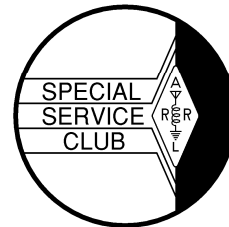




# SIGNAL



de NINC

December 2012 Volume 21 Number 12

## This Month's Meeting

The next regular meeting will be Thursday December 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 at the Pepperell Community Center.

The meeting program will be Homebrew Night. So finish up that home brew project and bring them to show.

Upcoming meeting programs depend on you. The January meeting is Members Short Subjects. If you have a short presentation (5-15 minutes) contact one of the Officers so they can plan the meeting and any resources needed.

## Last Month's Meeting



Last month's meeting was a presentation on AM Radio Broadcast Stations by Paul Andrews. Paul described the antenna systems, matching networks, phasing systems of a variety of area broadcast stations.



Photos courtesy KD1SM

Paul also showed some of the equipment used to maintain broadcast stations.

Attending the meeting were Jean K1AVM, Bruce K1BG, Ken K1JKR, Dennis K1LGQ, Skip K1NKR, Gary K1YTS, Phil K9HI, Mike KA1NXH, Ed KA1QL, Wolf KA1VOU, Phil KB1JKL, Ken KB1UVP, Stan KD1LE, Ralph KD1SM, John KK1X, Dan KW2T, Les N1SV, Ed N1YFK, Jim N8VIM, Roland NR1G, Larry W1ESR, Bob W1XP, Bo WA1QYM, Rod WA1TAC, Paul WB1EWS, and Gene WW4EN.



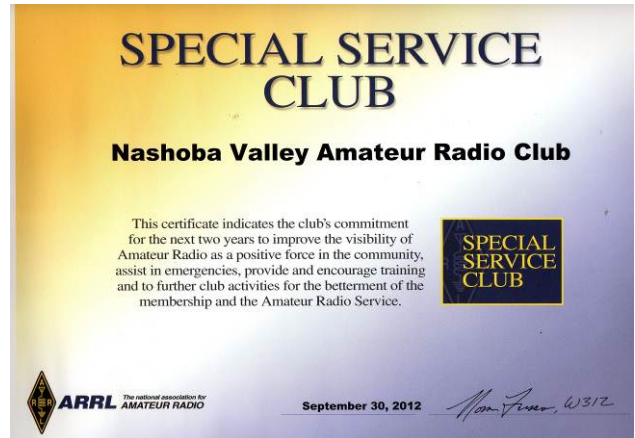
Photos courtesy KD1SM

We had guests from the ARRL Field Organization at the meeting. Phil Temples K9HI ARRL East Mass Section Manager and Bo Budinger WA1QYM Affiliated Club Coordinator presented the club with our Special Service Club Certificate. Both expressed the opinion NVARC was one of the best clubs in the area and only one of six out of 30+ clubs in Eastern Mass that held the Special Service Club title.



Skip "receives" from Phil our Special Service Club Certificate that had not arrived on time for the meeting.

But then it did arrive after the meeting.



Skip went over a years worth of NVARC activities showing just how active we are even in the summer when we think of the club being inactive.

Skip also put out the call for members to bring their homebrew projects to the December meeting. He also is looking for presenters for the January Members Short Subject Night.

In the book raffle Les N1SV won the Handbook and Repeater Directory.

### The President's Corner

**From the President**  
de Skip, K1NKR

It's family season. For me, that means lots of quality time with my grandkids, Sam, Gabe, Noah, and Annika. At ten-and-a-half, Sam's older than the others by 4-6 years. He and I have been building electronic kits and doing bench experiments this past year. I'm trying to set the hook and I'm not keeping it a secret.

We've explored batteries and magnetism. Tried series and parallel circuits. And blown out a modest number of light bulbs. Ten year old boys get a charge (No pun intended. Well, maybe yes pun intended.) out of blowing out light bulbs. But building kits really has him intrigued. We sit and identify parts, then relate them to the circuit diagram. The piece-de-resistance (Again no pun. Right!) is when the soldering iron gets turned on and assembly begins. Part by part, Sam guides about a dozen components onto the PC board and solders them in place. After a quick error check we fire the board up. Eureka! It works.



So far we've done LED sequencers, fiber optic links, and sound operated relays. I picked up the first couple of kits from Dennis, K1LGQ. He's a member of the New England QRP club and there's probably no organization more closely aligned with kit building than they are. Lately though, I've had to go farther afield to stay ahead of Sam's "What are we building next" queries. And Gabe and Annika have begun to ask when their turn comes.

