



The SPARC

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century

Newsletter of the Boston Amateur Radio Club

Serving Hams in the Greater Boston Area

December 2020 - VOLUME 32, NUMBER 12

www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



Message from the Editor – Doc Kinne, KE1ML



It's been a busy month, but largely not in a radio sense this time.

As some of you may know, I've been working at the long term Science substitute teacher at the Argenziano School in Somerville this semester. It is the first time I've had to deal with such things as grading, grade books, parents, and parent/teacher conferences. All of these things went well, but it continually surprises me how much time everything takes up.

This month BARC was a model of its members working together. The older, more experienced members wonderfully moved forward on the yearly membership renewal. I also got not one, but two different people submitting articles for this month's newsletter. Nice going everyone!

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a great holiday season, no matter what you celebrate, even if it is just the final end of 2020. Which seems like celebration enough for all of us!

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- Steve Gilbert, K1SG, SK
- Parks On The Air – A Beginning Tutorial
- Don't TX Til You See the Whites of Their Antennas!
- BARC Meeting Calendar & General News



BARC General Meeting, Thursday, December 17, 7:30 pm

BARC will be holding a General Meeting on Thursday, December 17, at 7:30 p.m. on the Zoom teleconferencing platform.

To join the Zoom meeting above go to:

<https://zoom.us/j/95380084800?pwd=STIPQmE3ZnRDd0x5M00rMjB0OGcvZz09>

Meeting ID: 953 8008 4800 Password: BARC

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BARC's Online Discussion Group – Joe Harris, N1QD



BARC has an online forum at Groups.io. The 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: <https://groups.io/g/BostonARC>. You can join, if you're not already there, by sending an email to "BostonARC+subscribe@groups.io."

What Did You Miss at the November 2020 General Meeting? – Doc Kinne, KE1ML

A Meeting of the Boston Amateur Radio Club was held on Thursday, November 17, on the Zoom teleconferencing platform.

Our featured speaker in November was Phil Temples, K9HI, wearing his new hat of New England Division Vice Director. His presentation detailed current happenings at ARRL League Headquarters, some of the things he's working on as the new Vice Director of the Division, and answering question regarding what the League and the Division does for its members.

Steve Gilbert, K1SG, SK – Bob Salow, WA1IDA



Steve was one of those people if you met him once, you never forgot him. He died at age 70 this past November. He was a member of BARC some years ago until he moved out of the area.

I met Steve about 1975 when my teenage son worked for him at the Newton Copy Shop which Steve owned. He was an active ham then, but his calm and friendly personality took the focus off him and made you feel most important. He was most enthusiastic about the 6-meter band, and was an expert in its vagaries. He made a well received presentation to BARC on the subject.

Steve will surely be missed in the ham community and as a

general nice guy.

Parks On the Air – A Beginner's Tutorial – Brendan Baldonado, AC1KI

Parks on the Air is an organization that supports the use of amateur radio in our state and national park system. This is a direct attempt to uphold the charter of providing communications support in times of emergencies. The program supports the radio sport by providing contest-like conditions for hams to practice their skills and equipment in real life outside or mobile operation from a park. POTA establishes a basic set of rules, a standard log format, and a communication platform for amateur radio operators to track, spot and receive awards much like a contest or a sweep might do. The main goal of this non-profit is to give the public an opportunity to discover and interact with the amateur radio services and discover the unique abilities of amateur radio. It also provides a system for amateur radio operations to get out of the shack, explore and use our great State and National Park system. Hams that go into the

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Parks and operate are called Activators. The Hams they contact or contact them are called Hunters.

How do you get started? First, visit parksontheair.com and register with your call sign and information. It's simple, easy, and free! Only seven easy steps and you're registered as a POTA member. Second, read all the documentation on the Help/Getting started page of the website. Then read through all the FAQ. This seems like a lot of reading but it isn't really and it will help avoid confusion later. Next, understand and know the rules. There are generic rules for conduct on their website and social platforms which align with the Ham radio conduct whilst on the air. Be courteous, non-offensive and helpful.

The Rules for a Park Activation:

- All equipment must be inside the boundaries of the park, and on public use land.
- No Land repeater use.
- Minimum of 10 Contacts must be made in 0000z to 2359z day.
- Only the activator needs to send a log to POTA for all parties to gain credit.
- One Log per park; It is possible to be in Two or Three Parks at once which would double or triple the activation credits.



That's it!

What if you're afraid of the outdoors? Is there another way to participate? Sure! Operating Mobile from one's vehicle or RV is totally acceptable, as long as all the equipment used for activation is inside the Park, power source included. Hunters also receive credit and awards for "chasing" Parks from the comfort of their own shack.

There are six official Parks on the Air within the city limits of Boston, with Castle Island being the easiest and largest park in the system. If you include Brookline and Cambridge, the number of parks to be explored and activated rises to eight.

This article has only been a quick introduction of the Parks On The Air program please visit Parksontheair.com as it is the official source of all things POTA. If you wish to start hunting right away POTA.us is the official website to see future and Live Activation Spots.

