



NVARC

SIGNAL



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Field Day

The numbers have not been crunched for Field Day yet, so we have nothing to report. There are some photos of our operation this year. We expect a full Field Day report in the next issue.

Meanwhile, Field Day Chair has a few words to say, starting on page 4.

Next Meeting

September 2024 is our next meeting date. There is nothing solid in the queue for this meeting.

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.

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.

Field Day Contacts of Mention Bruce K1BG

Field Day offers me a way to connect with old friends and say "hello" to them. In many cases, I know people operating with a particular club and assume (not always correctly!) that my old friend is doing the operating. With people getting older and more stations operating class 1D (home stations), I tend to run into more people I know.

Operating during Field Day this year, I had two memorable contacts. First, I got to work Brad, WOCO in Colorado. Brad was the second HF contact I ever made, early on the morning of January 1st 1969. At the time, he was WNOWCO and I was WN1KBG. The contact was memorable for both of us 15 year old novices, and how we re-connected 38 years later is even more memorable. If you're curious about how that happened, let me know at the next meeting and I'll share the story.

I also had a contact with my old friend Eran, WH6R. I met Eran while on a business trip almost 20 years ago and we've been friends since. He is one of the more interesting individuals I've ever met (ham radio or not), and I always enjoy having a quick chat with Eran whenever I run into him. He knows I operate at N1NC for Field Day and K1TTT for DX contests and always sends greetings.

Ask me at the meeting and I will fill you in with the details.

Bruce, K1BG



Bruce is a Great Teacher

Adam, KC1RVK photo



It might have rained a little...
(pallets next year?)

Jim, N8VIM photo



Food Tent and Dining Area

Skip, K1NKR photo

President's Corner Bruce K1BG

Field Day has come and gone, and in my opinion, we had another great year. I'm always amazed how our club members come together and enjoy the whole process – planning in advance, breakfast Field Day morning, setting up, operating, and taking down. Leaving the site exactly how we found it. In more years than I can remember, it has gone smoothly. Little things don't always go perfectly, but we are preparing for an emergency. We adapt, improvise, and in the end have functioning amateur radio stations. And best of all, we have a lot of fun doing it.

Besides the emergency preparedness part of the exercise, Field Day gives us an opportunity to "show our stuff" to the general public. Besides the general public who find us, this year we had 4 scouts working on their radio merit badge, with three of them completing 10 contacts. We additionally had two more youth operators who made contacts. I find these activities particularly gratifying. Exposure to Amateur Radio at a young age can have lasting effects on a person's life. I speak from experience on this one. Maybe that's why I get so much satisfaction out of participating.

I had a non-club member ham come up to me during Field Day and let me know how great they thought the Heald Street Orchard site was. Location, access, visibility, etc. The site has served us well over the years. I believe we have used this location every year since 1995, except for 2009 when we set-up in the then brand new Lost Lake Fire Station in Groton.

One club member let me know that he thought we should be in a "more public" location, such as the athletic field behind the community center. I personally like the suggestion and think it's a good idea! In years past, these decisions have always been left up to the discretion of the Field

Day Chairperson. The chairperson has to plan the event, arrange for permits, etc. How do I know this? I was the Field Day chairperson in 2009 when we went to the Lost Lake Fire Station. I polled club members as to what they wanted to do, figuring that if I wanted good participation I had better listen to the membership! My point is that the Field Day chairperson has a lot of leeway and flexibility. If you want to try something new on Field Day, volunteer! Field Day 2025 is right around the corner, and new ideas and participation are never a bad thing. That being said, John, K1JEB, did a great job as Field Day Chairperson this year. He'll be thanking participants elsewhere in this edition of the Signal, but I wanted to make sure HE wasn't left out. A job well done John. Thank you.

We still don't have a volunteer for NVARC's annual summer picnic/BBQ. This traditionally happens in July or August, but I believe we have had club picnics after Labor Day in the past. Whoever volunteers gets to host and show everyone their place (and shack if they want to). The club will budget for paper plates, plasticware, cups, condiments, ice, refreshments, etc. The host provides a grill (or gets attendees to bring them). Club members and guests attending bring the items that they want to cook and consume. Burning meat is never a bad thing! The host picks the day (preferably a weekend) and the time. Let me know if you would like to host in 2024.

