



NEWS FOR AND BY BARS MEMBERS

MARCH 2024

BARS meetings are now “hybrid” – the meeting will be held at the Chelmsford Bible Church and available simultaneously on Zoom.

The safety and well-being of our membership is important to us. Those members who feel uncomfortable attending in person can continue to join us over Zoom.

--BARS Management.

A Message from the President By Doug Bruce, N1WRN

Greetings Fellow Members,

As we head into March and Spring, now would be a good time to get outside and check your antenna systems and see what repairs and upgrades may be needed. It has been a fairly mild winter by New England standards, but it is always a good idea to check things out in the antenna area this time of year.

I want to thank everyone who attended our first in-person Club meeting at the Church on February 7. It was good to see everyone in person for the first time since the pandemic ended. We will be having hybrid meetings going forward, so that everyone will be comfortable in attending our meetings. I know that there are still a lot of folks are wary of COVID-19 and choose not to attend in person, and that is fine. This is a hobby after all, and our members' comfort and safety are a top priority of the leadership of our club.

As always, we welcome our members' suggestions for activities for the Club at our in person meetings. We will be getting into kit building, antenna construction, and any other activities of interest to the membership. This club is all about the members, so please feel free to email me at the BARS mailing list with any suggestions and comments that you may have for the Club. We are all ears!

Ham radio wise, we are approaching the sunspot maximum, predicted to be in December of 2025, so make sure to get on the air and work on your awards, particularly the DXCC award on 10, 12, 15 and 17 meters. Those bands have been providing spectacular DX lately. They will gradually peter out in the next few years, so now is the time to strike while the DX iron is hot. There are a number of DX spotting programs available, such as DX Heat and Clublog, so it is in the DXer's best interest to take advantage of these great websites for DX spotting. The world is awaiting you on all modes, so Get On The Air and have fun!

Now is also the time to start thinking of how you would like to participate in Field Day in late June. It is only four months away, so be thinking of what you can do for the Club to help out with this great annual event. Every contribution, big or small, is greatly appreciated.

On another note, NEARFest in April will be held on Thursday April 25 and Friday April 26 at the Deerfield Fairgrounds in Deerfield NH. As explained in the announcement below, NEARFest will be held Thursday and Friday (instead of the usual Friday and Saturday) this one time, due to scheduling conflicts with the Fairgrounds. Make sure to check the website for ticket information. You won't want to miss it! There is something there for every ham!

In closing, I would like to thank Bruce Anderson and Mark Nelson for their tireless efforts trying to make our hybrid meeting work last month. Hopefully this month we will have better success in hooking up the laptop to the TV in the Church Hall so everyone will have a great seat for the meeting. I am looking forward to seeing everyone on March 6 for our next in person meeting!

Until next time,
Here's to good DX! We are a G.O.T.A Club (Get On The Air), so fire up your gear and have some fun on the airwaves!

73,
Doug
N1WRN

Next BARS Zoom meeting: March 6 at 7:00 PM - "Is CW Still Viable?" Presenter: Bruce Blain, K1BG

It is with great pleasure that I announce Bruce Blain, K1BG, as our Guest Speaker for our hybrid Club Meeting on Wednesday March 6 at the Chelmsford Bible Church. Bruce is the ARRL Eastern Mass Club Coordinator. He was first introduced to amateur radio by his neighbor Jim Payne, W1GPN, when he was 4 years old. He was first licensed as WN1KBG in 1968 (Canton, MA) and upgraded to WA1KBG. He earned a BSEE from Northeastern University in 1976, and became K1BG in 1977.

Bruce is past president of the Norwood Amateur Radio Club and is a founding member and past Vice President of the Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club where he currently serves as a member of the board. He is also a member of the First Operators Club, CW Ops, the Yankee Clipper Contest Club, and the Radio Club of America. Bruce has been a member of the ARRL for over 50 years.

