

MOUNTAIN SPARK GAPS



NPARC-The Radio Club for the Watchung Mountain Area

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

N2XJ
Club Callsign

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UNCOMING EVENTS

Regular Meeting

Monday March 22, 2009

7:30 PM

**New Providence Municipal Center
Recreation Department Meeting Room
Academy St. (at Springfield Ave.)
New Providence, NJ**

Contributions to this newsletter are sorely needed. To paraphrase the *New York Times*—All The News That Fits We Will Print

Speaker for the last meeting was W2UDT. Bill described the manner in which QSL cards get delivered around the world and QSL card etiquette. In other words—if you receive a card send one back. If you really want a rare one send a self addressed stamped envelope. The problem with enclosing Green Stamps (dollar bills) for the return postage was also discussed. The money gets stolen and the card thrown away. Another problem is the difficulty of obtaining International Reply Coupons (IRCs). Apparently new ones will be available any day now but the post offices know nothing about them.

Meeting Schedule

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

4th Monday of each month: 7:30—9:00
PM
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 2009

President: K2UI Jim Stekas
908-665-0299
Vice Pres.: N2KDK Paul Campano
908-508-9595
Secretary: WB2EDO Jim Brown
973-829-1892
Treasurer: K2YG Dave Barr
908-277-4283
Activities: W2UDT Bill Hudzik
908-580-0493
Past President: KB2FCV James Kern
908-219-4016

On the Air Activities

Club Operating Frequency
145.750 MHz FM Simplex

Sunday Night Phone Net
Murray Hill Repeater (W2LI) at 9:00 PM
Transmit on 147.855 MHz
With PL tone of 141.3 Hz
Receive on 147.255 MHz
Net Control WA2DKJ

K2AGI Memorial Digital Net
To be determined.

Club Internet Address

Website: <http://www.qsl.net/nparc>
Reflector: nparc@mailman.qth.net
Webmaster: KC2RLM, Ralph

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Climatological Data for New Providence for February 2009

The following information is provided by Rick, WB2QOQ, who has been recording daily weather events at his station for the past 27 years.

TEMPERATURE -

Maximum temperature this February, 61 deg. F (February 27)

Last February (2008) maximum was 64 deg. F.

Average Maximum temperature this February, 41.9 deg. F

Minimum temperature for this February, 9 deg. F (February 5)

Last February (2008) minimum was 8 deg. F.
Average Minimum temperature this February, 24.9 deg. F

Minimum diurnal temperature range, 7 deg. (33-26 deg.) 2/3; (53-46 deg.) 2/12

Maximum diurnal temperature range, 29 deg. (61-32 deg.) 2/27

Average temperature this February, 33.4 deg. F

Average temperature last February, 32.4 deg. F

Number of days, this February, with temperatures 32 deg. or above - 26

Number of days, last February, with temperatures 32 deg. or above - 24

Number of days, this February, with temperatures of 31 degs. or lower - 24

Number of days, last February, with temperatures of 31 degs. or lower - 24

PRECIPITATION -

Total precipitation this February - 0.66" rain/melted snow, 3.75" snow

Total precipitation last February - 6.22" rain/melted snow, 8.75" snow

Maximum one day precip. event this February - 3, 3.75" snow

Measurable snow fell on 1 day this February; 2 days last February

The following article appeared last year on the ARRL web page. It is reproduced here for those who may have missed it.

William Hudzik – W2UDT
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Vacation, Contesting and friends – Perfect Together! (Apologies to former New Jersey Governor Tom Kean.)

This article is about an island vacation, contesting and friends.

For a number of years my wife Maryann and I have been vacationing on the beautiful island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Having been a dedicated DXer and contest junkie for years (it must be the type-A personality) I've always wanted to be on the other side of a DX pile-up. It started when I operated from KR6SP (between phone patches to the States) during my time on Okinawa with the USAF. So, what's the best way than to go somewhere you're wanted, that's easy to get to and appeals to the spouse? A Caribbean island, of course! The choice of locations came much by accident through a QST ad in the 1980's which led to our almost yearly week stay on the island and the development of what has turned out to be a long friendship with the apartment's owners Sam and Shirley Pasco. That friendship has, likewise, spiraled out to include other VI (Virgin Island) hams among which has been my ARRL Phone SS contest host the past several years, John Ellis, NP2B, who is also the USVI Section Manager. John and his wife Jeanette (Ms. "J") are the unique hosts who have more fun letting others use their station than operating it themselves.

Whenever it's possible, I've planned our vacation to correspond with ARRL SS phone. During the sunspot peak my low power and loop in the palm trees worked well but as the cycle inched down so did the contacts. It was at Sam's suggestion that I contact John Ellis to see if he had anything planned for SS since John's station was one of the better one's on the island. John graciously invited me to multi-op with him and W4OV. That first multi-op ended in a 'Clean Sweep' and another SS mug for me to make my own "Clean Sweep" (mugs for phone, CW and multi-op)! But, it started a friendship between John and I that has resulted in 3 more ARRL SS multi-op events. One thing for sure, John has the knack for finding those elusive multipliers!

