

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century Newsletter of the Boston Amateur Radio Club Serving Hams in the Greater Boston Area December 2018 - VOLUME 30, NUMBER 12 www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



## Message from the Editor – Joe Chapman, NV1W



There's a great moment at the beginning of Bill Bryson's A Walk in the Woods where he goes shopping for a backpack and is taken aback when he's asked what he wants for a rain cover. "A RAIN COVER?" he sputters. "You mean it didn't occur to them that people might take their backpacks out in the rain?"

I find something similar happens with ham equipment, There's a base price that almost nobody pays, and then there are alternate filters, internal antenna tuners, transverters, wobbulators, and power supplies. (I can hear Bryson sputtering, "What, some hams use something other than ELECTRICITY?") I recently sent some advice on extras for one of the new Kenwood HTs to a

new ham and made his expensive handheld even more pricey. Even Harry, WA1GXC, to whom "solid state" is the ice phase of water, has to lay in a supply of replacement tubes for his rigs.

I suppose that for those of us who are upgrading ourselves to porcelain teeth and titanium knees, even modifications that require diving into our rigs with a solder sucker can be regarded as a simple and inexpensive procedure. I also suspect that burping out blue smoke would be even more alarming than seeing it wafting up from a circuit.

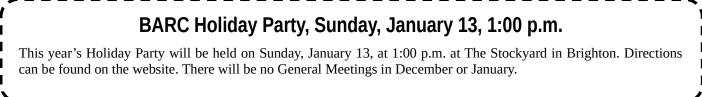
In the news, the club had a successful SKYWARN Recognition Day at the Great Blue Hill Observatory on December 1<sup>st</sup> and the next event will be the Holiday Party in January. There will be no General Meetings until March, and there's currently some uncertainty surrounding the choice of venues for meetings in the early Spring when Brookline Police HQ is unavailable. Your patience is appreciated and thanks to Linda, NA11, for once again handling the details of the meeting schedule.

Happy operating and 73!

# In this Issue of The SPARC

- Shopping for Surplus in the Old Days
- Bill Collins, W1PL (SK)
- Snazzing up your FT-817
- Meeting schedule for 2019





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

Simplex: 147.420

## 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: <u>http://groups.yahoo.com/bostonARC</u>.

## Harry Potter and the B-3 Intervalometer – Harris Pitnof, WA1GXC

What's an intervalometer? Is that like a Flux Capacitor driving the cool DeLorean automobile in "Back to the Future"? Somewhat.

We're always pining for the Good Old Days, which when we lived within them didn't seem so good at the time. However, there really were good times for electronics experimenters back in the day. In the 1960's, my formative years, every big city including Boston typically had at least 3 military surplus electronics suppliers ("Stores" would be too flattering a description—covered landfill—better). And 3 or more industrial component suppliers where you could walk in, give a guy at the counter (always 'guy') a request for a vacuum tube 6K8, a 20K potentiometer (IRC or Clarostat) and a 40/40 microFarad at 450V DC electrolytic capacitor in a can. He'd disappear for 5 minutes, come back, and you'd throw the components in a tiny paper bag and then go get back on the MTA trolley. (Yes, it was MTA).

We had Eli Heffron & Sons in North Cambridge (the good buys like Lambda 500 Volt power supplies were sitting out in the parking lot, under rain and snow). Electro-Craft on Dorchester Avenue (You kinda needed a personal "in"—Mr. Greenberg sold primarily to universities and professionals). And my favorite, and most physically remote, John Meshna on the Nahant peninsula of Lynn. It was a 2½ hour subway and bus ride/hike each way. I didn't have a driver's license at the time, so all purchases were limited to components and Army Air Force gear which was light and compact, most stuff 15 pounds or less. You walked into this creaky wooden-floored place with World War II blackwrinkle finish radios stacked from floor to ceiling. Boxes of musty, stained cartons with vacuum tubes with Signal Corps and Navy acceptance stamps. And the smell—if you've never hung out in close spaces with military gear, it's an aroma like no other. The underlying olfactory note is MFP—"Moisture-Fungi-Proofing"—a yellowish glop that was sprayed into every crack and crevice to prevent corrosion. It's not at all objectionable—just not replicated anywhere else on the face of the earth.

