NVARC
Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

SIGNAL

A club since 1992
Since 1993
Since 1996

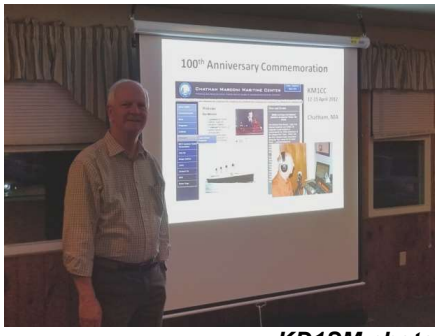
de N1NC June 2018 Volume 27 Number 6

This Month's Meeting

Phil, W1PJE, delivered the banquet address at February's HamSCI workshop at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He highlighted the contributions of Amateurs to breakthroughs in science and technology. He'll reprise his talk for us this month.

News and Happenings

Last Month's Meeting



KD1SM photo

Skip, K1NKR, claimed to be telling us about the Titanic disaster. Not so hidden in the talk was a local travelogue and a lot of history about where our licenses came from.

NVARC's Summer Picnic

We are looking for a Host for the Club Cookout. The following is all that is really required.

The Host gets to unilaterally set the date. He or she provides the location and a grill. On a reimbursement basis, he provides some basic condiments in anticipation of whatever people bring to cook.

The members bring their food and drinks and often something to share. (It has never been laid out as to what each person will bring and things have always worked out very well.) If the Host needs help or a specific item, like an extra grill or grill tools, he just lets someone on the Board know. People generally bring folding chairs and the club can come up with some tables if needed.

Field Day Cometh

Proposed 2018 Field Day budget:

$250 food
$30 fuel
$125 porta-john
$175 pins
$580 total

This is the same as the 2017 Field Day budget. Requests for reimbursement for 2017 were well below this budget, however the club should budget to cover these anticipated expenses.

Since the proposed total exceeds the Board's discretion, an approval vote will be taken at the June meeting.

Technology Beateth Propagation

I just *[24 May. Ed]* worked S01WS in Western Sahara (grid IL46) on 6 meters FT8 with 60W and a 3 element beam. Lots of people worked him and now he's just calling CQ. He has 3 stations running in parallel, showing up 3 places on the waterfall right next to each other.

Six is truly the magic band—and even more so now with FT8.

de, Dan KW2T

The President's Corner

Jim AB1WQ has stepped up to coordinate our Field Day effort. Thanks to Jim for taking on the Field Day Coordinator task. I hope that everyone will support Jim by contacting him proactively to find out where he needs help. (Besides help on individual items Jim could probably use an assistant.)

June being the last meeting before the summer break, I hope everyone has a great summer and look forward to seeing you all back in September. Watch the reflector notices for activities that are upcoming—like the NVARC Cookout.

In a previous column, I wrote about Tesla's Virtual Power Plants (VPP) and backup power system (Powerpacks) for the South Australian power grid. The goal of the large battery system (Hornsdale Power Reserve 100MW/129MWh) was to prevent blackouts by stabilizing the grid. The function of these installations is called FCAS (in Australia) for frequency control and ancillary services. The system has been quite successful because of its fast response time and lower cost and is taking the place of gas generators or steam turbines, providing 55% of the FCAS services in the past six months. This success has resulted in several additional units being ordered for different parts of Australia as well as one being considered for a wind power project. Another unit is being built in Belgium. There is even talk of Tesla building a 1GWh unit.

I don't understand all the workings of the power grid and the various costs in that market, but an interesting note was that not only did the system earn what may be millions of dollars when it kicked in to support the grid, it was paid tens of thousands of dollars to absorb power (and charge) when the electricity was negatively priced—somewhere between $66,000 and $76,000. I suppose that is part of the "stability" job, but getting paid to take energy off the grid seems like "bonus" time.

There are several articles on the electrek website **(https://www.electrek.co)**.

While this Australian activity seems far away, Green Mountain Power (Vermont. See **https://www.tesla.com/green-mountain-power.**) is working with Tesla to install Powerpack batteries (the commercial size) and 2000 Powerwall (residential size) systems in Vermont. The Powerwall systems will result in the residences having backup power without using generators. They will also be aggregated using Tesla software to stabilize the grid much like the Australian system does. One expected result is the reduction of up to 10 Mw of peak load. An interesting aspect is the program does not require a home to have a solar power system. Without the solar system the Powerwall will provide power to the home for as long as the battery allows. With a combined system the solar will charge the Powerwall and the home will have power for a longer period when the grid is down.

