



The SPARC

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century

Newsletter of the Boston Amateur Radio Club

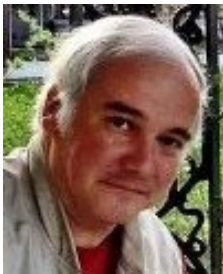
Serving Hams in the Greater Boston Area

October 2018 - VOLUME 30, NUMBER 10

www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



Message from the Editor - Joe Chapman, NV1W



I generally take my vacation in September, which is why the weather has been so lousy lately. I couldn't quite work in a bike ride on the Cape without having to deal with the remnants of Hurricane Florence so I wasn't able to operate from the Marconi Wireless site this year.

I did manage to spend some time with my KX2 in the East End of Portland, Maine, using a PackTenna thrown up in a tree that was not exactly tall and majestic. I heard one French station, a whole bunch of WO's, and of course one of those big Florida stations that you can probably hear at 599 on Mars. I didn't have a lot of luck being heard with my miserable wire. The other disappointment of the month was a special event station in Alaska, promised in QST a few months ago, that seems to have been a misprint; at least it never appeared on the spotting networks.

I had plenty of inspiration, beginning with a new book on portable operating published by the ARRL. It makes you want to go out and hit the road or the trail, at least if the remnants of a hurricane aren't hanging around. The other inspiration was a new batch of outdoorsy QSLs from a QSL printer that I review below. You can hit the road too (even in a car if you like) with BARC at SKYWARN Recognition Day, coming up in early December.

Many thanks to Harry, WA1GXC, for yet another interesting article from what I imagine is his microprocessor-free shack. I have to admit that even my Altoids tin-sized RockMite has a processor in it,.

Happy operating and 73!

In this Issue of The SPARC

- In Praise of Vacuum Tubes
- Review: KB3IFH QSL Cards
- Meetings and Events



BARC General Meeting, Thursday, October 18, 7 p.m.

The next General Meeting will be on Thursday, October 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Brookline Police Headquarters in Brookline. This will be a social meeting as no speaker is scheduled.

Repeaters: 145.230 (-) CTCSS 88.5 in/100.0 out

Simplex: 147.420

449.175 (-) DMR CC1

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BARC's Online Discussion Group - Joe Harris, N1QD



BARC has an online forum at Yahoo groups. The Yahoo group serves as a sounding board for members to post their suggestions and comments, and is intended to foster discussion. The group can also be used to share photographs from club events! Come visit us at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/bostonARC>.

You Tube? - Harris Pitnof, WA1GXC

For all you thoroughly modern hams, most and probably all of your main gear and auxiliary equipment is solid-state in design and execution—no vacuum tubes. Just a little more than three decades ago, vacuum tubes were the kings and queens of radio communications—Hams who were active in the 50's, 60's and 70's were practitioners of Steampunk before Punk was cool—and we didn't even know it. What's more cool than 9-inch tall vacuum tubes glowing orange and dull-red with high voltage ionizing residual gas to a deep blue? This missive is in praise of old radios. If you have never had the pleasure of listening to an HF receiver with a tube RF front-end, it is magnificent and will never be duplicated by silicon-based devices. The sensitivity and clarity is readily discernible even to a beginner's ears. In the late 1960's, WW II-era surplus gear was going to the dump; now, it's as expensive as a typical VHF hand-held. If you come across a tube-type receiver at a Hamfest, consider giving it a new home. More than likely, it'll need a lot of work to come awake, but there's no better way of learning electronics than by trouble-shooting, making mistakes, and repairing. You'll have to go back to older Handbooks for old-tech basics, but that's fun too. Try it out. You can't go wrong for 30 or 40 bucks. And they look cool just sitting on the shelf—frequency, gain, BFO, on/off; no 3-dozen little plastic pushbuttons to trick the microprocessor.



Caution—this is no joke—old gear uses anode voltages (B+) of several hundred volts. It can kill you. One of ARRL's founders was electrocuted by his own transmitter. Before embarking on powering up these units, ask an old-timer over for a free cup of coffee to show you the ropes, and basic electrical safety. It will stand you in good stead both in your Ham endeavors and electrical issues around the house.

