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# SPARC GAP

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St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club

January, February, March 2003

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## *Mark zaps the World (Radio) with his Dxpedition story!*

By MARK FARR N9MIU

Hello Phil,

I don't have anything from up North to write about at the moment and the only thing that I pretty proud about is my version of the Egmont Key summer Dxpedition that was published in WorldRadio. This was my first article in a periodical.

I would like to thank Peter and Joanie for their hospitality during my recent visit and Cecil, Judith, Emmett and Marge for all their work in making the "After the Holidays Party" another great success!

73, Mark



The working area for the Egmont Key Dxpedition last summer and the Egmont Key lighthouse, itself.

## Mark scores a journalistic coup!



Mark Farr N9MIU

By PHIL GULICK KG4IGX  
Editor

Mark Farr's comprehensive story of the club's Dxpedition to Egmont Key last summer hit the WorldRadio magazine with a four-page spread – and photos!

A whole bunch of hams got involved and, despite a dunking, back-breaking loading and unloading of the heavy gear, the Dxpedition was a rousing success.

It was a unique activity probably unheralded in other ham clubs, thanks to the creative and determined minds of the doers.

Perhaps it may become a yearly event for the club.



## Turner, Rutan thrill kids with contacts

Dee Turner, N2MNC, and Rick Rutan, K4BNE, took the ham radio story to more than 50 fourth-graders at North Shore Elementary School in St. Petersburg during the Great American Teach-In Nov. 20.

Dee brought a portable multi-band vertical antenna and a portable transceiver and power supply. Rick taped some CW at various speeds so the students could experience the sound of dits and dahs. The SPARC members set up the antenna in a field adjacent to the school's library and ran coax into the school for their talk and demonstration of amateur radio as a hobby and as a source of emergency communications.

Jim, W4KIM, in Salt Springs, broke away from the SoCARS traders net for more than a half-hour to talk on-air to children in the two separate class sessions. Salt Springs is in the heart of the Ocala National Forest. The contacts were made on 40-meters.

Ed Beatty WV4ED, and Mark Farr, N9MIU, logged onto the



Dee Turner N2MNC

SPARC 2-meter repeater for some two-way with the youngsters, too.

Rick passed around two large card-holders with a variety of his DX QSL cards after explaining the different countries' prefix system.

This is the second consecutive year the two hams have worked together during the teach-in. Prior to that, Rick had done the demo with a hand-held on the SPARC repeater for several years.

Several of the students expressed an interest in becoming hams and all were impressed by Dee's portable antenna and the ability to "work the world" on ham gear. One 9-year-old boy even saw it as an opportunity for one-on-one interaction toward world peace.

### For Sale

Icom 735 HF w\ manual..\$400  
Yaesu 847  
HF/2meters/440/6meters/SAT  
\$900  
Astron 50 power supply.....\$200  
10' x 20' King Canopy.....\$100  
Telephone: 727-895-9210  
73, de N9MIU Mark

### Know the Answer?

*How far can an antenna tower be located from the base transceiver?*

*Asked by Peter  
W4GTO*

## Airport monitors Needed for show

By KEN HOPKINS WA9WCP

SPARC is participating in "Airport Appreciation Day" at the Albert Whitted Airport in downtown St. Petersburg on Saturday, March 29. This is a special event to help save the airport which is currently under consideration for closure and possible sale to developers for condominiums. Yuck.

This will be a fun day with war birds, jet fly-overs, etc. We need 2-meter-equipped ham volunteers to help coordinate, provide safety and crowd control.

Volunteers will receive lunch, parking and access to the flight line. This is an all-day event and we need enough volunteers so that nobody has to do more than a four-hour shift.

Please call me at 727-525-8411 if you would be available and I'll get you more details. Oh, did I tell you about the ride in the F-16? Naw, just kidding...



Ken Hopkins WA9WCP



John Stark KU4BT happily hawks merchandise at the Tampa Hamfest

Photo by Tom Wedding KG4HGP

## Townsley, Daerda join WCF

By **DAVE ARMBRUST AE4MR**  
[ae4mr@arrl.org](mailto:ae4mr@arrl.org)

Please welcome John Townsley, AE4GB, as the new Section Emergency Coordinator for West Central Florida. John replaces Paul Toth, NA4AR, as SEC.

John has been active in public service, participating with Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough ARES over the past eight years. Prior to his appointment as SEC John was serving as EC for Pasco County.

Toth has resigned as both ASM and SEC due to personal and work commitments. It was Paul's efforts that were largely responsible for the creation of the ARRL West Central Florida Section.

Paul has been a tremendous aid to me since the creation of the West Central Florida Section. I have not met another that has worked so hard for amateur radio as Paul has done for the past four years. He does plan to remain active with Skywarn and MARS.

Please also welcome Norm Daerda, K4NRM, as the new EC for Pasco County. Norm is replacing Townsley

as EC of Pasco County.

An ARRL section appointment that I would like to talk about is the Public Information Officer or PIO. The PIO is an individual that works with the amateurs in an area to help get media coverage for an amateur radio event such as a field day.