With all this other "battery" activity, I wonder how Tesla is going to keep up the automobile production! The battery of a Tesla model S is between 75 and 100 KWh. Using a value of 85 KWh the above 129 MWh backup system consumed the battery capacity of over 1500 Tesla cars. Hopefully the Megafactory has lots of spare capacity.

In related activity, a number of major utilities are stating they are closing coal fired peaking plants and will no longer build new gas fired peaking plants, instead switching to battery. This was reported in Barron's and other sources. **https://www.tesla.com/blog/next-step-in-energy-storage-aggregation**

73, Stan KD1LE

Pepper Hill's Flying Field Day

A blast from the past. A comment from Bruce, K1BG

The Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club and ARRL Field Day have always had a very close relationship. Early club founders and members had been going on field day together for several years before the club came into existence. Pat Taber, KC1TD, the original editor of the *Signal*, was one of these people. He later moved to Acton and his interest in the club lapsed.

When I opened the May 1995 edition of QST, I flipped through the pages and started reading an article titled "Pepper Hill's Flying Field Day." It was a fictional article about a club's annual field day activity, and I was finding it highly amusing and entertaining. About half way through it, it suddenly hit me: This was MY club. These people were PEOPLE I actually knew. I went back to look at the author and it was none other than the same Pat Taber, KC1TD.

The similarities of the story to what was actually happening at the time were too close. For instance, NVARC was (and is) based in Pepperell, MA ("Pepper Hill's" Flying Field Day). Our Saturday breakfast hangout back then was Pa's Place ("Pop's" in the article). We operated field day in a field owned by the Wilkins family, owners of the Wilkins Farm Stand ("Farmer Watkins"). And so on. People referenced in the article actually existed as well, even though Pat took a great deal

of liberty by fictionalizing and embellishing events that may or may not have actually taken place. I laugh every time I read it, and I hope you will enjoy it as well.

The ARRL kindly granted NVARC permission to reprint the article. So without further ado, enjoy the PDDF file attached to this month's newsletter.

Strays

Thirty-somethings were asked to name three historically significant woman of science and technology. They came up with Siri and Alexa but couldn't come up with a third.

Treasurer's Report

Income for May was $105 from membership fees. Expenses were $20 for newsletter postage, $59.75 for the outgoing QSL bureau, and $200 for the annual liability insurance premium, leaving a net expense of $174.75 for the month.

Current balances:

General fund $3,041.34

Community fund $5,061.52

Welcome to new members Ray WA1CYB, John KC1FTJ, and Andrew KA1GTT.

As of 7 June we have 49 members who are current with their dues and 17 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

Board meeting 6/7/2018

Attending: Stan KD1LE, Jim N8VIM, John KK1X, Jim AB1WQ, Ed N1YFK.

- TreasureField Day discussions. Rob to mow before casting off to Canada. Jim AB1WQ once again shouldering the Field Day Chair billet. Gary has confirmed a portalet delivery.
- John KK1X, Bruce K1BG, and Skip K1NKR will be Field Day station captains.
- Phil Erickson to speak in June - Stan to check that Phil remembers.
- Repeater maintenance. Building should be painted. Batteries need to be checked.

Respectfully submitted,

de John KK1X

Club Services

NVARC Property List.

