



PARTicles

The newsletter of PART of Westford, MA – WB1GOF

March 2010

President's Column

March 2010

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Finally, it looks like we're starting to see some nicer weather! After losing power for 19 hours during the last storm, personally I'm happy to see the arrival of spring. It was great to see the spirit of generosity as fellow hams offered to help each other during and shortly after the storm.



Of course, the arrival of spring means that it is time for antenna maintenance. Unfortunately, some people suffered damage to their antennas during the winter. We know that all antennas are temporary in New England due to the weather. Be sure to get out there this spring and check your antenna(s) for signs of wear. Grab a fellow ham - I'm sure they'd be happy to help. Be safe in the process. Beware of power lines and don't do things beyond your ability. If you fix something, be sure to "fix it right". For examples of how NOT to fix things, check out this amusing website:
<http://www.thereifixedit.com>.

The arrival of spring also means that attendance will probably be higher at our monthly group meetings. The last two meetings were not as well attended, largely due to the snow storms that occurred on those two occasions. Despite the weather, about 15 people attended the February PART meeting. Our speaker was John Garrett (W9NT), and he discussed issues with RF interference in homes. There was lively audience participation, and I think everybody

had a good time. The speaker for our March PART meeting will be Paul Wade (W1GHZ), and he will talk about ham radio on the GHz frequencies.

PART is a premier sponsor of MassCon, the Massachusetts QRP convention, which will be held on March 12th and 13th, 2010, at the Westford Regency. The event is sold out(!). Scott (NE1RD) has worked really hard, along with others, to pull together what promises to be a great event.

Our monthly group breakfast was held on Saturday, March 6th, 2010. There were about 30 people in attendance - a great turnout! As always, Bob (N1RXV) did an excellent job of photographing the event (thanks, Bob!). Bob's photos can be seen on the PART website.

The K1P special event station will once again be operating over Patriots' Day weekend, April 17th and 18th, 2010. More details to follow.

Although it may seem early, Field Day is approaching. If you are interested in being the Field Day chairman, please contact me. This is the largest event sponsored by PART and there is always a lot of group participation. I'd like to have the field day chairman identified by April 15th. This event presents many opportunities for group members: a) helping to run the event, b) elmering opportunities, c) operating in bands or modes that you may not have at home.

73 de Andy KB1OIQ

Upcoming PART Meetings

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 19-Jan'1- and 16-Feb'10

	General Fund	Repeater Fund	Checking Total
Old Balance	\$2760.56	\$146.00	\$2,906.56
Income	\$483.63	\$122.00	\$605.63
Expenses	\$59.40	\$0.00	\$59.40
New Balance	\$3,184.79	\$268.00	\$3,452.79

PART 2010 Membership Demographics as of 5-Mar'10

	Households (New + Renew)	Individuals (New + Renew)
Full	20 (0 + 20)	20 (0 + 20)
Senior	15 (2 + 13)	15 (2 + 13)
Family	6 (0 + 6)	12 (0 + 12)
Student	0 (0 + 0)	0 (0 + 0)
Associate	0 (0 + 0)	0 (0 + 0)
Grand Total	42 (0 + 1)	48 (2 + 46)

Upcoming Events

- MassCon Mar. 12-13 Westford (<http://www.masscon.org/>) Framingham
- Framingham ARA Flea Apr 11 Keefe Vo Tech (<http://fara.org>)
- Spring NEAR-Fest Apr. 30th & May 1st Deerfield Fairgrounds, NH (<http://www.near-fest.com>)
- Flea@MIT, 3rd Sun Apr thru Oct, Cambridge (<http://w1mx.mit.edu/flea-at-mit>)
- Dayton Hamvention May 14-16, Dayton, OH (<http://www.hamvention.org>)
- Apple Blossom Parade May 15, Westford, MA – need hams for parade coordination. Contact Terry-KA8SCP
- Field Day June 26-27
- NE Division Convention Aug. 27-29, Boxboro, MA (<http://www.boxboro.org>)
- Fall NEAR-Fest Oct. 15th & 16th Deerfield Fairgrounds, NH (<http://www.near-fest.com>)

