

**NEWS FOR AND BY BARS MEMBERS****DECEMBER 2025**

The December BARS general meeting will be in-person at the Chelmsford Bible Church and on Zoom (hybrid).

A Message from the President

By Doug Bruce, N1WRN

Greetings, Fellow Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Membership for electing me again as Club President. It is my plan to keep our Club relevant, while maintaining the informal and friendly atmosphere for our members. We have a great Club now and it will only get better in 2026 and beyond.

We as a Club have a decision to make regarding the repeater that we will use in 2026 for our weekly Wednesday night net. I have had talks with Bruce Pigott, KC1US, at the Minuteman Repeater Association regarding our possible switch to the Billerica 147.12 2 meter machine. As most of you know, the Billerica machine is back on the air and fully functional. The response has been great to this development, as I have heard a lot of activity on the machine since the day it was announced as being back on the air.

We as a Club need to see if the 147.12 repeater will suit our needs going forward. We have to take into consideration the range of 147.12 before we decide to switch from the Westford repeater, which has one of the best footprints in the New England Area.

We will be having a Board Meeting after Thanksgiving and we will then present the Board's findings and recommendations to the full membership for a vote at the December Club Meeting on December 3, 2025.

On another note, I have been thinking long and hard regarding our Club Meetings at the Church and I would like to propose to the membership that we have our meetings via ZOOM regularly, and use the Church for Special Meetings 3-4 times a year for kit building and antenna building nights etc. I will also bring this topic up at our Board Meeting before the December Club Meeting.

ZOOM has been a Godsend, but I also keep in mind that a lot of members like meeting in person. We have had less than ten members show up for the last several in-person meetings, so I suggest going to Zoom meetings regularly going forward.

On still another note, the Club will have our Holiday Party and January 2026 Club Meeting at the Great Wall Restaurant in Bedford, MA on Wednesday night January 14, 2026 at 6:30 PM. I just got off the phone with the restaurant, and we are all set for that night. The cost will be \$33.25 per person, which will include tax and gratuity. Drinks can be ordered separately.

We will also be having a Yankee Swap. If you want to participate in the Yankee Swap, just bring a gift of no more than \$20.00 and you will be on the list. We have had a lot of fun with this party, so bring your Holiday Spirit for a great night of Ham Radio fellowship!

In closing, I would like to wish all our Members a Happy and Joyous Holiday Season. Remember, those microphones will not key themselves, so Get On The Air and have some fun with our great hobby!

Until Next Month,

73 and good DX,
Doug
N1WRN

Next BARS meeting: December 3 at 7:00 PM - "Fun With QRP"

Speaker: John Meade, W2XS

I am pleased to announce that our Guest Speaker for the December 3, 2025 Club Meeting will be John Meade, W2XS, and he will be presenting a talk on "Fun With QRP". You won't want to miss this one! John is an avid QRP Operator in Northport, New York. Here is John's Bio:

My main rig is the Elecraft K4D with the KPA500 and KAT500. I really enjoy the smooth QSK and quick QSY of the system. The K4D is a wonderful radio, and I am enjoying it very much. I have a K1, K2, KX1, KX2, KX3, SST40, OHR HP40, QCX mini, and NC40A for QRP use.

The paddles that I prefer are the Elecraft Hex-Key, the Brown Brothers Model BTL-A, and, for QRP, I also use the Black Widow, Paddlette PK-1, the Vibroplex Code Warrior, and K9LU Bulldog paddles, all of which have a nice feel to them.

The antenna is a center-fed 135-foot multiband doublet ("zepp") fed with KW 300-ohm ladder line through a Balun Designs Tuner Balun.

I enjoy CW operating, QRP, and restoring and using boatanchors. I started out in traffic handling and still like to QNI into nets.

My brother is WA2DSF and is using the K2 in Florida. Unfortunately, he is in a place with antenna restrictions, so the antenna so far is an indoor loop. His 2 meter HT is working, though.

LICW Club #53, CWOPS #1407, CFO #201, ARCI #10275, NAQCC #655, SKCC #2200, A1 OP, Larkfield ARC



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 there on Wednesday, 12/3, at 1900.

