



SIGNAL



VOL. XXXIII...No.1

WWW.N1NC.ORG

JANUARY 2024

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Next Meeting: 18 January 2024

The January meeting will feature the club's annual "Short Subjects Night". Please attend and speak for 15 to 20 minutes or so on any subject that you think the club would be interested in. Regular presentation equipment will be there. A VGA projector, screen, and laptop computer. The projector is compatible with either an HDMI or VGA video connection if you want to use your own computer.

Monthly Meetings

NVARC General Meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of the month at 7:30pm local time at the Pepperell Community center.
Meetings are not held in July or August.

Note from the Editor John Griswold KK1X

You'll no doubt discern that I've no experience as editor, so please forgive any transgression or omissions. Please give me something to work with, though. Make this YOUR newsletter. Following Vlad and George, I have some big shoes to fill. I intend to do this for a year, and I hope to document everything to assure a smooth transition for the next editor.
Thanks - John KK1X

Weekly 2-meter Net

The NVARC Information Net is held Monday nights at 7:30pm local time on the 2m N1MNX repeater, 147.345 MHz, +100PL.

Jim, N8VIM has been improving the repeater incrementally over the past several months.

DXCC / WAS / VUCC Field Checking Les Peters N1SV

If you've ever wanted to submit an application for a DXCC award (or WAS & VUCC), but were afraid to lose your precious QSL cards, then you've probably considered using a Field Checker. I'm one of a number of ARRL approved field checkers available to help in your area. Field checkers are able to check your cards in person on the spot, return them to you, and send the completed application to the ARRL for processing. Here is a link to the ARRL field checker search;
<https://www.arrl.org/dxcc-card-checker-search>.

While most contacts these days are confirmed via LogBook of the World (LOTW), there are still some stations around the world who do not participate in this program for various reasons. Below is some information that I hope you might find useful if you're interested in filing for any of these awards.

How do I fill out an Online DXCC application?

The easiest way is to use the online form found on the ARRL website;
<https://p1kexternal.arrl.org/onlineDXCC/>. To access this form, you will need to enter your ARRL login information (callsign & password). Just to clarify, this is NOT your LOTW login information.



Online DXCC Main Screen – Enter QSLs

Once you have accessed the site, you should see the Online DXCC Main Screen shown above. From the menu bar select Enter QSLs. At the bottom of the Enter QSLs screen there is a data entry section. Enter the callsign of the DX station and select all the pertinent

information about the contact from the QSL card using the drop-down controls. When finished press the **Save** button and continue to enter more QSLs as needed. If you exit this website all your entered contacts will be saved, so that you can go back in and enter more QSLs or make changes as needed.

Enter QSLs Page

As you add QSLs and save each, they will be shown below the data entry window, see Saved QSLs below for an example.

The 2 QSLs in your Online DXCC account are shown below. More recently entered QSLs are listed towards the top. [View All My QSLs](#) (as a PDF document)

Click the View All My QSLs button above for a PDF listing of your QSLs in the order they must be placed for submittal.

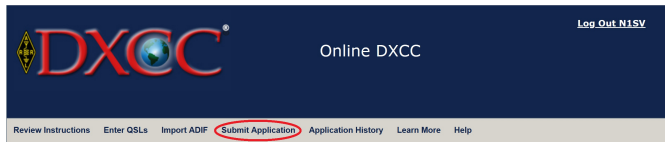
Call Sign	QSO Date (yyyy-mm-dd)	Band	Mode	DXCC Entity	
Z29KM	2007-11-20	30	CW	ZIMBABWE	Edit Delete
9Q8HQ/7	2012-03-03	30	CW	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	Edit Delete

1 of 1 Show 35 QSLs at a time.

Saved QSLs

After you have entered all your QSLs and are ready to complete the application, select **Submit Application** from the main menu bar.

Online DXCC Main Screen – Submit



Application

On the application enter your name, address, and other needed information. If you want your cards to be field checked make sure you check the box that says This application will be checked by a field checker. Then press the **Continue** button at the bottom of the page.

