

# SIGNAL

A club since 1992



Since 1993



Since 1996

de N1NC

January 2018

Volume 27 Number 1

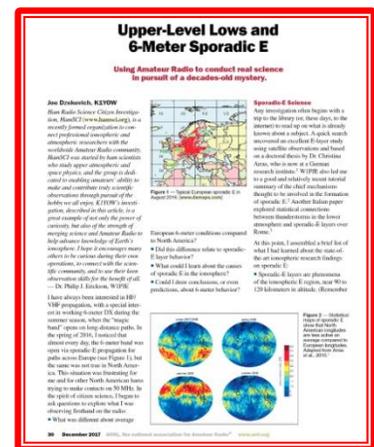
## FLASH!!!

### K1YOW Wins the December QST Cover Plaque Award

Extract from the ARRL webpage, 12/18/2017

The winning article for the December 2017 QST Cover Plaque award is "Upper Level Lows and 6-Meter Sporadic E" by Joe Dzekevich, K1YOW. The QST Cover Plaque Award—given to the author or authors of the most popular article in each issue—is determined by a vote of ARRL members on the QST Cover Plaque Poll web page.

We expect to have an ARRL official visit during an upcoming meeting to formally present the award.



## This Month's Meeting

It's Short Subjects Night. Enthrall a room of friendly members with a ten-minute talk on any (hopefully Amateur-relevant) topic of your choice. Best DX this year? Tell us about it. New equipment? Tell us about it. Contests won—or Nobel Prizes claimed? Tell us about it. We're your friends and like to hear about what interests you.

Both expository and "tall tale" talks will be appreciated. Coffee's on!

Remember, December's HB Night and January's Short Subjects Night both rely on member participation. It's your hobby; brag about it.

## The President's Corner

From the FWIW department: I find the "smart speaker" phenomenon very perplexing. Google and Amazon sold millions of them during the Christmas shopping season.

It is interesting they chose to call them "smart speakers" and play down the fact they are "smart microphones" listening to everything you say. How is it that Americans are averse to having intersection cameras to catch people running red lights and yet they invite an Internet-connected microphone into the house to listen to everything they say and do? I'm sure they result in targeted marketing to the owner at a minimum. But of larger concern is who else is listening and how secure is a \$29 piece of hardware and associated software?

Not much to report as the cold weather has kept my activities limited to keeping warm. If we are lucky, temperatures will return to more seasonable numbers next week.

The Arduino Group continues and we have the Community Center reserved for every Monday this month. We missed the first Monday which was New Years but will likely meet the next two weeks. There has been a lot of progress on the various member projects like George KB1HFT's thermocouple monitor and my Mister Pumpkin, which is being upgraded with sound. Of particular interest has been the building and testing of the QST Arduino Antenna Analyzer. This has delivered some "interesting" results. Our group as well as others are working on the AA to improve its performance and add features.

Skip K1NKR, Ralph KD1SM and I trucked out to Springfield for the ARRL Divisional Cabinet Meeting on January 6th. There was good attendance with about 40 people present.

This month's meeting is Members Short Subjects. What do you have to share?

73, Stan KD1LE

## Last Month's Meeting

Thursday, 21 December. It was dark, the longest night of the year. (The day was 6 hours, 12 minutes shorter than the opposite solstice in June!) We had a short meeting, but lively socializing. For a change, Ed, N1YFK, saw lots of the coffee he provides consumed by members.

We had two visitors: Forrest Filler, KD2MZH, (actually, a new member) and John Sharpe, KC1EYP, (who found that he lives a few doors down the street from KK1X).

The presentations were:

- Stan, KD1LE: Arduino experiences,
- Bruce, K1BG: Electronic keyer,
- Bill, AB1XB: GPS-slaved Arduino time server,
- Charlie, AB1ZN: Old radio and crystal,
- Peter, N1ZRG: Arduino antenna analyzer,
- Bob, W1XP: Comments and advice about getting on the air on 600m.

