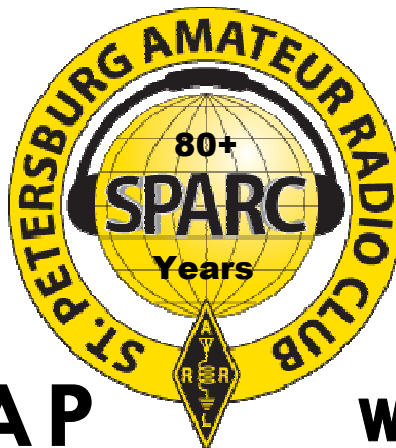


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WA4AKH Repeaters

W4GAC Club Station

W4TA Contest Group

# SPARC GAP

## Winter 2015/2016



### A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Thanks for again electing me President. The job is made easy by the great support I receive from my fellow officers and club members. Thanks folks. We're always looking for new ideas to keep the club timely and relevant. If you have any thoughts as to what would make SPARC a better club, just let me know.

The WX gods were with us and we were very fortunate to have another quiet hurricane season. That being said, I did have the occasion to dust off my SKYWARN training and report a waterspout (the one that flipped the mail truck on the Skyway Bridge) to the National Weather Service. The water spout can be seen in the middle of the picture I took from my back yard.



With a strong El Niño predicted for the winter season, keep an eye out for severe weather.

We now have a set of approved drawings for our tower installation and are looking for a commercial contractor to apply for a construction permit.

We added a new "high tech" exhibit at this year's Science Festival. Tom, NY4I loaned us his satellite station as well as mentoring a number of us in satellite basics. We figured the big shiny antenna would attract attention and draw a curious crowd. Record attendance and a reconfigured festival site led lots of folks to our booth. And the kids loved to tap out their names in Morse code.

Field day results indicated W4TA finished 56<sup>th</sup> out of 286 in category 3A. Considering that category 3A had over 100 more participants than our previous year's category, our new operating configuration performed well.

The 2015 SPARCFest was the best ever. Lots of equipment changed hands and a good time was had by all. We even added a few dollars to the club treasury. Thanks to all that participated. See you again in 2016.

Everyone appeared to enjoy the After the Holidays Party at the Skyway Diner. See the photos elsewhere in this issue.

73,

Bob – N2ESP

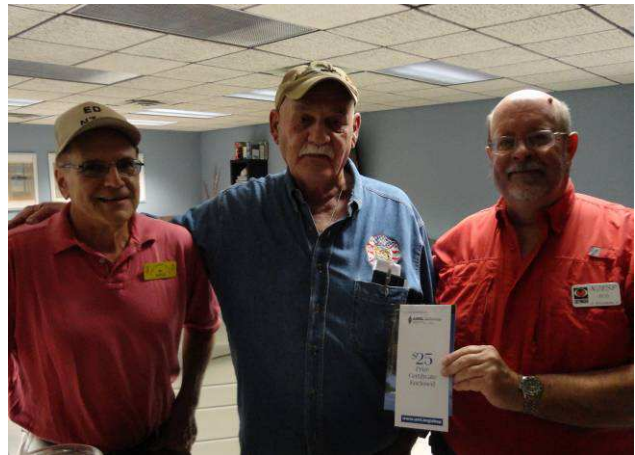
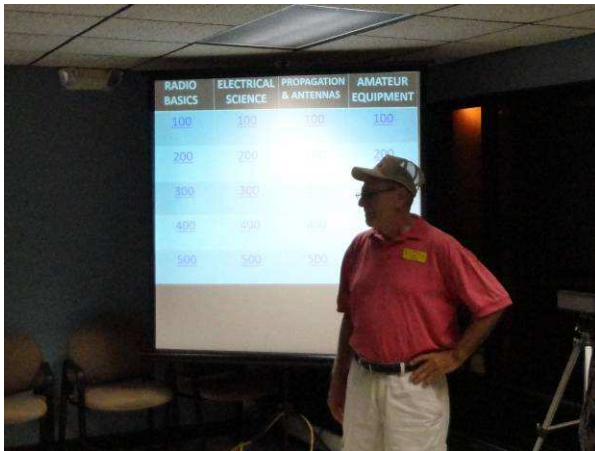
- P.S. A funny for this issue: There are two types of people in the world: Those who can extrapolate from incomplete data sets...