News from the net

D-STAR Info Newsletter

Posted by: "Woodrick, Ed" ewoodrick@ed-com.com

Tue Feb 16, 2010 7:52 pm (PST)

Something new has just been introduced into the world of D-STAR. The DV Access Point Dongle, released in January by Internet Labs, provides a way to connect to the International D-STAR Network. Like their current product, the DV Dongle, the DV Access Point Dongle (DVAP) for short is used with.... (Continued in the DSTARInfo Newsletter)

- D-STAR Net Listing
- D-STAR Reflector Listing
- PAPA's D-STAR of Southern California
- Calhoun County uses D-STAR
- D-STAR Tweets
- GB7MH and MB6AM, what's so different about these systems?

Check out these articles and more in this edition of the D-STAR Info Newsletter.

<http://www.dstarinfo.com/Newsletter/default.html>

6 Meter Dipole Project

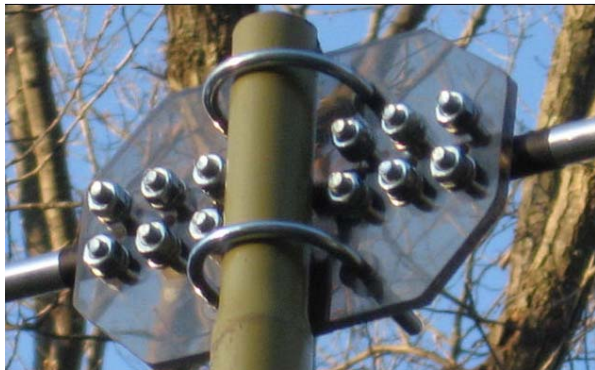
By Steve Rimsa – WA1KBE

6 Meter Dipole Assembly Instructions

- Fabricate center insulator from template using Lexan plate - do not substitute acrylic (plexiglass) as it will break! Cut out template and center it on the Lexan plate - affix it with tape.
- Center punch hole centers with a nail to mark hole centers. Do the 4 small U bolts and the 2 big U bolts (Template is for U bolts with 2" leg center to leg center -use correct dimension for your U bolts!!!)
- Drill out holes to fit U bolts comfortably - use a sharp drill bit - start out small and gradually enlarge the holes. Bolts should have some wiggle room!
- De burr drilled holes - a sharp pocket knife works well
- Peel protective paper off of both sides of the Lexan sheet
- Assemble the 4 small U bolts with lock washer, flat washer and a nut - loosely secure
- Slide 3/8" aluminum tube into 1/2" aluminum tubing slotted end. Put end caps on 3/8" tubes if purchased - slide the ends of the 1/2" tubes with out slits under the small U Bolts.
- Loosely secure the 1/2" tubing to the 3/8" tubing with hose clamps - adjust to 56". Place the hose clamp over the middle of the slit in the 1/2" tube and tighten slightly
- Hand tighten the small U bolts while maintaining 1/2" between the ends of the 1/2" tubing - center the 1/2" gap on the Lexan plate. Secure the nuts one wrench turn beyond hand tight. You can bend the Lexan if you over tighten the screws!!! Do not wipe the Lexan insulator with any type of chemical solvent! It will be destroyed!!!
- Drill a small hole 1/4 in from the end of 1/2" tubes. This is where you will attach the feed line. Select a drill slightly smaller in OD than the screw you are using.

