



SIGNAL



de N1NC

January 2015 Volume 24 Number 1

This Month's Program

January's program is Short Subject Night. Much like December's Small Projects Night, this meeting is the second of two in the year where members call the shots and make the presentations. In past years we've agonized whether anyone would contribute anything to these meetings. We've slowly learned not to worry. NVARCers are an inquisitive and talented lot.

That said, attendance at December's meeting was a bit lower than usual. Nevertheless, we ended having more projects brought in than we've had at a Small Projects Night in a long time! If you didn't come you missed a great meeting. Don't miss out on January.

Last Month's Meeting

Last month's meeting program was Members Small Projects Night. Many members brought projects they had recently completed.



Courtesy KD1SM

Stan KD1LE holds a "tool" he built to hold a mast centered in a Rohn 25 tower and not allow it to turn while a rotator is replaced.



Courtesy KD1SM

Stan KD1LE show a plumb bob for checking a tower for vertical.



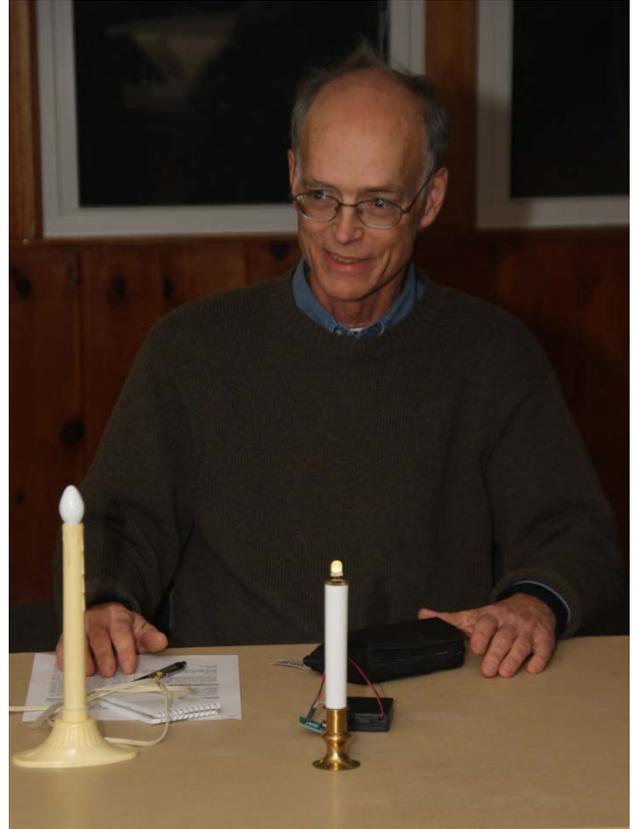
Courtesy KD1SM

Stan KD1LE show a high quality choke balun and inexpensive enclosure he developed.



Courtesy KD1SM

George W1JHR shows a microwave beacon he built.



Courtesy KD1SM

Bill K4OHZ displays a micro controlled window candle with the micro controlling flicker, flame color, and on/off time.



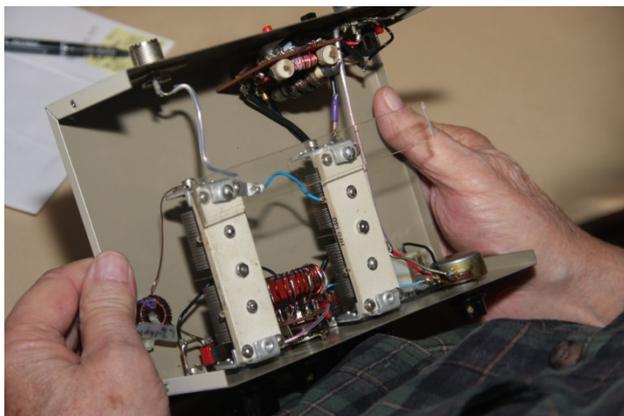
Courtesy KD1SM

Rod WA1TAC showed a homebrew antenna coupler he acquired and repaired.



Courtesy KD1SM

Previous page and below Dennis K1LGQ holds a QRP tuner kit he built



Courtesy KD1SM



Courtesy KD1SM

Above and below, Bruce K1BG showed a QSK switch he built to upgrade his power amplifier.



Courtesy KD1SM

Rear of the QSK switch.