## News and Happenings

### New England Division Director's Cabinet Meeting



A few weeks before each ARRL Board of Directors meeting Tom Frenaye, K1KI, our New England Division Director, invites representatives of all New England affiliated clubs to a cabinet meeting. He solicits member opinion and interest and he provides news and insight into what's happening in the ARRL, FCC, and Amateur Radio in general. Stan, Ralph, and Skip attended the 6 January meeting, along with 38 others.

We had only recently been apprised of what seemed to be a governance issue in the League, so we were quite interested in what Tom had to say.

You can get a sense of the brouhaha by reading:

- <http://cqnewsroom.blogspot.com/2018/01/cq-white-paper-follow-up-arri-we-have.html>
- <https://www.myarrlvoice.org/>, particularly <https://www.myarrlvoice.org/other-voices/>
- <http://cqnewsroom.blogspot.com/2018/01/cq-white-paper-follow-up-arri-we-have.html>
- <http://forums.grz.com/index.php?threads/arrl-affiliated-contest-clubs-criticize-board-actions.594688/>
- <http://forums.grz.com/index.php?threads/myarrlvoice-formed-to-question-arri-code-of-conduct-board-proposals.594673/>

**Caution:** conspiracy theories abound and there's a lot of non-fact mixed with the fact in

these references. It's always the other guy's fault and all of us are prone to reading the worst before reading the text.

Yes, we all should be vigilant. And there are different personalities moving and shaking the League following last year's retirements. But our assessment of Tom's discussion was that (while all should proceed cautiously in making changes) there is more being made of some of the issues than they warrant. We're impressed with Tom and he strikes us to be a straight shooter. In his words, his philosophy on any change is a charge to the proposer to "prove the actual need for change; justify it."

Don't forget, these items are being brought forth "for consideration." Some may not even make it that far.

There were other topics. Ask any of us and we'll review them with you.

de Ralph KD1SM  
Skip, K1NKR  
Stan, KD1LE

### Fall Moonbounce Contest

Will, KD4FOV reports that he operated during the 3-4 November ARRL EME contest using the MIT Haystack 150-foot dish.



Despite some lingering SWR issues that kept his power down to well less than ten watts at the antenna feedpoint, Will racked up four CW, five SSB, and eighteen JT65-B QSOs during the weekend. Gain (42dB) helps!

There were more than 400 participants worldwide in the three weekends of the contest. As in the past though, many stations were active during the contest weekend but for a variety of reasons, choose not to submit contest logs. Will was one of them so he doesn't show in the standings. (Had he, he would have ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in QSOs among the 20 other participants identified in his entry category.)

The contest results and summary are at [www.arrl.org/files/file/ContestResults/2017/2017%20EME%20Contest%20-%20Full%20Results%20-](http://www.arrl.org/files/file/ContestResults/2017/2017%20EME%20Contest%20-%20Full%20Results%20-)

[%20Version%202 03.pdf](#). There's a nice paragraph about Will and NVARC on page 6.

As noted in the ARRL summary, the Haystack folks are working with the system to reconfigure it for occasional amateur EME operations in conjunction with NVARC.

de K1NKR

### Arduino Group

What was initiated as an Arduino interest group has morphed into a real Elmering/Sherlock Holmes get-together. The Arduino-based Antenna Analyzer described in a recent *QST* seems to have had some problems. And the group is uncovering them, doing some engineering, and working on solutions.

## Editor's Note

### Change, or Not

I've been paying attention to other organizations' presentations. One local club has changed from a "Club" to a "Society." Fine, that's their business. And a couple of the magazines I receive have drastically altered their format and style—more white space for visual attractiveness and shorter articles to satisfy the readers' increasingly more miniscule attention spans.

Frankly, I considered surprising everyone in NVARC with a flashier *Signal* this month. Laziness, tardiness, and maybe a bit of personal philosophy got in the way. So you'll be getting the same *Signal* that NVARC has published essentially unchanged since its inception in 1992. Nineteen ninety-two, wow! Quality and class must have staying power. (That said, I sometimes wonder if anybody actually reads our *Signal*. I get few complaints and fewer comments.)

