

# SPARC GAP

St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

October-November-December

New tu(r)ner  
a kit-bash!  
by Dee Turner,  
N2MNC

As some of you might have heard I turned another year older. For that occasion, my wife Sam, KD6WVG bought me an AT-11MP automatic antenna tuner kit made by LDG Electronics.

If you're not familiar with their products, they manufacture a whole series of products for the ham, ranging from swr meters to repeater controller accessories.

Their web site can be found at [www.ldgelectronics.com](http://www.ldgelectronics.com).

The tuner comes in a black case that matches most modern radios and neatly labeled text in white. The cross needle swr meter is illuminated.

The kit comes packed in several plastic bags with parts separated in logical order. The manual is the same as you can download at their web site. As with build-

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Members celebrate 64th anniversary of club's ARRL affiliation. Club turned 65 in September.

## What's old is new — Officers retained

By Phil Gulick KG4IGX

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

That was the credo Ken Dale N2KD and his election committee followed in recommending that the SPARC membership retain the incumbent board of governors for the 2001 year. The move precluded the normal election

process except for nomination from the floor at the September meeting. It was at the October meeting that Dale presented the club with his committee's decision and it was at the November meeting that a single vote was cast, as per the bylaws, to reinstall the incumbents.

Remaining at their posts are: President Donn Davis N4KII; Vice-president Dee Turner N2MNC; Secretary Grace Harris KG4CTG; Treasurer Susan Dillon KD4FEZ; Board Members Mark Farr N9MIU, Freddie Luneburg KF4FCW and Dale N2KD; Past President Cecil Wagner KE4EYI; Net Manager Luneburg; Repeater Trustee Emmett West WA4AKH; W4GAC Trustee Ann Shaver WH2E, and Public Information Officer and SPARC Gap news editor Phil Gulick KG4IGX.

"It has always been fun running this club and I'm honored that the members have put so much trust in me and the board members," Davis said. "We run a very loose ship here and I don't think the members would have it any other way."

At the September meeting, the club was honored with a plaque recognizing its 64-year affiliation with the ARRL. Later that month, the club reached its 65th birthday.

The club meets the first Friday of every month at 7:30 p. m. at the St. Petersburg Red Cross Headquarters, 818 Fourth Street N. Meetings are open to all interested in amateur radio, licensed or not. Classes resume in January.

## A pleasant surprise for all!

By Cecil Wagner, KE4EYI

This is one of those stories that make HAM radio so interesting. I think you will enjoy it, and it may even bring back a memory of something similar that may have happened to you!

At a recent monthly SPARC meeting, a gentleman came over and introduced himself as "Bill", KB8IFI. I thought "That's a nice thing to do, and have I met this person somewhere before?" Bill went on to advise me that we had enjoyed a QSO (HAM radio

lingo for a discussion) some five years ago!

Bill told me that he had been listening on the 10 meter (28 Mhz) band and heard a CQ (seeking you) call from KE4EYI several times. He answered the CQ and we then spent a few minutes in a nice QSO!

At this time I began to remember this contact! Bill was coming down to Florida

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# Antenna tuner easy to build, work

(From Page 1)

ing most kits the first thing you should do is read the manual a few times and get familiar with the task a hand. Then inventory the parts to make sure nothing is left out or forgotten. It will also familiarize you with the parts to be installed.

The building itself went fairly smooth. Starting with the smallest parts to the largest. The hardest part of the whole process is winding the toroid coils. Care should be taken in counting the winds on the coils. The rest of the kit is by the numbers. It's an easy kit to build even though parts of the instruction book

## Say hello to Florida, Bill!

(From Page 1)

from Monroe, Michigan for relief from the cold weather! I also remember discussing the St. Pete Amateur Radio Club, SPARC, and he (Bill) was welcome to come to a SPARC meeting and say hello anytime!

Bill has relocated to Florida and is now a member of SPARC!

After the meeting, I checked my log, and found the entry back on Dec. 11, 1995.

A note in the log also mentioned that the temperature in Monroe five years ago in December, was + 9 degrees F. No wonder Bill was looking forward to relocating to Florida!

Welcome to Florida Bill.  
73 Cecil KB8IFI

73's from Cecil, KE4EYI

could use clarification. For alignment you need a voltmeter and a dummy load with your transmitter. It takes about 10 minutes to get the meters adjusted. The text is clear but could use a troubleshooting chart in case of difficulties.