He has been "advising" CW Academy classes for the past 4 years, where he is currently a "youth academy" advisor. Attracting and mentoring young people and supporting local radio clubs are areas that Bruce is passionate about.

His first experience with Amateur Radio came in 1958 (at the age of 4) when Jim W1GPN (SK) showed his dad his hamshack while he was quietly sitting in the background. He was first licensed in 1968 as WN1KBG, and became WA1KBG in 1969. His callsign changed to K1BG in 1977.

During the two years he lived in England, he was G4WJQ and he also operated as VP2V/K1BG.

In late 2013 he had a quick QSO with Shin, JA1NUT. He later read his QRZ.com page (<http://www.qrz.com/db/JA1NUT>), where he says the following:

"My worry about CW operation in ham radio is that they won't converse with this mode any longer. But CW seems to have become only a tool to make as many contacts as possible. CW is nowadays a kind of game. It has become a meaningless symbol system for games. It is not just an argument between rag chewing and contesting/DXing. It is concerning about the essence of this mode."

Shin's few sentences had a profound effect on him. When he first got into ham radio, it was all about making contacts and SPEAKING with people. Over time, it morphed into DXing and contesting, and not much else. He says, "Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with DXing or contesting. It's just that there was so much more that I was missing. Conversational CW, where I get to really make friends and get to know the people I am communicating with."

The upshot of this is that his code speed has improved way beyond what he thought possible (after 46 years in Amateur Radio at the time, apparently an old dog can still learn new tricks). He has converted both amps to QSK (he gets it now). And he's made a lot of friends that he never knew. For him, conversational CW (good old rag chewing) has taken a great hobby and made it better. Shin is 100% right, and if you take the time to read this, he hopes you will give it a try. CU SN. And thank you Shin!



We 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 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.

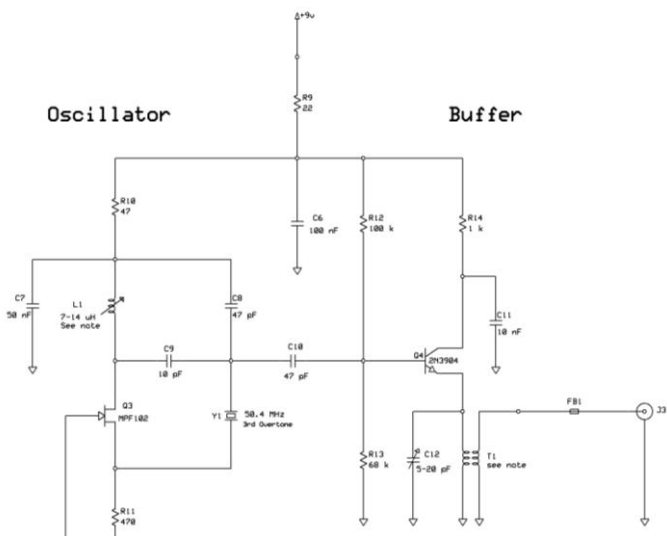
I am looking forward to "seeing" many of you on Wednesday 3/6 here at 1900.

Doug, N1WRN
President, Billerica Amateur Radio Society

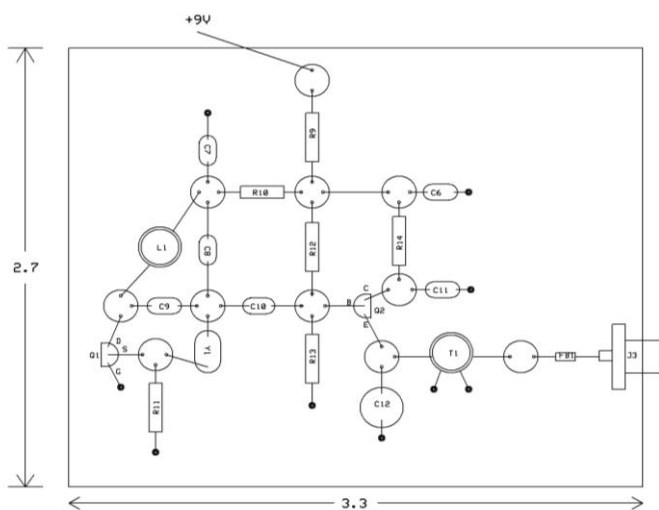
From the Editor's Desk By Marla Wallace, WA1GSF

