



The SPARC

Amateur Radio - Communicating Worldwide for A Century

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

May 2021 - VOLUME 33, NUMBER 5

www.barc.org - w1bos@arrl.net



Message from the Editor – Doc Kinne, KE1ML / M7RCK



It seems to be that we're rushing on toward summer at this point. Hopefully that means the season of antennas and station maintenance is upon us!

I know that some of us have been experimenting with antennas, and at least one person was doing the important step of installing a lightning arrester for their antenna system.

This is good since summer also brings us storms, not only in the local area, but all over the country. In the local area, the best thing you can do is to sign up for and keep track of local ARES and weather activity. Remember – I have to start putting it in the calendar – that the ARES on-the-air meetings are at the beginning of the month.

Finally, just so everyone is clear, no, the SPARC has not been taken over by the RSGB or the UK. Honest.

Let's start a great summer, folks!

In this Issue of The SPARC

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BARC General Meeting, Thursday, May 20, 7:30 pm

BARC will be holding a General Meeting on Thursday, May 20, at 7:30 p.m. on the Zoom teleconferencing platform. This will be a general discussion meeting where we expect to be discussing the upcoming elections.

To join the Zoom meeting above go to:

<https://zoom.us/j/99918732995?pwd=cFhSbmwySUQ2QjI90eGVUNFNhQ0N4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 999 1873 2995 Password: BARC

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

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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 April 2021 General Meeting? – Doc Kinne, KE1ML

A Meeting of the Boston Amateur Radio Club was held on Thursday, April 15, on the Zoom teleconferencing platform.

Joe Harris, N1QD, presented a magnificent talk regarding the DMR mode, concentrating on our 70cm W1BOS BARC DMR repeater. We're planning on getting this presentation onto the net for everyone to enjoy!

Becoming a British Amateur – Doc Kinne, M7RCK

Those of you with sharp eyes will note that the callsign in this by-line is...a bit different.



I've always had a particular affinity to Britain. About 390 years ago a 14 year old boy – an indentured servant - landed in Boston. Working off his indenture in Dorchester, Henry Kinne (or Kinney. Spelling was optional in the 1600s) founded a family one of whose branches would slowly crawl through CT and settle in central NYS where they would remain for over 200 years. In the early 21st century, the very last twig on that particular branch of this small tree – Doc -would return to live in the Boston area. This boy, Doc Kinne, would even travel back to Norfolk to walk the same streets and visit the same church his Great⁹ Grandfather had done.

I've also always had an affinity to amateur radio licensing history, both in the United States, and in other countries. I find it fascinating to note the differences between amateur radio licensing, laws, and how their national associations were formed. As an example, the American Radio Relay League was founded to solve the practical matter of moving data quickly from point A to point B. The very first stations the ARRL had were Official Relay Stations. Contrast this to the reason the Radio Society of Great Britain (and organization that is slightly older than the League) was founded – radio research. The Royal Post had a monopoly on message traffic in the Empire, and they liked it that way. There are no Official Relay Stations in the UK and UK Amateurs can't pass messages to non amateur radio operators.

This fascination has let me to study how amateurs in different countries get their licenses. I've gotten to the point where I actually studied for the Canadian and British first level tests. Twenty-five or so years ago I actually, during a normal vacation, arrived at the doorstep of the Canadian Department of Communications asking if I could get my Canadian Amateur Radio license. They looked at me like I had 3 heads. "You have your US license. You have full reciprocal privileges here. Go away and stop bothering us," they said.

It has been a thirty year dream to garner a foreign amateur radio callsign. I never quite thought I'd do it.

The UK has a three-tiered license structure as we do (now) – Foundational, Intermediate, and Full. Up until the COVID Pandemic, the Foundational test had a "practical" element to it. Not only did you have to pass a written,

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multiple-choice test much like the FCC's, but you also had to demonstrate your ability, in front of test proctors, to assemble and operate an amateur radio station. In the UK, the Radio Society of Great Britain oversees amateur radio testing under the auspices of the Office of Communications (Ofcom). The UK went to virtual testing early. The practical requirement didn't survive that process, and so the UK Foundational test became just the written test proctored virtually, much like various VECs have done in the US.



Slowly it dawned on me – fairly late, to be honest – that if I didn't have to physically demonstrate that I could set up an amateur radio station, I could take the Foundation test and get my UK license.