Boston had at least 4 major walk-in component warehouses— Cramer in Needham, Gerber in Dorchester at Egleston Square, DeMambro on Commonwealth Ave. and, if you can believe it, Radio Shack had a real industrial division for professionals out back at its B.U. area store on St. Mary's Street. Walk up two flights to more musty old wooden floors and fill your bag after 8 bucks. Several smaller suppliers were scattered here-and-there primarily for radio/TV service businesses. That's when you could actually fix stuff. Almost every drug store had a podiumsized tube tester and a limited supply of common vacuum tubes. Almost every consumer kitchen radio was what was called the "All-American Five"—12BA6 RF amplifier, 12BE6 Mixer, 12AV6 detector/amplifier, 50C5 Audio Amp., 35W4 half-wave



rectifier. Add up the filament voltages, and you get somewhere around 120V—They were all wired in series, and no power transformer. The case was plastic. If you poked at the metal chassis, you stood a great chance of fatal electrocution because the high voltage was derived from the power line. An essential service tool was a "cheater" cord to bypass the interlock safety receptacle while you worked on it with your left hand tucked in your back pocket to

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prevent an electrical path across your heart. Ah, those were the days! And the Intervalometer? That was 3 bucks at Meshna. It was a servo-motor driven stepping switch control panel used by B-17 and B-24 bombardiers to sequence bomb drops over Germany at half-second intervals. Always wanted one. Couldn't spare the money.

## Bill Collins, W1PL (SK) - Joe Chapman, NV1W



Sadly, we have learned of the sudden death of Bill Collins at the age of 64 on November 28. Bill was a long-time member of the Boston Amateur Radio Club as well as the Harvard College Wireless Club, W1AF, where he was station manager and a mentor to many. He was a member of Linda Blair's W5YI exam team, and our host when we conducted occasional VE sessions at Harvard.

Bill's work schedule prevented him from attending BARC meetings, but he had been a regular at Field Day for the past few years when BARC and the Wireless Club held joint Field Day operations in Hingham. Bill stayed up all night and was a major contributor to the QSO count.

Bill grew up in upstate New York, where he first became interested in radio as a teenage shortwave listener. He received an AAS degree in Electrical Technology

from Schenectady County Community College and has most recently worked as an electronics technician in the Chemistry Department at Harvard.

He earned his Technician, General, and Amateur Extra licenses in 2009. His operating awards included ARRL DXCC (Mixed, Phone, Digital, 20M, 15M, 10M), WAS (Basic, Phone, Digital. RTTY), CQ WPX-Mixed (+450 endorsement) (+Continent endorsement NA, EU), and CQ WPX-Digital.

Both the Harvard and Boston clubs have lost a good friend, and many will miss Bill on the airwaves.

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

In the December, 1998, issue of *The SPARC*, Mike N1IST reported that Eil Heffron has donated some surplus 70cm gear to the club — HF operators were requested for the SATERN Net — BARC was looking for a Field Day coordinator and officers — Jim Hatherly, WA1TBY, shared a story about crazy propagation — Bill Sullivan, N1TDF mused on hams' use of the royal "we" — The club had 172 members — *And elsewhere, Hugo Chávez was first elected President of Venezuela*.

## Deck the Yaesu FT-817 with Boughs of Holly – Joe Chapman, NV1W

Back in the days before the Elecraft KX line came into being, the Yaesu FT-817 was my go-to QRP and portable rig. It's now the basis of my emergency go-bag, and I also use it for satellite ops because it's easy to interface with MacDoppler.

Over the years I've loaded it up with some mods and accessories that I think give you a lot of bang for the buck.. Many of these are from SOTABEAMS in the UK, kind of an REI of QRP/portable radio. Many of these also apply to the later 818ND, but I don't have one myself.

I've always considered a CW filter a must for the 817, and I installed the internal 500 Hz electromechanical Collins filter when I bought the rig. You can now get less expensive combination internal SSB/CW filters for it; I haven't tried any of these but I've never noticed the need for better filtering for SSB the way I did with CW. You could also use an external audio filter like the NEScaf, once again available as a kit from the New England QRP Club.

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Sadly, Palm Radio in Germany has closed down, another instance of Herblock's Law ("If it's good, they'll stop making it.") You can no longer get their small CW paddles or the Peg Legs for the 817. On the off chance that someone else starts making them, Peg Legs were little fold-down legs that propped the rig up at a convenient angle for operating. They mounted underneath the things you thread the carrying strap through on the sides of the rig, and had small plastic end caps that you were guaranteed to lose at some point. When that happened to me I dipped the ends of mine in some of that liquid rubber goop you use for dipping tool handles and the like.

