NVARC Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

SIGNAL

SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB ARRL

de N1NC

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This Month's Meeting

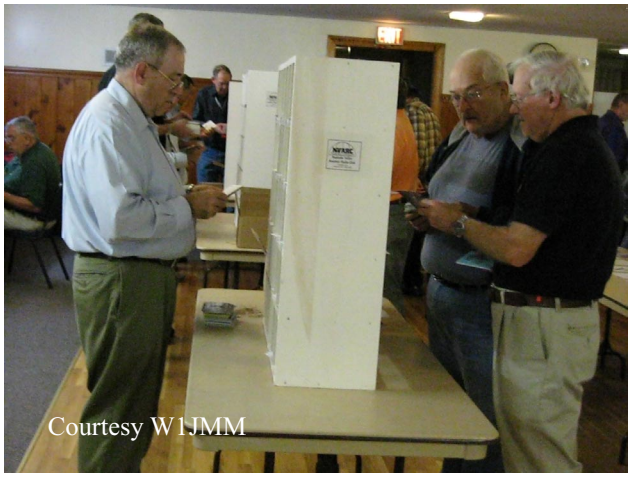
This month's meeting presentation will be the 100 Pound Dxpedition by Scott Andersen NE1RD. Scott will describe his quest to do these dxpeditions with a minimum of equipment and maximum fun.

Remember the last road cleanup of the year is the Sunday following the meeting.

Last Month's Meeting

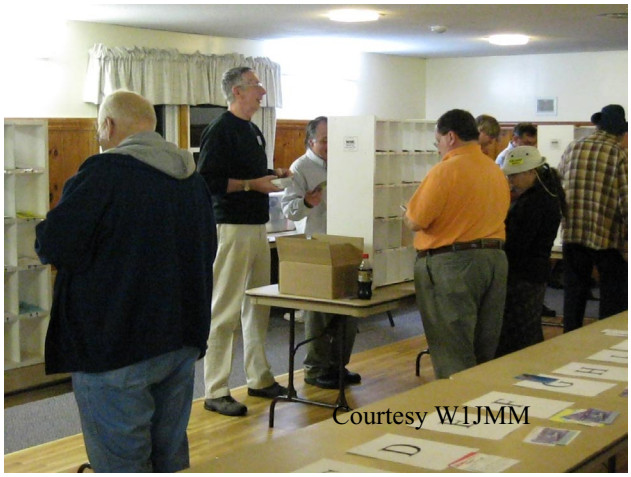
The challenge above of about 20,000 QSL cards waiting to be sorted. We have been sorting for the QSL Bureau for many years and have increased our effort from about 10,000 cards to the present 20,000.

Last months meeting program was our annual QSL card sort for the W1 QSL Bureau. Last year we had only one sorting box that we were trying for the first time. Since it was deemed a success we built five additional boxes over the winter. This was the first test using all six sorting boxes.



Above L-R Bob AB1CV, Charlie KT1I and Barry W1HFN sorting into the box. Two people can reasonably sort from each side of the box.

We sorted approximately 20,000 cards at the meeting in less than 90 minutes which I claim is a record. It certainly is for us. This is 3000+ more cards than last year in an hour less time. This was even though we were not under any pressure to finish quickly. The pizza coming later might have encouraged the hungry. The sorting box system makes for very efficient sorting while allowing plenty of ham chatter between all the participants.



As the boxes started to fill up the cards were accumulated on the tables in the foreground alphabetically.

After the sort was completed people searched through cards with the letter for their callsign.

Above the six sorting stations with the center tables for concentrating the cards.

We had over 30 participants with members of PART and MARA helping in the sort. NVARC provided pizza and soft drinks after the sort.

Thanks to Les N1SV, Jim N8VIM, and Leo K1LK for helping load sorting boxes for transport to and from the meeting. Also thanks to everyone at the meeting for helping to load/unload and set up the boxes for sorting.

Lynda N1PBL and Stan KD1LE cleaned up the sort and packaged the cards for shipment over the following weekend and they were shipped out heading for the letter sorters the next Monday.

