



PARTicles

The newsletter of PART of Westford, MA – WB1GOF

O c t o b e r 2 0 1 0

President's Column

I had the occasion to try Echolink while on a business trip in California last week. As you may know, Echolink is a technology which makes part of the communication path by radio, and part of it by the internet. Only licensed amateurs can use the Echolink software. It is available for Windoze and Linux. We have Echolink available on the 146.955 MHz WB1GOF repeater.

I took the liberty of installing the software on my employer's laptop which is running Windoze XP. (My Linux laptop was left home for this trip, but the Linux version of the software works equally well). I donned a pair of really cheap headphones with a boom mike and tried to contact the test server to no avail. It turns out that the wireless access points in the hotel were blocking the connection. Once I used an Ethernet cable for a direct connection, it worked quite well, and I got my volume settings properly adjusted.

I then connected to the WB1GOF repeater, only to remember that there is a 3 hour time difference. Pete (KB1OCF) was still awake at midnight local time and we had a nice QSO.

My son Geoffrey (KB1USE) and I setup a sked to chat on the repeater with me using Echolink. I woke up at 4 AM PDT (1100 UTC) and chatted with him while he got to use his HT at the breakfast table. We did this twice during the week and it worked very well both times. He was quite excited to hear me!

On another occasion, I took part in the chats with the morning commuters, and enjoyed chatting with Steve (WA1KBE) and John (W1JMA). Phil (K9HI) contacted me via Echolink as well.

If you haven't tried Echolink, you might consider it. It is pretty easy to setup from your computer. All you need is the software, an internet connection, and a microphone or headset, and you should be in business.

Many thanks to Terry for setting up and maintaining Echolink on the repeater!

73 de Andy KB1OIQ

**Club Meeting – October 19th – Westford Police station – Public Meeting Room
53 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886
7:30 PM**

Upcoming PART Meetings/Events

Oct. 19, 2010

- John Beanland-G3BVU, antennae

Oct. 31, 2010

- PART Pumpkin Patrol – contact Terry-KA8SCP if you'd like to assist

Balance of 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 17-Aug-10 thru 20-Sep-10

	General Fund	Repeater Fund	Checking Total	
Old Balance	2800.56	1130.99		3931.55
Income	5.00	587.00		592.00
Expenses	301.77	0.00		301.77
New Balance	2503.79	1717.99		4221.78

PART Membership Demographics as of 11-Oct-10

	Households (New + Renew)	Individuals (New + Renew)
Full	36 (9 + 27)	36 (9 + 27)
Senior	23 (3 + 20)	23 (3 + 20)
Family	7 (0 + 7)	15 (1 + 14)
Student	0 (0 + 0)	0 (0 + 0)
Associate	1 (0 + 1)	1 (0 + 1)
Grand Total	67 (12 + 55)	75 (13 + 62)

Upcoming Events

- Flea@MIT, 3rd Sun Apr thru Oct, Cambridge (<http://w1mx.mit.edu/flea-at-mit>)
- Fall NEAR-Fest Oct. 15th & 16th Deerfield Fairgrounds, NH (<http://www.near-fest.com>)
- School Club Roundup Contest - October 18 – 22 (<http://www.arrl.org/school-club-roundup-1>)
- Every Wednesday, 6 AM, Owl Diner Lowell – Breakfast
- Every 1st Saturday, 8 AM, Regency Inn Westford – PART Monthly Breakfast

Extra Class "Crash" Course Offered By Framingham ARA

The [Framingham Amateur Radio Association](http://www.framinghamara.org) is offering a "crash course" for those who would like to upgrade to Amateur Extra class. The course is free and open to everyone, not just FARA members. The dates are the following Saturdays: October 23, October 30, and November 6 and take place at the FARA shack from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. For further information, email Ed Weiss, W1NXC at EdAWeiss at cs dot com or call Ed at 508-881-2301.



Local Amateur Radio News

Pumpkin Patrol

As we have done for many years, PART will once again be providing the Pumpkin Patrol service to the Town of Westford. Many of you are veterans and others may be volunteering for the first time... which ever you are... thank you in advance for your help!



Pumpkin Patrol involves the use of Amateur Radio volunteers providing additional eyes and ears to the Town of Westford during the annual Trick or Treat event. Our purpose is to observe and report any potential safety concerns back to the PART Pumpkin Patrol Net Control Station which will be located at the Westford Police station. A report from one of our patrols will get handed off to the Westford PD dispatcher and addressed by the Town's public safety services. Our role is **ONLY** to report what we see and provide input to our Town's public safety departments.