Award Application

The subsequent screens will guide you through the remainder of the process including fees and payment information. Once the application has been submitted print it out and contact a field checker to arrange a day / time when your cards can be checked. This my preferred method to use however others may prefer the traditional DXCC application.

How do I fill out a traditional DXCC application?

On the ARRL website download the DXCC award application form:
https://www.arrl.org/files/file/DXCC/Application%20forms/DXCC_Application_Form_2023_May.pdf and print it out. Fill out all the appropriate sections. Then review the current ARRL fees and enter them in the Payment Details section

at the bottom of the application. Once the application has been completed contact a field checker to arrange a day / time when your cards can be checked.

What do I do if some of my DXCC entities are confirmed via LOTW & others are with traditional QSL cards?

Since the ARRL stopped the use of hybrid applications, LOTW and traditional QSLs are handled separately, with no minimum number of entities required for each. Submit one application (either one), then when it clears submit the other one.

I have one or more QSLs from deleted DXCC entities, how do I handle this?

Identifying a deleted DXCC entity can sometimes be tricky. If you're unsure of how to handle it, I suggest contacting a DXCC field checker for further assistance. While a deleted DXCC entity wouldn't count toward current DXCC totals, it will be added to your honor roll total.

After my DXCC application is submitted how can I track its progress?

DXCC applications can be tracked on the ARRL website; <https://www.arrl.org/dxcc-applications-received>. Applications are logged daily as their received and deleted once processing of each has been completed. To get a general idea of where you are in the queue, review the range of dates for the different applications to get an idea of how many applications are ahead of you and how long you may have to wait.

The card checker sent my DXCC application to the ARRL but they never received it, what do I do?

While it's rare that an application mailed to the ARRL gets lost, it has happened. Over the years I've only had to deal with this once. And in that event, the applicant used the online form and only had a handful of QSLs. I was able to work with the ARRL and vouch that I correctly verified the application and that there were no issues with it. The ARRL then accepted the online application as it had been entered. I would imagine if the applicant had used the traditional paper application, that he would have had to repeat the process from the very beginning.

How do I fill out a WAS award application?

On the ARRL website download the WAS award application;
https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Worked%20All%20States/WAS_Application%20_Form_May_2023.pdf and print it out. Fill out all the appropriate sections. Review the current ARRL fees and enter it in the Payment Details section at the bottom of the application. Once the application has been completed contact a field checker to arrange a day / time when your cards can be checked.

How do I fill out a VUCC award application?

On the ARRL website download the VUCC award application;
https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Awards/VUCC_Ap_p_July_2023.pdf and print it out. Fill out all the appropriate sections. Review the current ARRL fees and enter it in the Payment Details section at the bottom of the application. Once the application has been completed contact a field checker to arrange a day / time when your cards can be checked.

This was Surprising! John Griswold KK1X

Over the past several months, as documented in prior issues of The Signal, I've been playing with antennas. I wrote about my adventures with the Rybakov (28ft vertical, 4:1 unun, a few radials), the Half-square (2x5m verticals with 10m phasing line), and the Delta loop. All fine antennas, and along with a set of dipoles, an off-center-fed dipole, and an end-fed half-wave antenna at my disposal, I want for little.

All these antennas take up room, however, ranging from simply erecting a mast on a drive-on mount, slinging a line into a tree, or stringing a dipole between two trees, there's some setup time and some space occupied. I've been to parks where the authorities are uncomfortable with erecting anything, and I've had the distinct feeling that hanging stuff from trees might result in ME hanging from a tree.

I picked up a magnetic mount for Hamstick-style antennas (3/8"-16 thread) at one of the hamfests, and a couple of Hamstick-style antennas. I tried this setup several times, always to great disappointment. The antennas worked, that was clear, but in comparison to other antennas (why of course I have an A/B switch in my POTA kit) it turns in what can only be termed a lame performance.