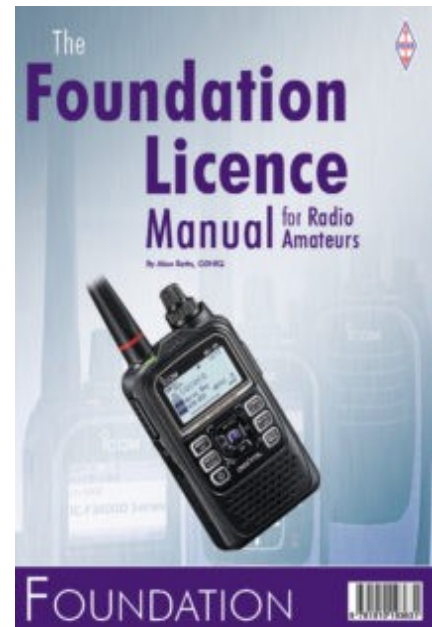
Due to the Foundational practical requirement, UK clubs are heavily into training people for the amateur radio exam. Overseen in the testing process by the RSGB, it was club members who proctored the practical requirement in the past. And so, when the

Pandemic hit, UK clubs just dialed their training up to 11 and moved forward. In the last year the Essex Amateur Radio Club has nearly moved entirely online with the sole mission of training and licensing new amateurs. I belong to the Online Amateur Radio Community, M0UKF, and its members were easily able to answer specific licensing questions for me – Do I require a UK address? How do I register for the exam? Etc.

I registered for my exam via the RSGB website. It was a simple, clear form that gave me choices of date and time. Once done I received a confirmation email. Then someone from the Society emailed me to set up a session to make sure all the virtual infrastructure worked. This person turned out to be Dave Wilson, M0OBW, who, it turned out, would also proctor my exam. Remember that name.

So how do you study for a UK exam? The question pool is not published as it is in the US. The RSBB, like the ARRL, publishes study books, which I had. There are also unofficial mock tests that you can take which I took advantage of as well. Even before studying, I never failed any of these mock tests. That's not to say the Foundation exam is a push over, but nearly 30 years experience as an Advanced-class US Amateur as to be worth something.

And so Test Day was upon me. I'd tried to choose well – 3 April – my 56th birthday. What is an amateur radio test without a glitch however? We were supposed to use WebEx to communicate, but WebEx's servers had chosen that particular time to go down the world over. A bad omen? I hoped not. Dave Wilson and I punted and got together on TeamViewer. Very much like US virtual tests I've seen, Dave had me move my camera around to make sure I didn't have any study materials near and no one else was in the room. He said the cats were OK, as long as they didn't meow me answers. We talked a bit more about ham radio both in the US and the UK, and both the ARRL and RSGB. Dave knew I was a member of the RSGB.



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Then we began the test. The testing software came up which took over my entire screen. Behind that screen Dave could see me, what I was doing, and what I was typing, but he couldn't see the questions. I would know my grade as soon as I'd done the last question. Dave would not. He said, "Usually I figure it out because the last question is done, and then a small smile comes on the person's face, which slowly grows to a grin."

The Foundation test is 26 multiple-choice questions. You have to get 19 of them right. The current testing fee is £27.50. You have 60 minutes to finish it. I got one question wrong.

Dave and I talked a bit more. The RSGB Annual General Meeting was coming up, and like everything else, it was going to be done virtually. Dave said, "If you've liked what you've seen here (Remember that the exams are done by the RSGB in the UK), remember to vote in this year's election." After a bit we said goodbye. It had been a wonderful experience.



*Dave Wilson, M0OBW, RSGB
President, wearing the RSGB
Presidential Chain of Office*

Dave's comment on voting stayed with me. Who was this guy? Was he running for Director or something? I'd not quite paid attention to the politics at this point. So, I went to the RSGB website to look him up. It turns out he was running for a Director position...because he term of office as President was up.

The guy who had given me my UK radio exam was Dave Wilson, M0OBW, *the President of the Radio Society of Great Britain!* That's something I'll remember for the rest of my life.

So, I'd passed my exam. What was the next step. It turns out that the RSGB would send me a letter giving me a Candidate Number. With that Candidate Number, I could then log onto the OFCOM website and get my station call letters. Obviously – especially these days – it took about 5 weeks for that letter to come across the pond, but come it did. The three different UK licenses have very distinct call letters. You can tell a UK license by the call letters they have. The "G" prefix is long gone; all used up. Currently if you have a Full License, you'll have an M0XXX or M1XXX callsign. If you have an Intermediate license your callsign will be 2E0XXX or 2E1XXX. Finally, Foundation callsigns currently start with M7. What's amazing is that when

you get on the OFCOM website and they verify your license with the Candidates Number, you get to choose your suffix. If it's not take – *it's yours!*

I first tried M7DOC. Nope. Taken. I then tried M7RCK. Available. And that immediately became my UK callsign. Immediately. OFCOM sent me a PDF of my license through email, and a thirty year dream was fulfilled.

