



NVARC

Signal



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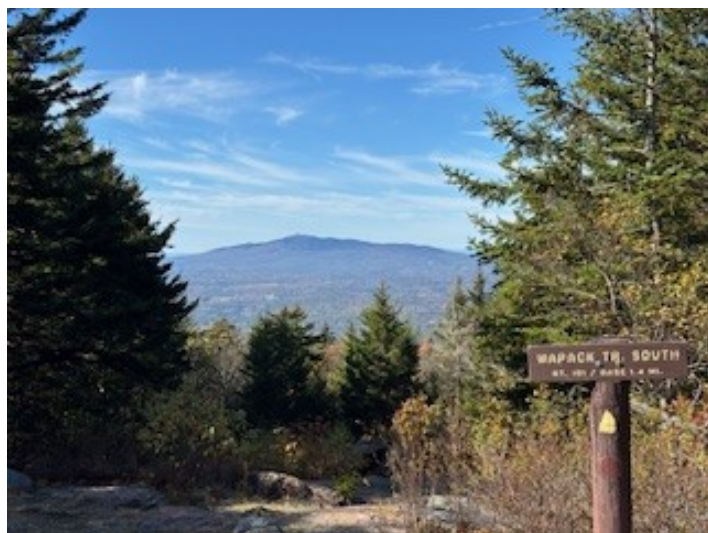
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November 2025

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**Don't forget! ARRL
Sweepstakes SSB contest this
weekend!
November 15, 2025 2100Z to
November 17, 2025 0300Z.**



View from Pack Monadnock

Next Meeting

Month's meeting will be held
7:30 PM on November 20, 2025
at the Pepperell Community
Center at 4 Hollis Street in
Pepperell, Massachusetts.

The November meeting will be
our annual card sort. Eric KV1J
will bring thousands of QSL
cards to be sorted. A pizza party
follows the sort.

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

This past month one of our members, Jim Barron N1SAK became a silent key (SK). Jim joined NVARC in 2023 and had been checking into our 2M Monday night net. Jim also enjoyed POTA & SOTA events. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Bianca and their family. Bruce has reached out to Bianca who has asked for assistance in selling Jim's equipment. Bruce is in the process of compiling a list.

Bruce K1BG, has started up a General license class as a follow up to his recent and very successful Technician license class. Last I heard Bruce had approximately fifteen students signed up. The classes are again being held at the Grady Research building in Ayer Monday & Wednesday nights from 7:00-9:00 PM through December 10th with a VE session scheduled for December 15th. If you would like to help Bruce, please contact him at bruce.blain@charter.net for more information.

One of my favorite monthly meetings is the November one where Eric, KV1J who manages the W1 QSL Bureau, visits us and we get to sort all of the incoming QSL cards for the 1st US call area. For those unfamiliar with the process, don't worry, it's easy and fun. Eric arrives with boxes and boxes of QSL cards from all over the world. Our job is to sort them alphabetically by the 1st letter following the "1" of the US station they are addressed to. Cards are sorted into groups and at the end of the evening collected and re-boxed ready to get shipped on the individual letter sorters. This is always a great social gathering for our members and in the process, you may find some cards of your own. Can't read someone's terrible handwriting or have a question, plenty of folks will be available to help. Oh, and did I forget to mention we provide pizza and soda during this meeting?



I also expect Rod WA1TAC will be there to collect any cards you may have for the outgoing QSL bureau. All he asks is that you have your cards bundled with a copy of your ARRL membership card or similar showing your membership number.

Calling all members with a homebrew project, a kit (completed or not), or just a unique piece of gear. It's not too early to be thinking about sharing these things with the rest of our members at our December meeting as it's our annual Show and Tell (AKA Homebrew night). If it's too big or heavy to bring in don't worry, take some pictures. I look forward to seeing what our members have been working on.

Operating hint John KK1X



As you know, I do a fair amount of POTA work, and for a new park, I might drive a couple of hours. Before I invest that kind of time, I visit <https://solarham.com/> to get a sense of the “space weather”. This stuff is altogether too complex for my little pea brain, so the kind folks at solarham.com have reduced it all to a colored chart. In the middle of the image to the left are three bars – purple, red, and yellow. These bars take on values of green, yellow, red, and (first time I’ve seen) purple. Green indicates good conditions, and apparently purple means just dreadful. (This coincides with great Aurora sightings reported on this morning’s weather - 12 Nov 2025 as I write this). I’m not bothering with the shack today!

Treasurer's Report

Ralph KD1SM

NVARC received no income and had no expenses for the month of October.

