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Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
1722 20th. St. Parkersburg, WV 26101

Parkersburg South campus draws students, ham radio operators into orbit for solar phenomena

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PARKERSBURG — Amateur radio operators from the Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub set up stations at Parkersburg South High School Monday to monitor how the solar eclipse may impact radio signals.

“We are contacting stations all across North America and Canada, anywhere they can hear us, and we exchange what is known as signal strength reports,” said club President Larry Dale.

Dale said operators were using multiple ham radio bands like 40 meters, 20 meters, and 10 meters. He said different digital and voice modes like FT8, Morse code, and single sideband were being utilized to contact other amateur radio stations and collect signal reports on readability, strength, and tone.

All the data on locations, times, and solar conditions will be sent to NASA and the Ham Radio Science Citizen Investigation (HamSCI) for analysis of changes in radio propagation during the eclipse.

“Not only will the birds stop chirping, but the signals will start bending,” Dale



Larry Dale, right, president of the Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub, spoke with Parkersburg South High School students Isaac Blair and Austy Akita about the experiments the club was doing during the eclipse Monday. Dale said stations were set-up to monitor how the solar eclipse may impact radio signals. (Photo by Douglass Huxley)

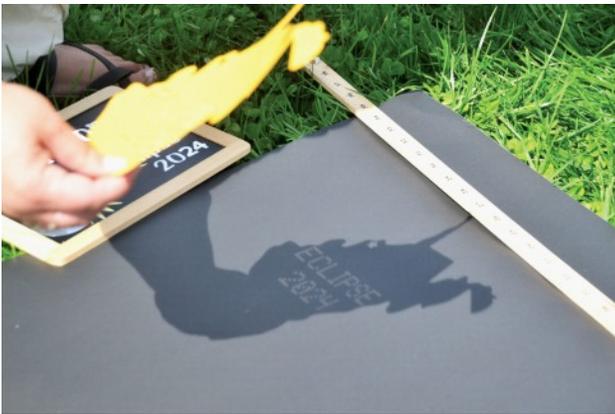
Dale, who began as an amateur Ham radio operator in 1964, said it was something anyone could get started in.

“The experience of Ham radio is for the whole family,” Dale said. *“We have grandpas, sons, and grandsons, and they’re all members. They all have their license. It’s more readily available nowadays.”*

He said the test taken to get a license consisted of rules and regulations, proper operation and some electronic theory and math. He said the math portion wasn't difficult and could be done by a 9-year-old.

He said for those interested they could visit the club's website at W8PAR.org.

"You can go right to that site and it has everything there," Dale said. *"It even has all of our names and callsigns."*



Jaime Moss, co-chair of the science department at Parkersburg South High School, holds a cutout her science class created to view the eclipse Monday. Students gathered on the front lawn to experience the solar phenomena and collect data they will be giving to NASA. Sensors to measure temperature, UV light intensity, wind speed, and other environmental factors were set-up during the eclipse that students then collected through their devices. (Photo by Douglass Huxley)

South students also got a chance to take advantage of the solar eclipse to conduct hands-on science experiments and collect data of their own.

"We use the vernier probes to do temperature, UV light intensity, wind speed, we've got pocket

sensors doing a whole bunch of science collection of data," said Jaime Moss, co-chair of the PSHS science department. *"We're hoping to use that to go along with NASA, and put our data, through an organization called GLOBE where we work with citizen science where the kids are going to be collecting the data and then analyzing that and possibly being able to use that for future science fair projects even for next year."*

Moss said the preparations date back to the previous eclipse in 2017 and involved collaborations with NASA, the West Virginia University at Parkersburg planetarium, and donations from various partners. She said by making the most of a rare astronomical occurrence, she hopes to inspire students and influence career choices in STEM fields.

"Learning should be fun," Moss said. *"This is like a win-win situation for me, whenever I can do actual science, collecting real data, working with NASA on weather, and collecting data and then also hopefully, influencing somebody to maybe look at a job or career in science is just icing on the cake."*



Staff and students at Parkersburg South High School gathered on the front lawn of the school Monday to experience the solar eclipse. (Photo by Douglass Huxley)

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Area ham radio operators take to airwaves for field day

Gretchen Dowler

PARKERSBURG - The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub (P.A.R.K.) and the Wood County Emergency Communications (WCEC) held an annual Winter Field Day Saturday at the Parkersburg City Park in a local, regional and national emergency prepared exercise. Ham Radio Operators, or radio amateurs, prepare this exercise to prove, in the case of a weather-related or catastrophic event where cell towers would no longer be available for usage, that they can establish reliable forms of communication and verify message traffic into or out of an affected area. The radio amateurs operate under less than ideal conditions according to Wood County Emergency Communications radio amateur Kenny Harris. Harris, along with others who participated in Saturday's event, have been amateurs for almost 60 years.