## Games being played at SPARC by Bob N2ESP

Club officers are always looking for new and interesting programs for our club meetings. While reading *Radio Waves*, the ARRL Instructors publication. I came across an article introducing the Jepperdee game produced by Bob Raffaele, W2XM. Our nightly net was having success reviewing a VE test question and answers. As a follow up, Jepperdee looked like a great opportunity to expand our knowledge base and have some fun at a club meeting.

I recruited our nightly questioner Ed, NZ1Q as our emcee. Ed always provides some additional insight into the correct answer; nearly everyone learns something new. The guy on TV always has some answer judges off-stage, so I recruited Dave, KR4U and Ron, KP2N to rule on the validity of our contestant's answers. Finally, John, KI4UIP volunteered to provide the buzzer system designed to determine the first contestant to "buzz in" with an answer.

During our November meeting, we recruited three contestants, Linda, KI4RV; Howard, KC3BIO; and Craig, KM4FXP. With the question matrix projected up on the big screen, the first question was asked.



In spite of a few technical glitches and answers being murmured by the audience, we made it through Double Jepperdee all the way to Final Jepperdee. Howard was the big winner, receiving an ARRL certificate for his efforts.



## Will I get permission from the XYL? By Ed Ermy NZ1Q

When I moved into my 30 year old house four years ago I was faced with the same set of problems many of us have had when moving into a house or have even encountered with our first ham shacks... Will the XYL let me do it and close behind that is where to locate the shack and how can I run cables?

- The XYL said “no holes in the walls.” And as my dad used to say “Case closed, next case.” He was a policeman so I’m used to others having the final word.
- Ok, I know what to do, I’ll bring cables in through the ceiling, maybe in the closet. Naw, that won’t be good having the antenna cables running through the attic with all the house wiring. I like to run high power and yes, “no holes in ceilings either.”
- I once laid cables through the house on the floor all the way to the shack. Nope, that won’t work in the new house (see #1&2 above regarding the XYL).
- What to do.... I’ve got it, of course, use a window!

Perfect, the window in the shack is right near the equipment bench. By the way, the shack is in a spare bedroom in the house. However, it is referred to as the “temporary storage room” by the XYL. I’m fine with that – in my mind it is The Shack! Little does she realize radios are starting to outnumber storage boxes.

Well, running the wires out of the window by keeping the window open a crack was not an option, were with all the bugs getting in and A/C costs, neighbors thinking I’m real tacky and of course the XYL.

I’ve got it. The perfect solution. Yup, not a short cut this time. I’ll take a more professional approach to it. How about a nice neat feed through panel in place of the glass. Or better yet, replace the glass with plexi-glass (acrylic sheet).

Yes, this is coming together very nicely. I’ll replace one pane of glass with acrylic and build in a feed through panel for all the cables and as a bonus use this panel as my “bulk head panel” for the single point ground system.

To see my plan come to fruition, I used an MFJ feed through panel #MFJ-4603 modified to use the metal mounting plate on the plexiglass. This plate will make a perfect single point ground for the shack.



Of the connectors shown in the photo of the MFJ feed through mounting plate, the N connector will be for the 2m/440 antenna, the four coax feed-throughs are for the 4 HF antennas, balanced line connectors are for a future project, random wire for an end-fed antenna, Red and Black power connectors for the solar panel and a feed through cable port.

After talking with John KI4UIP about the best way to drill the plex, I drilled the acrylic sheet according to the pattern in the plate. John came up with the correct bit to drill the plex without chipping, shattering or melting (many thanks John).



I removed all the feed through hardware to mark and drill the plex, which went smoothly.  
Continued.....



## Continued from page 3



This worked out very well and I now have a quick disconnect capability with feed-throughs and a bulkhead plate for grounding the shack. The up side is I can disconnect the station from the outside world in 20 seconds. Great for when those pesky thunder storms pop up in the summer time.



