



PARTicles

The newsletter of PART of Westford, MA – WB1GOF

March 2011

President's Column

This is the time of year where a lot is happening in our hobby. At the Algonquin club's flea market in February, I went with Geoffrey (KB1USE) and Bo (WA1QYM) and had a great time. I purchased a HiMound BK-100 bug for use as a CW input device. After spending an hour or so getting familiar with it and adjusting it, I started sending code to the computer. I figured that if the computer could decode my ramblings, they must be OK. After a few hours of practice, I got on the air with the bug and much to my pleasure, made many contacts and was told several times that "we didn't even know you were using a bug(!)".



My Elecraft K1, which I built in December 2010, has unfortunately malfunctioned again. The first time was apparently caused by a couple of bad solder joints which Scott (NE1RD) helped me to find. This time, armed with debug advice from Elecraft, Steve (WA1KBE) and I isolated the problem to a bum crystal. Thanks, guys, for all of your help! I am awaiting the delivery of a replacement crystal and am hopeful that this rig will be on the air in 100% tip top operating condition shortly. This is a *fun* rig to build and use!

Geoffrey (KB1USE) is looking for his own straight key. He likes my keys but wants one of his own. I plan to be on the lookout at the FARA flea market in Framingham, which will be held on Sunday, April 3rd, and also at NearFest, which is scheduled for Friday, April 29th, 2011, and Saturday, April 30th, 2011. I

expect that I will see many of you at these events.

Closer to home, we have many club events on the horizon. The K1P special event station is planned for Patriots' Day weekend, Saturday, April 16th and Sunday, April 17th. As of yet, we don't have a specific location planned for this event. We typically run one phone station and attract a small handful of operators. Stay tuned for more information about this special event.

Also on the horizon is the Westford Apple Blossom parade on Saturday, May 14th. We are looking for a person who would like to be the leader of this event. If you are interested, please contact me.

Our biggest club event of the year, Field Day, will be upon us before we know it. We are currently evaluating potential Field Day sites. I am looking for a Field Day chairman and this role needs to be filled very soon. I am also looking for a couple of assistants to help the Field Day chairman. Volunteers are most welcome, otherwise, I'll have to twist some arms!

Finally, the guest speaker for our March 2011 PART meeting will be Donna Halper. She will be discussing the role of amateur radio operators during the dawn of broadcast radio in the Boston area. Her discussion will be supplemented with pictures and memorabilia from that era. In lieu of a speaker's fee, Donna has requested that individuals consider making a donation to a local food pantry. Come early and get a good seat! This promises to be a great meeting!

73 de Andy KB1OIQ

Upcoming PART Meetings/Events

Mar. 12, 2011

- PART BoD meeting

Mar. 15, 2011

- Mar. club meeting night. Donna Halper (formerly W1KBN) is our guest speaker. Club dues were due in January

Apr. 2, 2011

- PART monthly breakfast. Westford Regency. 8-10 AM (\$14 & &7)

Treasurer's Report

PART Treasury 17-Nov-10 thru 15 Feb-11

	General Fund	Repeater Fund	Checking Total
Old Balance	2681.42	396.04	3077.46
Income	1475.29	396.04	1846.96
Expenses	944.49	0.00	944.49
New Balance	<u>3212.22</u>	<u>767.71</u>	<u>3979.93</u>

PART Membership Demographics as of 6-Feb-11

	Households (New + Renew)	Individuals (New + Renew)
Full (\$25)	25 (5 + 20)	25 (5 + 20)
Senior (\$15)	18 (1 + 17)	18 (1 + 17)
Family (\$30)	5 (0 + 5)	11 (0 + 11)
Student (\$15)	0 (0 + 1)	0 (0 + 0)
Associate (\$10)	0 (0 + 0)	0 (0 + 0)
Grand Total	48 (6 + 42)	54 (6 + 48)