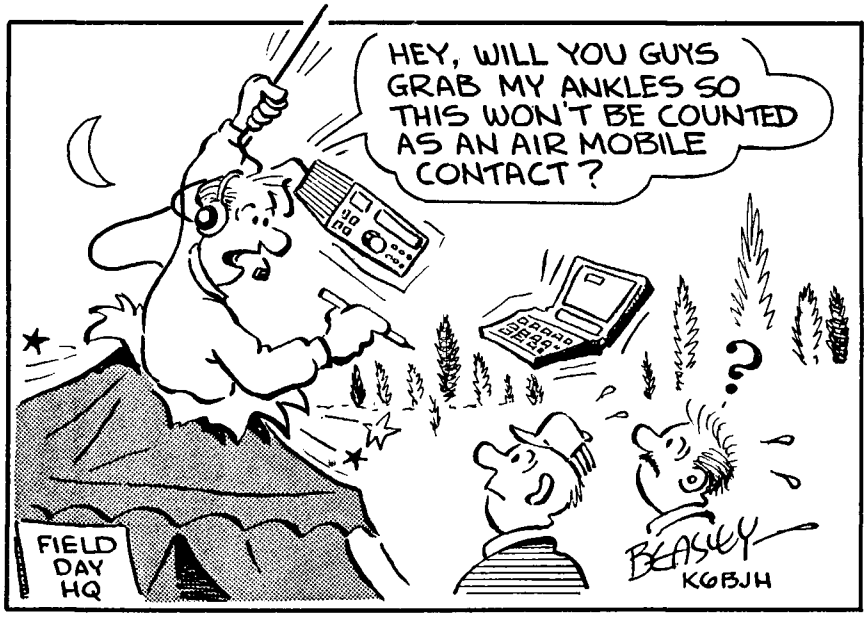
We're not a "property club" and we don't even own the repeater that we use, but there are some things available. John, KK1X, is the Property Master.

Call	Name	Qty	Property Description
KD1LE	Stan Pozerski	3	5' Brown folding tables
KD1LE	Stan Pozerski	5	MFJ Code practice oscillator
KD1SM	Ralph Swick	1	Swingline M711 stapler
KD1SM	Ralph Swick	1	Club banner
KK1X	John Griswold	1	Badge laminator
KK1X	John Griswold	1	Badge punch
AB1WQ	Jim Wilbur	1	Kenwood TS-451 transceiver SN 6100025
AB1WQ	Jim Wilbur	1	Astron RS-35M power supply SN 9506184
AB1WQ	Jim Wilbur	1	Cushcraft R7 antenna
KD1LE	Stan Pozerski	1	Projection screen
KD1LE	Stan Pozerski	6	NVARC Field Day Signs
KD1LE	Stan Pozerski	4	NVARC Comms Signs

Pepper Hill's Flying Field Day

Never underestimate the lofty enthusiasm of a new ham!

By Patrick Taber, KC1TD
14 Abel Jones Pl
Acton, MA 01720



The first indication we had that something was wrong was when Bob came back to the cook tent and told us that Jim had abandoned the 20-meter position. That in itself wouldn't raise eyebrows at 3 AM on Field Day, but it was odd that he seemed to have taken the tent and radio with him.

The Pepper Hill Amateur Radio Club has been running Field Day operations since the beginning of time and we always do a respectable job, even if we never quite take first place. (But, hey, it's not a contest, right?)

Just before my first Field Day, an armchair lawyer told me why Field Day was no good: Everyone knew when it was going to happen; people had a chance to test their gear and get ready for the upcoming "emergency drill," and they treat the whole thing like a big party. He seemed to feel it would be better if every ham in the country got a phone call at midnight on some date known only to a secret organization (of armchair lawyers?) telling them to turn out in 15 minutes.

After a few years of experience, my view is simpler: As soon as someone gets a ham license, they start building a pile of "stuff." This pile groweth every year and shrinketh not. Yea, verily. Once a year, each ham digs in the pile, finds his or her "emergency kit" and takes it out for use. Then, in accordance with the rules of pile management, it goes back on the top of the pile. So if The Real Emergency should ever come, the emergency kit is always near the top of the pile. And *that's* why we have Field Day.

Just Like a Real Emergency

In those early days, the Pepper Hill ARC honored the armchair lawyer's spirit of Field Day. This is a typical old-style Field Day:

We'd just be settling down to our regular Saturday morning breakfast at Pop's Restaurant when someone would come in and say, "Did you know that this is Field Day?" and we'd all dissent.

"It's next weekend," someone would say, "Last Saturday in June."

"Nah—it's July sometime isn't it?" another would offer.

Opinions would be freely expressed.

"Can't be Field Day, the sun's out."

"Didn't we just do Field Day?"

"Who cares?"

And so on.

After much discussion, someone would quote the rule, "Field Day is the fourth full weekend of rain in June." With the majority voting that it sounded familiar, pocket calendars were produced, last year's and next year's discarded, and we came face-to-face with the truth: it *was* Field Day.