After seeing quite a few YouTube videos of hams putting these antennas to good use, it was clear I was doing something wrong. Given the base of the antenna is capacitively coupled to the roof of my car, improved coupling in theory should improve performance. As the coupling is through the magnetic mount (see where I'm going?) a larger mount should help.

I have a telescoping 17-foot antenna (MFJ-1779) that works well down to the 20 meter band (about 16.5 feet quarter wavelength). I've marked it at 10 meter and 15 meter lengths

with a marker to save fumbling with the tape measure so much. I have not tried it on 6, 12, or 17, though clearly it will work.

An early Christmas 2023 present was a TRAM 3-magnet mount. If one can get over the trauma of seeing it described as a “CB antenna mount” on Amazon, it presents a decent antenna platform. Three 5” diameter magnets are mounted at the corners of a chrome-plated steel plate with a 3/8”-16 adapter for the antenna stud. 18 feet of RG-8X connects the radio to the mount. Stainless steel would have been nice, but this thing was nearly \$80 as it was. I’ll not leave it out in the elements.

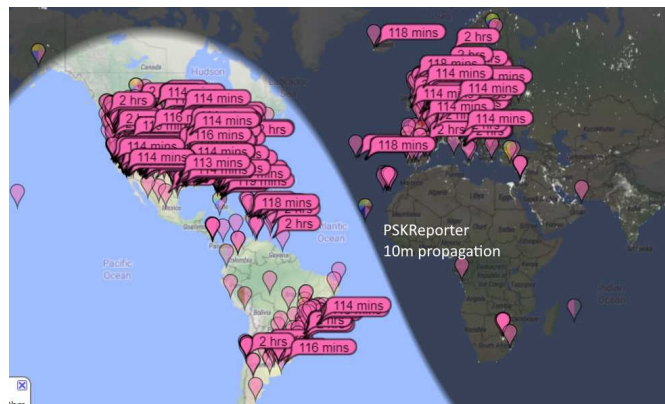
Over the course of several days around Christmas 2023 I spent some time in “my” antenna test site at the Bill Ashe Visitor Center on Devens. It’s part of the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge, so it counts for Parks on the



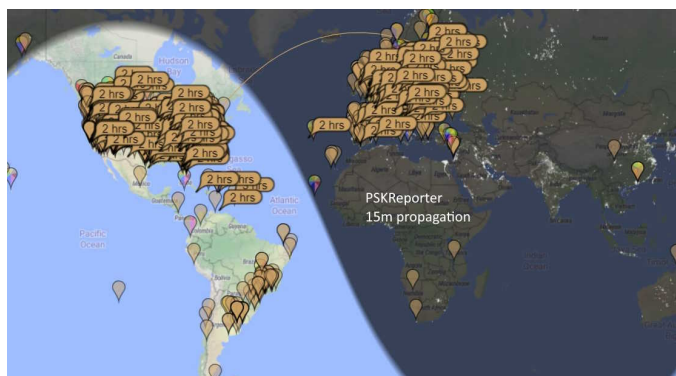
Air (POTA) activations. The aerial photo shows the test field in the middle of the visitor center, oriented within a few degrees of North-South. There is a lot of dirt to the east, as the visitor center is probably 100 feet down in elevation going down toward the river.

As usual, I use pskreporter.info to monitor

where my signal is received. On New Year’s Eve day I stopped by the center just before 1100 local time, and operated for a couple of hours. Using my KX3 running five watts FT-8, I started out on 10 meters calling CQ POTA. Interest in the POTA program helps pull in contacts. Using only five watts is challenging, so I call CQ, thinking that if they can hear me, I can hear them.