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Don't TX Til You See the Whites of their Antennas! – *Brendan Baldonado, AC1KI*



There I was, on that tall hill in Charlestown. It was cold and drizzly as I began to drag my equipment up the steps of the hollowed grounds of Breeds Hill. Slowly and methodically I begin to assemble all of the equipment I'd need to prepare for that day's activities.

The park is quiet and still. COVID has closed the Museum and the large obelisk to tourist traffic, but the park remains busy in the late afternoons with the stroller mafia and dog walkers. I had scoped out a spot for my Parks on the Air activation, over in a corner, hopefully far enough from the path to prevent rogue dogs or children from getting too close to the equipment.

As I begin to set up, I keep looking around for a Park Ranger. It's common courtesy to introduce yourself, explain the Parks on the Air program, and provide pamphlets, but there are no Rangers around. As a fastidious over planner and wanna-be Boy Scout, I came prepared. I pulled out my

checklist and made sure nothing has been left behind: table...check, HT...check, coax....check. I continued until all the equipment was accounted for. I'm readyI hope.

I set up my position with the day's armament: a Yaesu 897 and a metal table. I began to secure a tripod and automobile jack stand in their places. I brought over my make-shift antenna - a 10 ft PVC pipe with 25.5 feet of Wireman #532 wound up the pipe. With ten feet hanging back down from the top, it's fed via a Nelson Antennas 9 to 1 Unun. I sheepishly begin to erect it and look around waiting for push back. It's clear I've begun to fortify this hill. I then set up my 2m antenna - a homebrew $\frac{1}{4}$ Ground plane on six feet of PVC inserted into a jack stand. I connect everything up, check the time, organize the table, pull up POTA.us, and get ready to activate.

The clock ticks down. My nerves shake. At 1755Z I power up the radio, and tune the end fed antenna. The tuner clicks and clacks, I'm hoping my license limitations are improved by my advanced, high ground position. 1800z...CLICK! The FT-897 TX light turns Red. "KC1NEF calling CQ POTA, CQ POTA, CQ POTA." Static and silence. I try again. Static, silence. *How long do people sit and just call?*, I think to myself. Thirty minutes goes by. I decide to switch bands. The magic band isn't so magic today,

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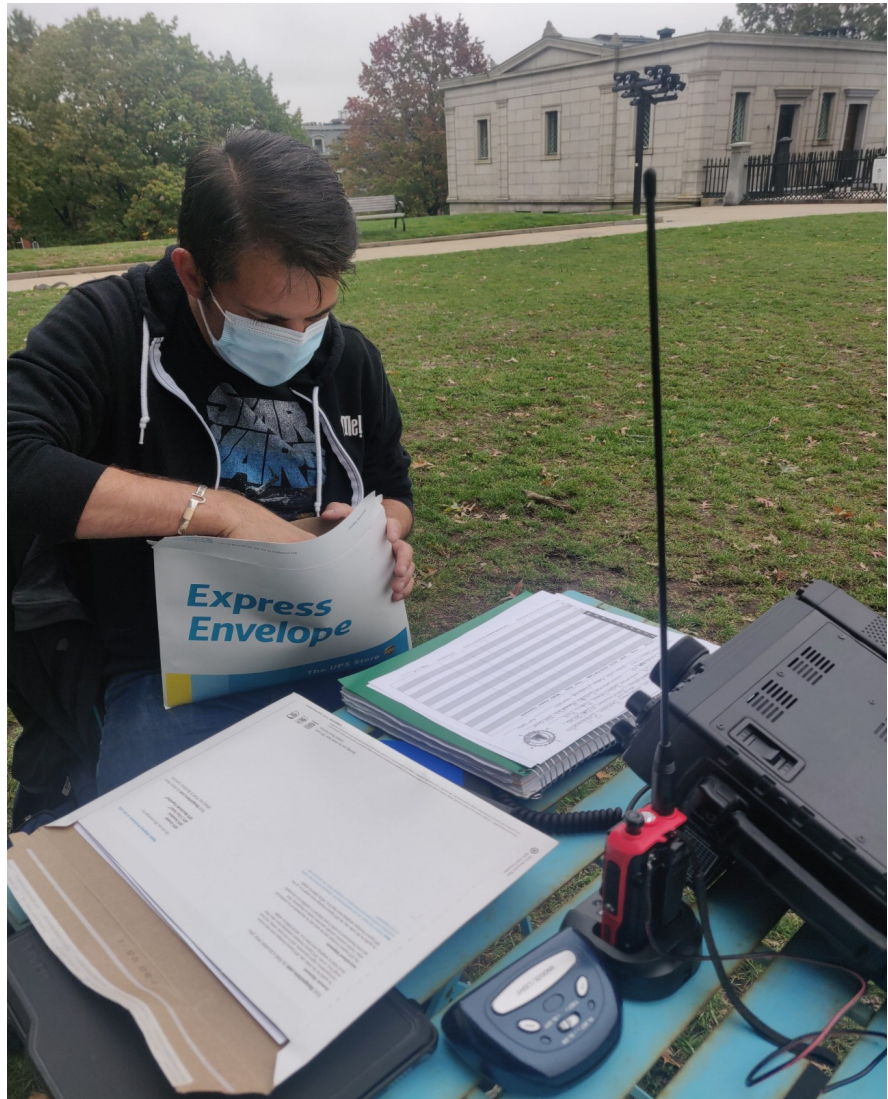
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I go to 2 meters. I can see a large part of the city from where I am so VHF should work. "CQ POTA CQ POTA CQ POTA." A friendly and familiar voice comes back to me. "November Victor One Whisky." It's Joe, my first Elmer, and now my first entry for the Parks on the Air activation. The battle has begun! We chat for a bit, he wishes me well on my endeavor. I am beholden to his guidance and help as the sigh of relief that most hams can relate to comes across me - the equipment is working, at least partly.

