

The Messenger 2.0

June 2025

Volume 6 Issue 2



Blackstone Valley Amateur Radio Club's Triennial Newsletter

W1DDD.org

Field Day 2025 boasts
learning, operating,
fellowship.

Join us. *BY PETER SICHEL—K1AV*



“ARRL Field Day is the most popular on-the-air event held annually in the U.S. and Canada. On the fourth weekend of June, more than 31,000 radio amateurs gather with their clubs, groups or simply with friends to operate from remote locations.”

Part emergency exercise, ham radio open house, and an opportunity to grow together in this remarkable hobby that combines hands-on communication technology and fellowship,

The Blackstone Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC) will participate in Field Day again this year from the historic Chopmist Hill site in Scituate, Rhode Island. Interested radio amateurs and the public are invited to join the fun and see



first hand what amateur radio is about.

Planning for BVARC Field Day is well under way. Here are details to help you connect.

EVENT TIME AND DATE:

Saturday, June 28 and Sunday, June 29. On the air operation begins at 2 p.m. Eastern Time

and continues for 24-hours.

EVENT LOCATION

Field at the Scituate Senior Center, 1315 Chopmist Hill Rd (Route 102), North Scituate, R.I. Talk In: 146.565 MHz FM Simplex.

SETUP TIMES:

Friday, June 27 starting at 1 p.m.

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and Saturday, June 28 starting at 10 a.m..

MORE INFORMATION:

Final planning meeting:
Monday, June 23, 7 p.m. at
the normal BVARC
meeting site (Our Savior's
Parish in Woonsocket).

GOOGLE GROUP:

"W1DDD@GROUPS.IO"

Email:

"psichel@sustworks.com"
(K1AV)

<https://www.arrl.org/field-day>

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR:

After last year's heavy rain that forced us off the air late Saturday the club will have a cabin style tent to protect the operators and gear during inclement weather. We anticipate using simpler antennas and welcoming more club members to take a turn at operating using the clubs equipment or some of their own portable gear.

PLANNING SUMMARY:

Our plan is to operate category 2A which means we can have up to 4 stations on the air:

- Two HF stations for category 2A (CW, SSB, or Digital per operator choice);
- A GOTA (Get On The Air) HF station for new or less active hams;
- A VHF station (50 MHz and



above).

- Possible Satellite contact and demonstration of WinLink email via Amateur Radio.

All radios to operate from battery or emergency power using portable generators.

Contact logging by computer using N3FJP Field Day software.

Optional internet access via mobile hotspot for assisted logging and synchronization.

Saturday lunch will be catered consisting of deli sandwiches, water, and soda.

Saturday evening will feature a club potluck supper

beginning around 6 p.m.

[Please sign up on-line or at the final planning meeting.]

A port-a-jon will be available at the site along with some soap and water for washing.

If everyone volunteers to contribute something, the only thing left to do will be to have fun.

73 and enjoy!



Pedal To-The - Metal

These 2 license plates from yesteryear reveals a HAM operator was behind the wheels.

SUBMITTED BY PATTY VILNIT-W1AUT



Welcome Aboard

BVARC has welcomed several new members to its roster since the last newsletter. If you meet them at club meetings or functions, please say hello.

New Members Since March 2025:

ANNA CHINAPPI

LOU VERTEFEUILLE -KC1VLW

GARY LAKE- N1GRL

ANN LAKE-KC1VME.

The ²⁰Messenger

*The Messenger Is Produced
3 Issues a Year
End of March,
Beginning of June,
And Beginning of November*

*Editorial Contributions
Are Done by our Members*

Edited by Ronald Blais

Produced by Teri Diiorio

DOES ANYONE STILL USE HAM RADIO?

BY JIM JOHNSON—K1GND

Yes, people still use ham radio! Also known as amateur radio, in many parts of the world. While the popularity of ham radio has declined compared to the past, there is still a vibrant community of amateur radio operators worldwide, using designated frequency bands to communicate with each other over the airwaves.

Hams engage in various activities such as making voice contacts, sending Morse code, using digital modes, even sending live video, participating in contests, contacting the international space station, experimenting with new technologies, attending field days and providing emergency communication support during disasters and weather events when other forms of communication may be unavailable.

ADVANTAGES

One of the significant advantages of ham radio is its ability to operate independently of traditional communication infrastructure. In emergencies or natural disasters, when landlines, cellular networks, or the internet may be disrupted, ham radio can serve as a reliable means of communication. Hams have figured out how to run effective communications using only battery and/or solar power.