For kit builders the apparent "go-to" source is Velleman. They put out a 200 page catalog and feature 50 pages of project kits at various stages of complexity that accomplish numerous functions. Radio Shack has a modest selection of kits in the \$5-15 range. Most of their kits seem to be actually from Velleman. Electronics Plus in Littleton also carries Velleman kits. They have as much on the shelf as Radio Shack does and will order whatever Velleman kits you want. (And it's worthwhile to support local business.) And for an almost overwhelming kit shopping experience there's always You-Do-It Electronics down in Needham.

As a matter of fact, Electronics Plus has a \$25 "Easy Miniikit Starter Pack." A 20-watt iron, a soldering stand, solder, diagonal cutters, and TWO kits—all for twenty-five bucks. Don't tell Sam, but it's his Christmas gift especially from me to him. He'll be a card carrying electronics wizard by the end of the month.



The head of DARPA, the Defense Department's research arm, just revealed in a Congressional interview that the nation is short of geeks and nerds. Defense aside, maintaining our national socioeconomic health demands that our stock of technical talent and creativity be continually renewed. (That means we need people to invent video games, not just play them.) The Radio Amateur population can always use some new blood, too. Kit building—and the grandparent-to-kid relationships it builds—is a good way to start the process. Dare I say that you owe it to yourself, your family, your hobby, and your nation?

What I've learned in all this is that nothing beats the "I did it" factor. Sam even took me aside Thanksgiving Day and started to describe a Mcgyver project he's thought up. Who knows, the hook may be set. What better thing to give thanks for.

## December Meeting Yankee Swap

We'll be doing a Yankee swap at the December meeting.

Back at the office this usually means finding a non-gender specific, non-offensive, seasonal, generic \$10-15 gift. Not for NVARC! We're cheap. Here's what to do. Go raid the back shelf of the shack or the workshop. Find something that you once thought was a great idea but have now come to your senses about. Wrap it up (Brown paper bags are acceptable.) and bring it in. Don't identify who it's from.

Distribution will be in accordance with Yankee Swap tradition. Someone will select the first wrapped gift at random. The next person chooses another wrapped gift and gets to either keep it or swap it for one someone else unwrapped earlier. The process continues until all gifts have been unwrapped AND the first selectee has had a chance to exercise his keep or swap privilege.

Please, nothing expensive. No trash or unfinished projects, though. You might get it back next year.

## NVARC Slow Speed CW Net

Several years ago I ran a "slow speed" CW net for club members who were just starting out on CW to develop their skills. I stopped the net for several reasons - I got busy at work for one.

Well, a number of people have recently come to me and asked if I would start it again. I am giving a qualified "yes" to the question. The condition is that when I am tied up, somebody else will pick up and carry the ball. That's all I ask.

The next was a modified formal net process. Modified meaning that there is structure to it, but no traffic handling. In light of this, I am attaching three documents to this email:

- ssn protocol rev 3A - a description of how the net runs
- ssn exchange rev 1 - a description of how typical CW exchanges are made on the net

Have a look at the info. It may seem complicated, but it's really easy. If you are new to CW or an old timer, I encourage you to make every mistake in the book (just like I did). It's supposed to be a learning experience, and mistakes are encouraged.

I don't remember what frequency or time we used to meet at, so we will meet every Tuesday and Thursday (except for club meeting night) at 7:30 PM on 28.123 MHz, and we can follow the net at 28.400 MHZ SSB afterwards. If you arrive late, don't worry. The net usually runs 45 minutes or so, and I can stretch it out.

Questions: Either email me, or call me at 978-772-2773.

One question: What speed should I start at? I suggest a speed of 8 WPM, with Farnsworth spacing at 15 WPM.

Your feedback is welcomed.

Bruce, K1BG

## Ten Tips to Help Your DXing Success

Les Peters, N1SV

With the weather getting colder the DX activity is starting to heat up. So here are ten tips I've accumulated over the years to help enhance your DXing success.

**(1) Listen!!!** – I know it sounds simple but I can't tell you how many times I've run a cross stations calling some DX station over and over again without ever listening. All these guys accomplish is to make it more difficult on the rest of us. You can't work them if you can't hear them!

