that pan and tilt. Then I screwed it onto a camera tripod for a little height. I could control the antenna with a remote that was attached to the micro-controller that controlled the servos. In my shack I currently have a Yaesu FT-4700 VHF/UHF transceiver. I also have a Yaesu VX-7r handheld radio. I have a VHF/UHF antenna about 20 ft in the air. I recently just purchased a Yaesu FT-817 QRP radio that is almost ready to start making contacts. I love this hobby and all the people that surround it. Thanks to everybody that has helped me along the way. This is KK4CUM saying 73's till next time.



Carving Out Time for Ham Radio by Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

On a recent episode of This Week in Tech (www.twit.tv), Leo Laporte, W6TWT, mentions ham radio, and a guest asks him how much time he is spending on the air. Leo, who just recently got his Tech license says Zero and laughs.

This is not uncommon. Lots of people seem to get a ham radio license and then do very little with it. I think one reason for this is that they don't take into account how much time the hobby really can eat up.

They get their ticket because it seems like a cool thing to do, but then they have to carve out some time to actually be a ham radio operator. Even if you don't make any of your own gear, setting up a station takes time, and then there is the operating time, of course. Carving time out of busy schedules and I would guess that Laporte has a pretty busy schedule being the owner of TWiT is a challenge.

I see things like this all the time. At one ham radio club meeting that I attended, the club vice president asked, OK, here is the question of the month. How many of you actually got on the air in the past month. Less than half of those in attendance raised their hands. Geez, I thought to myself, why do they even bother to come to meetings if they don't get on the air?

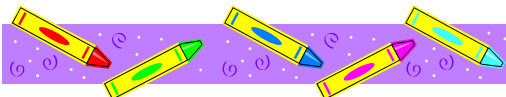
Making time for ham radio

So, if you're a busy person, how do you make time for ham radio? Well, being the Internet geek that I am, I Googled, making time for things you love. I got a lot of links to sites that talked about work-life balance and some new-age blogs, but none of them offered much in the way of concrete advice.

Then, I Googled make time for hobbies and right off the bat, I found two good articles: Creative Ways to Make Time For Your Creative Hobby! (<http://www.exploringwomanhood.com/homelife/hobbies/maketime.htm>) and 5 Ways to Make Time for Your Hobby (<http://o5.com/5-ways-to-make-time-for-your-hobby/>). Both articles offered very similar advice. Here are four points that both made:

1. Schedule it. Set aside a specific time during which you're going to do ham radio. Don't let that time get pre-empted.
2. Designate a place in your home for ham radio. Having to set up your radios or dig out your tools every time you want to operate or build something is not much fun and wastes a lot of time. Having a shack and a workspace designated for your projects will let you spend more time on the fun stuff.
3. Partner up. Arranging to work with another ham will make it harder to blow off ham radio for some other activity. Besides, it's a lot of fun to do things with other hams. If you're a newly licensed ham, find an Elmer. There really are plenty around who would be willing to help you.
4. Create a project plan. Setting up an amateur radio station is no small feat. Breaking it down into smaller chunks will make it seem more doable, and you'll get a feeling of accomplishment when you meet your in-between goals.

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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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There's so much to learn and do in amateur radio that it can seem quite overwhelming. I think that's one reason why so many Techs never really get into the hobby and why some experienced hams drift away. I think if you follow the advice above, though, you'll not only find the time to pursue amateur radio, but get a lot more out of it.

When he's not down in his shack, working with a friend on yet another amateur radio project, Dan writes amateur radio study guides. You can find them on his website at www.kb6nu.com/tech-manual. Make some time to e-mail him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Club Officers for 2012

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