



The SPARC

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century

***Newsletter of the Boston Amateur Radio Club
Serving Hams in the Greater Boston Area***

March 2021 - VOLUME 33, NUMBER 3
www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



Message from the Editor – Doc Kinne, KE1ML



I feel like I'm stealing from the big boys because everyone's editorial is about this, but...Welcome to Solar Cycle 25.

Both as an astronomer and a ham radio operator, the solar cycle is important to me. One of my jobs for some years was to both monitor sunspots to produce the RA number for NOAA and to support hundreds of observers in doing so.

I was lucky. My first station, N2IKR, came online, wonderfully, at the height of Solar Cycle 22. My first award was my 10-10 International Net award in March of 1989. This was done using a G5RV laid on a flat roof, leaking into the

building's phone system since the phone system had been put in before Alexander Graham Bell had been born.

As most hams know, the Solar Cycle is an approximately 11 year cycle where the sun's magnetic poles actually swap places. At the cycle height a significant number of sunspots appear on the sun and those sunspots cause solar activity that energizes our ionosphere causing radio waves at the higher HF bands to bend back to the earth instead of escaping out into space.

Furthermore, solar "weather" is as fickle as Earth weather. The famous 11 year solar cycle is just an approximation. It has lasted as little as 9 years, or as long as 15 years. The strength can vary greatly as well. The height of one solar cycle was so great that the ionosphere never calmed down during the night, leading to world wide communication on 20m 24 hours a day!

While it may take some time – remember this cycle goes for 11 years – it will only get better as time goes on for the foreseeable future. You can keep an eye on what the sun is doing, and what it means for radio propagation, by looking up the weekly K7RA Solar update on www.arrl.org. I'm also a big fan of the solar forecasts given in the Radio Society of Great Britain's weekly news bulletin from GB2RS which you can find [here](#).

Want a visual representation of what's going on? Take a look at the NASA Solar Observatory for up-to-date images of our big radio weathermaker!

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

Simplex: 147.420

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BARC General Meeting, Thursday, March 18, 7:30 pm

BARC will be holding a General & Business Meeting on Thursday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m. on the Zoom teleconferencing platform. We'll be taking a look at the next few months and how we want to move forward as we potentially begin to open up again.

To join the Zoom meeting above go to:

<https://zoom.us/j/99918732995?pwd=cFhSbmwySUQ2Qi90eGVUNFNhQ0N4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 999 1873 2995 Password: BARC

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 February 2021 General Meeting? – Doc Kinne, KE1ML

A Meeting of the Boston Amateur Radio Club was held on Thursday, February 18, on the Zoom teleconferencing platform.

Morgan, KB1ZFP, presented some upgrades that have been made to the club website, and some discussion was held regarding what might be done in the future.

News From the Club – Doc Kinne, KE1ML

We'd like to congratulate Morgan Johnstone, KB1ZFP who passed his FCC General License Exam Sunday evening, March 7th. His first HF transmission under his new privileges was a check in to N1LAH running the MA/RI Phone Traffic Net. His first contact was with KD8SVT, Dave, in central IL, a station whose General call was so new, he still had to use the /AG identifier.

Send *your news* to the SPARC editor, at KE1ML@arrl.net. We'd love to hear, and share, your accomplishments!

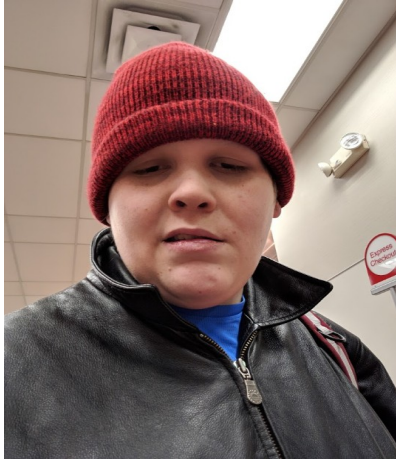
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Ending the First Quarter 2021 — Morgan Johnstone, KB1ZFP



This year is moving right along and it's taking us with it. It doesn't seem like three months since we left 2020 in the rear view mirror but March is here and Spring is upon us! Several things have happened in first quarter of 2021 and I wanted to cover them here.