It's been a busy month for me, even though my antenna is down – a casualty of the only major snowstorm of the winter (so far). I've been working on the design of a six-meter AM rig. In the process, I've invented a notation for schematics that explicitly shows how the pads used in Manhattan Construction are allocated.

Here's a section of the schematic for the crystal oscillator and buffer amplifier stages (don't take this as gospel – I haven't yet constructed this, so some component values might change):



Note the little open circles where junction dots would normally be drawn (for example, at the intersection of Y1, Q3 and R11) and the occasional open circle where no junction would be (such as between T1 and FB1). These symbols represent the pads. Armed with that information, laying out the circuit becomes easy:



So, I've been playing engineer and draftsman of late. But this, too, is ham radio. What a wonderful hobby we share!

Announcements

**Contoocook Valley Radio Club 2024 Hamfest/Flea Market
 Sunday March 17, 8 AM To 2 PM,
 At The Henniker Community School Cafetorium**

Many people say that ours is the best Hamfest, since, we have three Speakers, loads of Door Prizes, inexpensive food (Baked Beans, Hot Dogs, Home Made Pastries), lots of Vendors, VE Session, Mobile Radio Raffle Grand Prize, Great Conversation (I'm remembering listening to many Happy Voices of people who

haven't seen each other in a whole year!) Our Hamfest is a super place to meet new friends AND see old ones!

You are invited to Attend, be a Vendor, Upgrade, Buy Equipment, Eat, Visit, help with set up at 6:30 AM, help with Tear Down after 1:30 PM, Listen to Talks, or All of the Above!

It is a really happy time! I hope everyone can make it!

73,
 Mickie, W1MKY
 603-428-3840
 (Call or Email me if you want to reserve a table.)

The Spring NEAR-Fest XXXV Dates Have Changed

Please note this is an updated announcement. Please disregard any other notices you may have read.

Dear Friends of NEAR-Fest:

Our Spring 2024 hamfest, NEAR-Fest XXXV, will be held on Thursday April 25th and Friday April 26th, 2024. There will be no hamfest activity on Saturday due to an unfortunate scheduling conflict with the Deerfield Fairgrounds. We had originally announced that the event would take place only on Friday but due to popular demand and the cooperation of the Deerfield Fair Association we are pleased to announce this new full two-day schedule.

Our 2024 Fall NEAR-Fest XXXVI is scheduled for October 11th and 12th and will be the same as always for the past eighteen years, (i.e.: on Friday and Saturday).

The gates will open on Thursday morning at 7:00 AM for **prepaid ticket holders only** so you might want to buy your tickets online well in advance starting February 1st, 2024, on our Web site, <https://www.near-fest.com>, or in March at the Ham Radio Outlet store in Salem NH and at Ross Hochstrasser's Clock Shop in Whitman MA and get your favorite spot. NEAR-Fest XXXV will end at 3:00 PM on Friday.

Prepaid ticket holders will line up and enter via Gate C as we did in the Fall. They must have **all** of their needed tickets and inside parking passes or they will be sent to Gate F. This includes all Campers, RVs, tents, who must also have their overnight camping passes as there will be NO tickets or passes sold at Gate C. Anyone needing to buy tickets or parking passes will go to Gate F and will be admitted starting at 8:00AM. Once the line has entered at Gate C it will close and all others entering the grounds will have to proceed to Gate F.

