



SPARC Gap

The Official Newsletter of the Saint Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

Vol. 3 No. 2

October 2025

Multiple Clubs Join Together for ARRL Field Day 2025

by: Tom Schaefer, NY4I

Once again, three Pinellas County Amateur radio clubs joined forces for the annual ARRL Field Day event on June 28th & 29th, 2025 at the Clearwater Fire Training Center in Clearwater, Florida.



It would be somewhat trite to say *we got the band back together* for ARRL Field Day this year, but that is nonetheless what we did.

Members of SPARC teamed up with members from the Clearwater Amateur Radio Society and the Upper Pinellas Amateur Radio Club for the annual ARRL Field Day.

We have been at this facility before with both the other clubs for the most recent Winter Field Day in January and in years past. It is a wonderful facility and sharing the workload with the other clubs allows us to put on what I think is a better event.

As with other Field Days in the summer, we opted to set up temporary antennas but operated inside. We also used commercial power (since for a real emergency, we are well-versed in using the generators and the Clearwater EOC (*Emergency Operations Center*) which also has a generator).

We ran three stations plus the free VHF station for 6 meters and the satellite station. This all went to plan with the three UPARC Elecraft K3 radios, Paul KC4YDY ("6 meter Paul") Yaesu radio for 6m and the Icom IC-9700/Arrow antenna satellite station.

We scored the usual bonus points such as the natural power QSOs (contacts), a visit by a served agency (The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office), passing the Field Day message to the Section Manager and copying the Field Day bulletin. We also sent ten NTS (*National Traffic System*) messages from attendees and even had a youth contact. While we always get the media publicity bonus, this year thanks to the tenacity of Bruce K2BHS, we did it in style.



WFLA Comes to Town

Bruce, K2BHS joined the Field Day Planning Committee with the intention of acting as the public relations person. He sent invitations to various elected officials, served agencies and many media outlets. This paid off handsomely.



NBC affiliated TV station, WFLA (Channel 8) in Tampa, contacted Bruce saying that they wanted to do a live broadcast from our Field Day site on Sunday

morning starting at 6:00 AM. Yes, 6:00 AM on Sunday—not a typo. Reporter Jenna Bass and her photographer, Jamey Cicalese came out to the site and set up for their live shot. But it wasn't just one live shot. Bruce did three on-camera interviews. You can see one of those on our website www.sparc-club.org

The video at the end of this article is a later video they did at 6:00 & 11:00 PM on the Sunday of Field Day. The piece has more "action shots" and interviews with other participants including Olev, N4OHI.





SPARC Gap

The Official Newsletter of the Saint Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

Vol. 3 No. 2

October 2025

How did we do?

We made over 2300 QSOs this year. The three HF stations stayed busy as did the 6-meter station.

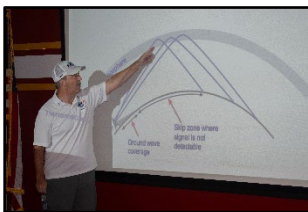
The Results:

- Total Contacts (all modes): 2358
- SSB (Phone): 1212
- CW (Morse Code): 401
- Digital (FT8, FT4, etc.): 745

The ARRL awarded Bonus Points in the following categories, resulting in 1170 total Bonus Points earned:

- Power Multiplier for 100 watts
- Media Publicity
- Message to ARRL Section Manager
- W1AW Field Day Bulletin
- Ten NTS (*National Traffic System*) Messages Handled
- Satellite QSO
- Natural Power QSOs
- Site Visit by a Served Agency
- Educational Activity Bonus
- Youth Element Achieved
- Safety Office Bonus
- Submission by Web App
- Social Media Bonus

Guests that came to the Field Day Event got some



education about ham radio from Fred, W2SUB. These educational sessions included offering pointers to hams of varied licensure classes and experience levels, encouraging a new

ham to pick up the microphone and make contacts or even introduce ham radio to someone for the first time.

It was an overall successful event, and the three clubs are considering doing Winter Field Day 2026 together as well. More information will be available at a later time.

ARRL Field Day 2025 Dry-Run Report

by: Tom Schaefer, NY4I

Members of the Clearwater Amateur Radio Society (CARS), St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club (SPARC) and the Upper Pinellas Amateur Radio Club (UPARC) met at the Clearwater Fire Training Center on June 21 for the Field Day Dry-Run.

This is where we set up the radios and computers to ensure we have all the necessary equipment and cables for the following weekend's ARRL Field Day. While neither the antennas nor coax were set up at that time, we performed a transmitter test on the Elecraft K3 radios, which will be used during the event, to ensure they are transmitting full power.