In February, acting in my role as VP, I applied for the Google Ad Grants program offered through Google for NonProfits. We were approved and now have the ability to run ads on Google using keywords for up to \$10K in cost each month. I believe that with this extra resource now available to us we can see our club grow, and our budget grow as well through donations this program may drive to our website.

On February 25th a few folks created a new committee that will focus on our website and outreach. I'd like to thank Doc Kinne, Brendan Baldonado, and Mark Wylie for spending some time with me and coming up with ideas on how to improve the website and start forming an outreach plan.

In terms of our website, we came up with a few features that we'd like to implement in the coming months: message boards, classifieds, member posts, and a [Discord](#). We would like the website to be a place people look forward to visiting. Our website should be the hub of all our activity.

For outreach, we took a look at how to do things during the pandemic and even after. We talked about increasing our ad presence on the internet using Google Ads and Facebook Ads. We already have the nonprofit grant for Google Ads and I will be investigating what kinds of programs Facebook may have as well. To help us better utilize our social media I've gotten us into a graphic design program called Canva where we are able to create graphical posts for social media. One thing that folks were really excited about was the possibility of holding events on the air. We discussed making area or section wide contests for folks across our area to participate in that BARC would sponsor.

When the world gets back to a non-pandemic footing, we have several ideas about reaching out to our local communities. Bringing ARISS contacts to schools is just the start of many things we can do. I'm really looking forward to the meeting of our committee again in March and if you want to join us just email me at kb1zfp@arrl.net and let me know!

I'm really happy with how things are coming along these days! With everything I've mentioned here, and the activity we've been seeing in our meetings, and on the bands, I'm really looking forward to what's in store for the amateur radio community.

Stay safe and 73 from Morgan, KB1ZFP.

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A (Very) Cold Walk in the Park – Gregory Kenley, KC1NRJ

A POTA Elmer Day with Brendan Baldonado, NW1S, at Castle Island Boston.

No that's not Banksy with a Yaesu FT-897D. After venting my frustration about getting some decent signals from Antennas at condos in Richmond, VA and North End Boston, Brendan offered to show me the Art of POTA at Castle Island in Boston.

Partly cloudy and a promise of 60+ degrees at peak turned out to be a constant wind of at least 30-35 mph with a real feel that had to be in the 30s. The park was packed with other Bostonians seeking the mythical nice day but we found a nice spot up high to put up the longwire with a Nelson Antennas portable antenna matchbox. I had been eyeing either an end feed from MyAntennas.com or a Nelson Antennas Matchbox for some time.

It was great to see Brendan run the longwire up with a 24 foot B"n"M "Black Widow" fiberglass extension rod. We worked 20 meters first and things were progressing well. We got contacts from Italy, Florida, Idaho etc. As Brendan filled out the log, I looked up the call signs with the QRZ android app to quickly identify more details about the contact. It was evident why some contacts came in loud and clear (5/9) from veterans showing off their 50 foot towers on the QRZ page. A new \$30 LiFePO4 6Amp battery from Amazon helped power the Yaesu. The hands-on exposure to the contents of a POTA "go bag" (in Brendan's case it was a "go box," seen above) was educational. However, what I ended up coveting the most was his solid Patio umbrella stand that he had found in a dumpster.



This heavyweight stand was a perfect anchor for the 24 foot fiberglass extension pole holding up the Wireman longwire antenna. The winds were a constant 30-35 mph all day. Tripods would not have withstood the heavy wind but the fiberglass pole bent without moving a bit. I immediately bypassed DX Engineering and HRO and found these at both Ocean State Job Lot and Lowe's/Home Depot stores. I'm always looking at improving the POTA/SOTA go bag. 40 meters proved hard to tune given the longwire and coax lengths brought for this trip, but contacts resumed on 15 and 17 meters.

