



### NEWS FOR AND BY BARS MEMBERS

# BARS Billerica Amateur Radio Society

APRIL 2023

## BARS meetings will continue to be “virtual” until further notice!

We intended to resume in-person club meetings with the April meeting, with the plan to continue to also allow members to attend virtually using Zoom. However, due to bandwidth issues with the Wi-Fi at the Chelmsford Bible Church, this “hybrid” meeting style appears to not be possible at this time. So we are going to continue to hold our meetings via Zoom, as we have been doing since the start of the COVID era.

The safety and well-being of our membership is important to us. Whether you attend in person or virtually is entirely up to you.

--BARS Management.

## A Message from the President By Doug Bruce, N1WRN

Greetings Fellow Members,

First off, I would like to thank everyone who joined us on 3/24 for our trip to the ARRL Headquarters and W1AW station. We wound up taking three cars and that gave folks the chance to get to know a few Club Members that they might not have known prior to the trip.

We got a pleasant surprise when we arrived, in that we were taken on a tour of the Lab and Museum areas which were previously off limits to the general public because of Covid. Ed Hare, WIRFI, ARRL Lab Manager, and Maria Somma, AB1FM, ARRL VEC Manager, were great tour guides and each added their own flavor to the tour. It was an unexpected yet pleasant surprise for all of us.

Next we went to the W1AW station and operated for a while under the tutelage of Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, the Station Manager of W1AW. Joe was a gracious host as always and he made sure everyone who wanted to operate got the chance. Everyone took plenty of pictures which were forwarded to Marla for her review and expert editing skills to be included in this newsletter!

Everyone who got to operate or visit will be receiving a nice W1AW Certificate suitable for framing and mounting in your shack as a memento of our trip!

As it got closer to 2:30 PM (time flies when you are having fun!) I noticed a crowd of hungry hams gathering in the W1AW lobby area, so I quickly got the message that it was time to head to our next stop!

Finally, on the way home, we stopped at Rein's Deli in Vernon CT, and it was everything it was cracked up to be. Everyone enjoyed the lunch and ham radio fellowship. Hopefully there will be another trip or two to ARRL HQ and W1AW before the year is out for members who were unable to join us this time.

On another note, the April Club Meeting on 4/5 will be via Zoom again. The Wi-Fi capacity at the Church does not allow for a Zoom Meeting, as there is not enough bandwidth provided by their internet connection as Gary F. advised me a few days ago.

Lastly, I hope everyone got a chance to get on the air this past weekend for the CQ WPX Contest on HF. The bands were crazy busy and I was able to pick up a few new countries to add to my DXCC totals. It was a lot of fun even though I do not consider myself a serious contestant.

Well, that's it from here. Remember we are a GOTA Club, so get on the air and have some fun wherever on the radio spectrum you enjoy!

73,  
Doug  
N1WRN

## Next BARS Meeting: April 5 at 7:00 PM - Program: "Antennas - the Third Dimension"

**Presenter: Gary Sutcliffe, W9XT**

Our guest speaker for the Club Meeting (In person and hybrid, hopefully!) on April 5, 2023 will be Gary Sutcliffe, W9XT, and he will give a presentation entitled "Antennas - The Third Dimension". Gary was Licensed as WN9FRG in 1970. Other calls he has held: WB9FRG, WB9FRG/6W8, W0XT. He also has an FCC General Radiotelephone Operator License (Commercial). His main radio interests include contesting, especially CW DX contests, DXing where he has achieved number one on the DXCC Honor Roll, 5BDXCC, over 100 countries confirmed on each band 160-10M (except 60M), and experimenting, designing and building equipment and antennas, so he is well versed in what makes a great antenna system for your QTH.

Gary got interested in ham radio through his uncle, Harold Beckman (SK) W9HEK, later W9FJ, at an early age but it was not until he got to high school that he had the discipline to learn the code. Gary's dad (Chuck) and Gary got licensed together and Gary was WN9FRG and his Dad was WN9FRF, later W9FRF (SK).

