



75 SPARC Years



GAP



**St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 2217 St. Petersburg, Fl. 333731
July- August 2010**



From Our President

Hi Everyone,

I thought I would take a moment to shine the light on net-managers. This position is taken voluntarily. Although, some might say, gentle persuasion was applied to fill the net-manager position at the last meeting. Pete, who had previously been the net-manager, informed the club that he would be stepping aside, then. He had served the club for years. His service to the club is to be commended.

Johnnie, our new net-manager, is doing things markedly different than his predecessors. He has begun a net for the net-control operators to check into and pass on their data to him then. I think that this change is a good one. Net-managers need not feel tied to the radio every evening anymore. Thank you, Johnnie.

73, Grace, KG4CTG

We are on the Web!
www.sparc-club.org

**Excerpt taken From Our Press Release Packet for Field Day
created by Donn N4KII and Johnnie W4TSP**

This annual event, called "Field Day" is the climax of the week long "Amateur Radio Week" sponsored by the ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio. Using only emergency power supplies, ham operators will construct emergency stations in parks, shopping malls, schools and back yards around the country. Their slogan "Ham radio works when other systems don't!" is more than just words to the hams as they prove they can send messages in many forms without the use of phone systems, Internet or any other infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis. More than 30,000 Amateur radio operators across the country participated in last year's event.

The complete packet can be seen in the W4GAC Club Room. Donn & Johnnie did such a fantastic job that it is a must read if you did not already do so at field day.

Welcome To Our New Members

Bernard (Bernie) Pettit WB9BZL

Marya Pettit KI4MPV

Peter Lefferson K4POB

Visit to WTSP Transmitter Site by N2ESP



Johnnie, W4TSP, took SPARC members on the second half of the Channel 10 tour at the transmitter site in Holiday, FL. Uniquely located in the middle of a housing development, Johnnie said that when he started with WTSP over 30 years ago, the station owned all the land around the transmitter site. Over time, the station sold off the property around the transmitter, keeping three rights of way for the tower guy wires.

Once inside the small transmitter building, you face the primary and secondary solid state TV transmitters. [photo 1] Off to the right is a rack full of control equipment that receives the signals from the Gandy Blvd studio via two microwave links. [photo 2] Also in this rack are the audio and tower lighting controls. In the event of a transmitter problem, a monitor program affectionately referred to as "R2D2" calls Johnnie or one of his co-workers and advises them of the problem. We saw R2D2 in action when Johnnie showed us one of the modular power amplifiers in the secondary transmitter. [photo 3]

In the room behind the transmitters, the output of the transmitters are combined together in a combiner [photo 4] and then fed through a "filter mask" [photo 5] before going out to the antenna. The coax used to connect the transmitter components together resembles two copper pipes, one inside the other. [photo 6] The coax leaving the transmitter building [photo 7] and going up to the antenna at the top of the tower is 6" in diameter! And what a tower it is; over 1,200 feet tall. [photos 8 & 9] It takes maintenance personnel up to 4 hours to climb to the base of the antenna located at the top of the tower. Three sets of two guy wires fan out into the neighborhood.[photo 10] At the base of the guy wires are some massive concrete anchor blocks. [photo 11 & 12]

The tour ended at the channel 24 UHF transmitter which is no longer in use. This transmitter was originally used by WTSP for their digital signal. When the channel 10 VHF transmitter was converted to digital operation, the UHF transmitter was mothballed.

Special thanks to Johnnie, W4TSP, for taking the time to show us how the big boys play radio/TV.



Field Day from Dave KR4U

Our Bay Pines luck stayed with us again this year, no rain at our site. We did shut down for a couple of hours as it did look like we were going to have a thunder storm early Saturday night but it passed us by...thanks. It was very hot and humid the entire weekend but we managed to get the job done. I want to thank all SPARC members that came out and gave their support in all aspects of the event...we have a Great Team for sure. A special Thanks to David, W4YD for his efforts in securing our site and having our notification on the entrance sign and to Blackie, W4TA for the use of his excellent call.

The setup on Saturday morning went very smooth at both the SSS and CW locations, we were ready to go at 2 pm with time to spare. We had one radio problem and one computer problem at the SSB location and both were quickly solved with spare units we had on hand. The CW stations were trouble free and worked fine all weekend. The antenna arrays were basically unchanged from last year using a beam and all band dipole and vertical for SSB and digital contacts and verticals along with a 15 meter half square for the CW stations. Band conditions on 20 and 15 meters were better than last year and about the same on 80 and 40 meters. 10 meters provided us with 8 CW and 37 digital QSO's, again better than last year. Our 6 meter man Paul, KC4YDY was able to make 75 contacts due to some very nice openings. Great Job! Last year 6 was very quiet with only a few contacts for the entire event. Here is a breakdown of the QSO's on the three modes that we used: Digital 37 (PSK 31), SSB 490 and CW 1135 for a total count of 1662 QSO's. We managed to get 1350 bonus points out of a possible 1850 points. Overall we did better than our last years 5A entry but most important was the fellowship, fun and the ability we have to communicate under adverse conditions if that ever becomes necessary. I also wanted to mention that we enjoyed Doug Mills, AG5I coming from Tennessee to visit and operate with us on Field Day.

Our sign in and guest book contained 57 entries this year and I really enjoyed visiting with several people who had no idea what amateur radio was all about, I know several of you had this same opportunity during the weekend. The food was excellent again this year with lunch on Saturday and dinner on Saturday evening. On behalf of the club I want to Thank Roger, K4SHI and Leslie, WA4EEZ for providing our lunch and making all the arrangements for our dinner and going to pick it up. I also want to Thank Johnnie, W4TSP for his efforts to have Marcus Grayson from WTSP-TV provide some media coverage at our event on Sunday. I hope everyone who participated had a great time, I sure did and now I am looking forward to next year with some improvements all ready noted.