2000z. Three hours on the hill now, that sacred ground where over a thousand lost their lives. I have eight contacts out of the ten I need to make the activation official. They are coming in waves, just like that fateful July 17th so long ago. The sun has come out but the air has chilled. Like Colonel Prescott's men I am weary but I am holding steadfast. My "long range" methods are not working. Each call on six and ten meters fall to cosmic static and are lost and absorbed into the atmosphere.



I get two close calls. A ham in Lynn spots me on the POTA website. My signal is weak and barely readable, he writes. The second close call: "Whisky One Juliet Juliet Fox" booms through the speaker and then fades out. I call back. Nothing. Emptiness. Static.

I switch back to two meters. I give 146.52 another try. Most of my confirmed contacts have come from two meters FM, and on the calling frequency. I am so close, I can almost taste it. I check the clock, it's nearly 5 pm local. Hopefully I can catch the 9 to 5 crowd driving home and mobile. I call again. The speaker crackles back, "KC1-..."

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“YES!” I shout! Another one! Then another! My first mini-pile up! The second callsign is another familiar voice. KC1NDB is now number nine in the log. Then it’s KC1HHO, Peter from Quincy, one of my Elmers helping me on the 2 Meter Traffic Net. He becomes number ten! I had done it. I am ecstatic!

I had started this journey fed up with studying for the General and Extra exams. I was sick of reading about ham radio. I wanted to *do* Ham radio. As a Tech with limited HF privileges, I came up with a plan, told everyone of my idea, then got on a tall enough hill to transmit to our fair city. The ham community didn’t let me down. I was encouraged and supported by this great group of people and they showed up for me. I was hoping for more HF contacts. I had not even originally planned to bring a two meter antenna, after all I had my HT. In the end I was so grateful that at the last minute I chose to bring my ¼ wave ground plane. Without it, it’s likely to have been a failure. I made 11 Contacts that Wednesday afternoon, all VHF FM on 2 meters.

I plan to do more POTA activations. After all there are plenty more Parks in the city of Boston.

General Radio News From Around the Net – Doc Kinne, KE1ML

- Tom Walsh, K1TW, declared elected to a two year term as EMA Section Manager starting 1 January 2021.
- The first Transatlantic tests mark their 99th Anniversary
- Solar flux rising, and staying, into the 90s for the rest of the year.

BARC Meeting Calendar for 2020

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

General Meetings (* Business/General Meetings)

December 17	2020	Thu	7:30 pm via Zoom.
January 21	2021	Thu	7:30 pm via Zoom
February 18	2021	Thu	7:30PM via Zoom.

VE Sessions

None scheduled at this time.

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

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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

12-13 December	ARRL 10m Contest
17 December	BARC General Meeting, 7:30PM, Zoom Teleconferencing Platform ▲
1 January	ARRL Straight Key Night
4 January	ARRL Kids Day
4-5 January	ARRL RTTY Roundup
10 January	SPARK Article Deadline
21 January	BARC General Meeting, 7:30PM, Zoom Teleconferencing Platform ▲

▲ 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

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who are appropriate to our readers. For additional information, contact Doc Kinne, KE1ML, at 617.297.2718 or kinnerc@gmail.com.

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, Doc, KE1ML, at kinnerc@gmail.com. Articles for the September issue must be received by September 6.

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 Doc Kinne, KE1ML, kinnerc@gmail.com.

BARC Volunteer Exam Sessions

The Boston Amateur Radio Club usually offers license exams quarterly. **Due to uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the next test session is yet to be announced.** Test sessions are held at Brookline Police Headquarters, 350 Washington St. in the Community Room (across from the information desk).

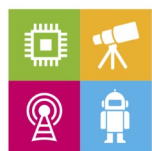
We give all exams (Technician, General, and Extra). *Testing is by reservation only.* Please bring the following with you:

- 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.

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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.



BARC Officers and Staff

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Vice President: Morgan Johnstone, KB1ZFP
857.287.9586; morganjohnstone87@gmail.com

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Newsletter Editor: Doc Kinne, KE1ML
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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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