20 Years Ago in The SPARC - Joe Chapman, NV1W

In the October, 1998, issue of *The SPARC*, it was announced that BARC and SATERN would be offering a free Technician license class — Ned Bolle was scheduled to speak at the October general meeting on the National Ski Patrol — Bob, WA1IDA, reported on public service at the WGBH Ice Cream Fundraiser and the Jimmy Fund Walk — Hams were sought to assist wildlife researchers — A report from the 17th ARRL and TAPR Digital Communications Conference appeared — *And elsewhere, the space shuttle Discovery blasted off carrying 77-year-old John Glenn, who became the oldest person to go into space.*

Review: KB3IFH QSL Cards - Joe Chapman, NV1W

I recently got around to a project I've been meaning to tackle for a few years, a QSL card for verifying bicycle mobile, backpack portable, SOTA activations, and similar contacts in the field. I'd learned about KB3IFH QSL cards from Greg, KC1CIC, who has a stunning card. As a frequent sender of postcards, I'm fussy about quality, and Greg's card was top-notch as far as I can tell. One of my calligraphy teachers, Ward Dunham, is even more stringent; I cherish the terrible-quality postcard I once received from him that said, "I'd love to have a five minute 'interview' with the @*%\$%! #@\$*&\$!! who specified this paper stock!"

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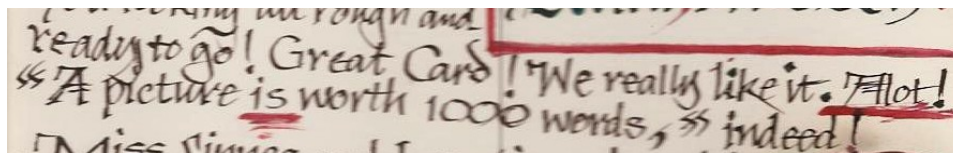
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Alas, I don't have any decent photos of me operating from a picnic table or a rock, but I did have one of me with my bike loaded up for a few weeks on the road that just happened to be taken at the Marconi Wireless Site on Cape Cod. I had the idea of standard QSL information on the back along with a line or two for the QTH. I also wanted it to work as a postcard so I'd have the option of not using an envelope if that wasn't necessary.

Randy, KB3IFH, could not have been easier to deal with. He responded almost instantly to my query. I sent him a photo and he came back with a design that was tasteful and exactly right and the QSL text I'd had in mind. When I gave him the go-ahead to print, he told me it would take about ten days and it ended up taking a week. The packaging was sturdy and all the cards were in perfect condition.

This is a guy who has hundreds of reviews on eHam and they're all 5/5. I can see why; he does good work, prices are reasonable, and he's a pleasure to do business with. I can't think of the slightest quibble.

It also passed muster with Ward:



KB3IFH QSL Cards, Randy Dorman. 4522 Foxtail Road, Hampstead, MD 21074, <https://kb3ifh.homestead.com>. 250 cards were \$70 with \$11 shipping, other quantities available.

New Members - Joe Chapman, NV1W

A warm welcome to Robert Erlich, W1ZQI (also VE3ZQI), who joined the club at the September meeting.

BARC Meeting Calendar for 2018

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings will take place at the Brookline Police Headquarters.

General Meetings

October 18	2018	Thu	7:30 pm
November 15	2018	Thu	7:30 pm (Business/General Meeting)

New Business/General Meetings - Bob Salow, WA1IDA, and Joe Chapman, NV1W

The Bylaws require that BARC hold four Business meetings per year. In an attempt to streamline our meeting schedule, BARC Business meetings will now be held concurrently with the General meetings in March, June, September, and November. We will attempt to keep the business portion of these combined Business/General meetings to a half hour. The next such combined meeting will be on **November 15, 2018** at Brookline Police Headquarters in Brookline. All members are urged to attend and participate in club affairs. This is where club functions are discussed and decided, and your help is needed to guide us.

To provide continuity of club business between meetings we also have a virtual business meeting via an email list. Any member interested in the affairs of the club can ask to be on this virtual meeting list—just give your name, call and your email address to Secretary Joe Chapman, NV1W.

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BARC Net Preamble

The control operator for the BARC Net is Joe, W1JJF. He rarely misses a net, but when he does any ham can take up the position and run the net. To assist you in opening and closing the net The BARC Net Preamble is printed below. Do not be afraid to step up and take the challenge.

Is there any further business for the repeater before we begin the Boston Amateur Radio Club Net? This is «YOUR CALL». Calling the Boston Amateur Radio Club Net. This is «YOUR CALL», my name is «YOUR NAME» and I am located in «YOUR TOWN». This net meets each Monday evening at 9 pm Eastern Time on the 145.230 Boston repeater, PL 88.5. This net is an informal round table discussion concerning matters of interest to the members of the Boston Amateur Radio Club and the Boston Amateur Radio community in general. When checking into the net, please say, “this is” and drop your carrier to check on doubling. Then give your call sign, name and location. All amateurs are welcome to join the net. Any check-in’s for the Boston Amateur Radio Club Net please call now.

