



BARS Billerica Amateur Radio Society

NEWS FOR AND BY BARS MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2025

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.

A Message from the President By Doug Bruce, N1WRN

Greetings Fellow Members,

I hope everyone is enjoying this relatively snow free winter! I can definitely get used to these after experiencing the winters of 1969, 1978, and 2014!

I saw an interesting article in DX World yesterday. There is currently a DXpedition to Mt Athos in Greece. The dxpedition was on for a few days and suddenly disappeared from the air! Turns out they had failed to secure the proper permitting and all 8 members of the dxpedition were jailed! Guess it pays to be properly documented when attempting a dxpedition in a foreign land. Most groups do secure the proper permits from the local authorities, but not in this case! The contacts made the first couple of days from this Mt Athos trip (a rare DX entity when a proper DXpedition is run!) are very much coveted now for sure! This will make the locals take a real hard stance with the next DX group tries for the proper regulatory permitting!

On another note, I was pleasantly surprised to see how many hams participated in Winter Field day, most from their homes. I went on 20 meters on Sunday afternoon and made a couple of dozen contacts on SSB. Good practice for our June Field Day, as Jim Evans wants to make sure I do my fair share of calling CQ on single slop bucket! June Field Day will be here before we know it so mark the dates on your calendar now! ARRL Field Day will be on June

28-29 and hopefully we will be able to have the same great site and great food and participation like we had this year.

This weekend will feature the Vermont QSO Party on ssb, so if you need Vermont for your WAS, then this is the perfect weekend for you to snag a semi difficult state for your log. Minnesota and British Columbia will also have their QSO Parties this weekend. These QSO parties offer great opportunities to G.O.T.A. (Get On The Air1) which is the theme of our great Club! Here is the link to the 2025 QSO Party schedule:

[WA7BNM Contest Calendar: State QSO Parties](#)

Hopefully everyone is on board with Niece's POTA initiative. We would like to begin plans for a late spring (mid to late May) POTA activation in a park to be determined. Please feel free to email me with any POTA site suggestions so we can begin the planning in earnest the next few months!

As always, I hope everyone can get on the air while we still have the great Solar Cycle 25 maximums. The DX has been great lately so G.O.T.A!

Until next time,

73,
Doug
N1WRN

Next BARS meeting: February 5 at 7:00 PM - “Overview of the Minuteman Repeater Association”
Speaker: Bruce Pigott, KC1US

I am pleased to announce that our Guest Speaker for our February 5 hybrid Club Meeting will be Bruce Pigott, KC1US, who is the Trustee for the North Reading Repeater on the frequency of 146.715. The presentation is a quick overview of the Minuteman

Repeater Association repeaters and network. Will be talking about how the network is put together, information resources, and details of the Billerica equipment and operation. Also included will be details about scheduled nets, discussion of the extensive MMRA web site and how to contact club officers. Bruce will be appearing in person at the Church to give his talk, and there will be ample time after for questions and discussion. This will be a very interesting presentation about one of the best repeater networks in the state, so you won't want to miss it!



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 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, 2/5, at 1900.

Doug, N1WRN
President, Billerica Amateur Radio Society

From the Editor's Desk

By Marla Wallace, WA1GSF

I'm excited to announce a new column: From the Mailbag. This is a monthly photo-feature of interesting, unusual or rare QSL cards received recently by members. So, scan that rare DX card you just got or that card with a scenic shot of Nebraska cornfields and send it to k1dc.radio@gmail.com.

In other news, my brother Andy's article on HF beacons last month has inspired me to design a beacon transmitter for the six-meter band, which I hope to construct and put on the air in the next few months.

Feature Article: Remembering Eric Johnson, KC1OAV, (BARS member)- 12/6/1947 to 1/19/2025

By: From Rich Fine, KC1PYV

I met Eric Johnson early in the 1980's – we were both firmware engineering contractors working for the same contract house. Even though we were working on separate projects, our paths would cross from time to time. We quickly developed a friendship and would trade bad jokes (and good puns) as often as we could.

A few years later (mid-eighties) Eric and a few other contractors went to work for a company in Brookline. The job was challenging and very interesting in the process control industry. I was asked to join – which I did – thus beginning my direct working relationship with Eric. The development, initially, was using an operating system called “CP/M” which predated DOS. We then migrated to DOS and got to learn a new language (“C”). The development team consisted of both experienced and new grads. Eric was very instrumental in helping the latter – playing an important mentor role. The development team was very tight – working together to see the deliverables through and having “good time”. On a side note – the building (and my office) was located within feet of the Green line. Every time a train passed, my screen would “wobble” due to the “magnetic” interference.

