

It's still my mountain, it's still beautiful, it's still there.
-Sandra Harman, Bland County, VA property owner



Loudoun Times-Mirror

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Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club members – shown here during the 2006 American Radio Relay League Field Day – will be back at the Park View High School practice field June 27-28, contacting radio operators from coast to coast – ...

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Catch the (radio) wave

[People and Community](#)

By [Shannon Sollinger](#)

Source: Loudoun Times-Mirror

TUESDAY, JUNE 23 2009

UPDATED SUNDAY, JUNE 28 2009

The Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club – SPARC – ham radio operators will be camping out behind Park View High School June 27-28, demonstrating how communication can survive fallen cell towers and shorted-out power stations.

They hope, said club member Jim Chappell, that anyone in the area who finds radios and communications interesting will drop by. They'll have a special low-tech radio for newcomers to try a hand – the GOTA, or Get on the Air station. Turn a dial, talk into a microphone.

It's the annual American Radio Relay League Field Day, and SPARC members, along with ham radio buffs from coast to coast, will test their readiness to provide communications during an emergency.

The assumption is the power grid, along with cell phone communication, is down. Radio operators go to fields and parking lots and malls and backyards to string antennae, fire up generators and deploy solar panels.

The Federal Communications Commission and the



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league keep a list of all amateur license holders, by latitude and longitude. The hams are on call 24/7.

Starting Friday afternoon, they will pitch tents, loft antenna wires over goal posts and fence poles and fire up the generator that's been in storage since last June. At 2 p.m. June 27, the five radios will go on the air. For the next 24 hours, until 2 p.m. June 28, radio operators will log every contact they make.

Last year they recorded contacts with nearly 2,000 stations from the West Coast to the Caribbean.

Three of the radios are Morse code only, some are high tech and only talk through a computer. The GOTA station is radio at its basics, and visitors are welcome to reach out and touch someone.

SPARC meets monthly and sponsors classes for newcomers. Call Jim Chappell, 703-437-6379 to learn more. Visit the American Radio Relay League online at www.arrl.org.

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