



The SPARC

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century

Newsletter of the Boston Amateur Radio Club

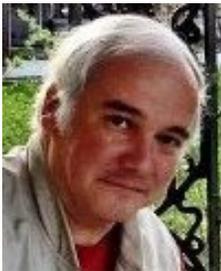
Serving Hams in the Greater Boston Area

January 2020 - VOLUME 32, NUMBER 1

www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



Message from the Editor – Joe Chapman, NV1W



To my great distress, a nasty sore throat kept me from attending this month's Holiday Party, but my sources tell me a good time was had by all. I was equally upset that on New Year's Day I was unable to work WA1WCC in Chatham, MA, where our own Harry, WA1GXC, was manning the straight key and bug. Virtually no stations from the first call district were audible on 20 meters during the day at my house (the exceptions were a few W1's doing FT8 who were down in the weeds). Harry confirmed that the WA1WCC signals appeared to be going over everyone's head in New England. Other parts of the country and the Caribbean were coming in reasonably strong for me, and I even heard a KH6, who disappeared as I was trying to come back to him.

For die-hard hamfest fans, our friends down at the Whitman club will be holding their Winterfest later this month, and we have also been invited to join Bob Phinney, K5TEC, and the folks at Sci-Tech in Natick for Winter Field Day.

Also this month, volunteer registration for the 2020 Boston Marathon will begin. Registration closes on Friday, February 7, so don't delay!

73 and good radio!

In this Issue of The SPARC

- KE1ML on BARC's future
- 2020 Meeting Calendar
- Ham of the Year
- Winter Field Day
- Marathon volunteer signup



No BARC Meetings Until March

The next BARC General Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19 at 7:30 p.m. at a location still to be determined. Stay tuned to *The SPARC* for details.

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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>.

Whither BARC? – Doc Kinne, KE1ML

(The title for this article is inspired by the title of the last chapter in Clinton B. DeSoto's seminal Amateur Radio historical work, *200 Meters & Down*.)

Since returning to Amateur Radio in April of last year, after a hiatus of over six years, I found that the intervening time period was a period of rather profound change, both good and bad.

On the good side, new digital modes that had not existed the last time I was on the air were threatening to nearly take over the HF bands. Also, in my 2nd floor apartment where there was no real space for an 80m antenna and I constantly worried about interference, remote radios had become a viable way of getting on the air.

But all has not been roses for Amateur Radio in the last several years, either. To get caught up, I spent an afternoon going through certain sections of *The SPARC* archives from 2010 onwards. The story it told of both the evolution of nets in Amateur Radio, and about BARC itself, was... interesting. Since I'm a Traffic Handler, I mainly looked at the evolution of the local traffic nets. In the last decade, the Heavy Hitters Traffic Net has gone from 7 days/wk to 4 days. The MA/RI Phone Net, once 7 days/week, now struggles at 3. I don't mean to say that this is a problem just for Boston or E. MA, certainly—my first Traffic Net in Central NY, the Oneida County Traffic and Emergency Net, has cut down 50% of its meeting times as well. The traffic nets also constantly struggle with available net control stations, most putting in double or triple duty per week now.

BARC has also evolved. Ten years ago we had much more regular monthly meetings. Sometimes we had as many as three meetings in a month—the General Meeting, the Business Meeting, and an informal Brunch meeting. We now have, at most, one meeting a month, and sometimes this meeting is actually an activity such as Field Day. Fifty percent of the meetings I've been to since I returned have held large debates as to if we should cut down these meetings even more, or even become a "repeater club."

BARC's meeting issues are not endemic to BARC at all; this is a social change that has been moving in on us for the past couple of decades. We now all have far, far more choices of what we can do with our time, and the competition between those choices can become as tight as successfully getting a contact during a pile up. Like anything being sold these days—and BARC is something that must be sold, make no mistake—we need something to differentiate ourselves in the market. We already have some things that we can use to do this. We are, for example, the only urban club in Boston, by which I mean to say that BARC is the only club whose meetings are reasonably accessible by public transit. That's a valuable differentiating feature for us.

In my mind, virtually ever amateur radio club nowadays has a 2m repeater, perhaps even a 70cm repeater. That's old hat. I'm not saying at all that we need to get rid of our repeaters! The 2m repeater that BARC has is, I think, an important mainstay in the local community. It is depended on by several public service groups, and this makes it important. But everyone has one. Can we, as a club, work on something that *no one* has, and can we use this to improve BARC as a club? Can this differentiate us?

Everyone must have ideas. One of the great things about Amateur Radio is that it is so diverse! Personally, I'd like to investigate Amateur Television. Twenty-five years ago there was a television club in New England. Could there be interest again? This is the perfect mode for a repeater, and such a repeater, now, would make us unique in New England. ATV activity in the US seems to be centered around the SW. Can it be brought to the NE?

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Another possibility is exploring high speed digital modes. I know some people are interested in playing with networking along these lines. This idea has several advantages in that no one (in the North East) is doing it. It can be used to investigate using Amateur Radio spectrum that really needs some activity. It can use smaller antennas which may make it “apartment friendly” in the urban area we find ourselves in, and perhaps it could start to draw in some of the “younger crowd.”

We may also look at trying to place our meetings a bit closer to where a potential audience is. Amateur Radio is a technical hobby and Boston may be among the most technical cities we have. This year we’ll be looking at having one of our meetings at Google Headquarters in Cambridge. Investigating such a move has several very interesting possible advantages! Again, it maintains our place in the greater Boston area. It is literally on our public transit system. We know there are several active hams within the Google corporate population. Finally, there could be the interesting possibility of a ham station being placed on the grounds!