Now that the kit is built and aligned it's time to put it to work. I have an inverted V antenna for use on the bands that I can't tune on the beam. It's a little short for 80 m without a tuner. I first used the tuner on the 80 m band and it tuned as advertised. While watching the swr meter after the auto tuner I can see that the 80m 4:1 swr was tuned down to less than 1.5:1 in about 2 sec.

Signal reports on the band were good. I then went to 40m. Same story. Tuned as advertised.

Anywhere between 10m and 80m tunes very quickly, it

would not tune the 160m band on my antenna, which is not a surprise. While I didn't check to see if it tuned the advertised 10:1, it had no trouble tuning the other bands on my antenna.

I would recommend this tuner for anyone with a need for an auto tuner or just don't like to use a manual tuner. It covers a wider range of swr than most built-in tuners. If you are a first time kit builder take your time and ask questions if you don't understand something. The manual could use a little more detail.

I also got the remote control head for it. It's built and being tested in the shack. When I get it installed in the car I will give a report on how the tuner works mobile. Till then, Play Radio and have fun.

73 Dee, N2MNC

## Kids Day a fun-fest for everyone

On June 17, W4GAC held the annual "Kids Day." For 5 1/2 hours, youngsters from across the United States participated in exchanging names, QTh's, favorite colors, ages, and any other things they thought might be of interest.

Control operators were N4KII and KG4FZI, who had as much fun as the kids.

W4GAC had two youngsters operate the station equipment for the 5 1/2 hours, Alex Wark, 5 years old, and Nick Martin, 12 years old. Better look out, here comes a new crop of HAMS! They made contacts to states such as

California, Texas, New Jersey, but the most contacted state was North Carolina.

Between Alex and Nick, 108 contacts were made with youngsters ranging from 5 years old to 82 years young. All later got certificates.

It was an exciting day, the high point when Alex made contact with his father, George Wark, on 2 meters. Also four people from my own (KG4FZI) family in North Carolina joined in to talk with the kids.

73 Norm KG4FZI

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It is just a matter of time before e-QSL-ing becomes acceptable. Some months ago, when ARRL was asked what position it took, it stated it was too easy to fake a QSL. Until some other method was found to verify contacts. ARRL will not accept e-QSLs.

73 George  
KS4YJ

## A NEW SOON-TO-BE HAM!

Taylor Morgan Kostyal born 6\17 \2000 6 lbs, 10ozs Grandfather Norm KG4FZI

# Code opens new world, and it's oo—o oo— —o!

By John Stark KU4BT

Well, you passed your 5 wpm code test, you got your privileges, maybe even a new call.

You're working HF now, but, for some reason, you have

never ventured into the lower half of the band. Why would you want to? Well, here are a few reasons. In today's world, a ham's freedom to operate can be constrained by covenants, deed restrictions, and economic factors. If any of these happen

to you, it's nice to have a mode that can get out under adverse conditions using low power and low profile antennas.

QRP is one of the most exciting parts of ham radio today. If you want to hike into the forest, carrying your equipment and make a few contacts for the fun of it, CW is the way to go. Half of the HF frequency allocations are for CW. Since 6 CW QSos can fit into the space of one SSB QSO, you are loosing out on the major part of your privileges. The sunspot cycle can't peak forever. Seven of those eleven years might not be that hot.

How do you do it? How do you make your first CW contact? Don't worry about speed, since restructuring is equal around the world, there is a lot of slow code out there, and a bunch of it is DX. (Look in the Novice subbands. QRP is located around frequencies ending in .060. Fists are

around .058. Usually, the closer you get to the bottom of the band, the faster the code, the closer to the top of the CW allocation, the slower).

First, pick a key and practice s F First, pick a key and practice sending. A lot of people will recommend a straight key for slow speeds. That's okay, but they are hard to use. I say this is the cusp of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, get a keyer. Your code will sound better if you don't try to go too fast, and it's a lot easier.

Remember your spacing, one dit between elements inside a character, 3 dits between characters and 7 dits between words. A dah is 3 dits in length. The keyer will take care of the dits and dahs and the internal spacing for you. Just remember to leave space between the letters and between the words. It's next to impossible to copy code when the letters run together. It's better to leave too much space than not enough.

Say you hear a CQ your speed that you want to answer. Write down his or her call and wait until they finish. Usually CQs end with AR or with K. Purists would vote for the AR. Send their call twice, DE and then your call twice followed by a K or a KN. If you're using the club station call, or a call unfamiliar to you, it's a good idea to practice it first, as nothing makes you look like an idiot faster than messing up your own call.