***** Dues are due *****

PART, P.O. Box 503, Westford, MA 01886-0015

-or-

Meeting, Westford P.D., 7:30PM, Tuesday, 15-Mar. '11

Latest new members

Robert/W1RJF (Cambridge, MA)

Ron/KJ4UUG (Chelmsford, MA)

Bob/KB1SWZ (Concord, MA)

Fred/AB1OC (Hollis, NH)

Lawton/KB1UUZ (Acton, MA)

Upcoming Events

- Apr. 3, 2011 FARA/Framingham Flea (<http://www.fara.org/flea/>)
- Apr. 10, 2011 Groton Road Race (contact kd1sm@arrl.net)
- Apr. 17 – 1st of the season MIT Flea (<http://w1mx.mit.edu/flea-at-mit>)
- Apr. 18th Boston Marathon (<http://marc.mmra.org>)
- Apr. 29 & 30, 2011 NEAR-Fest Deerfield Fairgrounds, NH (<http://www.near-fest.com>)
- Dayton Hamvention, Dayton, OH May 20-22 (<http://www.hamvention.org/>)
- Field Day June 25/26 (<http://www.arrl.org/field-day>)
- Every Wednesday, 6 AM, Owl Diner Lowell – Breakfast
- Every 1st Saturday, 8 AM, Regency Inn Westford – PART Monthly Breakfast

Monthly PART Breakfast

Don't forget the monthly PART breakfast the 1st Saturday of each month at the Westford Regency Inn at 8 AM. The full hot & cold buffet breakfast costs about \$14 (includes tip) per person, a cheaper, lighter fare is available for adults and children. **NOTE: PLEASE let the folks who are settling the bill with the staff know whether you had a full or continental breakfast!**

Repeater Nets

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

- Sunday night at 2000/8:00 PM Sunday Night PART Net – every
- Sector 1C RACES Net – this net occurs the 1st Monday or every month (except when it is a holiday). Skywarn and ARES Nets – these nets are spontaneous when local conditions warranted.

442.450 D-Star Nets – There are a number of nets that are regularly scheduled.

- Sunday 8:00 PM [Ozark Mtn D-STAR Net](#) – Reflector 001C
- Tuesday 8:00 PM [New England Amateur D-STAR Net](#) – Reflector 010C

Monthly PART Meeting

At the March 2011 PART meeting, our speaker will be media historian and author Donna Halper (formerly W1KBN). Donna will bring old magazines and rare memorabilia to the meeting as she discusses the role of amateur radio operators in the early days of commercial broadcasting in the Boston area.

Most people don't realize that commercial radio in Massachusetts was created by the amateurs. They also don't realize that until 1922 many of the voices heard on the air were amateurs(!).

Donna is the author of a book entitled "Boston Radio 1920 - 2010", and she will be happy to autograph your copy of the book at the meeting.

In lieu of a speaker's fee, Donna has requested that we, as individuals, consider making a donation to a local food pantry such as the Merrimack Valley Food Bank (<http://www.mvfb.org>).

I look forward to seeing all of you at the meeting! – 73-Andy, KB1OIQ

Radio Awards and Accomplishments

By Andy Stewart – KB1OIQ

- Andy (KB1OIQ) set a personal record with a QRP 1.5 watt CW QSO with F6HKA in France on 17m, receiving a 549 signal report, which is 2315 miles / watt.

Did you make a contact to a new country? Did you make more contacts in some contest than ever before? Maybe you had an interesting conversation with a fellow ham in a far away place? Whatever it is, send it to me, and we can let the club know who is doing what. This is your chance to brag a little bit about the fun that you are having. Remember...fun is contagious!

Public Service Events



Groton Road Race – April 10th

The Groton Road Race is nearing its 20th year. It brings about a thousand runners to the town of Groton on a Sunday afternoon in April. There are two events; a 5k race and a 10k race. Both depend on Amateur Radio to provide logistics and safety communications. The Squannacook River Runners -- the event organizers -- have turned to Amateur Radio since the second year of the event.