Present at the December meeting were; Jim AB1WQ, Bruce K1BG, Dennis K1LGQ, Skip K1NKR, Bill K1NS, Bill K4OHZ, Phil KA1JKL, Ken KB1UVP, Stan KD1LE, Ralph KD1SM, John KK1X, Dan KW2T, Les N1SV, Peter N1ZRG, Jim N8VIM, George W1JHR, Rod WA1TAC

President's Corner

2015. Would you believe it, 2015! Remember when we worried about 1984, or the GPS week-1024 roll-over, or Y2K. Now we've crossed the Millennium. Crossed—heck we're 15% into the twenty-first century. Einstein is quoted as having said, "Time is what keeps everything from all happening at once." Here's a different spin on it. Things *can* happen all at once. Think modulation. Think operating activities. Think cooperation.

In the beginning God made CW. And it was good. And CW ruled the airwaves and made communications possible for humankind. And God was pleased and He rested. But when that experimental mode Amplitude Modulated Phone started to show up on the bands what happened? I'm sure there was a good amount of wailing and gnashing of teeth. After all, CW ruled the airwaves. But the transition to AM phone didn't eliminate CW; it added a mode option. Practitioners of the two modes coexisted. (The transition to true continuous waves and away from spark helped.) Some actually used both modes!

Post-war experimentation led to a new mode, Single Sideband-Suppressed Carrier (SS-SC, we now just call it SSB). The reaction to this new "Donald Duck" mode was, politely speaking, not nice. AMers couldn't conveniently tune in SSB. It required more than AM/CW receivers of the day provided in selec-

tivity and stability. It was also something new. Never trust the new, right?

And on, and on. John Zimmer, W2BVU of Harvard MA, published a ground-breaking series of articles in QST in 1963 promoting pulse modulation. Pulse of all things; isn't CW, AM, and maybe FM enough? Amateurs experimented with standard television in the 1930s. Still, slow scan TV (SSTV) came along in the 70s or so and invaded HF. And SSTV, too, has been one-upped by an HF digital image transmission mode called EasyPAL. Amateurs are trying digital voice on HF. And don't get me started on the multitude of digital ("sound card") modes themselves. What an alphabet soup! Even FM has a following of digital experimenters. Heck, digital FM is already fairly mature. (I hate to say it, but some of the best and most pervasive experimentation is going on down on the "DC bands," not up at the "experimental" microwave frequencies.) Never, never trust the new, right?

But the lesson of all of the above isn't that experimentation pushes technology onward. It's that all of these modes still exist, and all are available at the flick of a switch or the click of a mouse. There is arguably no mode in the history of communications that Radio Amateurs haven't used and we still have all of them at our disposal.

The same goes for operating activities. Message traffic? Got it. Ragchewing? Got it. Contesting? Got it. DXpeditioning, mountaintopping, roving? Got it. WAS, DXCC, IOTA, SOTA, 10-10, certificate hunting? Got it. QRP, QRO? Got it. Public service, special events, even experimenting? Got it. And despite what seems to be a cacophony on the airwaves some weekends, there's actually still a plethora of bands and bandwidth to exercise your favorite mode or activity.

What makes it all work? Cooperation—and a love of the hobby—all of which promotes the best interests of the Amateur Radio Service.

The Radio Amateur is

CONSIDERATE...He/[She] never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

LOYAL...He/[She] offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, the IARU Radio Society in his/[her] country, through which Amateur Radio in his/[her] country is represented nationally and internationally.

PROGRESSIVE...He/[She] keeps his/[her] station up to date. It is well-built and efficient. His/[Her] operating practice is above reproach.

FRIENDLY...He/[She] operates slowly and patiently when requested; offers friendly advice and counsel to beginners; kind assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the marks of the amateur spirit.

BALANCED...Radio is a hobby, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

PATRIOTIC...His/[Her] station and skills are always ready for service to country and community.

- adapted from the original *Amateur's Code*, written by Paul M. Segal, W9EEA, in 1928

NVARC Operating Event, the January ARRL VHF Contest

Last year the club entered the January ARRL VHF contest by having members that took part in the contest submit their logs as part of a club entry. This contest is a way to have some amateur radio fun and maybe take part in something new. I know we have many club members that are dedicated VHF/UHF operators. I encourage you to also take part in this by sending in your log as part of the club entry. I also hope you will take part by encouraging and mentoring the club members that are new to VHF/UHF contesting. So let's give it a go again this year. Besides being fun it is also a way to wave the Club flag a bit.