A few years later he attended the University of Wisconsin where he majored in Ham Radio with a minor in Electrical Engineering (HI). The UW club station, W9YT, was a major contest station at the time and he developed a passion for contesting under the guidance of some very good operators.

"My QTH is near Slinger Wisconsin on 14 acres in the country. I wanted to have space for antennas! I currently have 3 towers. Two are for HF and one for 2M EME. I also have other antennas including Beverages, a K9AY array, a 30M vertical and a 160M inverted L."



BARS will announce the link to join the Zoom meeting before the meeting, but it will be posted to the BARS email list and should not be shared outside our Club. Are you on the email list? If not, please send an email to [bars-subscribe@w1hh.org](mailto:bars-subscribe@w1hh.org) and then simply reply to the robot response from the server and you will be subscribed.

Observing our Zoom meeting requires only a web browser and headphones/speakers. You do not need a webcam or microphone unless you want to speak or be seen.

Before our meeting date, please go to <https://zoom.us/test> and see if it will function for you. If you have problems, we can try to assist – feel free to ask questions on the BARS email list.

We are looking forward to "seeing" many of you on Wednesday 3/1 here at 1900.

Doug, N1WRN

## From the Editor's Desk By Marla Wallace, WA1GSF

This is the third installment of my HF station saga. Since last issue, I bought a Bluetooth wireless mouse to use instead of the touchpad and an optical drive in case I need to install software from a CD ROM.

As for what software to run, I have decided to stick with programs which work under Windows. The March program helped enormously in that regard. I'm going with N1MM for contest logging (though I have no plans at the moment to do contesting) and DXLABSuite for keeping my station log. I've installed WSJT and will probably find other software to eventually also install. I found the reviews at <https://www.eham.net> to be helpful. Stay tuned...

## Feature Article: BARS visits ARRL Headquarters

**By Bill Poulin, WZ1L**

On Friday, March 24, 12 individuals showed up for the trip to the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) in Newington, CT. The travel is about 133 miles through Routes 495, 290, CT-84 and CT-15. We left at 9:30 and arrived around 11:30am



*BARS Group assemble in front of historic WIAW building.*



Upon arrival we ventured into the ARRL HQ building and I talked to the Receptionist and we explained we were from the Billerica Amateur Radio Society and wondered if we could get a tour of the facility. A phone call was made and Maria Somma, AB1FM, ARRL VEC Manager, escorted us to the hallway where there is a historical display of Amateur Radio History from the beginning to present day.

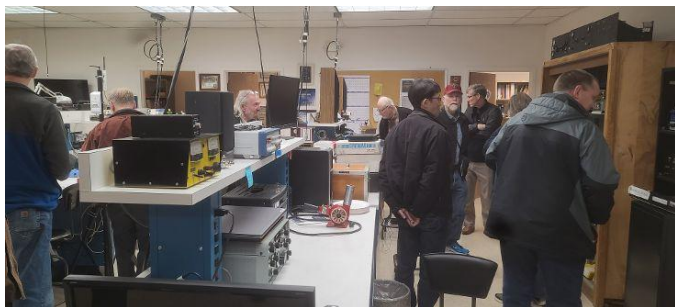


*BARS Group viewing older radios on display.*



*We were met by ARRL staff member, Maria Somma, AB1FM.*

We were then turned over to Ed Hare, Jr., W1RFI that gave us a tour of the Laboratory at the ARRL where they make assessment of radios, circuits and provide data to the manufacturers for their production of equipment.



*BARS Group escorted through the ARRL Lab by Ed Hare, Jr., W1RFI, Lab Manager.*

You may not know this, but the ARRL HQ has a separate station, W1HQ, that can be remotely operated by the ARRL Staff. They have their own Radio Club and employees that are licensed can use that station via their cell phone or tablet from their office remotely over the Internet. (Two weeks ago when I visited

W1AW, I was working 40 meters when this loud station attempted to contact me. We chatted for a few minutes and the next thing I knew, he was standing next to me and I heard my reply on his cell phone!)

Back to the Lobby and for some attendees went to purchase License Manuals, Books, Posters, Shirts, Frequency Charts and Free copies of QST and On The Air Magazines, while others strolled over to the display area to see vintage ham radio transceivers, receivers, power supplies, etc.

