

SPARC GAP

St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

October, November, December 2004

Changing of the guard at SPARC



SPARC's new president, Phil Gulick KG4IGX (right) and vice-president Peter Goldhammer W4GTO (center) with incumbent treasurer Susan Dillon KD4FEZ (far left), secretary Cedric Harris KF4ZCG (back center), and directors Leslie Johnson WA4EEZ (left front); Bob Burke KC4SXO (back left) and Bill Zulas WZ4GW (back right). The officers were installed at the November meeting.

By PHIL GULICK KG4IGX
President

After years of service and dedication, president Donn Davis N4KII and vice-president Dee Turner N4GD turned over the helm of SPARC to new leadership during the November meeting at the Red Cross headquarters in St. Petersburg.

Phil Gulick KG4IGX and Peter Goldhammer W4GTO were installed as president and vice-president, respectively. Incumbents holding their positions were secretary Cedric Harris KF4ZCG and treasurer Susan Dillon KD4FEZ. Bill Zulas WZ4GW retained his post on the board and new board members elected were Leslie Johnson WA4EEZ and Bob Burke KC4SXO.

"I want to thank Donn and Dee for their invaluable, long-time contributions to SPARC and hope they will continue to contribute in the future," Gulick said during his installation. Donn, Dee, former net control manager Freddie Luneburg KF4FCW and repeater trustee Emmett West WA4AKH were presented plaques by Gulick for their service and dedication to SPARC.

"During my four years as a member, I've seen club membership expand, its activities increase and its presence a contributing factor to the community welfare. Unless members feel otherwise, I don't see a change of direction, only a widening of the road we're traveling. That is, more public recognition, better relations with WCF chapter, which I hope Dee will make possible, and stronger member participation in the newsletter and various events."

Gulick, 72, is a four-year SPARC member, its newsletter editor and holds a general license. He is a former Marine recon scout and a member of the Submarine Veterans Amateur Radio Association and the Historic Naval Ships Association. He is a veteran sportswriter, has written the St. Petersburg Times' bowling columns for 21 years and is a member of the St. Petersburg Bowling Association Hall of Fame. He has published three novels and a short story

Florida hams meet hurricanes' challenges

Compiled from news sources

Amateur radio once again was part of a storm relief and recovery effort in the wake of Hurricane Jeanne, the fourth storm in six weeks to hit Florida. Jeanne made landfall Sept. 25, some five miles southeast of Stuart, not far from where Hurricane Frances struck September 5.

Authorities blamed the storm, a Category 3 hurricane with 120 mph winds, for at least six deaths, and the state was declared a major disaster area. The Hurricane Watch Net (HWN) www.hwn.org whose members tracked the storm up through the Caribbean, wrapped up three full days of communication support Sept. 26.

During severe storms, the HWN works hand-in-hand with WX4NHC www.wx4nhc.org at the National Hurricane Center in Miami to gather ground-level weather data and damage reports from ham

operators in a storm's path. The net relays these to forecasters via WX4NHC, which regularly checks into the net and also disseminates weather updates.

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) volunteers were at the ready before Hurricane Jeanne arrived, supplementing communication at emergency operations centers and shelters set up for evacuees. ARRL Southern Florida Section emergency coordinator Jim Goldsberry KD4GR said Indian River County appeared to be the hardest hit. ARES teams in Palm Beach, Martin, St Lucie, Brevard and Indian River counties also assisted American Red Cross and Salvation Army relief and damage assessment efforts.

Northern Florida SEC Nils Millergren WA4NDA reported that operators handled shelter duty in Flagler, Orange, Seminole,

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FCC Adopts New BPL Guidelines

If you read the release on the ruling and the separate comments there is some hope. The devices now have to be certified not verified, capable of notching out any frequency, and a public database of their installations must be maintained.

Three of the commissioners specifically mentioned that interference complaints from licensed users must be quickly resolved. Two of them mention the Amateur Radio service, so all of those cards and letters had some effect.

I'm sure the League will give us a more detailed interpretation after a more thorough analysis.

73

Gary Wilson, K2GW

From the ARRL

At an open meeting Oct. 14, the FCC adopted revised Part 15 (unlicensed services) rules to specifically regulate broadband over power line (BPL) systems. Specifics of the new rules in a Report and Order in ET Docket 04-37 won't be known for a few weeks. In comments before voting, three members of the commission, including chairman Michael K. Powell, specifically mentioned the concerns of amateur radio operators and expressed either assurances or hope that the new BPL rules will adequately address interference to licensed services. Republican FCC commissioner Kevin Martin addressed amateur radio's and broadcasters' interference concerns in his written statement.

ARRL president Jim Haynie, W5JBP, said he was encouraged to see the commission acknowledge interference to amateur radio as a genuine issue in the BPL proceeding.