Several people suggested we add two more sorting boxes so there would be enough for the number of people we have for the sorts. To do this we need to collect the equivalent of one sheet of 1/2 inch plywood and one sheet of ¾ inch plywood. If we get the material we can build two more boxes over the winter and have them for next year.

In attendance were AA1MT, AB1CV, K1BG, K1JKR, K1LGQ, K1LK, K1NNJ, K1YTS, KB1ESR, KB1JKL, KB1KEF, KB1LZH, KD1LE, KD1SM, KK1X, N1HVA, N1SV, N1ZRG, W1JMM, W1TRC, W1ZBT, WA1SMI, WA1TAC

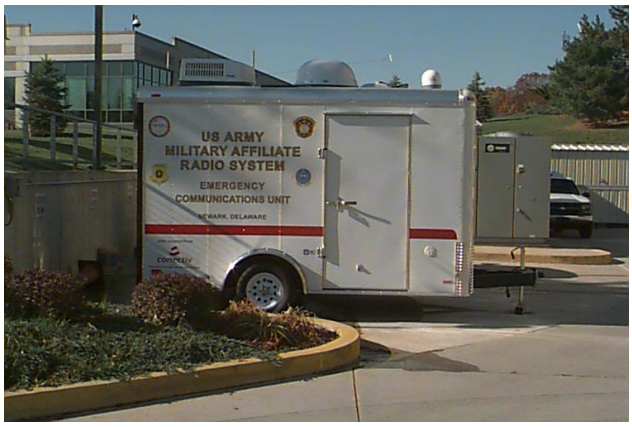
Guests: KB1JZU, KT1I, N1MGO, N1UZ, W1AHM, W1HFN, WA1QYM

From the President

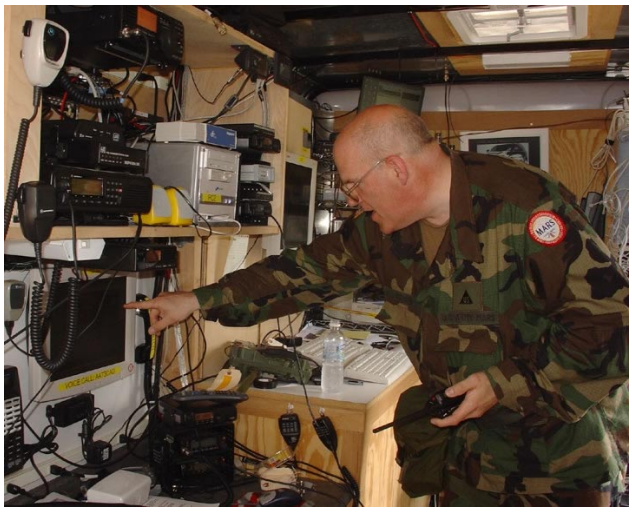
Now that Hurricane Noel has passed by and a quiet hurricane season is over on the east coast the idea of emergency communications may not be something you are thinking about. But winter in New England has its own set of potential challenges such as blizzards and ice storms.

I have been doing some research on recent disasters such as Katrina. One of the major problems these create is a lack of communications and information from the disaster area. This has resulted in many organizations including the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Southern Baptist Emergency Amateur Radio Service, FEMA, and state emergency management agencies devoting enormous resources to building Emergency Communications Vehicles. These come in the form of trucks, trailers and RV type vehicles equipped with a variety of radio equipment. A proposal was even made to the ARRL Board of Directors that the League should equip and maintain several of these vehicles.

Getting caught up in all this I was also thinking about what type of vehicle or trailer a club or small group could afford to support. Based on my research I put together a short picture presentation for my MARS state meeting on what some clubs and organizations have done. See the example below. The groups that have them use them for their public service events and Field Day effort as a way to keep them ready for emergencies and to justify the investment in time and money.



Army MARS trailer outside and inside (above-below)



There may be good reason to have some of these vehicles. As I continued the research I compiled the features and capabilities that were needed. To do this I was trying to understand what problem they were using them to solve and from that what capabilities it would need to accomplish the task.