I managed to log 10 contacts on 10 meters, another 10 contacts on 15 meters, and started calling CQ on 20 meters. My radio was getting

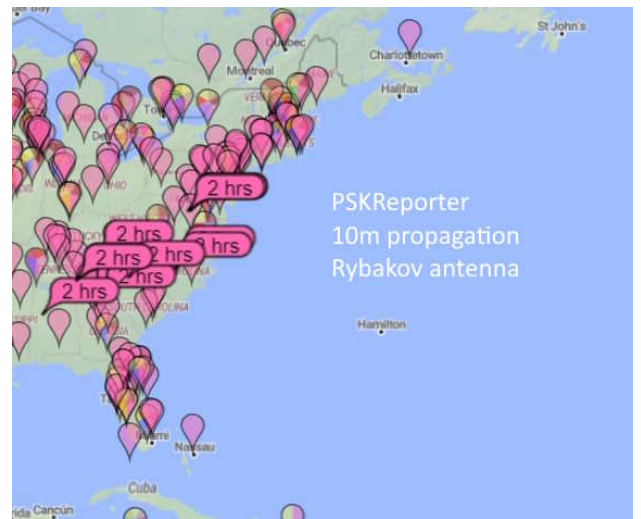
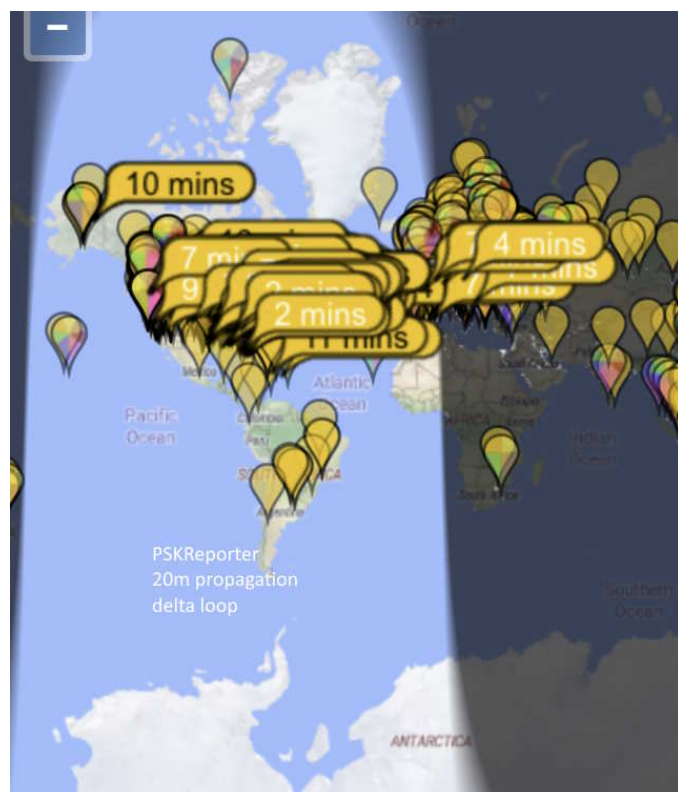
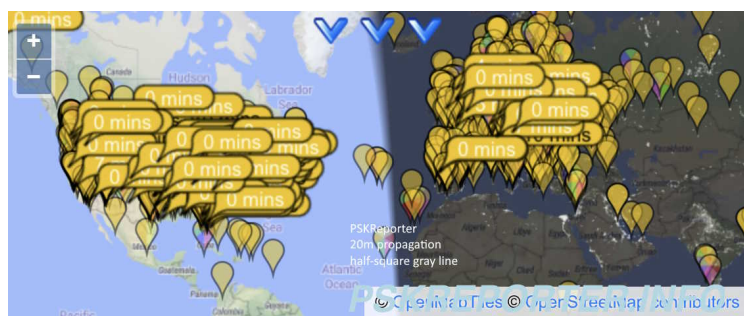


hotter than I like, so I closed down for the day.



As is my usual bent, there is very little actual science going on here. I do try to keep as much control over things as possible by always testing in one spot, but the Bill Ashe Visitor Center is far from ideal as an antenna test site. With a hill to the east, one would expect performance to the east to suffer. It does, but not nearly as much as expected. Isn't it odd that most propagation for all bands is east-west? I'm sure the PSK Reporter spotting station distribution lacks any level of uniformity, so the east-west skew is likely a relative preponderance of monitoring in the US and EU, versus Canada and South America.