"What the league has done in the last year and a half on this issue showed in the commission's public meeting today," Haynie said. He cited the FCC's approval of three major points that the league had been pushing for: Certification of

Commission tries to balance the difference between hams and the public need.

BPL equipment instead of verification, a requirement for a public BPL database - something the BPL industry did not want - and mechanisms to deal swiftly with interference complaints.

Anh Wride of the FCC Office of Engineering and Technology (OET), outlined the draft R&O and acknowledged that Access BPL devices "pose a somewhat higher potential for interference to licensed radio services than typical Part 15 devices." But, Wride went on to say, "we believe the specific benefits of BPL warrant acceptance of a small degree of additional risk, and that this interference potential can be satisfactorily managed."

Commissioner Michael Copps, a Democrat, said he remains concerned about interference to amateur radio users. "I take the concerns of this community very seriously and believe that the FCC has an obligation to work hard to monitor, investigate and take quick action, where appropriate, to resolve harmful interference."

Copps said if interference occurs, "we must have a system in place to resolve it immediately," and he expressed the hope that the new rules would include such "rapid turnaround" provisions. Copps, who dissented in part with the R&O, raised the question of whether utility ratepayers should have to "subsidize an electric power company's foray into broadband."

The commission's other Democrat, Jonathan S. Adelstein, said the interference question made the proceeding a challenging one because it had to accommodate concerns raised by public safety licensees, federal government users and amateur radio operators. "These are important services that we need to protect from harmful interference,"

Adelstein said.

Adelstein also said that while it's clear that some BPL systems can co-exist with existing licensees, others "haven't fared so well." He said those systems shouldn't be deployed commercially until it's assured that they won't cause harmful interference.

Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy, a Republican, said the FCC had to "make some hard compromises" to deal with questions about interference. But she expressed confidence in "technical solutions."

Chairman Powell called it "a banner day" for communications in the U. S. because, he said, BPL promises "ubiquitous service to all Americans at affordable rates." The chairman, a Republican, conceded that BPL will affect some spectrum users - including "all those wonderful amateur radio operators out there." Powell said the FCC has taken amateur radio interference concerns seriously from the start and has taken care to ensure that protections are in place "to allow that service to continue." At the same time, Powell implied that the FCC must balance the benefits of BPL against the relative value of other licensed services.

"But let me underscore the potential for the American economy is too great, too enormous, too potentially groundbreaking to sit idly by and allow any claim or any possible speculative fear keep us from driving this technology and drive America into the broadband future."

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, suggested that Powell was overstating the necessity of yet another broadband pipeline.

"It's astonishing to me that the chairman of the FCC can talk about needing a 'third way' to provide broadband to consumers when multiple technologies already are available, including wireless broadband," he said.



New directors elected for the 2005 club term are from left, Bob Burke KC4SXO, Leslie Johnson WA4EEZ and incumbent Bill Zulas WZ4GW.

Elections

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collection and is past president of the St. Petersburg Writers Club.

Past president Donn Davis N4KII –

Donn has held just about every post there is in SPARC as a 21-year member of the club. He was treasurer and board member of the Tampa Bay Repeaters Association and calls himself "The Grand Imperial Vizier" of SPARC. Truth is, Donn is our president emeritus.

Past vice-president Gerald D. Turner N4GD – Dee is one of the most technically gifted members of SPARC and many have called on him for just about any ham radio problem. Dee is a six-year club member and a 12-year extra-class license holder.

Vice-president Peter Goldhammer W4GTO – Peter is a New York City native, extra-class license holder and a four-year member of the club. He is an architect and accomplished banjo player.

Treasurer Susan Dillon KD4FEZ – Susan is a 10-year member of the only club she had belonged to and from Paris, Tenn. She has been treasurer for seven years and

six members of her family are hams.

Secretary Cedric Harris KF4ZCG – Cedric is a general class and club member for five years. He became secretary two years ago and is a net controller.

Director Bill Zulas WZ4GW – This is Bill's second term as a board member and a four-year club member. He is our membership chairman. His radio-equipped motorcyle is a piece of work.

Director Leslie Johnson WA4EEZ – Leslie has been a club member for two years and a general license holder for 43 years. She is the former Chapter head of the Suncoast Chapter of the 10-10 Club and former secretary of the Suncoast VHF Club.

Director Bob Burke KC4SXO – Bob has been vice-president and secretary of SPARC and is an accomplished photographer.

The St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club (SPARC) was founded and chartered by the ARRL in 1934 with Phil Masters W4BCZ its first president.

The club station call, W4GAC was approved by the FCC in 1945. The SPARC repeater, with the WR4ALM call sign, went on the air for the first time in 1974.

Toy collection for 'canes' kids

Allen Pitts W1AGP ARRL PR manager

Over the past weeks, we have all heard of the devastation in central Florida. Many hams actually heard it first hand through volunteer service or on the HF nets. While many areas of the country were affected to differing degrees, Florida was the worst.

