



PARTicles

The newsletter of PART of Westford, MA – WB1GOF

February 2010

President's Column

By Andy Steward – KB1OIQ

As I celebrate my three year anniversary as a licensed amateur radio operator, I realize how much I have learned. I have met many people and made many new friends. I have found another outlet for my technical curiosity. I have changed and grown in this hobby in that short period of time. There are many people who have helped, and continue to help, as I dive deeper into this hobby. It is a lot of fun, and I am thankful.

In many ways, this is similar to the change and growth that PART has experienced over the last few years. From a core group of about a dozen guys, the club has grown to well over 50 members in just a few years! We are very fortunate to have a thriving club and a robust repeater. A great many people in the club volunteer their time to organize and participate in club events. Our events are successful because of our collective efforts. We should all be thankful.

As we grow, change is inevitable. Some people are not comfortable with change, while others embrace the new opportunities which are made possible by change. As a larger club, we have many resources at our disposal. We have the collective knowledge of the membership, and all of the people that we know. We have financial resources that other clubs do not possess and that we did not have even a couple of years ago. We also have the energy and passion that have gotten us to this point and I'm sure will carry us forward.

I would like to challenge each of you to think of ways that this club can best utilize our resources to the benefit of the membership and the community. We should start thinking more like a bigger club, because, after all, we ARE a bigger club. As one example of moving in this direction, PART is now a premier sponsor of the MassCon QRP Convention which will be hosting about 80 attendees.

While we currently have many events which draw a large number of people, we should not be afraid to invest a few dollars and more energy in bigger and even better club events. We have the resources, the membership deserves it, and we'll all have a lot of fun in the process. Perhaps we should host Skywarn training, have a larger or fancier Field Day, put up a tent at NearFest, or have a presence at Boxboro. We are limited only by our collective imaginations.

That is not to say that every club event should be a grandiose production. Indeed, our smaller events like the K1P special event station offer something that the larger events can't touch. We should strive to find a balance given our financial and human resources.

I look forward to your ideas for future club activities, but even more importantly, if you have the energy to volunteer and help implement one of these ideas, the entire club will be grateful.

Upcoming PART Meetings

February 16, 2010:

- DVD presentation of the DXpedition at Scarborough Reef in 2007

March 16, 2010

- Paul Wade (W1GHZ) will give us a talk about ham radio on the super high GHz frequencies

April - November 2010

- Speakers have not yet been scheduled for these dates

We have a large membership, and I'm sure each of you knows somebody who would be an excellent speaker at a future PART meeting. Perhaps YOU would like the chance to address the club. All of you can help! Please send me email with contact information for prospective speakers, including your self. I'll work out the logistics with the prospective speaker. All of you collectively know a LOT more people than I do. With your help, I'm sure that we'll continue the PART tradition of having fine speakers at our monthly meetings. Thanks, and 73 de Andy KB1OIQ.

Treasurer's Report

PART Treasury between 17-Nov'09 and 29-Jan'10

	General Fund	Repeater Fund	Checking Total
Old Balance	\$2,242.86	\$115.00	\$2,357.86
Income	\$950.26	\$153.00	\$1,103.26
Expenses	\$103.20	\$0.00	\$103.20
New Balance	\$3,089.92	\$268.00	\$3,357.92

PART 2010 Membership Demographics as of 29-Jan'10

	Households (New + Renew)	Individuals (New + Renew)
Full	16 (0 + 16)	16 (0 + 16)
Senior	10 (1 + 9)	10 (1 + 9)
Family	3 (0 + 3)	6 (0 + 6)
Student	0 (0 + 0)	0 (0 + 0)
Associate	0 (0 + 0)	0 (0 + 0)
Grand Total	29 (1 + 28)	32 (1 + 31)

Upcoming Events

- MassCon Mar. 12-13 Westford (<http://www.masscon.org/>)
- NE Division Convention Aug. 27-29, Boxboro, MA (<http://www.boxboro.org>)
- NEAR-Fest Oct. 15-16 Deerfield Fairgrounds, NH (<http://www.near-fest.com>)
- Flea@MIT, 3rd Sun Apr thru Oct, Cambridge (<http://w1mx.mit.edu/flea-at-mit>)

Visit to WTAG on 16 January 2010

A mix of hams, broadcasters (present and former) educators and hobbyists. Met at the WTAG transmitter site in Holden MA on 16 January 2010. The address is 402 Shrewsbury St. Holden, Ma. From I-190 exit 2, west on Arrarat to end, right on Brattle, crossing Doyle, to Shrewsbury St. Right on Shrewsbury about 500 feet to site on left.



