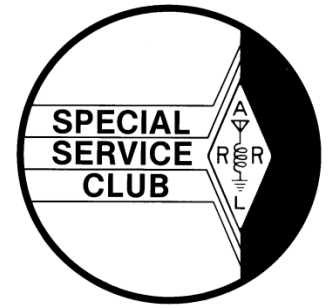




The SPARC

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century
Newsletter of the Boston Amateur Radio Club
Serving Hams in the Greater Boston Area
March 2013- VOLUME 25, NUMBER 3
www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



Message from the President – Joe Chapman, NV1W

I want to devote this month's ruminations to advice for our newly licensed members on the terrifying syndrome known as Microphone Anxiety. All of us have been there: you've just gotten your first license and your first rig, and now you're facing the psychological bomb trigger that is a PTT switch that's never been pressed.

My first transmission was on the MIT UHF repeater, so I had the benefit of encouragement from friends and the terror of realizing that the people listening on the repeater included one of my professors.

I'm assuming you have a Technician ticket and your new rig operates on the 2 meter band. A reasonable place to start is on a repeater like the 145.230 Boston machine. The first bit of good news is modern radios are set up to handle repeater offsets automatically, so you can just tune to 145.230 and rest assured you'll be transmitting on the right frequency. The other bit of good news is if you mess up the one thing you do have to configure--the 88 Hz CTCSS tone (also called the "PL tone")--nobody will hear you, so you can't make a fool of yourself.

You can, of course, just key up the repeater and say, "KB1XYZ monitoring". After you release the PTT switch you'll hear the repeater's squelch tail (a second or so of hiss) if you made it.

A more structured alternative is to check in to a net. Before doing so it's useful to have a copy of the ITU phonetic alphabet around ("Alpha, Bravo, Charlie", etc.) or at least know the phonetics for your own call sign. If your call sign includes the letter Z, note that most hams use the British pronunciation "zed" to avoid confusion with letters like P. I myself think it's best to stick to the standard phonetics rather than cute ones you make up yourself, but we German-Americans love doing things by the book.

The BARC club net happens every Monday night at 9:00 pm under the able and friendly leadership of Joe, W1JF. When you check in for the first time he'll ask for your first name and location for the logs, and at some point you'll be asked whether you have any comments for the net. You don't have to make a speech; "Hello everyone, I just got my license and am learning how to use this radio" is plenty. Finish up by giving your call sign and saying "back to net"--this satisfies the FCC requirement that you identify yourself at the end of a conversation.

Another net that welcomes newcomers is the Eastern Mass. 2 Meter Traffic Net; it happens daily at 8:00 pm. This is a traffic (message handling) net, though nobody's going to force you to bring or take traffic if you check in. In addition to knowing the phonetic alphabet, you should know that your "QTH" is your location (a bit of very common ham jargon that some net control stations use), and that when you're invited to "secure" it means that the net control station is giving you permission to leave the net.

So, be bold! And don't worry about the PTT switch triggering a nuclear explosion--on most rigs that's handled by a menu item.

Microcontrollers!

The next BARC General Meeting will be on **Wednesday, March 20**, at 7:00 pm in the Community Room of Brookline Police Headquarters in Brookline Village. The speaker will be Joe Chapman, NV1W, speaking on Microcontrollers and Ham Radio, with a special focus on the Arduino. In addition to learning about the topic, your presence will help support the ulterior Presidential motive of encouraging club members to volunteer to give presentations at meetings.

NOTE: The March General meeting date has been changed to Wednesday, 20 March – usual time, usual place.

The SPARC

BARC Meeting Calendar for 2013 – Linda Blair, NA11, Vice President

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings will take place at the Brookline Police Headquarters; the map is later in this newsletter. These dates will be published again in the newsletter as needed.