Finally, we need to talk about the club’s leadership. One of the other things that my overview of *The SPARC* brought out is that there has been a small cadre of people who have been the leadership of this club for nearly a decade. They’ve done a fine, fine job, but they need, and deserve, a rest. I will say this summer that we desperately need a contested election. And it’s not necessarily because you think you can do a better job than Joe, for example; it’s because Joe’s been doing it for a decade and he deserves a break. Our old officers won’t run away, either. They’ll be here to answer questions (“How have you done this in the past?”), and they’ll want you to succeed. Take a good look at our website at <http://barc.org/officers-and-staff/>. Imagine yourself in a particular position. Then, this summer, when the call for elections go out... go for it!

Yes, I know we all have so much to do, so many ties on our time. I get it. But our current leadership has the same stresses, and they’ve been doing this for years.

We need to step up.

BARC Meeting Calendar for 2020

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

General Meetings (* Business/General Meetings)

March 19*	2020	Thu	7:30 pm [<i>location to be determined</i>]
April 16	2020	Thu	7:30 pm [<i>location to be determined</i>]
May 21	2020	Thu	7:30 pm
June 18*	2020	Thu	7:30 pm — <i>Elections</i>
September 17*	2020	Thu	7:30 pm
October 15	2020	Thu	7:30 pm
November 19	2020	Thu	7:30 pm

VE Sessions

January 13	2020	Mon	7:30 pm
April 13	2020	Mon	7:30 pm
July 13	2020	Mon	7:30 pm
October 12	2020	Mon	7:30 pm

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New Business/General Meetings – 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 **March 19, 2020** at a location to be determined. 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.

Winter Field Day at Sci-Tech – Bob Phinney, K5TEC

Members of BARC and other local clubs are invited to Winter Field Day 2020, January 25, any time between 2–10 pm. Join the FUN! Pot Luck Dinner, Ham Radio Event, Maker Activities, Planetarium Shows, Guest Speaker, Games, Movie Night, all in one! Also celebrating the Lunar New Year! Spouses and children welcome. Hosted by members of Sci-Tech Amateur Radio Society (STARS), New England Amateur Radio (NEAR), and New England Sci-Tech (NEST), at 16 Tech Circle, Natick. Please sign up here: <https://www.nescitech.org/winter-field-day/>.

Greg Bennett, KC1CIC (SK) is Ham of the Year – Joe Chapman, NV1W

BARC's 2019 Ham of the Year is Greg Bennett, KC1CIC, formerly of Hull. Greg became a silent key in July. In lieu of the usual plaque, BARC will be placing a memorial brick at the Bare Cove Fire Museum in Hingham with Greg's first name and call sign.

Greg had been a member of BARC since he was first licensed and was a faithful participant at Field Day every June. Many will remember his go-kit "box" as well as his enthusiasm and good cheer. There was no mistaking his voice on the air!

He was Assistant Section Traffic Manager for eastern Massachusetts and a DEC in ARES, helping to coordinate NTS and ARES. Many newly licensed hams who finally muster the courage to try their PTT buttons out for the first time do so on the 8 pm daily traffic net, and Greg was a friendly and encouraging presence.

His nomination as Ham of the Year garnered enthusiastic support, and thanks to Peter, KC1HHO, for suggesting the memorial at the Fire Museum.



Volunteer Signup for the 2020 Boston Marathon – Joe Chapman, NV1W

Volunteer signup for the 2020 Boston Marathon is open and will close Friday, February 7, at 5:00 pm. Those who have volunteered in previous years should already have received email from the Marathon Communications Committee. Others should go to <https://www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon/volunteer/volunteer-registration> and

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follow the instructions. Be sure to identify yourself as an amateur radio operator, and select one of the ham radio placements.

People new to volunteering at public service events take note: you will need some more equipment than the stuff you got with your handheld. At least one extra battery is mandatory, and you'll need a better antenna than the "rubber duck" that came with your radio. You'll also need time and patience to program your radio, and if you're still doing that by hand instead of using a computer, this is a good time to make the switch.

There will be plenty of information on the volunteer website as the date for the Marathon, and members of the Communications Committee are always happy to answer questions.

Member News – Joe Chapman, NV1W

We welcome Roland Smith, KC1MID, of Hyde Park. Roland has a shiny new Technician license and one of his first actions as a ham was to join BARC. An inspiration to us all!

We have several members who are not yet licensed, who should note that the club is happy to help people study for, take, and pass the Technician exam. Contact Joe Chapman, NV1W, at nv1w@arrl.net if you're interested.

BARC Net Peamble

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

13 January	BARC VE Session, Brookline Police Headquarters, Brookline, 7:30 pm
18 January	Winterfest, Whitman, MA
19–21 January	ARRL January VHF Contest
25 January	Winter Field Day at Sci-Tech, Natick (<i>see article</i>)
25–26 January	Winter Field Day
31 January	End of the discount for 2020 membership renewals

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5 February	Boston Marathon volunteer registration closes, 5:00 pm
8 February	Deadline for articles for the February SPARC
10–14 February	ARRL School Club Roundup
15–16 February	ARRL International DX Contest — CW

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

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>.

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.

Two Ways to 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 February issue must be received by February 8.

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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BARC Volunteer Exam Sessions

The Boston Amateur Radio Club offers license exams quarterly. **The next exam session will be on January 13, 2020.** Test 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.



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.



Greg, KC1CIC's "box".

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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 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 8 pm	Sci-Tech Amateur Radio Society (STARS) 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 Newsline)	145.470 (PL 136.5)
Sun 9 pm	CAARAnet	145.130 (PL 107.2)

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