



# SIGNAL

A club since 1992



Since 1993

de N1NC

June 2022

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## In this Issue

- PowerPoles at a Discount! .....2
- Check out the NVARC YouTube Channel!.....2
- NVARC/ARRL Outgoing QSL Service .....2
- History of Entry-Level licensing, Part 8 .....2

## NVARC Monthly Meetings

NVARC General Meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of the month at 2430 UTC (7:30pm, Eastern Time), except for July and August, when no General Meetings are held. When held, meetings are at the Pepperell Community center and are generally simulcast via Zoom. Non-members who are interested in attending may send an email to [meetings@n1nc.org](mailto:meetings@n1nc.org) requesting the teleconference details.

NVARC thanks **Medtronic, Inc** for providing the teleconferencing services under their employee volunteer support program for non-profit organizations

## This Month's Meeting

At this writing, the speaker for the June NVARC meeting is yet to be determined

## The President's Corner

de Bruce, K1BG

It seems that for most active clubs, June is focused on ARRL Field Day, and that is certainly the case for NVARC.

As always, Field Day takes place the fourth full weekend in June. This year, this means June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, and we will set up at our usual spot in the

Heald Street Orchard in Pepperrell. I hope to see you there!

However, in 2022 we are trying something a little different.

Because we have not been able to coerce a Field Day Chairperson this year, we will be having Field Day by committee. For the most part, the cast will remain the same as last year. Jim, N8VIM, will run the generators and networking. HF stations will fall to John, KK1X, and Bruce, K1BG. VHF/UHF will be provided by Skip, K1NKR, and Phil, W1PJE.

Plans for food are still up in the air, but Leo, K1LK, will provide the gathering area for participants.

One new volunteer is John, K1JEB, who will make a station available for GOTA activities – “Get On The Air”. The GOTA station is reserved for new and inactive hams, and unlicensed participants who are interested in making contacts under a watchful eye. More on the GOTA station later in this article.

For 2022, the ARRL has decided to extend the affiliated club aggregate score program they started during Covid. This means you can operate your station from home, and YOUR individual score gets printed in QST!

Additionally, your score is added together with all participating NVARC stations, and this total score gets listed as a club aggregate score.

Remember, when operating from home, always use your own callsign.

Whether participating at the Heald Street Field Day site or operating from home, remember, a successful Field Day requires YOUR participation.



Last month, I mentioned that George, KB1HFT, would like to step back from his role as Signal Edi-

tor, something that he has excelled at for 3 plus years now. Vlad, W1MTI, has generously stepped forward to fill George's shoes. Please join me in welcoming Vlad into the position, and thank George for his hard work and dedication over the last three years. NVARC has one of the best radio club newsletters in New England, and George has worked diligently to keep it that way.



We are still looking for someone to host the annual summer picnic. When and where it happens is up to the person who steps forward to host. If interested, please let me know.



NVARC's second Technician license class of 2022 is underway, with 6 students participating. After 6 sessions, one student has already passed their exam, and the other students are doing well.

Between the two license classes and some new hams in the area, I expect a number of new hams showing up for Field Day. The GOTA station will be busy!



I mentioned last month that I would be attending the Dayton Hamvention, and Dayton certainly didn't disappoint.

I thought it was VERY well attended, with attendance at pre-covid levels. I was told by several vendors that business was better than expected.

I ran into NVARCers Jean, K1AVM, Dennis, K1LGQ, and Skip, K1NKR while out there. Did anyone else from NVARC attend? It was a big show, and I know of people who were there that I never ran into.



As of today, we have no guest speaker lined up for the June meeting. At a minimum, we will review Field Day plans, and hopefully announce plans for the picnic. The meeting will be on the third Thursday in June, which is the 16<sup>th</sup>. I look forward to seeing you there.

-de Bruce, K1BG

**NVARC/ARRL Outgoing DX QSL Service**  
de Rod, WA1TAC

One benefit of NVARC membership is that the club forwards DX QSL cards to the ARRL for shipping overseas. Rod, WA1TAC, is collecting

DX cards for a shipment to the League later this month. If any club member has DX cards to send, bring them to the June club meeting and give them to Rod. Please sort them per the ARRL instructions and include proof of ARRL membership, e.g., a QST mailing label with valid expiration date.

