

MOUNTAIN SPARK GAPS

NPARC - The Radio Club for the Watchung Mountain Area

VOLUME 40

December 2005

NO. 10



N2XJ

Club Callsign

Regular Meeting

Monday December 12th, at the Salt Brook School

From: The Prez

“Changing of the Guard”



With the election of club officers for 2006 having taken place last month, I can say that I am truly optimistic and excited about the coming year ahead. Not only are the new officers primed for a great year, but already many club members have demonstrated a willingness to get involved and “pitch in”. Rich, N2AUG, has already in the works plans for a terrific new construction project of a Ten-Tec regenerative receiver. Fifteen members have already placed their orders and another ten to twelve are expected to join in on the action. From some preliminary comments from club members who have taken a good look at the kit, it offers enough of a challenge to be very interesting and very rewarding. I’ve placed my order! Don’t miss out on this one. We will discuss it at the December 12 meeting.

Jim, WB2EDO, has volunteered to take over the maintenance of the club roster, and Vince, KC2IZK, continues to handle the club catering with style. Nick, KC2ONP, is working hard at the Statics Radio Club at Salt Brook School.

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I would also like to say “thanks” to Barry, K2JV. Barry decided not to run for office this year and I think everyone agrees that he deserves a breather. Over the last several years Barry has worked tirelessly for the club. He has shown New Providence and local area officials what we have to offer in emergency communications and has put us “on the map” in that regard. His dedicated work in fostering interest among youths through Kid’s Days and school fairs and of course, in the founding of the Salt Brook Statics Radio Club, has shown the community the true face of Ham Radio. It will be a busy year for Barry with the Statics and with an ARISS contact looming in April, he will need as much time devoted to it as possible (and some help).

Regular Monday Meeting

Ten-Tec Kits by Rich N2AUG

A Regular Meeting will be held on Monday, December 12th at the Salt Brook School. At that meeting N2AUG will take final orders for the Ten-Tec Model 1054 regenerative receiver kits. Rich will have an assembled receiver to show, and Barry K2JV will bring 5 unassembled kits as they come from Ten-Tec. There will also be one “enclosure kit” so everyone can see one and decide whether or not to buy that item.

It’s expected that the actual assembly of the kits will be done at our Project Meetings on the 4th Monday of each month. This can start on January 23rd. Please NOTE that since the Salt Brook School will be closed on that date, the meeting will be at an alternate location to be arranged.

Construction projects have been done in the past at NPARC, and have been very successful. But this project will result in a working HF receiver which can be modified by each builder to suit his/her interests.

At future meetings we’ll have presentations on the theory and operation of receivers in general and “regens” in particular

Several members participated again in the CQ WW CW DX contest under QRP power. KB2FCV, K2YG, WA2DKJ and I all ran our K-1’s and K-2’s. Conditions were not too bad considering that we are near the bottom of the sunspot cycle. I worked into Europe and South America on five watts and Andy worked 92 countries. Anybody else have any reports? Send them to the Spark Gaps. We would like to hear about it.

Finally, Happy Holidays to all our families and friends and may the warm glow of Ham Radio insulate us from winter’s chill and radiate kindness and peace to all.
73 es 88 de
Al K2AL

Meeting Schedule

Regular Meeting: 7:30 - 10:00 PM
2nd Monday of each month at the
Salt Brook School Cafeteria
Springfield Ave. and Maple St.
New Providence.

4th Monday each month: 7:30 - 9:00
Informal Project Meeting, at the
Salt Brook School Cafeteria
Springfield Ave. and Maple St.
New Providence.

Everyone is Welcome

If a normal meeting night is a holiday
we usually meet the following night.
Call the contacts below.

Club Officers for 2005

President: K2AL Al Hanzl
908-464-1323

Vice Pres: N2VI Eric Grosse
908-322-9653

Secretary: KC2RLM Ralph Milnes
973-377-7061

Activities: K2EZR Frank McAneny
908-464-5285

Past President: AB2CM Harry Schwill
908-322-8867

Treasurer: K2JV Barry Cohen
908-464-1730

On the Air Activities

Club Operating Frequency

145.750 MHz FM Simplex

Sunday Night Phone Net

Whippany Repeater at 9:00 PM

Transmit on 147.63 MHz

Receive on 147.03 MHz

Net Control: KB2IKC

K2AGI Memorial Digital Net

Various evenings 8:00 to 9:00 PM

Various Modes 145.75 MHz

Info Contact: N2VI

Club Internet Addresses

Website: <http://www.qsl.net/nparc>

Reflector: nparc@mailman.qth.net

Webmaster: KC2RLM, Ralph

MOUNTAIN SPARK GAPS

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Climatological Data for the Watchung Mountain Area Provided by WB2QOQ, Month of November



	2005	2004
Maximum Temp.. °F:	72	65
Minimum Temp. °F:	19	24
Average Temp. °F:	46.1	45.6
Total Precip Rain/snow (in.):	4.43/0.25	5.05/0.25

The above information was provided by WB2QOQ, who has been recording daily weather events at his station for the past 24 years.

