

NEWS FOR AND BY BARS MEMBERS

MARCH 2026

# BARS Billerica Amateur Radio Society

**Starting in March, members are encouraged to bring flea market items to the meetings. We will have a table in the back of the hall for folks to sell or give away excess items from your shack!**

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

Greetings, Fellow Members,

I hope everyone is doing ok after the Blizzard of 2026! I hope everyone is keeping safe and warm in the aftermath, and that you are shoveling and snow blowing with care so as not to sustain any nagging injuries. I also hope that your outdoor antennas did well in the high winds and heavy snow. It's a good idea to check out that antenna outside after you finish clearing your driveways etc.

If you see any issues, be sure not to transmit until you check your SWR with your antenna tuner. Nobody needs blown finals on the rig as we are in the peak of winter DX season! Hopefully you have an antenna system that you can easily access if you have any storm related issues with it.

My antenna system is on an endless loop about 70 feet off the ground. I can raise and lower my antenna with ease at any time if I see any issues with it that need repair. I have 20 feet of ROMEX wire around an 8-inch diameter portion of the trunk and a 6-inch heavy duty carabiner attached to that ROMEX, and also 140 feet of half-inch marine rope fed through the carabiner all the way to the ground. My 160 to 6m T top vertical antenna made entirely of coax is attached to the rope. I tie off the rope at a cleat about two feet off the ground that keeps that rope tied securely to the bottom of the tree!

Knock on wood, I have had only one issue with my antenna, and that was because there was 18-gauge solid wire holding

the antenna to the rope and when that snapped the antenna started falling to the ground. I loosened the rope, lowered the antenna like a flag on the flagpole, and made the necessary repair using 12-gauge stranded insulated wire to attach the antenna back to the rope. After that, the antenna went up to the carabiner, and I was back in business!

On another note, we are back to in person meeting at the Church. The meeting is also available on Zoom for those who choose not to attend in person. It looks like we will be on track weather-wise to have the meeting in person on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Please feel free to bring Flea Market items that can be placed on a table at the back of the hall for those who wish to peruse your wares! You can also bring free stuff if you want to just give items away that you no longer need or use in your shack, like QST magazines, etc.

There are several good DX opportunities for the month of March. I have attached the link for the calendar from DX World below for your reference. I hope everyone has had a chance to work Desecheo Island, which is number 14 on the Clublog Most Wanted DX Entity list! It is a good chance to get a great ATNO for your log. See [DXNews.com DX Calendar March 2026](#).

I'd also like to mention the new DXCC Trident Award, recognizing 100 confirmed countries over CW, Phone, and FT8 modes. See [DXCC Trident Award](#). This looks like a fun new award for DX'ers to shoot for. They have a nice plaque for the shack that you can be very proud of. I will have to learn CW to get this award, which is one of my 2026 ham radio goals. Hopefully you have ham radio goals as well for 2026. These goals to strive for make the hobby more fun and rewarding, so G.O.T.A. (Get on the Air!) and have some fun with our great hobby!

73 and good DX,  
Doug  
N1WRN

## Next BARS meeting: March 4 at 7:00 PM - "Restoring and Repairing Antique Radios"

**Speaker: Andy Stewart, KB1OIQ**

It gives me great pleasure to announce our Guest Speaker for the March 4, 2026, club meeting, Andy Stewart, KB1OIQ, and he will give a presentation on restoring and repairing antique radios. Andy gives great talks, so you won't want to miss this one! Here is Andy's bio:

I've been repairing and cleaning vintage radio gear, including re-capping, rewiring, and using modern solutions for things like "curtain burner" cords. I've done about 20 - 30 radios and a few pieces of vintage test equipment.

I built a 1920s style regenerative receiver using a 6C4 tube and many parts from that era. It has 3 different hand-wound coils roughly for a) AM broadcast band, b) 160m through 40m, and c) 40m through 31m.

General Info: First licensed 2007, general 2008, amateur extra 2009; past President of the Police Amateur Radio Team (PART) from 2009 – 2019; ARRL ACC for EMA from 2017 – 2019; SKCC member #6265S; vice President of the Police Amateur Radio Team (PART) from 2026 – now; Field Day Chairman for June 2026; DXCC Challenge (2025); Trident Award (August 2025); 8-Band DXCC Award (April 2025).



