



# BARS Billerica Amateur Radio Society

NEWS FOR AND BY BARS MEMBERS

DECEMBER 2024

**BARS meetings are now “hybrid” – the meeting will be held at the Chelmsford Bible Church and available simultaneously on Zoom.**

The safety and well-being of our membership is important to us. Those members who feel uncomfortable attending in person can continue to join us over Zoom.

--BARS Management.

## From the Editor's Desk

By Marla Wallace, WA1GSF

Okay, I'm done with Hawaii for a few months. (You heard it here first: I don't plan to go to Hawaii in 2025. Feel free to remind me when I announce my next trip.) Which means that my missing the November meeting was an anomaly unlikely to be repeated. Sorry.

Things look a little different in this issue. At the press deadline, I still had not received Doug's column or the program announcement. Normally, those come first in the newsletter and then I can format the rest to minimize empty space. This month, Doug is late. In order to meet the deadline, I've moved his material to the back. Whenever it arrives, I'll insert it. But at least the rest of the newsletter will be in place when that happens.

## Feature Article: Raising a Radio Tower with Army Surplus Tent Poles

By: Juan Jimenez, K1CPR

A few weeks ago, I saw an ad on Craigslist for a funky MFJ loop antenna, the MFJ-1786 10-30 Mhz model. I was intrigued by it, and did a little research online, finding out that it uses a custom tuner, and the tuning process is very finicky and definitely not like modern tuners. I thought it was a good deal, so I went to see it. The owner described it as unused, which seemed to check out from the untouched parts, so I took a chance and brought it home.

I have been playing with putting up different antennas, and to put this one up it looked like I would have to take down my 2m J-pole on the roof. I didn't feel good about that, since now that I have the Yaesu FT-991A I had been lusting after it would not have made sense to take 2m out of the shack.

After reading the manual for the loop, and examining the mounting hardware it came with, it occurred to me that I wouldn't have to do that. I still had quite a few of the surplus fiberglass reinforced Army tent poles I had bought and decided to go that route. These poles are inexpensive, \$1 each from a vendor in Easton MA, and 4 feet in length. He has a whole trailer full of thousands of them. The ends slide into each other to make a single pole, theoretically as high as you want. To put the antenna over the height of my roof I would need to put several of them together.



To make sure they don't slip out of each other, I drilled a hole and put a bolt through at each junction. At the top I drilled three holes

and installed three eye bolts for nylon guide wires. I then mounted the antenna horizontally at the top as recommended in the manual for the kind of propagation I wanted and connected the coax.

The hard part was lifting it up. At the base I drove two 24-inch rebar pins from Lowe's right next to each other, and with the help of my wife we slowly raised it. It was hard work, and we had to shorten the pole by one segment to make it more manageable. In hindsight, more people manning the guide wires would have helped. Once we slipped the base of the poles into the pins, I held it while my wife tied the guide wires.

So, there it is: a 28 foot antenna tower for a whopping \$7, plus the cost of the hardware and a few dozen feet of nylon guide wire. It works great!

## Announcements

### Results of the Election of Club Officers

Our election for the 2025 set of BARS club officers took place at the monthly general meeting on Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>. Here are the results:

PRESIDENT:	Doug Bruce, N1WRN
VICE PRESIDENT:	Mark Nelson, KA1INE
TREASURER:	Bruce Anderson, W1LUS
SECRETARY:	Marla Wallace, WA1GSF
DIRECTOR #1:	Bill Poulin, WZ1L
DIRECTOR #2:	Steve Wedge, W1ES/4

And because Doug was reelected, the Ex Officio officer continues to be Gary Frascarelli, W1GFF.

### Algonquin Amateur Radio Club Flea Market

The Algonquin Amateur Radio Club will hold its annual Flea Market on February 15, 2025 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. The event will be held at the 1LT Charles W. Whitcomb School, 25 Union St or off Bolton St (Rt. 85), Marlborough, MA 01752.

The following is the link to the Flea Market flyer:

<https://www.qsl.net/n1em/2025flyer.pdf>

Thank you,  
Ken, KA1GFN  
Treasurer and Newsletter Editor  
Algonquin Amateur Radio Club

## 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.

Currently 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

### 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

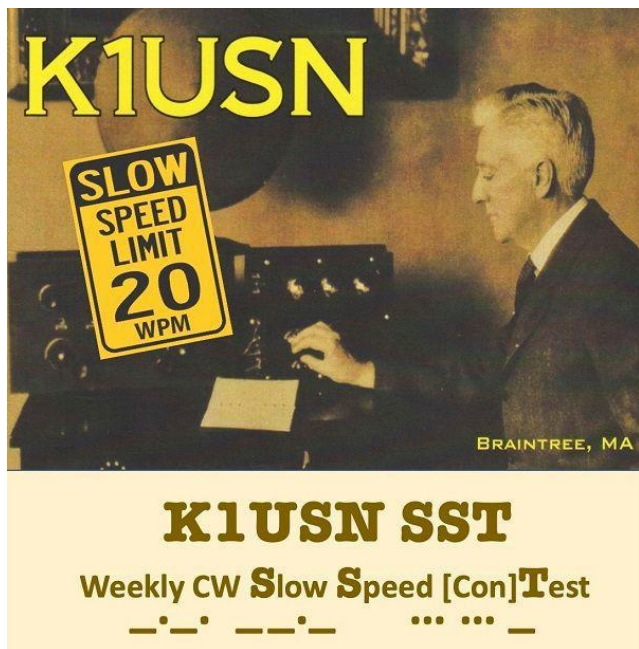
Elmer helping to walk them through the process. An Elmer could have Zoom on their cell phone and show a new ham how their shack was set up. Use your imagination and see how you might use this tool. If you would like to use Zoom for this, contact Bruce, [WILUS@hotmail.com](mailto:WILUS@hotmail.com), with 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