The first problem the vehicles are supposed to address is that after the disaster event no one is left on the air for medium to long range communications to supply information on the situation. The second communications requirement is to support the rescue and recovery effort which is shorter range U/VHF communications.

The fact no one is on the air can be for several reasons such as no power, antennas down, damaged equipment and the fact people are trying to deal with the problems affecting them. It is understandable in some areas of total destruction and flooding that people would be off the air and maybe long term. That only explains a relatively small percentage of the total area of an incident like Katrina. What about everyone else? All of those people who tout emergency preparedness such as ARES and RACES groups, and people claiming Official Emergency Station (OES) with the ARRL. Why aren't they on the air or capable of getting back on the air? It would be a shame if the reason is nothing more than they didn't think of it because they were cleaning up the yard.

I'm going to take the hard line that most people who claim they are prepared for emergencies are not. The few stations that even check in to the local emergency nets each week or month are not much better prepared. Even getting past the preparation issue how many have thought about what they could be doing after the initial event has passed besides waiting for help.

My challenge to readers, especially if you claim an interest in emergency communications, is to give some thought to how you could get back on the air after a few different disaster scenarios. I'm not talking about at the height of the storm. Try a hurricane scenario where all your antennas are down. How would you get back on the air after the storm? You do not need DX level performance. A few hundred miles of range is more than enough. Getting an antenna ten feet high is more than enough. Making a spare 80 meter dipole and having a roll of string around is an inexpensive back up to your normal antennas. Maybe the problem is compounded by power outages. Do you have a battery that you can use to get your VHF and/or HF radio on the air for a few days? What about your car battery. If you have a garden tractor that you don't use in winter why not bring the battery in and keep it charged? From time to time over the years we have had free gel cell batteries available for members at meetings. Do you keep your handheld charged and do you have either a AA battery holder for it or the proper power connector and cable so you can hook it to an external power source? Do you know the frequencies used for emergencies? The PART repeater 146.955 pl 74.4 is the RACES frequency. Since our six meter and 440 repeaters are on battery power they are a place to ask for information. There are ARES and RACES communications plans available on their respective Websites.

If only a few stations in each area were prepared it would be significantly better than waiting a few days after an event for some vehicle based hardware to arrive from hundreds of miles away and they are a very limited resource. Depending on each individuals location different items might be addressed to improve either the station survivability or ability to recover after some event.

The second service the vehicles provide is the local communications to support the relief and recovery effort. This is usually done with U/VHF communications. This can be simplex communications or the use of repeaters. We have made an effort locally to address this part by having emergency power for our repeaters and at least loose plans for charging the batteries if needed to help keep them on the air. We have a spare tower, antennas and plans for replacement repeaters should the normal equipment become damaged or inoperative. This makes our repeaters a pretty solid resource.

Think about what you can do to be prepared. Don't forget regular home preparations of food, fuel, prescriptions, etc. The FEMA and Red Cross Websites have suggested lists to use to prepare.

http://www.redcross.org/
http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/pubs.shtm

Below are the sites of some organizations that provide emergency communications. I don't know anything about these organizations except they have built and deployed emergency communications vehicles.

Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Association (DERA) www.disasters.org

Southern Bapist www.southbears.org

Calgary Alberta ARES
http://www.arescalgary.homestead.com/

Irvine Disaster Emergency Communications (IDEC)
www.cityofirvine.org/ipd/info_center/idec_ham_radio.asp

Public Service

The Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club (NVARC) organizes communications support for many local events. NVARC members also support events organized by other clubs. Beside the many personal hours contributed they supply their own equipment at no cost to the event. The following table summarizes our contributions to events in the past year.

Event	Hours	Value of Equipment
Massachusetts Adopt a Highway	96	
Townsend Lions Club Canoe Race	50	$4000
Groton Road Race	425	$19,645 + repeater
Parker Road Race	50	$4000
RACES Nets	36	1500 + repeater
Groton Memorial Day Parade	16	$1200
Walk For Hunger	20	$800
Pepperell 4th July Parade	16	$1600 + repeater
Lonsjo Bike Race	160	$8000
Townsend 275th Parade	128	$6400
Total	987 Hours	

We can be proud of our contribution to these events in both time and the assets we provide. Members spend additional time at planning meetings for the events.