For this event only admission per person is \$10.00 whether you buy your ticket online or in advance or at the gate. Overnight parking and tent passes are \$15.00 regardless of whether you plug into an electric outlet or not. Campers, RVs and overnight stayers will go directly into the Fairgrounds as we will not be using the

campgrounds this time. The cost of the pass for RVs, Campers, Motorhomes, etc, is \$30.00. All vehicles that remain in the Fairgrounds overnight (after 9:00 PM) will require an overnight parking pass in addition to an inside parking pass for Friday.

Everyone over 21 will need an admission ticket except unlicensed spouses, active-duty military, full-time students (with ID) and other valid pass holders.

If you buy something big and heavy in the flea market one of our volunteer staff members will be glad to transport it and you to your vehicle at no charge as we have been doing for many years. As always inside parking for disabled persons is free of charge and they may use a single person "mobility device" as well. NEAR-Fest reserves the right to limit the use of golf carts and "other power-driven mobility devices" due to safety concerns and potential liability issues.

Please visit our Web site, www.near-fest.com, or our Facebook page, NearFest NH for any further updates. We apologize for any inconvenience that this modified version of NEAR-Fest may have caused but it is only for this time. We appreciate your indulgence and understanding.

See you at Deerfield!
73, MisterMike, WIRC

Technician In a Day Study Course

Classroom Session: Saturday, April 20, 2024, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Sponsored by: Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association Gloucester, MA.

Our Technician In a Day Session is a study course. The course allows you to become licensed by the Federal Communications Commission as an Amateur Radio Operator.

You should first obtain a copy of the ARRL Technician Class License Manual. You may purchase this book at Ham Radio Outlet or any other amateur radio related store.

You should read the book. The information contained therein will allow you to answer questions on a 35-question test for obtaining your Technician License.

There are videos on Youtube.com at W4EEY that explain the theory and cover the questions to enhance your knowledge. You may also take practice exams at <https://HamStudy.org> for comprehension.

1. You should apply and obtain an FCC Registration Number at:
<https://apps.fcc.gov/coresWeb/publicHome.do>
2. You will be charged a small fee for this course, \$40.00. (Normally, \$15.00* for the examination, \$15.00 for study materials and \$10.00 for snacks and drinks which will be provided for the session.)

- *For minors under 18 years, the test fee is \$5.00
3. The Tech In a Day Session will be almost a full day session (8 am to 5pm)
 - a. The first study session begins at 9:00am for 45 minutes and you will be given a 15 minute break before the next session begins at 10 am.
 - b. Three study sessions will be held before a lunch break (approximately 11:45am-1:00pm)
 - c. There will be three more study sessions in the afternoon to run to 3:45 pm.
 - d. Testing will begin approximately at 4:00 pm.

You will be administered an examination of 35 questions of which you must score at least 26 out of 35 or better to pass.

Upon successful completion of your examination, you will be handed a Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE Form).

Your exam results will be forwarded to the American Radio Relay League in Newington, CT for processing to the Federal Communications Commission. When your license has been processed, you will receive an email from the FCC requesting the \$35.00 Application Fee.

Please use a computer to make this payment – tablets and cellphones will not work!

Upon receipt of your payment to the FCC, you will receive an email with instructions on how to download a copy of your new license.

If you would like more information, you may email the CAARA at caarave@caara.net or Telephone (978) 504-9112 for more information.

To sign up for the course, email: techinaday@caara.net

--de Bill Poulin

Strays

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 WILUS@hotmail.com

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

By the Numbers

Some funny numbers you might get, especially on CW, at the end of a QSO:

33 is see you later (between YL's, i.e.: YL to YL)

73 is see you later (anybody)

88 is see you later with more feeling 😊

Also, some abbreviations that are good to know:

OM = Old Man

YL = Young Lady

XYL = Ex-Young Lady (she's married, typically the OM referring to his wife)