### 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

## Secretary's Reports

from Marla Wallace, WA1GSF, Secretary

### November BARS General Meeting

I was not present for the meeting.

### November BARS Board of Directors Meeting

There was no Board of Directors meeting in November.

## BARS Membership

Our current combined membership is 146. Please check your email and your "Junk email" to see if you have a renewal invoice from PayPal.

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

from Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, Treasurer

## 2024 BARS Member Dues

A \$15 annual BARS membership begins on January 1<sup>st</sup> and expires on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Any renewal or new membership made after September 1<sup>st</sup> will be valid until December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Memberships allow us to

- pay our bills,
- maintain our great web page,
- fund field day,
- and bring the membership a great variety of informative meetings and speakers.

## Treasurers Report for November 2024

Dues for 2024 are now due. Dues for 2024 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 November, we had six new/renewals for \$105 income; our expenses were Zoom \$16.99, and PayPal \$3.03 We now have \$485.62 in the bank and \$1263.36 in our PayPal account for a total of \$1748.98.

Bruce Anderson  
W1LUS

## BARS Needs You!!!

We are looking for a few good hams to act as net control on the regularly scheduled Wednesday night nets! All it takes is one night a month; if you are interested contact Doug, N1WRN.

Also, the club needs volunteers for light tasks of about 1 hour a month. Are you able to pitch in? Contact Doug Bruce, N1WRN.

## Wednesday Night Net

Join us on the Westford 146.955 Repeater for the weekly BARS net each Wednesday at 8:00 PM (**except on the first Wednesday of the month which is club meeting night**). *Note: Thanks to the Westford Police Amateur Radio Team (PART) for their generous act of making their repeater available to us.*

Repeater info:

WB1GOF

146.955 MHz

-600 kHz (normal) offset

Encode CTCSS 74.4 Hz

Reminder: “kerchunking” the repeater is not only impolite, it’s illegal. It constitutes an unidentified transmission. If you need to check that you’re making the repeater, say something like “This is <your call> standing by on the frequency.” Thanks for your courtesy.

## Club Meetings

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

Club meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 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 November 2024

We had two people show up for the November 14 VE exam session. Results were one new Technician and one Extra upgrade.

Thanks to Gary W1GFF, Peter N1ALO, and Bill W1ZL for helping run this exam session.

Our next exam session will be on December 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the Chelmsford Bible Church. 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

## 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](#)

## Future Meetings

**There will be no January meeting due to the BARS Holiday Party which will be held that month.**

## 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)

## December Get-on-the-Air Suggestions from Scott Ginsburg, K10A

BARS is a “get-on-the-air” (GOTA) club. We encourage members to participate in the varied events on HF and VHF.

Here are the popular suggestions for this month:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
Dec 6-8	ARRL 160-Meter Contest <a href="http://www.arrl.org/160-meter">http://www.arrl.org/160-meter</a>
Nov 9-10	ARRL 10-Meter Contest ** <a href="http://www.arrl.org/10-meter">http://www.arrl.org/10-meter</a>
Nov 16-18	ARRL Rookie Roundup, CW <a href="http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup">http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup</a>
Nov 23-24	Youth On The Air (YOTA) Contest <a href="https://www.ham-yota.com/contest/">https://www.ham-yota.com/contest/</a>

**\*\* Top recommendation for this month**

Recurring Events – visit webpage for exact times and dates:

K1USN Slow Speed Test - Every Friday 20:00 UTC /  
Every Monday 00:00 UTC  
<http://www.k1usn.com/sst.html>

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)

Details on each contest 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](https://www.contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php?mode=custom&week=current)

## BARS Leadership Team

### OFFICERS:

President: Doug Bruce, N1WRN  
Vice President: Mark Nelson, KA1INE  
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: John Fisher, KC1FTJ  
Field Day Chair: Mark Nelson, KA1INE

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

Greetings Fellow Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season. We all have a lot to be thankful for this Season. I am grateful and thankful that the membership chose me again as Club President. Here's to a great 2025 ahead of us as a Club!