We started at 9:00 AM and were able to finish up by 11:30 AM. It is a few well-spent hours to make sure we have all the little cables and other accouterment that radios and computers need to operate (microphones, CW keys, foot switch, USB cables, etc).

The dry-run was successful and everything was deemed operational in preparation for the following weekend's big event.

Who was WA4AKH: A Look into SPARC's Repeater Callsign

by: Bruce H. Solov, K2BHS

Anyone who frequently uses any or all of the St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club's three repeaters, has



SPARC Gap

The Official Newsletter of the Saint Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

Vol. 3 No. 2

October 2025

heard its ID, whether it is the CW (WA4AKH/R) or voice version. “WA4AKH repeater” The burning question in minds similar to mine is, “Who was WA4AKH? How did the repeaters get this call sign bestowed upon them.” Prior to receiving its familiar WA4AKH callsign, the repeater was operating under the club callsign of no other than W4GAC.



Marjorie West, WA4TVL (SK)

So, first of all, who was WA4AKH? WA4AKH was no other than longtime trustee, Emmett West, who became a silent key in November 2007.

The newly formed SPARC Repeater Group, received a new license, with an initial callsign of KJ4DTL on April

28, 2007, as stated in the November 2008 edition of the *SPARC Gap*. Work was started almost immediately to obtain, Emmett’s WA4AKH callsign under the FCC’s Vanity Call Program, 100% backed by his widow, Marjorie T. West, WA4TVL (SK). Ms. West provided the group with a letter indicating her wishes and consent to have SPARC apply for Emmett’s call. With the help of not only, Marjorie West – WA4TVL (SK), but Lu Romero – W4LT, Pete Petersen – KB9LXM (SK), Dee Turner – N4GD, Bill Zulas – WZ4GW, David Trewin – KR4U, Past President Leslie Johnson – WA4EEZ (SK) and Ron Hall – KP2N (SK), WA4AKH/R became a reality on July 25, 2008.

The first QSO on the newly licensed repeater was between Marjorie, WA4TVL and Dee, N4GD on SPARC’s 440 MHz repeater. The source article states, “Marjorie’s face lit up when the voice ID of WA4AKH came over her HT.”

It is important to note that Emmett’s memory has been honored for the past 17 years, as the SPARC repeaters’ callsign.

Photo of Marjorie West, WA4TVL and excerpts courtesy of SPARC Gap dated November 2008.

There will be future articles highlighting a time in SPARC’s rich 90 plus year history. The club had its 91st anniversary on 4/28/2025. Stay tuned!

Make Your Voice Heard with Regards to Restrictive HOA Rules

by: Bruce H. Solov, K2BHS

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) launched a Nationwide Grassroots Campaign back in February 2025 for lawmakers in Washington, DC to pass the Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act. This act would essentially give Amateur Radio Operators the same rights to install antennas on their property as those enjoyed by users of TV antennas, wireless internet, satellite dishes and flagpoles. The bipartisan House and Senate bills are aimed at preventing homeowners’ association (HOA) rules that currently prohibit or severely limit the installation of amateur radio antennas. These restrictive HOA rules even stretch to the point of having these antennas hidden in trees, in your attic or even on your vehicle.

You are urged to make your voice heard! Only collectively, as the Amateur Radio Community, can we put an end to these oppressive restrictions. Remember that there is strength in numbers! The letter is pre-drafted and all you need to do is fill in some blanks. Those letters get sent to your local congresspeople and senators. You can make your voice heard at <https://send-a-letter.org/hoa> or by clicking the link below.

[HOA page - Legislative](#)

You do not need to be an ARRL Member to participate. This is open to all licensed U.S. Amateur Radio Operators.

The post on the ARRL’s website states, “Your



SPARC Gap

The Official Newsletter of the Saint Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

Vol. 3 No. 2

October 2025

Representative and Senators need to know that the passage of this legislation is important to you.”

Make your voice heard to put an end to restrictive HOA rules, regarding amateur radio antennas!

SPARC's Occupancy of Current Meeting Place Terminates at the End of the Year

by: Bruce H. Solov, K2BHS

The St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club has been notified by the owner of the DMI Research facility last month, that the club must vacate by the end of the year. Kathy, who is the owner of DMI Research cited a changing business model, that requires the space that SPARC currently occupies. She placed a move out date by the end of December 2025.