Doug, N1WRN

President, Billerica Amateur Radio Society

From the Editor's Desk

By Marla Wallace, WA1GSF

I'm in the process of going digital. I decided I'm a lot more comfortable operating a keyboard instead of speaking into a microphone (and my CW skills are laughable – fifty-nine years ago, I passed a 5 WPM code exam and I've barely used that mode since). But I want to *communicate*, not just exchange datagrams. So, I'm planning on operating some sort of RTTY-like mode. My rig is already set up to do audio and PTT over a USB cable, so getting the rig and computer to play together should be simple. *Famous last words...*

And then Dave Marcucci penned the article below. Maybe I'll have to get over my mic-shyness after all.

Feature Article: FreeDV: Open Source Digital Voice for HF

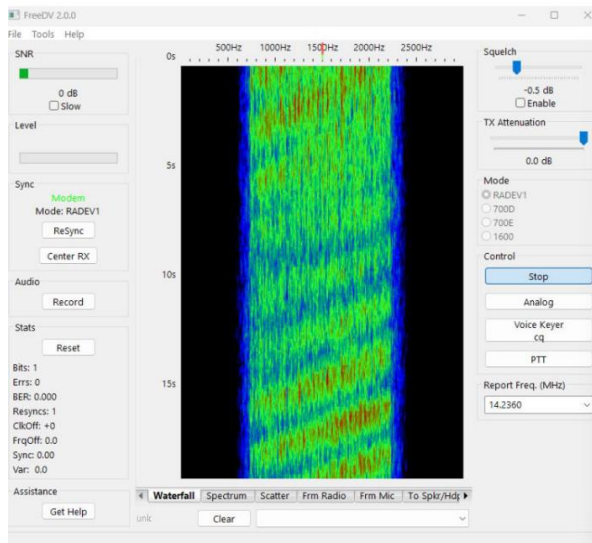
By Dave Marcucci, KC1TLF

Amateur radio has always been about experimentation, innovation, and pushing the boundaries of communication. Experimentation with digital voice on HF bands isn't new. In fact, in 2000 a QEX article described the idea in detail including its challenges and its potential \$300 per operator cost. However, the 2012 innovation, FreeDV, has evolved and this iteration offers a free and viable solution. FreeDV is a completely open-source digital audio mode designed by and for amateur operators and we're going to learn how to get started!

First, let's provide some additional details about what this technology is. FreeDV is a suite of digital voice modes that

allow you to transmit high-quality speech over HF using any SSB-capable radio. Unlike proprietary digital voice systems, FreeDV is 100% open source, including its speech codec (Codec2). This means there are no patents, no locked-down technology, and no restrictions on experimentation.

The flagship mode, Radio Autoencoder (RADE), uses advanced digital signal processing and machine learning to deliver audio quality that compares favorably to SSB — even under challenging signal-to-noise conditions. FreeDV activity is growing rapidly. You can check into nets in Argentina, Australia, the UK, and the US. There's even a monthly FreeDV Activity Day where hams worldwide get on the air to test and enjoy the mode.



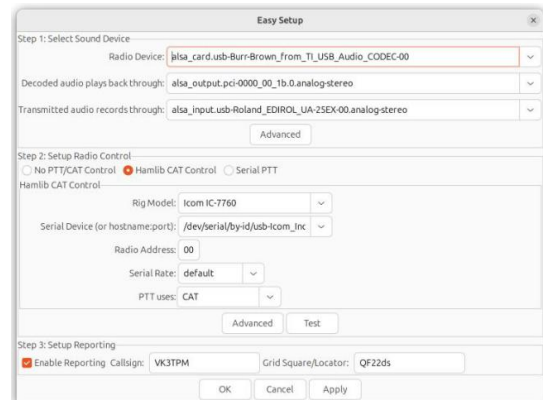
One of my favorite features is the Reporter Map. It is not required to be enabled, but if you do, the reporter map will use your internet connection to allow you to see, in real time, who is listening and on what frequency. It will even show you who is transmitting and not only who's receiving the transmission but what the SNR is!! There are a few other features as well, but these few allow you to know you have everything setup correctly on that first PTT:

Call Sign	Location	Freq	Mode	Status	Splat
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500
K1RDP	MASS	14.2360	RADEV1	OK	13.7500

Why else am I excited about FreeDV? It represents a future for digital voice where amateur radio remains open, innovative, and free from proprietary lock-in. By adopting FreeDV, we ensure that digital voice technology remains in the hands of the amateur community, not controlled by a single manufacturer. It's also a fantastic way to learn more about DSP, codecs, and modern communication techniques, all while making QSOs with fellow operators.

