



NEWS FOR AND BY BARS MEMBERS

BARS Billerica Amateur Radio Society

APRIL 2020

A Special Announcement

The following was sent out on the BARS email reflector, but I think it deserves repeating here. – ed.

Hello everyone.

As you know, Governor Baker's response to the COVID-19 crisis has forced us to cancel our April meeting. I have also heard from Gary, W1GFF, that the Chelmsford Bible Church is closed until further notice as well. This means that VE sessions for BARS are also cancelled.

I will update the Club as to whether we can have our May meeting. The situation is fluid, as they say. Likewise for VE session status if you have questions please direct them to Gary Frascarelli W1GFF and Bruce Anderson W1LUS.

I have observed other clubs such as NVARC in Pepperell trying to go-live with virtual meetings and reviving VHF nets to keep members connected. I applaud this and will be the first to tell you if BARS begins doing virtual meetings. Meanwhile, stay connected by getting on the air, getting on our Net, and of course feel free to post to the BARS email list which is there for all members' use.

Another thing that is in flux is the W1DC repeater. I have told you that BARS is not the owner of W1DC but we are a user of course. This repeater is owned by the 1200 Radio Club and the location of the repeater is the former Honeywell building on Concord Road in Billerica. Mike Rioux, W1USN, has been working on upgrading the old repeater and has enlisted Doug Elfman, N1LHP, to test the new equipment and configure it.

I was not notified or involved in recent testing but from what I have observed, the new repeater is now being used simultaneously on 147.12, with a different PL tone. It appears Doug has done this to allow the new repeater to exercise itself and be checked out before installing permanently at Concord Road.

There has been a huge amount of chatter on both repeaters, and people are speculating what will happen next. People are offering to take up a collection for a better antenna, etc. Some people have also wondered why BARS has not made some sort of announcement - well, it's not *our* repeater. The 1200 Radio Club owns and operates it, and maintains a budget for it. If you hear questions on the repeater, please feel free to tell people this news and that the 1200 Radio Club is the organization doing the upgrade.

Please be patient and when the 1200 Radio Club finishes the work I am sure word will get out.

This work may affect our Wednesday 8PM BARS Net. My suggestion is to continue to use the 103.5 PL for the old repeater for all BARS traffic.

I hope all our members are doing well.

Thanks,

Andy

KA1GTT

President, Billerica Amateur Radio Society

This just in: the spring Near-Fest has been canceled because the governor of New Hampshire has ordered a stay-at-home advisory. This is disappointing to many BARS members, but hardly surprising. For complete information, see: <http://forum.near-fest.com/index.php?topic=1469.0>

We now return you to our regularly-scheduled newsletter.

The takeaway here is something we heard from our mothers: DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER. You never know when the next ham you meet could have a hidden passion for the hobby or technical knowledge that could make a lot of other people happy. Or three chords and the truth.

Andy, KA1GTT
President, BARS

Next BARS meeting: Wednesday April 1 at 7:00 PM "The BARS Meeting for April Has Been Canceled"

Because of the corona virus, the state has banned any gathering of 25 or more people. The Chelmsford Bible Church is closed until further notice. Our meeting scheduled for April 1 is therefore cancelled.

I am hoping that we can resume meeting for May 6 and that Ken Caruso, WO1N, can postpone his April FD talk until then.

I would encourage our members to follow health guidance about whether to continue gathering for our weekly Saturday breakfast, and also advise our VE team to monitor the virus situation as April approaches.

Thanks for your understanding – please be healthy!

Andy, KA1GTT
President, BARS

A Message From the Editor

from Marla Wallace, WA1GSF

With corona virus restrictions that the state has put into effect making it difficult for club members to get together socially, this is a good time to use the BARS net (Wednesday nights at 8:00 PM on W1DC/R 147.12, +600, 103.5 Hz) in lieu of eyeball QSOs. See the announcement below about the net.

The net can serve as a vehicle for a round-table discussion or you can just check in and say how you're feeling and how you are coping. So dust off the 2m gear and check in. On the March 18th net, we had 19 check-ins.

Meanwhile, be safe and stay healthy.

Feature Article: Reporting on the Nashua Vintage Radio Show

By Andy Wallace, KA1GTT

Those of you with an interest in vintage electronics should be enthused that we have a big club in the area. www.nearc.net is the

website of the New England Vintage Electronics club. You may have seen the BARS email post from N1HTS about the show which happened on Sunday, March 1st. I got in touch with Jim and he was gracious enough to let me put gear in his van to go set up there as a dealer for a change. This was extremely helpful as I had some heavy items to bring. Jim was planning to set up with a big batch of 78 RPM records he had procured.



