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www.sparc-club.org



SPARC CALLS:
WA4AKH REPEATERS
W4GAC CLUB STATION
W4TA CONTEST GROUP

SPARC GAP

November–December 2013



A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Thanks for electing me President for another year. Our biggest challenge is still finding a new location for our station. My personal goal is to increase member participation in club events, by identifying areas of interest to club members. All suggestions and help are welcome. And remember, club dues are due.

Propagation was poor in mid-summer and there were not many DXpeditions scheduled; things on the HF bands were rather slow. Taking advantage of this down time, the crew of W4CU, KR4U, KP2N, KI4UIP, N4KII, N2ESP and N4NSS continued update W4GAC / W4TA by installing two antennas, a multi-band vertical and a 40/80 dipole...just in time for the next contest.

Opening up the August issue of *QST*, and scanning through the Top Ten Scores box, it was gratifying to see W4GAC listed in 5th place (Multi-Op W/VE Low power category) in the 25th anniversary running of the ARRL RTTY Roundup. Eagle-eyed readers also noticed W4GAC in the middle of the spectrogram that makes up the title photograph. Good work team.

Trying to keep up our record of success, W4TA entered the NAQP RTTY on July 20th, our first contest from the temporary station location. With our antenna options limited and a maximum power of 100 watts, we were happy to submit a score of 78,819, very close to our July 2012 effort. KP2N, KR4U, N2ESP, N4RI, NY4I, W4CU, W4TSP, and WA4EEZ took part in this ground breaking event.

We also had a number of new hams drop by and experience their first RTTY contest. *UPDATE:* W4TA finished fifth in class M2 and first in "W4" land. Wonderful results under less than ideal conditions. If you're interested in giving contesting a try, contact one of the folks listed above. A list of upcoming contests may be found elsewhere in this issue.

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We are on the Web!
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HAPPY
HOLIDAYS



...from our President

The SPARC family has been busy these days:

Thanks to Larry, AL4B for taking over as Sunday net controller. We still need a part time Thursday net controller for the 220/440 net.

Ron, Dee, and John, KP2N, N4GD and KI4UIP respectively, tweaked up the repeaters, and took care of some technical issues. Dee, N4GD and Tom, NY4I took care of some web site issues. Thanks guys.

Kudos to Veronika, KC4YAW, for producing another memorable Field Day CD. Credit to Steve, N2KBD; Tom, AI4QP; Ron, KP2N; Donn, N4KII for the photographs/videos that recorded all the activity. And don't forget to view Larry's (AL4B) video on YouTube® <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnq8C4eSHfY> RAH-RAH Field Day.

Testing 123...Our VE testing team has been busy, and because of these volunteers, we have a number of new and upgraded hams in our ranks. Without you folks, we would not continue to grow the hobby and SPARC. A debt of gratitude to Mike, K4ZPE and his team.

The Summer time collisions between the east and west coast sea breezes kept the Skywarn folks busy. Keep a weather eye open. Fortunately for everybody, this has been a slow hurricane season.

An early morning trips to the TARCfest in Tampa and the UPARC Tailgate in Palm Harbor yielded a few more dollars for the treasury.

SPARC was well represented at the St. Pete Science Festival. This was a great opportunity for the youth of St. Pete to interact with and learn about ham radio. Thanks to all that participated.

Great propagation returned for the CQ Worldwide SSB contest at the end of October. 10M was busy from 28.3MHz to 29.2MHz with contesters everywhere....about time.

73, Bob - N2ESP

P.S. A funny for this issue: No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.



Special event stations educate, entertain

I like special event stations. I enjoy operating them and making contact with them. Whenever I operate WA2HOM, our club station at the Ann Arbor (MI) Hands-On Museum, one of the first things I do is to search for special event stations.

One of the reasons I enjoy operating special event stations is that it's educational. For example, on November 17, I worked W4D in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. They were commemorating the 520th anniversary of the discovery by Europeans of the island of Puerto Rico. As a result, I learned that on November 19, 1493 Christopher Columbus landed on the island, naming it San Juan Bautista in honor of Saint John the Baptist, a name that was later changed to Puerto Rico (rich port).

Working special event stations is also entertaining. Most times when you work a special event station, you can tell that they're having a good time. One time, I worked W4B, operating from the Kentucky Bourbon Festival. Now, those guys were really having a great time!

How do you find special event stations?

One way to find special event stations is to just tune around. Most special event stations will be operating at least a 20m phone station, so take a look at that band first. Also, consult the special event stations listings in QST or on the ARRL website (<http://www.arrl.org/special-event-stations>). KE2YK also has a special events page (<http://ke2yk.wordpress.com/special-event-station-events/>).

In addition to working special event stations, you should consider organizing and operating one of your own. For the past two years, several members of our Rotary Club who are also amateur radio operators have operated W8P on the third weekend in February, which commemorates the founding of the Rotary Club and helps spread the word about the End Polio Now campaign (<http://www.endpolio.org/>). It was not only fun to do this, but I think that we helped raise awareness about polio around the world.

