



NVARC *Signal*



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Next Meeting

May's meeting will be held 7:30 PM on May 15, 2025 at the Pepperell Community Center at 4 Hollis Street in Pepperell Massachusetts.

Our guest speaker will be Les Peters N1SV on the subject of collecting awards and Logbook of the World.

Portable operating tip



Use a "permanent" marker to mark telescopic whip for various bands. Measure once and mark it!

Weekly 2-meter Net

The NVARC Information Net is held Monday nights at 7:30PM local time on the 2m N1MNX repeater – 147.345MHz+100pL. An informal net on 28.400(+/-) may follow the VHF net.

President's Corner Les N1SV

I'd like to thank Bruce K1BG for his many years of guiding NVARC through thick and thin. He's helped to grow the club and make it more welcoming to those members who've been away as well as new visitors and licensees. With his Technician license classes he's helped to mint a new group of amateurs and new club members like Mary KC1VSQ & Thea KC1VSF. I've worked side by side helping Bruce to prepare these prospective licensees as well as helping to loan out equipment and install antennas. As Bruce has reminded me, getting people licensed is just part of the process, we also need to help get them on the air! Over the past year I've learned a lot from him, most of all that I have large shoes to fill. There is still a lot for me to learn so I ask for your patience and understanding during this time of transition.

Field Day is fast approaching on June 28th & 29th so save the date. I'm happy to report that John K1JEB has agreed to be our Field Day Chairman again. We will again be setting up the Heald Street Orchard in Pepperell as we've done in the past. While we may have gotten pretty good at setting up in this location over the years, we still need plenty of volunteers to be successful. Whether it's people to help with setup, operators, logistical assistance & food support or takedown we could certainly use your help. So please reach out to John K1JEB with whatever assistance you can provide.

Now that NVARC has taken on the responsibility of maintaining the N1NMX repeater system, I've created a repeater committee to oversee this. I've appointed Jim N8VIM to head this committee and Matt KC1TUV to help with this effort. And I'm in the process of trying to fill a third position to round out the committee.



As the weather continues to improve, I expect Jim will be requesting assistance to help paint the repeater shack and make other improvements. This is a great opportunity to learn more about our repeater system and to help the club. Speaking of repeaters, don't forget to check into the weekly NVARC Information net on the 147.345 MHz N1NC repeater every Monday night at 7:30 PM. We've had a nice group of stations checking in and discussing their projects or just asking questions. At around 8:00 PM when we close the net, we QSY to 28.410 MHz where we hold a roundtable discussion with locals stations including some of our new licensees. I hope you can join us!

If you haven't checked out our new WordPress webpage at <http://n1nc.org> please do so. Eliot W1MJ and John KK1X have made some nice improvements. Eliot has updated our [Constitution & Bylaws](#) and John has added a new [newsletter archive](#). In the coming months come back and look for new content as we continue to make improvements. And if you have any feedback one way or the other please reach out to Eliot or me.

This month's speaker will be yours truly speaking on operating awards and LogBook of the World (LOTW). Learn about some of the popular awards as well as some of the more uncommon ones you may not know about. I'll also provide an overview of, and how to get started with, LOTW.



Treasurer's Report Ralph KD1SM

Income for January to April was \$558.75 in membership fees and \$8.75 in donations. Expenses were \$9.89 in PayPal fees and \$116 for six month renewal of the Post Office box, leaving a net income of \$441.61 for the period. Several members renewed their membership multiple years into the future.

Current balances:

General fund \$3,741.53

Community fund \$7,128.25

At the April Special Meeting the membership approved a change to the Bylaws making all memberships renew on the first day of January each year. Members with a renewal month other than January will adjust their renewal date to January by adding \$1.25 (12/15) to their next renewal period for each month between their previous renewal and the following January.

I will inform each affected member of the specific amount of this adjustment for their next renewal date.

As of 30 April we have 59 members who are current with their dues and 30 renewals outstanding.

To pay membership dues via PayPal see the instructions in <https://n1nc.org/membership/>

If you are joining ARRL or renewing your membership please note ARRL's instructions to enter your NVARC membership information. As a Special Service Club, the ARRL expects a majority of Club members to also be ARRL members and will send a portion of your new or renewal ARRL membership fee back to the Club. Contact Ralph for further information if you need it.

Board Meeting Report John K1JEB

John KK1X will add the changes to the Club By-laws concerning a policy change in the dues.

A proposal was made and passed to provide John and Lisa Grady Honorary NVARC membership for their long support to the Club. The Gradys have allowed us to use their facilities for classes and seminars for several years, starting with Tech Night with Dan Pedtke, KW2T (SK).

