



75

SPARC Years



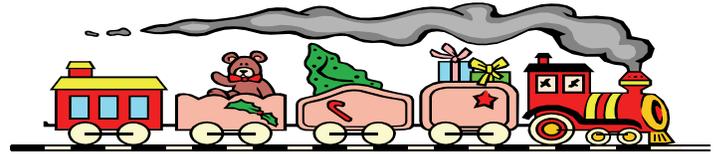
GAP



St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 2217 St. Petersburg, Fl. 333731
November December 2007



From our President



2007 is fast coming to a close...this year has passed all too quickly-but we eagerly await the excitement and challenge of the year to come!

Regretfully, SPARC has suffered the loss of several members who became SK's this year..among them were Russ- W4NCE, Bill-KB8IFI, and our beloved Emmett WA4AKH...and our deepest sympathies go out to their family and friends.

The Tampa Bay Hamfest (Dec 1-2) was well-attended by SPARC folks...the weather was beautiful, and I sure hope you found all the goodies you were looking for! It is always fun to see all the hams that you have not seen in awhile, and to meet new folks...SPARC members were very helpful in manning our table--thanks Ron (KP2N) Dave (KR4U) Tom AI4QP) and all of you who helped with it! I was able to replace my SPARC badge at the Signman of Baton Rouge booth...I was amazed that they were able to retrieve our template and make my badge in a jiffy! If you would like one of our SPARC badges, their website is <thesignman.com> but I bet they will be at the Orlando Ham-cation which is coming up in February.

The After-Holiday Dinner is coming up soon...we were all sorry to hear that the Four Coins Restaurant where we usually go had been damaged in a fire recently; we have enjoyed good and friendly service there, and will discuss an alternate restaurant at the December meeting.

We have enjoyed several very interesting programs this past year at the meetings, and are hoping that some of you will step up to the plate and share some of your hamming projects, interests or activities with the rest of us! I am still trying to work up the nerve to present something on 10-10 or Paper chasing myself...!!

The new SPARC QSL cards have been delivered, and I will be showing them to you all at the December meeting! We were able to keep the legacy look of our old QSL, but get the new, updated information for the back of the cards. We had them printed at UX5UO and they are quite beautiful! If you work the W4GAC club station during one of the contests, send me the log information on your QSL and I will send our new and improved card back to you! Thanks go to Bob (KC4SXO), Chairman of the QSL Committee and everyone who made suggestions for the design and layout of the card.

The Officers and Board members of SPARC would like wish everyone a joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

73 and stay Radio-Active!
Leslie Johnson WA4EEZ
President, SPARC





Ham Radio Stuff for Free

By Bob Wanek, N2ESP



Yes that's right free stuff, and not just some old Boat anchor. I'm talking about state of the art technology worth some serious money. What's the catch? There is none...that's the great part. State of the art ham radio software can be downloaded from a variety of websites at no cost. The level of sophistication of these programs as well as the support documentation and online help rivals that of any commercially written software. Let's take a look at some of these freebies...I have categorized the software offerings in two broad categories, programs that operate stand alone and those programs that work in conjunction with the newer radios having a computer connection. For complete information and details on any program, visit the internet link provided.

One fun program that stands by itself is **HAMCAP** by VE3NEA. This is a propagation program that uses information it updates from government sources via an internet connection. This propagation information combined with your location and time of day results in a colorful map of forecasted propagation to any point in the world. You can easily change frequencies, time of day and even enter DX prefixes to check the propagation, both long or short path. It's amazing how accurate this program is. **HAMCAP** can be downloaded from <http://www.dxatlas/hamcap/>. A complete review of **HAMCAP** and other propagation software can be found in the October, 2006 edition of QST.

Another useful program for checking propagation is **BeaconSee**. This program requires an audio connection from the output of your radio to the input of your computer sound card. If you have a computer controlled receiver, **BeaconSee** can be configured to automatically set your radio to the DX beacon frequency. **BeaconSee** works in conjunction with the NCDXF/IARU worldwide beacon network to display propagation to various points around the globe. Key to the operation of **BeaconSee** is making sure that the internal clock in your computer is set to the correct time. There are a number of websites that provide access to the time such as <http://www.time.nist.gov>, as does some windows operating systems. To learn more about **BeaconSee** and to download a free copy, visit <http://www.ncdxf.org/Beacon/programs/BeaconSee.html>.

For those of you that use a logging program and send out lots of QSL cards, Bernd Koch, DF3CB has written BV7 a QSL management and label printing program. Available for free at <http://www.df3cb.com/bv/>, this program is designed for those stations that send out lots of QSL cards or who are QSL managers for DX stations. This is a heavy duty program with lots of features, and requires considerable experience to use. If you are tired of handwriting QSL's, this is one to download and look at.