Thousands of families are without a place to live and will be homeless over the coming holiday season. For a child suddenly living out of a tent, or car, or someone else's home, the 2004 holiday season will be anything but jolly.

But hams are coming to their rescue in a new way.

Between now and Thanksgiving, hams across the country are being asked to purchase a new child's toy and send it with a QSL card or 3x5 showing their call sign to: Ham Radio, The United Way White Dove Project, 50 Kindred Street - Suite 207, Stuart, FL 34994.

"The storms and their aftermath have been especially traumatic for children. In addition to the frightening experience of going through the hurricanes, youngsters are coping with a great deal of stress felt within their families and at school," writes Carol Hodnett, a director at the United Way site, handling the distribution end of the program. "We are so incredibly thankful to you and the American Radio Relay League for thinking of the children of our area in planning your toy drive."

The Martin County United Way in Stuart still has the facilities to manage a large toy drive. They have agreed to serve as the collection point and also coordinate distribution to the surrounding counties whose agencies are no longer capable of managing such a project.

Unwrapped toys for boys and girls of ages 1 to 14 will be gathered and shipped by amateur radio operators to the Stuart facility between now and Thanksgiving for distribution over the holidays. Non-hams are also encouraged to join in this effort to provide for the thousands of children suddenly homeless due to the series of hurricanes.

Those wishing to donate money instead of toys can send a check to: White Dove, c/o United Way of Martin County, 50 Kindred Street, Suite 207, Stuart, FL 34994.



Bob N2ESP's setup at the St. Petersburg EOC during the hurricanes.

Photo by Bob N2ESP

Wanek N2ESP establishes link with St. Petersburg EOC during the rare onslaught of four major hurricanes

By BOB WANER N2ESP

As a Pinellas County volunteer in the Emergency Management Auxiliary Communications Service, I was assigned to the St. Petersburg Emergency Operation Center during the recent hurricanes. The St. Pete EOC is located in the city's fire administration building located behind Webb's City between Eighth and Ninth Streets.

My job was to provide backup communications between the St. Pete EOC and the county EOC located in the basement of the Clearwater County Courthouse.

During the hurricanes, I dragged two 2-meter rigs, my HF rig and a power supply along with some backup antennas to the EOC. Here there are two antennas permanently installed on the roof and the center is equipped with a large standby generator, so no batteries were required. In the event a backup battery was needed, the parking lot was full of loaners.

Primary communications were through the ACS repeater W4ACS on 145.17hz. (PL 145.7). Having two radios meant I could maintain my primary watch on the ACS repeater and still communicate with

Cooperation during an emergency is a must with ham operators

the weather service on Big Stick or get local reports via the SPARC machine. The HF rig was used as an experiment to see if I could monitor the hurricane watch net for information, but the limited antenna available did not work well.

It was fascinating to see all the preparation done by the city to get ready for a hurricane. The heads of each department each had a position at the EOC equipped with a networked PC. This enabled the police and fire chiefs to view the dispatch computers and monitor all activity. City workers also had their 800 MHz trunked radios available. Each position, including my radio setup, also was equipped with a dedicated phone, which turned out to be the primary mode of communication. City workers were also able to update city web site, issue press releases, communicate with elected members of the city government from within the EOC.

For additional information on becoming a member of ACS visit www.pcacs.org.

Florida hams provided invaluable services during the hurricanes

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Lake and Volusia counties.

The Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) on 14.265 mhz handled health and welfare traffic in the aftermath of the storm on the air and via its Web site. Special sessions of the Southern Florida ARES Net were called up on 7242 kHz.

"Since the wind field was much larger than Frances', Jeanne knocked out recently restored power to much of east and central Florida quite early and easily," said HWN assistant manager Bobby Graves KB5HAV.

He noted that since debris cleaned up after Hurricane Frances had not yet been picked up, Hurricane Jeanne had an "abundance of projectiles" at her disposal.

Other reports indicated that after Frances denuded much of the region's vegetation, Jeanne came along and tore off roofs, then dumped heavy rain into the vulnerable houses and buildings. The storm disrupted conventional telecommunications and left some 2.5-million homes without electrical power.

Wal-Mart hosted an emergency preparedness day, inviting local agencies to participate by setting up information tables inside its stores on Sept. 18.

Over the storm's course, HWN members received reports throughout the northwestern Bahamas and eastern and central Florida. Many areas of the Bahamas also were still recovering from Hurricane Frances. As Marti Brown KF4TRG/C6A reported to the HWN, "Let me tell you that this storm was virtual hell."

Members of the Tampa Amateur Radio Club (TARC), were deployed with the Salvation Army to provide logistic communications for the canteens that brought food and water to those impacted by Hurricane Charley's destruction.