Current balances:

General fund	\$3,305.44
Community fund	\$7,243.25

As of 6 November we have 43 members who are current with their dues and 52 renewals outstanding. With the Bylaws update adopted earlier this year all membership renewals become due in January. Those who have not yet paid the "catchup" amount for the remainder of 2025 will need to pay that with your renewal dues for January 2026. The catchup amount is \$1.25 for each remaining month of 2025 after your renewal month.

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.

Operating tip

John KK1X



I determined that the primary limiting factor in my POTA activations is not battery life, but whether I have coffee!

One day at the transfer station in Ayer I found a butane backpacking stove. I purchased a can of butane at Walmart, a collapsing drip funnel from Amazon, and I'm in business. I even found ultra-pasteurized creamers.

And yes, I have a real cup – I don't have to recycle McD cups. This picture was taken at the Vermont Sheep & Wool Festival in Tunbridge...(after which I did a POTA activation at Queechee State Park)

Board Meeting Report

Les N1SV

NVARC 11/06/2025 BOD Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Les Peters, N1SV

Ralph Swick, KD1SM

John Griswold, KK1X

Jim Hein, N8VIM

Bruce Blain, K1BG

Ralph provided the treasurer's report prior to the meeting. Ralph agreed to put together a mass mailing to remind members of their remaining 2025 catch up dues as we convert to the new system in January. Ralph also commented that while he knew Jim N8VIM had donated the fuel for Field Day, that he had not received any reimbursement requests.

Bruce visited Bianca Barron, the widow of John Barron, N1SAK (SK) and discussed what to do with his equipment. Bianca indicated that she would like to sell the equipment and Bruce will be putting a list together with items and their suggested prices.

John reported that the Signal was still in the early stages of assembly and that he was still looking for articles. Les will provide an article on basic repeaters.

Bruce reported that his General license class began on the 5th with approximately nine students in attendance.

Les reported that the November meeting will be our annual card sort / pizza party. A budget of \$150 was approved at the October meeting for this. Les briefly mentioned that December meeting would be our annual Show and Tell / Homebrew Night.



There was a discussion on loaner equipment for newly licensed hams with Les indicating that thanks to John K1JEB, his Kenwood TS-2000 was now available. Bruce indicated that he had several different radios available as well and agreed to create a list of them.

There was a discussion around handing out club promotional material at VE sessions and/or requesting email addresses from those taking the exam for subsequent communications from the club. Les indicated that Ray AA1SE provided handouts at the VE session for Bruce's Technician license class.

Bruce brought up harvesting local GMRS license data to try and reach prospective amateur licensees to help locate potential new members. The consensus was that post cards could be sent out informing them of NVARC and amateur radio.

Logging-In the Woes of the Hobby Skip K1NKR

(Or Logging In the Woes of the Hobby, or Logging-in, the Woes of the Hobby. Let the reader decide.)

I replaced my station computer recently. (An article in IEEE Spectrum magazine noted that the average replacement lifetime of a computer is now five years.) In my case it's been a while longer than that. I bought my HP desktop in 2010 to support a fully decked-out Flex-5000 I presented to myself as a fifty years in ham radio anniversary present. The HP's IEEE-1394 Firewire interface was an F5K necessity and justified the purchase. I can't think back to when any prior purchase happened.

Over the years I upgraded the HP's operating system, cleared out excess storage, and did all the so-called proper things. Still, the machine was getting to the point that the delay from command to execution was approaching 30-40 seconds. Keystroke, wait; keystroke, wait.

So now there's a newer, smaller, faster ASUS processor box setting here in the shack. The Flex was put into storage a couple of years ago when I purchased an Elecraft K4D and an Icom-9700 as a sixty years in ham radio anniversary present. No more need for the Firewire interface. Plus, the ASUS was half the price of the HP. And it runs a lot faster.

I had copied off all the data from the old machine to an external hard drive, figuring that I could just download and install new copies of the programs (e.g., HRD, WSJT, RadioMobile) I wanted to continue using and then selectively re-populate the directories and files that I really wanted to keep from those on the USB hard drive.

OK. Until I noticed that HRD Logbook didn't have the six station definitions that I had accumulated over decades of moving around. No problem, I thought. I'll just recover the logbook file and it'll be all there. Not quite so; not sure why. I recovered, purged and recovered, and recovered and purged, and any other sequence I could think of for two or three days. Finally, I manually re-entered the most recent three QSOs that had been entered on the new machine and manually re-typed all the six station definitions. Less than an hour after I started, I was done. They say ham radio is a "learning hobby." It's also an investment in time. Not sure what I learned here—and I probably won't have to go through this until another fifteen years have passed. But I think I'll re-do the WSJT configuration settings and spend some time learning more about FT8.

