

# **MOUNTAIN SPARK GAPS**

**NPARC—The Radio Club for the  
Watchung Mountain Area**



**Website: <http://www.nparc.org>**

**Club Calls: N2XJ, W2FMI**

**Facebook: New Providence Amateur Radio Club  
(NPARC)**

**November 2025**

**Volume 58 No. 11**

## **Regular Meetings**

**Second & Fourth Mondays**

**at New Providence Municipal Bldg (3rd Floor)**

**Nov 10 - Who Really Invented Morse Code?  
by Greg, W2GLS**

**Nov 24 - Annual Business Meeting, Elections**

## **Upcoming Events**

**Digital Net Mondays at 9 PM – 28.085 MHz (+/-)  
CW Training Net, 9PM Thurs – 28.050 or 7.030 MHz**

*Check announcements in the Reflector for details.*

## Meeting Schedule

**Regular Meeting:** 7:30—9:00 PM  
**2nd & 4th Monday  
of each month**  
Watch for Emails

### Everyone is Welcome

If a normal meeting night is a holiday,  
we usually meet the following night.  
Call one of the contacts below  
or check the web site

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## Club Officers for 2025

President: K2AL, Al Hanzl  
908-872-5021  
Vice President: W2EMC Brian DeLuca  
973-615-1262  
Secretary: K2AL, Al Hanzl  
908-872-5021  
Treasurer: K2YG, Dave Barr  
908-277-4283  
Activities: N2TO, Kevin Glynn  
917-885-4424

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## 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 K2AL

Digital Net  
Mondays 9 PM  
28.084 — 28.086 MHz  
Will be using PSK and RTTY  
Net control KC2WUF

CW Training Net  
Thursdays 9 PM  
28.050 or 7.050 MHz  
Net control K2YG

## Club Internet Address

Website: [www.nparc.org](http://www.nparc.org)  
Webmaster KC2WUF David Bean  
Reflector: [nparc@mailman.qth.net](mailto:nparc@mailman.qth.net)  
Contact K2AL, Al

## MOUNTAIN SPARK GAPS

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Editor: K2UI Jim Stekas  
Contributing Editors:  
WB2QOQ Rick Anderson

## Climatological Data for New Providence - September 2025

The following information is provided by Rick, WB2QOQ,  
who has been recording daily weather events at his station  
for the past 44 years.

### TEMPERATURE -

Maximum temp. this September, 84 F (Sept. 6)  
Last September(2024) maximum was 82 F.  
Average Maximum temp this September, 75.9 F

Minimum temp this September, 50 F (Sept. 8)  
Last September(2024) minimum was 50 F.  
Average Minimum temp this September, 59.5 F

Minimum diurnal temp range, 8 F (77 - 69 F) 9/25  
Maximum diurnal temp range, 21 F (72 - 51 F)

Average temp this September, 67.7 F  
Average temp last September, 65.8 F

### PRECIPITATION -

Total precipitation this September – 2.44” rain  
Total precipitation last September – 0.52” rain

Maximum one day precip. event: Sept 7, 0.55” rain  
Measurable rain fell on 12 days this September  
8 days last September.

YTD Precipitation – 41.24” rain

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Rick Anderson 10/7/2025  
243 Mountain Ave.  
New Providence, NJ  
(908)464-8911  
[rick243@comcast.net](mailto:rick243@comcast.net)  
Lat = 40 degrees, 41.7 minutes North  
Long = 74 degrees, 23.4 minutes West  
Elevation: 380 ft.  
CoCoRaHS Network Station #NJ-UN-10

## November Presidents Report

At our next Club meeting Greg, W2GLS, will be presenting a talk on “Who Really Invented Morse Code?”. I will have to wait until then to find out, but I do know one thing for sure- there is an NPARC CW Net (K2YG NCS) every Thursday evening at 9PM, usually on 10 meters. Although we have a core group of five or six of us that participate each week, it would be great for more members to participate. Please recall that the original impetus behind starting the CW net was forming a Morse Code training net. We will accommodate beginners or those members who are a bit “rusty” or those who want to try something new (we have had some check-ins sending with newly ‘hamfest bought’ classic “bugs” or challenging their fist with a straight key).

There seems to be a resurgence in “on-air” CW operating other than the big CW contests. There are two hour long slow speed “contests” sponsored by the K1USN Radio Club on Monday 0000-0100 UTC (Sunday evenings 7-8PM EST) and Fridays 2000-2100 UTC (3-4PM EST). ([www.k1usn.com](http://www.k1usn.com)). And many POTA (Park on the Air) ops use CW. So don’t be “key-shy” and give the CW Net a try.

As a reminder, the Annual business Meeting will take place on Monday November 24 at the Salt Brook School. We will also be holding elections of 2026 officers at that meeting. Other than Treasurer, all office positions are still open. Thanks to Tim, KD2EKN, for his efforts once again as our “nominating committee”. Contact Tim if interested in holding office for 2026.