[Compile the list of the check-ins and proceed with the net.]

Is there any further business for the net before I close? Hearing nothing, this is «YOUR CALL» closing tonight’s session of the Boston Amateur Radio Club Net. I would like to thank everyone who participated in the net and those who stood by while I ran the net. The Boston Amateur Radio Club Net will return next Monday evening at 9 pm Eastern Time. This is «YOUR CALL» returning the repeater to general amateur use. 73.

I See the Future

15–19 October	ARRL School Club Roundup
18 October	BARC General Meeting, Brookline Police Headquarters, Brookline, 7:30 p.m.
21 October	Flea at MIT, Cambridge
27–28 October	ARRL EME 50 to 1296 MHz
27–28 October	CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB
3 November	Deadline for articles for the November SPARC
3–5 November	ARRL November Sweepstakes, CW
10–11 November	WAE DX Contest, RTTY
15 November	BARC General/Business Meeting, Brookline Police Headquarters, Brookline, 7:30 pm
17–19 November	ARRL November Sweepstakes, Phone
18 November	Homebrew and Oldtime Equipment Party
24–25 November	ARRL EME — 50 to 1296 MHz
24–25 November	CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW
30 November–2 Dec	ARRL 160 Meter Contest

▲ **Note change from usual date and/or location**

(Rp) = BARC Repeater likely to be used

As you might expect, there are many more events (public service, hamfests, flea markets, etc.) taking place—some only peripheral to ham radio. For information on these, covering much of the Northeast, the “Ham - Electronic Flea Market” and the “PSLIST” lists tell the story. Of course, if you know of an event that would be of interest to the readers, please let the Editor know.

For an up-to-date calendar of events, including web links, visit <http://www.barc.org/calendar>.

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Businesses Can Advertise Here

The SPARC accepts commercial advertisements. BARC encourages monthly promotion of your products and services which would be of interest to hundreds of our members and others interested in the Amateur Radio Service.

The rates for display advertising are:

1 col × 2 in. (business card)	\$15 per issue
1 col × 2 in. (business card)	\$75 per 6 consecutive months
1 col × 2 in. (business card)	\$125 per 12 consecutive months
1 col × 4 in. (½ column)	\$30 per issue
1 col × 9.5 in. (full column)	\$60 per issue

Originals of ads must be presented to the Editor in MS Word or .jpg format to print 1:1. Other composition will be at extra cost. We will be glad to quote other ad sizes and durations. Members are urged to seek prospective advertisers who are appropriate to our readers. For additional information, contact Joe Chapman, NV1W, at 617.267.6349 or nv1w@arrl.net.

See Yourself in Print! (well, PDF) - Joe Chapman, NV1W

We are always looking for articles for the newsletter. I have reserved this space for your articles, reviews, tips, how-tos, hints, kinks, photos, schematics, or other ham related information. Photos of you operating or your shack are especially welcome. Send your submissions to the Editor, Joe, NV1W, at nv1w@arrl.net. Articles for the November issue must be received by November 3.

BARC Volunteer Exam Sessions

The Boston Amateur Radio Club schedule has been revised to suit the needs and interests of the applicants and examiners. **The next exam session will be on Monday, January 14, 2019.** Generally, sessions are held at Brookline Police Headquarters, 350 Washington St. in the Community Room (across from the information desk).

We give all exams (Technician, General, and Extra). *Testing is by reservation only.* Please bring the following with you:

- Your current license and a photocopy for the ARRL, if you are upgrading
- Any CSEs you are claiming, and a photocopy of them
- Valid picture ID or two valid non-picture IDs
- A pen and a calculator (if you want to)
- **\$15.00** (good for all the tests you take at that session, except for retests)

Note: Written tests can be taken sequentially at the same session for the same \$15 fee. The needed FCC forms will be provided.

To reserve a seat or for further information, contact: Jim Clogher, N1ICN, n1icn@arrl.net, or Linda Blair, NA1I, na1i@arrl.net.

Your Personal Ad Could Have Been Here

Are you a depressed BARC member because you have a treasure you must turn to cash? Cheer up, Bunky! The SPARC will run your (non-business) ad for free. Of course, a 10% donation if you sell it will be cheerfully accepted. Just send your ad to Joe Chapman, NV1W, nv1w@arrl.net.