If you're not afraid to get out the soldering iron, SOTABEAMS sells a speaker with a mylar cone to replace the speaker the 817 comes with. There's a noticeable improvement in audio quality, and the mylar is better at fending off rain than the paper cone on the original speaker. It's not a difficult mod at all; the only tricky operation is prying off a rubber gasket from the old speaker.

SOTABEAMS also has a nifty 3D-printed PowerPole adapter that bolts onto the rig with the ground screw. One less adapter cord to fuss with.

Although I usually operate CW, voice is obviously necessary for a go-kit. SOTABEAMS has a small speech compressor that plugs into the microphone cord. It's about the size of a pack of Starbursts but is less likely to cause tooth decay. It comes in kit or pre-assembled forms.

In many or most situations you'll need an antenna tuner for the 817, and the tuning procedure for SSB is a pain. LDG does make a tuner specifically for the rig that gives you one-button tuning. The LDG tuner is a little on the large side, so I use an Elecraft T1, which is the size of a pack of cigarettes. SOTABEAMS also sells a clever Click2Tune dongle developed by Huk, G4HUK. To tune, you click the PTT button on the microphone like a Morse code 'A' (didah) and it magically sends out a carrier (either AM or packet).

Also in my go-bag (a "Tactical Transceiver Radio Bag" from AMP-3): a 12V, 6 Ah LFP battery from Bioenno Power, a Palm Radio micro paddle (alas, no longer available), a Nifty mini-manual for the 817, a PackTenna long wire with balun, assorted adapters. some short coax cables, and hanks of parachute cord.

Mentioned in this article: From Universal Radio (<u>https://www.universal-radio.com</u>) and many others: Collins 500 Hz CW filter, \$190. From SOTABEAMS (<u>https://www.sotabeams.co.uk</u>): FT-817 SSB/CW filter module, \$48; replacement speaker, \$11; PowerPole adapter, \$24; Speech compressor, \$43 (kit), \$51; Click2Tune dongle, \$24. From the New England QRP Club (<u>http://www.newenglandqrp.org</u>): NEScaf audio filter, \$35 (kit only). From Elecraft (<u>https://elecraft.com</u>): T1 antenna tuner, \$140 (kit), \$160. From AMP-3 (<u>https://www.amp-3.net</u>): Tactical Transceiver Radio Bag, \$182, From Bioenno Power (<u>https://www.bioennopower.com</u>): 12V 6Ah LFP battery, \$80. From Nifty Accessories (<u>https://www.niftyaccessories.com</u>): Yaesu 817ND and 818ND Mini-Manual, \$17. From PackTenna (<u>http://packtenna.com</u>): PackTenna Mini 9:1 random wire antenna, \$90.

## **New Members** – Joe Chapman, NV1W

Welcome to Jim Green, KC1CNQ, of Canton. Jim is the club's 900<sup>th</sup> member, and when he joined us on the Hill for SKYWARN Recognition Day he was able to meet member #1, Bob, WA1IDA.

## **BARC Meeting Calendar for 2019**

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

#### **General Meetings (\* Business/General Meetings)**

March 21*	2019	Thu	7:30 pm (location to be confirmed)
April 18	2019	Thu	7:30 pm (location to be confirmed)
May 15	2019	Wed	7:30 pm (note change from 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday)

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June 20* September 19* October 17 November 21*	2019 2019 2019 2019 2019	Thu Thu Thu Thu	7:30 pm — <i>Elections</i> 7:30 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm
<b>VE Sessions</b> January 8 April 8 July 8 October 14	2019 2019 2019 2019 2019	Tue Mon Mon Mon	7:30 pm ( <i>note change from 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday</i> ) 7:30 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm

## 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 **March 21, 2019** at a location that is still to be confirmed. 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.

## **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

16 December	ARRL Rookie Roundup, CW
1 January	ARRL Straight Key Night

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5 January	Deadline for articles for the January SPARC
5 January	ARRL Kids Day
5–6 January	ARRL RTTY Roundup
8 January	BARC VE Session, Brookline Police Headquarters, Brookline, 7:30 pm ▲
12–13 January	North American QSO Party, CW
13 January	BARC Holiday Party, The Stockyard, Brighton, 1:00 pm
19 January	Whitman Amateur Radio Club Winter Fest, Whitman
19–20 January	North American QSO Party, SSB
19–21 January	ARRL January VHF Contest
26–27 January	Winter Field Day
31 January	End of the discount for 2019 membership renewals

#### ▲ 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:

$1 \text{ col} \times 2 \text{ in.}$ (business card)	\$15 per issue
1 col $\times$ 2 in. (business card)	\$75 per 6 consecutive months
1 col $\times$ 2 in. (business card)	\$125 per 12 consecutive months
$1 \text{ col} \times 4 \text{ in.}$ (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, howtos, 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 <u>nv1w@arrl.net</u>. Articles for the January issue must be received by January 5.

