



The SPARC

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century

Newsletter of the Boston Amateur Radio Club

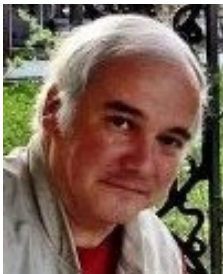
Serving Hams in the Greater Boston Area

August 2018 - VOLUME 30, NUMBER 8

www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



Message from the Editor – Joe Chapman, NV1W



It has not been a good month for technology at the NV1W QTH. In early July my Macbook decided to generate bizarre errors when I tried to upgrade it, forcing me to eventually reimage the entire machine; my telephone line went dead; my bathroom light switch became intermittent; my central air conditioning started spitting out 83 degree air; and my building's loaner portable air conditioner started spitting out 81 degree air.

Under the circumstances I have been somewhat wary about turning on any of my ham equipment, lest I be greeted with a puff of smoke and another bill. I have been considering putting together a DXpedition to the Bermuda Triangle on the theory that things might mysteriously start working.

Every ham has a toolbox of repair strategies and I got to use some of my favorites this month: cursing, shelling out money, just waiting and hoping things will get better, and actually getting out some tools and fixing the thing. I'm grateful to my bathroom light switch for enabling me to add that last one.

In the Calendar this month you'll see there are plenty of things to do coming up! Stay cool and 73.

In this Issue of The SPARC

- Contest College
- WA1GXC on Propagation
- Tech in a Day at Boxboro



No BARC Meetings in the Summer

As usual, there will be no BARC meetings in August. The next Business Meeting will be on Thursday, September 6 and the next General Meeting will be on Thursday, September 20. Both meetings will be at 7:30 p.m. at Brookline Police Headquarters in Brookline.

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

Simplex: 147.420

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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>.

20 Years Ago in *The SPARC* – Joe Chapman, NV1W

In the August, 1998, issue of *The SPARC*, Field Day results were published: 514 QSOs (22 digital, 191 CW, 301 phone) and 2454 total points — Public service opportunities included the Jimmy Fund Marathon Walk and a WGBH FunFest — The ARRL proposed a simplified license structure *[that seems to have gone nowhere]* — The Amateur Radio News Service judged *The SPARC* “excellent” — A company installing remote-reading water meters for Boston Water and Sewer asked for some help tracking down interference on 452.8875 MHz — *And elsewhere, the first human RFID implant was tested in the UK.*

Contest College at SEMARA – Andy Stewart, KB1OIQ

The South Eastern Massachusetts Amateur Radio Association (SEMARA) is hosting a presentation entitled: Contest College @ SEMARA on Sunday, September 9, 2018 starting at noon or so.

Location: 54 Donald Street, S. Dartmouth, MA 02748 Club phone number for messages: 508-997-7070

This hands-on presentation will deal with:

- different styles of contesting,
- how to achieve a respectable score with 100 W,
- a mixture of modes and styles of operating specific to that mode during a contest,
- antennas that can be home-brewed for contests.

There will also be on-air operation, listening and/or making contacts during the Worked All Europe SSB contest.

We need an approximate head count, so some lunch time pizza can be ordered. Kindly email Don if you are interested and plan on attending. Don, wa1bxy [at] hotmail [dot] com .

(Lousy) Propagation – Harris Pitnof, WA1GXC

If you look in a big dictionary, propagation will be defined in terms of plants making whoopee, or animals ensuring the future of their species. For our purposes, Propagation is the term used by physicists to describe the paths and movement of wave phenomena; in our Ham world, we're essentially asking, “How're conditions today?” — How efficiently are the radio waves getting from our station to/from the intended receiver on the far end?

Hams who have been around a bunch of years will tell you that, right now, HF (“shortwave”) conditions are not so great. We're at the bottom of the approx. 11½-year solar activity cycle, during which the



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reflectivity of the upper reaches of the ionosphere (F2 layer) is often sub-optimum. But that doesn't mean to quit trying or that HF hamming is a waste of time. Just last week, I heard a New Zealand station (ZL) at 2000Z (4 PM EDT) coming in not loud but copyable with no effort on 30 meters. There's a VK (Australia) station that's on several days a week on 30M (10.1MHz) RST 569. Although signals tend to not boom in during these trying times, there's plenty of DX to be had from late afternoon to late night. Those ZL/VK stations—that's the opposite side of the world, last time I checked. So there's plenty of fun to be had—cheer up and don't give up. And you can contact some part of the entire lower 48 states on HF any time of day by listening and selecting the appropriate HF band. Having said that, some days will be off-days—bad conditions all 'round. So just like you can't go fishing or play tennis or golf or enjoy the fresh air reading a book outdoors, at will, every day, so it is with HF. Big deal. Better times will come along and in the meantime you can sharpen your operating skills with weaker-than-desired signals, and really learn to listen and get a sense of what's on the air, what's not working, and what's possible.