John KK1X has up to 9 pages of content for this month's Signal. Les N1SV has requested that a teaser article be added to the Club web-page concerning this month's Signal.

Zack KC1VUY received lots of pictures from Skip K1NKR to be add to the new web-page.

~~This month's speaker will be Adrian KO8SCA to talk about him planning for his up coming Expedition to Bouvet Island. Jim N8VIM will help Adrian set up the Video conferencing presentation.~~ Unfortunately Adrian was not able to make it this month. Les N1SV will make a presentation.

The weekly 2-meter net last Monday 04/28/2024 had 6 check-ins and went very well. The 10-meter also went very well.

Jim N8VIM is still trouble shooting the 440 repeater and may be on line very soon.

A repeater committee will be formed. So far there are only two members Jim N8VIM and Matt KC1TUV still requesting a 3rd candidate.

Ralph KD1SM reported that the Boston Marathon race went very well. The Groton Road Race will be this Sunday 05/04/2025.

Board meeting cont'd

John K1JEB will be coordinating with the town of Pepperell to reserve the Orchard, coordinate the mowing of the Field Day site, inform the Pepperell Police and reserve the Porta Pottie service for Field Day 2025.

NEARFest is this weekend and Les N1SV will be setting up a table on Saturday May 3rd for NVARC any members wishing to sell any Ham Equipment.

Les N1SV will be posting information concerning the 48th Eastern VHF/UHF Conference May 8 through May 11th at Windsor Locks, CT. Bruce K1BG has reported that the NVARC Special Services Club application has been approved by ARRL.

Les N1SV has requested for a Club Property List be brought up to date.

Les N1SV will be reaching out to Peter N1ZRG for an inventory of the Lending Library.

A proposal was made and passed to reimburse Les N1SV's dinner expenses for April presenters Dale AF1T and Mickie W1MKY. Les had given the bought dinner when they traveled from Henniker, NH for the antenna presentation.



Les N1SV set up a club table at NEARFest in New Boston NH. He walked away with a bit of a sunburn...

Made in New England

Leo K1LK

Theodore Roosevelt McElroy (1901-1963) was born September 15, 1901 in Somerville MA. He got his name because Teddy Roosevelt assumed the office after President McKinley's assassination the day before his birth.

At an early age he showed his talents with the typewriter at school, his teacher claiming he could type 150 wpm. (Today the keyboard record is 305 wpm) At the age of 14 he had his sights on Western Union as a messenger. The older operators showed him how to operate the telegraph keys. They were in awe with his typing skills.

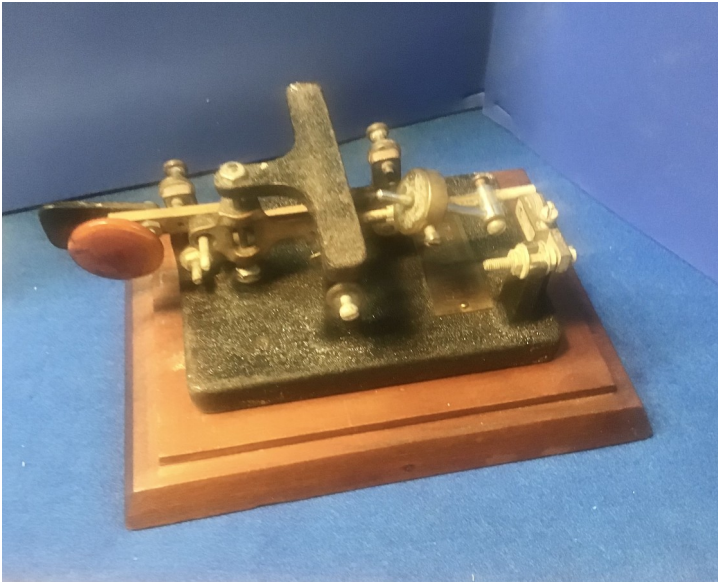
At 15 McElroy left school to become a full fledged operator. He went to Chatham MA to operate the RCA wireless station for a year. As he was homesick, Western Union brought him back to Boston. During WW I he was a civilian operator at Camp Devens.

The year 1922 was big for TR (a nickname he preferred) with speed and accuracy telegraph competitions. He brought home the trophy in Boston winning with 51 1/2 wpm, New York City (56 1/2 wpm) and Chicago (56 wpm). Twenty minutes after that competition ended, he went on to capture a world record of 70 wpm for 5 minutes. The 1939 competition in North Carolina was his last with a record 77 wpm.

TR started a business in his kitchen manufacturing telegraph equipment before opening a plant in Boston. Production of his first key, called the MAC-KEY, started in 1934. The photo shows serial #5947, made ca. 1935 of heavy cast iron to prevent any vibrations. He advertised in the 1937 December QST with some newer models. The photo shown has his signature tear drop shape with a chrome finish.