The Groton Police Chiefs have said over and over again that the Amateur Radio operators are critical to their ability to handle this large event.

In previous years the Groton Road Race has been at the end of April. This year due to the Easter holiday the Race is being held earlier in the month.

Please talk with Ralph KD1SM and hold Sunday April 10 in your calendars. This is one of the premier events at which we show to the community the value of our skills, our licenses, and the precious radio spectrum that is made available to us. There is no better feeling that to receive some of the many expressions of thanks from a runner as they pass your station.



Apple Blossom Parade – May 14th

The Westford Kiwanis will Sponsor the 43rd annual Apple Blossom Festival the week of May 11-15 2011 with the parade and crowning of this year's Apple Blossom Queen on Saturday May 14th 2011. We cordially invite PART to participate in the parade and festivities. Individuals and Organizations should gather between 8:00 - 8:30 AM Sat. May 14th. The Parade will kick off at 10:00 AM sharp rain or shine.

PART has supported this event for a number of years by assisting with parade route staffing at key locations for safety and operational services to the Kiwanis. Please consider volunteering this year for the event. Contact Terry-KA8SCP (ka8scp@wb1gof.org) if you'd like to volunteer or learn more about the parade activities.

ARRL News

[Middle School Students to Launch Near-Space Balloon](#)

March 08, 2011

A group of students from Olde Towne Middle School (OTMS) in Ridgeland, Mississippi is preparing for a trip to space -- or as close as they can get. The OTMS Radio and Technology Club, along with the school's Science Team, are planning a near-space balloon launch at 9 AM (CDT) on March 26 (the date and time are subject to change depending on weather). The balloon -- nicknamed Titans in Space -- ...

[New QuickStats Poll Now Available on ARRL Website](#)

March 08, 2011

Four new poll questions have just been published on the QuickStats page on the ARRL website. Let your voice be heard!

Questions in this month's QuickStats poll include:

- How did you sign up for ARES®?
- When was the last time you built a transceiver from a kit?
- Are your station antennas supported by a tower?
- Do you regularly operate HF mobile?

Visit the QuickStats page and be sure to bookmark it in y...

[The K7RA Solar Update](#)

March 05, 2011

Solar activity is rising again, but the average sunspot numbers and solar flux are down, compared with last week. This week, the average daily sunspot number declined more than 14 points to 50.9, and the average daily solar flux was off 7 points to 96.8. The average daily planetary A index rose from 6.1 to 9, and the average mid-latitude A index was about the same, declining from 5.4 to 5.1. Su...

[FCC Adopts Spread Spectrum Rules Changes](#)

March 04, 2011

In a *Report and Order* adopted February 22 and released March 4, 2011, the Federal Communications Commission has eliminated the requirement that amateur stations transmitting Spread Spectrum use Automatic Power Control (APC) to reduce transmitter power. At the same time, the Commission has reduced the maximum power of a Spread Spectrum emission from 100 to 10 W PEP.

The *R&O* explains the Commissio...

[Respected Journal Publishes Explanation for Low Sunspots](#)

March 04, 2011

An article in the March 3 issue of the journal *Nature* purports to explain the extended sunspot minimum from 2008-2010. According to one of the authors, Piet Martens, the last time a sunspot minimum lasted twice as long as usual was around 1913 and before that, 1810. Although solar activity has increased recently, scientists have been puzzled by the recent lack of sunspots. This quiet period had...

[Surfin': See Spot Sun](#)

March 04, 2011

By Stan Horzepa, WA1LOU
Contributing Editor

This week, Surfin' now knows why there was a dearth of sunspots for two years.

Based on a new computer model of the Sun's interior, scientists have concluded that "plasma currents deep inside the Sun interfered with the formation of sunspots and prolonged solar minimum."

The March 3 edition of *Nature* expands on the conclusions, while the NASA website p...

