Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

NVARC Signal

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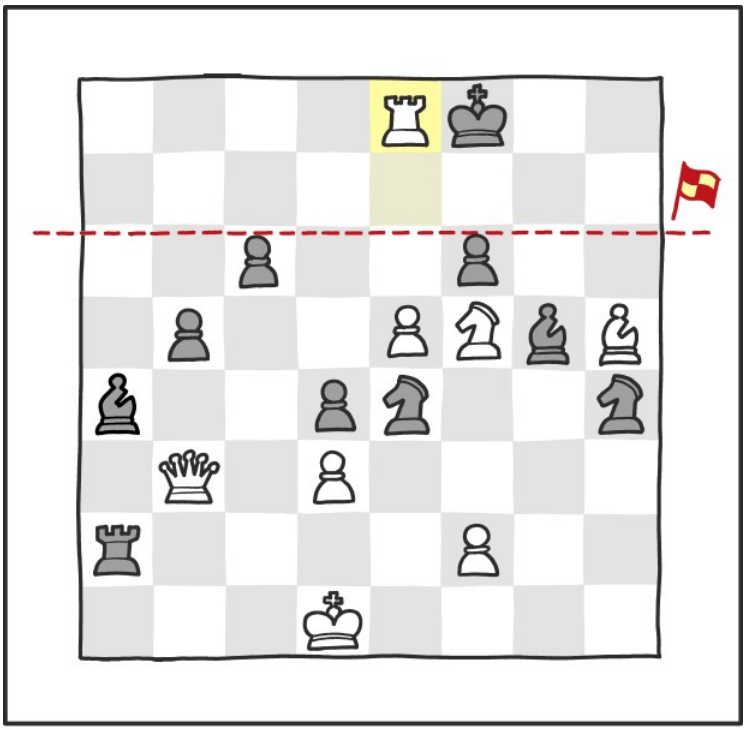


I THOUGHT I HAD CHECKMATE, BUT I DIDN'T REALIZE MY ROOK WAS OFFSIDE.

Next Meeting

This month's meeting will be held 7:30 PM on August 20, 2026 at the Pepperell Community Center at 4 Hollis Street in Pepperell Massachusetts.

This meeting will be another Summer Workshop, this time building one of two antennas (Jpole or Ground Plane) for your new shack.

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

We're officially in the dog days of summer! While I'm not a big fan of this hot and humid weather, I know my new vegetable garden is loving it. The cucumbers are getting large and my tomatoes have started to ripen. This is also a great time to think about any antenna projects you may have thought about but haven't gotten to yet. If you have any projects or are just looking for advice to get started, just ask as there are plenty of good club member resources available to help. Saturday breakfast continues to be a good place to start this conversation as is our new email reflector.

Recently a group of our members went down to Windsor, CT to tour the Vintage Radio & Communications Museum down there. Everyone enjoyed the 4-hour tour by the museum's director, John Ellsworth. Jim N8VIM shot a lot of video so I'm looking forward to seeing it on our YouTube channel. More details on this trip can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

At the end of July our old email reflector ceased to exist. This occurred without much warning which forced Ralph, KD1SM to scramble to find a replacement. If you were on the old email discussion group Ralph should have sent you an invite to the new Groups.io one. If you're having any problems getting registered or potentially got missed in the process, please contact Ralph KD1SM at his QRZ.COM email address.

President's Corner
Les N1SV

This month we have our Antenna Workshop on August 20th from 7:00 – 9:00 PM at the Pepperell Community Center (same location that we have all our meetings). If you've signed up, please look for a separate communication on this from me. If you haven't signed up show up anyway and see what this is all about. Also don't forget about the club picnic on August 22nd in Littleton at the QTH of John Bielefeld K1JEB starting at 3:00 P.M. See QRZ.COM for John's email address (same place as last year). As was the case last year John provides the grills and members bring what they'd like to cook. In addition, if you would like to bring a potluck side dish that would be helpful. Please reach out to John directly for further details.