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@wlhh.org](mailto:bars-subscribe@wlhh.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, 3/4, at 1900.

Doug, N1WRN

President, Billerica Amateur Radio Society

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

I never cease to be amazed at what the Open-Source software community can accomplish. A few weeks ago it was announced that the author of HamClock, a utility used by thousands (if not millions) of hams, is now a silent key and the server the program depends on will go dark shortly, rendering the program useless. Most of the time, this means that the user has no recourse and must, sadly, simply sigh and uninstall the software.

As Dave Marcucci details below, in the case of HamClock, this is not necessarily the case. The community (or at least one individual) has created a replacement that not only does what HamClock did but extends its capabilities and can even be run from a browser (with some limitations). Best of all, it does not depend on a server for its functionality and is, therefore, future-proof.

And for those of us with the skill set, the code is freely available to be modified and customized as desired (or simply examined to learn how to do similar things). Some of the customizations and / or extensions thus created will wind up in the project if there is interest, it is hoped. Likewise, if bugs are discovered, bug fixes can be created by anyone and folded back into the code. This is crowdsourcing at its best.

I'm excited to see OpenHamClock and plan to install it soon. I also want to spend the time learning more about how it works by examining the code. This old dog (60 years a ham) is still learning new tricks.

## Feature Article: The Future of the Shack: Carrying on the Legacy with OpenHamClock

By David Marcucci, KC1TLF

For nearly a decade, one piece of software has defined the "aesthetic" of the modern amateur radio shack: **HamClock**.



Created by Elwood Downey, WB0OEW, this dashboard became the go-to utility for tracking everything from the gray line to solar flux. Following Elwood's passing in late January 2026, the community began to look toward the future of this essential tool. With the original backend servers slated to "sunset" in June 2026, a new chapter has officially begun: the era of **OpenHamClock**.

### The End of an Era, the Start of a Movement

Elwood's original HamClock (which reached version 4.22 before his passing) was a marvel of efficient C++ coding. However, it relied on a centralized "scraping" server to aggregate data from NOAA, NASA, and various DX clusters. Without a central maintainer, that server infrastructure cannot stay online forever.

Rather than letting the screens go dark, the ham community has rallied behind **OpenHamClock**. This is not just a copy of the original; it is a ground-up, open-source reimagining built on modern web technologies (HTML5, JavaScript, and Node.js). It aims to provide the same "at-a-glance" situational awareness while ensuring that no single individual's absence can bring the project to a halt.

### Two Ways to Play: Browser vs. Local Install

The biggest shift in OpenHamClock is its flexibility. Unlike the original, which required a specific installation on a Raspberry Pi or a computer, OpenHamClock is natively web-based. This creates two distinct ways for you to use it in your shack today.

#### 1. The Instant Browser Experience

For those who want to see the dashboard immediately without messing with code or SD cards, you can simply point any web

browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari) to <https://openhamclock.com>.

The web version is "read-only" but incredibly powerful. You get the world map with the real-time day/night terminator, live DX spots from the Spider network, POTA/SOTA activation markers, and current space weather indices. Because it runs in a browser, you can open it on an iPad, a smart TV, or even your phone while you're out doing a portable activation. It's the perfect, zero-configuration way to keep tabs on the bands.

#### 2. The Local Power-User Installation

While the web version is great for monitoring, the real "magic" happens when you install OpenHamClock locally on a Raspberry Pi, a Docker container, or a Linux/Windows PC.

A local installation is required if you want the clock to actually **interact** with your shack hardware. The most anticipated feature for the local build is **Direct Rig Control**. By running the software locally, OpenHamClock can interface with Hamlib (rigctld). This allows you to click a DX spot on your HamClock screen and have your transceiver automatically jump to that frequency and mode.