Finally, I'd like to remind membership that the Northeast HamXposition is coming up August 23rd – 25th. This used to be called "Boxboro" until it moved to its new location in Marlborough, MA, several years ago. Please support your amateur radio community and plan on attending. HamXposition has what is arguably the best speaker lineup of any Amateur Radio convention/hamfest in the country, and there is a good list of exhibitors that are coming this year. For more info, please go to www.hamxposition.org.

As I write this, I'm sitting at my campsite in Truro MA escaping the July heat that is gripping the Boston area. I have 20 watts and a random length long wire and having a blast making contacts and rag-chewing with hams around the country and around the world. If you have an interesting summer story to share, submit it to the Signal. We'd love to hear about it.

Traditionally, NVARC does not have meetings in July and August, and 2024 is no difference. Please enjoy the summer holidays and be safe.

Bruce K1BG

Field Day Thanks John K1JEB

This was my first Field Day event as Field Day Chairman.

It was a really fun event! It was the highlight event of the club year.

I am elated for all the support I got from veteran NVARC Members who have participated in NVARC's past Field Day events. Everything went according to plan, and the team performed as we all planned.

I want to thank all the great Station Captains: For HF Bruce Blain K1BG and John Griswold KK1X, for the VHF/UHF Station Captain Les Peters N1SV and for the GOTA Station Captain Eliot Mayer W1MJ. What a team!

I want to thank Jim Hein N8VIM for all the infrastructure support for electrical power and the ethernet infrastructure.

I also want to thank the FD Planning Team Bruce Blain K1BG, Les Peters, N1SV, John Griswold KK1X, Jim Hein N8VIN, Eliot Mayer W1MJ and John Bielefeld K1JEB.

I also want to thank Skip Youngberg for his past notes when he was FD Chairman. They were really helpful.

I want to thank Bruce Blain for being the N1MM Logger IT guy.

I want to thank The Food Chairperson Charlie Pentedemos AB1ZN and his wonderful wife Judy for the great food, snacks, cream cheese, bagels and sandwiches. The Crock Pot sausages were amazing. Charlie at the end of FD even volunteered to take the garbage with him. I also want to thank John Griswold KK1X for the terrific homemade cookies and the two containers of lemonade and ice water. Jim Wilber AB1WQ loaned us a nice big picnic table and the street signs.

I also want to thank Tim Chase KB1ZVR for bringing 4 Boy Scout to FD for classes and operating on the GOTA Station. The boy Scouts made 10 contacts each.

I want to thank Phil Erickson W1PJE for visiting us on FD as Director of Haystack.

I want to thank Leo Hunter K1LK for bringing the large food canopy.

If there is anyone, I missed please accept my apologies.

Jim Hein N8VIM laid down the AC power and the Ethernet like a pro and kept the power on.

Everyone chipped in to help John Griswold put up his 38 ft telescoping mast.

This year's HF antennas consisted of Delta Loop and two end-fed half-wave antennas supported by the 38ft mast and trees. The band conditions were not the best but the enthusiasm was the incredible.

On 6-meters Les Peters K1SV did quite well operating FT-8 with his Kenwood TS-2000 Radio.

Eliot Mayer W1MJ supervising the GOTA station managed to get 4 boy Scouts to get 10 contacts each on the air towards getting their Merit Badges. Bruce Blain also gave the scouts a great lesson on Ham Radio.

In conclusion I thought FD was a blast! Everything went very well. It was hot and sunny at times and then it drizzled at times. Thanks everyone that participated and volunteered on FD 2024 to make FD 2024 special.



Tim KB1ZVR instructing the Scouts

Tim KB1ZVR photo



Rediscovering that no matter the precautions, halyards and guy lines get tangled.

Charlie, AB1ZN photo

Working POTA John KK1X

June was not a bad month for my Parks On The Air "challenge". I managed to activate ten of the newly-added Wildlife Management Areas in the local area, from about Shirley to Winchendon. Several of these parks were first-time activations, me being the first "crazy person sitting in a park with a radio" to make ten contacts with other "crazy people looking to talk to them". That's mostly how I describe my activities to the muggles. I also offer brochures.

I spent several sessions along the Nashua River in the Oxbow National Wildlife Reserve, testing a couple of configurations of a 20 meter Delta Loop Antenna. Antenna theorists indicate that if fed one way, the a delta loop is vertically polarized. If fed another way, it's horizontally polarized. My



Putting up the VHF antenna Stack

Charlie, AB1ZN photo

results show no meaningful difference in the two feed methods, but my test methods are at best suspect. I'm really only calling CQ, counting contacts, and looking at PSKReporter. I strongly suspect that 24-hour test periods using WSPR would provide a better indication of the differences in polarity.