Eric and I would always get a chuckle from that. Not to forget an important event... during this time, I got married and Eric was in the wedding party.

After a few years, we all moved on... and managed to stay together as a “working” group of contract engineers. Here again, I observed, one of Eric's traits regarding engineering skills – when he said a project was done – it was. I realized this was not always a common trait – yet Eric was always very thorough in delivering a working, documented product.

Into the early 90's we all went our separate ways (work wise) while maintaining our social relationship. We didn't see each other that often but did have a few great times – attending a James Taylor concert in Great Woods, watching the Red Sox at Fenway and attending automobile shows at the Larz Anderson car museum. (In his younger years, Eric owned an Austin Healy 3000 – a really cool 2 seat convertible).

Into the 2000's, I remained a contractor while Eric worked at a company in the “printer” business. I, very luckily, had never been out of work for any longer than a month or so. After the 2008/2009 recession, things dried up a bit – Eric mentioned his company was looking for an embedded firmware/Linux engineer. I threw my hat into the ring and interviewed in Feb – by April, there were 50 initial

applicants – down to 3 which included me. I got the final word that someone else landed the job – but a day or two after, a contract came through for me. I'm sure that Eric's input helped greatly with that opportunity.

Eric retired from the company as the Covid lockdown began – soon after that, Eric excitedly contacted me about becoming a “ham”. I had had some interest since I had my Novice license in the mid-seventies. He eventually convinced me to re-acquire my license, which I did and glad of it. His enthusiasm was contagious – he helped me acquire the ham equipment (both home & QRP) – we practiced on the air often to help me (re)learn the morse code. Eric also donated lots of time to “outside” groups – such as the New England Sci Tech folks in Natick.

Eric will be sorely missed – as a family man, as a friend, as a ham – and just as a great guy who would laugh (or mostly chuckle) at my bad jokes.

Here's one of several links to his obituary:
https://ccals.org/in_memory_of/eric-l-johnson/

Announcements

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.

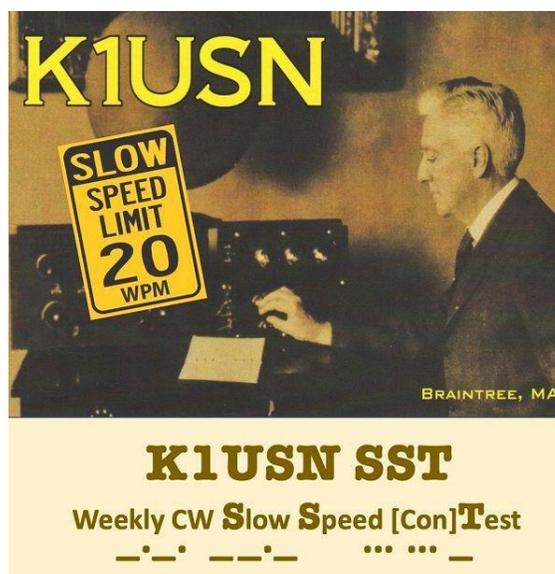
Currently at least 82 BARS members are also ARRL members. If we all renewed through the club, we could potentially receive \$410 per year from the ARRL.

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

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

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, 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

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

Secretary's Reports

from Marla Wallace, WA1GSF, Secretary

There was no BARS General Meeting in January

The club held its annual Holiday Party instead.

January BARS Board of Directors Meeting

There was no Board of Directors meeting in January.

BARS Membership

Our current combined membership is 157, with 27 not yet renewed for 2025. 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 W1LUS@hotmail.com to get your current membership status.

from Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, Treasurer

2025 BARS Member Dues

A \$15 annual BARS membership begins on January 1st and expires on December 31st. Any renewal or new membership made after September 1st will be valid until December 31st 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 February 2025

Dues for 2025 are now due. Dues for 2025 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,
- 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 January, we had thirty-one new/renewals for \$465 income; our expenses were the January dinner party \$46, Zoom \$16.99, PayPal \$24.10, and QTH.com 136.28 for Web hosting. We now have \$581.66 in the bank and \$1804.08 in our PayPal account for a total of \$2385.74.

Bruce Anderson
W1LUS

Photo Feature: From the Mailbag

This month, the BARS Newsletter launches a new feature: a “brag wall” for QSL cards received recently by members. Perhaps seeing what other club members have snagged from the airwaves will inspire you to spend more time on the air.