General Meetings

March 20	Wed	7:00 pm
April 18	Thu	7:00 pm <i>at the Clay Center in Brookline</i>
May 16	Thu	7:00 pm
June 20	Thu	7:00 pm
September 19	Thu	7:00 pm
October 17	Thu	7:00 pm
November 21	Thu	7:00 pm

VE Sessions

May 13	Mon	7:00 pm
July 8	Mon	7:00 pm
September 9	Mon	7:00 pm
November 16	Sat	10:00 am

Business Meetings

June 6	Thu	7:00 pm
September 5	Thu	7:00 pm
December 5	Thu	7:00 pm

Membership Renewal – It's Vital

The BARC fiscal year is the calendar year with the grace period coming to a close. Now is the time to renew your membership in the best ham club around. If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2013, a Membership Information form is included with this issue of the newsletter. Be sure to complete the form when submitting your dues as the data is necessary for statistical purposes and to notify you with important information. To assist the Treasurer with his burden, please return it promptly with your dues.

Please note that completion of the Membership Information form each year assembles not only your identity, but certain statistical data that is important for the orderly operation of our club. The form is the tangible link for the Treasurer and the database to confirm your dues payment.

BARC accepts PayPal. If you want to renew your membership online, just go to www.barc.org/membership.html, or click on the membership link on our home page. You can use this to pay your dues or make donations with a credit card (even if you do not have a PayPal account), from your PayPal funds, or from your linked bank account. Our PayPal address is w1bos@arri.net. If you appear to have a problem using PayPal, send an email to Mike at n1list@arri.net, with a copy to Bob at wa1ida@arri.net. We can then wrestle with PayPal.

Bylaw Amendment Approved

The following BARC Bylaw amendment has been approved by the Club after being voted on at the January General Meeting:

Section 2: Conditions Of Membership

Add paragraph:

The Executive Committee will confer a free Regular Membership upon a person who has been a speaker or presenter at a club meeting. Such membership term shall complete the current fiscal year and extend to the end of the next fiscal year. If this person is already a member, dues shall be forgiven for the next fiscal year.

The SPARC

Ferretting Out Noise Sources – Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

About three months ago, I put up a 20 meter antenna - an end-fed, half-wave antenna <www.kb6nu.com/kb6nu-finally-builds-an-end-fed-half-wave-antenna>. Right off the bat, I was flummoxed by the high noise level. It was nearly S9, obliterating all but the strongest signals.

The strange thing about this noise was that I was experiencing it only on 20m, and using only this antenna. If I switched to my 40 meter dipole, the noise dropped back to the S1 - S2 level that I usually experience here. (Yes, I know. I'm really lucky to have such a low noise level here.)

It didn't really make any sense to me that this antenna would be so susceptible to noise while my other antennas weren't, but I just couldn't come up with any other explanation. I was not experiencing any noise on any of the other bands, after all. Sometimes 40 meters is so quiet here that I check to make sure that the antenna is connected to the radio.

As luck would have it, I stumbled upon the noise source a couple of days ago. I had taken the laptop I normally use in the shack somewhere one day last week, and when I returned it to the shack that evening, I switched the rig over to 20 meters before connecting the power supply back to the laptop. No noise! When I plugged the power supply into the laptop, the noise jumped up to S9 again. The problem noise source was found!

I posted about my experience to my blog and to the HamRadioHelpGroup, <groups.yahoo.com/group/hamradiohelpgroup>. Mark, K5LXP, one of the gurus on HRHG, advised me to throw the main circuit breaker in order to determine if it was something inside the house generating the noise. Bob, K0NR, commented on my blog post, "I have found that flipping off circuit breakers in my house is a good first step to try and find a noise source. Usually ticks off the family, but what the heck." Either of these methods will help you determine if a noise source is inside or outside of your house.

I'm still thinking that the way my antenna is positioned may have something to do with its picking up the noise generated by the power supply. I plan to play around with the positioning of the antenna once the snow melts and see if that makes any difference. Until then, I can work 20 meters with the power supply disconnected and run the laptop off the battery.