If you're looking for a new project that blends tradition with innovation, give FreeDV a try. It's simple to set up, fun to use, and represents the spirit of amateur radio at its best, open, experimental, and community-driven. I hope to "decode" you on the bands and "hear" you on the next FreeDV net!

Before I go, here's a simple quick start guide to getting FreeDV up and running in 5 steps:



1. Download the FreeDV software : Visit freedv.org and grab the installer for Windows, Linux, or macOS.
2. Connect Your Rig: Use a USB sound card or audio interface to link your transceiver's mic/speaker ports to your computer.
3. Configure Audio: In the FreeDV GUI, select your input/output devices and adjust levels for clean audio.
4. Pick a Mode: Start with RADE for reliable QSOs. Experiment with other modes as you gain experience.
5. Get on the Air: Tune to known FreeDV calling frequencies (easily selected in the GUI) and use FreeDV Reporter to see who's active so you can coordinate contacts.

Good luck and 73!

Feature Article: Possible Nantucket Lightship Activation

By Wayne Geiser, KC1ONM

Last month, my XYL and I visited the Nantucket Lightship (LV-112). It has been retired, is being restored, and is docked in Boston Harbor as a floating museum. They are open for tours on Saturdays from the last Saturday in April through the last Saturday in October.

We were given an interesting tour by one of the volunteers. Of course, one of the locations we visited was the radio room. In the room was a display of an amateur radio activation during a Past International Lighthouse/Lightship weekend. The callsign on the display was WINLS (Nantucket LightShip).



As we were finishing our visit, Maryann mentioned that I was a Ham, and our guide said that it had been a while since the last activation. The man who is the head of the non-profit museum and is leading the renovation effort was on board. He was quite excited about the possibility that it could be activated again, and gave me his card.

WINLS is the club callsign for the Nantucket Lightship Amateur Radio Club. The trustee of the callsign is busy with other interests and has no interest in activating LV-112 again. He has agreed to transfer the trusteeship of the callsign to me, along with the existing logfile and some printed QSL cards, LoTW and QRZ.com logins, etc.



There are several events that could possibly feature activation of the lightship. The biggest one is International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend, which is on August 15 & 16, 2026. I hope to be able to set up a radio and antenna and

broadcast as WINLS sometime that weekend. I suspect that this will be limited to the normal open hours of 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday. I don't think it will be an "all weekend" activation.

There are many details to iron out, but I've started the process to do just that. At this time, I am looking to collect a list of email addresses of people who might be interested in operating for part of an activation sometime next summer.

I have created a mailing list to be kept up-to-date on this project. Members of this mailing list will be sent notifications on activations and will have the opportunity to sign up to operate from LV-112 as WINLS. To subscribe, send an email to activations-request@winls.com with the subject: 'subscribe' (without the quotes). You will get a confirmation email back. Responding as directed in the confirmation email will add you to the list.

If you have any problems subscribing, send me an email at KC1ONM@ARRL.NET.

Announcements

Santa Claus Net Begins Nov 28, 2025

The Santa Claus Net will begin Friday, November 28, 2025 on 80 Meters 3.916 at 7pm Central (8pm Local).

The Net runs daily from Nov 28th to December 24th 2025.

See www.cqsanta.com for the Check-In procedures.

--de WZ1L

W1DC is back

After the repeater rack was removed from the old site, updated and placed at the new site, after the ravens vacated their nest on the water tank, after an agreement with the Town of Billerica was drawn up, then accepted by the Select Board, after the tower climber had available two dates for multiple antenna installations and after an audio cable was repaired, the Billerica repeaters are back on the air. 147.120 (tone = 146.2 Hz) and 224.880 W1DC repeaters are in operation from their new location. The default linking mode on 147.120 will be an individual repeater and 224.880 will be linked to HUB1. See https://mmra.org/repeaters/repeater_linking.html for the map of HUB1 linked systems.

Send observations about repeater performance to <mailto:mcontact@mmra.org>.

--de Bruce Pigott KC1US - Public Service Coordinator
Minuteman Repeater Association <<https://www.mmra.org/>>

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

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

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, 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 in using Zoom to Elmer someone.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

BARS Membership

Our current combined membership is 144. There are eleven members that still haven't renewed for 2025.

Anyone with a question about their renewal status can email me at W1LUS@hotmail.com to get your current membership status.

from Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, Treasurer

Secretary's Report for November 2025

Doug called the November 5th General Meeting to order at 1900 EST. The meeting was Zoom-only.