So you're not normally active on the VHF bands. Or at least on SSB or CW. You just use VHF/UHF for mobile or hand held repeater activity. Well many of the newer HF radios cover six meters, but six meters goes unused. So here is a chance to try out that strange band at the top of the range. Maybe you have never really explored the band. It is certainly possible to tune the band and only hear noise. January is not the best time to find good operating conditions on six meters. The really best conditions are typically in May through August. But Sporadic E opening can occur at any time. One never knows what the "Magic Band" may bring. During a contest like the January VHF contest there will be a lot of local activity. If you have any antenna that you can load up on six meters, with the use of a tuner, you can probably work many of the closer locals on either SSB or CW. (note that directional antennas may not radiate in the normal direction on bands they are not intended for, but they may still radiate well) Either mode is permitted in the contest along with FM simplex activity. But only one contact is permitted per station per band. This contest is also a good time to maybe try your FM radio on other than the local repeater. Any local simplex frequency is OK except 146.52 MHz. So maybe it is a good opportunity to explore what your simplex range is on one

or more of the bands. One thing that is encouraged in the VHF/UHF contests is once you are in QSO with a station moving to other bands to work that station is standard practice. So working a station on six for example and then QSYing to say two meters or 440 MHz (or any other VHF/UHF bands) is standard practice.

The exchange is very simple. It is the Grid Square. For just about every club member that is FN42. What could be simpler? A signal report is optional. That's it. Contacts count different amounts for the different bands. The contacts count more on the higher frequency bands. The total number of different grids worked per band is the multiplier. IE working FN42 on 50, 144, and 440 MHz. is a multiplier of three. So working as many bands as you have available is a good way to increase your scores. I would encourage that you take a quick look at the contest rule which are available on line at the ARRL web site. But the logging software can keep track of the scoring.

The contest period is from 2 PM EST, Saturday January 24th till 10:59 PM Sunday January 25th. I won't try and discuss contest strategy but afternoons and early evenings are usually times of good activity. I generally try getting on for short session spread over the contest period as opposed to a long session at one time, but to each his own.

Log submission is best done by electronic means. Most logging software probably includes the ARRL January VHF contest. I use N1MM mainly because it is the software the club uses for field day. But use whatever you like. The ARRL will accept paper logs so you can't use that as an excuse. Logs are due Feb. 25th. I expect there will be more info available after the contest for those that need help submitting their log.

So No Excuses! Circle the dates on your calendar and start talking up the activity with your friends in the club. Let's make this a fun club activity to start off 2015.

As always if anyone has any questions or need some help please send an E mail or give me a call. Or there are others in the club that can give you a hand.

Till next time, 73 Bob

NVARC QSL Bureau

One benefit of membership in NVARC is the free forwarding of QSL cards to the ARRL's outbound DX QSL bureau. In the past Bob, W1XP, has collected and sent cards. At the last NVARC Board of Director's meeting it was decided that Rod, WA1TAC, will assume this task for the future. Rod will be accepting cards at the November meeting. As before, all cards for the outbound bureau should have the recipient's call on the upper right corner, be sorted alphabetically, and include proof of current ARRL membership.

73, Rod

January Board Meeting Notes

No notes available

December Treasurers Report

Income for December was \$23 from the book raffle at the November meeting, \$2 from ARRL memberships, and \$5 in PowerPole connector sales. We received the invoice for the Porta-John for Field Day which had been delayed; this was our only expense for the month, in the amount of \$125. The net expense for the month was \$95.

Current balances:

General fund	\$2,984.58
Community fund	\$4,636.41

As of 7 January we have 36 members who are current with their dues and 28 renewals outstanding. Thank you to those of you who hand in your dues before Ralph comes to you. Please check your renewal status on the roster circulated at the monthly meeting or ask Ralph.

If you are joining ARRL or renewing your membership please consider letting Ralph send in the paperwork for you. The Club will buy the stamp and will get a commission from ARRL. ARRL membership checks should be made payable to NVARC; Ralph deducts the Club commission before forwarding your paperwork to Newington. As an Special Service Club, the ARRL expects a majority of Club members to also be ARRL members.

Ralph KD1SM

Meeting Coffee "Bar"

Many thanks to Ed Snapp, N1YFK, for his rejuvenating the coffee "bar" at the meetings. There's been an incremental increase in socializing, and that's what we meet for.

Don't forget to leave a donation if you partake.

Items That Anywhere Else Would Be Called Strays

None submitted

NVARC Club Net

The NVARC Club Net meet's every Monday evening at 8 PM on the 442.900 Pepperell repeater.

Stop in and bring your input and questions.

The net is in need of a regular Net Control Station (NCS).

