

# MOUNTAIN SPARK GAPS

NPARC - The Radio Club for the Watchung Mountain Area



**N2XJ**

**Club Callsign**

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## **MEETINGS FOR MAY:**

**Monday the 14th & Tuesday the 29th**

**Topics: Field Day Planning, Software Defined Radio project status,  
and maybe a demonstration or two**

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### **President's Column by James Kern, KB2FCV**



May is here and for many hams, May is the month for the annual trip to Hamvention in Dayton, Ohio. As many of you know, Dayton is the largest Hamfest in the world. It draws hams in from all over the world. This huge hamfest dates back decades starting in 1952 and eventually moving to it's current location to the HARA Arena in 1964. This event draws every manufacturer of ham equipment and just about every organization to its exhibition center and the flea market outside has the reputation of "If you can't find it, it doesn't exist". If you enjoy going to hamfests, I think Dayton is something that should be experienced at least once in your life time. I've made three trips out there over the years and this year

will be my fourth. Every trip is filled with fond memories.

Also coming up is Field Day next month. It's never too early to start thinking of planning this event. Each year I enjoy trying something a little different to keep it interesting. Whether it's a new mode or bringing an old boatanchor to 'put through it's paces', it's always fun to try new things. We will be covering Field Day a little bit more and more each meeting as it gets closer.

And finally, May 10th was the first ever (at least that I know of!) VE session of the New Providence Amateur Radio Club. NPARC members put together a General Class upgrade class and in the process several members (myself included) obtained VE status via the ARRL. Many thanks to everyone who took the initiative to get this class together! Best of luck to anyone who is attempting their upgrade!

73, James KB2FCV

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## **New Providence Memorial Day Parade - Monday, May 28th**

NPARC members are invited to participate in this years Memorial Day Parade, taking place on Monday, May 28. Our club has annually participated in this town event, for as long as I can recall; and a decent attendance in this club activity is requested. As in past years, we request members to initially meet in the New Providence Memorial Library parking lot at 9:25 AM, and we will car pool over to our position on Central Avenue.

Suggested dress code is white shirt, blue slacks, NPARC yellow cap, and of course your 2 meter HT, tuned to club frequency.

I understand that we will have members of the Saltbrook Statics joining us this year. Our unit will walk the parade route, down Springfield Ave., between Central Ave. and Academy St. Please consider talking part in this community event.

Feel free to contact Rick, WB2QOQ, with questions. (908) 464-8911

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## **May Meeting Topics**

For the first meeting in May on the 14th, our club will meet in our usual location at Salt Brook School. Since the weather is getting nicer, we are beginning to think of Field Day -- The fourth full (rainy) weekend in June. That would be the 23rd and 24th for this year. This meeting should be a preliminary planning session to allow us to get a feeling for any changes we might want to make compared to last year. We may also start a firm list of those who would like to purchase and build a Software Defined Radio receiver kit for your summer club build-it project. The price is approximately \$11.

For the second meeting in May, we will again be at the Salt Brook School, but on Tuesday. The day before is Memorial Day Monday. The second meeting will undoubtedly have reports of the club's participation in the Parade and also from those members who traveled to the Dayton Hamvention. More talk of Field Day and the possibility of the June VHF contest effort will be heard, to be sure. Any last minute technical demonstrations are always welcome and encouraged.

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## **Results from the NPARC License Class and VE Session**

The NPARC General Class license course had four regular participants for the several weeks duration. Three of the four, Hillary KC2HLA, Nick KC2ONP, and John KC2MTN all passed the General Class test. Our fourth student, Don KC2OWG, was not available the night of our VE session, but most likely he'll pass the test at an upcoming test session.

The VE session had a total of nine test-takers and all but one walked away with a CSCE (Certificate of Successful Completion). Two of those taking the test who weren't in the class were also from our club. One was Dave Hartman who passed the Technician test. The other was Frank K2EZR who upgraded to Extra Class. There were almost as many VEs (Volunteer Examiners) as test-takers. Thanks go to Gerry AA2ZJ for managing the test session and of course Scott AB2WF for running the license course and organizing the VE session.

Congratulations to our newly licensed and upgraded members!

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## **Climatological Data for New Providence for March 2007**

The following information is provided by WB2QOQ, who has been recording daily weather events at his station for the past 25 years.