Members of the Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub take a break from collecting data Monday at Parkersburg South High School to view the eclipse. The club was at the school to monitor how the solar eclipse may impact radio signals. (Photo by Douglass Huxley)



Students at Parkersburg South High School gathered on the front lawn Monday to experience the solar eclipse and collect data they will be giving to NASA. Sensors to measure temperature, UV light intensity, wind speed, and other environmental factors were set-up during the eclipse that students then collected through their devices. (Photo by Douglass Huxley)



"We're only holding this Winter Field Day for six hours, where during the annual field day during June, we'll be holding the exercise for twenty-four hours," said Harris. "Today we have about 1,100 communicating all over, and in June, with the American Radio Relay League, we'll have 4,000 to 5,000 participating." Harris says that in the case of an emergency, the radio amateurs would be able to communicate with those all over the United States and even those all over the world. The amateurs make contact for emergency responders like police and fire departments, EMS and



911 centers during a crisis. They use emergency power, batteries or generators only, while communicating. While practicing, the amateurs are correcting any errors on the fly as well as any repairs that they may need to make, according to Harris.

"Most of us start out with this as a hobby, but many of us just end up becoming professional communicators," Harris said. "During Hurricane Katrina, many radio amateurs sent out emails using these communications to let the world know what was going on and to ask for help. It was also used during 9/11."



Harris quotes a familiar amateur radio saying stating, 'When all else fails, Amateur Radio.' He says that when catastrophic events happen, they're the guys that are ready to communicate for those in need. While Harris and others have been radio amateurs for over 60 years, there is always a call for young,



new amateurs and classes can be taken to obtain one's amateur radio license.

For more information regarding amateur radio or classes on amateur radio, visit the Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub website at w8par.org or the Wood County Emergency Communications website at wc8ce.org.

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Park Minutes 1/8/24

Meeting called to order at the Western Sizzlin steakhouse on January 8, 2024 at 6:30 PM.

Introductions were made by 25 members and guess.

Treasures report was given by Jane H, We had a beginning balance of \$3708. And to that balance was added \$468 in dues \$66 in raffle money and \$465 in T-shirt money. For an ending balance of \$4695. Motion to approve the Treasures report was moved by Ray and seconded by Rick, approved as read.

The 50-50 raffle was won by Denny for a total of \$23.

Minutes of the December meeting were read by Mary W. Motion to approve was made by Earl and seconded by Bill, and approved as read.

Old Business:

Larry discussed parks on the air (POTA) activation in the area. He said a few members of the Park club have activated various parks around the area. if you are Interested in activating a park get in touch with Larry and he will tell you who to contact about how to do it.

Winter Field Day is coming up the weekend of January 27 and 28. Kenny Harris his group is going to be participating, if you want to get involved in that activity. You can find Kenny on the 255 repeater. You do not have to be part of our club or Kenny's club to participate in this event. I think you can set up your own station if you so desire. Check the ARRL Website for details.

Larry gave a big thank you to everyone and helped out during the Christmas party and made it a big success. Due to problems with the room we are considering moving the Christmas party to a different location. We would keep Western Sizzlin as our regular meeting place however.

Larry also discussed the (French) faux pas of having the main door prize given away by accident. And having to have a second drawing. It was really nobody's fault, Just in one of those things. It was placed on the wrong table. This as a human error.

New business:

Larry. Spoke about creating a Volunteer Examiner team for the club. This team would be in charge of giving FCC exams. You don't have to be an ARRL member to be a VE for ARRL. Larry envisions this as a Klub project to help encourage and help new hams in the area get tested. One of the ideas discussed was having "Elmer" days, This is were the questions of new and upgrading hams could be answered. This could be after the club meeting, after Saturday breakfast or after the "fishing hole" gathering on Wednesday. Or something along those lines and then schedule the VE testing session when there was enough interest.

No official action was taken. This was just brought up for discussion.

Earl showed off the 440 repeater that he had picked up on his trip over to Romney. He has one pair of cavities, but they are old and may or may not function properly. He asked permission for the club to be able to spend some money to buy a new set of cavities. The frequency of the repeater will be 444.750. I have a PL tone of 91.5. Jerry made a motion and Ray seconded to authorize spending of approximately \$400 for repeaters cavities and other equipment. Motion was passed.

There's a Nelsonville ham fest coming up this Sunday, January 14.

Having no further business, the motion to adjourn was made by Jerry and seconded by Baines and approved, meeting adjourned at 7:45. The minutes were taken by Mary Wharton dictated by Jerry W.

Park Minutes 2/12/24

The meeting was called to order at Western Sizzlin Steakhouse on February 12, 2024 at 6:30 PM. Introductions were made by 30 members and guests. Robert Riordan KM4CRF, John Hescht K8ARA, Kenny Cline KB8YAV, Teresa Porter KF8ADF were introduced as potential new members. Teresa Porter KF8ADF was congratulated as being a new ham radio operator. The 50/50 raffle of \$31.00 was won by Robert Riordan KA4VNK. He donated \$30.00 back to the club. Norma Lontz read the minutes of the January meeting. Libby Auville made a motion to accept the min-

utes, and it was seconded by Scott Luntz. It was approved by the group.