Whatever your reason for holding a special event, you'll want to be somewhat knowledgeable about your topic. For example, if you decide to set up a special event station at the local Rutabaga Festival, you might want to know how long they've been having the festival, how many pounds of rutabagas are produced by local farms and around the U.S., and maybe even find a couple of rutabaga recipes that you could send out to stations that work you.



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When he's not working special event stations, Dan, KB6NU enjoys building kits and working CW. For more information about his operating activities and his "No-Nonsense" series of amateur radio license study guides, go to KB6NU.Com or e-mail cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

SPARC-FEST SPARCTACULAR !

The annual SPARC-FEST has had another great year! It was a great day for the event and everyone showed up early. Ron and Bob got there early around 6 AM and the gate was open and people were already setting up. That was a surprise for us. We thought we would be the first ones there. The crew got there and started setting things up. The Sun was coming up just in time. It was a little cool, around 67 degrees but that felt good for a change. Things started warming up and it was a beautiful day for a tailgate.

I don't know if anybody got a count on how many folks showed up but some guessed between 2 and 3 hundred. All I know it was busy and they were having fun. Dave did a great job on the coffee and Ron got the Burnt Offering Grill going and the aroma was floating through the air. The SPARC-DOGS and burgers went well and the donuts are always a hit.

I think the club table sales went well and other vendors were doing good also. It was also good to see the folks you only see at these events and get caught up on the past year.

The SPARC VE team had a good session to. Mike said we had 2 new Extras and 2 Techs with one upgrading to General. That is a good session. Mike does a great job bringing all the necessary equipment to set up a portable class room setting.

I saw a lot of folks taking pictures so I hope they get them to Veronika for the SPARC-GAP. She and Dave do a great job getting it out.

I hope you had the chance to get to the SPARC-FEST, if not, it was your loss. Hope to see you next year.

AI4QP Tom



SPARC Fest Pictures Courtesy of AI4QP



Congrats to Leslie WA4EEZ



USA-CA

(worked and confirmed 3077 US Counties)

Ameco Code Records—remember those? My OM K4SHI was listening to them back in 1961 when he came home from work every day. While he worked on his code, I would be cooking dinner, so I couldn't help but hear all those dits and dahs..and before long, I knew the code fairly well (at least to copy it!) Shortly afterward I took the Tech and Novice tests and became WN4EEZ and WA4EEZ in December 1961 at the ripe old age of 17....I became very active on the VHF bands...made many, many contacts, got my CW speed up with my J-38 on the Novice bands, participated in a Field Day, and even stood by on a local emergency net with Nancy, WA4EDL during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Before long, I got some QSL cards returned, and noticed that I had worked different states and counties~ the Florida Skip Magazine offered a "Worked all Florida Counties" award, so I kept that in mind as I worked along. (note: The Worked All Florida Counties Award is now administered by The Florida Contest Group) Some rigs I used in those early days were the Clegg 99'er (8 watts), Globe Hi-Bander 6n2 (50 watts)..I built a Heathkit HX-11, which I enjoyed building AND using! I even got into the CQWW VHF contest in 1963 and got a nice certificate for "High Scorer" in the "Florida" section. Somewhere in there a hurricane came along and took down my beloved Finco 6n2 Beam...Was off the air until 1977, when I got my General and put up a vertical for HF... then shortly afterward we got two lightning hits that destroyed most all of our ham gear. I became busy with work and family until 1999, when a couple of our ham friends insisted on helping us get back on the air.

Wow—10m was hopping and I was hooked all over again!! Managed to confirm 500 counties on 10m for the USA-CA-500 award. When the sun spots disappeared, I migrated to HF, began learning about the Digital modes..PSK, Hell, RTTY, then got into some of the smaller contests and began to see a steady increase in my county total. However, I didn't really believe I could ever get them all—but thought maybe 1000 might be do-able. Gosh, maybe even 2000. By this time I was using an Icom 756 Pro II at 100 watts, and all wire antennas for 80-10m.

I came across the CHN (County Hunter's Net) on 14.336 MHz one fine day in late 2004, and began to work on my counties a bit more diligently! I had maybe 1100 counties by then. I learned how to make out the MRC's and use the MARAC QSL Manager service...Hey, this is the way to go!

The final impetus for my county-hunting came when I attended the memorial service for Wendy, KB1AF. She was a member of our local club, and a truly delightful person. She had been very active on the airwaves here locally, despite many health issues. At her service, her USA-CA 3077 Number 952 was displayed, and I determined at that moment to try for all 3077 counties in Wendy's honor.