Those stations that work a lot of DX are familiar with the various DX clusters that are available on the World Wide Web. These websites provide a near real time listing of DX stations along with their frequency. One popular site is the DX cluster at <http://www.dxcluster.com> which can be viewed by any station with a web connection. For faster DX spots, many of these clusters offer a connection called telnet. Because using a telnet cluster requires the use of many cryptic commands, programs have been written to make the use of telnet connections easy. My favorite telnet cluster program is AR User. To learn all about AR User as well as download a copy, visit <http://www.ve7cc.net>. AR User provides extensive filtering capability and can be interfaced with most of the popular contesting software programs.

Looking for a hardcore contest logging program then **N1MM Logger** offers everything you ever wanted and more. Written by N1MM, N2AMG and PA1M, this is one comprehensive program. A quick visit to <http://pages.ctime.net/n1mm/TopWindow.htm> will reveal a list of over 50 different contests supported by **N1MM Logger**. Just browsing, then download the **N1MM Logger** Manual and the Help files. The program connects to your favorite DX cluster on the internet and places the call sign next to the frequency he is working. Once your PC is connected to your radio, simply click on the desired call, your radio jumps to the correct frequency, and the call is entered in the log just waiting for you to make the QSO and hit the enter key to confirm the contact. It's easy to work your way up and down the bands with tools like **N1MM Logger**.

The biggest bang for the buck (sic) is a program called **Ham Radio Deluxe**. Here in one free package is a radio control program, logging program, DX cluster program and PSK31 program just for starters. Add to that the ability to automatically plot contacts on a world map as well as call up the stations location on Google Earth, and you have a package that is literally worth hundreds of dollars, all for free. Want to run your rig remotely over the internet? It's included as part of HRD. Information as well as downloading instructions are available at <http://www.hrd.ham-radio.ch/>.

Interested? Fire up your PC and you will have a hard time breaking away for dinner.

SPARC Meetings



First Friday every month, 7:30 pm

and

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

at the Red Cross Bldg,

818 Fourth Street 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.

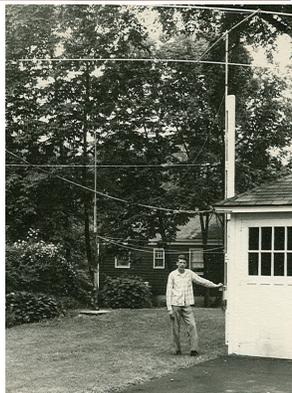
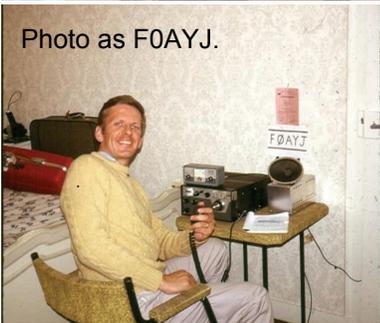
Station of Bob N1XX



I was first licensed as WN1MDO in 1956 then W1MDO and finally N1XX in 1977.

DX chasing and contesting have been my main interests. I operated from multi-multi contest station K2GL in the 70's and obtained a French call sign F0AYJ in 1974. I have 369 countries confirmed and all 337 entities on the current ARRL Countries list for Honor Roll purposes.

Since moving to Florida in 2004, I do miss having good antennas and presently have two antennas in my town-house attic: a trap dipole for 20/15/10 and a loop fed with an SGC tuner for the other bands.



I have enjoyed my association with fellow SPARC members and am pleased to contribute as Secretary.



My first beam ---2 el. Gotham (old timers will remember the name) for 15mtrs on home made mast.



Upcoming Events

Hamfests

Feb. 8-9-10, 2008



Orlando Hamcation, at the Fairgrounds

ELMERS

Specialty	Name	Call	Contact Information
Digital, CW, and Antennas	Dave Trewin	KR4U	trewins@aol.com
PSK	Wendy Kincaid	KB1AF	kb1af@yahoo.com
RTTY, Repeaters	Ron Hall	KP2N	kp2n@arrl.net
HF, 10-10	Leslie Johnson	WA4EEZ	wa4eez@verizon.net

100 QSO's a Month by Ernie Gregoire

Published in eHam on 11/18/2007

I found a great way to build up my CW speed, and have fun at the same time!

The Energizer Bunny Band article posted recently here on eHam got me to spend more time on thirty meters than I normally would have.

I have had an "On again, off again" relationship with this band for years, but at the low end of solar cycle 23, it has once again become my favorite band. By the time this article is posted on eHam, (ARRL Sweepstakes) SS CW for 2007 will be history. My goal this summer was to spend all of my "On Air" time using Morse Code to build up my CW reading skill for this contest.

A Little Personal History (1991)

I had bought all of the necessary gear, rig, tuner, coax, and made a dipole, hooked it all up before acquiring my novice ham radio license. I attended classes and would take my novice test soon. The man who taught the classes was a wonderful teacher and great encourager. He said, "I figured that even if I were the dumbest person to ever succeed at getting a ham radio license, (speaking of himself here) and if I got my novice license, so can you." Radio theory was a snap for me, but I thought that I had made a serious error in judgment by buying the radio gear ahead of learning Morse Code. My Elmer gave me what I needed at the time, encouragement! I'll never forget the first QSO. It was with N1HOG. He sent me a nice card with a graphic of a large sow on it. I was hooked!