Which brings me to contributors. This past year ten members had by-lines in the newsletter. Thanks immensely to K1BG, KB1HFT, KD1LE, K1LGQ, W1PJE, KD1SM, N1SV, WA1TAC, AB1WQ, K1YOW, plus W2NAF and Olivia and Maddy (Girl Scouts of Troop 10435). We also receive yeoman service in monthly reporting of club business and activities from KD1LE, KK1X, and

KD1SM. There's a lot of knowledge, skill, and experience in the club.

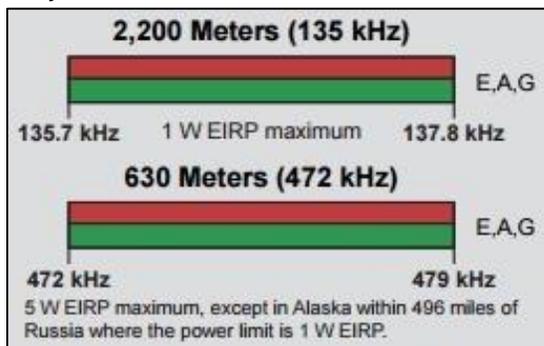
Some things did change a bit in 2017. We've always gotten our share of press. (See the article in the June 2017 *Signal*.) Still, we're not known as a club that goes around tooting our own horn. But it's significant that new 2017 members K1YOW, W1PJE, and KD4FOV have made it a point to specifically mention the club in all their respective national articles. Thanks, guys.

Would I change anything else? Probably not. High-stakes contesting? No. High-tech only? No. Immense membership? No? The sixty or so members of NVARC seem to like being a part of a "full-service, multi-interest" gathering of folks who, like themselves, appreciate the hobby and who like being with others who do so, too.

73, Skip K1NKR

## On the Air

Just a report on a little over a month of activity on 630 meters WSPR.



Some of us were talking about this so I did a search of my WSPR "signals heard" database this morning and had it sort out the unique reporting stations by distance. To my surprise, at the top of the list was K9FD. He is in Hawaii! He's listed at 5027 miles. Next was G8HUH at 3170 miles. KPH, a heritage marine station, north of San Francisco Bay at 4318 miles was third. W7IUV/W was fourth at 3766. Then came a group of three VE6 stations at the mid-3300 mile range. The next station of note was ZF1EJ on Grand Cayman Island at 2752 miles. After that are 12 stations above 2000 miles. The database showed 70 more stations between

1000 and 2000 miles. The total number of stations that had heard my signal at least once is 185. (Don't forget. This reporting is for Amateur frequencies below the Broadcast Band. Ed.)

The bottom of the list is a decode be W1XP3 right here at home, but the next station is Les, N1SV at 8 miles. Hi Les, thanks for the ground wave report. I note you were hearing me better than the in-shack monitor.

I am pleased with this because it all happened despite the lack of a really proper antenna. An Ice storm took down the vertical several years ago and I never replaced it. That task is now under way, but the antenna at the moment is a #14 wire feeding two top loading wires with a total top hat of about 180 feet of #14 wire about 40 feet above ground. When the weather improves, we will put up a 45 ft aluminum mast that will connect to an upgraded top loading system. This will hopefully get my station up near the 5-watt EIRP limit.

73 and Happy Holidays to you all.

de Bob W1XP

*(Now go back and think about it. Bob's talking real DX at low frequencies and low power. While WBZ is a 50KW station, have you heard it as far away as some of the DX Bob's reporting? Ed.)*

## Ham Radio in the Media – An Observation

"In some respects, Sherrill fit the pattern of previous mass murderers. He lived alone in northwest Oklahoma City in a modest house, which he had shared with his mother before she died. He had few friends, according to neighbors on 27th Street, and liked ham radios and guns. Several neighbors complained that Sherrill's ham radios constantly interfered with their television reception. They said he was an odd person."