So, the next question you might ask is how does the antenna work otherwise? It seems to be putting out a very good signal. One evening last week, I worked several DX stations, including 6W/HAONAR in Senegal. It's not a beam, but I'm pretty happy with it.

Looking Ahead At Public Service -- Bob Salow, WA1DA

When hams engage in public service as mandated by the FCC Rules, the benefits go well beyond just following the rules. We can enjoy our hobby - have fun! We protect the health and safety of event participants. We support worthy charities. We learn to work within an organized effort. We experience the technical aspects of operating under adverse conditions. We can practice for communicating under emergency conditions. We can demonstrate these qualities to the communities we serve and thus promote our service for their acceptance.

Throughout the year BARC coordinates numerous public service events. Most of these are also suitable for hams who are new to helping at such events as well as experienced hams. For 2013, we have already been tasked with several events that will be announced closer to their dates. Contact Brett Smith, AB1RL, at 859.466.5915 or <ab1rl@arri.net>.

- *Multiple Sclerosis Boston Walk – 7 April 2013* – (Boston/Cambridge)
- *BAA 5K and 1 Mile Races – 14 April 2013* – (Boston)
- *Run of the Charles – 28 April 2013* – (Charles River, Needham to Brighton)
- *Multiple Sclerosis Journey of Hope – 18 May 2013* – (Natick)
- *Boston Brain Tumor Bike Rides – 19 May 2013* – (Waltham to Carlisle)
- *BAA 10K Race – 23 June 2013* – (Boston)
- *BAA Half Marathon – 13 October 2013* – (Boston)

Other events may jump in on short notice. Among our skills is the ability to apply our technical, organizational and staffing quickly and proficiently. Join our team and join in the fun and learning.

The SPARC

BARC Growth

It's a rare month when we fail to add or upgrade a few members. Periodically we publish their names so that you can give them a special welcome. There may also be some upgrades and long lost members who rejoin, so greet them, too.

Jim Marrs

N1PXY

Please welcome new BARC members and congratulate the new upgrades. Make it a point to introduce yourself when you see them at a meeting. In addition, we would like to note here all call sign changes. If you fit any of these categories, please promptly notify the Keeper of the Database, Bob Salow, WA1IDA, at: 508.650.9440 or email: <wa1ida@arrl.net>.

Hams Needed For the Run of the Charles -- Brett Smith, AB1RL, BARC Public Service Coordinator

Ham radio has been part of the Run of the Charles canoe and kayak races for more than 30 years. BARC has coordinated the hams for most of that time. This is a well-run event which provides wetness for the participants and excitement for the hams (who stay dry). We are looking for hams to help on Sunday, 28 April.

Our duties include reporting from hazardous portages around the many dams on the Charles River from Needham to Brighton. Various assignments start between 0700 and 1200, with assignment completions from 1230 to 1630. This is an excellent way for those new to public service to get your feet wet (figuratively only) and learn how hams can support the community.

It's an outdoor event, yet safe for hams. Because of the terrain along the river bank, a hand held radio with an antenna better than a "rubber duck" and a full 5 watts is necessary.

If you can help, or you have any questions, contact me at <ab1rl@arrl.net> or 859.466.5915.

Hams Needed For the BAA Boston 5K & 1 Mile Races-- Brett Smith, AB1RL, BARC Public Service Coordinator

The Boston Athletic Association (BAA) presents a sanctioned 5K (3.1 miles) race followed by a series of six invitational 1-mile races for the best young runners. The events are in downtown Boston, and all races will give the runners the thrill of crossing the official Boston Marathon Finish Line near Copley Square.

We have been asked to provide ham communications for these events. The date is **Sunday, 14 April**, with hams assembling at 0700. All events are expected to be over by 1130.

Note that there will be no interference with preparations for the Boston Marathon the next day. If you can assist or have any questions, contact me at <ab1rl@arrl.net> or 859.466.5915.