**(2) Working split** – Working split refers to a station receiving on a different frequency than they are transmitting on. This is done to make it easier for the DX station to hear its callers when a pileup grows too big. The DX station will announce where they are listening. For example on SSB you may hear "Listening up 5" to indicate they are listening up 5 KHz from their TX frequency. On CW you may copy "UP 1" indicating they are listening 1 KHz up from their TX frequency. The DX may also indicate a band of frequencies where they are listening (on SSB "Listening up 5-10", or on CW "UP 3-5"). DX stations can also announce that they are listening down as well though this is somewhat less common.

**(3) Timing** – If the DX station is working split try and locate the station the DX is trying to work (having a transceiver with dual receivers is very handy here!). First listen to the DX station and the call sign of the station that they have picked out. When the DX turns it over to the caller quickly try to identify the

caller. Once you have found the caller wait for the QSO to end and then dump your call in once or twice. If the DX is listening over a band of frequencies this will be more difficult as you will have to tune around to locate the caller. Remember the better your timing the better your success will be.

**(4) Identifying an operating pattern** – When trying to work a DX station split where clearly they are not listening on just one frequency, try to identify there operating pattern. It may be that they are slowly tuning up after every contact or switching between then ends of their announced band of frequencies (IE. 5 & 10 KHz if they announced they are listening 5-10 up). If you have listened for a while and there appears to be no apparent pattern try to find a clear frequency in the band they are listening and call hoping the DX eventually finds you.

**(5) PacketCluster** – The use of the PacketCluster system to alert DXers in real time as to when a DX station is active can be helpful but remember the information isn't always accurate. When a DX station gets spotted very quickly a "Packet" pileup builds making it more difficult to work the DX then before they were spotted. Most logging programs have a PacketCluster interface integrated into them.

**(6) Propagation** – Expanding you knowledge of propagation will help you to better understand when different bands are open and to which parts of the world. I like to use W6ELProp (a free program at <http://www.qsl.net/w6elprop/>), to predict if a path between two locations will be open. Also <http://spaceweather.com/> this useful site lists current solar and geomagnetic conditions as well as historical data.

**(7) DXpeditions** – In order to work some of the rarer DXCC entities you may have to wait for one or more people to organize a trip to activate the entity. When activated the station may be active on one or more bands for a defined period of time. DX bulletins will allow you to stay informed as to what DXpeditions are coming up and when, here are two examples bulletins that I use; <http://www.dailydx.com/> (\$) and <http://www.papays.com/opdx.html> (Free).

**(8) Contests** - Contests can be a good way to work DX stations that are typically not very active and also to increase your band totals. There are hundreds of contests each year with many listed on WA7BNMs website <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/index.html>. Probably the most popular DX contest is the annual CQWW (Phone & CW) that occurs each fall. One useful resource for knowing the announced DX op-

erations for some of the upcoming major DX contests can be found on NG3Ks website <http://www.ng3k.com/Contest/>.

**(9) Calling CQ DX** – I know this somewhat contradicts tip #1, but sometimes on a quiet band that should be active it pays to make some noise and draw some attention! Many a winter morning I have gone down to the shack just before sunrise and called CQ DX on 75m beaming Asia / Pacific and have had the pleasure of a VK or a ZL comeback to my call on a seemingly otherwise dead band!

**(10) Local resources** – Finally ask questions and seek advice from people who you perceive to know more than you do. I have had many Elmers in my 30+ years of being a ham and every one of them has helped me immensely.

## Treasurers Report

Income for November was \$60 in membership renewals and \$28 from the November meeting book raffle. Expenses were \$18 for newsletter postage leaving a net income for October of \$70.

In addition we received a donation of \$250 from the Squannacook River Runners in recognition of our support of the 2012 Groton Road Race. This donation has been placed into the Community Fund.

Current balances:

General fund	\$2,870.57
Community fund	\$4,636.41

As of 6 December we have 42 members who are current with their dues and 26 renewals outstanding. Please check your renewal status on the roster circulated at the monthly meeting or ask Ralph.

If you are joining ARRL or renewing your membership please consider letting Ralph send in the paperwork for you. The Club will buy the stamp and will get a commission from ARRL. ARRL membership checks should be made payable to NVARC; Ralph deduct the Club commission before forwarding your paperwork to Newington. As an Special Service Club, the ARRL expects a majority of Club members to also be ARRL members.

Ralph KD1SM

## Board Meeting 6 December

Attendees: Skip, Ralph, Larry, Rod  
*convene at* \_\_\_1947\_\_\_.