This headline comes from an August 21, 1986 article in the [Washington Post](#) reporting on the mass murder by Patrick Sherrill in the Edmond Oklahoma Post Office. The term "going postal" originated after this event. The article depicts his interest in ham radio as being part of his odd behavior, "following a pattern of previous mass murderers". To

my knowledge, there have been no other ham operators who were also mass murderers.

While this happened over 30 years ago, what does this have to do with today?

One of my favorite programs on TV is NCIS. Mostly fantasy with little reality, NCIS is one of the most popular shows on television. Re-runs happen on a daily basis on one or more cable channels, and will be re-run for years. In a recent episode "Trapped", ham radio plays a central part episode's plot (you can see the entire episode [here](#) (requires having subscribed to CBS All Access Ed.) Even the ARRL promoted watching the show: <https://www.facebook.com/ARRL.org/posts/10155293954242408>.

At the beginning of the episode, ham radio is viewed positively. The only means of communications after 911 and hurricane Katrina—that kind of thing. But as the plot develops, in my opinion, they get most of the "facts wrong" (confusing CB operating habits with amateur radio, callsigns, handles, you-name-it). And hams are again being depicted as social misfits and odd people. See for yourself.

Why does this matter? What we do as



hams matters, and how we are viewed by the public matters. We are available whenever there is a disaster. I

put my experience with amateur radio on my resume. Hams volunteer for public service. Youth highlight their ham experience on their college applications. How we are viewed matters, and uninformed people who watch the media may view us negatively based on what they see in the media. Our opportunities for jobs, public service, colleges, etc. will suffer.

What can we do? I'm not sure. On an individual basis, letting CBS know that you care is step one. The ARRL has to take a stand on this. Let your Section Manager or Division Director know how you feel. We (both individually and the league) have to promote amateur radio positively on both a local and national basis. That means letting

the media know when we do something good (which means all the time).

I'll let you know when "Trapped" re-runs so that you can watch it and file your own complaint. Or you can watch it on the link above and file your comments sooner via <http://www.cbs.com/feedback/>.

de Bruce, K1BG

## Strays

The Central Mass Amateur Radio Association will be conducting a "Learn CW Training Net" on the W1BIM 146.97 repeater starting Monday January 15th at 7:30 PM.



A year-long operating event, "Science Milestones in the History of Radio," is under way, sponsored by the Italian Amateur Radio Association (ARI) [Fidenza Radio Club](#). Each month will highlight individuals who laid the foundations—theoretical and practical—for radio science. Awards are available for participating stations.

Each month, a commemorative station with a distinctive call sign will be on the air featuring an individual—some better known than others—with a role in the history of wireless communication. During January, I14MXW is active, honoring the contributions of James Clerk Maxwell.

See [www.arrl.org/news/science-milestones-in-the-history-of-radio-event-is-under-way](http://www.arrl.org/news/science-milestones-in-the-history-of-radio-event-is-under-way). (from the ARRL webpage)

## Treasurer's Report

Income for December was \$50 from membership fees. Expenses were \$19.60 for newsletter postage and \$112 for the post office box leaving a net expense of \$81.60 for the month.

Current balances:

General fund \$2,812.09

Community fund \$5,061.52

As of 11 January we have 42 members who are current with their dues and 20 renewals outstanding. Thank you to those of

you who hand in your dues before I come to you. Please check your renewal status on the roster circulated at the monthly meeting or ask me.

de Ralph KD1SM

## Board Meeting Notes

The Board meeting scheduled for 1/4/2018 was cancelled due to weather.

Respectfully submitted,  
de John KK1X

## Club Services

### Elmering

Remember that NVARC has a multitude of members with experience in virtually all aspects of the hobby. For digital modes, see KK1X or K1YOW. For circuits, try KW2T, W1XP, or K1JEB. AB1XB has turned out to be our Arduino and programming “go-to.” K1LGQ and KK1X are our QRPers. K1BG and N1SV for contests and DX. And on, and on.