We normally require 5 - 8 radio operators per "shift" that will patrol various geographical sections of town. Maps and a checklist of locations to watch will be provided when you check-in for your assignment. Check-in occurs at the Westford Police station where we record your call sign and your vehicle information. You do **NOT** need to be a resident of the Town of Westford to volunteer, but a basic familiarity to the town's geography is a plus!

We have quite a few new hams and club members this year. If warranted, a meeting prior to the event may be scheduled. This will give our new folks and veterans a chance to interact and become comfortable with the operation.

The normal time for Trick or Treaters' is 6 PM until 8 PM. Our activities have varied over the years, but we normally will run the operation from 5:30 PM until 10:00 - 11:00 PM. If the weather is lousy, the net closure time will be adjusted accordingly. We try and accommodate every individual's schedule, we have run with 2 shifts in the past... an early and a late shift. We will accept your offer to assist at any time throughout the course of the evening.

The plans are to use the WB1GOF 2 meter repeater, 146.955 (PL 74.4), for the entire event. So all a volunteer will need is a radio capable of operating on that frequency. A vehicle will help too... but if you don't drive and want to ride shotgun with another ham, which can be accommodated as well. If you'd like to do a bike or foot patrol, please contact me and we could talk thru that kind of an operation.

Feel free to drop me a note with any questions and/or if you would like to volunteer. Pass this along to others who may be interested. Contact Terry-KA8SCP (via email preferably) ka8scp@arrl.net

Fall Freeze 2010

Charles Suprin – AA1VS writes:

For the past few years, PART has supported the Lowell Youth Soccer Fall Freeze Tournament. The 2010 Fall Freeze is suspended as the Lowell Youth Soccer Association celebrates their 30th anniversary. Congratulations to them on their anniversary.

The Fall Freeze will return in 2011 and we expect to be invited back.

Shack Photos

K2GXT Shack Photo Courtesy – Bryce Salmi, KB1LQC



The first shot on the left is from the Fall of 2007, whereas the photo on the right is a more recent 2010 photo. This is a before and after set of photos.

Now here is a question for you... can you identify this shack? Tell us at the next meeting if you know who it is.



Local 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 or every month (except when it is a holiday).

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

NVARC Slow Speed CW Net

Pete-KB1LZH reports that there is a Slow Speed CW Net being conducted by our neighbors in Pepperell. If you have some interest in learning CW and or learning how to interact in a NET, you might want to join the net on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, at 7:30 PM. The net is run by the NVARC in Pepperell. It is a good chance to develop skills in NET procedures and in developing CW capability. This net meets on 10 meters on 28.123 MHZ. The (usual) Net Control Operator is Bruce, K1BG.

Repeater News

146.955 Repeater audio available online

This feed now allows anyone anywhere to monitor the repeater from your computer or mobile device via the internet. You can be at an Airport, hotel, at work or sitting in a coffee shop with Wi-Fi. If you're just monitoring and want to join in on a Qso, you can just switch over to the Echolink connection and join in. Or if you're just driving along and you're out of the repeaters range, you can still listen to the repeater with your mobile device with internet access. The other times you would want to access the live feed would be during bad weather that is reported in this area and you are at work and you may get to hear the latest driving conditions before you leaving work.

This also frees up the Echolink connection that is used now to access the repeater to hear if anyone is on the repeater. The Echolink IDs your call sign and will disconnect if idle or it will time out. You can now leave this live audio connection on 24/7 if you would like.

This link below is from the Radio Reference MA Middlesex County live audio feeds.

<http://www.radioreference.com/apps/audio/?ctid=1221>

145.330 WB1GOF VHF Repeater D-Star on the air

The D-Star settings for WB1GOF Port C D-Star system:

RX Freq: 145.330

TX Freq: 144.730

MYCALL: <your callsign>

URCALL; CQCQCQ

RPT1: WB1GOF C

RPT2: WB1GOF G (make sure this is set!)



We have seen a lot of new “faces” on the D-Star repeaters. Many of these new users have indicated they'll be joining PART and attending meetings. We received some very nice donations from the users of the repeaters, you know who you are and we all thank you very much for helping us maintain and add new capabilities to our repeaters!

Repeater Interference

The 146.955 repeater continues to see interference to existing conversations as well as at random quite times throughout the day and night. The repeater interference committee needs your help in collecting information about this interference.

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.

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.

ARRL News

- [OSCAR 67 Satellite Active for JOTA](#)
- [ARRL Marks 27th Year of Hosting USTTI ARAC Course](#)
- [Have an ARRL.NET E-mail Address?](#)
- [ARRL Introduces Three Major Titles for Fall!](#)
- [The Weather Outside Was Frightful During First Antarctic VE Session](#)

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>)



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.



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