Local installation also allows for:

- **WSJT-X Integration:** Displaying your own real-time TX/RX paths from FT8 traffic directly on the map.
- **Rotator Control:** Clicking a point on the map to automatically turn your beam.
- **Custom Data Sourcing:** Hosting your own DX Spider proxy or propagation engines for faster updates.

#### What Makes OpenHamClock Different?

Beyond the "Open Source" tag, the new version introduces several features that were difficult to implement in the original architecture:

- **Modular Widgets:** You are no longer locked into a fixed layout. You can drag and drop "widgets" - such as the Solar Panel, the PSKReporter feed, or the Satellite Tracker - to different parts of the screen.
- **High-Resolution Scaling:** The original HamClock was built for specific screen sizes (like the 7-inch official Pi display). OpenHamClock scales beautifully to 4K monitors, meaning those of you with a "wall of screens" can finally fill that space with crisp, high-definition propagation data.
- **Community Data Fallbacks:** If one data source (like a NOAA satellite feed) goes down, the community can quickly update the code to pull from a different API. This "crowdsourced" maintenance is what will keep the software alive for decades.



### How to Get Started

If you are currently running the original HamClock on a Raspberry Pi, don't delete your SD card just yet. The original service is expected to remain stable through **June 2026**. This gives you a few months to experiment with the new system.

I recommend starting with the web version first to familiarize yourself with the new UI. When you're ready to take the plunge into a local install, you can find the repository and "one-line install" scripts on GitHub at <https://github.com/accius/openhamclock>.

### Final Thoughts

Amateur radio has always been about evolution. We moved from spark to tubes, from crystals to VFOs, and from paper logs to digital dashboards. Elwood Downey gave us a magnificent tool that helped modernize thousands of shacks. By transitioning to OpenHamClock, we aren't just replacing a piece of software; we are honoring his legacy by ensuring the "HamClock" concept remains a permanent, community-owned fixture of our hobby.

See you on the air (and on the map)!

AI was used to assist with the writing of this article.

## Announcements

### Westford Apple Blossom Parade needs hams

Hello fellow ham radio community members. It is that time of the year when we start pitching for ham radio support for the annual Westford Apple Blossom Parade. This year's parade will be held rain or shine on Saturday, May 16th. The parade starts in Westford Center and ends at the Abbot School.

It has been hosted by the Westford Kiwanis (<https://westford.org/kiwanis/>) and has a long history in town. PART has been providing comm support for many years.

The parade starts at 10 AM, we usually muster around 8AM for any last-minute updates and to ensure adequate coverage. The parade is pretty much wrapped up around noontime. Your assignment could finish earlier.

All you need is a 2 meter FM handheld that works with the Westford 146.955 WB1GOF repeater. Some assignments are stationary at specific parade route locations; others may be to be as a shadow to one of the Kiwanis Parade organizers. We are looking for 12 (minimum) to 16 hams for this event.

This is a GREAT event for a first-time public service event participant. It's a very laid back and calm event. It's always fun to watch a parade!

If you'd like to sign up or need more information, please contact me, Terry KA8SCP [ka8scp@arrl.net](mailto:ka8scp@arrl.net)

### USA 250 Semiquincentennial Special Operating Event

Dear Massachusetts Hams,

I am reaching out to you, would like to be part of the 2026 ARRL Celebration of the USA 250 Semiquincentennial Special Operating Event. This is part of the Year of the Club and the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ARRL Field Organization along with a year-long Worked All States (WAS-250).

I am the state manager for Massachusetts.

For one week in August 2026, there is the ability for stations located in Massachusetts to operate as W1AW/1. ARRL membership is not required. The dates are August 12-21.

August 14th & 15th will be an SSB operation from the New England HamXposition in Marlboro. They will have precedence in choosing the band and mode (probably SSB) for a block of time. We are looking for ops that can get on multiple times during this week, from your club, home, mobile or portable stations and work stations that will be hunting you. Your transmitter MUST be in Massachusetts.

Modes that can be operated are:

- SSB
- CW
- Digital
- Satellite

ALL Logging MUST be done with computer logging that can export in ADIF format. The log will be sent to me once your operating has completed.