McElroy was a ham operator with the call W1/JYN. It seems that it was passed down to a family member, W1JYN, an XYL located in Groton MA according to QRZ.

During WW2 his company manufactured more telegraph equipment than any other, receiving the Army-Navy E award for excellence. Many of the keys were made in Littleton MA from 1944-45. He built 2 buildings on a 10 acre parcel on the shore of Fort Pond. It was secured by high chain link fence and entry gate. The building is still there, used as a function hall. In 1956 he attempted semiretirement and sold his business. He started another business T.R. McElroy and Associates, and the McElroy Electronic Corp., a distributor of electronic components located in Shirley MA. T.R. Passed away in 1963 from a heart attack. There's more to T.R.'s story but with limited pages and my typing skills check the internet for more info.



More Antenna Testing

John KK1X

By now you know that I tend to build most of my antennas, but AliExpress sent me an offer I found impossible to resist - a ground-mounted vertical with telescopic whip, complete with a set of radials.

I'd seen this antenna in YouTube videos, always with mixed results. For \$21, I bit. Given it was shipped from China, it got here in only two weeks. There is no additional tariff on electronics goods such as this, so there was no pain there.

I chose a decent day to test the antenna. I was going to be out anyway on errands, so I brought along my radio and the new antenna. After delivering bread to my sister, I grabbed a fresh coffee and set up at the Ashby Wildlife Management Area on MA-119, just this side of the New Hampshire line.

The radials packaged with the antenna consisted of a ribbon cable stripped on one end and crimped into a 10mm (about 3/8") ring terminal. The ring fits over the threaded ground spike that protrudes from the base of the feed point. Splitting the ribbon into individual conductors is facilitated by breaking out the ten ends, then pulling the odd ends one way and the even ends the other. The radials are about 17 feet long, oh-so-accurately measured by my arm span.

The feedpoint appears to be a cylinder of "metal" (it might be aluminum – I didn't taste it) tapped on either end for a 10mm thread with a SO-239 connector jutting out of the middle.

Both tapped holes had identical-looking hardware inside, so I used a meter to figure out which way to assemble the antenna. I did label it for later ease of use...



10 meters has been pretty decent of late, so I started there, extending the whip out to 100 inches (Fig 1), which to the metric-challenged, is right about 2.5 meters, a quarter wave on 10 meters. Performance (or propagation) was disappointing. PSK Reporter shows only a few stations even hearing me after 15 minutes of calling CQ. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the antenna's footprint.



Fig 1

Disappointment on 10 spurred me on to skip 15 altogether and try 20. I extended the telescopic whip to 200" (sense a pattern?) and reassembled. Again with the disappointment. There was some domestic coverage, but it appeared pretty sparse.

Since my POTA quest of last year is in the rear-view mirror, I've been operating from home, and lately using 50 watts. Perhaps I'm just jaded and 5 watts just doesn't seem fun any more...

