Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

NVARC Signal

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Next Meeting

This month's meeting will be held 7:30 PM on February 19 2026 at the Pepperell Community Center at 4 Hollis Street in Pepperell Massachusetts.

Our guest speaker will be Jim AB1WQ doing a presentation about 3-D printing

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.

Groton Road Race

The Groton Road Race is coming up on Sunday, May 3, 2026.
See story on Page 7.

President's Corner
Les N1SV

Les emailed his President's Corner text, but I did not receive it. Les is in Florida without his computer and can't resend it, so I have no column to post. My apologies.

Two of the area's premier amateur radio flea markets are coming up:

On Saturday February 14 the Algonquin Amateur Radio Club will be hosting their annual event in Marlborough at the 1Lt Charles W. Whitcomb School 25 Union St. or off Bolton St. (Rt. 85) Marlborough, Massachusetts

On Sunday March 15 the Contoocook Valley ARC will be hosting their annual event in Henniker NH at The Henniker Community School 51 Western Avenue, Henniker, NH

Both venues offer VE sessions to upgrade your license.

Treasurer's Report
Ralph KD1SM

Income for January was $521.25 in membership fees. Expenses were $7.47 in PayPal fees and $122 for the semi-annual PO box renewal leaving a net income of $391.78 for the month.

Current balances:

General fund	$3,759.11
Community fund	$7,243.25

As of 5 February we have 58 members who are current with their dues. NVARC dues are still a bargain at just $15/year.

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

Please remember when you are renewing that our membership term for all members is now 1 January to 31 December. I have sent emails to everyone on our roster indicating the amount of your 2026 dues. In some cases that is less than the $15 annual dues if your previous renewal was after January 2025. If you still owe dues for part of 2025 my email will have included the catch-up amount ($1.25/month) for the remainder of 2025 plus the 2026 dues.

If you are in doubt about your dues status please send me (Ralph) an email and I will be happy to answer your questions.

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 me (Ralph) for further information if you need it.

Board Meeting Report
John K1JEB

Attendees: Les N1SV, John K1JEB, Ralph KD1SM, John KK1X, Jim N8VIM, and Zack KC1VUY

John KK1X is resurrecting the repeater page for the NVARC web site.

Jim N8VIM has uploaded the video from the Home Brew Night club presentation.

Zack KC1VUY has coordinated with Bruce K1BG to post the Girl Scouts “Thinking Day on The Air” event.

At this month’s club meeting Jim Wilber AB1WQ will be doing a presentation on 3-D Printing.

The March club meeting will have guest speaker Tony K1KP talking about the development of the Aurora 500W HF Transceiver.

Les N1SV is coordinating with Phil W1PJE to do a future presentation HamSCI.

Bruce K1BG is currently conducting a CW class, and is also planning a future Technician class.

Ralph KD1SM is coordinating with the Squannacook River Runners to support a future Groton, MA Road Race.

Made in New England
Leo K1LK

The Pilot Radio Corp. was founded by Isidor Goldberger, born 1893 in Manhattan New York. Goldberger graduated from Hebrew Technical Institute in Mechanical Arts in 1908 at the age of 15.

Goldberger followed his interest in aviation and became a test pilot for Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation from 1910 to 1914. He also sold aeronautical supplies and model airplanes.

In 1919 Goldberg started the Pilot Electric Manufacturing Co. in Brooklyn NY, manufacturing parts and kits for the radio amateurs. Pilot's early success came with the shortwave receiver "Wasp" in 1925.

In 1929 he acquired the Speed Tube Co. which allowed him to run radios on AC power allowing the Super Wasp to come to market. The name was changed to the Pilot Radio and Tube Corp. and finally in 1932 the Pilot Radio Corp.

In 1930 Goldberger established a second plant in Lawrence, Massachusetts. By 1936 his products were being sold in 90 countries with plants in Britain prior to WW2, Israel in 1947, and South Africa in 1953.

Televisions and a popular priced FM tuner were in the product line. Goldberger was president of the company until his death in 1961. By then they were building high quality Hi-Fi amplifiers, AM/FM tuners, and more. The 60's saw the beginning of Pilot Radio's decline with the influx of cheaper Japanese products.

Emerson Radio fully bought out Pilot's operations ending its run 1963.

Groton Road Race

** 2026 Groton Road Race Seeks Amateur Radio Support in May **

The Groton Road Race organizers are again requesting the assistance of the Amateur Radio community for the 2026 Race on Sunday May 3.

The Groton Road Race is a premier public event engaging over a thousand runners. NVARC and the ham community have been providing situational awareness, health and safety communication for this event for over three decades.

The course circles Groton Hill, starting and ending at the Groton Hill Music Center. This is the fourth year the Race has followed this course.