Hams Needed For Two Multiple Sclerosis Walks --Rick Savage, KB1LYJ, Public Service Event Coordinator

Continuing years of success, the Multiple Sclerosis Society is repeating their two local events. The "Boston MS Walk" will be on **Saturday, 7 April**, and the "MS Journey of Hope," on **Saturday, 18 May**.

We have been asked to support communications for both. The Boston MS Walk will start and finish at the Harvard athletic facility on North Harvard St near Soldiers Field Rd in Brighton. The route of the walk will be on both sides of the Charles River in Cambridge and Boston.

The MS Journey of Hope starts and finishes at Natick High School with a 7.5 mile course. There will be checkpoints, vehicles and medical coverage for us to support.

Each will be managed by a Net Control station, using VHF and UHF repeaters. Your help is vital for this worthy cause. Our past help has won heavy praise, and we have to maintain our superb reputation. If you can lend a hand, contact Brett, AB1RL, at <ab1rl@arrl.net> or 859.466.5915.

The SPARC

Field Day? It's Only Three Months Away

No, no, it is not too early to start planning for Field Day 2013. Start by thinking about how our 2012 Field Day went. We had compact HF stations, antennas and generators. In addition, anyone could join the club activity by providing their own station facilities – and they did.

The result was a resounding success. We set up, operated, and tore down with ease – and had **fun** doing it. We will do it again. Pending further discussion, the Bare Cove Fire Museum in Hingham is likely to be repeated as the site. **22-23 June** is the weekend.

The fun is yours for the taking. Planning meetings will be announced. Bring your ideas, or just say you want to be there – to see, to learn, to try, or maybe to see how other people have fun.

Orange Caps for Public Service Events

BARC has a supply of the bright orange caps for use at emergency or public service events. They are adjustable to fit all but the very largest heads, and proclaim, "Emergency Communications."

The price is \$5.00, and they are available at most club meetings, or contact Bob, WA1IDA, at <wa1ida@arrl.net> or 617.650.0062.

ARRL, Microsoft Resolve Email Blockage

-- *The ARRL Letter*, 14 March 2013

After more than 20,000 ARRL members had their **arrl.net** and **arrl.org** emails blocked by Microsoft, the issue has been resolved. According to ARRL Information Technology Manager Michael Keane, K1MK, Microsoft told the ARRL that the mail blockage from ARRL servers to Microsoft domains (including **msn.com**, **hotmail.com**, **live.com** and **outlook.com**) was mitigated as of Sunday, March 10.

US Postal Service Introduces Global Forever Stamp

-- *The ARRL Letter*, 14 March 2013



In addition to an increase in postal rates in January 2013, the US Postal Service introduced a new *Global Forever First-Class Mail International* stamp. Priced at \$1.10 each and offered in a pane of 20, the new global stamp offers a single price for any international First-Class Mail 1-ounce letter to any country in the world, as well as 2-ounce letters to Canada. The stamp is available online, at post offices in the US, or by calling 800.782.6724.

The SPARC

Hands-Only™ CPR  **1**  **Call 911** **2**  **Push hard and fast in the center of the chest.** **American Heart Association**  **Learn more at handsonlycpr.org** *Learn and Live*

I See the Future

20 Mar	BARC General Meeting ▲
7 Apr	MS Boston Walk (Rp)
7 Apr	FARA Flea (Framingham)
14 Apr	BAA 5K and 1 Mile Races (Rp)
18 Apr	BARC General Meeting – at Clay Center ▲
21 Apr	MIT Flea (Cambridge)
28 Apr	Run of the Charles (Rp)
3-4 May	NEAR Fest (Deerfield, NH)
11 May	SEMARA Flea (Dartmouth)
13 May	BARC VE Session – Monday 7:00 pm
16 May	BARC General Meeting
18 May	MS Journey of Hope Walk
19 May	Boston Brain Tumor Bike Rides (Rp)
19 May	MIT Flea (Cambridge)
16 Jun	MIT Flea (Cambridge)
23 Jun	BAA 10K Race (Boston)
21 Jul	MIT Flea (Cambridge)

▲ **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.