Head of the Charles Regatta

Over the weekend of October 20-21, the Head of the Charles Regatta hosted some 1700+ boats and 8200+ athletes from all over the world who came to compete in the world's largest and most prestigious rowing event. Dozens of hams participated in providing a health and safety net, accompanying Red Cross first aid volunteers at aid stations along the three-mile race course, as well as in nearly a dozen rescue launches placed at strategic locations in the Charles River. John, KK1X, was one of the volunteer hams this year, and reports that things were slow at the Finish Line station on Saturday. Several rowers came over to have hand blisters cleaned and bandaged, and one particularly inattentive gentleman was treated for minor injuries suffered in tripping over one of the hundreds of boat trailers in the Finish Line area. John says that the event is a whole lot of fun and worth signing up for. As a bonus, the volun-

teers are rewarded with lunch and a really nice fleece jacket (which can come in very handy! The weather for the event is highly variable day-to-day and year-to-year). John KK1X

Worcester Emergency Inoculation Drill

On Saturday October 13, 8 members of the Worcester Emergency Communications Team (www.wect.net) manned a simulated emergency inoculation drill in Worcester. The City of Worcester was administering flu shots for the at-risk population (primarily the elderly) anyway, and Worcester Emergency Management personnel took the opportunity to evaluate the communication skills of WECT under nearly-real conditions. Initial plans of using the WPI repeater at the airport were scrapped by management at the last minute to check the team's adaptability, and simplex frequencies were used. John, KK1X, manned Net Control at the Worcester EOC on Skyline Drive. Communications to the Meade Street EM headquarters as well as two schools where shots were administered proved difficult, prompting the station captains at those locations to configure cross-band repeaters locally, which worked out very well. Two transport buses were able to communicate effectively. Toward the end of the drill, everybody switched over to the WPI airport repeater for testing, and it was found that simplex communication was significantly better than the repeater. So much for the conventional wisdom of using simplex only as a backup for the repeaters! It also demonstrates the flexibility of cross-band-repeating radios, most notably the Yaesu FT-8900 in this exercise.

John KK1X

Board Meeting

This month's board meeting discussion topics.

Wrap up of card sort. Everything went well. Some sorting errors still particularly if the callsign has an "I" in it. We will build two more boxes if we get the material. Potential MARA card sort. Sent email to MARA Board waiting reply.

Ralph gave the Treasurers report.

Discussed NMAEPC purchase of two tri-band radios and antennas. The programming and documenting of the split site repeater option.

In attendance Ralph KD1SM, Bob W1XP, Joel W1JMM, Stan KD1LE , Larry KB1ESR, and Les N1SV.

Adopt A Highway

Our October cleanup was Sunday the 22nd.

Thanks to John KK1X, Callie K1ZAK, and Stan KD1LE. We picked up nine bags.

The November Clean up will be Sunday November 18th. This is the last cleanup for the year. I would like to have at least eight people for the last cleanup so we can do a complete job.

ARRL Letter

ARRL AND MFJ TEAM UP TO OFFER 40 METER TRANSCEIVER KITS

Earlier this fall, ARRL introduced the third edition of its "Low Power Communication" book, written by Rich Arland, W3OSS. This new edition includes the complete assembly manual for a 40 meter transceiver kit produced by MFJ Enterprises.

"ARRL has also bundled the book with the kit, giving readers a firsthand experience at project-building and operating," said ARRL Sales and Marketing Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R. This is the first time ARRL has offered a publication bundled with a radio kit. Inderbitzen said orders for the kit have been brisk. "We're delighted that MFJ agreed to collaborate with us on this unique publication and product undertaking. The initial surge of interest exceeded our expectation, and we've already gone back to MFJ a couple of times for more units." With such a high demand for these kits, the ARRL has experienced a large number of orders and the League regrets any inconvenience with order delays.