The NVARC summer POTA series that's occurred on the 1st Saturday of each month has been moderately successful. On August 1st a couple of us activated Pearl Hill State Park in West Townsend. This location is nice and level with picnic tables and a large open field. These POTA events have been a great way for some of our newer members to get out and see how easy it is to set up a simple HF station. I hope this has helped and thank you to Bruce K1BG for suggesting it. We're going to have one last summer POTA event on Saturday September 5th (yes, I know this is Labor Day weekend). Stay tuned to our new reflector for details on this.

And finally, I'm looking forward to our regular meetings starting up again in September. September's presentation will be on Emergency Communications with Steve NA1T. Steve has indicated that the presentation will also include a tour of his EMCOMM trailer. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Field Day After Report

After Field Day, our President, Les N1SV wrote a letter of thanks to the Pepperell Conservation Commission:

Les wrote:

I just wanted to drop you a note to express our appreciation for your continued support of the Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club (NVARC) in the annual ARRL Field Day event held on June 27th & 28th. This National event showcases the ability of 30,000 amateur radio operators in the US & Canada to practice emergency communications and demonstrate these skills to the local community. The Heald Street Orchard has been a wonderful site for our organization to participate in this event. During this weekend some of our newer members learned more about basic operating. We also got a number of visitors who were interested in learning more about amateur radio and the Orchard. We look forward to being able to hold this annual event at the Orchard in the future. Thanks again for all your help.

Regards,

Les Peters, N1SV
President
Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

Paula replied:

Thank you so much, Les. The Conservation Commission is always more than happy to provide the Heald Street Orchard site for the important work that NVARC does. NVARC not only focuses on practicing emergency communications but, public education is such a critical component of your annual ARRL Field Day event and the public thoroughly enjoys this annual event.

Please thank everyone at NVARC for the work that they do. We look forward to working with you next year and for many, many years to come.

Thank you,

Paula Terrasi
Conservation Administrator

Treasurer's Report
Ralph KD1SM

Income for July was $15.00 in membership fees. Expenses were $0.44 in PayPal fees and $250.00 for the annual Post Office Box renewal leaving a net expense of $235.44 for the month.

Current balances:

General fund	$3,586.49
Community fund	$7,243.25

As of 6 August we have 84 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/

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.

Ralph KD1SM
ralph@kd1sm.net

Board Meeting Report
John K1JEB

The old list servers were discontinued abruptly by Dreamhost. Ralph KD1SM followed his backup plan to groups.io. A Signal article will address the particulars.

Treasurer Ralph KD1SM is looking for Field Day invoices for the portalet. Les N1SV tasked with hunting them down.

John KK1X is always looking for Signal articles. Bruce K1BG will write up Field Day, and Jim AB1WQ's article about the pico balloon is available. John KK1X has an antenna article.

John KK1X proposed following Bob Berube's AB1EO suggestion of vinyl siding, and is requesting a second opinion from John K1JEB, who actually knows of such things.

Bruce submitted the Field Day info to the ARRL, where the scoring is done. Bruce thinks the score will be around 4038.

POTA Saturday for September is Labor Day weekend. Les N1SV to query if anyone’s interested.

Don N1NWE has reached out to a number of potential speakers, and is waiting for replies. There are specific concerns that a September speaker has not yet been lined up.

Bruce K1BG discussed recruiting efforts, including the GMRS direct mailing. Another Technician Grade class will start in September.

Field Trip to the Vintage Radio Museum
Les N1SV

John Ellsworth explaining how a phone operator used to connect calls

A group of our members recently traveled to the Vintage Radio & Communications museum of Connecticut, in Windsor. (https://www.vrcmct.org/) We were given a full tour by John Ellsworth, the museum's director. The museum has a wide-ranging collection of equipment dating back to the late 1800s up through the 1970s. John provided immense knowledge of the history of each piece including how it was used and stories of how the piece was acquired & restored.

Atwater Kent Model 2 Receiver from 1922

Field Trip to the Vintage Radio Museum
Les N1SV

The museum is broken into chronological groups that trace the history of wired and wireless communications as well as computers. There is a demonstration of a spark gap transmitter (luckily not hooked up to an antenna) that one can try to send Morse code with. They also have a wonderful collection of early receivers including an Atwater Kent Model 2 from 1922. All these early receivers were in kit form, and I'm told were rather expensive for the average consumer to purchase. John also demonstrated an early Tesla coil including doing his best Darth Vader impersonation with a fluorescent tube.