### Field Day

The club’s premier operating event. Traditionally held on the next-to-last inclement weekend in June, FD is a little bit contest, a little bit EMCOM practice, a little bit publicity, a little bit socializing—and a great way to conclude the program year.

### ARRL Renewals

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.

## Calendar

### January

- 21 NVARC Short Subjects Night
- 21 NEARC Antiques, Brookline NH

### February

- 9-11 Hamcation, Orlando FL
- 10 Thinking Day On The Air – Londonderry NH
- 11 Thinking Day On The Air – Shirley MA
- 23-24 HamSCI Workshop, New Jersey

### March

- 4 NEARC Antiques, Brookline NH  
(Mistakenly reported as 21 January in last month's Signal. Sorry!)

## Upcoming Operating Activities

### 2018

- International Grid Chase (all year!)
- Science Milestones event (all year!)

### January

- 1 Straight Key Night
- 6 Kids Day
- 6-7 RTTY Roundup
- 20-22 VHF contest

### February

- 10, 11 Thinking Day On The Air
- 12-16 School Club Roundup
- 17-18 International DX contest - CW

### March

- 4-5 International DX contest – Phone

Are you a “contest nut?” See <http://www.arrrl.org/contest-calendar> (Contest Corral) for month-by-month listings of both ARRL and non-ARRL contests.

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**Nashoba Valley  
Amateur Radio Club**

PO Box # 900  
Pepperell Mass 01463-0900

<http://www.n1nc.org/>

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Editor: Skip Youngberg K1NKR

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Join NVARC! Annual membership dues are \$15;  
\$20 for a family.

Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the  
month at 7:30 p.m. in the Pepperell Community  
Center.

Contact us on the N1MNX repeater.

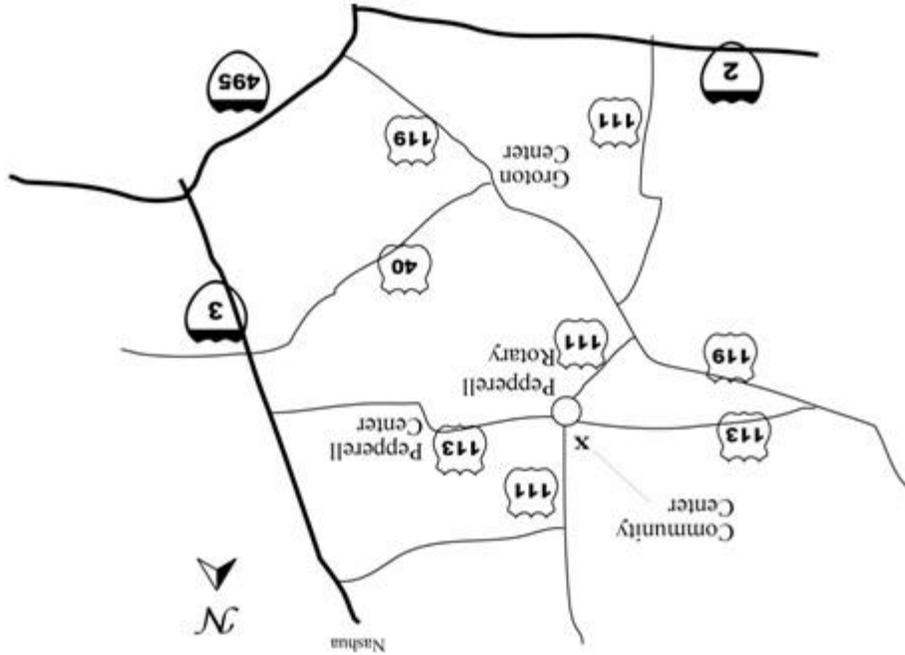
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**Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club**

*PO Box 900*

*Pepperell, MA 01463-0900*