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Continued Congrats to Leslie WA4EEZ

I continued collecting counties passively, using ragchews and contests and got back onto the CHN's pretty much full time in 2011, when I came across the 40m CH folks on 7.188....Scottie, N4AAT and Joe, N5UZW helped me get started again, and the chase was on! Before too long, using various bands and modes, I had about 1500, then 2500, and then 3000 counties confirmed....

The last three counties seemed to take forever (although it was less than a month, actually). Petroleum, MT—Benton, OR—and Traverse MN. Petroleum County, MT was being run by two mobiles at the same time—WQ7A/m on 20SSB, and N4CD/m on 20mCW...what to do?...somehow I managed to work them both at 1805z. WQ7A got Benton, OR for me and that left ONE to go! Thanks to Brian, NX0X and his XYL Shari, KB0MHH, Traverse MN-- Number 3077 is in the log!

My heartfelt gratitude to all the mobiles, Net Control Stations, testers, ragchewers, and card checkers who helped me so much along the way! It has taken me 51 years—what a fantastic journey! 73 and good hunting! Leslie, WA4EEZ

Reprinted with permission, from the "Awards" column in the November 2013 issue of CQ magazine."



Meet our Member.... Richard Stephens N4BUA

I have been a ham since February 1999 and a member of SPARC since that time. My equipment includes a Yaesu FT-1000MP MARK-V, an ICOM IC-706MKIIG, a TGM MQ-1 Miniature Four Band Hybrid Quad Antenna, and a Vectronics HFT-1500 Antenna Tuner. I use my equipment daily enjoying rag chewing on 20 meters (14.305, The Very Beautiful Day Net). I also serve as an ARRL VE and a W5YI VE.



Science Festival 2013



SPARC received an invitation to participate in the 2013 St. Petersburg Science Festival. Starting with a 10' x 10' tent, a table and two chairs, the challenge was to put together a series of hands-on demonstrations designed to let visitors actively *participate* in some of the various aspects of ham radio. Simply watching a QSO in progress was not good enough.

The SPARC team came up with a number of exhibits to fill the bill:

The booth featured "Texting via Short Wave Radio" which in actuality was a demonstration of PSK64. Visitors were asked to search the simultaneous QSOs displayed, looking for a CQ call. Once a calling station was identified, a QSO was attempted.

"Tweeting with Morse Code" let participants send a "tweet" using Morse code data entry. Code Practice Oscillators were available for visitors to practice their code skills before tweeting. An Arduino based interface connected the code key to the internet via a PC. A "High Tech Morse Code" demonstration consisting of an electronic keyer and iambic paddle showed that even time tested CW has seen technological improvement.

Coincidentally, the Boy Scouts Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) was being held the same day, and we were able to conduct a number of SSB QSOs between youngsters at the Science Fest and young scouts around the country.

Visitors wishing more information were given W4GAC QSL cards with contact information. Where possible, we made a pitch for a new station location, as many of the city's largest organizations were also participating in the science fest.

This effort could not have been accomplished without the aid and assistance of a number of SPARC members. Thanks to: **KP2N, K4SHI, KI4UIP, KJ4EXM, KJ4RUS, KK4JMP, KR4U, N2ESP, N4GD, N4KII, N4NSS, W1EES, WA4EEZ.**



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Pictures of Science Festival 2013 Courtesy of AI4QP & N4GD



Upcoming Contests

ARRL Ten Meter Contest 12/14-15

SARTG New Years RTTY Contest 01/01

ARRL RTTY Roundup 01/4-5

NAQP CW Contest 01/11-12

ARRL January VHF Contest 01/17-19

NAQP SSB Contest 01/18-19

CQ 160 Meter Contest 01/24-26

10-10 International Winter Contest SSB 02/1-2

CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest 02/8-9

NAQP RTTY Contest 02/22-23

Contest/Operating /W4GAC Station Activities

The SPARC Club Contest Group took part in the annual ARRL November Sweepstakes event held on the weekend of November 2/3 using our contest call W4TA. This was the CW portion with the SSB event scheduled on November 16/17. We managed to contact all of the ARRL Sections for a "Clean Sweep". All of our station equipment worked very well and we all had a great time. Some Fantastic Chili was provided by Tom, W4CU for those breaks between operating sessions. THANKS Tom.

73 de David KR4U, W4GAC Station Trustee



Working session at the Station

Pic's Courtesy of AI4QP



SPARC Meetings

First Friday every month, 7:30 pm

*Testing : Third Tuesday every month 6:30 pm

at First Assembly of God

6380 62nd 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>
Digital, CW, and Antennas	Dave Trewin	KR4U	trewins@aol.com
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



Welcome To Our New Members

Clive Newcomb KK4STA

Les Stroup KK4SED

Richard Echternacht AC0PY

Granville Houldsworth,IV KK4TOT

Scott Houldsworth KC4TGQ



Club Officers for 2013

President Bob Wanek N2ESP

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Net Manager Johnnie Popwell W4TSP

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Vice President Clayton Parrott KJ4RUS

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