[ARRL Members Respond to HR 607](#)

March 02, 2011

Last month, a bill was introduced in the US House of Representatives that addresses certain spectrum management issues, including the creation and maintenance of a nationwide Public Safety broadband network. This bill -- HR 607, known as *The Broadband for First Responders Act of 2011* -- if passed, also calls to auction off parts of the 70 cm band, namely 420-440 and 450-470 MHz. As such, the AR...

[ARRL in Action: What Have We Been Up to Lately?](#)

March 01, 2011

Compiled by S. Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA
ARRL News Editor
k1sfa@arrl.org

This feature -- including convenient Web links to useful information -- is a concise monthly update of some of the things ARRL is doing on behalf of its members. This installment covers the month of February.

The ARRL asked its members to write letters in opposition to HR 607, a bill introduced in Congress that if passed, would a...

[Lou Burke, W7JI, Wins February QST Cover Plaque Award](#)

March 01, 2011

The winner of the *QST* Cover Plaque Award for February is Lou Burke, W7JI, for his article "A Compact 40 Meter Receiver." *Congratulations Lou!* The *QST* Cover Plaque award -- given to the author or authors of the best article in each issue -- is determined by a vote of ARRL members on the *QST* Cover Plaque Poll Web page. Cast a ballot for your favorite article in the March issue today.

[Former Atlantic Division Assistant Director Eugene Pressler, W3ZXV \(SK\)](#)

February 28, 2011

Eugene "Gene" Pressler, W3ZXV, of Gwynedd, Pennsylvania, passed away February 22. He was 80. Pressler, who served as an Assistant Director in the ARRL Atlantic Division, also served as the Public Information Coordinator and Assistant Section Manager for Eastern Pennsylvania, as well as the Division's representative on the Public Relations Advisory Committee for several years.

In 1996, Pressler w...

[The K7RA Solar Update](#)

February 25, 2011

The average solar flux was nearly unchanged this week, up just 0.3 point to 103.8, while the average daily sunspot number was down 4.9 points to 65. Sunspot groups 1161 and 1162 -- which brought so much activity last week -- have now rotated across our Sun's western horizon, but new sunspot group 1163 has now emerged over the eastern limb. Sunspot numbers for February 17-23 were 51, 101, 79, 10...

[No HF Frequencies Being Used in New Zealand Earthquake Operations](#)

February 25, 2011

The ARRL has just received word from the New Zealand Association of Radio Transmitters (NZART) -- that country's IARU Member-Society -- that amateurs there providing communications support in the aftermath of the 6.3 earthquake are using 2 meters (144 MHz). No HF frequencies are being used. If this changes, the information will be posted on the ARRL website.

[Surfin': Field Day Planning](#)

February 25, 2011

By Stan Horzepa, WA1LOU
Contributing Editor

This week, Surfin' considers potential new tools for Field Day operators.

ARRL Field Day is four months away, but it is not too early to start planning for the big ham radio event. In fact, James Whitfield, N5GUI, has started planning and would like some help developing a tool that would enhance Field Day operations. I will let James tell you what he ha...

[Amateur MF Allocation Moves a Step Closer](#)

February 24, 2011

Amateur Radio has moved a step closer to a medium frequency (MF) allocation below the AM broadcast band. During the first week of the Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM) for the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-12) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), held in Geneva February 14-25, delegates completed the drafting of nine pages of analysis of the technical and regul...

[New Zealand Amateurs Assist in Earthquake's Aftermath](#)

February 24, 2011

A 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck the Canterbury region in New Zealand's South Island on Tuesday, February 22 at 12:51 PM local time (2351 on February 21 UTC). According to IARU Region 3 Disaster Communications Committee Chairman Jim Linton, VK3PC, 10 radio amateurs are using their two emergency broadcast vans to keep rescue teams and Civil Defense staff in touch. One is at a major welfare cent...