So we grabbed napkins and begged pens from passing waitresses and started making lists. We decided who was bringing the radio and who'd bring the antenna. We debated who owned the tent we used last year. We listed our needs for coax, keyers, tape, slingshot and so on. Then we rushed out of the restaurant, napkins in hand, determined to get whatever was on our list. In the parking lot someone would bring us up short by asking *where* we were going to set up.

Mark helpfully noted that we should have asked Farmer Watkins for the use of his field and then Tom pointed out that it was bottom land and we should have looked for high ground, like Old Mrs Hadrian's place. Then the merits of the two were hotly debated until Tom and Mark both switched sides. Just when it was getting interesting, somebody annoyed the crowd by saying that all this was fine, but where were we going to operate *today*?

Eventually, we all agreed on a place. We each promised to go home, get our stuff and meet at 10 AM. At 10:30, I met Charlie at the dump. "Tell Tom I'll be there soon," I said.

"Will do." he replied, "If you happen to get there first, though, tell him I won't be more than a couple of minutes late."

At 11:15, I saw Tom at the hardware store. "Charlie says he'll be along soon. I might be a couple of minutes late, but I'll be in time to help set up."

At noon, I was waiting at the site and looking at my watch, "Those guys are so unreliable," I muttered. At 12:30, when I was pulling out, Brad's truck came barreling in.

"Sorry I'm late," he said "Did Mike tell you I'd be here?" Twenty minutes later, Tom came by and asked what we were doing there, when we should be two miles up the road. It turned out that Mike met Charlie at the grocery store at 11:45 and the two of them decided to go to a different place because it had better wind protection. So when they met Tom and his sons coming out of the barber shop, they declared it settled.

We got to the site in time to see the wire dipole going up. "Shouldn't there be a strain relief on that cable?" I asked Tom.

"Nah—I put connectors on to stay," he replied, smirking and rolling his eyes at my hard hat. He was just describing how the trick is to use a propane torch to make sure the solder flows *all the way* around the connector, when we both got hit by 30 feet of connectorless RG-8 falling from the sky. "Besides, we forgot the tape," he added checking his scalp for blood. To this day I wear a hard hat all through set up and occasionally think shoulder pads would be a worthy investment.

Finally, although the tent was still

packed and one leg of the chair was sinking into the soft dirt, we decided we had enough working so that Brad could start operating the station while we set up around him. He dialed up a frequency on 20 meters and sent a bold string of CQs over the 15-meter dipole. On getting a response, he turned to me and asked for a pen. Although I knew I didn't have one, I patted each pocket, then turned to Tom as if surprised, and asked for his pen. He repeated the pantomime to Charlie, who followed suit and demanded one of Mike, and so on until it was clear that nobody had a pen.

Mike was sent into town by the shortest route to get a pen. Forty minutes later he returned with a cooler full of soda, a folding chair and a can of insect repellent. But no pen. We were looking around for enough coax to hang him with when Brad rummaged around in his pants pocket and said, "Oh, never mind, here's one," in a tone that clearly implied it was quite unfair that he had to do everything himself. I'd tell the rest of the story, but it doesn't reflect well on the club.

Getting Things Off the Ground

When the codeless Technician-class license was created in 1991, the club started to get more members, so naturally we began to tell the classic Field Day stories (changing names and call signs as required) to the new Techs.

"Yo, Tom," I'd say at breakfast, "Do you remember the time Charlie and I hung the dipole upside down?"

"Do I!" he'd reply, "We worked nothing but Australians that year! We barely made 15,000 points. Thank heaven CW contacts count for 2!"

And because we were thinking about it, we'd make plans for the Techs. We said that someone ought to go around to get permission in advance to operate from Farmer Watkins' field, and one of the new guys, who knew him, did. We suggested what we really needed was a detailed map of the site, and the next weekend someone came by with one drawn to scale in four colors and apologized for its appearance. From that we made a plan showing antenna placement and Brad, while explaining to a new operator how to use propagation charts, worked out an example operating strategy based on time of day, estimated band population and MUF. A well-planned Field Day isn't as true to the spirit of sudden disaster, but it is strangely satisfying.

This year we were looking forward to a better-than-average performance because of Nancy. Nancy was a new Tech who was into the hobby of hot air ballooning. Need I say more? Saturday mornings, the engineers of the club had breakfast at a separate table, furiously drawing on napkins and muttering about lift, loading and center of gravity.