It's clear that this antenna performs at least OK. Below are some propagation patterns for other antennas for comparison:



In a continuing comparison of various antennas, this is very likely the easiest to deploy. I do keep it packed in its box while not in use (it's not stainless!), but it takes only a minute to take it out and plop it on the roof. It's another minute to extend the antenna to the mark and screw it into the mount and feed the coax through the cracked car window.

Have YOU paid your
NVARC Dues?

W1AW Operating Schedule

Pacific	Mtn	Cent	East	UTC		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
6 am	7 am	8 am	9 am	1400z			Fast Code	Slow Code	Fast Code	Slow Code
7 am to 12:45 pm	8 am to 1:45 pm	9 am to 2:45 pm	10 am to 3:45 pm	1500z to 2045z		Visiting Operator Time				
1 pm	2 pm	3 pm	4 pm	2100z		Fast Code	Slow Code	Fast Code	Slow Code	Fast Code
2 pm	3 pm	4 pm	5 pm	2200z		Code Bulletin				
3 pm	4 pm	5 pm	6 pm	2300z		Digital Bulletin				
4 pm	5 pm	6 pm	7 pm	0000z		Slow Code	Fast Code	Slow Code	Fast Code	Slow Code
5 pm	6 pm	7 pm	8 pm	0100z		Code Bulletin				
6 pm	7 pm	8 pm	9 pm	0200z		Digital Bulletin				
6:45 pm	7:45 pm	8:45 pm	9:45 pm	0245z		Voice Bulletin				
7 pm	8 pm	9 pm	10 pm	0300z		Fast Code	Slow Code	Fast Code	Slow Code	Fast Code
8 pm	9 pm	10 pm	11 pm	0400z		Code Bulletin				

Business Meeting

Due to the holidays, the business meeting was light in attendance. Minutes were not taken.

Those in attendance were:

Bruce K1BG

Ralph KD1SM

Les N1SV

Sponsors



History of the Signal Bruce Blain K1BG

This month closes a chapter in the history of this publication – the Signal – and opens a whole new chapter.

I'd like to thank Vlad, W1MTI, for his dedication to producing an excellent newsletter, and for carrying on the fine tradition that previous Signal editors have exhibited. I'd equally like to thank John, KK1X, for stepping forward and volunteering to coordinate the publication of the Signal into the future.

While past copies of the Signal are available on the club website and archive.org, many people are not aware of who guided the Signal in the past. I'd like to highlight their contribution to the history of NVARC.

NVARC was officially founded in April of 1992, and we started having meetings shortly thereafter (If I remember correctly, it was April of 1992). Pat Taber, KC1TD, was living locally in Pepperell, and stepped forward to be the first and founding editor of the club's newsletter. The first edition was published in July of 1992. Remember, this is before widespread use of the internet, email, etc. All newsletters were published and sent via the US Postal Service!

The July 1992 newsletter, Volume 1, Number 1, had two small notes from Pat, which are copied here for you –

“So, How Copy? This is the first issue of what, after a little organization and coordination, I hope will be one of the best small-club newsletters anywhere. It can’t be the best if it doesn’t serve the needs of the membership, so I would like to hear what you think, what you want, what you can give. If you organize or coordinate an event, please send a summary of what you did, when and who else participated. If you’d like to write a whole article, by all means do – it’s not my goal to write every word of this newsletter.

If you have dreams of your own monthly column, dream no longer – let’s get started. If there’s something you are interested in, even if you can’t be an information source yourself, let me know. Articles, columns and features should be radio related, but do not specifically have to address ham radio. I envision this policy to be wide enough to meet members’ interest in short-wave listening, scanners, collecting, radio telescopes, radio related fiction, poetry, or finger-painting – the sky’s the limit. In all cases, the editor’s decision of what is appropriate is final. – KC1TD”

30 years later, I could not conceive of a better or more accurate description of what the Signal would become, or what it has been.