Club Business and announcements:

- Election of officers was held. The slate of candidates (all running unopposed) was elected.
- The BARS Holiday Party will be held at the Great Wall, as usual, on Wednesday, January 14th, 2026.
- Tim, K1DC, will take over as Field Day chairman.

The program started at 1920 and ended at 2015.

The meeting adjourned at 2020.

There were 17 participants on Zoom.

Treasurers Report for December 2025

Reminder 2026 Dues are due starting January 1, 2026. BARS Dues are from January 1 to December 31. Dues for 2026 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,
- or with cash or check by mailing \$15 to Billerica ARS, 16 Regis Road, Tewksbury, MA 01876

In November we had two renewals for \$30 income. Our expenses were Zoom \$18.05 and PayPal \$2.02. We now have \$891.84 in the bank and \$967.10 in our PayPal account for a total of \$1858.94.

Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

BARS Does breakfast every Saturday.

On Saturday mornings at 8:15AM, we meet for a casual, social breakfast at Stelio's restaurant in Billerica.

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

December Get-on-the-Air Suggestions from Andy Wallace, KA1GTT

KA1GTT Andy Wallace here. I am offering my input for this month's Get on the Air column. These are contests which can be on HF or VHF/UHF, and may be SSB (voice), CW (Morse code) or digital (FT8, etc.) modes. If you are a beginner, contests can still be a lot of fun. Most of the time the rules expect you to submit electronic logs of your activity, but I know hams who simply want to exchange QSLs for confirmation.

Contests can be frantic - rapid exchanges (what info the stations pass back and forth) and careful rules of engagement. But others are more casual. It always helps to tune in stations and listen to the exchange and get a feel for the methods.

One of the best resources for finding out what contests are upcoming is the WA7BNM website and his 8-day contest calendar at:

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php>

This gives a snapshot of the next 8 days, and you can instantly see what contests are longer term (like across weekends) and thus more popular.

The 12-month calendar is excellent for getting a snapshot of an entire month in advance. Surprisingly, I find it has more contests listed than the "Perpetual" site view. The 12 month is what I used to compile this month's hot contests.

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.php>

Of note: contests are listed in UTC (Coordinated Universal Time or Greenwich Mean Time or Zulu) day and date. This is the time going through the 0° meridian (Greenwich, U.K.). If you are new to hamming you need to know hams historically use UTC to align with hams around the world in a way that being on the air at a certain time is simple. We're in Eastern Standard Time right now, so that means UTC is 5 hours ahead of us. 0000Z being midnight Zulu/UTC/GMT translates to 7:00 PM EST. So, for a typical contest, the start of the contest is 00:01UTC November 7 (Saturday). Subtract five hours and you better have your rig ready at 7:01PM EST Friday evening.

Here is KA1GTT's list of top contests for this month - and please remember these are best-guesses on my part.

1. ARRL 160-Meter Contest
<http://www.arrl.org/160-meter>
2200Z, Dec 5 to 1600Z, Dec 7, 2025
Exchange: W/VE: RST + ARRL/RAC Section (for instance: EMA, Eastern MA)
Comments: Here's another challenging contest on 1.8-2.0 MHz. How big is your wire antenna? A resonant dipole on 160m is 260 feet long! Add to that this is CW (Morse code) only. But for those who enjoy this combination, I'm sure it'll be a blast!