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, <u>nv1w@arrl.net</u>.

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# **BARC Volunteer Exam Sessions**

The Boston Amateur Radio Club offers license exams quarterly. **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 CSCEs 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, <u>n1icn@arrl.net</u>, or Linda Blair, NA1I, <u>na1i@arrl.net</u>.



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 <u>www.NESciTech.org</u> or <u>www.NE1AR.org</u>.





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## BARC Officers and Staff

President: (position vacant)

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

Secretary: Joe Chapman, NV1W 617.267.6349; <u>nv1w@arrl.net</u>

Treasurer: Jim Clogher, N1ICN, 781.901.3545; <u>n1icn@arrl.net</u>

Volunteer Exams: Jim Clogher, N1ICN, <u>n1icn@arrl.net</u> Linda Blair, NA1I, <u>na1i@arrl.net</u>

Public Service Coordinator: Brett Smith, AB1RL 859.466.5915; <u>ab1rl@arrl.net</u>

Public Information Officer: Geri Duff, KB1ISG 781.749.7664; <u>geriduff52@juno.com</u>

Membership Services: Linda Blair, NA1I 617.500.4406; <u>na1i@arrl.net</u>

Newsletter Editor: Joe Chapman, NV1W 617.267.6349; <u>nv1w@arrl.net</u>

**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 Newsline)	145.470 (PL 136.5)	
Sun 9 pm	CAARAnet	145.130 (PL 107.2)	

	BOSTON MEM Members: if there are no c information from last year only your name and call si	r, check here and fill in		<b>10 C</b> 2019 1 New 🗆 Rer	
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Advanced Extra	Not a member	distribution:		email to link to	ll be notified monthly by a web page where the
Former ham	EMCOMM?			earliest posting	will be available.
Not yet a ham	1 2 3	OMIT ADDRESS			
Are you an ARRL certified	Have you taken	<b>–</b>			renew your membership p://barc.org/join/ for details.
VE?	ICS-700?	OMIT EVENING P	HONE	•	
YES NO	YES NO		-		
Mei	mbership Category			ear <b>2019</b> if paid between 18 to 31 July 19	Half year <b>2019</b> if paid between 1 Aug 19 to 31 Oct 19
REGULAR MEMB	<b>BER:</b> Not otherwise qual	ified below	ı \$25	5.00	\$12.50
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Boston Amateur Radio Club





# Here's why you must not pass this up:

- 1. Past experience has shown that you are guaranteed to have a good time.
- 2. You will be among the members and friends of the Boston Amateur Radio Club.
- 3. The BARC gourmet and gluttony departments have praised it far and wide.
- 4. Good food at a reasonable price.
- 5. You get to vote on the BARC "Ham of the Year" and watch the winner squirm.
- 6. It's for you, your family and your friends (if any).

# Here's what's happening:

## Where:

The Stockyard

135 Market St. Brighton MA 02135

Brighton MA 0213

Parking in the restaurant lot Street parking on Guest St & Life St

## When:

Sunday, 13 January 2019 1:00 pm *(The January club meeting is suspended.)* 

**(T)** buses: #86 and #84 stop nearby

Talk in on 145.230, PL 88.5

# Food ?? Of course !!

We will be ordering off the regular menu so there's no need to choose now. You will be responsible for your own drinks.

© BARC

# Cost ?? We knew you'd ask !!

It's a bargain at \$25.00 per person (tax and gratuity included). Reserve seats for yourself, your family, and your friends by sending your check, *payable to BARC*, with the coupon below, and get it in the mail quickly.

Nominate your choice for the 2018 BARC Ham of the Year on the other coupon below.

Send <i>both</i> coupons below to:	Boston Amateur Radio Cl P.O. Box 15585 Boston MA 02215	ub Send before 31 December 2018 Send before 31 December 2018 Send before 31 December 2018
A party? Of course we'll be there We will be ordering off the regular is <i>Cash Bar - You will be response</i>	nenu; no need to choose now.	<pre>2018 BARC Ham of the Year II I nominate: Because:</pre>
Name Email	Call Sign	          