Don’t forget our annual Holiday and Awards Luncheon is Saturday December 6<sup>th</sup> at the Vintage Tavern, 342 Valley Road, Gillette. Reservations are still being taken by Dave, K2YG. Hope to see you there and at our meetings.

73,

Al K2AL

# Popular Contests in November 2025

**Dave Barr – K2YG**

Contest Name*	Dates (EDT)	Modes	Exchange	Notes & Websites**
ARRL Sweepstakes CW	Sat 11/1 5pm to Sun 11/2 10pm	CW	Serial No. + Precedence + [your call] + Check + ARRL Section (See note 1)	QRP-LP-HP 160-10 m** See <a href="http://www.arrl.org">www.arrl.org</a> for details. <b>Daylight Savings Time ends during this contest.</b>
WAE DX Contest RTTY	Fri 11/7 7pm – Sun 11/9 7pm	RTTY	RST + Serial #. Optional QTCs See note 2 for QTC details	LP-HP 80-10 m** QTC details: <a href="http://www.darc.de">www.darc.de</a>
CQ-WE (Western Electric)	Sat 11/8 2-6pm	CW/Digi	Name, WeCo QTH; Yrs of Svc	All Bands ** See rules at <a href="http://w8zpf.com">w8zpf.com</a> for locations
	Sun 11/9 8-12m			
	Sat 11/8 8-12m	Phone		
	Sun 11/9 2-6 pm			
ARRL Sweepstakes SSB	Sat 11/15 4pm to Sun 11/16 10pm	SSB	Serial No. + Precedence + (your call) + Check + ARRL Section (See note 1)	QRP-LP-HP 160-10 m**  Details at <a href="http://www.arrl.org">www.arrl.org</a> .
CQ WW DX Contest CW	Fri 11/28 7pm to Sun 11/30 7pm	CW	rst + CQ zone	qrp-lp-hp 160-10 m** Details at <a href="http://www.cqww.com">www.cqww.com</a>

Check [www.contestcalendar.com](http://www.contestcalendar.com) or contest specific websites for more information on these and many other radio contests.

\*\* No WARC bands in any contest.

Note 1: Sweepstakes exchange, which mimics traffic handling, is:

Serial Number; start at 001

Precedence (entry category): Q = QRP; A = <100w; B = >100w; U = unlimited; M = Multi Op;

Your Call Sign;

Check (2 digit year first licensed)

ARRL/RAC Section.

For example, my first exchange running qrp would be: 001 Q K2YG 56 NNJ.

Note 2: The WAE contest is simple, if you prefer, with only RST and serial number exchanged.

However, scores can be increased by a factor of between 2 to 10 if you participate in the exchange of QTCs, which are lists of contacts including time, call and serial number for already completed contest contacts. QTCs should only be attempted if you understand the process and are using logging software that makes the QTC process fairly easy, such as N1MM+. You can avoid sending or receiving QTCs by simply saying “no” or “nil” when asked if you have or want QTCs. Most participants do not exchange QTCs.

# **A Condo, a Long Wire, and a Mag Loop**

***Don Madson – K2DAM***

Once upon a time, say, April of 2020, I was deep in the throes of Covid isolation and boredom, when I remembered that I MIGHT be able to parlay my time in the U. S. Navy into something to keep me occupied and interested while the world withdrew from interaction on a personal level.

In the Navy, I had been a Radioman, trained and versed in ways to communicate from the belly of the Destroyer I rode. I hadn't been to school for the technical aspects of radios. Indeed, I was initially sent to school to become a Sonar Systems specialist. Not having much math in my background, I could not keep up, and was sent to the fleet as a deck hand. Needing a watch-stander and message runner, the Chief Petty Officer of the Radio crew asked if I'd like to join the Radio Gang. Thinking hard for at least 10 seconds, I recognized the benefits of NOT having to chip and paint stuff, swab decks, get up every day at 04:30, and get bullied by a Boatswains Mate with a mean streak. I jumped at the chance.

Soon, I was running messages to the bridge, making coffee in the radio shack, and absorbing the operations of radio communications. Fast forward to March, 1965. Me and the navy separated, and I did not think of radio communications on purpose, for the next 55 years.

As many will recognize, one the important sidebars of the Time Of Covid was the lack of interacting with other humans in close proximity. THAT was the single driving issue that brought me to the decision to try to capitalize on my military training and see if I could get licensed as an Amateur Radio Operator. NOW comes the pertinent part of this article...

Initially, although living in a Condo in an HOA community, I had pretty strong aspirations of working the world on Voice and CW. After all, as a former Navy Radioman, Morse Code was embedded in my brain. The problems of ANTENNA showed up immediately. Having limited space for antennas, and not really wanting to buck the known regulations about antennas, I tried several "solutions" offered by various publications of ARRL.