Central Massachusetts

K1LJN and AA1VS [N1QGE photo]

This transmitter site was built in 1936 and the towers have been banging out five kilowatts on 580 ever since. Whatever WTAG documents, logs, equipment, photos and so forth I have inherited or came across, have been collected at the site. The materials are not well documented. Sorry I do not have it catalogued with dates or details. John Andrews, former Chief Engineer, agreed to attend. John is a fountain of information about the station and he does know details and dates.



I noticed recent list interest in WTAG TV. The TV applications are all there, I have read them and it's a fascinating political story. In any case, you are welcome to eyeball it all. We'll even spark up the homebrew Tesla coil!



When Central Massachusetts want to know what happening, they turn first to **NewsTalk 580 WTAG**. North of Worcester and just east of I-190, Shrewsbury Street in Holden is home to the towers of the oldest station in Worcester. WTAG stands for "Worcester Telegram and Gazette," and this site was already home to the 5 kilowatt signal on 580 kHz even before World War II.

Plan on some food and drink about lunch time. I'll cover sandwiches, drinks and coffee but I need some idea of how many. If you plan on attending please respond via email. A response is not required but might insure you get a sandwich. If you happen to be around and want to stop by, please do. Looking forward to seeing and meeting you next month.



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WTAG Expands The Radio Dial Thursday, April 17, 2008

Starting today NewsTalk 580 WTAG has started another chapter in our long broadcast history in Central Massachusetts. Listeners can now hear all of WTAG's programming on the FM dial at 94.9. WTAG has acquired the rights to simulcast our programming with FCC approval to help fill in gaps in the AM signal to better serve our listeners and advertisers in our coverage area.



Modern Harris AM
5000 watt Transmitters

Left:
Digital / Primary

Right:
Analog / Back-up

It is extremely exciting to bring WTAG to a new audience on 94.9 FM. For 85 years WTAG has served the communities of Worcester on 580 AM. Adding 94.9 gives us the opportunity

to better serve those communities. WTAG has been the News Talk leader in Worcester County and we look forward to continue to earn that reputation with an additional signal" according to WTAG Vice President and Market Manager Michael Schaus

WTAG Chief Engineer Dan Kelleher adds "Recent changes in FCC Rules now allow AM stations to use FM translators to rebroadcast their signal. WTAG is one of the first groups of stations in the country to use these changes to benefit our listeners.

"WTAG has always been at the forefront of changes in technology over the years. In addition to the AM signal and live streaming on the web, this provides listener's with another option to hear all of their favorite shows no matter where you live" according to WTAG Program Director George Brown.

WTAG has been broadcasting since 1924 and is the home of The WTAG Morning News, Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, Jordan Levy, as well as other local and national radio shows. WTAG also broadcasts Worcester Sharks Hockey, Worcester Tornadoes Baseball and Holy Cross Football and Basketball.

Written by Hugh Maguire-N1QGE

EmComm

RACES – The WB1GOF 146.955 repeater is used on the first Monday of every month (except federal/state holidays) for RACES starting at 1930 local time. If you are interested in being part of the local emergency communications team in your community, feel free to contact any of the following folks:

Terry Stader – KA8SCP, MEMA Region 1 RACES Officer
Hugh Maguire – N1QGE, RACES Officer, Town of Westford

We need radio operators that can pass messages on to the local emergency management directors in several towns in northern Middlesex County.

There is a Region 1 RACES meeting to be held on Saturday, March 20th at the MEMA Region 1 HQ in Tewksbury from 10:00 am to noon. Contact Hugh-N1QGE or Terry-KA8SCP for more information.

Skywarn - The WB1GOF 146.955 repeater is also used for reporting significant weather events to the National Weather Service from our local spotters. We expect to have a local Skywarn training class in 2010, more information as it becomes available. You can provide valuable information even if you have not attended one of the training sessions. Listen to the Skywarn Net Control Station for reporting criteria, when you have information that qualifies, please advise him with your report.

Situational Awareness – Recently, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency has asked the Amateur Radio community to provide situational awareness and disaster intelligence information within your local community via RACES, ARES and/or Skywarn stations. Significant events such as widespread power outages can be reported and by agencies such as MEMA to evaluate the scope of a blackout for example. Initially, you should try and contact RACES or ARES operators on the Westford 146.955 repeater to pass this information. More on this new program will be forthcoming.