Early RCA Color TVs

The museum also follows the history of television including some very rare and early color TVs like the RCA Model 5 prototype & the RCA 21CT55 from 1954. The museums 21CT55 is thought to be the earliest known one of its kind in existence. More details on this rare piece including how they acquired it can be found at this link including a YouTube video https://www.vrcmct.org/exhibits-collections.

Field Trip to the Vintage Radio Museum
Les N1SV

The W1VCM club station

The museum also has many old ham radio transceivers and a working club station W1VCM with satellite capability. The club station is available for visiting hams to operate if they have a copy of their license with them. In the backroom of the museum are racks of old AM broadcast transmitters from WTIC & WPOP. Everyone enjoyed the walk back into communications history. For some of our younger members the walk back was farther than others! Jim N8VIM shot about 4 hrs of video so I'm looking forward to seeing it in one form or another on our YouTube channel. If you enjoy communications history like I do, you'll enjoy a tour of this eclectic museum. For more information on the museum please see their website https://www.vrcmct.org/

Antenna Corner
John KK1X

I was watching a YouTube video the other day (*quelle surprise*) and was won over by the simplicity of a "random" wire 71 feet (23.6m) in length. The video's host, Peter Waters G3OJV of Waters & Stanton (Britain's "Candy Store") touted its ability to work even on 160m, albeit at admittedly horribly low efficiency.

Well, I'd just gotten in a new roll of wire from Amazon, so I thought I'd give the antenna a try. I use really flexible 18 AWG silicone insulated wire.

The tough part was finding a 71 foot tall telescoping mast. Just kidding. I used a slingshot to drop a weight in from as high in my back yard maple as possible. For a temporary installation, I've only strung some hi-vis mason line to support the antenna. I pulled a 100 foot (30m) measuring tape up to measure first. 71 feet just fit.

The radiating element was bog standard for me - a small loop for support at one end held in place with glue-lined heat shrink (yeah, I just use the stuff from Harbor Freight). Six inches (15 cm) of spare wire at the other end is formed into a short loop reinforced with heat shrink, and a ferrule to cap the end. (Note to self - the ferrule really only works with binding posts, not the screw and wingnut that *you* use.)

Because of the binding post bit, I used a 9:1 unun from LDG. I built a wiring harness to connect radials with spade connectors. Eleven radials were spread out, exhausting my current supply. I ignored the temptation to steal some from another underway experiment, the 29 foot (8.8 m) random wire.

After connecting the unun, coax, radials, and antenna, I pulled the antenna wire snug (I've got to find my spool of bungee) and went back inside. Just for grins, (and my recent discovery that there's *often* something going on) I jumped to 6m FT8, and the the 7300's internal tuner sputtered and clicked, tuning up very nicely. A few minutes later, I

had three contacts. I saw there was POTA activity on 12m, so QSY'd to hunt there, and made five contacts on that band. Similar results on 20m, 15m, 17m, and 10m. In just over an hour, I made 19 contacts on six bands just to quickly check how this antenna performed.

The viewing of a few subsequent related videos (who *knew* there were so many?), it was pretty clear that an external tuner would be needed, so I dug out an LDG Z-100Plus, a long-ago justified Field Day purchase. Well, that was just the ticket, allowing me to at least appear to tune on 40, 80, and 160 meters. PSK reporter showed two hits on 160 after a few minutes calling CQ, five on 80, and a smattering on 40 extending into Europe. But no people were listening - only the reverse beacon. Subsequent attempts to tune 160 failed to achieve a usable SWR, though the 7300 is more tolerant at lower power. I only run 50 watts.