Got a Story? Why Not Share It? -- Joe Harris, N1QD

We are always looking for articles for the newsletter. I have reserved this space for your articles, tips, how-to's, or other ham related information. Send your submissions to the Editor, Joe, N1QD, at <n1qd@n1qd.org>.

Articles for the April issue must be received by April 6.

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 x 2 in. (business card)	\$15 per issue
1 col x 2 in. (business card)	\$75 per 6 consecutive months
1 col x 2 in. (business card)	\$125 per 12 consecutive months
1 col x 4 in. (1/2 column)	\$30 per issue
1 col x 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 Harris, N1QD, at 781.844.8684 or <n1qd@n1qd.org>; or Bob Salow at <wa1ida@arrl.net> or 508.650.9440.

Repeater: 145.230 (-) CTCSS 88.5

Simplex: 147.420

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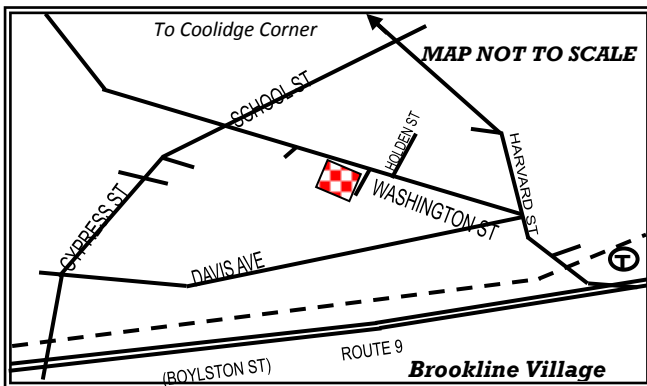
Quarterly Business Meetings -- Bob Salow, WA1DA


We have Business meetings quarterly. Unless circumstances warrant, BARC Business meetings will be held on the first Thursdays of December, March, June, and September. The next such meeting will be on **6 June 2013** at the Brookline Police headquarters. 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.

A short opening period of each General meeting will continue to be used to bring any immediate business matters to everyone's attention.

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 President Joe Chapman, NV1W.

Directions to the Brookline Police Headquarters, 350 Washington Street, Brookline MA





The Clay Center Observatory
Welcomes BARC members

www.claycenter.org

Public Astronomy Nights, Astronomy Day Events,
Amateur Radio Classes, Amateur Radio Youth Club,
Community and Adult Education, Weather Festival,
Science Lecture Series, Educational Outreach

20 Newton St., Brookline, near Larz Anderson Park

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 2013 exam session schedule is shown elsewhere in this newsletter issue.** Generally, sessions are held at Brookline Police Headquarters, 350 Washington St in the Community Room (across from the information desk). A map is shown above.


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 ID (picture ID preferred)
- 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>.

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The SPARC

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 the Editor, Joe Harris, at <n1qd@n1qd.org>.

BARC Officers and Staff

President: Joe Chapman, NV1W
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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 Special Service 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 5:30 pm	Eastern Mass/Rhode Island Phone Net (NTS)	3.915
Daily 7 and 10 pm	Eastern Mass/Rhode Island CW Net (NTS)	3.658
Daily 8 pm	Eastern Mass 2M Traffic Net (NTS)	145.230 (PL 88.5)
Daily 8 pm	Slow Speed CW Net	28.160
Daily 10:00 pm	Heavy Hitters Traffic Net (NTS)	MMRA-linked repeaters: 146.610, 146.670, 146.715, 146.820, and all 222 and 440 repeaters
First Mon 8:30 pm	EMA Section ARES Net	146.610 and all MMRA links
Mon 9 pm	BARC Club Net	145.230 (PL 88.5)
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	HHTN Swap Net	146.640
Thu 8:30 pm	AMSAT Net	146.640
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

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