**PowerPoles at a Discount!**

As a benefit to NVARC members, the club makes Anderson PowerPole<sup>1</sup> power connectors available below cost at only \$0.50 per pair. Contact Ralph, KD1SM, for details on how to order.

**YouTube Channel! NVARC**

Jim, N8VIM's, latest video is of Phil, W1PJE's, presentation during the NVARC May 2022 General Meeting. Phil spoke on "Earth's Natural Radio: Strange sounds at VLF frequencies and below". You can view Phil's presentation at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8J2zYgGIsno>

All of Jim's videos may be found by searching on the YouTube page for "NVARC".

If anyone has old (or new) Ham Radio related videos or electronic projects, and would like to have them edited and put on the YouTube channel, please contact Jim, N8VIM.

**History of Entry-Level Licensing**

**Part 8**

de Bruce, K1BG

In the last installment, I ended with Novice Enhancement, which went into effect in 1988.

Let me start this installment by saying that worldradiohistory.com does now have a QST archive into the 1990s, so I will not be able to list my QST sources here in this article.

The ARRL's searchable archive is limited to ARRL members, and as such, you need to be logged into their site in order to use it. Links to articles on the league's website do not work. If you would like articles relating to what is below, please let me know and I will forward them.



<sup>1</sup><http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Public%20Service/TrainingModules/Technical/Anderson%20powerpole.pdf>

In my opinion, when the Novice question pool went from 200 to 300 questions, and the test went from 20 to 30 questions, clubs started losing interest in giving Novice classes.

It was no longer just simple code practice and an introduction to very basic theory. The commitment became much larger.

In 1991, the FCC Adopted a “no-code” Technician class license. This, in effect, became the entry level license for many people, and the clear preference for adults. And at the time, the privileges were fantastic!

As a Technician, the “killer demo” was ordering a pizza from your car (via autopatch over a repeater)!

The Technician license provided personal and mobile communications. 30 years later, both can be accomplished easily using a cellular phone.

Keep in mind, however, that the Novice license was still considered the entry level license.

In 1992, the exam was bumped from 30 questions to 35 questions, and the pool increased to a minimum of 350 questions (from approximately 90 subjects).

In 1993, the FCC decided to stop specifying how many “subjects” the questions would come from, and left that entirely up to those writing the exams (National Council of Volunteer Exam Coordinators) to determine!

Finally, in 1997, the VE program took over the testing in its entirety. The days of an Elmer administering a Novice test on your kitchen table were over.

All of these changes – not just the relatively recent increase in testing requirements, increased question pools, and VE testing – but the previous elimination of the short term, non-renewable, relatively easy license (with distinctive callsign) as designed by the FCC in 1949 – had taken their toll.



In the late 1990s, the FCC had made it known that they wanted to simplify amateur radio’s licensing structure. Both the ARRL and the FCC had their own plans, culminating with FCC docket 98-143 in 1998. The proposal could be summed up with the following changes: Elimination of the Advanced and Novice class licenses.



The September 1998 issue of QST was largely dedicated to discussing this proposal. Rick Palm, K1CE, had a multipage article titled “Licensing Restructure for the Future”, which discussed the “why” for the restructuring proposals. It laments that the average age of an ARRL member has increased from 53 to 57 in the last six years, and that 90% of new hams are Technician (3% Novice).

“The original concept of the Novice License as temporary learners permit was a good one in its day... But today’s Novice test is a far cry from the old, simple, 20 question exam of yesteryear... The Novice question pool alone occupies more pages than did the entire License Manual for all classes of license in 1962... We can’t hold their (young people) attention long enough to bring them in through the existing Novice class license. *It’s time to say good-bye to the Novice license.*”



I’ve always been dismayed by the league’s complete lack of leadership with regards to the Novice license. Its original concept was brilliant – a license aimed at getting youth into amateur radio – and its effectiveness was systematically destroyed, one small step at a time.

It’s no wonder that statistically, few youth have been coming into amateur radio since the mid-1970s – long before personal computers, internet, and cell phones came into widespread use.



Beginning in 2000, the Novice license was eliminated, and the Technician license became amateur radio’s entry class license in the USA.