All volunteers will need to work together and share operating times with the team of ops. There will be an operation guide emailed a few weeks before the operating week to all volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact:

Larry Krainson, W1AST [FunHamRadio@gmail.com](mailto:FunHamRadio@gmail.com)

Thanks and 73

--de Jon W McCombie, N1ILZ

ARRL Eastern Massachusetts Section Manager

[n1ilz@arrl.org](mailto:n1ilz@arrl.org)



### Call for Speakers

HamX is the largest amateur radio convention in the Northeast! With close to 1,800 attendees each year, HamX draws radio amateurs from all over and is an ideal venue to present your ideas and experiences.

This is a call for speakers on topics of general interest to the amateur radio community. Some examples include: Operating practices, contesting, DXing, mobile stations, emergency communications, emerging activities, STEM outreach, club improvement, radio history, restoring antique gear, test equipment, kit building, antenna design, AI in amateur radio, VHF/UHF/Microwave/Mesh, EME and more. If you have a story to share, we would like to hear about it.

To submit a talk proposal, please go to the following website and enter the requested information.

<https://registration.hamx.org/speaker/>

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the program chair at the e-mail address listed below.

We look forward to your contribution at HamX 2026!

--de Mark Noe KE1IU

HamX Program Committee Chairperson

[ke1iu@hamx.org](mailto:ke1iu@hamx.org)

### HamSCI is looking for your club's support.



HamSCI Announces Its Ninth Annual Workshop on March 14-15 for Amateur Radio Operators and Science Professionals

HamSCI, the Ham Radio Science Citizen Investigation, is pleased to announce the ninth annual HamSCI Workshop will be held beginning Saturday, March 14, 2026, and concluding

the next day. The venue will be the Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) in Newington, CT.

The theme for the conference is “Discovering Science Through Amateur Radio” with registration now open. The conference venue offers easy access from Bradley International Airport, and a variety of nearby lodging options are available.

The annual HamSCI meeting will provide an opportunity for both the amateur radio and professional research communities to collaborate and share ideas. HamSCI workshops act as forums that are both interesting and accessible to the amateur radio and professional communities. This year’s meeting will take place on Saturday and Sunday, allowing both professionals and amateurs to attend at least one day (in person or virtually). The Workshop will feature a number of invited tutorials given by both amateurs and practicing scientists.

HamSCI is partnering with ARRL, The National Association for Amateur Radio, with its nearby headquarters providing an exclusive opportunity to tour facilities, behind-the-scenes access to the ARRL Laboratory, the W1HQ Radio Laboratory and the W1AW Hiram P. Maxim Memorial Station, which licensed hams may operate.

The workshop is a must for amateur radio operators and citizen scientists, professional researchers and engineers, faculty and educators, and undergraduate and graduate students.

HamSCI's chief area of interest is the use of amateur radio techniques for the characterization and study of ionospheric phenomena such as traveling ionospheric disturbances, sporadic E, response to solar flares, geomagnetic storms, and other space weather events. To facilitate this science, there will be discussions concerning continued development of the HamSCI Personal Space Weather Station, integration of amateur radio into the collegiate curriculum, and related topics. The workshop agenda will offer presentations relating to amateur radio and science, particularly space and atmospheric science, space weather, and radio astronomy.

For registration details and updates, visit [www.hamsci.org/hamsci2026](http://www.hamsci.org/hamsci2026). The 2026 HamSCI workshop is supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC), and the organizing committee including representatives from CCSU partner institutions such as the University of Scranton, New Jersey Institute of Technology and ARRL. For those unable to attend in-person, a virtual attendance option will be announced closer to the workshop.

HamSCI serves as a means for fostering collaboration between professional researchers and amateur radio operators. It assists in developing and maintaining standards and agreements between all people and organizations involved. Its goals are to advance scientific research and understanding through amateur radio activities, encourage the development of

modern technologies to support this research and provide educational opportunities for the amateur community and the public.

For more information about HamSCI, and to join our mailing list and receive our newsletter, please visit our website at [www.hamsci.org](http://www.hamsci.org).