Our next stop was the Hiram Percy Maxim W1AW Station. We took pictures on the front steps before entering the building. We signed in the log upon entering the building. We were allowed to operate W1AW on various bands, 20, 40, CW on 30, 12 and 10 Meters.



*Two members of BARS operating 10 meters (front) and 12 meters (rear).*

We departed ARRL at 2:30pm and arrived at REIN'S DELI in Vernon, CT 30 minutes later. We had a great lunch and then traveled home. We got all fed up!!



*Lunch was taken at Rein's Deli in Vernon, CT.  
We got all fed up!*



Before leaving, we even purchased some food for Gary, W1GFF who could not make the trip.

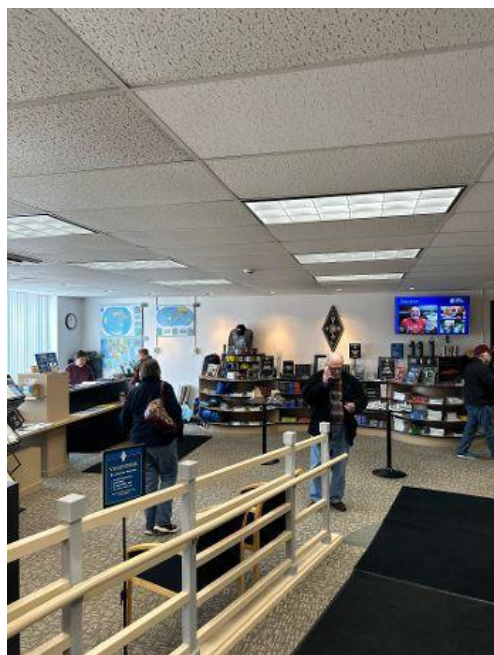
Participants: Bill Poulin, WZ1L, Craig Davidson, K1CWD, Mark Nelson, KA1INE, Art Walsh, AA1HO, Tim Carter, KC1RET, Wayne Geiser, KC1ONM, Doug Bruce, N1WRN, Noriyuk Kajita, AA1NK, Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, and Jim Freed, KA1NQ.



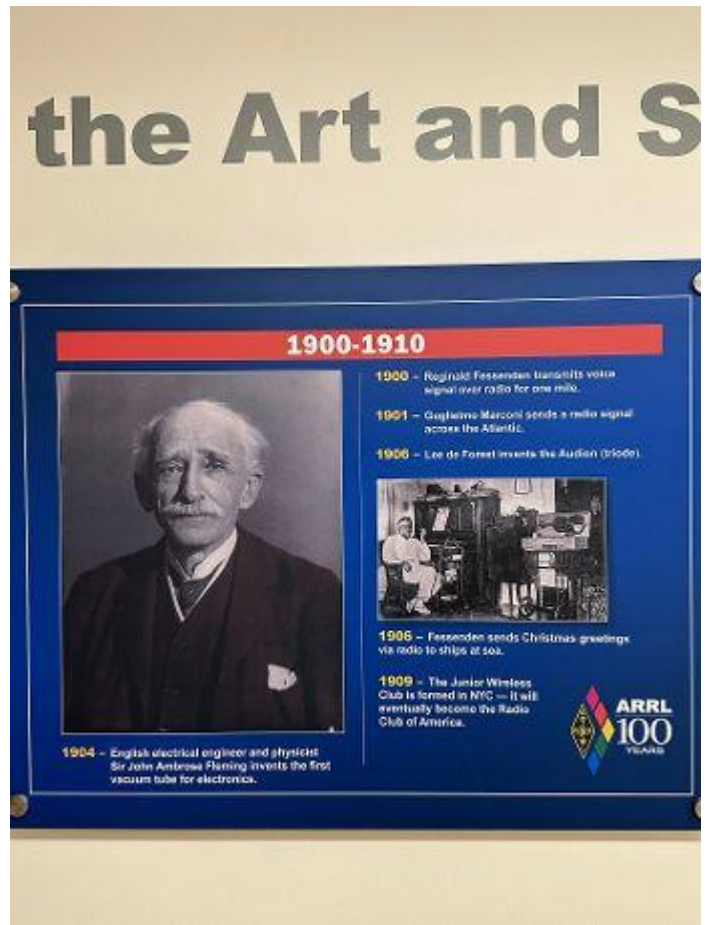
*And, of course, we signed the Visitors' Register*