2. ARRL 10-Meter Contest ***
<http://www.arrl.org/10-meter>
0000Z, Dec 13 to 2400Z, Dec 14, 2025
Exchange: W/VE: RST + State/Province
Comments: At the opposite end of the HF spectrum is this 10m contest! If your 260' dipole fell down, cut it to 16.7' and get on 10m!
3. ARRL Rookie Roundup, CW
<http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup>
1800Z-2359Z, Dec 21, 2025
Exchange: NA: Name + 2-digit year first licensed + (state/province/XE area/DX)
Comments: another Morse code only contest but aimed at new ham operators (licensed three years or less OR if this is your first time operating any contest). With the Novice license gone, there aren't as many people learning CW as before. But if you know it, and are new, get on and give this a try!
4. Stew Perry Topband Challenge
<https://www.kkn.net/stew/>
1500Z, Dec 27 to 1500Z, Dec 28, 2025
Exchange: 4-Character grid square
Comments: another 160m CW contest! Go here and look up your grid square:
https://www.levinecentral.com/ham/grid_square.php
5. ARRL Straight Key Night ***
<https://www.arrl.org/straight-key-night>
Straight Key Night is held every January 1 from 0000 UTC through 2359 UTC.
Comments: Here is yet another CW contest but MY FAVORITE OF ALL. Straight Key Night is held beginning 8PM Eastern on New Year's Eve. Since the Newsletter will be published after that, I am listing it here so people can be aware. The idea is you get on and NOT score points but instead have casual friendly conversations in Morse Code just for the enjoyment of it. Tom K1TW, Henry WA1VAB, and I look forward to it every year. Years back I had a tradition of working W1HH (my father) on SKN and we'd exchange QSLs. For SKN you can use any equipment to converse in CW but it is best to use a straight key. This is the classic old telegraph key, where you use up and down motion on a simple lever/knob to make dots and dashes entirely by your own rhythm. Alternatively, the sideways key (a "bug" or "sideswiper" - my favorite) can be used. If you have an interesting contact or two, post it to the ARRL website above.

** Top recommendation for this month

Reminder: details on each of these contests 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>

Final comment: It is a VERY sparse contest calendar for December, but you can still have fun. If you don't do these contests, at least get on and call or answer a CQ in between holiday cooking and shopping! If you get on and enjoy operating one of these events, please send an email to the BARS email reflector, bars@w1hh.org.

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 about 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 held in person (weather permitting) and via Zoom. A link will be sent via the BARS email reflector to all currently paid-up members who might wish to attend via Zoom.

Club meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM Eastern time.

VE Sessions

Our VE sessions are 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 \(map\)](#)

VE Session Report for November 2025

We had two people show up for the November 13th VE exam session. Results were one new Technician, and one General upgrade. The new Technician will have to wait until the FCC catches up from the Government shutdown to get his callsign. The upgrade received a CSCE that allows them to immediately use their new privileges.

Our next exam session will be on December 11th at 7:00 PM. At the Chelmsford Bible Church. Thanks to Niece, KA1ULN, Peter, N1ALO, Gary, W1GFF, and Bill, W1ZL, for their help conducting this exam session.

While walk-ins are still welcome it speeds the process up if you pre-register for your BARS VE exam session at HamStudy.org.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

Future Meetings

The next BARS General Meeting will be held via Zoom and at the Chelmsford Bible Church on December 3rd at 7:00 PM. For those who prefer, a Zoom link will be sent in the club email feed prior to the meeting.

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.

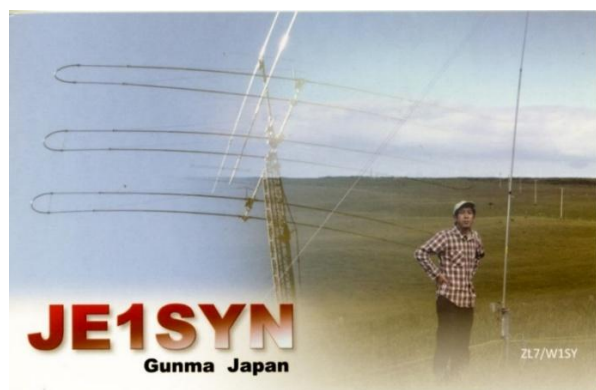
Reply to that message from the list server and you are then subscribed.

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

Photo Feature: From the Mailbag

I'm still a 'baby ham' having been licensed only since May 2022. In that relatively short time I've managed to get over 70k contacts in my log. Granted, a lot of those are contest contacts and most are FTx which some folks don't count as 'real' contacts.

A small fraction of those contacts are with Japanese stations. However, until a short while ago I had not received any cards from them. Well, the bureau does deliver, eventually... A few of these cards are over 3 years old! I guess patience is a virtue, even in ham radio!



Show Me Your Cards! I would like to highlight cards from our club members. Send me a scan of your card or just mail one to me. Or bring one to the next club meeting and I'll collect them. Thanks!

As always, if you have received any interesting cards, hand-drawn or not, please send them along to

k1dc.radio@gmail.com

and I'll share them with the group!

73, Tim/K1DC

BARS Leadership Team

OFFICERS:

President:	Doug Bruce, N1WRN
Vice President:	David Marcucci, KC1TLF
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:	<pending>
Field Day Chair:	Tim Carter, K1DC
Webmaster:	David Marcucci, KC1TLF