The kit selected for this offering is the MFJ 40 Meter CW Cub Transceiver Kit. The project includes some pre-assembled parts such as surface mounted components. Kit builders get to solder on connectors, inductors, trimmer capacitors and potentiometers. It takes only a few hours to complete the kit and get it on the air. "Building the kit is a natural application for someone enjoying this book," said Inderbitzen. "ARRL is committed to developing active radio amateurs. I can't think of a better way to encourage more hams to experience low-power operating, and to help grow the community of active QRPers." Visit the ARRL on-line catalog <http://www.arrl.org/catalog> for more information about "ARRL's Low Power Communication--third edition," the Cub Transceiver Kit and other new publications.

SAN DIEGO AREA HAMS ACTIVATED AS WILDFIRES RAVAGE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As fires raged through parts of the San Diego area and other areas in Southern California, ham radio operators did their part to ensure the safety of residents either affected or threatened by the fires. ARES groups in San Diego were activated on Monday, October 22 and continued to assist their served agencies until early Wednesday morning. Sixty hams were called to service by the County of San Diego's Emergency Medical Service.

According to ARRL San Diego Section Emergency Coordinator James J. Cammarano II, KG6R, hams assisted at the San Diego Medical Operations Center, six trauma centers and 16 community hospitals. Hams served as a resource, Cammarano said, "to be used in case primary circuits to hospital communications were lost due to either overload or power interruptions." In addition to these 60 amateurs, another dozen or so hams were activated by the Red Cross.

ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD, learned that San Diego ARES volunteers were activated and now they are in standby mode. "They are ready to go at a moment's notice, but there are currently no plans for re-activation," he said. As in any emergency situation, information can quickly change and the ARRL will continue to monitor the situation and inform members if the situation changes.

As the fires started to spread, hams started a FIRENET on the Palomar ARC 146.73 MHz repeater. Howard White, KY6LA, of La Jolla, who was among those who served as net control operator under extremely stressful conditions, disseminated a preliminary log of his experience. Excerpts follow:

"With flames starting to engulf the county and no active single source of information, as best as I could determine Charlie NN3V stepped into the information vacuum to start the 'FIRENET' as an ad hoc operation on Sunday afternoon. Early contributors included Gayle K6GO and Gary W6GDK. Initial operations started by collecting fire information as to fire location, wind directions, shelter locations and initial evacuations. Hams provided eyes and ears on the ground where the danger was. Soon however the fires seemed to be heading down to the Poway area so Charlie and the other Poway hams needed to evacuate.

"Day One: Is the fire near us? Where is the head of the fire? What directions are the heads going? What are the winds doing? Should we evacuate? What roads are closed? What about our animals? Where should we go? What should we take? What is the route to avoid the flames? Can you help us find missing people or pets? Can you help us get barrels of water for animals? Can you help us find food and water? Can you get the police to deal with looters?

"Unlike Katrina, the questions and answers did not abate at night. It was nonstop. Terry K3PXX needed routing around the fires to evacuate his Animal trailer. Terry reported on Fires as he drove through Poway and back to San Marcos EOC. ROARS hams had evacuated Ramona and the 147.03 repeater and were looking for help to be routed safely out of the area. Fires broke out in Coronado Hills in San Marcos. People needed to be evacuated. Brian KF6C asked where to evacuate his 4 children. San Marcos EOC needed to be activated and FIRENET held the fort for them until they could get there and became operational to evacuate San Marcos. George KG6IDE tries to drive up to Ramona to evacuate elderly parents but we turn him back to avoid the flames...

"0130 Tuesday: N9XF reports flame proceeding down 76 from Fallbrook. Tom KI6IET, who is blind, but stays at his post as my backup net control, needs to be evacuated. Evacuation arranged ok. Rob WA3IHV calls from his office at Palomar hospital to tell us his family was evacuated OK and horses survived...

"2100 Tuesday: FIRENET hams drive to Qualcomm Stadium and load trucks with food. Dan leads ham relief convoy with food and supplies to Mira Costa College. Fire victims at shelter express gratitude for first food delivery.

"2350 Wednesday: KG6VVN signs off as net control as the 146.730 repeater runs out of fuel and goes off the air..."