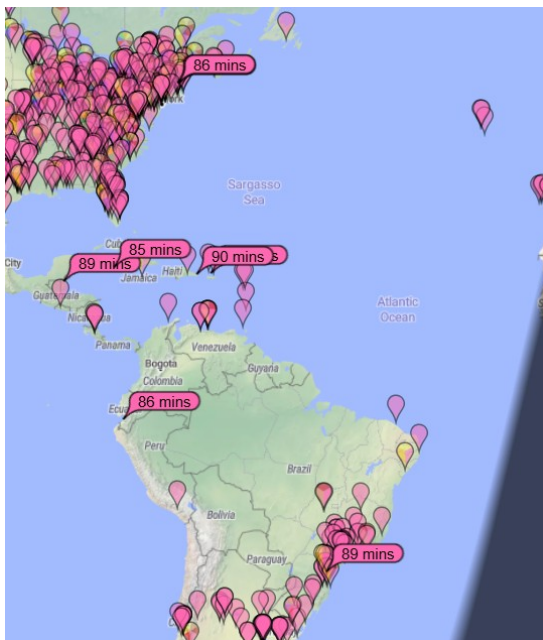


Fig 2

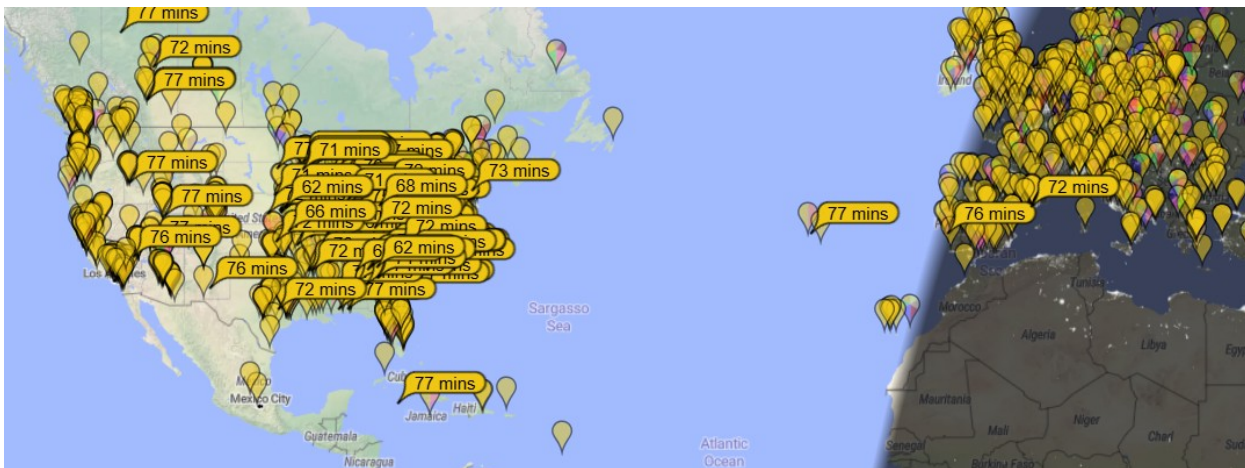


Fig 3

I decided that I'd not given the antenna proper justice, so I ran a test one random day (well, a Tuesday) from the Oxbow NWR Bill Ashe Visitor Center, my personal antenna test range... I set up “my” antenna (a “truck-stop” CB antenna mount on a landscape spike with telescoping whip) on one end of the parking area as a reference, and the AliExpress antenna about 60 feet away. The AliExpress antenna had ten ribbon-cable radials. My antenna had nine 18 gauge radials, about 16-17 feet long. Both antennas were choked at the antenna and connected to an A/B switch, then to my KX3. Seemingly equivalent, if not electrically identical.

I ran my typical five watts using FT8. Over the course of an hour, each antenna had two fifteen-minute time slots. I simply called CQ KK1X with my “truck-stop” antenna and CQ KK1X/P with the AliExpress. This allowed me to track antenna performance using (you guessed it) PSKReporter. Not a 100% fair test, but I don't have fancy test equipment, and I only care about what works (or appears to...). Again, I think I've been spoiled operating fifty watts from home, but I managed a mere nine contacts in that hour using only five watts. Of the nine contacts, four were using the reference antenna, and five using the AliExpress unit.



Fig 4

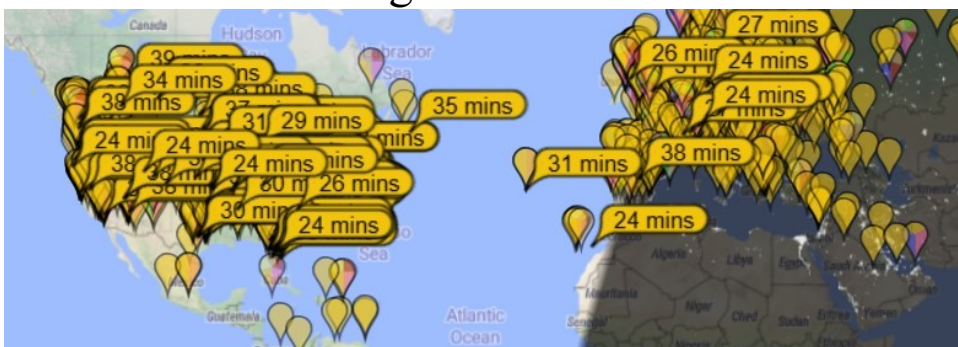


Fig 5

Figures 4 and 5 show the relative performance of the two antennas. The test unit seems to have somewhat better reach into Europe, but over the course of an hour, simple propagation changes could easily account for that difference.

In all, cost-wise, the AliExpress antenna wins handily, at half the cost of the whip I already had.

Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club
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President: Les Peters N1SV
Vice President: Zack Harrison KC1VUY
Secretary: John Bielefeld K1JEVB
Treasurer: Ralph Swick KD1SM

Board Members:
John Griswold KK1X (2024-2026)
Jim Hein N8VIM (2024-2027)
Matt Fennell KC1TUV (2025-2028)

N1NC Trustee: Bruce Blain K1BG

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

Contact us on the N1MNX repeater:
442.900(+) PL100
147.345(+) PL100
53.890(-) PL100

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corrections, and inquiries should be sent to

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