I came across the passage below in a Yaesu FTDX 101D brochure that pretty well sums up the draw of the HF DX experience. Take a few minutes to read and re read this passage from Yaesu. It caught my eye when I was looking over the brochure and I read it two or three times. It made that much of an impression on me. This passage will inspire anyone who reads it to get more involved with HF DX in the future (I hope!):

Ours is the age of “easy communications via the internet. Push a button, and your message is sent without hearing a sound. Which is precisely why, today, the allure of HF DX communication is stronger than ever. HF DX involves communication with imagination... The dream of a faraway place and the wonder at how your signal will get to the far side of the world. The noise, the polar flutter, the echo of the long path...and the sudden joy at hearing your call sign being sent in response to your call.

This is the essence of DX, and only a person who who has experienced the thrill can know the thrill. Drama, emotion and excitement...These are the essential elements of the lure of HF DX. A fundamental human need to know what is out there.

The magnificence of Nature brings unforeseen ionospheric encounters, And you prepare yourself for these special moments. You improve your technical skills, optimize your antennas, And tweak your rig for the best possible performance. It's been said that the destination is not as important as the journey.

Surely this expression was written with Ham Radio in mind...Courtesy of Yaesu Musen CO. LTD Tokyo, Japan.

HF DX is the heart and soul of our great hobby. As I have said before, our hobby has so many ways to have fun. It is entirely up to you as a ham radio operator to choose the path to follow. As Robert Frost once said “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I, I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.” Take the road that inspires you in your ham radio journey! I am sure it will make all the difference for you!

On another note, I want to announce that B.A.R.S. will be having our Annual Holiday Party at the Great Wall Restaurant in Bedford, MA on Wednesday night January 15, 2025 at 6:30 PM. This event will be in lieu of our January hybrid Monthly Club Meeting. We will be having a Yankee Swap (\$20.00 limit) to those who wish to participate. We will be having the buffet dinner as well as remarks by myself and Mark Nelson, KA1INE, our Vice President, so put this on your calendar now! The Holiday Party is always great fun and ham radio fellowship.

On a final note, we have entered into the winter DX season. As we are now at the Solar Maximum, try and work the bands that will go away as we near the Solar minimum in approximately 6 years. The bands active now are 10, 12, and 17, so make hay while the sun is so active and while the conditions are so awesome.

Until next time,

73,  
Doug  
N1WRN

## Next BARS Zoom meeting: December 4 at 7:00 PM - "An Evening with the New England Area Director"

Presenter: Tom Frenaye, K1KI

I am pleased to announce that we will be having Tom Frenaye, K1KI, the newly elected New England Area Director. Here is Tom's bio:

I've served as ARRL Director in the past and am currently elected as an ARRL Director Emeritus. I've been licensed since I was 14 years old, thanks to a middle school science teacher. Amateur Radio has been part of my life ever since! I'm particularly interested and involved in on-the-air activities. In high school I focused on DXing and county hunting and worked more than 1500 US counties. A friend and I started the California QSO Party in the early 1970s.

After graduate school I took a once in a lifetime job as a communications specialist and spent a year in Palmer Station, Antarctica, also operating as KC4AAC. Following that, I took the job of contest program manager at ARRL in Newington CT. During that time, I learned about packet radio, which led to an understanding of computer networks, and a career in information technology at a Hartford-area insurance company where I developed large corporate databases for end user access, managed the new information center and the network control operations.

I volunteered as ARRL Director and Vice President until 2018, and also as ARRL Foundation president for ten years. I've also served on several of my town's boards and commissions, including finance, technology, capital projects, and the planning and zoning commission. I've also served as mayor (First Selectman). I believe every ham should look for the opportunity to get involved in their town's government in some way.

In the 1990's I started a New England effort to get new hams on the air called the Get On The Air Program. It focused on reaching out to new hams and helping them to get started in ham radio by connecting them to local ham radio clubs. This program was then adopted by the ARRL as a major addition to Field Day – the Get On The Air (GOTA) station which is great for new hams to experience getting on-the-air.

In 2002 I started the New England QSO Party as a way to help encourage on-the-air activity. Over the last twenty years it has grown to more than 100,000 QSOs made in a weekend and 1100 logs received. When the World Radiosport Team Championships were held in the Boston area in 2014, I was part of the team that managed the event. My assignment was to find 50+ locations for teams to operate from, and to build the several hundred volunteers for site management.

I've also served as President of the Yankee Clipper Contest Club – two different times. I especially like to operate CW and on 160 meters, and really enjoy building antennas. I'm looking forward to the improving propagation on the 15 and 10m bands!



We will announce the link to join the Zoom meeting before the meeting, but it will be posted to the BARS email list and should not be shared outside our Club. Are you on the email list? If not, please send an email to [bars-subscribe@w1hh.org](mailto:bars-subscribe@w1hh.org) and then simply reply to the robot response from the server and you will be subscribed.

Observing our Zoom meeting requires only a web browser and headphones/speakers. You do not need a webcam or microphone unless you want to speak or be seen.

Before our meeting date, please go to <https://zoom.us/test> and see if it will function for you. If you have problems, we can try to assist – feel free to ask questions on the BARS email list.

I am looking forward to “seeing” many of you there on Wednesday, 12/4, at 1900.

Doug, N1WRN  
President, Billerica Amateur Radio Society