## Additional Pictures from the Visit to the ARRL Headquarters

Collected by Doug Bruce from Various BARS Members







## Feature Article: Running FT8 Without The Internet

By Scott Ginsburg, K1OA

One Friday afternoon in January a tree fell on my property and took out my Comcast feedline, and with it my Internet. I immediately called Comcast and opened a service ticket. The customer service representative assured me I was on the high priority response list for the following day, Saturday. This put a potential wrinkle in my DXing plans for the weekend as I was still in need of 17m, 12m and 10m contacts with FT8WW on Crozet Island, and the DXpedition operator on Crozet liked to work FT8. I was lucky enough to work him on 20 CW (my #338 on CW), and 30m and 15m FT8, and I was hoping to have a shot at my remaining band fills for the bands he was planning to be active on during his remaining days on this very rare island.

As any of you FT8 operators know, the system clock on your computer needs to be within 2 seconds of current time for the mode to work properly, and as such everyone runs some kind of time management software that queries time servers on the Internet and continually corrects your computer's clock. Without Internet access I would not be able to get my shack computer's system clock synchronized using a program called Dimension 4 which continually runs in the background syncing my clock. Or so I thought!

After doing some quick research on the web I discovered the time command available from the Windows 10 DOS command. This command allows you to reset your system clock using the format HH:MM:SS. Now all I needed was a reliable time source down to the second, and for that I loaded the website <http://time.is> on my cell phone using my cellular data. I verified that my cell phone time was accurate. You should see output that looks like this:



Then I followed these steps:

1. Type **cmd** into the Windows 10 search window – this should display the Command Prompt app.
2. Right click on Command Prompt and choose Run as administrator – if you don't run as admin you won't be able to set your clock.
3. At the prompt, run the time command – it will output what it thinks is the current time, then prompt you for a new time.

4. Enter a value that is in the future from what time.is is displaying on your cell phone, for example 30 seconds from now, or the next round minute.
5. Get ready to hit the Enter key and when the time you see on time.is matches what you entered, hit the enter key.

Believe it or not, this was enough to get my system clock synchronized. I tested it out by making a few FT8 contacts and was satisfied that it was working. As luck would have it, within an hour or so after setting my clock I worked FT8WW on 12m FT8, and 3 hours later worked him again on 17m FT8 for two more band fills!

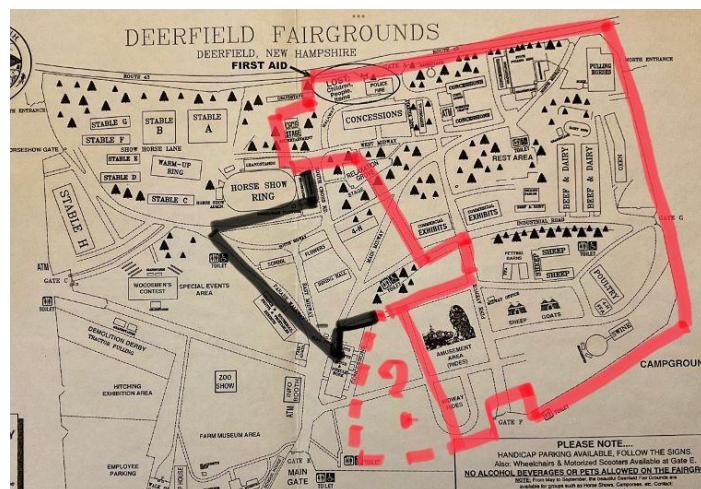
## Strays

### New Date for NEAR-FestXXXIII

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEAR-FestXXXIII will be held on April 28th and 29th 2023 and not on its traditional date which always has been the first weekend in May every year since 2007. NEAR-Fest XXXIV scheduled for October 13th and 14th 2023 is NOT affected.