Calendar of Coming Events

Dec. 10th: **NPARC ANNUAL LUNCHEON**: Starts at 1130. O'Connors
Beef 'n Ale House Watchung. See Flyer in this issue.

Dec. 12th: **REGULAR MEETING** at the Salt Brook School, 7:30 PM.
Viewing and ordering Ten-Tec receiver kits.

Dec. 26th: NO MEETING scheduled. School is closed.

Jan. 8th Sunday: **KIDS DAY** On the air operating event for all kids. At
Berkeley Heights Community Center, Noon to 4 PM.

Jan. 9th: **REGULAR MEETING** at the Salt Brook School, 7:30 PM.

Jan. 10th: **FIRST MEETING** of NPARC sponsored License Class at 4:00
PM in the Berkeley Heights Community Center (Park Ave). Fu-
ture classes every Tuesday through March 2006.

Salt Brook Statics

The Yagis are UP!!

Take a look at the roof of the Salt Brook School, from the basketball courts, and you'll see the Yagi array which will be used for the ARISS QSO. The antennas are currently operated from the library which is the usual Statics meeting place. Sometime in March or early April however, we'll move the feed and control lines to the schools auditorium from which the actual QSO will take place. We expect the QSO to be in April 2006, but no firm date is scheduled yet.

From now on, every meeting of the Statics will include practise runs of "speaking with an astronaut." If the kids have enough practice speaking with a club member who simulates being in space, they'll be able to handle a conversation with a real astronaut who is orbiting the earth on the International Space Station.

The usual activities for the kids, including Morse Code practise, HF operating, VHF operating with the HTs. etc. will also continue at each meeting if we get enough Club Members present to act as control operators. Fortunately we have a few "regulars" who usually come to the kids meetings. These include Frank K2EZR, Vince KC2IZK, and Nick KC2ONP. We could certainly use a few more licensed hams at the meetings.

The new batch of tee shirts will be ordered soon, so any NPARC members who want one should contact K2JV ASAP.

Walter Creuz W2CIY

On December 10, 2005 club member Walt Creuz W2CIY will celebrate his 90th birthday.

Walt was born and grew up in Newark NJ. His first involvement with radio was at age 12 (1928) when he decided to build a crystal receiver set that featured a wire-wound round oatmeal box. When he was 15 (1931), he saw an ARRL magazine advertisement entitled “How to become a Radio Amateur”. Walt sent in his 10 cents and soon received a book on licensing and all the information he needed to build a working receiver and transmitter. He built the receiver first, using a “bread board” (a rectangular piece of wood), screws, wire, and some parts he had to send away for. The set used three 201A tubes, a regenerative detector and 2 stages of amplification. “It worked right away”, Walt said.

Tuning around, Walt heard other kids nearby who were transmitting. Very quickly he learned Morse code (CW) by studying and listening to the receiver. When he thought he was up to the 13 words per minute speed required for licensing, Walt took the “Hudson Tubes” over to the Federal Building in New York City (Pine, Nassau and Wall Streets) to take the licensing exam. He passed on his first try and was issued the call sign W2CIY, the call sign he still holds today!

With license in hand, Walt then built a transmitter from the ARRL information. Early operation was 80 meter CW, using a TNT oscillator coupled to a random length of wire run to a pole in the backyard. His first contacts were with hams around town. “DX” (long distance) was New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

Throughout high school and college, Walt continued to read up on new rigs in QST and in an ARRL handbook, which sold for just \$1.00. He built a lot of gear including a receiver, transmitter, power supply and antennas. Later store-bought equipment was added, with each improvement adding to the enjoyment of ham radio. DX became a favorite mode of operating, both phone and CW.

When he was 17 (1933), Walt got involved with the Naval Volunteer Communication Reserve. He received an invitation to join from an “on-the-air” Naval Recruiter who had identified Walt as a promising operator. Walt’s unit met monthly in the Mountainside Hospital’s engine room, where they learned both about becoming a sailor and about Naval communication procedures. Walt remembers weekly CW drills on 3.590 MHz and active duty was available on summer cruises on a Naval ship to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, which he did once.



Walt in October 1944

Walt stayed active in the Reserve while he attended the Newark College of Engineering (now NJIT), earning a BS in Mechanical Engineering. While in college, he built several radio-related kits. To earn money for these, he had a side-line business repairing neighbor’s radios and appliances and doing home wiring improvements.

After graduation, Walt worked for two years as an engineer for a heating products manufacturing company. In 1940, with war clouds brewing and an emergency declared, he received his “Greetings!” letter from the US Navy saying that he needed to report to Norfolk, Virginia for active duty afloat.