## 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.

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)

### 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

### 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

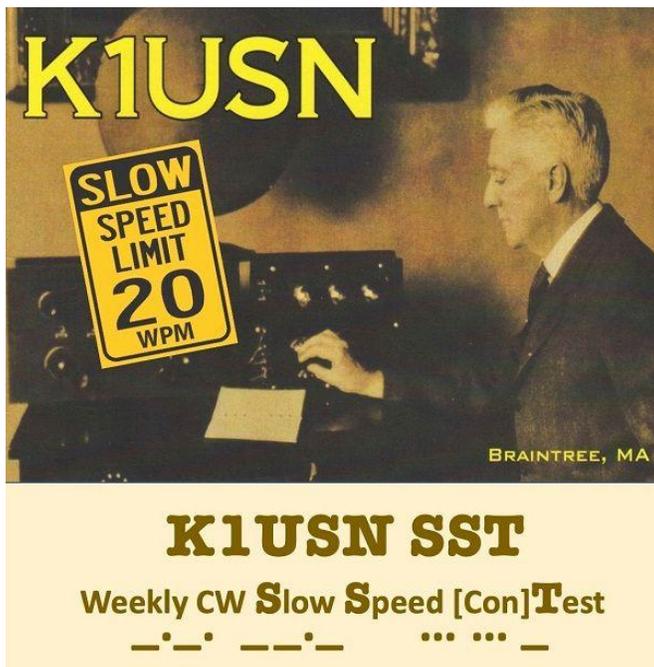
In this time of social distancing, we have been using Zoom for our monthly club meetings. I have been thinking that Elmers could also be using Zoom to coach new hams instead of actually going to visit with them. Elmers could perhaps help with programming a new radio with the new ham sharing their computer 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](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 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

#### Another recurring event:

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)

## BARS Membership

Our current combined membership is 142, with 45 that haven't renewed their membership for 2026.

Anyone with a question about their renewal status can email me at [W1LUS@hotmail.com](mailto:W1LUS@hotmail.com) to get your current membership status.

from Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, Treasurer

## Secretary's Report for March 2026

The minutes of the February meeting were given in the (late) February edition of the newsletter. Please refer to that issue. Now that the publication schedule has reverted to normal, the minutes of the March meeting will appear in the April edition,

## Treasurers Report for March 2026

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](mailto: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 February we had twenty-three renewals for \$347 income. Our expenses were Zoom \$18.05, PayPal \$20.66. We now have \$882.48 in the bank and \$1409.41 in our PayPal account for a total of \$2291.89.

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](#)

## March 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 ham radio, 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. North Carolina QSO Party  
<http://ncqsoparty.org/rules/>  
1500Z, Mar 1 to 0100Z, Mar 2, 2026  
Exchange: non-NC: (state/province/"DX")
2. **ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB \*\***  
<https://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>  
0000Z, Mar 7 to 2400Z, Mar 8, 2026  
Exchange: W/VE:RS + (state/province)  
Comment: this is a BIG one!
3. Novice Rig Roundup  
<http://www.novicerigroundup.org/>  
0000Z, Mar 7 to 2359Z, Mar 15, 2026  
Exchange: Name + QTH + Optional (Rig, NRR number)  
Comments: Back in the 50s-60s-70s, the beginner class of ham license was the Novice. People were issued special callsigns (I would have been given KN1GTT) with an N to denote Novice. They were allowed to use CW (and some years later, voice) on small portions of the ham bands. The test was very simple and they had to know Morse code at 5 words per minute. The idea was to give the "little fish" a secure place to swim and talk to others of their own kind. It was not an elitist thing – it was a way for a young ham to get interested in the hobby and talk to people he or she could relate to.  
Well, manufacturers catered to these hams by putting out simple, small, low powered ham rigs, especially CW transmitters. The Novice Rig Roundup is a time to get your old vacuum tube Novice rigs on the air! I have one of those – a Drake 2-NT transmitter paired with a Drake 2-C receiver. I had them on the air in the 90s and really enjoyed them. But I need to put new capacitors in the power supplies before using them on the air. Maybe next year. At the very least, tune in and try to hear some of these fine old sets.