While this is so crucial to the growth of our hobby this is a function that is often overlooked in many areas.

If you are already doing this for your club or if you are interested in becoming involved in the Public Information program in the Section please contact our Public Information Coordinator, Jack Doyle, WX1JAD. Jack can be reached at 941-485-0700 or [wx1jad@arrl.net](mailto:wx1jad@arrl.net)

There are other field appointments available. They include Official Relay Station (NTS), Official Observer, Official Bulletin Station, Official Emergency Station (ARES), Local Government Liaison and Net Manager (NTS/ARES). Please contact me if you have any questions about any of these programs or the clubs in your area.

## Where did Packet go?

By **AL SHAVER**  
**NH2Z**

Remember Packet radio? Long, long ago, it was considered cutting edge. Only a few, very technically savvy hams had the equipment and the smarts to run Packet. It was way cool. SPARC even debated long and hard back in the early 90s whether to make this great leap into Tomorrow Land and add a Packet station to the goodies housed at W4GAC.

As I remember, before the Momentous Decision could be reached (SPARC was in a period of financial decline back then), the Internet galloped into everyone's lives. It ran roughshod over everything in its path. Suddenly I-Phone was easier than HF. And, as for Packet, fugetaboutit! Who needs to mess with TNCs and BBSs when e-mail is so quick and easy? Why fight with a digipeater when broadband is available?

Well, I'm here to tell you Packet radio is an important component of our readiness arsenal. When the phone lines go down and commercial power isn't available, will you be able to send those messages over the Internet? I'm not knocking the Internet -- as a matter of fact, I'm transmitting this to Editor Phil via Internet -- but just because we have it and use it doesn't mean we should junk our Packet equipment or forget how to use it.

As we begin to gear up for hurricane season, let's re-learn our Packet skills. Perhaps we could have a Packet net in conjunction with other emergency nets. Perhaps some of our technically advanced members could show the club how to create a mobile Packet station using antiquated gear.

When it hits the fan, being able to send written messages reliably over amateur radio will be just as important as that converter pack that lets you run your HT on AA batteries!

## *ARRL okays new Field Day Class F operations*

Field Day 2003 will gain another entry class for 2003. "Class F" stations will operate at emergency operations centers, or EOCs. The change renews the emphasis of Field Day's 1933 origins as an emergency preparedness exercise as opposed to a routine contest.

ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, said that last year the League received a record number of Field Day entries from groups and individuals. Given the increased emphasis on

### 2002 FD entries a record

emergency communications since September 11, 2001, the ARRL Board's Membership Services Committee asked that the Contest Branch come up with something to reflect that emphasis. The new Class F station is the result.

"This is a major change," Henderson said. "Class F has been established to encourage groups to test and further their working relationships with established emer

gency operations centers." The updated rules and a list of frequently asked questions in the new 2003 Field Day packet spell out the details.

A Class F entry station must set up at an "established EOC" center activated by a club or non-club group. Class F EOC operation must take place in cooperation with the EOC staff. Class F stations are eligible for the same bonus points as Class A stations.

## **...and more news from the ARRL...**

### **...new e-mail service ...**

The FCC has inaugurated a new e-mail service, The FCC Consumer E-Bulletin, to let consumers know about FCC developments, to disseminate FCC consumer information and to invite comments on FCC regulatory proposals.

Those signing up can expect to receive FCC fact sheets, consumer brochures and alerts, news releases, public notices, notices of proposed rulemaking, reports and orders, and other consumer-related information.

The Consumer Education Office in the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) operates the free service.

To subscribe, send an e-mail to [subscribe@info.fcc.gov](mailto:subscribe@info.fcc.gov). On either the subject line or in the message body, type "subscribe fcc-consumer-info <first name> <last name>". If you encounter difficulties subscribing, send an e-mail to [lnely@fcc.gov](mailto:lnely@fcc.gov).



### **...reflector messages**

For anyone interested, here is how you can retrieve past messages from the PR reflector:

1. address an email to [lyris@reflector.arrl.org](mailto:lyris@reflector.arrl.org)
2. in the subject line, type the following: get listname yyyymmdd-yyyymmdd where "listname" is the name of the list that you want the archived mail from and "yyyymmdd" is the format for the date range.

The "listname" is pr. Example for the date range of messages - 20021215-20030203  
If you want the mail from one day in particular, just enter the year, month and date.

### *...look out below!*

## *Starshine satellite becomes so much dust!*

The Starshine 3 satellite, the 91-kg disco ball in space, burned up in Earth's upper atmosphere above northern Canada or southern Greenland around 0515z on Jan. 21. From the time of its September 29, 2001, launch, Starshine 3 (SO-43) made 7434 revolutions around Earth.

Starshine 3's highly reflective surface was designed to be easily seen as it passed overhead at dawn and dusk, providing students the opportunity to participate in its primary mission of satellite tracking. Amateur Radio operators also could monitor AX.25 9600-baud telemetry on 145.825 MHz.