The show was held at the Courtyard Marriott in Nashua. This is the new venue for the meet which for many years was held at the Westford Regency and has been one of the biggest antique radio shows in the area. The focus is still antique radios but you can also find ham gear, antique TVs and record players, test equipment, and books. Radios from early 1920s balloon-tube sets, crystal receivers, A/C sets, and transistor radios abound. Some items are very pricey and if you can't afford a \$950 catalin (swirly bakelite plastic) radio or a Philco Predicta TV you can at least browse around and take photos for free.

I had a generously loaded table and was very happy to see the hotel's furniture supported the 100 lb WWII receiver I had brought – a very clean Hallicrafters SX-28 general coverage

radio. I also had various small tube and transistor sets in working and nonworking shape, and even a Waterman Pocketscope oscilloscope probably from the 1940s, working!

Believe it or not, the SX-28 was one of the first items sold. I had brought it to Near-Fest a couple of years ago and had a pretty firm price on it. It was complete, and had not been abused – but had not been restored to working condition either. That being said, I did not want to give it away too cheaply. Thousands were made around WWII but how many have survived without being modified by well meaning people with power drills? So I was pleased when a younger man stopped by to ask about the set. It turns out he was an SWL but not a ham but knew what the radio was and how important it was for the War. I did tell him it was not working and repairs like recapping in the RF area would be difficult and not for a beginner. In the end he offered me a low price, and I countered with a number that was higher but reasonable and we shook hands. He said he had other vintage receivers and was going to enlist an experienced friend to make the SX-28 live again. I couldn't have been happier to see it get a good home. The man and his friend muscled it away. Google "SX-28" and you will find many websites and YouTube videos about the receiver.

Jim did sell some of his 78s, which were all classical – especially ones which were sets like Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. I was flexible on my prices, especially the nonworking sets. So I went home with only one small item I had brought!

Jim and I enjoyed socializing behind our tables, too, and we gave each other breaks to walk around and purchase things. Since I was downsizing, I tried not to be tempted by too much. That day I seemed to find a lot of books – the ARRL VHF Manual for a friend, and some theory books for myself. I got a super looking 5-volume set of Basic Electronics by Rider publications. These show tube theory circuits in easy-to-digest chunks including oscilloscope diagrams.

At the end of the show I picked up what I was told was a National vacuum-tube voltmeter for \$5. I have never seen a device like this from National (the National Company, of Malden MA, which made receivers, transceivers, and electronic parts) and cannot find it in any National catalogs online. The black cabinet is similar to the National SW-3 style receivers of the 1930s and National/Millen may have produced this or at least the parts. The engraved knobs tell me it is not homebrew, certainly.



Inside are three octal tubes and a beefy transformer. I had intended to use this as a power supply, or build a regenerative radio inside – now I am wondering if I should restore it and do an article for Electric Radio (www.ermag.com) ? Can anyone identify this?

You can see photos of past shows at:

http://www.nearc.net/past_events.htm

The Nashua show is once per year but during other months they have shows at the Brookline NH Event Center. The next show is May 16, 2020. <http://www.nearc.net/swapmeetinfo.htm> Please consider going and supporting this club. The outside tailgating area attracts people with ham gear especially, so it's worth checking out. And they usually have a "free" table where you can grab stuff.

Big thanks go out to N1HTS for helping me accomplish this!

Strays

Your editor, Marla, WA1GSF, has been playing around with a \$30 software defined radio receiver. It is not the most performant such device on the market, but good enough to get your feet wet. It covers 24 to 1700 MHz (and can be made to cover HF at reduced performance) and demodulates CW, LSB, USB, AM, NFM and WFM (and specialized modes, with the appropriate plug-ins).

I will probably pen an article about it for the May newsletter.

BARS April Suggestions - Get-on-the-air Events

BARS is a “get-on-the-air” (GOTA) club. We encourage members to participate in the varied events on HF and VHF. Here are some popular suggestions for this month:

Date	Event
April 4-5	Nebraska QSO Party
April 4-5	Missouri QSO Party
April 4-5	Mississippi QSO Party
April 4-5	Louisiana QSO Party
April 11	QRP ARCI Spring QSO Party **
April 11-12	New Mexico QSO Party
April 11-12	Georgia QSO Party
April 11-12	North Dakota QSO Party
April 17-18	Holyland DX Contest **
April 18	QRP to the Field **
April 18-19	Michigan QSO Party
April 18-19	Ontario QSO Party
April 19	ARRL Rookie Roundup, SSB**
April 25-26	Florida QSO party
May 3-4	New England QSO Party **

** Top Recommendations for this month

Details on each contest above and more events can be found every week on the WA7BNM contest calendar at : <https://www.contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php?mode=custom&week=current>

Secretary's Reports

from Scott Ginsburg, K1OA, Secretary

BARS General Meeting, 4-Mar-2020

Vice President Kayla Creamer, W2IRY called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Bruce Pigott, KC1US told the group about two upcoming public service events, TuffRuck in April for which details are in the BARS March newsletter, and the Brain Tumor Ride on May 17 in Waltham. The organizers need sweep vehicles that will be carrying bicycle repair gear. The drivers will be trained on how to do repairs. See <https://events.brainumor.org/events/boston-brain-tumor-ride/>.