Orange County update: Acting Section Emergency Coordinator Cathy Gardenias, K6VC, provided this update on the situation in the ARRL Orange Section as of October 25: "Slide Fire/Green Valley is 17% contained; Grass Fire is 70% contained. Santiago Canyon Fire was 50% but was reduced last night as it turned and headed for the Riverside County border of the Cleveland National Forest.

"Amateur Radio operators have been utilized. The San Bernardino County Fire EOC has been using ECS and ARES members in the EOC to monitor communications and other jobs needed. At the

command post at the Rim of The World High School near Lake Arrowhead, ECS and ARES members who have been fully trained in all ICS and S190 (bush training) are handling communications and other needs. This is according to Jeff W6JJR DEC for ARES San Bernardino County and a Public Information Officer (Miles) from the EOC in San Bernardino. The EOC is at Level III at this time.

"SATERN [Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network] Amateur Radio operators at all the shelters have been volunteering their time as non communicators, but as helpers for those who are in need."

As of Friday afternoon, CNN reported that 14 of the nearly two dozen fires were under control. Nearly 800 square miles has burned in Southern California, and seven deaths have been blamed on the fires, with dozens of injuries.

Ron Roberts, Chairman of the San Diego Board of Supervisors estimates that 560,000 people were ordered to evacuate their homes, and thousands more were evacuated in San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Orange counties.

Firefighters received help from Mexico, the state and federal governments and even inmates from California's prisons. About 7000 firefighters were battling the blazes, including 2300 inmates from California's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, according to Governor Schwarzenegger.

President Bush visited the area on Thursday and declared a federal emergency for seven counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said that the President's action authorizes FEMA to "coordinate all disaster relief efforts, which have the purpose of alleviating the hardship and suffering caused by the emergency on the local population, and to provide appropriate assistance for required emergency measures, authorized under Title V of the Stafford Act, to save lives, protect property and public health and safety and lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe." Schwarzenegger estimated that at least $75 million in federal aid would be needed. -- Some information from The Weather Channel and CNN

AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE NAMED VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR BY MARINE CORPS MARATHON

On October 19, the Marine Corps Marathon announced that the Amateur Radio Service is its Volunteer Group of the Year in light of the 30 years of service and support hams have provided for the annual event. Amateur Radio volunteers began assisting with the Marine Corps Marathon in 1978 and have provided essential, mission critical communications to the medical staff on race day. The Volunteer Group of the Year Award will be presented today, October 26, as part of a special ceremony.

"The ham radio operators play a vital role in medical operations of the race. The knowledge and expertise of their dedicated volunteers enables the Marine Corps Marathon to provide all participants the highest level of emergency care and I am deeply appreciative of the hams' continued support," said Rick Nealis, Director of the Marine Corps Marathon.

Initially, ham radio served as a simple means of communications at both aid stations and mile markers. In the early 1990s, this support expanded to include digital communications with the aid stations and tracking of the pace car. Eventually, the aid station support evolved to automated digital communications that includes 115 ham operations located at mile markers, water points, aid stations, two finish area medical locations and as shadows to the division commanders. More than 100 Amateur Radio operators volunteer for the Marine Corps Marathon.

The award also recognizes two specific individuals, Rick Bunn, N4ASX, and Tom Azlin, N4ZPT, for their contribution to Amateur Radio participation at the Marine Corps Marathon. Bunn was first licensed in 1971 while in high school. He began volunteering for the Marine Corps Marathon in 1983 and served as the Marine Corps Marathon Amateur Radio liaison from 1997-2001. From 2001-2005, he served as the lead Amateur Radio operator, coordinating all aspects of ham radio support to the marathon. Azlin has been licensed since 1990. He first volunteered with the Marine Corps Marathon in 2001 and, since 2004, has been the Amateur Radio operator responsible for coordinating all aspects of aid station ham radio support.

Voted "Best Marathon for Families," the Marine Corps Marathon continues a combined tradition of dedication, sportsmanship and patriotism. Runners from all walks of life have participated in the world's largest marathon to not offer prize money, deservingly earning the nickname "The People's Marathon." The 32nd Marine Corps Marathon will be held on Sunday, October 28, 2007 in Arlington, Virginia and Washington, DC.