Without a backyard anymore to try out alternative antennas, life in HOA restricted Condo environments have forced me to

love the Magnetic Loop and other compromise antenna solutions. I've had OK success from the 3rd floor location in the North End of Boston, but Richmond's location turned out to be an even greater antenna challenge. One side is full of power lines, and the other side is a brick blocking courtyard. Here my receive only W6LVP ekes out some FT8 signals from a 2nd floor location.

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What would have made the day more of a learning experience would be if I had been able to get my POTA kit ready by selecting a Transmit/Receive Mag Loop, and get my Xiego G90 out of the box (yet another manual to read and YouTube immersion) to try to make similar band contacts in parallel. We could have compared notes during the day. A BARC POTA day at Castle Island with 3-4-5 setups on the hill overlooking the bay would allow us to run in parallel, stop for a snack and compare notes and each other's setups. You can learn only so much from the manuals and YouTube videos.

EMA's National Traffic System Expands – Doc Kinne, KE1ML

One of the first things I remember doing when I joined BARC was going through a good bit of the old SPARCs which were (and are!) available online on the website. One of the things I noticed over the last 10 or so years was the slow but definite degradation of the Traffic Nets in EMA. A few would disappear. Some would condense in both size and the times of the day they were on the air. To be fair, this wasn't an EMA-only issue. I learned that my first traffic net, the Oneida County Traffic and Emergency Net, where I made my very first transmission, had gone from two times a day to one time a day.



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This why it thrilled me to no end to have to edit the Greater Boston Net Directory at the bottom of our newsletter. The MA/RI Phone Net net has *expanded* to Monday-Saturday at 17:00ET, still on 3978kHz.

And that's not all! Literally just as we went to press, Marcia Forde, KW1U, our Section Traffic Manager, announced a completely *new* traffic net – MARISN, the Massachusetts Rhode Island Slow Net. MARISN is a revived slow speed CW traffic net starting on 22 March. The net will meet on Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday at 20:30 ET on 3598 kHz. Rob Zarges, K2MZ is stepping up as Net Manager.

While the MA/RI Phone Net has expanded their times, the last year has seen other expansions of sorts to EMA traffic nets. The Heavy Hitters Traffic net, for example, continues to add repeaters that radio operators can use to check into the net from all over the state, and farther!

The best of congratulations to the new and expanded nets of the EMA NTS!

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

- Virtual SKYWARN Training Sessions to be held in April and May.
- ISS Amateur Radio antennas repaired on the space station.
- Israel loses majority of Microwave Spectrum between 1-6GHz and a vast power reduction on 10GHz.

BARC Meeting Calendar for 2021

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

General Meetings (* Business/General Meetings)

March 18	2021	Thu	7:30 pm via Zoom – Business Meeting.
April 15	2021	Thu	7:30 pm via Zoom.
May 20	2021	Thu	7:30 pm via Zoom.
June 17	2021	Thu	7:30 pm via Zoom – Elections.

VE Sessions

None scheduled at this time.

BARC Net Preamble

The control operator for the BARC Net is Joe, W1JF. 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

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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 March	BARC General Meeting, 7:30PM, Zoom Teleconferencing Platform ▲
4 April	SPARC March Article Deadline – Become Famous! Write for The SPARC!
15 April	BARC General Meeting, 7:30PM, Zoom Teleconferencing Platform ▲
18 April	ARRL Rookie Roundup - Phone

▲ 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>.



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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 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 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.

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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

President: *(position vacant)*

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

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617.297.2718; kinnerc@gmail.com

Treasurer: Jim Clogher, N1ICN,
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Public Service Coordinator: Brett Smith, AB1RL
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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
M,T,F,S 8:30PM	Massachusetts Rhode Island Slow Net	3598
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
Mon-Sat 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 Newsline)	145.470 (PL 136.5)
Sun 9 pm	CAARAnet	145.130 (PL 107.2)

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