All told, I went out fifteen times over the month. Four of the outings were at overlapping parks (Oxbow/Nashua River), so I counted nineteen "activations" for the month. An outing counts as an activation if I manage to log at least ten unique contacts. In light of that requirement, I revisited Walden Pond State Reserve in Concord, where I had been "skunked" a few months back. If I recall, something stupid broke... This time I logged 25 contacts. I'll have to revisit Cotuituate State Park in Natick, as well. Current park count for me is 91. I get more wallpaper at 100, HI.

As your Newsletter Editor, I trek to HRO monthly to drop off a few copies of the Signal, and a few people actually pick it up to read (or line their

parakeet cages...). There is a "two-fer" park nearby the Candy Store, so I drove up to the Ballard State Forest parking lot in Derry and carried some gear about 400 meters to the Taylor Mill State Historic Site, (co-located in Ballard State Forest.) I made 16 contacts (32 because of the two-fer), and packed back out. As I walked into the parking lot, I saw two fellows sitting at a card table with wires up in trees. Hmm.

"Working a little bit of POTA, boys?", I asked, before recognizing Jim W1FMR and Paul AK1P, who I know from NEQRP activities. I sat down for twenty minutes to have a chat.

While I don't have enough material to discuss antennas in a separate article, I can point out that a lot of the videos on YouTube are of dubious merit (even though it's on the internet, John?). One of the go-to antennas found in that theatre is the 17' telescoping vertical (i.e. MFJ-1979), which by itself is good to 20 meters. Several vendors produce loading coils for this antenna to stretch it out to 40 meters. Lots of radials are employed. Some use the "magic carpet" approach, in which a large patch of Faraday cloth is laid out on the ground instead of radials. I've used this setup with six or eight radials, and have always had pretty terrible luck. It's probably worth noting that I transmit at 5 watts, and most of these video guys are QRO, running at least 50 watts, if not 100. At the Taylor Mill site, I set up the vertical, six radials, great SWR. I sat there for nearly an hour with no contacts. I was thinking the band was dead, but I just was not getting out. At ALL. I swapped to MY go-to antenna, a 40 meter off center fed dipole, supported about 20 feet at the feedpoint, ends sloped out in a wide inverted-V (and it occurs to me that perhaps my 25 foot feedline in some way affects this...). The only antenna I prefer to the OCFD is a straight-up dipole, but the OCFD is very convenient as I have quite a robust tuner in the KX3. I feel I owe a plug to the ham that built my OCFD, Tim, N9SAB, who has an eBay store.

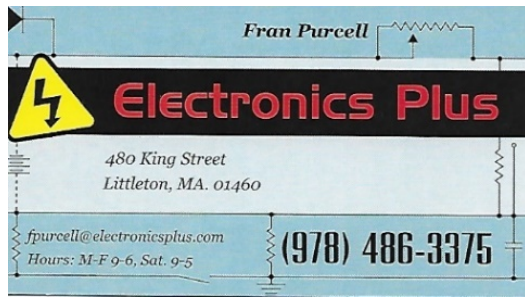


Bruce K1BG and Eliot W1MJ
This photo recreates a Field Day photo from the 1970's
Eliot, W1MJ photo



Eliot used his KX3 to earn the solar power bonus. At night...
Eliot, W1MJ photo

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Treasurer's Report

Due to the Board meeting being delayed because of the Independence Day holiday, various reports are unavailable at "press time". The Treasurer's report and meeting minutes will be available after the meeting on July 11, and will be in the next issue of Signal.



I swear it was there when I left the house...
Charlie, AB1ZN photo

Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club
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President: Bruce Blain K1BG
Vice President: Les Peters N1SV
Secretary: John Bielefeld K1JEB
Treasurer: Ralph Swick KD1SM

Board Members:
Fred Darling KB1RGT (2024-2025)
John Griswold KK1X (2024-2026)
Jim Hein N8VIM (2024-2027)

N1NC Trustee Bruce Blain K1BG

Join NVARC! Annual dues are
\$15 individual, \$20 family

Contact us on the N1MNX repeater:
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