On the inside shown above, the rotor cable comes in through the hole that was for the "F-connector" and goes to a terminal block where there are 37-volt MOVs and .01 caps on each of the 8 lines. Above the terminal block is a Molex connector used as the quick disconnect for the rotor cable.



As it turns out, the XYL walked into the shack and said where is it? Where are the cables? With the panel mounted in the top pane and the blinds down half way, one can hardly notice the panel and cables from inside. Success! What can be noticed from the inside is a copper strap on the right of the window, which is on the outside. The cables running down the right side of the window on the inside to the rigs are hardly noticeable.



## Continued from page 4

From the outside the cables come down from the roof and are color coded so I can remember which cable goes with which antenna. The horizontal copper strap on the outside is the "bulkhead single point ground." All cable feedthroughs are grounded to the copper strap. Here the copper straps continue down to ground and are tied into ten ground rods with a perimeter ground installation. Many thanks to Kyle N4NSS, a.k.a. Sparky, for his help with the ground system. I brazed the straps together and affixed them to the plex with screws.



The copper strap was brazed with a bit of guidance from John KI4UIP. Not bad for a first attempt at brazing. And yes, John was right, it does take a bit more heat than plain soldering. However, brazing is much better for ground systems because lightning can cause regular solder to vaporize on the first stroke and then leaves no path connection for the return stroke. The only thing I'm missing here perhaps is a big sign that reads "Danger High Voltage" as a bit of an explanation since I've had several yardmen and neighbors walk by and look at this and then turn and look at me as if I were re-creating Frankenstein's Monster in my bedroom.

I really like this installation for the single point ground design, the quick disconnect and acceptance by the most critical eye – the XYL ! Yes, I am still being allowed to play ham radio for at least another year or until the next big antenna project.

## Pictures of ARRL RTTY Contest



We are on the Web!  
[www.sparc-club.org](http://www.sparc-club.org)

## DXCC Entity List by Bob N2ESP

How to Generate an Accurate DXCC Entity List.

In the days before the ARRL created the Log Book of the World (LoTW), keeping track of your DXCC status required you to manually keep records of card submissions and awarded credits. This article shows you how to generate an accurate list of your DXCC entity credits and modes as recorded by the ARRL LoTW program.

First, you must have a Logbook of The World (LoTW) account with the ARRL. They are free, and “relatively easy” to set up. Once you have established your LoTW account, simply log in. Click on the Awards box, followed by the Select DXCC Award Account box. The screen will show your Account Status as shown in the illustration below

Account Status					
DXCC Award	New LoTW QSLs	LoTW QSLs in Process	DXCC Credits Awarded	Total (All)	Total (Current)
<a href="#">Mixed *</a>	112	0	102	214	210
<a href="#">CW</a>	1	0	1	2	2
<a href="#">Phone</a>	96	0	101	197	193
<a href="#">Digital</a>	161	0	0	161	161
<a href="#">160M</a>	9	0	0	9	9
<a href="#">80M</a>	52	0	3	55	54
<a href="#">40M</a>	103	0	1	104	104
<a href="#">30M</a>	22	0	0	22	22
<a href="#">20M</a>	147	0	18	165	163
<a href="#">17M</a>	103	0	2	105	105
<a href="#">15M</a>	126	0	51	177	174
<a href="#">12M</a>	110	0	2	112	111
<a href="#">10M</a>	127	0	25	152	151
<a href="#">Challenge</a>	795	0	98	---	893

\* = Award has been issued

By clicking on any of the underlined blue entries in the DXCC Award column, you will limit the list to display only the DXCC entities in the selected category. A sample of this screen for the “Mixed” category is seen below.

The screen allows you further customize your DXCC entities list by selecting from the following options:

- Pending credits, all credits or all entities
- Mixed, CW, SSB or Digital modes
- Individual bands: 160M through 2M
- Challenge contacts
- Satellite contacts

## Continued from page 6

Finally, you also have the option of sorting the list by entity name or prefix.