The planned event schedule this year is similar to 2025; the two main races start shortly after 10am. The communications support that we provide is expected to start around 9am and we should be done shortly after 1pm.

The Groton Road Race continues to be a major event for Amateur Radio in North Central Massachusetts. Those of you who have joined us in previous years know that the runners sincerely appreciate our presence.
Many tell us so as they run past. This event is so large that several Police Departments and other public safety organizations from other communities come to assist the Groton PD. The Groton Police Department specifically looks to Amateur Radio for our added communications support.

Contributing to the public good is one of the reasons Amateur Radio exists. Our public service events are a key opportunity for us to show our colors, volunteer our skills and equipment, and demonstrate why it is in the public's interest to continue to allocate precious RF spectrum to our the Amateur Radio Service. The Groton Road Race is a low-stress event and a great way to gain more experience with the public service aspect of amateur radio. Please consider joining us on May 3rd; let me know by email.

Groton Road Race

If you are a new Ham or know of another Ham who is interested in helping at these events but unsure of what is expected or what equipment may be needed, please do not hesitate to introduce yourself (or them) to me.

The Groton Road Race Committee and the Groton Police Department repeatedly praise and express their appreciation for our assistance in providing communications for this event for many years. I do hope you will be able to join us this year; please let me know.

Thanks and 73,
-Ralph KD1SM

mailto:ralph@kd1sm.net or mailto:kd1sm@arrl.net

[1] http://www.n1nc.org/Events/
[2] http://grotonroadrace.com/
[3] https://grotonhill.org/

Welcome Paul KC1YMR of Fayville to NVARC. Paul lists his interests as QRP HF, POTA, SOTA, portable operations more broadly, and emergency communications.

Paul is a graduate of NVARC's recent licensing class.

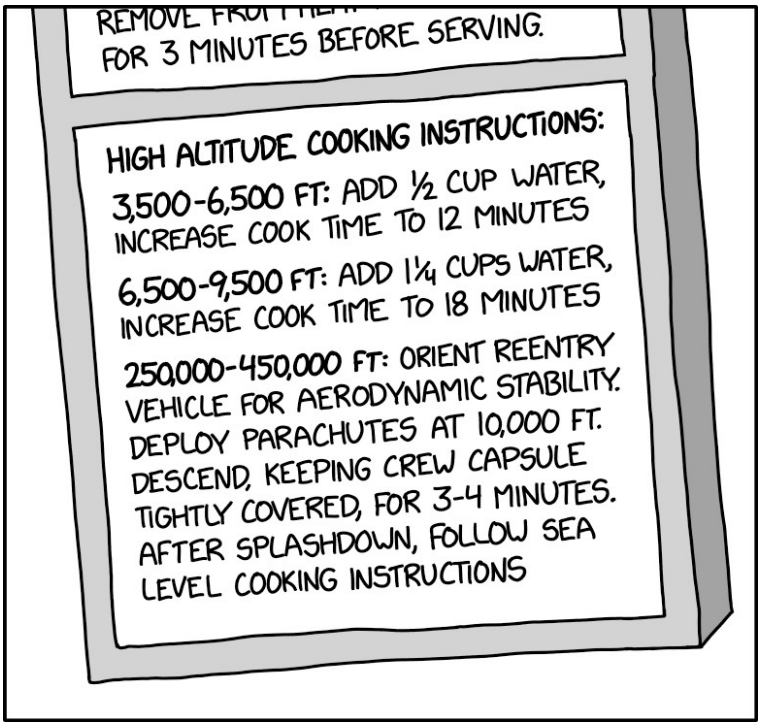
For those who, like me, weren't familiar with Fayville: it is a village in Southborough.

Announcements

From Rod, WA1TAC - I have started de-collecting some of the stuff that found its way into my basement starting with transformers. There are many transformers and filter chokes of various sizes, shapes and capabilities.

These include units from kilowatt to filament level and are mostly applicable for vacuum tube circuits.

If anyone is in need of iron, contact WA1TAC with need and application. The prices are right but pickup only and if one decides to depart with a unit, do it only at his/her purchase cost. Amateur radio is a hobby, not a money-grubbing business.



https://imgs.xkcd.com/comics/high_altitude_cooking_instructions.png

What Happened to Simple Radios?
Bruce K1BG

As more and more new hams graduate from NVARC's Technician license classes, I get more and more requests from new hams to help them pick that first transceiver. It's a complicated decision, and one they don't take lightly. The features and options seem daunting.

Back in the day, my first transceiver was the Heathkit HW-100. It was a 5 band SSB/CW transceiver, and in today's terms, had an output power of around 100 Watts. It covered 80/40/20/15/10 meters. What about the other bands? 160 meters still suffered from severe post WWII restrictions, and 30, 12, and 17 meters were not authorized for use until 1980s. Six meters did not become common in multiband transceivers until the 1990's.