Last month the Deerfield Fair Association informed me that they booked two events, the NH Farm, Forest and Garden Show and the NH Arabian Horse Ass'n Show at the Fairgrounds for May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2023 which is the weekend before Mothers Day. We were told we were welcome to hold the NEAR-Fest at the same time with the two other shows but there would be a "few small changes" to the parts of the Fairgrounds that we would be allowed to use.



Regretfully I decided the best course of action is to take a chance on the weather one week earlier and change the date. My team agrees with me. It's the best way to deal with it. We have full use of the grounds with no stinking and noisy horses and outsiders to bother us. I resisted it at first but changed my mind after discussing it with my colleagues who run the fester with me.



Is this a one-time thing or is it permanent? Depends on if the horse show comes back next spring. We could co-exist with the Farm Show but it is the horse show that causes us the problems because we use part of the grounds adjacent to the Horse Show ring and bleachers.

I still don't like it but I know it is the right decision. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause anyone.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year my friends.

Mister Mike, W1RC <[w1rc@near-fest.com](mailto:w1rc@near-fest.com)>

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### **Becoming an ARRL member or is your membership up for renewal?**

One of the benefits of being an ARRL Affiliated Club is a commission for recruiting new ARRL members and securing timely ARRL member renewals.

Each new ARRL member earns the club a \$15.00 commission. New members are defined as never having been a member or a returning member that has not been a member for two years. Each renewal earns the club a \$5.00 commission. There is no limit to the amount a club can earn in this program.

Multiyear memberships earn only one commission. Life, Family, International, Blind, and Student memberships are not eligible for a commission. The member will not be eligible to receive a gift or incentive if the club collects a commission on the membership.

Currently at least 82 BARS members are also ARRL members. If we all renewed through the club we could potentially receive \$410 per year from the ARRL.

If you are interested in renewing your ARRL membership through the club fill out the following form [ARRL Affiliated Club Membership Application \(pdf\)](#). Then forward it to [W1LUS@hotmail.com](mailto:W1LUS@hotmail.com)

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### **Is your Email address on the FCC site up to date?**

#### ***§ 97.23 Mailing and email addresses.***

*Each license grant must show the grantee's correct name, mailing address, and email address. The email address must be an address where the grantee can receive electronic correspondence. Revocation of the station license or suspension of the operator license may result when correspondence from the FCC is returned as undeliverable because the grantee failed to provide the correct email address.*  
[85 FR 85533, Dec. 29, 2020]

I recommend that you log on to the your FCC Registration at <https://apps.fcc.gov/coresWeb/updateRegistrationPre.do> to make sure that your email address is up to date. Also in the future

should you change your home address or your email address be sure to remember to update it on the FCC site.

*[The \$35 FCC application fee applies to new, renewal, rule waiver, and modification applications that request a new vanity call sign. The fee will be per application.*

*Administrative updates, such as a change of name, mailing or email address, and modification applications to upgrade an amateur radio licensee's operator class or to request a sequentially issued call sign, are exempt from fees. – ed.]*

--de Bruce, W1LUS

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### **Upgrading Your License? Here's a Resource**

If you are thinking of upgrading your license using one of the Online exam sites. I recommend that you take some free practice exams on HamStudy.org. I recommend it because the software used to generate practice exams on HamStudy.org is the same software that is used to create exams for online tests. By doing that when you take an online upgrade exam the test question format will be familiar. With HamStudy.org practice tests you should use the keyboard to select the answer, A,B,C, or D and not your mouse as that is way online exams are run.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

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### **Making ZOOM available to Elmers**

In this time of social distancing we have been using Zoom for our monthly club meetings. I have been thinking that Elmers could also be using Zoom to coach new hams instead of actually going to visit with them. Elmers could perhaps help with programming a new radio with the new ham sharing their computer screen and the Elmer helping to walk them thru the process. An Elmer could have Zoom on their cell phone and show a new ham how their shack was setup. Use your imagination and see how you might use this tool. If you would like to use Zoom for this, contact Bruce, [W1LUS@hotmail.com](mailto:W1LUS@hotmail.com), with a date and a time and a meeting will be setup for you. You may also contact Bruce if you would like training on using Zoom to Elmer someone.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

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### **Friday and Sunday Night CW Slow Speed Contest**

Every Friday and Sunday night, there is a weekly slow-speed CW contest run by the local K1USN guys. This is a good way to polish up your CW skills. See <http://www.k1usn.com/sst.html> for details. Currently, the schedule is:

Fridays 20:00-21:00 UTC (3-4pm EST) and  
Mondays 00:00-01:00 UTC (7-8pm EST Sunday).