The treasurer's report was given by Jane Hulce. The beginning balance was \$3982.61. We received \$194.00 in dues, \$18.00 from the 50/50 raffle, and \$365 from the sale of the t-shirts. We paid \$369.61 for the t-shirts and \$100.00 for the 2 new repeaters. The ending balance \$4272.91. A motion was made by Dave Wright to accept the treasurer's report and it was seconded by Bill Roberts. It was approved by the group.

Old Business:

The 440 repeater was installed, but it had to be removed due to problems. It is still under testing. Larry gave a recap of the Winder Field Day. He felt it was a huge success. He reported that 25 people stopped by during the time they were operating. Scott Luntz gave a statistical report of the field day. Larry plans to do this again next year.

Larry discussed the VE testing. We need hams with General to Extra classification to become VE testers.

New Business:

John Riordan made station accessories on his 3-D printer. These were passed around for the club members to see.

A motion was made by Conrad Richardson, WV8JCR to vote in 4 new club members Teresa Porter KF8ADF, Robert Riordan KM4CRF, John Hescht K8ARA, Kenny Cline KB8YAV as associate mem-

bers. The motion was seconded by Libby Auville. It was approved by the group. At the next club meeting, they will be voted in as full members.

Larry suggested that the club have an antenna building session at the Parkersburg City Park in the spring. Matt Doyle, KC8SFI would oversee this project.

Larry mentioned that there has been malicious interference on the repeater. He suggested that we ignore it.

A discussion was held on where the Christmas party would be held. Rich brought menus from Logan's Steak house as a consideration. Emmanuel Baptist Church was the other consideration. A vote was made by Larry Dale, and seconded by Earl to have the Christmas dinner at Emmanuel. It was approved by the group.

Bob Riordan KM4CRF made the motion to adjourn. Earl seconded it. It was approved by the group.

Park Klub Minutes March 11, 2024

Meeting was called order by Larry Dale at 6:37 PM at the West-

ern Sizzlin steakhouse on route 68.

Introductions were made by 32 members and guests.

Condolences were made to Lynn P. on the passing of her brother Baines, KD4WDH.

Minutes were read by Mary W. Last month they were taken by Jane (Thanks Jane). In Mary's absence. She did a fine job. The minutes were approved as read.

Treasures report by Jane H. The opening balance of \$4272.91 to which was added dues of \$144 a raffle of \$41 deductions were made to Conard and Earl for repeater equipment purchases. Which gave us an ending balance of \$4211.99. Treasurers report was approved as read.

Old business.

Three associate members were welcomed into the club is full term members: Teresa Porter, Bob, Riordan, Robert Riordan. Two members rejoined the Klub, John Hescht and Kenny Clein .

New business.

Earl had his laptop and programming Software to program radios for use on the new 440 machine.

We also had a show and tell demonstration of a portable use of a flex, radio via, the Internet. A big thank you to

Ron, NQ0D, for that demonstration.

Earl reminded members who wanted to get on 6 mtr's that the club has a 6 mtr. antenna available for loan.

Larry reminded everybody that the Christmas party was going to be at Emmanuel Baptist Church and we will discuss the menu at a later meeting.

Larry also mentioned the parks on the air (POTA) if you're interested in participating, please talk to Larry about the procedure.

Bob KB8EFB won the 50-50 raffle of \$32.

Having no further business, Bob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 PM. The motion was approved.

Minutes by Mary W dictation by Jerry W.

PS. After the meeting was adjourned, Jane was given a generous donation for the Klub, that person wanted to remain anonymous. Thank you very much whoever you are!

PARK Minutes April 8, 2024

The Park Amateur Radio Klub meeting was called to order by Larry Dale at 6:30 PM. At Western Sizzlin Steakhouse. Introductions were made by 25 members and guests.

The minutes from the March meeting read by Mary Wharton and then the absence of Jane to treasurers report was also given by Mary Wharton. Motion to accept them both was made by Rick and seconded by Bob .

The 50-50 raffle was next and it was won by Brenda \$26, Yay.

New business

Since this was eclipse day, April The eighth. Larry gave a report on the activity that they had just completed. Conard, Larry, Scott, Norma, Larry Dale, and a few others met at Parkersburg South High School at noon. They were there to participate with students on recording the propagation of HF waves during an eclipse. This was in conjunction with NASA and the kids from the school seemed really excited and it worked out well for everybody. Thanks to all involved. There's a nice article in the paper if do you want to look it up I will be putting a copy of it in the newsletter.

Next month we will have to start thinking about field day.

There was no other business. Motion to adjourn was made by Bob at 7:02 and approved. The minutes taken by Mary Wharton dictated by Jerry W.