The front panel was simple – a large VFO dial controlled your frequency, based on the position of the band selected via the Bandswitch. Separate controls for AF Gain (volume) and RF Gain (sensitivity adjustment). A Mode control selected between LSB (lower sideband), USB (upper sideband), CW (morse), and Tune (essentially, a CW carrier, without needing a key to send). A Mic./CW Level knob controlled either microphone gain on SSB or power output on CW. The Driver Preselector and Final load/tune controls (a knob and lever on a concentric shaft) were used in tuning the transmitter for resonance on whatever band you were operating on.

The front panel was rounded out with a Function slide switch, which selected either PTT (push-to-talk), VOX (voice-operated-transmit), or turned on a built in 100 kHz crystal calibrator to make sure your receiver display was displaying close to the right frequency! Another slide switch controlled what was being displayed on the analog Meter, either ALC (Automatic Limiter Control), Relative Power, or Plate Current (current through the final amplifiers).

A total of 7 knobs, a lever, and two slide switches were on the front panel. This was typical for early transceivers. There was no "menu" system typically found in modern radios. The software acronym is WYSIWYG – What you see is what you get. There were always a couple of fixed adjustments that were not easily accessible for settings not regularly changed. On the HW-100, the VOX controls – VOX Sensitivity, Anti-Trip, and VOX Delay - were potentiometers that could be adjusted using a small screwdriver placed through small holes in the side of the case. Adjust once and leave alone. The entire "Operation" chapter in the manual was five pages.

No automatic antenna tuner, built-in keyer, SWR meter, computer interface, or many other features and functions found in modern transceivers. The radio didn't do much, but it was easy to learn!
We bought my used HW-100 – I say "we" because my father was very involved in his 16-year-old son's decision-making process – for $250 in March of 1970. That would be over $2100 today.

IMO, today's transceiver are both technological marvels and nightmares to set-up and fully understand.

Consider what is one of the basic first transceivers for today's ham, the ICOM IC-735. It covers 160 – 6 meters, including the WARC bands. Besides SSB and CW, modes like AM, FM, and RTTY are included. Antenna tuner (automatic!), electronic keyer, SWR meter, computer interface, etc, standard. RX Preamp/Attenuator (P.AMP/ATT), Notch Filter, Noise Blanker (NB), Noise Reduction (NR), Twin Pass Band Tuning (TWIN PBT), included. Dual VFOs (A/B), RIT, XIT, 99 memory channels. All selectable from the front panel controls. What do all these features do, a beginner might ask? It's too much info for this short article!

A modern touch screen display replaces the frequency display and analog meter of the HW-100 but also provides a whole range of additional information. Spectrum waterfall, Audio Scope, and many other items. Simple adjustments not made on the front panel are all programmable functions selectable by using combinations of the large touch screen on the front panel and a knob to step through the menus. The "operation" part of the user's manual is about 58 pages in length.

I've seen used prices for an IC-7300 coming in at $800. Compare what you today compared to what we started with 50 years ago.
Besides having more state-of-the-art features, more advanced modern transceivers – like the IC-7300s big brother, the IC-7610 – allow quicker access to commonly used features by providing more buttons and controls on the front panel. While providing "ease-of-use", it further complicates the front panel.

So what does this all mean? On one hand, modern technology has simplified the operating experience. No tuning and loading. No need for external keyer, antenna tuner, speech processor, second VFO.

On the other hand, all the features, settings, learning curve, etc., can both confuse and intimidate new hams. But consider this: These technological marvels are a dream to operate. Trust me on this (if you don't believe me, buy some vintage gear and put it to work). If you buy a new transceiver, turn it on, plug in the microphone, and get on the air (assuming you have a good antenna). All the basic functions are pre-set. You can tailor the adjustments to your personal preferences later. If you buy a used transceiver, download a searchable manual off the web, and search the manual for "reset". Do a full reset and start like it is a factory new transceiver. BTW, on an IC-7300, it's a menu function. I just downloaded the manual and did a search.

And finally, and maybe the most important advice I can give, lean heavily on NVARC members (like me!) who can help you with this. We are available to go to auctions and hamfests and look at what is available with you, or review items on eBay or other places. The club has radios available to lend that you can use to get some experience and get comfortable. You can visit with other club members who may already have the transceiver that you are interested in and see them installed and working. The club email reflector is a good place to ask questions. Don't be afraid to explore, learn, and ASK. You are going through the same process that all of us went through and are going through.

And I, for one, look forward to helping you out. Hope to see you soon.

Bruce K1BG

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Vice President: Zack Harrison KC1VUY
Secretary: John Bielefeld K1JEB
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

This newsletter is published monthly. Submissions, corrections, and inquiries should be sent to

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to reach the newsletter editor.

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