Pat also contributed this – *“Name the Newsletter Handsome though it is, and surely a collector’s item, Volume 1 Number 1 is short on a name. I’m not sure that we need one, but if you think so, send in your suggestions”.*

The first editions of the Newsletter are fun to read for me. They’re an excellent snapshot of the interest and passion that the early members of the club had. Sadly, many have become silent keys or moved away over the years.

Edition 3 is the first designating the newsletter the “Signal”.

In July of 1993 (Volume 2, Number 7), Pat announced that Roger Bisbo, N1OJW, would be taking over as the second editor. Roger’s tenure was short as Clint Talmadge, KD1OL, became the third Signal editor with Volume 2, Number 11 in November of 1993. And Clint’s reign was also short. While I can’t find any mention of the transfer, the May 1994 edition of the Signal (Volume 3, Number 5) has Stan Pozerski, KD1LE, listed as the fourth editor of the Signal. Now it’s possible that this happened in March, but I’m not sure!

For newer members of the club who don’t know Stan, he was the major “mover and shaker” in the club starting shortly after the club’s founding in 1993 until early 2020. Stan was club president through many of these years and filled in wherever and whenever needed. Editorship of the Signal was no different, there was a void and Stan filled it. Stan admirably filled the void from May 1994 through May 2016 (22 years!). If my math is correct, that is a total of 265 consecutive issues of the Signal. I don’t think this feat will ever be repeated, and if it does, I know that I will not be around to witness it. Thank you Stan!

We now move into what I’m calling the “modern” era of the Signal. Most know the recent editors because they are still active in the club.

The Fifth editor of the Signal was Skip, K1NKR, who volunteered with the June 2016 edition (Volume 25, Number 6). Under Skip's tutelage, the Signal immediately encompassed more content, and in my opinion, the quality of the articles improved quite a bit. But things change. A longtime resident of Tyngsboro, Skip moved to Marlborough MA during his tenure. It was again time to find another editor.

The Signal's sixth editor was George Kavanaugh, KB1HFT, who took over with the May 2019 edition (Volume 28, Number 5). George's opening comment was "I am honored, but somewhat uncertain of my abilities to assemble enough content to make up 12 interesting issues of the Signal per year"! Like his predecessors, George certainly rose to the occasion. For the next three years, George was editor. During his tenure, we experienced Covid lockdown when we could not meet in person. The Signal was more important to the club than ever, keeping the membership informed and keeping the club relevant. I was president of NVARC during this time, and I will always be grateful to George for guiding the Signal through this period.

Vlad Goncharov, W1MTI, assumed the role of Signal editor (our seventh) with the July 2022 edition (Volume 31, Number 7). Vlad immediately tried some new and creative ideas to spice up the Signal. Vlad followed a strict schedule when it came to the Signal – Board meetings are traditionally the first Thursday of the month. The Signal is published the following Thursday, which is exactly a week before the club meeting on the Third Thursday. We would discuss potential articles at the board meeting, but we had to get them in. Personally, I found the editorial calendar to be something that worked well. Vlad's stewardship of the Signal came to an end with the December 2023 edition.

Beginning with this edition, we have a new editor of the Signal. Please join me in welcoming long time club member John Griswold, KK1X, as the eighth editor of the Signal! Please contribute to the Signal with articles, ideas, questions, whatever. It's YOUR newsletter. Please support the Signal (and John) in any way you can.

Thanking you in advance – Bruce, K1BG

Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 900
Pepperell MA 01463-0900
<https://n1nc.org>

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James Hein N8VIM 2021-2024

N1NC Trustee Bruce Blain K1BG

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\$15 individual, \$20 family

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442.900(+), PL100
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This newsletter is published monthly. Submissions, corrections, and inquiries should be sent to editor (at) n1nc (decimal) org to reach the newsletter editor.

Editor: John Griswold KK1X
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