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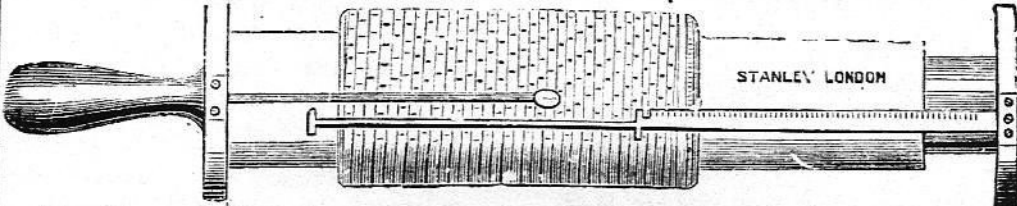
NEW ENGLAND SCI-TECH

New England Sci-Tech Inc is a new 501(c)(3) STEM education center, amateur radio training center, and maker space located at 16 Tech Circle, Natick. It is home to New England Amateur Radio Inc (NE1AR) and the youth radio club Sci-Tech Amateur Radio Society (STARS). NE Sci-Tech welcomes memberships and donations via www.NESciTech.org or www.NE1AR.org.



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BARC Officers and Staff

President: (position vacant)

Vice President: Mark Duff, KB1EKN
781.749.7664; emgmt@comcast.net

Secretary: Joe Chapman, NV1W
617.267.6349; nv1w@arrl.net

Treasurer: Jim Clogher, N1ICN,
781.901.3545; n1icn@arrl.net

Volunteer Exams:

Jim Clogher, N1ICN, n1icn@arrl.net
Linda Blair, NA1I, na1i@arrl.net

Public Service Coordinator: Brett Smith, AB1RL
859.466.5915; ab1rl@arrl.net

Public Information Officer: Geri Duff, KB1ISG
781.749.7664; geriduff52@juno.com

Membership Services: Linda Blair, NA1I
617.500.4406; na1i@arrl.net

Newsletter Editor: Joe Chapman, NV1W
617.267.6349; nv1w@arrl.net

The Boston Amateur Radio Club is a non-commercial association of persons interested in the Amateur Radio Service. The Club is organized for the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communication and education, for the establishment of emergency communications in the event of disasters or other emergencies, for the advancement of the radio art and the public welfare, for the representation of the radio amateur in legislative and regulatory matters, and for the maintenance of collegiality and a high standard of conduct.

The Club is open to all persons interested in Amateur Radio without regard to race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, disability, or sexual preference. Our General and Business meeting locations are handicap accessible. Other meeting and activity locations may be handicap accessible by arrangement.

The Club is an ARRL-affiliated club, and is a member of the Council of Eastern Massachusetts Amateur Radio Clubs (CEMARC) and the New England Spectrum Management Council (NESMC). The Club is also an associate member of the Courage HandiHams system.

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Greater Boston Net Directory

Daily 7 pm	MARI (Mass/Rhode Island CW Net) (NTS)	3.565
Daily 8 pm	Eastern Mass 2M Traffic Net (NTS)	145.230 (PL 88.5 in/100.0 out)
Daily 8 pm	Slow Speed CW Net	28.160
First Mon 8:30 pm	EMA Section ARES Net	146.610 and all MMRA links
Mon 8 pm	New England DMR Net	DMR New England Talk Group (TG 3181)
Mon 9 pm	BARC Club Net	145.230 (PL 88.5 in/100.0 out)
Sun Mon Wed Fri 10 pm	Heavy Hitters Traffic Net (NTS)	MMRA-linked repeaters: 146.610, 146.670, 146.715, 146.820, and all 222 and 440 repeaters
Tue Thu Sat 6 pm	MA RI Phone Net (NTS)	3.978
Tue 7:30 pm	Clay Center ARC Net	446.325 (PL 146.2)
Tue 8 pm	MMRA Club Net	146.610 and all MMRA links
Wed 8 pm	Wellesley Amateur Radio Society Net	147.030; 444.600 (PL 88.5)
Wed 9 pm	Waltham Wranglers Swap Net	146.640 (PL 136.5)
Sat 9 am	Northeast SATERN Net	7.265
Sun 9:30 am	Yankee SSB Net	50.275
Sun 8 pm	Algonquin Amateur Radio Club Net	446.675 (PL 88.5)
Sun 8:30 pm	NSRA Net (with Newline)	145.470 (PL 136.5)
Sun 9 pm	CAARAnet	145.130 (PL 107.2)



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