73 de Dave KR4U, Field Day Chairman

Contest/Operating Event Corner

North American QSO Party RTTY (NAQP)

Our SPARC group was well represented in the recent running of the NAQP RTTY contest held on July 17/18, 2010. Since all involved are members of the Florida Contest Group (FCG) we put a team of five stations together and entered as FCG Team #1. Three of us operated our home stations Tom, W4CU..Leslie, WA4EEZ and Dave, KR4U. Ron, KP2N used the club station W4GAC and Cary, K4CC operated the club station at the Tampa Amateur Radio Club. It was a fun event and maximum allowed time on was 10 hours. All five scores were added and submitted as a team score, our final tally was 162,352 points. Anyone in SPARC interested in future team efforts should contact KP2N or KR4U.

73 de Dave KR4U

ARRL Field Day 2010 at Bay Pines



Sittin' on the Dock of VA by Tom Schaeffer W4CU to the tune of (Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay by Otis Redding

CQin' in the morning sun
I'll be CQin' when
the evenin' comes

Watching the Qs roll in
then I'll send
QRZ? Again

I'm sittin' on the dock of
VA
watchin' Field Day roll away
Just sittin' on the dock of
VA
feelin' fine



Field Day Happy Happy Faces



Satellite Operation my "White Whale" by Tom Schaefer NY4I



Ever since the failed attempt to make a satellite contact at this year's Field Day, I have become much more interested in working the amateur satellites. Call it my white whale if you will, but I have become determined to make contact through an amateur satellite. Perhaps just as Ahab before me, I consumed myself with all the trappings of technology to learn when to look, where to look and how to work them. For just as the stricken captain determined he would get his whale, I too decided that I would use everything I could to get my revenge.

Seriously, one thing I do not lack are the tools of technology. Being a professional bit fiddler, I pride myself on having the right gear for the job. In this case, it turned out to be a simple iPhone. It could just as easily have been any smart phone but the key is the satellite tracking application. Rather than having to haul out the computer to track the "birds", I thought it would be great to track the satellites right in the palm of my hand. I downloaded an app called "Satellite Tracker" from the Apple App Store. This app allows me to specify the amateur satellites I want to monitor. It then gives me a list of the next passes for the birds in question. As you can see from the chart, in this example, SUN-SAT has a pass due in 9 minutes while the ISS has a pass due in an hour and 14 minutes. By tapping on the satellite, you are then presented with a graph that shows the predicted path of the satellite relative to the iPhone. The dot in the middle is the predicted location of the Sun so you can line up the position (no compass on the iPhone 3). From this graph, I can see this is a relatively high pass. On the detail screen, I am told this pass will be a 57 degree pass at maximum elevation.

All of this information leads me up to what most people would consider strange—even obsessive. You see, last night (or should I say early this morning) I finally dragged myself to bed at about 1:00 AM. As I lay down, I checked my iPhone for any last minute messages. I also checked the Satellite Tracking application. As I lay there, I saw—there upon the screen—satellite nirvana: a 85 degree Satellite pass. The ISS was going almost right over my head!!! 5 minutes to go...could I seriously make it in time. Keep in mind that my plan was to use the APRS digipeater that is running on the ISS. I worked MIR years ago before it fell from the heavens with a simple HT and a small whip antenna. Surely, I could do it with the 1/4 wave on my car? "Frequency," I thought, "I need the frequency. Is it duplex? No, I read it was simplex." Up from bed I sprang.

Into the car—the dogs did NOT want to go for a ride at this hour—and back out of the drive way. I quickly programmed the Kenwood D700A (my APRS radio) to the simplex frequency of 145.825 Mhz. As this is simplex, it has to be the simplest satellite to work ever! I set my call (NY4I-12), set the beacon interval to 1 minute, set the MSG Group to * and most importantly, set the digipeat packet path to ARISS. As soon as I turned up the volume, I was hearing stations. I heard a position packet from W9QO in Georgia, XE1ISS in Cancun and KE5ZGI in New Mexico among others. After I received these stations and listened some more and not wanting to send out needless reports, I pulled the car back in the garage, saved the settings on the radio in a memory, and shut it down. As I headed back to bed, I thought how cool it was that with no more than a simple installation that I use to talk on local repeaters, I just sent a signal 400 KM into space, and had it repeated back to me. All while sitting in my driveway in the early morning hours. Not exactly the hardest satellite to work, but between the tracking, the "rush" and the little details, it made for an exciting night. As I lay down and dreamed of bagging that whale I call FO29 sometime in the future. I imagined Field Days to come when we do get that hundred points, but more important, we open up yet another facet of this wonderful hobby to all.

73,

Tom Schaefer, NY4I

Upcoming Contests

NAQP CW Aug. 7/8

SKCC Weekend Sprint Aug. 8

10/10 Summer contest SSB Aug. 7/8

SARTG WW RTTY Aug. 21/22

NAQP SSB Aug. 21/22

SPARC Meetings

First Friday every month, 7:30 pm

and

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

at the Salvation Army

3800 Ninth Avenue 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.

ELMERS

Specialty	Name	Call	Contact Information
Digital, CW, and Antennas	Dave Trewin	KR4U	trewins@aol.com
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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

Lake Maggiore Hamfest



Club Officers for 2010

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