Warren Elly WIGUD, Fox 13 reporter, produced an excellent piece. A copy of the clip is available on TARC's website, www.hamclub.org.

Nights before Christmas were not all that cheery!!



From RON KP2N
& CARL AE4CC
By Anonymous

'Twas the night before Frances

*'Twas the night before Frances
When all through the state
Not a gas pump was pumping
Not a store open late.*

*All the plywood was hung
On the windows with care
Knowing that a hurricane
Soon would be there.*

*The children were ready
With flashlights in hand
While bands from the hurricane
Covered over the land.*

*And mamma with her Mag-Lite
And I in my cap
Had just filled the bath tub
For flushing our crap.*

*When out on the lawn
There arose such a clatter
I sprang from the closet
To see what was the matter.*

*The trees on the fence
And the neighbor's roof torn
Gave the fear of us dying
In this terrible storm.*

*With a little wind gust
So lively and quick
I remembered quite clearly
Our walls weren't brick.*

*More rapid than eagles
Her courses they came
And she whistled, and wafted
And surged all the same.*

*Off shingles! Off sidings!
Off rooftops! Off power!*

*Down trees! Down fences!
Down trailers! Down towers!*

*In the center of Florida
She continued to maul
Screaming Blow Away!
Blow Away! Blow Away All!*

*As wind ripped and tossed
The debris through the sky
I peeked out the shutters
At cars floating by.*

*So go to the safe-room
My family did do
With a portable radio
And batteries, too.*

*And then, in a twinkling
I heard on the set
The end was not coming
For a few hours yet!*

*As I calmed down the kids
And was turning around
Through the window it came
With a huge crashing sound.*

*A tree branch it was
All covered in soot
The wind blew it smack-dab
On top of my foot.*

*A bundle of twigs
Now lay in a stack
And my living room looks
Like it was under attack.*

*The wind - how it howled!
The storm - very scary!
Myself and the family
Were all too unwary.*

The dangers of hurricanes

*Are serious, you know
They are taken for granted
As Frances did show.*

*With the winds dying down
And the danger beneath
I noticed my tool shed
Was missing its sheath.*

*So I grabbed my last tarp
And nailed it on down
Then I got in my car
And I headed to town.*

*The traffic was awful
And stores had no ice
My five gallon cooler
Would have to suffice.*

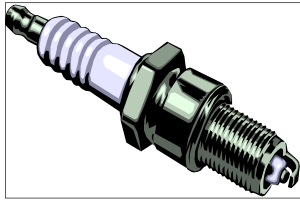
*Generators were scarce
Not one left in town
There were trees on the roads
And power lines down.*

*FEMA was ready
With people to work
Electrical companies
Came in from New York.*

*And in the midst of
This peculiar routine
Another storm emerged
Named Hurricane Jeanne.*

*I sprang to the car
And gave my family a whistle
Then away we all went
Like a Tomahawk missile.*

*You could hear us exclaim
As we drove out of sight
"The hell with this place,
Vermont seems just right."*



**SPARC GAP
ST. PETERSBURG
AMATEUR RADIO
CLUB
PO BOX 4026
ST. PETERSBURG, FL
33731-4026**

Mailing
Address
Goes
Here

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DATE LOG - 2005

SPARC meetings - First Friday every month, 7:30 p. m., 818 4th St. N, St. Petersburg.
SPARC breakfast, every Saturday, 7 a. m. Four Coins, 2700 34th St. N.
Testing sessions - Third Tuesday every month, Gulfport Neighborhood Center, 1617 49th St. South.
Training classes—TBA
Tampa Bay Hamfest—Dec. 4-5, Manatee Convention Center, \$7 adv., \$8 at door.

AREA REPEATERS & WEB SITE

SPARC repeater: Nightly, 6:30 p. m., 147.06+, 224.66-, 444.475+.
Web site: www.qsl.net/W4GAC - Webmaster Dee Turner N4GD
CARS repeater: Wednesdays, 8 p. m., 146.970- PL103.5, 224.940-no pl, 444.150+.
Metro repeater: Mon-Wed-Fri, 7:30 p. m., 147.360+, 127.3.
WCF Section Net: Sun 7:30 p. m., Wed, 9 p. m., 145.430+ & 442.950+(100Hz).

SPARC'S 2005 BOARD

President - Phil Gulick KG4IGX	392-3481
Vice-president - Peter Goldhammer W4GTO	866-7889
Secretary - Cedric Harris KF4ZCG	894-1447
Treasurer - Susan Dillon KD4FEZ	302-0611
Events Co-ordinator—Ken Hopkins WA9WCP	525-8411
PIO & Newsletter editor, Gulick KG4IGX@msn.com	
Directors - Bill Zulas WZ4GW	725-4020
Bob Burke KC4SXO	541-2216
Leslie Johnson WA4EEZ	347-7422