Recent attendees were

Jim N8VIM, Stan KD1LE, Skip K1NKR, Larry W1ESR, Les N1SV, Bruce K1BG, George KB1HFT, Dave N1MNX, Bruce K1BG, Dan KW2T

Upcoming Contests

2015

January

17 North American QSO Party SSB
17ARRL January VHF Contest
23 CQ 160 Meter Contest CW
24 ARRL January VHF Contest

February

7 Vermont QSO Party
7 Minnesota QSO Party
7 Delaware QSO Party
7 Mexico RTTY International Contest
7-8 Black Sea Cup International
8 North American Sprint CW
14 New Hampshire QSO Party
21 ARRL International DX Contest CW
27 CQ 160 Meter Contest SSB

March

1 North Carolina QSO Party
7-8 ARRL International DX Contest SSB
14 Idaho QSO Party
15 North American Sprint RTTY
15 Wisconsin QSO Party
21 Russian DX Contest
22 North American Sprint SSB
28 CQ WW WPX Contest SSB

April

2 SARL 80 Meter QSO Party
4-5 Mississippi QSO Party
4-5 SP DX Contest
11-12 JIDX CW Contest
11-12 Georgia QSO Party
17-18 Holyland DX Contest
18 EU Spring Sprint SSB
18-19 YU DX Contest
25-26 SP DX RTTY Contest
25-26 Florida QSO Party

May

ARI International DX Contest
2-3 Indiana QSO Party
2-3 New England QSO Party
CQ-M International DX Contest
9-10 Volta WW RTTY Contest
30-31 CQ WW WPX Contest CW

Flea Markets/Hamfests

2015 August
21 ARRL New England Convention Boxboro MA
2015
March
7 Chicopee MA Mt Tom ARA
May
1, 2 Deerfield NH NEARfest
August
21, 23 Boxboro MA FEMARA NE Convention

Your Article

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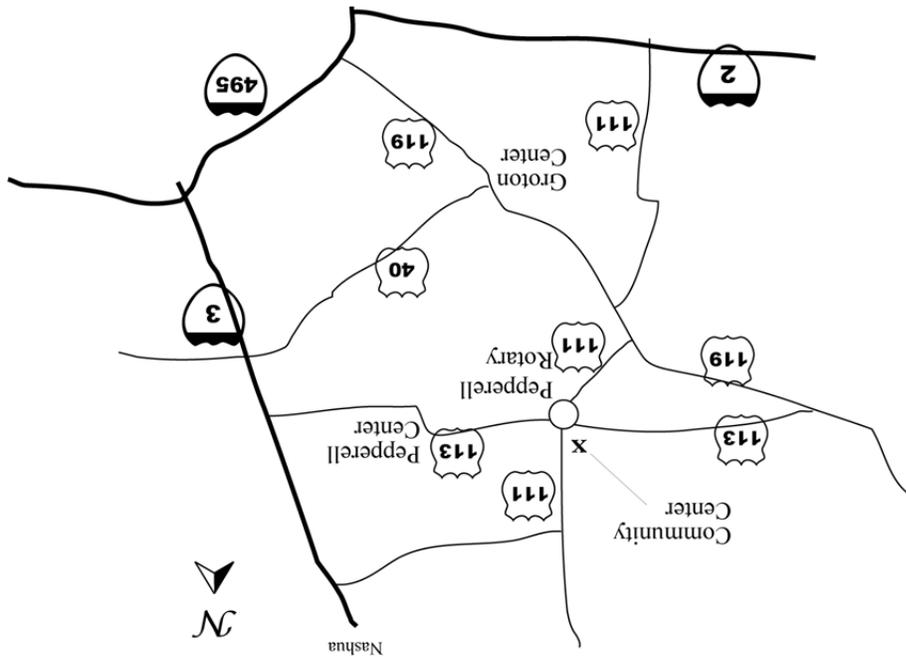
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Vice President: Jim Hein N8VIM
Secretary: John Griswold KK1X
Treasurer: Ralph Swick KD1SM
Board Members:
Rod Hersh WA1TAC 2012-2015
Bob Reif: W1XP 2013-2016
Wolf Seidlich KA1VOU 2014-2017

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Property Master: John Griswold KK1X
N1NC Trustee: Bruce Blain K1BG
Annual membership dues are \$15; \$20 for a family
Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month
7:30 p.m. - Pepperell Community Ctr.
Talk-in 146.490 simplex
442.900 + 100Hz Repeater battery power
147.345 + 100 Hz Repeater
53.890 – 100Hz Repeater battery power
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corrections and inquiries should be directed to the
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