The design was ingenious. Mark explained the details, "We'll fabricate a harness of steel cables that will hang a set of Yagis one over the other. The balloon will lift off and the harness attached to the gondola will pick up each antenna in turn. When the oscillations die down, we can drop a mast of my own design down through a hole in the bottom of the gondola."

"A what?!" yelped Nancy.

"After all three antennas are skewered, the mast will be locked to a thrust bearing in the floor of the gondola."

"Let's get back to that hole," Nancy started to say.

"And then, after releasing the harness, the antennas can be pointed by someone in the balloon."

"No good," ruled someone eating a muffin at the armchair lawyer table, "the contacts would be air-mobile. Not allowed."

"I don't think so," said a learned colleague around a mouthful of cheese omelet, "The radios will be on the ground. The balloon is just an antenna support."

"And the balloon will be tethered," added Mark for the Defense. "I can tell you guys don't know anything about balloons." Nancy quibbled and then everything broke into babble.

I decided to concentrate on my eggs. It didn't seem worth the effort of paying attention. Mark has these kinds of ideas all the time, and if you'll pardon the expression, they never get off the ground. I figured the whole idea would gradually elide from "Hey, let's do this" to "Gee, somebody otta do this" to "I knew a guy once who..." in about a week. But nothing compares with the energy of a new ham and we had a bunch of them.

Jeff, who sells wire and cable, teamed up with Suzy, who was learning everything about building antennas from our old-timer expert, Roy. Sean, who works in welding, fabricated a frame that replaced the balloon's gondola, and he and Nancy designed a new gas-fired burner fed by hose from the ground so nobody had to ride aboard. A clever adaptation of a ring made for rotating tower sections made tethering the frame from four corners easy, which Mark figured made pointing with a rotator reliable enough.

The result was that the Saturday of Field Day, under the traditional threatening sky, Nancy's balloon slowly drifted up, first picking up the trap Yagi our antenna committee (Suzy) designed for 10, 12 and 15 meters, then a 20-meter monobander, then a 40-meter monobander. Each was fitted with a piece of mast (my own design, I'm pleased to say, which Sean fabricated), tapered at the top and with a funnel shape at the bottom. An electric winch on the frame pulled the sections up snug and they locked into place as pretty as you please. The rotator? In the end, we had abandoned it—one of the Techs had done a pretty computer simulation showing that just pointing southwest was good enough for our needs. Say what you will, know-how is useless without enthusiasm. And nobody is as enthusiastic as someone just starting in the hobby.

Jeff had gotten the loan of four huge spools of steel cable that were being used to tether the balloon. We paid out enough cable from each to get our "aerial antenna platform" up about 200 feet—as far as our scrounged coax could go and still leave a little slack in the shortest cable.

Two Watts is Enough for a True Operator

I took up my traditional operating position—in the cook tent. The cook tent, if I do say so, is the nerve center of the Pepper Hill operation. From here people are dispatched to fill the generator. Here is the map of North America that shows the sections and provinces we've worked (with bands indicated by color-coded pushpins.) And, of course, this is where the NORs hang out. *NOR* means "not operating a radio."

I enforce a strict pecking order of NORs: *CNOR*s are Currently Not Operating a Radio—they've pulled their shift or are scheduled to take one. I ensure that they get all the food and fluid they want. Then come the *ANOR*s —Assisting, Not Operating a Radio—social people who come for the good feeling you get working hard for a common goal. Maybe they have mike or key fright, or maybe, like me, they don't like to operate with someone looking over their shoulders. But they come and help set up and, more important, tear down and clean up. These guys get anything they want that isn't being eaten by the operators.

At the bottom of the food chain are the *ATNOR*s—All Talk, Never Operate a Radio. They show up to point out what's jury rigged or suboptimal. They never pick up a mike or a wrench or a piece of litter. Their enjoyment of Amateur Radio comes from the thick, vague rule book that gives endless fodder for arguing pointless, hypothetical questions. As far as I'm concerned, these guys can bottom-feed. They're welcome to whatever is about to be deep-sixed anyway, and have gradually learned that it's wise to bring their own beverages. I used to throw them out, but then one in particular would go bother the Novice station. "When *I* was a Novice," he'd shout at the headphones of someone desperately trying to operate, "licenses were one-year, nonrenewable, CW only and we were rockbound." And when nobody rose to the bait, he'd go on like Foghorn Leghorn, "That means we were crystal controlled. Fixed frequency. Bound to one frequency by a rock, you see." (His harangue has become kind of a joke. Whenever any club member is telling a story and stretching the hardship angle, say, "There we were, the amplifier a smoking ruin, pushing 100 W into a coathanger against a pileup that ran the length of the band...." one of the younger members invariably calls out, "And we were rockbound" [with a lot of topspin on the last word].)