Maximum temperature for this April, 80 deg. F (April 30)      Last April(2006) maximum was 84 deg. F.  
Minimum temperature for this April, 26 deg. F (April 7)      Last April(2006) minimum was 33 deg. F.

Average temperature this April, 49.2 deg. F      Last April, 54.7 deg. F.

Total precipitation this April – 12.42" rain      Last April – 3.43" rain; 0.5" snow

Minimum daily temperature was below freezing for 7 days this April.

Greatest precipitation day this April – April 15, 5.78" rain.

Measurable rain fell on 11 days this April.

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Rick, WB2QOQ

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## **Dayton Hamvention - 18, 19, & 20 May 2007 - "The Big One"**

**If you really want to go this year, you can probably hitch a ride with one of the club groups/members heading west. Just send an e-mail or call:**

Andy, WA2DKJ: andys4@mindspring.com 973-377-6992

or

Barry, K2JV: k2jv@arrl.net 908-464-1730

Same bat time and same bat channel as previous years. Despite all sorts of unfounded rumors, it's still in Hara Arena in Trotwood, Ohio. Several club members will be there. See the following Uniform Resource Locator (also known as: url, website, web address, internet address) for more information:

<http://www.hamvention.org/>

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## **Sunday Night Phone Net Now On W2LI - 147.255 MHz**

For the last few weeks our club has been using the W2LI repeater in Murray Hill, NJ for our regular Sunday night phone net. So far, this repeater has been an improvement over the Whippany machine due to its being more centrally located for our members. We plan to continue using the W2LI machine for the time being. The important information is as follows:

Sunday net meets at 9 pm and the net control takes check-ins from anyone interested. The net is informal and the topics for discussion are strictly limited to whatever anyone wishes to talk about, mostly related to amateur radio.

The repeater transmits on 147.255 MHz FM and it receives on 147.855 MHz. In order for the repeater to activate upon receiving a station, the station must transmit a sub-audible tone of 141.3 Hz along with their voice.

Please join us and keep us posted on your radio projects.

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## Digital Net Status

Currently our digital net, a reincarnation of the K2AGI Sunday night RTTY net, has been active on ten meters at 8 pm on Sundays. The activity has been with PSK 31 and other modes as well as the traditional RTTY. After a few weeks of shaking the bugs out of the operation, net control station Scott AB2WF posted the following on our club e-mail reflector:

We're considering changing the time and frequency of the digital net. With the better weather arriving, we seem to have more and more conflicts at 8PM for the Sunday net. We are considering changing the time to after the voice net (nominally 10PM). Additionally, in part to deal with the members who will be out of the area over the summer (and in part to deal with my antenna), we're considering switching to 40m or 80m.

Any thoughts, suggestions, comments, or objections?

73, Scott AB2WF salex@dsalex.org

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For a good chuckle, check out the following website and look at the pictures of the efforts from the recently concluded DXpedition to Scarborough Reef (between China and the Philippines)....And you thought we have it rough at Field Day!

<http://www.scarboroughreef.com>

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The first transistor was invented at Bell Laboratories on December 16, 1947 by William Shockley, John Bardeen and Walter Brattain. This was perhaps the most important electronics event of the 20th century, as it later made possible the integrated circuit and microprocessor that are the basis of modern electronics. Prior to the transistor the only alternative to its current regulation and switching functions (TRANSfer resISTOR) was the vacuum tube, which could only be miniaturized to a certain extent, and wasted a lot of energy in the form of heat. Although video was possible with vacuum tube equipment, as was the case with the Ampex VRX-1000, without the transistor video products would never have gotten very small.

The picture on the left shows the first point contact transistor built by Walter Brattain. It consisted of a plastic triangle lightly suspended above a germanium crystal which itself was sitting on a metal plate attached to a voltage source. A strip of gold was wrapped around the point of the triangle with a tiny gap cut into the gold at the precise point it came in contact with the germanium crystal. The germanium acted as a semiconductor so that a small electric current entering on one side of the gold strip came out the other side as a proportionately amplified current.

Transistor text above from: <http://www.cedmagic.com/history/transistor-1947.html>

The text was slightly edited to refer only to the picture at right. See the above url for the un-edited version.