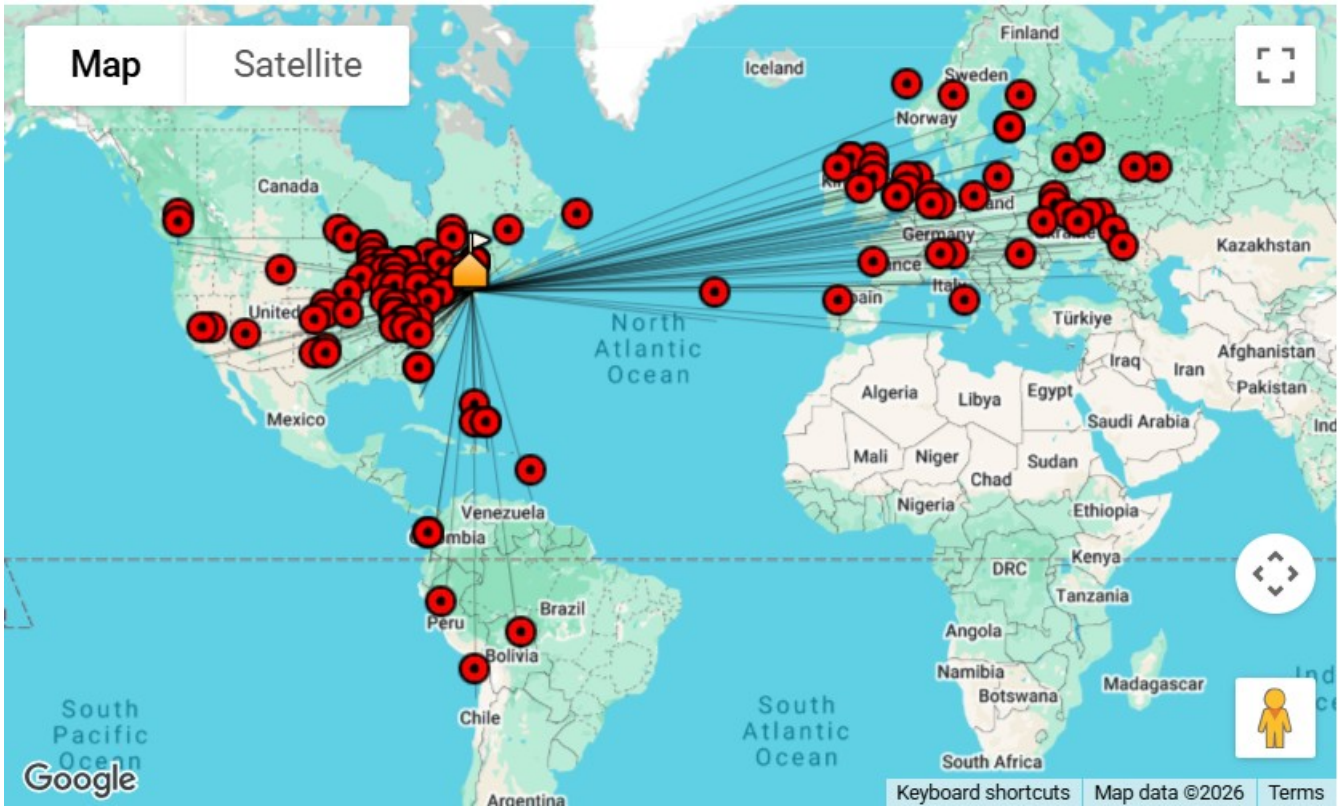
I waited a few hours, and around 0200 the next day I tuned into the 160 meter band, and managed to snag two contacts, my first on this band. I dropped down to 80 meters and made another four contacts, but pickings were thin. Down to 40 meters and there were a lot more waves in the waterfall. I quickly worked four stations from Wisconsin to Worcester to Moscow, as well as Texas, Quebec, and Brazil.

The variety of contacts I've made on this antenna over the past few days is driven mostly by happenstance. When "testing" an antenna, I'll typically call CQ on bands of interest, interrupting that cycle to attempt contacting some fun DX. So, most of my contacts are looking for FN42, I guess, though that's not a statistically meaningful data set.

I expect this antenna can be deployed easily for portable operation. Typically for an end fed half wave (EFHW) I don't use radials, instead relying on the feedline coupling to ground. I expect it will be fine. Testing this concept at home simply involved removing the radials and spreading the feedline out over what I laughingly refer to as my lawn, hoping to increase the capacitive coupling to the earth relative to simply being coiled up.