After a hiatus of a year from vacationing on the island I contacted John to find out if he would like to do another multi-op. John was up for it but he said he didn't know how his voice would hold out. Since I've always enjoyed the fun of contesting with others I started to look around for a partner or two. I was particularly looking for someone who had experience operating from the Caribbean and was familiar with propagation from there to the mainland. My thoughts immediately went to some fellow NJDXA (North Jersey DX Association – the W2 QSL Bureau) members who had moved to St. Croix but were now living in California; Ann and Brian Keegan (KP2YL and KP2HC respectively). My wife and I had become friends with Brian and Ann when they lived in New Jersey and visited them just after they moved to St. Croix. (Once again ham radio and friendships.) Ann is the contester of the team and a devoted QRP operator having won that power level in several contests. Brian is the CW maven but will get on phone if shoved. So, doing a multi-op QRO contest would be something new for Ann. Anyway, not sure of what the answer would be I sent off an e-mail which was almost immediately answered with a very emphatic YES!! Their trip planning to St. Croix was more involved than ours but they were determined to come down. Ann even sent her Heil Headset back to the factory to get refurbished. We had a team. And, a secret weapon, a female voice, which always attracts attention.

Once on the island and settled in we all got together at NP2B's QTH for a pre-contest strategy session. Our main goal was to make a "Clean Sweep" (which Ann had never done before). The other was to take the time out, when needed, to explain the SS exchange to people who were attracted to the NP2B call sign but did not understand what the contest was about or felt intimidated about the exchange. We felt this would cost us some contacts but maybe encourage people to overcome their initial fear of a contest exchange and then go on to make other contacts. I've done this before but not apparently in the patient manner Ann exhibited as she walked people through the exchange format. It was nice to hear people actually say "thanks, no one has ever explained this to me before". Did we loose contacts? Sure. But our other goal of making the contest less frightening and attracting potentially new contesters was being met.

But, on to the contest itself and how we actually did. Following John's advice we planned to start the contest off at the highest band open and then follow the propagation. We avoided 40M at night due to the severe broadcast QRM and went right to 75M once 20M closed down for us. Sunday had us making some contacts on 40M in the early morning before moving up to 15M. Throughout the day we kept checking 10M for some short openings but heard nothing but some South American stations. We gradually approached our goal of the clean sweep but we were still missing 3 sections by early Sunday afternoon. Even bouncing back and forth between 20M and 15M yielded nothing until a call from VY1JA on 15M gave us NWT (thanks, Jay!). That left two sections to go. It was back to 20M since John mentioned we should have propagation to the west coast at that time. Sure enough, we found KL7AA on 14.200 KHz working into the Midwest. After some calls Ann just felt we would not be able to break the pile-up even with her pleading voice! She gave the seat to me and I started shouting "Virgin Islands" several times. It seemed to work as KL7AA came back to us with an exchange. I had to ask for a repeat since everyone in the room was jumping and passing around "high-fives". That left VE4 to go. About an hour later we snagged VE4AG but, again, needed a few repeats to get through the QRM. Brian and I just gave a sigh this time. We had our Clean Sweep with several hours operating time left. Ann, was now really into the contest mode, and very emphatically said we still had time to make a thousand contacts. She took over to make sure that new goal happened. It did. We finished the contest out on 75M making #1000 just before the end.

Our group may not have had the highest multi-op score but we achieved all of our goals and still had several days left on St. Croix to enjoy the rest of our vacation time. We all spent the post contest days at various activities. Ann and Brian visited friends and just relaxed with John and Jeanette Ellis who graciously hosted their stay. Maryann and I did some Christmas shopping (great bargains!) and toured the northern part of the island which, by the way, is covered by a rain forest. Ann and Maryann even got together for a relaxing day split between the beach and the pool (they just followed the sun!) at our complex. Once again, John and Jeanette hosted a terrific Thanksgiving Day dinner attended by some neighbors and visiting hams. Our last night on the island was spent having dinner with the Ellises. It took a little convincing to get them to agree that we would be the hosts this time! All in all, we couldn't ask for a better way to finish out a terrific week. All four of us had time to just relax and enjoy the St. Croix atmosphere before heading back home. And, as the title says, we got it all in: vacation, contesting and friends- Perfect Together!

This article is from the February 2009 ARRL Hudson Division Newsletter.

====> For those of you who are looking for something different on Sunday evenings, there is a Kids Net on the W2LI 2 Meter Repeater -147.255, in Murray Hill, New Jersey. This net is run by KC2ONP - Nick Esposito of the New Providence Amateur Radio Club. Kids are encouraged to check in each Sunday evening. It's a great opportunity for kids to talk with other kids and share what they have done during the week, school activities that they are involved in, and Amateur Radio activities that they do. Tonight's net (2/22/09), there were 6 kids checking in. At the conclusion of the net, Nick asked for check-ins and there were 3 or 4 adults checking in to show their support of the net. Thanks Nick, for helping get more youth on the air! - de Joyce KA2ANF

Congratulations Nick!