



The SPARC

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century

Newsletter of the Boston Amateur Radio Club

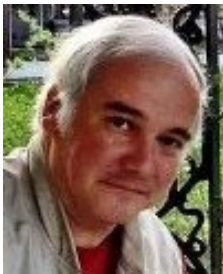
Serving Hams in the Greater Boston Area

April 2020 - VOLUME 32, NUMBER 4

www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



Message from the Editor – Joe Chapman, NV1W



Well, this month's events calendar didn't take a long time to put together. With Dayton, other conventions, and hamfests on hold in most places, there isn't much to do but hang out in the shack. Even special event stations have vanished due to the unavailability of locales. For those who do contesting, there are still some things to do; a glance at the Contest Corral in QST reveals plenty of odd contests. I was going to make up a ridiculous April 1 contest to promote in this issue of the SPARC, but I think there already is a 160 meter left foot CW contest.

Speaking of contests, the New England QSO Party is coming up at the beginning of May, on the same day as the 7th Call Area, Indiana, and Delaware QSO Parties. You can submit one log for all four contests, a rare occurrence of something not being a pain in the neck. I just hope I give a few people Suffolk County; last year I couldn't complete a QSO with Braintree.

Aside from contests, the HF bands still have activity, even if the propagation isn't great. Now might be a good time to give one of the WSJT modes a try.

73, good radio, and good DX!

In this Issue of The SPARC

- Hamming distance... social, that is
- 2020 Meeting Calendar
- Member news
- Upcoming events and non-events



BARC General Meeting, Thursday, May 21, 7:30 p.m.

The April General Meeting has been canceled. The next BARC General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 21 at 7:30 p.m. at Brookline Police Headquarters in Brookline; stay tuned for updates.

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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>.

Call Sign Tattoos in New Hampshire – Emilio Tetrode, AP1RIL

Ham Radio Outlet and Droichead's Artistic Body Art in Nashua have announced a special offer for the month of April. With any \$100 HRO purchase of coax, dummy loads, or wintergreen Altoids, amateurs will receive a certificate good for a complimentary call sign tattoo in the font of their choice.

New England QSO Party is May 2 and 3 – Tom Frenaye, K1KI

The NEQP is a great time to check out antenna systems and offers a moderately paced opportunity to work new states and countries. You'll find a wide variety of participants, from newcomers to experienced contesters, all interested in making contacts with New England stations.

We're working to make sure that all of the New England counties are active again this year and would appreciate your help. Get on for at least an hour or two and join in on the fun. Please let me know if you can put in any time at all so we can work on activity from the rarest counties. **Will you be QRV? Let us know which county you'll be on from with a message to info@neqp.org.**

Oh yes, the NEQP is also **lots** of fun when mobile. Every time you cross a county line the action starts over again. It's amazing what a 100w radio and mobile whip can do.

The QSO Party is 20 hours long overall, in two sections with a civilized break for sleep Saturday night. It goes from 4pm Saturday until 1am Sunday, then 9am Sunday until 8pm Sunday. Operate on CW, SSB and digital modes on 80-40-20-15-10 meters. For each QSO you'll give your callsign, a signal report and your county/state. Top scorers can earn a plaque and everyone who makes 25 QSOs and sends in a log will get a certificate.

The full NEQP rules are here: <http://www.neqp.org/rules.html>.

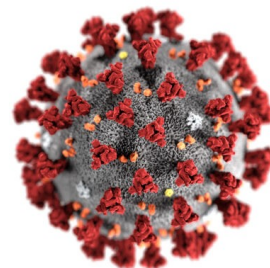
The 2019 results are posted (and the results since 2002 are also available) at <http://www.neqp.org/results.html>.

It's just a few weeks until the 2020 NEQP. Please make some QSOs even if you don't want to send in a log.

Hamming in the Age of COVID – Doc Kinne, KE1ML, ORS

We're certainly in a different age than we were in when I last wrote you. We can hope that this age doesn't last too long, but it has already greatly affected us, not least our hamming.