-- de Tom Walsh, K1TW

## Secretary's Reports

from Marla Wallace, WA1GSF, Secretary

### BARS General Meeting – Mar. 1

BARS President, Doug Bruce, called the meeting to order at 7:15PM.

Details of the upcoming trip to ARRL Headquarters were announced. We will have a bus and there will be a \$30 per person charge to defray the cost.

The April meeting will be hybrid: Zoom and in-person.

We voted to spend up to \$1700 for the ARRL trip, in case we do not get enough participants to defray the cost of the bus.

Program began at 7:30. Tom, KA2D, spoke on techniques for HF DXing and described the features of logging software. (Your secretary took a lot of notes, as this information was timely for my own set-up.)

The program ended at 8:00, but lively discussion continued until 8:30.

We adjourned at 8:31. I failed to note the exact number of participants, but it was over 20.

### The BARS Board of Directors Meeting was on 05/06/23.

Doug called us to order at 7:02.

Attending were: Doug Bruce, Bruce Anderson, Marla Wallace, Don Melanson, Bill Poulin, Mark Nelson.

Discussion began with the BARS expedition to ARRL Headquarters. Doug arranged to hire a bus, with a capacity of about 30 passengers. In order to help fill seats, we are inviting members of PART, to join us. As of the BoD meeting, we have about 12 from BARS signed up. Hoping to get 20-25 people. The per-person charge is \$30.

Thinking to order food on the way down so it will be ready when we arrive.

Field Day – it's not too early to be starting planning. Will put something from Mark in the newsletter.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30.

## BARS Membership

Our current combined membership is 123. To date 62 members have renewed their 2023 membership. 36 members from 2022 did not renew their membership. Anyone with a question about their renewal status can email me at [W1LUS@hotmail.com](mailto:W1LUS@hotmail.com) to get your current status.

from Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, Treasurer

## 2023 BARS Member Dues

A \$15 annual BARS membership now runs from January 1<sup>st</sup> and expires on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Any renewal or new membership made after September 1 will be valid until December 31<sup>st</sup> 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 for April 2023

We are accepting dues for the current year. For 2023 dues will remain at \$15.

Dues can be paid several ways:

- Via bank to bank transfer with Zelle, Venmo, PayPal, etc. by sending \$15 to [bars.dues@outlook.com](mailto:bars.dues@outlook.com).
- With credit card by using the Join/Renewal membership form on the W1HH.org website.
- With cash or check by mailing \$15 to Billerica ARS, 16 Regis Road, Tewksbury, MA 01876



In March, our expenses were:

- Zoom \$15.93,
- PayPal \$3.03.

We had 5 new/renewals for an income of \$75. We now have \$2016.75 in the Bank and \$203.46 in our PayPal account for a total of \$2247.21.

The club approved up to \$1700 for the bus trip to the ARRL during the March meeting.

Bruce Anderson  
W1LUS

## 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 Doug, N1WRN.

Also, the club needs volunteers for light tasks of ~ 1 hour a month. Are you able to pitch in? Contact Tom Walsh, K1TW.

## Wednesday Night Net

Join us on the Westford 146.955 Repeater for the weekly BARS net each Wednesday at 8:00 PM (**except on the first Wednesday of the month which is club meeting night**). *Note: Thanks to the Westford Police Amateur Radio Team (PART) for their generous act of making their repeater available to us.*

Repeater info:  
WB1GOF  
146.955 MHz  
-600 kHz (normal) offset  
Encode CTCSS 74.4 Hz

Reminder: “kerchunking” the repeater is not only impolite, it’s illegal. It constitutes an unidentified transmission. If you need to check that you’re making the repeater, say something like “This is <your call> standing by on the frequency.” Thanks for your courtesy.