Furthermore, ham radio enthusiasts often pursue the hobby for personal enjoyment, learning and community engagement, sponsoring, for example, library and Boy Scout events. It offers opportunities for

making connections with people around the world, exchanging knowledge, and exploring different aspects of radio technology. In many cases, the hobby provides a very strong foundation for advancement in diverse careers.

FIELD DAY

Ham Radio Field Day is an annual event held by amateur radio operators around the world, typically on the fourth full weekend of June. The purpose of Field Day is to practice emergency communication preparedness, showcase amateur radio capabilities, and foster camaraderie within the amateur radio community. During Field Day, ham radio operators set up temporary stations in outdoor locations such as parks, fields, or other public spaces. These stations operate on emergency power sources, such as generators or batteries, to simulate the conditions of a real emergency situation where commercial power might not be unavailable.

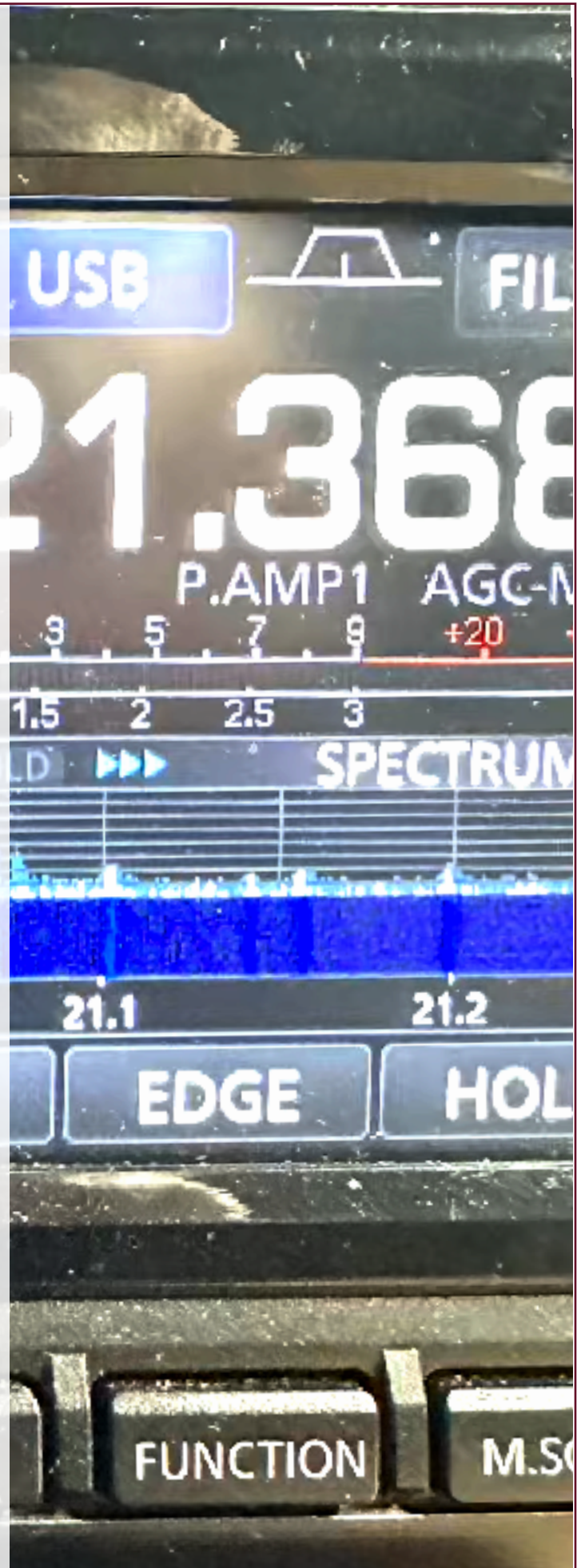
The event involves making as many contacts as possible with other amateur radio stations within a 24-hour period. Operators use various modes of communication including voice (phone), Morse code (CW), and digital modes. Each contact earns points, and additional points are awarded for operating under emergency power, setting up alternative antenna systems, and other factors that demonstrate preparedness. A footnote, the speed of communication is not

the essential element of a contact, accuracy is the real goal.

Field Day provides an opportunity for operators to test their equipment, practice their operating skills, and enhance their emergency communication abilities. It also serves as a public demonstration of amateur radio's capabilities and its role in supporting emergency communication when traditional infrastructure fails. Participation in Field Day is not limited to experienced operators; it also welcomes newcomers to the hobby. It encourages learning, teamwork, and cooperation among operators while fostering a sense of community and preparedness within the amateur radio community.