- Prepare a short 50 ohm coax pigtail. I used RG-8X with a BNC connector. A one foot length is sufficient. Strip insulation on one end 3/4" and attach #8 ring lugs, crimp and solder. Slide 3 ferrite snap on chokes onto the pig tail. Attach a coax connector of your choice to the other end. Center the ferrite chokes on the pigtail and wrap them with rubber splicing compound to waterproof. You must peel off the backing and stretch the rubber tape to activate it. Wrap it tightly while keeping the tape stretched. The tape will fuse together giving a great seal! Over wrap with good electrical tape (Scotch 33) or apply liquid electrical tape liberally. This protects the rubber compound from UV damage.
- Attach pigtail to aluminum tubes with self tapping sheet metal screws and lock washers. I used #8 hex head by 3/8" stainless screws and lock washers, Tighten the connection securely but be careful not to strip out the screw! Coat the connection liberally with liquid electrical tape
- Mount the antenna on a mast away from adjacent objects. The SWR with a MFJ antenna analyzer should be under 1.3 to 1 at 50.200 MHz. Adjust element lengths by sliding 3/8" tube in and out of the 1/2" tube. It is important that the elements be the same length! Measure carefully. Over all length = $468/f$ in MHz. - about 56" for each dipole element is correct.
- Mount high and in the clear. A rotator would be a real plus!- use a dual female adapter to attach your feedline - don't forget to tape the connection up!

ENJOY YOUR NEW ANTENNA!!



Member Contributions

W1IS activity from FL - Robert Glorioso

We are staying in our Condo at Riviera Beach, FL for a month and I am having great fun with the band openings. The rig is an IC 706MKIIG that I have to run at 5 watts on the low bands for several reasons not least is the marginal antenna that I have. I found out that I could load up the down spout that runs outside our condo window using the window frame as the counterpoise on 80-10M with my MFJ Travel Tuner. I use a Buddipole on 6M as shown in the attached photo and have worked west to Houston and East to Puerto Rico with it and about 10 watts. With 15M and 17M open I have managed to work some great DX including Moldova, Japan, Hungary, Netherlands, Ukraine, Kure Island, Canary Isles, and France. See you all at the QRP Convention in March.



80-10m Antenna



High Power Antenna Connection



Operators Position and 6-2m Antenna

Editor's Note: I know what these pictures are missing... SNOW! Nice station Bob! ;) We're jealous.

Algonquin Flea Market

By Andy Stewart – KB1OIQ
13-Feb-2010

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I attended the Algonquin Amateur Radio Club's annual flea market at the Marlboro Middle School on 13-feb-2010. I hitched a ride with Bo (WA1QYM) and my daughter Kimberly (KB1PZG) joined us. Several club members were seen at the flea market, including Allison (KB1GMX) and Evelyn, Chauncey (K1OPE), Jim (K1VNV), Charlie (K1PUB), and Scott (NE1RD). Scott worked as a volunteer examiner at the event.

The two cafeterias were full of ham related items, including the usual assortment of old books, study guides, tubes, meters, oscilloscopes, and a few used laptops. There were a couple of

Kenwood HF rigs from the 1980s, a big Heathkit antenna tuner with a roller inductor, and an old Zenith multiband shortwave radio, noteworthy because of its physical size and large telescopic whip antenna. If you wanted a small flashlight or some bright LED lights, one guy had a table full of them.

I picked up some new coax cable, a barrel connector, and a 2-position antenna switch. That's about all that I needed. Kimberly found an RF wireless keyboard for a buck. We're still trying to make it work with her laptop.

It strikes me that the social aspect is as much, if not more, of a draw than the items for sale. It was common to see hams standing around talking with others, sharing a coffee, hot dog, and ham radio stories. We weren't there for 10 minutes before Bo ran into an old friend with whom he chatted for probably 15-30 minutes. Not that I should throw stones, since Allison and I were equally guilty when we ran into each other. Kimberly was quite patient with us.

Bruce from the Minuteman Repeater Association tried his best Ernie Boch Jr. imitation to sell me a "real analog meter". I suggested he put a DAC on it and make it a digital meter. That stopped him right in the middle of his (pretty good) sales pitch - I don't think he heard that one. Sometimes it's fun messing with the salesmen. Bruce said that they were doing pretty well raising money for their repeater fund.