After the reconfiguration I got back into the shack to start "testing", which of course consists of running through the bands starting at 6m. While there's usually little activity on 6m, sometimes there;'s a nice surprise. Starting around 2000Z (1600 local) I saw a few traces on 6 but nothing I could work. 10m and 12m each yielded a single contact. 15m just opened right up which did surprise me! My normal MO while operating QRP is to mostly call CQ. If they can hear me, we can probably make a contact. A pox on those that work the cluster. I make a particular effort to work POTA and SOTA stations that are calling CQ, and of course try to work new DX...

A smattering of contacts across the bands shows that the antenna works "acceptably" on all bands but 80m. It "tunes" with the external tuner, but there's what I suspect is RF feedback despite a choke in the line. I reconfigured again using 12 radials this time (I built more), and 80m “worked” again.



Several random days’ worth of contacts across all bands.
Map courtesy KD2SL

Field Day Reflections, Part 2
Bruce K1BG

Last month I recounted NVARC's 2026 Field Day experiences, but I neglected to share "how we did", meaning, what was our score. So here are the details.

We had approximately 50 total people who visited our site. NVARC ran 100% emergency power (giving us a 2X multiplier on contact points). We made a total of 397 CW QSOs, 296 Digital QSOs, and 197 Phone QSOs (890 Total contacts), for a total of 3,166 claimed points.

Bonus Points:

100% emergency power	200
Public location	100
Public information table	100
W1AW Field Day message	100
Educational activity	100
Youth participation	80
Social media	100
GOTA Station	150
GOTA Coach	100
Entry submitted via web	50
Total bonus points	1,080

Total claimed score : 4,246.

In previous years, our scores (Contacts/Points) were as follows:

2025	944/4937
2024	1042/4832
2023	1191/5384
2022	1206/5332
2021	1271/6142

Uh oh… I see a trend here! See you at Field Day in 2027.

NVARC Membership Statistics
Bruce K1BG

As was announced here recently, Les, N1SV has appointed me membership chairman. I thought this might be a good time to update you on NVARCs numbers.

As of today (August 10 2026), NVARC has 84 total members. Again, according to our current records, 24 are Tech class, 19 are General, 4 are Advanced, 36 are Extra, and 1 is unlicensed.

As an ARRL Affiliated Club (and a Special Service Club!), we are supposed to have at least 50% ARRL membership. I'm very happy to report that our ARRL membership stands at 69%. I'd like to see this number higher, but again, I think that 69% is pretty good

.

Here is what I find most interesting. NVARC's membership took a big dip after Covid for several reasons. We went for the better part of two years without in person meetings. During this period, members passed away or moved. Quite a few lost interest in the club, amateur radio, or both. And don't forget, during Covid we had little going on in the way of activities.

Out of our 84 members, 50 are new to NVARC after March of 2020 (the beginning of the Covid lockdown). 31 have joined in the last 2 years, with 20 of those joining in just the last 12 months. Many, but not all, of these members are new hams.

Our activities – Meetings, club nets, POTA activations, Fox Hunts, Field Day, science fair judging, Girl Scout Thinking Day on the Air, license classes, Morse code class, antenna builds, field trips, and our latest interest – balloon launches – all contribute to the excitement of being an NVARC member.

I'll keep you posted as to trends in the future. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Field Trip to K1TTT
Bruce K1BG

On the morning of Sunday, July 26, a contingent of NVARC members and guests traveled to Peru Massachusetts to visit contest superstation K1TTT. A good time was had by all!

In attendance were:

Bruce, K1BG
Mary, KC1VSQ
Frank, Mary's Husband
Paul, AC1WL
Ed, KA6PNL
Jim, N8VIM (who was also filmed our visit, see details below).

We left the local area around 8 AM and spent several hours in the station before attending the Yankee Clipper Contest Club annual picnic where we consumed burgers, hotdogs, etc etc.

The outside portion of the tour is published here with the tour of the inside to follow (it may be available when this signal is published, check https://www.youtube.com/@nvarc).

If anyone is interested in going again next year, or interested in going for the first time next year, I might be persuaded to go again. Talk to me next July!

Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club
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President: Les Peters N1SV
Vice President: Don Campbell N1NWE
Secretary: John Bielefeld K1JEB
Treasurer: Ralph Swick KD1SM

Board Members:
Jim Hein N8VIM (2024-2027)
Steve Davidson NA1T (2025-2028)
John Griswold KK1X (2024-2029)

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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