The Project Starshine Web site has more information at <http://www.azinet.com/>

## Texas ARES aids shuttle recovery

Nacogdoches, Texas - The Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) volunteers of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club assisted Emergency Management officials and NASA locate and catalogue debris from the Columbia shuttle disaster.

Working in tandem with students from the Stephen F. Austin College of Forestry HUES/Geographical Information Systems lab, the ARES volunteers surveyed the city and county of Nacogdoches looking for shuttle debris.

When located, the debris is photographed, its position determined by Geographical Information System satellites and receivers. The data is later downloaded into a database and the debris points will be superimposed over maps in the hopes that patterns will help NASA officials determine the nature of the shuttle's catastrophic failure. The effort is being coordinated by the ARES group.

ARES volunteers also were directed to coordinates given by NASA that may contain debris according to NASA telemetry and radar information.

NASA has a long relationship with amateur radio. There have been several amateur-radio-based shuttle experiments, amateur radio satellite launches. Astronauts on the shuttle and the International Space Station use amateur radio to communicate with students. Shuttle Columbia was the first ham radio station in space and three of the seven Columbia astronauts were licensed ham operators.



Club members, family and guests settle in for the After Holidays Party at the Four Coins Restaurant last January. The annual get-together has grown in numbers over the past few years.

*Photo by Carl Holdshoe N4AAV*

## ARRL non-members served

The ARRL is providing FCC amateur radio license renewals, address changes and other license modifications to non-members.

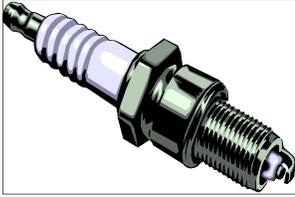
For the \$12 fee, the league will renew a non-member's amateur radio ticket (the license must be within 90 days of expiration), file an application to change address or name or request issuance of a new sequential call sign. The league's VEC will process the applications.

"The \$12 is in line with our calendar year 2003 examination fee," said ARRL VEC manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ. For several years, the ARRL has been handling renewals, address and name changes and modifications free for members. It has directed non-members to the



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Members or non-members using this service should submit



**SPARC GAP  
ST. PETERSBURG  
AMATEUR RADIO  
CLUB  
PO BOX 4026  
ST. PETERSBURG, FL  
33731-4026**

Mailing  
Address  
Goes  
Here

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**DATE LOG - 2003**

SPARC meetings - First Friday every month, 7:30 p. m., 818 4th St. N, St. Petersburg  
Testing sessions - Fourth Monday every month, Gulfport Senior Center.  
Club picnic - Lake Seminole Park - March 9 -11 a. m. - 3 p. m.  
Albert Whitted Appreciation Day - March 29 - Monitors needed.  
Florida QSO Party -April 26-27- Club station - 1 p. m.  
March of Dimes Walkathon - April 26 - Monitors needed.  
Lake Maggiore Swapmeet - May 4 - 8 a. m.

**AREA REPEATERS & WEB SITE**

SPARC repeater: Nightly, 6:30 p. m., 147.06+, 224.66-, 444.475+.  
Web site: [www.qsl.net/W4GAC](http://www.qsl.net/W4GAC) - Webmaster Dee Turner N2MNC.  
CARS repeater: Wednesdays, 8 p. m., 146.970-, 224.940-, 444.150+, 444.450+.  
Metro repeater: Mon-Wed-Fri, 7:30 p. m., 147.360+, 127.3.  
WCF Section Net: Sun 7:30 p. m., Mon, Wed, Fri 9 p. m., 145.430+ & 442.950+(100Hz).

**SPARC'S 2003 BOARD**

<b>President - Donn Davis N4KII</b>	<b>527-9636</b>
<b>Vice-president - Dee Turner N2MNC</b>	<b>548-7474</b>
<b>Secretary - Grace Harris KG4CTG</b>	<b>894-1447</b>
<b>Treasurer - Susan Dillon KD4FEZ</b>	<b>302-0611</b>
<b>Board - Mark Farr N9MIU</b>	<b>895-9201</b>
<b>Norm Martin AG4BI</b>	<b>712-8964</b>
<b>Bill Zulas KG4HPM</b>	<b>725-4020</b>
<b>PIO &amp; Newsletter Editor</b>	
<b>Phil Gulick KG4IGX</b>	<b>392-3481</b>
<b>Special Events Co-ordinator</b>	
<b>Ken Hopkins WA9WCP</b>	<b>525-8411</b>

*WorldRadio order  
Info and Web site*

Mark Farr's fine article of the club's Dxpedition last year that was published in the widely-circulated WorldRadio magazine was a scoop for the club.

Our thanks to Mark for submitting the comprehensive story.

You can subscribe to WorldRadio for \$15 per year by sending a check to: /WorldRadio, 2224 Beaumont, St., Ste. D, Sacramento, CA 95815. Or you can visit its Website at [www.wr6wr.com](http://www.wr6wr.com).