Once the list is generated by LoTW, stations that have been awarded credit for the selected DXCC entities appear in **BOLD** type. Stations that have been verified by LoTW but have not been submitted for DXCC entity award credit appear in normal text. Stations that have been submitted as part of an application for DXCC upgrade award credit appear in *italicized* text.

To print the list, simply right click anywhere on the list and select the appropriate printer. If you have the capability to print .pdf files, you can save the list as a file.

**Account Credits**

**View:** ☐ Pending credits ☐ All credits ☒ All entities  

Mixed ▼

Sort list by: ☒ Name ☐ Prefix

**Notes**

- Pending credits include those QSLs *Selected* for award credit and those *Applied* for via **Application**.
- Use *All credits* to list both *Pending* and *Awarded* credits for the selected award.
- Use *All entities* to list all of the available DXCC entities.

**Award Credits:** Selected: 112 Applied for: 0 Awarded: 102 Total: 214  
Key: Selected · Applied · Awarded

DXCC Entity	Mixed
ABU AIL ISLANDS (DELETED)	
AFGHANISTAN	
AGALEGA & SAINT BRANDON ISLANDS	
ALAND ISLANDS	<a href="#">OH0/OH3VV</a>
ALASKA	<a href="#">KL7WK</a>
ALBANIA	



# SPARC Fest Pictures by Tom AI4QP



goodbye  
WINTER  
hello  
SPRING

## Pictures from After Christmas Dinner by Tom AI4QP



## Upcoming Events (\*) and Contests

CQ WW WPX RTTY Contest 02-13/14  
ARRL International DX Contest CW 02-20/21  
NAQP QSO Party RTTY 02-27/28  
ARRL International DX Contest SSB 03-05/06  
QCWA QSO Party 03-12/13  
BARTG HF RTTY Contest 03-19/21  
CQ WW WPX SSB Contest 03-26/27

Note: Contest information for any month or the entire year is readily available, simply GOOGLE WA7BNM and select the contest calendar.

## Station Report - RTTY Contest by Ron KP2N

Final total Q = 1021, Mults = 106, Total = 108,226

Submitted to ARRL and received # 4318524.arrl-rtty. We are in!

Our total operating time 22 hours, 50 minutes. Could have operated the extra hour+ if we had started at 7 AM. Will do better next year. Results have been posted on LOTW and Leslie has the ADIF file to answer incoming QSL's.

Great job by the entire crew. Thanks to John (forgot his call) for the loan of the R7 antenna and to John, KI4UIP, and Dave, KR4U, who repaired and tuned the vertical. It worked really well. Thanks to Tom, NY4I, who solved the problem with the K3 sending extra diddles at times. A device hung on the data buss was picking up RF and

after it's removal the K3 worked like a champ. The 80/40 dipole gave fair results after Dave, KR4U, installed his Heathkit 2060 tuner. The old EF Johnson matchbox would tune on 80 but not 40. All the rest of the stations worked

great. Can't wait until the tower is installed with the T-8 on top.

BTW the group consumed 6 pounds of Sloppy Joe . A new record!

Again, many thanks for helping with the RU and hope we do well in future contests from DMI.

73 Ron KP2N



Order your SPARC Badge from Tom AI4QP

## SPARC Meetings

First Friday every month, 7:30 pm

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

at DMI

6699 90th Ave. N. Pinellas Park

\*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. Petersburg

### 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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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



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## Welcome To Our New Members

Stephan Klein KM4LTF  
 Ron Milbourn N4KPJ  
 Tom Arseneau WA6NJV  
 Dan Gerson KB4BOQ  
 Marvin Taylor AE0EG  
 Rex Symonds KB8ESY  
 Erkki Taada KM4NOZ  
 Patrick Lynch KM4OKG



Gerald Pollack WR6N  
 Francis Britcher KC3BIO  
 Eddie S Day W4KET  
 Michael Taylor KM4OVL  
 Indio Velazquez KM4DYB  
 Mark Matthews KM4PHH  
 Paul Dittbrenner, JR. K2KYN  
 Christopher Jones, Jr



## Club Officers for 2016

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Treasurer Tom Wedding AI4QP

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Repeater Trustee Ron Hall KP2N

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W4TA

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