My second Elmer was the father of my best friend in high school – William ‘Bill’ Borgman, K8CJQ (sk). I spent many an hour helping him around his shack (ask me about my first encounter with 220v... oh, boy) and even logged for him on a few Field Day events. He was an avid DX'er and had amassed quite a collection of QSL cards. The one I found most impressive was from JY1, King Hussein of Jordan (sk). The contact details were hand written and a personal note “Thanks for the chat, Bill!” included on the back. The wall of his shack was covered with cards from far-off & exotic lands, but that is the one that stuck with me.

The tradition of exchanging QSL cards goes back to the roots of amateur radio. The general format has not changed much since then – a standard post card with basic details of the QSO including date & time, frequency and mode. They often include photos of the sender's shack, antennas or perhaps local landmarks. I've heard from some folks that “The QSO is not complete until the card is on the way!”. This tradition has faded with the evolution of the hobby. I personally feel we have lost something as a result.

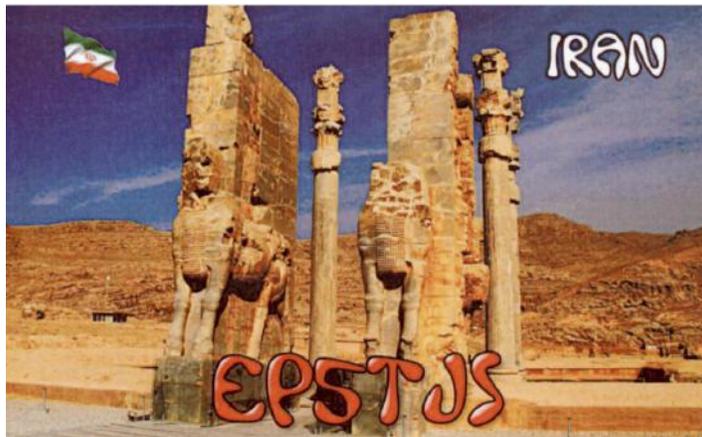
My intention with this column is to share interesting cards I, and you dear readers, have received. I hope for this to inspire more folks to exchange them, or at least be inspired to turn on the radio and try to contact those far-off & exotic lands. For this inaugural issue I'll begin with two cards, S51DX and EP5TJS.

A few months after getting my ticket I sat on my deck with my TS-2000 in front of me scanning 20m. I came across this BOOMING S9+10 signal calling “CQ DX Sierra 51 Delta Xray”. I managed to overcome my mike shyness and hit the button. Less than a minute later I had my first HF contact – with Slovenia!



In December of '23 I had just installed a new 30m dipole and was eager to warm it up. It was about 4:30 in the afternoon (2130z) and EP5TJS pops up in JTAAlert. I have no idea where EP5 is so a quick Google search, a gasp, then a pounce on the ‘Enable TX’ button.

It took quite a few cycles, and the dipole was warm as it was going to get with ~80 watts going into it, but I did eventually get the ‘RR73’.



What interesting/meaningful cards have you received? Send a scan of them to me (k1dc.radio@gmail.com) and I'll share them with the group. Extra credit if they have a story to go with them!
73

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 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 January 2025

We had two people show up for the January 9 VE exam session. Results were a new Technician, Strephon KC1VZW, and a new Extra, John AC1TL. Be sure to say hello if you hear them on the air.

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

Our next exam session will be on February 13th 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.

--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

The next BARS General Meeting will be held at the Chelmsford Bible Church on March 5th at 7:00 PM. A Zoom link will be sent in the club email feed prior to the meeting for those who would prefer not to attend in person.

Subscribe to the BARS Mailing List

To subscribe to the BARS email list, send a blank email to 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

February Get-on-the-Air Suggestions from Marla Wallace

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>
Feb 1, 0000Z to Feb 2, 2400Z	VT QSO Party http://www.ranv.org/vtqso.html
Feb 1, 1200Z to Feb 2, 1200Z	European Union DX Contest https://www.eudx-contest.com/rules/
Feb 10, 1300Z to Feb 14, 2359Z	ARRL School Club Roundup https://www.arrl.org/school-club-roundup
Feb 15, 0000Z to Feb 16, 2400Z	ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW ** https://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx
Mar 1, 0000Z to Mar 2, 2400Z	ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB ** https://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx

** 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 6th of every
month at 1200 UTC
http://www.skccgroup.com/operating_activities/week_end_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>

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