The stars of the show are the operators,

loggers and fixer-uppers who go hand-to-hand with current problems. I send people around to make sure they have enough fluids at hand or things to eat that come in small bites. Some of these guys are awesome to be near: Born to Operate.

Once, when the club was doing public service for a local fair, we put up a ham radio display. Someone tossed a thin piece of wire up over a tree and connected it to the center conductor of a piece of coax with an alligator clip. It made an okay receive antenna, which was all we had in mind. Then Brad came along. Brad is as fussy as any ham alive about having things just perfect before the operating starts, but once it starts, he works with what he has. He gradually drifted over to the radio and started to fiddle with it. He keyed down for a second and noted the SWR meter on the rig shot past infinity and took a small chip out of the peg. Then he picked up the mike and made a brief call. And got an answer. So he slid into a seat and explained that we were at a fair doing a radio demo. Then someone called him. Soon he was operating a special-event station right in the middle of our display and handling a reasonable pileup. The ATNORs were there, smugly awaiting disaster: It couldn't work because the finals were folding back to no power, the antenna was all wrong and so on. But while they rehearsed what they were going to say when he failed, Brad operated, dragging in contacts from Africa and Central Europe to the delight and amazement of a gathering crowd. Before the afternoon was over, we had filled up a Novice class and made many people aware of ham radio. Afterward, Brad admitted that the finals may well have folded back to two watts, "But two watts was enough." he said with a matter-of-fact smile.

Keeping the QSO Rate Up, Up and Away

Field Day wore on. The ATNORs packed up at sundown. The map bristled with colored pins. Only Hawaii and North Dakota had evaded us so far. The clouds blew off and it turned cold. The bugs settled in for the night. The moon rose, deer came out of the woods to look at us, we filled (and refilled) the generator, drank insect-repellent-flavored beverages and told stories. Bob came in to warm his hands on a cup of coffee and, enthusiastic about his first Field Day, talked with amazement about Jim's rate. Mike told us a story about Jim—the operator who turned up missing at the start of this tale, if you remember—which I'll take a moment to retell:

Jim is a 13-year-old Amateur Extra Class operator. He came to us as a 12-year-old Tech and former computer hacker. Not to perpetuate stereotypes, but Jim is one of those "I was a 98-pound weakling until I lost weight," single-focus types. He landed on Amateur Radio with both feet. To learn operating technique he apprenticed himself to Brad, our star operator, as a logger.

Now Brad loves to operate, but if someone put a time bomb under his chair that could only be disarmed by typing "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog" at a keyboard, Pepper Hill would lose a great operator. As a former computer hacker, Jim was a touch typist who could nap between characters at 40 wpm.

At the start of the contest season, they were a common sight at the club station, side-by-side, headphones in parallel, Brad operating, Jim logging. If Jim was falling behind, Brad would say, "Don't worry about it," and Brad would write the call signs and exchanges on a sheet of paper as Jim followed along. Jim would occasionally remark that although he was listening to the same audio, Brad was hearing things he just couldn't hear.

Gradually, though, Jim looked at the paper less and less. By the middle of the season, Jim not only kept up, he could log the ones Brad was working and screen other call signs for dupes or multipliers fast enough to direct strategy.

Then one day Brad took a break, Jim slid the key over and the rate *went up*. Jim had learned to operate, but Brad hadn't learned to type. The concentration of a 12-year-old, mixed with the energy of a new Tech, combined to give Jim an edge.

I have to declare my admiration of Brad. Lesser men would have responded differently, but Brad loved to operate and he loved to win. When he saw what was happening, he just sat down next to Jim, put on his headphones and slid the keyboard over to his side. Jim started writing call signs and exchanges on the scratch pad as Brad painfully transcribed them into the computer.

Bob walked out of the tent determined to follow Jim's example and be the best logger he could. A minute later he was back wide-eyed with the news of Jim's disappearance.