Treasurers Report

Income for October was $105 in membership dues, $39.58 from bank interest, $5 from PowerPole connector sales, and $5 from one member who purchased one of the Field Day pins. Expenses were $16.40 for newsletter postage and $70.35 for the pizza for the October meeting leaving a net income of $67.83 for the month.

The Squannacook River Runners sent us a donation in appreciation of the support we provide for the Groton Road Race. As has been our practice for such donations, this has been added to the Community Fund.

Current balances:

General fund	$4,169.95
Community fund	$2,386.83

As of 8 November we have 57 members who are current with their dues and 9 renewals outstanding. Please check the member roster that is circulated at the monthly meeting if you do not remember your renewal date. Your membership date also appears on your newsletter mailing label.

If you are not yet an ARRL member please consider joining and showing your support for the programs developed by our national organization. If you let me send in your membership then the Club pays for the stamp and receives a portion of your ARRL dues.

Ralph KD1SM

NVARC Club Net

The club net meets on the 442.900 repeater. Subjects discussed recently; emergency communications preparedness, communications vehicles, repeater projects and improvements.

Recent participants include Dave N1MNX, Bob W1XP, Bob AB1CV, Joel W1JMM, Larry KB1ESR, Skip K1NKR, Gary K1YTS, Ralph KD1SM, Stan KD1LE, Les N1SV, Richard W1LTN, Ken K1JKR, Den KD2S.

The net is a good place to bring information for the club and questions or discussions. The net meets at 8:00 PM Monday evenings on the 442.900 N1MNX repeater.

Flea Markets

November
3 IRS Flea Market
10 Bourne MA FARA

December
8 Windsor CT

2008
February
16 Marlboro MA AARC
17 Westford MA Antique Radio
23 Milton VT

March
30 Southington CT

April
6 Framingham FARA
19 Manchester NH NE Antique Radio

August
22-24 NE Division Convention Boxboro

Advertisements

Tell them you saw it in the Signal. Advertisers should contact the NVARC Treasurer for information.

Contest, DXpeditions and Special Events

The information for a DXpedition can be quite detailed and may include bands, dates, number of stations, and times of day they plan to work certain continents so I can not list it all here. But if a country or prefix is of interest you can get more information at www.425dxn.org.

Contests 2007

November
17-19 November Sweepstakes Phone
24-25 CQ WW DX Contest CW

December
30-Jan 2 ARRL 160 Meter Contest

January
5-6 ARRL RTTY Roundup
12-13 North American QSO Party CW
13 DARC 10 Meter Contest
19-20 North American QSO Party SSB
26-27 CQ 160 Meter Contest CW

February
2-3 Vermont QSO Party
2-4 Delaware QSO Party
23-24 CQ 160 Meter Contest SSB
23-24 North American QSO Party RTTY

DXpeditions

Call	Location	Until
9V1CW	Singapore	2008
8Q7IM	Maldives	Nov 2007
9A60K		12/31/07
9A07P		12/31/07
SG60RK	Gotlamb Is	12/31
FO5RU	French Polynesia	1/15/08
T31XX	Central Kiribati	October
FO0	Clipperton Atoll	3/08

See www.425dxn.org for more listings

NVARC

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http://www.n1nc.org/

President: Stan Pozerski KD1LE
Vice President: Peter Nordberg N1ZRG
Secretary: John Griswold KK1X
Treasurer: Ralph Swick KD1SM
Board Members:
Les Peters: N1SV 2005-2008
Joel Magid W1JMM 2006-2009
Bob Reif: W1XP 2007-2010

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Photographer: Ralph Swick KD1SM
PIO: Dave Peabody N1MNX
Librarian: Peter Nordberg N1ZRG
Property Master: John Griswold KK1X
N1NC Trustee: Bruce Blain K1BG
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
147.345 + 100 Hz Repeater
53.890 – 100Hz Repeater
This newsletter is published monthly. Submissions, corrections and inquiries should be directed to the newsletter editor. Articles and graphics in most IBM-PC formats are OK.

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