## Club Meetings

Club meetings are being held at the in-person Chelmsford Bible Church and “simulcast” via Zoom for those who are not yet comfortable with groups. \

Club meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month.

## VE Sessions

**Our VE sessions are again being held in-person at the Chelmsford Bible Church. Pre-registration for our in-person**

**exams is suggested. Contact [w1lus@hotmail.com](mailto:w1lus@hotmail.com) for registration information.**

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 \(map\)](#)

### March VE Session Report

On March 9 eight people showed up at our VE exam session. As a result there were four upgrades to Extra, one upgrade to General, one new General and one new Technician.

Our next exam session will be at the Chelmsford Bible Church on April 13 at 7:00 PM.

Thanks to Gary W1GFF, Craig K1CWD and Bill W1ZL for their help in running the session.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

## Club Breakfast every Saturday

On Saturday mornings around 8:30AM, have a virtual Zoom breakfast session (link provided in email if you subscribe).

We also meet in-person weekly at 8:15AM for a casual, social breakfast at Stelio’s restaurant.  
[Stelio’s Family Restaurant, Billerica, MA](#)

## Future Meetings

The 5/3 meeting will be held “virtually” via Zoom.

## Subscribe to the BARS Mailing List

To subscribe to the BARS email list, send a blank email to [bars-subscribe@w1hh.org](mailto: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](mailto:bars@w1hh.org)

## April Get-on-the-Air Suggestions from Scott Ginsburg, K1OA

BARS is a “get-on-the-air” (GOTA) club. We encourage members to participate in the varied events on HF and VHF.

The 10 meter band has been frequently open now that Cycle 25 is producing numerous sunspots. Consider joining the 10-10 International organization which was formed in 1962 to promote activity on 10m. Membership is \$15/yr (<https://www.ten-ten.org/Forms/Application.pdf>) and with that comes a 10-10 number that is yours for life whether you continue paying dues or not. Membership requires that you initially work at least 10 stations with 10-10 numbers. There are various contests and awards programs sponsored by 10-10 all with the goal of increasing 10m activity.

Here are the popular suggestions for this month:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
Apr 8	QRP ARCI Spring QSO Party <a href="http://qrparci.org/contest/spring-qso-party">http://qrparci.org/contest/spring-qso-party</a>
Apr 16	ARRL Rookie Roundup, SSB ** <a href="http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup">http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup</a>
Apr 23	North American SSB Sprint Contest <a href="http://ssbsprint.com/rules/">http://ssbsprint.com/rules/</a>
Apr 29-30	10-10 International Spring Contest, Digital <a href="http://www.ten-ten.org/index.php/activity/2013-07-22-20-26-48/qso-party-rules">http://www.ten-ten.org/index.php/activity/2013-07-22-20-26-48/qso-party-rules</a>

#### **\*\* Top recommendation for this month**

Recurring Events – visit webpage for exact times and dates:

K1USN Slow Speed Test - Every Friday 20:00 UTC / Every Monday 00:00 UTC <http://www.k1usn.com/sst.html>

Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) Weekend Sprintathon – the Saturday following the 6<sup>th</sup> of every month at 1200 UTC  
[http://www.skccgroup.com/operating\\_activities/weekend\\_sprintathon](http://www.skccgroup.com/operating_activities/weekend_sprintathon)

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>

## BARS Leadership Team

### OFFICERS:

President: Doug Bruce, N1WRN  
Vice President: Mark Nelson, KA1INE  
Treasurer: Bruce Anderson, W1LUS  
Secretary: Marla Wallace, WA1GSF  
BoD: Don Melanson, W1DM  
BoD: Bill Poulin, WZ1L  
Ex Officio: Gary Frascarelli, W1GFF

### VOLUNTEERS:

Net Coordinator: Doug Bruce, N1WRN  
Newsletter Editor: Marla Wallace, WA1GSF  
New Member Outreach: John Fisher, KC1FTJ  
Field Day Chair: Mark Nelson, KA1INE