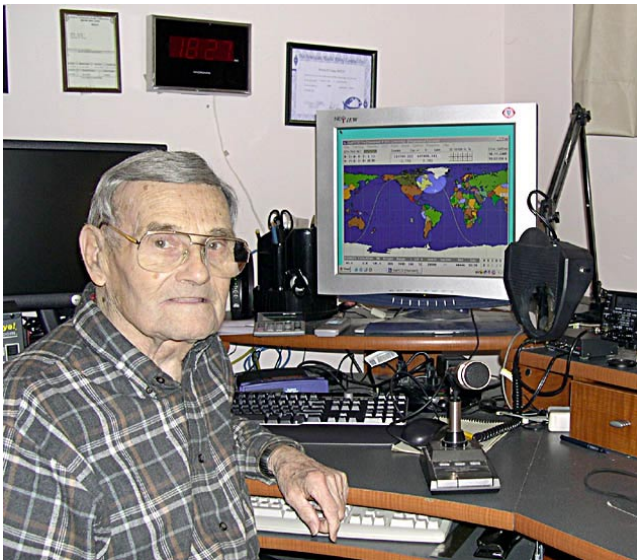
When he reported, the Executive Officer assigned him to the flag-ship, the destroyer MacLeish, while his new-found radio buddy, Jack, was assigned to the destroyer Reuben James. In October 1941, the Reuben James became the first US ship sunk by a U-boat and Jack was lost, a twist of fate that still gives Walt pause. For the next three years, Walt served as a communications operator on destroyers escorting convoys in the Atlantic. He endured rough seas and witnessed several ships lost to U-boats.

In 1943, Walt was re-assigned to shore duty at the Naval Underwater Sound Laboratory in San Diego CA, “a good job”. He took that opportunity to finally marry his childhood sweetheart and now wife of 62 years, Margaret.

In October 1945, Walt was released from active duty and he returned to his previous job. In 1947 he and Margaret bought a lot in Chatham Township. The following year, they and their two young children moved into a house they had had built (Walt did all of the heating and electrical work). Of course, he soon set up his radio station and operated whenever he could, although the obligations of family and extended offsite business assignments made that difficult.

Later a daily commute to north Jersey gave him the opportunity to work “DX” mobile using a Heathkit 20 meter rig and a Hustler antenna in his car. His career log now shows over 250 countries worked. During this time, Walt also found time to volunteer as a RACES member in the Chathams, serve a term as club president for the NPARC, and be an active participant in the NJ chapter #77 of the QCWA, Quarter Century Wireless Association (Walt has now been a ham for nearly 75 years!).

After a distinguished career in the HVAC and energy recovery field where he held several patents, Walt retired in 1982. That gave him an opportunity to devote more time to amateur radio. At a hamfest, he saw an AMSAT demonstration of a satellite tracking program called InstaTrak, and Walt was soon “hooked” on satellite operating. In the “early” days of ham satellites, there were several high elliptical orbiting (HEO) satellites. The lengthy orbit time of these satellites permitted extended (one hour or more) QSOs (conversations) which Walt really enjoyed. He remembers being one of the first hams to hear AO-40 soon after it was launched in 2000 and sadly followed its loss a few days later. He also laments the gradual loss of most other satellites, since the remaining LEO (lower earth orbiting) are short pass satellites that permit only 3-10 minute QSOs. Nevertheless, Walt follows the satellite news and maintains a sophisticated satellite station. It includes a Yaesu FT-847 and a circularly polarized VHF and UHF Yagi antenna with azimuth and elevation control. Computer programs automatically point the antenna at the selected satellite and adjust the radio’s frequencies for Doppler effects. A cable Internet connection gives him weekly updates of the Keplerian satellite elements needed for those programs.



Walt at his station today, with his satellite tracking program on the computer.

In fact, Walt has been using computers to assist his ham operations for many years. “I was into all the digital modes. In fact, I was one of the first guys around here to get into packet” using a Commodore PC. He said he had a lot of fun operating HF packet on 20 meters, working stations in Europe and acting as a DX digipeater station until HF digipeating was disallowed. An AEA PK-232 Multimode Controller allowed him to do not only HF 300 baud packet, but VHF 1200 baud packet, AMTOR, RTTY, and CW.

When the PSK31 digital mode appeared around 2000, Walt immediately got involved, buying a RigBlaster to make the required connection from his radio to his computer’s sound card.

Over the last few years, vision problems have made it a little more difficult for Walt to operate as easily as he would like. Nevertheless, he’s usually in front of the radio and computer for a few hours every day, listening for digital or satellite activity, following the latest advances in ham radio operations via the Internet, and staying young.

Happy 90th Birthday, Walt, from all your friends at the New Providence Amateur Radio Club! Our very best wishes to a true ham pioneer, unselfish patriot, beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather – and good friend to many admiring hams.

Submitted by KC2RLM