Repeater Information

Repeater Interference

The 146.955 repeater continues to see interference to existing conversations as well as at random quiet times throughout the day and night. The repeater interference committee needs your help in collecting data. If you hear any type of interference, please report the following info to "**repeater**" at "**wb1gof.org**":

- Time: When did the event happen?
- Observing location: Where were you? Were you mobile?
- Frequency: Input only (146.355 MHz)
- What you heard: Voices, tones, kerchunking or whatever.
- Signal strength: Either by ear (noisy, quiet or full quiet) or S meter
- Radio: To get an idea of the reporter's radio situation.

* Most important - what direction: How did you determine direction? This is the most essential piece of information. Even if it's an estimate as in "Roughly east" or "from the Northeast" it's useful. NEVER EVER reply or direct any thing to the sick person causing the interference. Because some of us have answered this person, he knows we are aware of him and that is what keeps him doing it. Also since you are communicating with a non IDing station you are operating just as illegally as he is. YOU ARE BROADCASTING! NEVER TALK ABOUT INTERFERENCE on air. NEVER

If you are interested in assisting in helping us identify the sources of interference, contact Terry-KA8SCP.

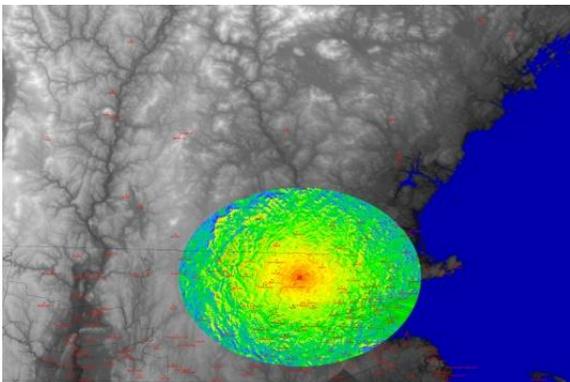
EmComm events and repeater use

Most everyone knows that the 146.955 repeater is used during times of emergency situations, drills and exercises. Skywarn and the monthly RACES drills are the normal events.

So what does this mean to those that are just looking for regular QSOs with other users? It means that if you are in a regular QSO and there is a significant weather situation that has been getting press/air-time lately, you can expect that if severe weather develops in our area, the folks from Taunton-WX1BOX may interrupt a QSO and ask anyone on frequency what may be happening weather wise. The BOX operator will probably ask for specific information, hail, wind damage, property damage from lightning or wind, etc. Please give him the information he needs or tell him that you've not heard of any such activity. You don't need to tell him it is sunny in Nashua!

There may come a time when an unexpected emergency situation arises. These will significant events that may affect life and property. This is where ARES/RACES activity may step in. Usually an NCS will interrupt a QSO and announce the situation and ask for a QSO to cease or to be "aware" of the possibility of priority calls/traffic. Please make sure you leave breaks between transmissions so stations with traffic can get in between QSOs. If there is enough traffic, it may be necessary for your existing/interrupted QSO QSY to another frequency. You should use your best judgment or check with the NCS on what he feels is best.

If you have any questions, please feel free to correspond with either Hugh-N1QGE (Westford RACES Officer and Skywarn NCS) or Terry-KA8SCP (regional RACES Officer and Skywarn NCS) . They will be more than happy to talk about these programs with you.



New additional repeater info is now available on the PART [website](#). Check out the links to the summit information as well as coverage and plot plans maps for the WB1GOF repeaters. Also our PART/WB1GOF Forums are found at <http://wb1gof.net/forum/>

PART Gear

The PART Quartermaster has lots of great PART-ware for sale including hats, mugs, and shirts. You can get information how you can obtain your PART-ware at the monthly club meetings.

Club members are also encouraged to obtain an official PART badge from [The Sign Man](http://thesignman.com/clubs/part.html) (<http://thesignman.com/clubs/part.html>) PLEASE NOTE: There is a new PART badge available if you'd like to order one. Price for badge is \$15 which includes shipping and handling.



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.

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.



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This month's editor: Terry Stader – KA8SCP

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