Repeater Basics

Les N1SV

When two stations exchange signals on the same frequency it's called simplex communications. The effective communications range is a function of the output power of each transceiver, the type of antennas being used, and any obstructions that may exist between the two stations. Two stations with VHF FM Handi Talkies might be able to communicate several miles or more.

An amateur radio repeater is an electronic device that receives a weak or low-level amateur radio signal and retransmits it at a higher level or higher power, so that the signal can cover longer distances without degradation. Many repeaters are located on hilltops or on tall buildings as the higher location increases their coverage area. In this way distances of 20 miles or greater are possible. Repeaters commonly are used to extend FM and digital communications modes.



Repeaters listen on one frequency called an Input frequency and transmit on another called an output frequency. The difference between the repeater input and output frequencies is known as the offset. For 2m repeaters the offset is ± 0.600 MHz and for 70cm its ± 5 MHz. Most repeaters are configured to retransmit an input signal only if that signal contains the correct Continuous Tone-coded Squelch System (CTCSS) or Digital-coded Squelch (DCS) tone. This subaudible tone is commonly referred to as the PL tone for historical reasons. Your transceiver must be configured to transmit this tone in order to use the repeater. There are numerous online resources that list amateur radio repeaters, their locations, frequency offsets, and their CTCSS or DCS frequencies. Two examples are the <https://www.nerepeaters.com/> & <http://www.repeaterbook.com/repeaters/>.

Repeater etiquette involves being courteous and respectful. First, no one calls CQ on a repeater, they simply just say “this is W1ABC listening” to let others know they are available. Second, keying up a repeater without identifying (AKA ‘kerchunking” the repeater) is frowned upon. It’s important to listen before transmitting and identify your call sign regularly. The Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club (NVARC) operates repeaters on the following amateur radio frequencies:

6m - 53.890 MHz, -500 KHz offset, PL 100 Hz

2m - 147.345 MHz, +600 KHz offset, PL 100 Hz

70cm - 442.90 MHz, +5 MHz offset, PL 100 Hz.

A weekly net is held every Monday night on the NVARC 2m repeater starting at 7:30 PM. The net control operator will provide instructions on how to check into it. The purpose of the net is to exchange information among amateurs within the coverage area of the repeater, all are welcome and encouraged to join.

Programming some of these new radios with their multi-function keys and deep menus can be a frustrating process. An alternative to this tedious exercise is to use a free software program called CHIRP

<https://chirpmyradio.com/projects/chirp/wiki/Home>

that can be used to program transceivers. CHIRP supports many different transceivers and requires the programming cable that can be purchased for your particular transceiver. Using CHIRP you can download what’s in your transceiver’s memories, modify it as desired and upload it back to the transceiver.

Try a Contest

Bruce K1BG

At the October meeting of the Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club, I gave a presentation on contesting for beginners. The autumn season is considered by many to be “contest season” because of all the major contests that take place. Newbie and seasoned hams can equally share in the fun that these contests offer. Since the October meeting, we’ve had the CQWW Phone contest, which is the first major worldwide event of the year.

I heard from a number of new hams who participated in the CQWW Phone contest for the first time. They were all dubious that their small stations could make contacts to other continents. I’m happy to report that every one of them who participated are thrilled with their results! When conditions are right (as they are on ten meters right now), worldwide communication is possible with modest levels of power and modest antennas. 100 Watts and a dipole will go a very, very long way.

This means that there are several contests still to go, and I am writing this article to encourage you to try one – or both – of them.

The first is ARRL Sweepstakes Phone. It will start just a couple of days after this Signal is published. It runs from 2100 UTC (or Greenwich Mean Time, GMT) November 15th through 0259 UTC November 17th. This means 4 PM Saturday through 10 PM on Sunday. That’s 30 hours, but operators are limited to 24 of those 30 hours. This means that you can get some sleep! The exchange for sweepstakes is rather unique in that there is more information than you typically exchange in a contest. Read the rules for details on the exchange as I am sure that you will have questions and that I will not go over every scenario. Each exchange starts with a sequential number, starting with 1, that indicates how many contacts you have made in the contest. The second part of the exchange is the “precedent”, which indicates what category you are in. “A” is high power, “B” is lower power (usually 100 watts), “Q” for QRP, “U” for unlimited, etc. Third part is your callsign, followed by the fourth part, the “check”. The check is the last two digits of the year you were first licensed. Lastly is the ARRL Section.