Doc Kinne, KE1ML / M7RCK.

The next step, of course, is to activate it. That may take a bit of work.

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Down the Rabbit Hole – John Judge, KA1LBD

Around age 21, I attempted to learn Morse Code with an eye toward obtaining my Novice license. An ex-girlfriend's dad - let's call him Big Stan - was a Ham and he encouraged me to buy *Now You're Talking* by the ARRL and study. Stan was an oil burner technician by trade and was a Technician Plus as a Ham. His call sign was KA1LBD. Stan gave me a 5 wpm Morse Code tape and off I went to the bookstore to find the recommended study materials. While I was able to grasp all the radio related concepts, I struggled with Morse Code. Being young and impatient, I gave up.

Fast forward to January of 2021. I'm cleaning out my bedroom closet and I find an old Realistic Hyper Scan Pro-43 scanner in a box. I was given the hand-held scanner as a Christmas gift in 1992, but hadn't listened to it for years. I wasn't even certain it would work. Fingers crossed, I plugged it in and, voila, it began scanning all the frequencies I programmed back in '92. The first frequency it landed on was a repeater and I heard that familiar Morse Code sound. This got me thinking about Big Stan (who sadly had become a silent key in 2003) and Ham Radio. I hoped Stan was in a better place and I wondered about the state of Ham Radio. I thought, perhaps it was time to revisit Ham Radio. So down the rabbit hole I went...

I decided to begin my research on YouTube. Surely there would be lots of Ham related content there, right? Right. Given the digital age we live in, I was certain the hobby had changed. How could it not? And sure enough, what did I discover? FT8. PSK31. WSJT. And what's with all these Chinese radios? But I digress. During my research, I also learned that the CW requirement had been dropped and that the license structure had changed. The neon sign of opportunity began flashing. Now would be the right time to jump into the hobby. At this point the plan became clear: study for the Technician exam and bring call sign, KA1LBD, back to the airwaves. I spent most of February studying for the Technician exam and passed it on February, 27th. On March 5th, I was assigned call sign KC1OVW. While it was a nice accomplishment to be in the FCC database this was not the stated goal. That same day, I applied for vanity call sign, KA1LBD. 18 days later it was granted. Mission accomplished.



But why stop there? I became very curious about Parks on the Air. I watched more than a few videos of Ham's taking their portable rigs to state and national parks and activating those locations. What a cool idea. Play radio for a few

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hours and enjoy a new green space in the process. Hmm... But this was next level Ham Radio: HF. Back to the drawing board. I spent all of March immersed in Gordon West's General study guide and at the end of March, I passed the General exam. Phew! What an incredibly challenging and satisfying journey. I purchased the requisite equipment (radio, antenna, battery, etc.) and this summer I plan to activate Niagara Falls, Mount Washington and other parks in my area.

I'm grateful to Big Stan. Neither of us could have known then that the fulfillment of his encouragement would require the fullness of time, but as they say, better late than never.

Now go clean out your closet. You never know what kind of inspiration you will find.

EMA ARES Workshops Go To Zoom for May - Doc Kinne, KE1ML / M7RCK

EMA ARES are hosting several workshop comprising various topics through the month of May on Zoom.

The schedule, along with the presenters, are below:

Thursday, 20 May, 20:00: NTS with Marcia Ford, KW1U.

Saturday, 22 May, 10:00: WinLink and Vara with Frank O'Laughlin, WQ1Q.

Monday, 24 May, 20:00: Narrow Band Emergency Messaging System with Frank O'Laughlin, WQ1Q & Don Rolph, AB1PH.

Thursday, 27 May, 20:00: RF Exposure Rules by Dan Brown, W1DAN

General Radio News From Around the Net – Doc Kinne, KE1ML / M7RCK

- Virtual SKYWARN Training Sessions to be held in April and May.
- Northeast HamXposition (New England Division Convention) calls for Speakers, Sept 10-12.
- Steve Finberg, W1SGL, founder of the MIT Flea, becomes a Silent Key

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)

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.

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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

20 May	BARC General Meeting, 7:30PM, Zoom Teleconferencing Platform ▲
21 May	Virtual Dayton Hamvention Starts – https://hamvention.org
27 May	CQ WPX Contest, SSB
29 May	CQ WPX Contest, CW
6 June	SPARC Article Deadline
12 June	ARRL June VHF Contest

▲ 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.

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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

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)*

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Newsletter Editor: Doc Kinne, KE1ML
617.297.2718; kinnerc@gmail.com

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

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