4. Classic Exchange, CW  
<http://www.classicexchange.org/>  
1300Z, Mar 8 to 0700Z, Mar 9 and 1300Z, Mar 10 to 0700Z, Mar 11, 2026  
Exchange: Name + RST + (state/province/country) + rcvr/xmtr manuf/model  
Comment: here's another contest to use old gear of any type!
5. South America 10 Meter Contest  
<http://sa10m.com.ar/wp/rules/>  
1200Z, Mar 14 to 1200Z, Mar 15, 2026  
Exchange: RS(T) + CQ zone
6. Oklahoma QSO Party  
<http://k5cm.com/okqp.htm>  
1500Z, Mar 14 to 0200Z, Mar 15 and 1500Z-2200Z, Mar 15, 2026  
Exchange: non-OK:RS(T) + (state/province/country)
7. Idaho QSO Party  
<https://www.idahoqsoparty.org/>  
1600Z, Mar 14 to 0400Z, Mar 15 and 1400Z, Mar 15 to 0200Z, Mar 16, 2026  
Exchange: non-ID:(state/province/country)
8. Wisconsin QSO Party  
<http://www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm>  
1800Z, Mar 15 to 0100Z, Mar 16, 2026  
Exchange: non-WI:(state/province/country)
9. Virginia QSO Party  
[https://www.qsl.net/sterling/VA\\_QSO\\_Party/2026\\_VQP/2026\\_VQP\\_Main.html](https://www.qsl.net/sterling/VA_QSO_Party/2026_VQP/2026_VQP_Main.html)  
1400Z, Mar 21 to 0400Z, Mar 22 and 1200Z-2400Z, Mar 22, 2026  
Exchange: non-VA:Serial No. + (state / province / "DX")
10. **CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB \*\***  
<https://www.cqwp.com/rules.htm>  
0000Z, Mar 28 to 2359Z, Mar 29, 2026  
Exchange: RS + Serial No.

#### \*\* 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 comments: We have a bunch of state QSO parties this month, some big SSB contests, and even some to take advantage of the antique rigs on your shelf. We're having a blizzard as I type this, but contest season (and hopefully the Spring) will be heating up! Andy, KA1GTT

If you don't do these contests, at least get on and call or answer! If you get on and enjoy operating one of these events, please send an email to the BARS email reflector, [bars@w1hh.org](mailto: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 Billerica 147.120 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**).

Repeater info:

W1DC

147.12 MHz

+600 kHz (normal) offset

Encode CTCSS 146.2 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](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 \(map\)](#)

### VE Session Report for March 2026

We had five people show up for the February 12 VE exam session. Results were two new Technicians and two General upgrades. The new hams are Daniel, KC1ZAL, and Alex, KC1ZAD. Be sure to say hello if you hear them on the air. Our next exam session will be on March 12 at 7:00 PM. At the Chelmsford Bible Church. Thanks to Peter, N1ALO, Gary, W1GFF, Shawn, N1CVO, and Bill, WZ1L, 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](http://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 April 1<sup>st</sup> (no foolin'!) 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](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)

## Photo Feature: From the Mailbag

I've not done extensive research on this but my understanding is the term 'radio shack' traces its roots to the military. The first generation of radio equipment was quite large, noisy and often installed in separate buildings. I imagine that some were quite literally "shacks out behind the barracks" hence the term 'radio shack'.

Ham shacks take many forms; from the modest rig on a corner desk to dedicated rooms able to accommodate 10 or more operators at a time. While most of us don't have the space for a K3LR style shack, we are all proud of what we do have and some are keen to show it off.

This month's QSL card column theme is "Our Shacks".