So let's say I'm speaking with the 34th person that is going into my log for the contest, and let's say that it's John, KK1X. I would say the following:

"KK1X, Thirty-Four Bravo, Kilo One Bravo Golf, Sixty Eight, Whiskey-Mike-Alpha". Remember, always use phonetics for information being conveyed.

Make sure you review the rules and enter the correct category. Because you send this in your exchange, it cannot be corrected later. And remember, this is a US only contest, so it's great opportunity to work on awards like Worked All States. For more information on Sweepstakes, again, go to <https://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes> for complete details of the contest rules.

The second contest which will be of interest is the ARRL 10 Meter Contest. This year, it runs from 0000 UTC on December 13 through 2359 UTC December 14th, or 7 PM on Friday, December 12th through 7 PM on Sunday, December 14th. The exchange is easy, a signal report (usually 59), and a state. My exchange to KK1X might be "KK1X, Five Nine, Mike Alpha". That's it. For me personally, the ARRL 10 Meter contest is one of the most fun contests out there. It's 48 hours, but 10 meters will likely close just after dark. I can sleep! And it is a worldwide contest, so many DX stations will participate (BTW, DX stations send a signal report and a serial number). This is a great contest for both Worked All States and DXCC awards. I will enter NVARC's "Aggregate Club Score" for the 10 Meter contest, so please participate!

<https://www.arrl.org/10-meter>.

Both of these contests are supported by the major logging programs (such as N1MM+). I will host an evening Zoom session before Sweepstakes to answer any questions people may have.

Let me know if you have any questions, and I look forward to seeing you on the air (and working you!) during these contests.

Bruce, K1BG

Working POTA John KK1X

October turned out to be a pretty busy month for me. As many readers might be aware, my 2024 goal was to make at least 500 contacts each month. I did it - ending up with over 7000 contacts in total. I didn't set a similar goal for 2025 (my wife terms that "learning"), but I have resolved to "activate" each of the eligible State Parks in Massachusetts. Eventually. Toward that goal, in October I managed to activate ten new parks for me, stretching from Dartmouth to Topsfield to North Adams to Mount Washington, Massachusetts, all the way down in the southwest corner of the Commonwealth - walking distance to Taconic State Park in New York (and yes, I activated it). Along the way I managed to see a few bald eagles. They are difficult to photograph with an iPhone. Eagles were seen at Hampton Ponds State Park, though I've also seen them at Mystic Lakes State Park (Medford), and the Federated Women's Club State Forest just east of the Quabbin Reservoir.



Bash Bish Falls

I viewed waterfalls at Bash Bish Falls SP (along with a hike that doubled as a coronary stress test) and at Waconah Falls SP. Waconah was a much easier hike! The foliage this time of year is pretty spectacular, though toward the end of October, as we all know, it's mostly gold, brown and yellow. Peg and I drove out to Clarksburg to see Natural Bridge State Park. The bridge itself is completely unimpressive.

I did another trip to the same park later in the month simply to have more activations there than any other ham. Yes, POTA is a petty business!

I haven't been doing any antenna testing per se. I've stuck to my "tried and true" selections - quarter wave verticals twice, using 15 or 18 radials. I have no comparison data, but there was no obvious advantage to the additional three radials. I used an End Fed Half Wave (EFHW) five times. It's handy when I want to work multiple bands without changing antennas, but if there are no trees it's a trick. To my great surprise, after a number of lackluster experiences in my early amateur career, I've been using "hamstick" style antennas on a triple mag-mount on the roof of my car. While not "gangbusters", these antennas do work, and they are very easily and quickly deployed, perfect for a lazy sot like me! Even moving to a different park, I'll just remove the antenna and leave the mount in place. I made 18 activations (72%) using this system, and I'm pretty happy with it. I still need 6m, 12m and 80m sticks for a full set.



Waconah Falls

I think I spoke about this last month, but I'd been carrying my IC-7300 around, as I'd encountered a fellow in 7-land looking for a NH contact for WAS. I reached out to him. He had barely heard me, so I promised to use more power on the next attempt, which never happened. He managed to make a contact with another ham, but I've been pushing 50 watts for POTA, and while the reach is clearly better than 5 watts, I was not impressed with the difference. I have returned the IC-7300 to the shack, reverting to the KX3, though I've been running it at 10 watts with no apparent harm. The heat sink gets warm, but as long as I can keep a finger on it, right?

Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club
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President: Les Peters N1SV
Vice President: Zack Harrison KC1UY
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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