Club President, Tom Schaefer (NY4I) said that he received a text message from Kathy on Thursday, September 25, with the dreaded news. Tom further said that Kathy mentioned she is not selling the building. He also stressed that this action had nothing to do with anything the club may or may not have done as a tenant in the facility, it is just the changing business needs of the building's owner.

SPARC's Board held an informal information session via Zoom on September 29, to brainstorm ideas in the quest to securing, at the very least, a place to meet each month. He further mentioned that it would be ideal to secure a location where the club can have a shack as well. However, the most important thing is having a place to meet.

This development will be discussed in greater detail at the Monthly Meeting on October 3. Anyone that might have a “warm” lead of where we can hold our meetings is encouraged to advise accordingly.

The membership will be notified once a new meeting (and maybe a club station) venue is secured. Stay tuned for future developments.

Welcome New Members

By: Bruce H. Solov, K2BHS

The St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club would like to welcome the following new members to our club.

April 2025:

Dan Harden, KG7OYF
Chris Clement, KA4UPC
William Arnold, KO4ETH
Didier Touchet, KR4CMA

May 2025:

Lawrence McCabe, WA0QHF

June 2025:

Cedric Harris, KF4ZCG
William Crowe, KR4EDC

July 2025:

Nick Ingrande, KR4ERZ
Alex Tobin, KR4ESA
Tim Benton, KR4ESB

August 2025:

Joseph Battikhi, KR4FJI
Wesley Wells, KR4FJJ

September 2025:

Mason Taylor, KK4MSZ
Bryce Nix, KR4GHU
Aaron Hernandez, KR4GHM
Eli Levy, KR4GKS

Congratulations and welcome to all our new members!



SPARC Gap

The Official Newsletter of the Saint Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

Vol. 3 No. 2

October 2025

VE Testing Results:

By: Bruce H. Solov, K2BHS

The St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club holds monthly VE testing sessions at the Club Station located at DMI Research, in Pinellas Park.

The results are as follows:

4/15/25

Cancelled – No candidates

5/20/25

New-Technician

William Crowe, KR4EDC

6/17/25

New-Technician

Timothy Benton, KR4ESB

Alex Tobin, KR4ESA

Nicholas Ingrande, KR4ERZ

Upgrade-Extra

Ryan English, KR4BDP

7/15/25

New-Technician

Joseph Battikhi, KR4FJI

Wesley Wells, KR4FJJ

Upgrade-General

Nicholas Ingrande, KR4ERZ

8/19/25

New-Technician

Aaron Hernandez, KR4GHM

Eli Levy, KR4GKS

New-General

Bryce Nix, KR4GHU

Upgrade-Extra

Michael Canfield, W1MPC

9/16/25

New-Technician

Benjamin Thompson, KR4GUZ

Upgrade-General

Wesley Wells, WN4IND

Upgrade-Extra

Nicholas Ingrande, KR4ERZ

VE testing sessions are held on the third Tuesday of each month at DMI Research in Pinellas Park. If you wish to test, please contact the club. Congratulations to all the new hams and upgrades. Job well done! Enjoy.

Looking for Participation from club members.

By: Bruce Solov, K2BHS

As your editor of the *SPARC Gap* Newsletter, I am always looking for feedback, suggestions and submissions for future editions.

I am also always looking for people to submit articles to me.

Also, a reminder that I would absolutely love some *real* reviews of gear that you have (whether it is good, bad or downright ugly). The reviews are not limited to just transceivers, but everything (e.g. antennas, tuners, accessories, testing equipment, etc.) This type of information would be beneficial to new and seasoned amateurs alike. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to reach out to me.

If anyone has any ideas on columns that you would like to see in the *SPARC Gap*, please reach



SPARC Gap

The Official Newsletter of the Saint Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

Vol. 3 No. 2

October 2025

out to me.

Of course I can be reached by email:

editor@sparc-club.org All are welcome to make submissions.

73's,

Bruce H. Solou, K2BHS

Secretary and SPARC Gap Editor

Current SPARC Net Schedule

SPARC Nightly 2-meter Prenet from 18:00-18:30
on 147.060 MHz (7 days/week)

SPARC Nightly 2-meter Net starting at 18:30 on
147.060 MHz (7 days/week)

SPARC 220/440 Net starting at 19:15 on 224.66
MHz/444.475 MHz with a tone of 146.2 Hz
(meets every Thursday evening).



In Memoriam

Silent Keys

*It is with a heavy heart that the St. Petersburg
Amateur Radio Club announce the following member
has become silent key:*

Harold "Pete" Petersen, KB9LXM

*He will be sadly missed. May his memory be cherished
forever.*