FACTS

- As of September 2021, the number of licensed ham radio operators in the United States was over 760,000
- As of September 2021, the exact number of licensed ham radio operators worldwide is challenging to determine with absolute certainty. However, estimates suggest that there are several million licensed amateur radio operators globally.
- The International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) is an organization that represents amateur radio operators worldwide and coordinates activities among national amateur radio societies. According to the IARU, there are over 3 million licensed amateur radio operators across the globe.



900 Mhz on a Budget

BY MATT PENTTILA—NA1Q

I was speaking with Paul Peluso, KB1LXJ, at his house when we were trying to figure out why his double G5RV antenna wasn't working. At that time, he sparked my interest as he was using an older Motorola FM handheld on the 902-928Mhz amateur band. He told me about the NEAR900 group, (www.near900.com) their linked repeaters and how I should get a 900 Mhz radio and join the fun.

I did some research. The 900 Mhz band works similar to the 70cm band, so operating means you're either hitting the machine or you're not. Propagation is more line of sight, although reflections off walls and hills make for some interesting signals. Remember when you walked around to find the spot where your cellphone had the strongest signal to work. That's what 900 Mhz is like.

Most 900 Mhz enthusiasts operate converted Commercial Motorola, GE, or Kenwood radios. Looking online I found that used gear costs around \$150 to \$400, above my budget at the time. But as I did more research, I found a more budget friendly way to try a band that, unfortunately, sees little use.

Retevis makes the RT10 DMR/Analog Handheld radio and it retails for under \$70 from Retevis. The radio comes with the rubber duck antenna, battery pack, charging base with USB plug, and a USB wall wart. This is a very basic radio, one watt FM analog and DMR, no display or keypad, just a 16-channel selector knob, on/off volume knob, and standard three side buttons, F1, PTT and F2. It has the standard Baofeng/Kenwood side plugs for a speaker mic, and that is where you do the programming, like most modern HT radios.



The programming isn't too hard.

First, you'll need to download the software from Retevis off the support page. Then you'll need a codeplug. The codeplug is actually available from the NEAR900 Google group page as a .zip file, which contains all the 900 Mhz repeaters in New England on their network at the time. All you need to do is plug in the radio to the computer, run the software, pull up the codeplug, change the callsign to your callsign, and then write the codeplug to the radio.

Continued On Next Page

Now this is where it gets confusing. There is no dos play so how do you know what frequency you are on. First the radio has voice announcements, like when it powers up, it says "Power On Zone X C" where X is the Zone Number 1 to 8 and C is Channel Number 1 to 16. So you'll need a cheat sheet to tell you what frequency each channel has stored in it.

So Zone 1 Channel 3 on my radio is the Cumberland RI NEAR900 repeater. Zone 1 Channel 2 is the Wrentham MA repeater, and so on. My cheat sheet is a screenshot on my cell phone of my computer screen and I know where the repeaters are. I'm still experimenting with where the best spots are to use them. Next, I set up the F1 and F2 buttons so F1 tells me the battery voltage, and F2 opens the squelch, both setup in the menu of the programming software..

For activity there is the NEAR900 900 Mhz Thursdays, with the idea to make QSOs during the day and, starting at 9 p.m. local, the NEAR900 net, where Paul is Net Control. He usually gets over 20-plus checkins from

around the network of linked 900 Mhz repeaters.

I can say I have worked new hams on this band, from different states, and different parts of the country that I wouldn't have met if I hadn't tried this underutilized band. I am also experimenting with a 900 Mhz mini beam design to work with my HT to help extend the range of my one-watt radio also.

Also, if anyone does get one of these radios and needs help programming it, feel free to contact me, we can meet and program it in a matter of minutes. If you can't find the codeplug, contact me and I can send the file over to you also.