**AA1BS**  
**Robert D. Sylvester Jr.**  
North Waterboro, Maine USA



**DL3AQJ**  
GERMAN AMATEUR RADIO STATION



Op: Peter  
QTH: Rodgau  
Loc.: JO40KA  
DOK: F05

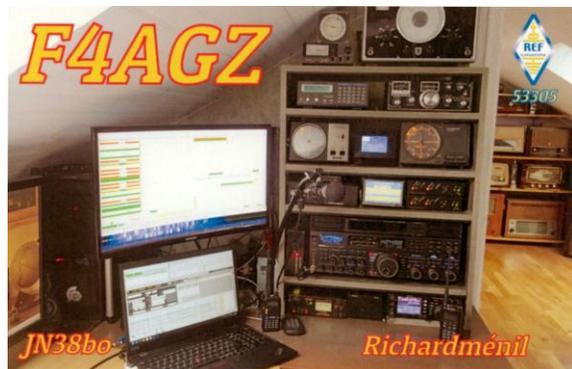
**DL4FCH**



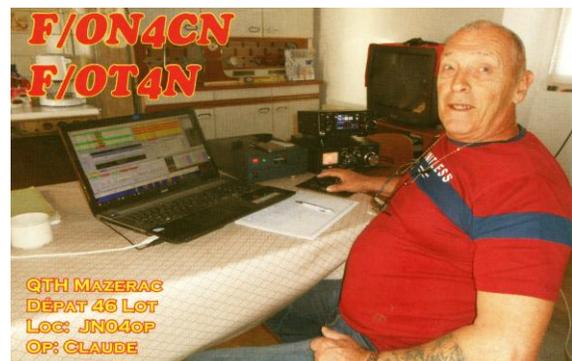
**DL5CD**  
German Amateur Radio Station



To: KC1RET This confirms our 2-way MFSK(FT4) QSO  
Date: August 8, 2022 Time: 20:56 UTC  
Band: 20M UR Sigs: -16

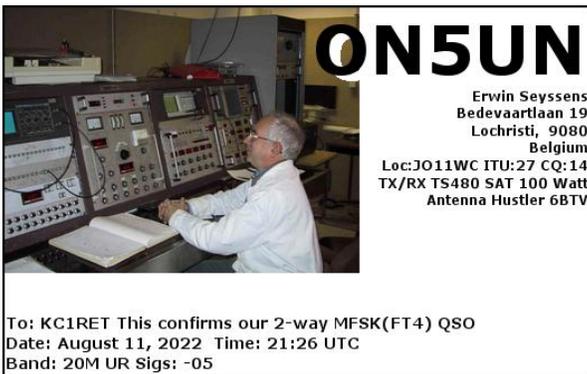
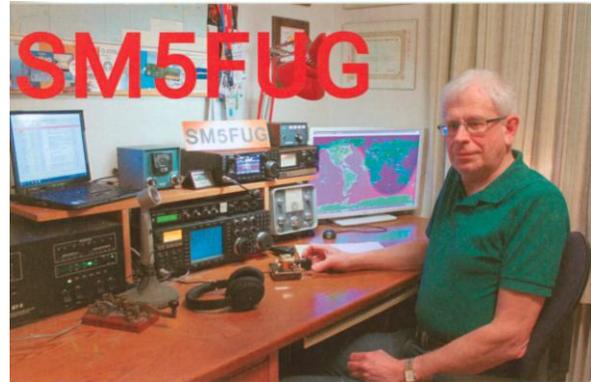
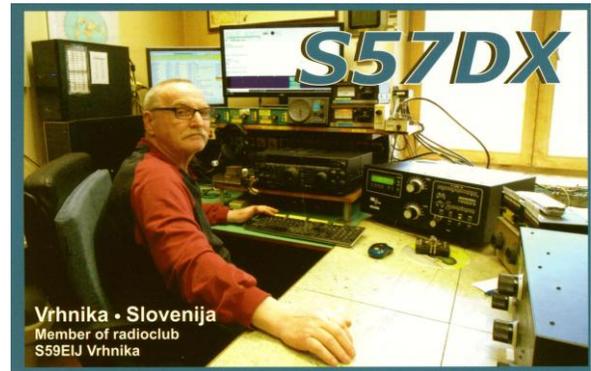


**F4AGZ**  
JN38bo Richardménil



QTH MAZERAC  
DÉPAT 46 LOT  
Loc: JN040P  
OP: CLAUDE





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](mailto: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:	Doug Bruce, N1WRN
Field Day Chair:	Tim Carter, K1DC
Webmaster:	David Marcucci, KC1TLF