Bruce Blain, K1BG gave a great talk on the work he's doing as the newly appointed ARRL Eastern MA Affiliated Club Coordinator. Bruce has already visited a number of clubs in EMA and has these goals, among others: facilitating the sharing of

ideas among clubs, helping to develop more ARRL service clubs, and eventually visiting all clubs in the EMA section.

There were 20 attendees.

W2IRY closed the meeting at 8:45 PM.

There was no BARS Board of Directors Meeting.

BARS Membership

Bruce, W1LUS, our BARS Treasurer reports that as of April, 2020 we have 107 total members.

2020 BARS Member Dues

The BARS Board has changed the policy on member dues. A \$15 annual BARS membership now runs from January 1 and expires on December 31st. Any renewal or new membership made after September 1 will be valid until December 31 of the next year. Memberships allow us to

- Pay our bills;
- maintain our great web page;
- fund field day;
- and bring the membership a great variety of informative meetings and speakers.

Treasurers Report

from Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, Treasurer

April 2020 Treasurers Report

Reminder 2020 Dues were due starting January first. So far 47 members have renewed for 2020.

Through mid March we had four renewals and one new member for \$75 income. PayPal expenses were \$1.48 We now have \$403.65 in the Bank and \$433.16 in our PayPal account for a total of \$763.15

BARS Needs You!!!

We are looking for a few good hams to act as net control on the regularly scheduled Wednesday night nets! All it takes is one night a month; if you are interested contact Chris, KC1IUK. Also, the club needs volunteers for light tasks of ~ 1 hour a month. Are you able to pitch in? Contact Andy, KA1GTT

Wednesday Night Net

Note: because we cannot hold our usual General Meeting, there will be a net on April 1st.

Join us on the Billerica Repeater for the weekly BARS net (except on 1st Wednesday of Month which is club meeting night)

Repeater info:
147.12 MHz
+600 kHz (normal) offset
Encode CTCSS 103.5 Hz

Club Meetings

NOTE: Club meetings are suspended until the COVID19 Emergency has passed.

First Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM at Chelmsford Bible Church, 128 Gorham St., Chelmsford MA
Park in back and enter by rear door
[Chelmsford Bible Church Hall, 128 Gorham St, Rear Door, Chelmsford MA 01824-3220 \(map\)](#)

VE Sessions

NOTE: VE sessions are suspended until the COVID19 Emergency has passed.

VE sessions are held every month on the 2nd Thursday at 7:00 PM at Chelmsford Bible Church, 128 Gorham St., Chelmsford MA. Park in back and enter by rear door. [Chelmsford Bible Church Hall, 128 Gorham St, Rear Door, Chelmsford MA 01824-3220 \(map\)](#)

At the 3-12-2020 BARS VE exam session 10 people showed up for testing. ALL of them passed the test they came for! There are now 6 new Technicians, 2 upgrades from Tech to General, and 2 upgrades from General to Extra. Be sure to say hello if you hear one of them on the air.

The VE's at the session were Charles Suprin, AA1VS; Peter Norden, N1ALO; and as Team Leader, Gary Frascarelli, W1GFF.

de Gary Frascarelli, W1GFF

Club Breakfast every Saturday

NOTE: The Club Breakfast is suspended until the COVID19 Emergency has passed.

On Saturday mornings around 8:15AM, we also meet weekly for a casual, social breakfast at [Stelio's](#) restaurant. [Stelio's Family Restaurant, Billerica, MA \(map\)](#)

Future Meetings

NOTE: Club meetings are suspended until the COVID19 Emergency has passed. It is not certain that the 5/6 meeting will be held.

5/6 David Kruh, WB2HTO, on repairing vintage tube radios
6/3 TBD

Subscribe to the BARS Mailing List

To subscribe to the BARS email list, send a blank email to bars-subscribe@w1hh.org and watch for an automated reply. Note that bars-subscribe is all one word.

Reply to that message from the list server and you are then subscribed.

To post to the list, address your email to bars@w1hh.org

BARS Leadership Team

President: Andy Wallace, KA1GTT
Vice President: Kayla Creamer, W2IRY
Treasurer: Bruce Anderson, W1LUS
Secretary: Scott Ginsburg, K1OA
Net Coordinator: Chris Lobdell, KC1IUK
Newsletter Editor: Marla Wallace, WA1GSF
BoD: Mike Raisbeck, K1TWF
BoD: Henry Christle, WA1VAB
Ex Officio: Tom Walsh, K1TW