You listen, and hear your call, DE followed by his call. He will then send you a message that will usually contain three information items: RST followed by three numbers, QTH followed by the location, and Name, or OP, followed by

his or her name. The rest will be polite filler. He will then usually send your call again DE followed by his call, and then K or KN. Or he may just send DE his call and K. The K or KN means it's your turn. Send something like this: R R TNX FER RPT UR RST 569 569 QTHST PETE ST PETE, FL FL.(This can also be sent as ST PETE, FL ST PETE, FL) NAME NORM NORM send his call, then your call and K. (The R R means I copied it okay, or QSL)

The next go round usually contains this information, RIG, ANT and WX, if conditions are okay. Copy what you can, and when he turns it back to you, if you want to continue the QSO, send his call, DE your call and RIG HR IS IC 701 RUNNING 100 WATTS TO ANT INV VEE UP 45 FT WX WX HOT ES SUNNY, then send his call, DE your call K. (ES means and) A shorter variation of this could be RIG IC 701 ANT INV VEE BT BT WX HOT. (BT sent as one character, dah di di di dah, is like saying uh in speech, it's something to send while you are thinking of what you want to send next.)

Let's say you are ready to quit. Either he has sent you 73 already and it's your turn, or you decide it's time to bale, end the QSO something like this: TNX FER NICE CHAT 73 73 CUAGN SK his call DE your call E E or a shorter version TU CUL 73 73 SK his call DE your call E E.

TNX is thanks, CUAGN is see you again, TU is thank you, CUL is see you later. SK sent as one character before the calls

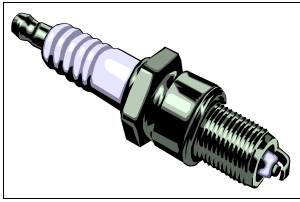
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***“If you want to hike into the forest.. CW is the way to go!”***

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Thanks to Dee  
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Mailing  
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Here

Next club meeting Dec. 1, 2000.  
Tampa Bay Hamfest - Dec. 2-3, Manatee Civic Center.  
License Classes resume Jan. 10, 2001, 6:30 p. m., at Red Cross Headquarters.  
After Holidays SPARC Party, Jan. 21, 2001, 3 p. m., at Four Coins Restaurant.

In This Issue...

**A NEAT DEE-TUNER, WELCOME, BILL, KIDS' FUN, CODE FUN!**

## *– Save your privileges and bandspace – Go CW!*

### **(From Page 3)**

means this is the last time you are transmitting to him period, or that's all she wrote and she didn't write no more. The E E sent at the very end goes back to the old days of railroad telegraphy and also the old days at the beginning of wireless for ships.

A DX exchange, which is usually more hurried might be: UR 5NN 5NN QTH FLA FLA OP NICK NICK BK. (BK is back to you or over) 73 73 CUL SK his call sign, your call sign E E.

If conditions are bad, the items may be repeated 3 or 4 times. It's okay to do whatever the operator you're talking to does. If he repeats a lot, go ahead and do it.

If you don't know what RST to send, send back what he sent to you. Usually for DX, you just send 5NN.

Say you copied everything, but missed the operator's name. As soon as he goes back to you, identity and then send NAME ? NAME ? NAME ? BK. He will come back right away and send you his name two or three times and then send BK. If you copied it this time, you would send R R R TU, and go on with whatever else you want to say. Other questions could be QTH? QTH? QTH? Try to keep queries to one word of Q sign followed by a question mark.

If you want to call CQ, listen on the frequency first.

If you don't hear anything, send QRL? QRL? QRL? This means, is this frequency in use? If you then hear anything like Y or YES somebody is on it.

Two good formats for CQ are the 3 by 3 (three CQs, DE three call signs) or 4 by 2. Never repeat the call more than three times without sending AR or K and listening to a response. If you put them to sleep, they won't answer.

Another useful and common Q signal is QRU, which means I don't have anything else to say to you, I'm all talked out. QRU? means do you have anything else you want to say to me? If you hear QRU?, the other

fellow is getting ready to end the QSO, you can send him your 73s and finish off. QRT means they are going to quit operating. AS sent as one character means wait a minute, or please stand by.

The best reason to do this is for your own satisfaction. It's also the only thing that will defrost some of the "dyed in the wool" old-timers, but I don't know anybody like that!

73 John KU4BT