By the way, those propagation forecast blocks on QRZ.com and other websites—oftentimes zero correlation with what's really going on at the moment. They're trying predictive science when the underlying phenomena are understood, really understood, by no one. So turn on your radios and catch the microvolts.

If it were easy, anybody could do it. Is that what you want?

Tech in a Day – Bill Poulin, WZ1L

The Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association, CAARA, will be holding a one day study course for those interested in earning the FCC Technician class amateur radio license. This course will be held at the ARRL Boxboro Convention at the Boxboro Regency Hotel in Boxboro, MA on Saturday, September 8, 2018.

Registration begins at 8 a.m., class starts at 8:30 a.m. and goes until 4:30 p.m. Exams will begin at the end of class.

There is a \$20.00 fee for course materials, snacks and the FCC Test Fee. You must sign up beforehand by e-mailing CAARA at technaday@caara.net.

Volunteers Needed for Boxboro – Andy Stewart, KB1OIQ

The 2018 Boxborough convention is falling short of its volunteer needs this year. Volunteers are needed to help in the parking lots, at the ticketing tables, and to assist forum speakers.

If you donate two hours of your time, you will be given a voucher that can be exchanged for a free lunch.

See: <http://boxboro.org/volunteer> <http://boxboro.org/volunteer> to sign up!

BARC Meeting Calendar for 2018

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

General Meetings

| | | | |
|--------------|------|-----|---------|
| September 20 | 2018 | Thu | 7:30 pm |
| October 18 | 2018 | Thu | 7:30 pm |
| November 15 | 2018 | Thu | 7:30 pm |

Business Meetings

| | | | |
|-------------|------|-----|---------|
| September 6 | 2018 | Thu | 7:30 pm |
|-------------|------|-----|---------|

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December 6 2018 Thu 7:30 pm

VE Sessions

July 9 2018 Mon 7:30 pm

October 8 2018 Mon 7:30 pm

Quarterly Business Meetings – Bob Salow, WA1DA

As the Bylaws require, BARC has 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 **September 6, 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.

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 Secretary Joe Chapman, NV1W.

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

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| 18–19 August | ARRL 10 GHz & Up Contest — Round 1 |
| 18–19 August | North American QSO Party, SSB |
| 19 August | Flea at MIT, Cambridge |
| 19 August | ARRL Rookie Roundup, RTTY |
| 25–26 August | W/VE Islands QSO Party |
| 6 September | BARC Business Meeting, Brookline Police Headquarters, Brookline, 7:30 p.m. |
| 7–9 September | ARRL New England Division Convention, Boxboro, MA |
| 8 September | Deadline for articles for the September SPARC |

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| 8 September | Tech in a Day at Boxboro (see article) |
| 8–9 September | WAE DX Contest, SSB |
| 9 September | North American Sprint, CW |
| 9 September | Contest College at SEMARA (see article) |
| 15–16 September | ARRL 10 GHz & Up Contest — Round 2 |
| 15–16 September | New Hampshire QSO Party |
| 16 September | Flea at MIT, Cambridge |
| 16 September | North American Sprint, RTTY |
| 20 September | BARC General Meeting, Brookline Police Headquarters, Brookline, 7:30 p.m. |
| 22–23 September | Maine QSO Party |
| 29–30 September | ARRL EME — 2.3 GHz & Up |
| 29–30 September | CQ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY |

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.

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 September issue must be received by September 8.

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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, October 8, 2018.** 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:

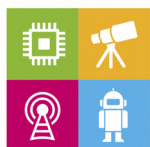
- Your current license and a photocopy for the ARRL, if you are upgrading
- Any CSEs you are claiming, and a photocopy of them
- Valid picture ID or two valid non-picture IDs
- A pen and a calculator (if you want to)
- **\$15.00** (good for all the tests you take at that session, except for retests)

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.



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
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Newsletter Editor: 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 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 Newslines) | 145.470 (PL 136.5) |
| Sun 9 pm | CAARAnet | 145.130 (PL 107.2) |



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