Everyone who was in the tent wandered out to see what was going on. The field was so dark I couldn't see much of anything. We had to get within five feet of the operating position to make out the tentless table and its strangely empty chair. I was about to joke that it was the first time I had heard of a ham radio operator being snatched up into heaven, when I looked up and saw the ghost.

My eye had been attracted by a blue glow in the grass and as I looked, the ghost materialized out of the darkness. It was hovering just off the ground a few feet away and coming slowly in our direction. It seemed to be chanting something over the noise of the generator. Its billowy form twisted in the light wind and limp tentacles dragged the ground. We were hushed. Awed. A respectful silence descended upon us as we tried to figure out what it all meant. Then I noticed that the blue glow was originating from the screen of an upturned notebook PC lying in the grass.

Not long after that we recognized the ghost was chanting, "Roger, we are 3 Alfa, 3 Alfa, Eastern Mass. QRZed?"

It was Jim! But although we had found him, we were as puzzled as ever. What was going on? We called to him. He finished an exchange and then asked us to bring the chair over to him. We set the chair on the ground and then saw one sneaker descend out of the tent and plant itself tippy-toe on it. "I need something higher," he said. Quickly the table was brought and we saw his feet come down flat-footed. "I need a logger, quick!" he said, "I'm almost out of room and they just keep calling!" Two people hopped up on the table and folded the tent back. There, standing like a sweaty Statue of Liberty, was Jim. Tarzan-like, he had been swinging gently, gripping a loop of coax with one hand. He had been logging contacts on the case of the radio with a grease pencil in neat, tight printing. His logging hand flipped the headset control back to VOX and he said, "Kilo Hawaii 6 Aloha Boys, we are 3 Alfa Eastern Mass," pause, "QSL, 6 Alfa PAC and thank you for the new one." He flipped the control back to Manual and threw the grease pencil to Bob, "I'm out of room! Write that one down!" Bob scrawled it on the table and looked up attentively, the picture of the perfect logger.

We finally got Jim to stop operating and he climbed down rubbing his arm. "It was right after Bob went for coffee. I guess the balloon must have gone up. The coax was tight to begin with and it pulled the radio off the table. I didn't want to stop operating because I had just gotten a frequency on 20 and I didn't want to give it up. So I got up on the chair and then the table. Then it started to go up again, and so I just wrapped the feed line around my arm figuring my weight would pull the balloon down. But as I pulled down, my feet slipped off the table and I swung out into the field, tent and all. At first I was scared, but I didn't seem to be going up any higher and stations were calling me. So I flipped the headset to VOX and used the grease pencil to log the calls. I figured Bob would be back soon, so there wasn't any need to stop."

He looked up at the dark outline of the balloon and smiled sheepishly, "I guess I'm lucky the connector didn't let go."

"Nah," I smiled, "Tom puts connectors on to stay."

Thus Spake the Experts

The next Saturday, we were discussing the results at breakfast. "A clean sweep!" Brad was saying, "Every section and every province!" There was a doubtful sound of someone clearing their throat at the lawyer's table. "What?" Brad demanded.

A coffee and Danish spluttered, "Surely you're not going to claim that Hawaii contact?"

"And why not?" Brad wanted to know.

"It was clearly air mobile!" the learned colleague cried, "All those contacts were air mobile; when you're in the air and moving, you're air mobile."

Half a dozen people started to speak at once. I decided to concentrate on my eggs.

Calendar

June
23,24 Field Day
July
15 Flea at MIT
August
19 NoBARC Hamfest, Adams MA
19 Flea at MIT

Upcoming Operating Activities
2018
International Grid Chase (all year!)
Science Milestones event (all year!)

June
23,24 Field Day
July
14-15 IARU HF World Championship
August
4-5 222 MHz and Up Distance Contest
18-19 10 GHz & Up – Round 1
19 Rookie Roundup – RTTY

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

Advertisers

FOR SALE

This space available for members' use.

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL

Buy one rig for the price of two and get a spare for free.

NVARC

Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

PO Box # 900
Pepperell Mass 01463-0900

http://www.n1nc.org/

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.
442.900 (+), 100Hz
147.345 (+), 100 Hz
53.890 (–), 100Hz

This newsletter is published monthly. Submissions, corrections and inquiries should be directed to the newsletter editor. Articles and graphics in most PC-compatible formats are OK.

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