--de Niece - KA1ULN

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 through the process. An Elmer could have Zoom on their cell phone and show a new ham how their shack was set up. Use your imagination and see how you might use this tool. If you would like to use Zoom for this, contact Bruce, WILUS@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 in using Zoom to Elmer someone.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

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

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 the way online exams are run.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

Secretary's Reports

from Marla Wallace, WA1GSF, Secretary

BARS General Meeting in February

- Doug called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:10. (There were technical difficulties getting the Zoom video to the big-screen TV that we were never able to resolve.)
- Introductions of those present in the hall ran until 7:25.
- The program started at 7:30 after Doug introduced the speaker.
- The program ended at 8:15.
- We were informed that a local club (I didn't get the name) was disbanding and would be donating their equipment to BARS. Doug said he would call a board meeting to determine what we should do with the donated equipment and where to store it,
- We adjourned at 8:30

There was no BARS Board of Directors Meeting in February

BARS Membership

Our current combined membership is 128. To date 26 of the paid-up members in 2023 have not renewed for 2024.

We are now accepting renewals for 2024. For 2024, dues will remain at \$15.

In late February an invoice reminder was sent to all those that hadn't already paid their 2024 dues. If you have any question about your renewal status please check you "Junk email inbox" for the renewal invoice from PayPal. Anyone with a question about their renewal status can email me at W1LUS@hotmail.com to get your current status.

from Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, Treasurer

2024 BARS Member Dues

A \$15 annual BARS membership begins on January 1st and expires on December 31st. Any renewal or new membership made after September 1st will be valid until December 31st of the following 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 March 2024

Dues for 2024 are now due. Dues for 2024 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.
- 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 February, we had income of \$570 from 38 new/renewals. Our expenses were Zoom \$16.99 and PayPal \$33.64. We now have \$1311.07 in the bank and \$1109.54 in our PayPal account for a total of \$2420.61.

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 Doug Bruce, N1WRN.

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 now held in person and via Zoom. A link will be sent via the BARS email reflector to all currently paid-up members who might wish to continue to use Zoom.

Club meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 PM Eastern time.

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 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](https://www.chelmsfordbiblechurch.org/128-Gorham-St-Rear-Door-Chelmsford-MA-01824-3220) ([map](#))

VE Session Report for February, 2024

We had four people show up for the February 8th exam session. We created three new Technicians: Adam, KC1UDV, Jim, KC1UDQ, and Chandu, KC1UEE. Be sure to greet them if you hear them on the air. We had one upgrade to Extra: Alan, N1SPP.

Our next exam session will be on March 14 at 7:00 PM at the Chelmsford Bible Church.

Thanks to Gary, W1GFF, Peter, N1ALO, Niece, KA1ULN and Bill, W1ZL for helping run this exam session. While walk-ins are still welcome you may pre-register for BARS VE exams at <https://HamStudy.org>.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

BARS does breakfast every Saturday

On Saturday mornings around 8:30AM, we have a virtual Zoom breakfast session (a link was provided in email some time ago).

We also meet in-person weekly at 8:15AM for a casual, social breakfast at Stelio's restaurant in Billerica.

[Stelio's Family Restaurant, Billerica, MA](#)

Future Meetings

The April meeting will be on 4/3 and will be hybrid – in person AND via Zoom.

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

February Get-on-the-Air Suggestions from Scott Ginsburg, K10A

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

Here are the popular suggestions for this month:

Date	Event
Mar 2-3	ARRL International DX Contest, SSB ** http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx
Mar 2-10	Novice Rig Roundup http://www.novicerigroundup.org/
Mar 9-10	South America 10 Meter Contest http://sa10m.com.ar/wp/rules/
Mar 16-17	Africa All Mode International DX Contest sarl.org/contest/rules
Mar 30-31	CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB https://www.cqwpw.com/rules.htm

** 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 6th of every month at 1200 UTC
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: Bill Poulin, WZ1L

BoD: Steve Wedge, W1ES/4

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