Back to 100 QSO'S

I set a goal for myself to make 100 QSO's each month. I figured that the more CW I did, the better my CW reading skill would become. I missed the goal last month by just a few QSO's. This month I made 112 QSO's.

These are not contest QSO's by the way. They are rag chews, some long winded some short but they all add up to copious amounts of CW. I was elated to make my goal. As a bonus, I had some wonderful chats with some very nice hams all across the country and some nice DX as well. I spent the greatest amount of time on 30 meters, check it out.

<http://www.eqsl.cc/Member.cfm?AA1K>

I also made a couple of jogs to 20 and 40 meters on occasion. Some days the K index was high and I made only two contacts. Other days yielded as many as 15 QSO's. I was hearing CW coming from the ceiling fan, the neighbor's chickens, and squeaky truck brakes by the end of the month. I'll let you know how I made out with SS CW. But even if I don't make 100 QSO's in that contest to win a lapel pin, the quest for improved CW reading abilities goes on. The contest is sure to have a positive effect on it. The 100 QSO's per month goal will continue, and I encourage others to get on the air and try it too.

Broken down to QSO's per day, 3 Q's per day will yield 90 QSO's a month. The remaining 10 can be split up. For 10 of the 30 days make 4 QSO's instead of 3 and you will have done it. I'd love to hear how you make out. My guess is that you will have fun doing it and improve your code speed in the process.

De AA1K/P

Ernie Gregoire

On the banks of the Suwannee River





Next possible W4GAC Contests

ARRL RTTY Roundup January 5 & 6, 2008

Congrats

The results for Field Day 2007

we were **11th** Place out of 63 Entries in Class 5A Nationwide and **1st** in the West Central Florida section.

GREAT JOB WELL DONE!!! 73 de Dave KR4U

ARRL November Sweepstakes. We did better this year.

2006 CW claimed score 75,520 + sweep

2007 CW claimed score 85,280 + sweep

2006 SSB claimed score 90,120 + sweep

2007 SSB claimed score 97,080 + sweep

Again, thanks to all who participated in one or both Sessions.

In 2008, let's make it our goal to break 100K points in both sessions plus sweeps.

Now it's on to the ARRL RTTY Roundup January 5 & 6, 2008

We should be able to be in the top 5 US M/S and 1st in FL.

73 Ron KP2N SPARC Contest Group



Silent Key

West, James Emmett Published by TBO.com on 11/18/2007

WEST, James Emmett 85, of St. Petersburg, Fla., passed away Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at St. Anthony's Hospital. He was a World War II veteran, serving in the 8th Air Force, 484 Heavy Bombardment Squad at Dorchestershire, England, as a navigator on B-17 Flying Fortresses. One of the medals he was awarded was the Purple Heart. He was a television engineer at WCHS-TV in Charleston, W.Va. for several years, helping them build the transmitter for the station. He and his wife and children moved to Florida in 1959, where he worked in master control at WTVT-TV as a television engineer for 26 years. During that time, he was an engineer with the TV crews, and assigned the privilege of recording the recoveries of astronauts John Glenn aboard the USS Randolph and Alan Shepard on the USS Wasp. For more than 20 years he served as trustee for the St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club. He was a member of St. Bede's Episcopal Church and held the office of Junior Warden on the Vestry Committee. He dearly loved his family and was committed to taking care of them. He was preceded in death by his son, Philip Neil West. He is survived by his loving wife of 48 years, Marjorie; daughter and son-in-law, Linda Kay and Graham Green; three grandsons, Jeffrey D. Green, Eric E. Green and his wife, Wendi, and Frank M. West and his wife, Kathy; and two great-granddaughters, Morgan K. and Erica M. Green. A visitation took place from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday, November 17, at Anderson McQueen Funeral Home. A graveside service followed at Sunnyside Cemetery. Donations may be made to St. Bede's Episcopal Church, your church or charity of your choice. Anderson McQueen Funeral Homes N.E. St. Petersburg Chapel (727) 822-2059

Picture Gallery



SPARC members during ARRL Sweepstakes CW operating from club station W4GAC. Left to right: Scotty, N4RI; Tom, W4CU; Dave, KR4U; Bob, N1XX. Missing were Doug, KI4SYS, and Ron, KP2N. Final claimed score: 85,280 and a sweep! All 80 ARRL/RAC sections.



SPARC table at Tampa Bay Hamfest December, 2007



Dan Street, K1TO, president of Florida Contest Group (FCG) meeting up with Leslie Johnson, WA4EEZ, SPARC president and member of FGC at Tampa Bay Hamfest, 2007



Club Officers for 2008

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