In my opinion, it’s a comparatively poor product.

First, it was never designed (or re-designed) to be an entry level license. Too many privileges (KW power for instance) in some cases, and too few in others (HF data for instance). It compares badly to cell phones, in both what you can do and in what it requires to be able to operate one.

And not much has happened since the Novice was eliminated. New Technician pools were devised in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018, and will be on July 1 of this year.

Approximately 420 questions are in the pool, even though only 350 are mandated by law. Questions

on subjects that are not relevant to an entry level ham are included. When or if this will ever change is unknown. The FCC does not seem inclined to focus on these kinds of issues.

That about sums up the history of entry level licensing here in the United States. I hope you've enjoyed the series. If you have any questions, please let me know, and if some interesting questions are asked, I may use them for the basis of future articles in the Signal.

-de Bruce, K1BG



Have YOU paid your NVARC Dues? See: <http://n1nc.org/Members/Roster> for your renewal month.

### Treasurer's Report

Income for May was \$85 in membership renewals. Expenses were \$185.48 for PowerPole connectors available to members at a subsidized price, leaving a net expense of \$100.48 for the month.

Current balances:

General fund	\$2,922.22
Community fund	\$6,628.25

As of 2 June we have 50 members who are current with their dues and 26 renewals outstanding. Renewal months are in the member list on [www.n1nc.org](http://www.n1nc.org) in the Member's area; check yours on <https://www.n1nc.org/Members/Roster> or you may also email me. Thank you to those of you who mail your renewals or use PayPal without a reminder from me. To pay membership dues via PayPal see the instructions at <http://n1nc.org/Members/dues>.

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.

To be a "Special Service Club", the ARRL expects a majority of Club members to also be ARRL members. Contact Ralph for further information if you need it.

de Ralph, KD1SM

### NVARC Board Meeting: May 6, 2022

#### Attendees:

Bruce, K1BG,	John, K1JEB,
George, KB1HFT	Ralph, KD1SM
Skip, K1NKR	

Call to order: 7:30PM

1. Jim, N8VIM, added some additional video into YouTube.
2. TBD on the June guest speaker.
3. Ralph, KD1SM, indicated that 29 hams volunteered at the Groton Road Race and 13 of these were from NVARC.
4. Bruce, K1BG, started the 2<sup>nd</sup> License Class. All students passed the practice test after Session 5.
5. There will be two HF and one VHF stations and one GOTA station at the 2022 NVARC Field Day. During Field Day approximately 12 Gallons of Diesel may be used and may cost the Club \$80.00. Jim, AB1Q, is negotiating with a vendor for a PortaPotty for the site.
6. Ralph requested \$200 to renew the Club's Liability Insurance Policy. The proposal was passed with a unanimous vote.
7. The Big-E or Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, MA is requesting additional volunteers.



8. Reminder: there will not be a July or August Club Meetings. This is the summer break.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21PM

de John, K1JEB

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**President:** Bruce Blain, K1BG  
**Vice President:** Phil Erickson, W1PJE  
**Secretary:** John Bielefeld, K1JEB  
**Treasurer:** Ralph Swick, KD1SM

#### Board Members:

Sean Pearson, KC1ONO, 2022-2025  
Skip Youngberg, K1NKR, 2020-2023  
Jim Hein, N8VIM 2021-2024

Property Master: John Griswold, KK1X  
Librarian: Peter Nordberg, N1ZRG  
N1NC Trustee: Bruce Blain, K1BG

Join NVARC! Annual membership dues are \$15; \$20 for a family.

NVARC general meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of the month at 2330 UTC (7:30pm, Eastern Time). Non-members interested in attending may send an email to [meetings@n1nc.org](mailto:meetings@n1nc.org) requesting the teleconference details. NVARC thanks Medtronic, Inc for providing the teleconferencing services under their employee volunteer support program for non-profit organizations.

Contact us on the N1MNX repeater.  
442.900 (+), 100Hz  
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This newsletter is published monthly. Submissions, corrections and inquiries should be directed to the newsletter editor: [editor@n1nc.org](mailto:editor@n1nc.org).

Articles and graphics in most PC-compatible formats are OK.

Editor: George Kavanagh, KB1HFT

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