Afterwards, Bo, Kimberly, and I enjoyed lunch at the nearby Piccadilly Pub, and then went home. I got out without spending too much money and still had a great time.

73 de Andy KB1OIQ

Repeater Nets

146.955 Nets – There are a number of nets that are regularly scheduled on the 955 repeater.

Sunday Night PART Net – every Sunday night at 2000/8:00 PM

Sector 1C RACES Net – this net occurs the 1st Monday of every month (except when it is a holiday).

Skywarn and ARES Nets – these nets are spontaneous when local conditions warrant

**Next PART meeting is March 16 at the
Westford Police station. Guest speaker is
Paul Wade – W1GHZ**

PART Board Meeting

Notes from the PART BOD meeting on 1/13/2010

The following people attended the meeting held at Clarkes Pub in the Westford Regency:

Andy, KB1OIQ - Rich, AB1HD - Alan, W1AHM - Dave, WI1R - Ernie, N1AEW - Rick, W1RAG - Terry, KA8SCP - Bo, WA1QYM and Hugh, N1QGE

- Andy thanked Terry for organizing and running up the PART Christmas party
- Hugh, N1QGE will be the PART 2010 Christmas party chairman. He has looked to alternatives to the Yangtze River, such as Bamboo, would cost about \$10 more per son (\$30 each). He will also look into other restaurants, such as the Princeton Station as suggested by Andy.
- Andy stated that we need to do a minor update to the PART bylaws. Terry stated he had done some and will e-mail a copy to the board
- Alan gave a Treasurers' report
- Andy sent around a mock budget for 2010 to show that we should have about \$2500-\$3000 by August 2010. He asked for ideas on if we should use this money and if so, How?
- For MassCon, we had a motion and voted to have the club donate an Elecraft KX1 as a raffle prize
- Alan stated that he got the needed form from the Town of Westford for a raffle
- We had a motion that we be legal with the raffle and all approved that Alan go forward with the paperwork
- Andy asked if he has the authority as President to donate money to the charity of a club member who has become a Silent Key
- A motion was brought to the floor to allow the President of the club to have the authority to have no more than four incidental expenses not to exceed \$100 per incident for the year. All attending officers approved this motion, but Andy did not vote due to conflict of interest.
- Ernie talked about the possibility of getting an additional repeater for the water tower and to revise the rack for growth. He is looking into getting another 2m digital only repeater/frequency.
- Ernie has seen a D-Star system without any Icom equipment
- Ernie mentioned the possibility of getting a 900MHz repeater at the Highway garage
- Ernie is looking into the possibility of getting the water tower upgraded to DSL for internet/VOIP in place of the land line.
- Terry talked about the current interference on the repeater
- Terry went to the ARRL New England Division Cabinet meeting and asked for help regarding our interference issues on the repeater. We may get some equipment and help from other area clubs
- Hugh spoke about his idea of PART being involved with a new Food Pantry planned at the Westford Senior center. He was seeking input from the board to see if PART should have this as the clubs main charity. He asked for and ideas or comments to be sent to him.

Please help us keep PARTicles exciting and fresh. Send any photos or stories of your projects or activities to Terry – KA8SCP (KA8SCP at WB1GOF.org)

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

Bill Ohm – W1OHM, RACES Officer, Town of Chelmsford

- 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.

PART Sunday Night Net – The PART Net each Sunday night is an IMPORTANT part of our regional EmComm function. With each station that checks in from the surrounding communities, we test our ability to communicate vital information to the ham radio community. Sure we announce club info but we can also communicate regional disaster news and serve as a “hub” for news of situations in our communities. The repeater is on a generator, so even if we loose power in the region, an ht with a supply of batteries will reconnect you to other local hams.



**Field Day
June 26-27 2010**

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PART official mailing address is:
PART, PO Box 503, Westford, MA 01886

Our website is: <http://wb1gof.org>
Contact us at: info@wb1gof.org