There are, of course, the bad things that the COVID-19 pandemic has done—canceling virtually everything from our own meetings to the United State Amateur Radio Direction Finding Championships that were scheduled to be held near Boston in June. Dayton, of course, has been canceled. At this point Skywarn training for the year has also been canceled. The Eastern MA web page (<http://ema.arrl.org>) currently has a running feed on what the status is of meetings and events in our Section. If you're



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planning on going anywhere, it is certainly worth a read, but *always*, at this point, check with the event itself to make sure of its status before you head out.

Virtually all DXpeditions have been canceled, largely due to the extended quarantine most countries have instituted for incoming travelers. It's difficult to activate a certain country or location if it's going to take an additional two weeks to get there, even if you can get there, now, in the first place.

Contests have been affected as well, both good and bad. Some of our contests are events where we get together, physically, and operate multi-op stations. These contests, or at least those parts of the contests, have been adversely affected. On the positive side, for those contests that have significant home activity, such as the ARRL Rookie Roundup, we may be able to look forward to come increased activity.



No matter what happens at this point, Field Day is going to be different. I'm not aware that Field Day has ever been *canceled*, outside of anytime when amateur radio itself has been knocked off the air. At this point the League has acknowledged that FD this year will be different and as amateurs we'll have to adapt. And that's not a bad thing. We figure that there will be an increase in home/emergency (Class E) stations, among other changes.

Non-amateur events near and dear to many of our hearts have also been either canceled or substantially delayed. The Boston Marathon, in this case, has been re-scheduled for September.

COVID has also disrupted component delivery and pipelines. Icom, for example, has had to announce the delay of the upcoming IC-705.

However, there are some good things that this situation has brought about for us. When you get right down to it, Amateur Radio operators are the original social distancers. We were made for this! As a Traffic Handler, I've noticed perhaps a 40% uptick in check-ins to both the Eastern MA 2m Traffic Net as well as the MA/RI Phone Net.

New or expanded on-air nets are also taking place. Pilgrim AWA is active. Framingham ARA has started additional nets and frequencies as well as taking a look at ZOOM for their monthly meetings for the duration of the crisis. The President of the Radio Society of Great Britain has actually gone so far as to officially encourage hams to arrange skeds, both on-air and with video calls or simple phone calls, to make sure that our community keeps track of, and takes care of, our community.

New license exams have taken a nose dive, but they're not dead! The W5YI VEC has actually produced a Technician-class license late last month by a virtual testing session. Interestingly enough, virtual testing services have been legal since 2014 and have extensively used in AK, although there they have had virtual sessions with one proctor in the room. W5YI, now that the initial experiment is done, is looking to expand this. The League seems to be playing catch-up here. We're expecting that a good many people are using this period to study up for their next license—myself among them!—and that we'll end up seeing a surge in new license tests once COVID dies down.



In the end, while hams can have the reputation of being somewhat stodgy at times, really, we're very flexible. COVID is again proving that. I think we'll come out of this tunnel the better for it!

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BARC Meeting Calendar for 2020

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

General Meetings (* Business/General Meetings)

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

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

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 **June 18, 2020** 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.

Member News – Joe Chapman, NV1W

The grace period for 2019 memberships ended at the end of March.

Welcome to Bernie Lynch, KC1MSN, of Milton, and Rich Sacks, N1RYM, of the Back Bay in Boston.

BARC Net Preamble

The control operator for the BARC Net is Joe, W1JJE. 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

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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

19 April	ARRL Rookie Roundup — Phone
2–3 May	New England QSO Party
9 May	Deadline for articles for the May SPARC
30–31 May	CQ WW WPX Contest, CW

▲ Note change from usual date and/or location

Before going to any event over the next few months, please confirm that the event will take place and what the hours are.

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 May issue must be received by May 9.

Thanks to the ever-faithful Doc, KE1ML, for his contributions to this month’s issue.

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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.

BARC Volunteer Exam Sessions

The Boston Amateur Radio Club offers license exams quarterly. **The next exam session will be on July 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 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, n1icn@arrl.net, or Linda Blair, NA1I, na1i@arrl.net.



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

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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 5 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 Newslines)	145.470 (PL 136.5)
Sun 9 pm	CAARAnet	145.130 (PL 107.2)

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