My first antenna was a Moonraker-style vertical with a sliding tuning connection, that I stuck in the corner of the room, with JUST enough clearance that it didn't touch the ceiling. The base was made from PVC pipe from Home Depot. Utter Failure. It was horrible to tune, getting a signal was a real PITA, and it was clumsy to handle, to boot. I sent it back. After that, I tried several iterations of wire-loop configurations in the room. Picture it! A 10x12' room with a ceiling height of about 9' at the outside wall, and about 12' at the other end of the room, heading back into the apartment. I had wire strung around the perimeter of the room at the 9' level, horizontally, around the outboard wall (where the windows are) in a vertical loop pattern, even along the baseboard at floor level. Every variant was disappointing!

THEN, I decided to go rogue, and strung a wire out the window, which is about 8' from my desk, into an ornamental Cherry tree, along a line of other trees to the corner of the house, then a 90-degree turn to terminate at my balcony, on the other end of the apartment. I had about 120' into a 9:1 balun, into my ICOM 718. It worked! In the meantime, I had acquired a Loop Antenna made by Chameleon Antenna in Nevada. It was called HF PORTABLE LOOP ANTENNA 2.0 (CHA F-LOOP 2.0), and

my intentions were to take it to local parks and play outdoors with CW. That did happen, and I was pleased with myself...

The antenna consists of a tuning unit,, two different coupling loops, two different Co-Ax radiating loops, and a mounting base plate for use with a tripod or other mount. The coupling and radiating loops can be used in various configurations to be able to tune different bands with better success. I have also acquired their 3.0 version of the radiator loop, which is aluminum, and works better than the Co-Ax loops. Original power limit was 30 Watts, but they sell a power compensator that allows for 100 watts of power.

I had also recently been convinced of the potential for using the FT8 platform for communication, and Paul (W2PTP) Bob (K2GLS) were kind enough to help me get set up for that. In retrospect, they kept me on the air...



Several months after I had achieved a decent level of communications, being able to work 10,12,15,17,20,30, and 40 meter bands pretty well, tragedy struck! The tree that was the primary support for my wire was deemed rotten, and had to come down. That meant that I had no support, certainly, for the 120' version of the wire, but pretty much any wire outside my window wasn't going to go unnoticed. Drat and Phooey! The kicker is that during this time, about when the tree came down, I was asked to serve on the Board of Trustees for my community. Didn't dare do anything against the regs, now...

So, now that my communications potential from my shack had been shrunk exponentially, I started to pay LOTS more attention to FT8. The Loop antenna from Chameleon has been in every corner of this room, and at every height, complements of an industrial-grade camera tripod I own. It has also perched on the window sill. It's currently sitting atop a hutch on my desk, maybe 4' from me, and within arms reach for tuning purposes.

I operate it QRP most of the time, for several reasons. Turns out the modem and router for my Wi-Fi network is about 6' away, and they go ballistic if I go higher than about 15 watts, and that causes the television that my wife is watching to stop, which annoys her greatly, which isn't advisable. Also, I don't seem to do any better with lower power than with higher power. Lately, I've been doing pretty well with 1 and 2 watts, so staying with that for now. Next adventure will be to concentrate on FT4 and see what happens...

At this point, in a little over 2 years, since I've been forced to rely on the loop and FT8 for communication relief, I've logged almost 1300 contacts, into 46 states and 68 countries. I can't speak to the success rate, 'cause I don't know score is kept, but I'm relatively pleased, and intend to persist...



## **It Takes a Village**

### **Sam Sealy – KC2OSR**

On July 12, 2025 my SPE Expert linear amplifier detected a fault and shut down. After consulting with Al Hanzl K2AL and Jim Stekas K2UI, they came over to my shack and ran numerous tests. We determined transceiver was not the problem. We then tested the linear with a watt meter into a dummy load. We found the amplifier was on an issue. After completing SWR test and antenna analyzing, we found the feed line and were beyond operating limits. We suspected high humidity or rain would have caused the problem. Troubleshooting with manufactures and distributors narrowed down the problem to the feed line and loose ferrites and possible connection issues at the hexbeam. While installing the new coax cable, we found that the antenna elements were loose and corroded.

On October 4, 2025 my birthday present gift to myself was to install new coax cable. My fellow hams help me get the job done. Jack WA2LAN, Gene N6JIV, Don Jones 7Q6M, Pat K0OO, Brian WB8BVM and Jeff Licari from Woodland Tree with his bucket truck. Jeff got up to the hexbeam and discovered many of the connections were corroded and loose. We replaced the star washers and cap nuts and coated them Ni-Ox to avoid corrosion and moisture and filtration. Essential to my success and exemplified were truly what ham radio is about – helping one another. We celebrated with lunch at Chatham Sandwich Shop, the staff was amazed that Don came to visit from Malawi. We then attended my neighborhood block party. My neighbors were astounded that Don had traveled all the way from Malawi. Don, Pat and Brian enjoyed the neighborhood totem pole and took a picture with the sculptor. All in all it was a wonderful birthday.



### ***Breaking News from Daily DX!!!***

The Yasme Foundation is pleased to announce the latest recipients of the Yasme Excellence Award: Don Jones K6ZO has played an instrumental role in developing an active young amateur community in Malawi. The enthusiasm of the young operators is inspiring, especially their ability to train and support each other as they develop on-the-air experience.