The Treasurer reported \$2842 in the working account. A donation of \$250 from the Groton Road race will be put in community Fund.

Old business:

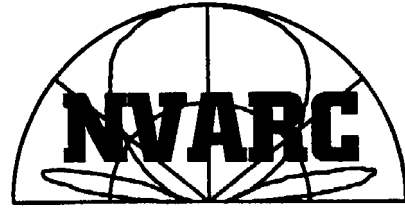
1. Admin/event/activity calendar inputs per Board member. Nothing.
2. There was no activity on the Summer Study report (addressing how up-to-date the constitution is). There are no big issues, though.
3. Meeting programs are in place through April. Some meetings could use a secondary program subject. May and June need topics.
4. Larry reported that the local Emergency Management Agency is expected to pick up the difference between individual hams' donations and total cost of replacement back-up batteries for the N1MNX repeater.

There were no public service, operating, or miscellaneous activities status reports.

New Business:

1. Skip and Ralph will attend the New England Division Cabinet Meeting. Saturday, 5 January in Springfield MA.
2. The point was raised regarding starting a licensing class or emergency communications (EMCON) certification training. There was no discussion pick-up at all on licensing. The EMCON discussion quickly turned from certification training to how to inform EM professionals who we are and what we can provide. The discussion also addressed the differences in first-hand communications experience between EMCON professionals and Radio Amateurs.

*Adjourn at* \_\_\_2052\_\_\_



### Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

PO Box # 900  
Pepperell Mass 01463-0900

<http://www.n1nc.org/>

President: Skip Youngberg K1NKR  
Vice President: Larry Swezey W1ESR

Secretary: John Griswold KK1X

Treasurer: Ralph Swick KD1SM

Board Members:

Bob Reif: W1XP 2010-2013

Roland Guilmet NR1G 2011-2014

Rod Hersh WA1TAC 2012-2015

Editor: Stan Pozerski KD1LE

Emergency Coordinator: Larry Swezey W1ESR

Photographer: Ralph Swick KD1SM

PIO: Dave Peabody N1MNX

Librarian: Peter Nordberg N1ZRG

Property Master: John Griswold KK1X

N1NC Trustee: Bruce Blain K1BG

Annual membership dues are \$15; \$20 for a family  
Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month

7:30 p.m. - Pepperell Community Ctr.

Talk-in 146.490 simplex

442.900 + 100Hz Repeater battery power

147.345 + 100 Hz Repeater

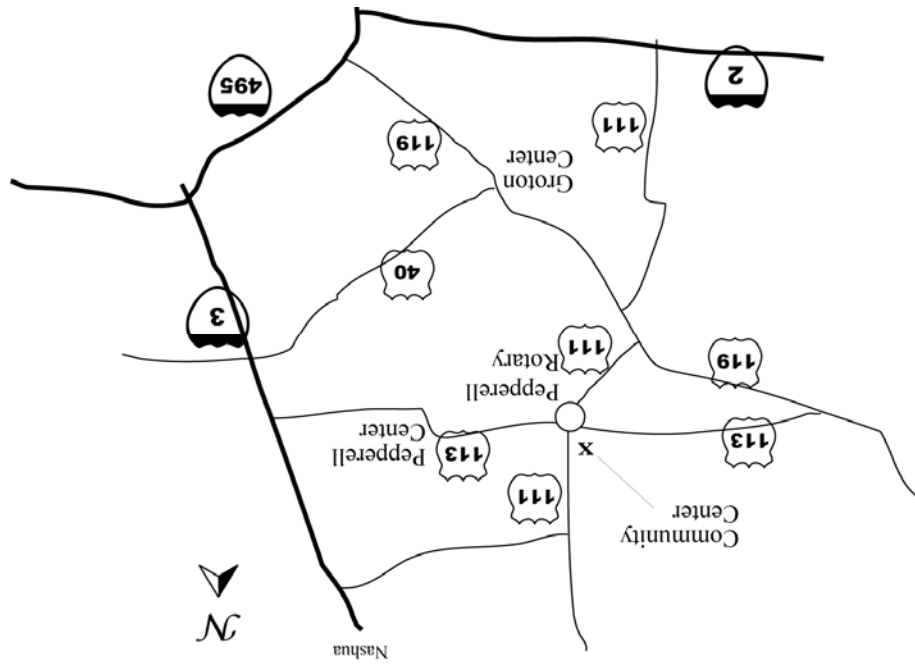
53.890 - 100Hz Repeater battery power

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