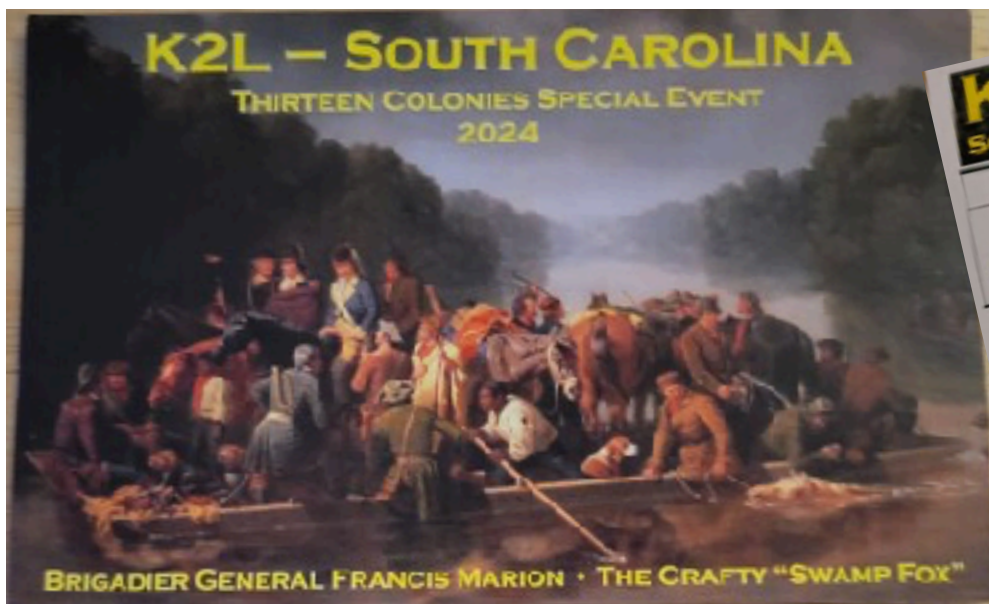
Ch No.	RF Frequency	TX Frequency	Channel Type	Net 457.900	Net 457.900	TX Power	Bandwidth	SQL	Scan	Channel Alias	Notes
1	907.40000	900.40000	Analog CR	106.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
2	907.40000	900.40000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
3	907.40000	900.40000	Analog CR	106.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Cumberland	11
4	907.70000	900.70000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
5	907.80000	900.80000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
6	907.80000	900.80000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
7	907.80000	900.80000	Analog CR	106.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
8	907.10000	900.10000	Analog CR	106.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
9	907.70000	900.70000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
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12	907.80000	900.80000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
13	907.80000	900.80000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
14	907.80000	900.80000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
15	907.80000	900.80000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11
16	907.80000	900.80000	Analog CR	111.0	101.0	High	12.5K	OFF	Yes	Wardville	11

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SWELL QSL'S

SUBMITTED BY MATT PENTTILA-NA1Q

A QSL card for K2L SOUTH CAROLINA. It includes a table for recording contact details and a historical note about Francis Marion.

To Radio		DATE		UTC	Band	Mode	QST
Call	Frequency	Month	Day	Time			
NA1Q		7	24	0608	70M3	FT8	44-45

Marion was nicknamed by the British as the "Swamp Fox" for his elusive tactics. After William T. Garrison departs, Marion and his group of irregulars crossing the Pee Dee river on a mission to harass the British.

Brigadier General Francis Marion
The "Swamp Fox" (1732 - 1793)

Thank you for the service record
hope to work you next year. 50

A sampling of QSL Cards issued by individual states participating in the 13 Colonies Patriotic Special event held concurrently with July 4th



Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776), Sec 13: That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state ...

Battle of Great Bridge—'The Day Is Ours' - G. Moore, courtesy of Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways Foundation, Chesapeake, Virginia

Culpeper Minutemen

13 Colonies Special Event 2024—K2B Virginia

Softserve on the Mr. Sam

BY MARSHALL CROSS—W1HK

I arrive at the U.S. Navy's submarine base at Holy Loch, Scotland, and get an early morning ride on the Commodore's launch to the USS Sam Rayburn (The "Mr. Sam"), SSBN-635, a nuclear powered missile submarine tied-up alongside the submarine tender USS Holland. Mr Sam's captain takes me below, hands me a radiation exposure badge and gives me a tour of his 425 foot boat that carries 16 Poseidon missiles, each tipped with three H-bombs. He then invites me to join him up on the sail while cruising down the Firth of Clyde to the Irish sea.

A young lieutenant pops his head up through the hatch and tells the captain "Sir, we forgot to arm the bastard one (Navy lingo for the BST-1 emergency buoy), and oh yes, by the way sir, the Mr. Softee machine is still not working." The boat slows, a crew comes topside and lowers a tethered sailor over the side to arm the buoy. While this is happening,



the captain calls somebody on the intercom and asks about Mr. Softee's health. "We think it will be OK, sir" comes the reply. I wonder why the captain seems to be worried as much about an ice cream machine as the emergency buoy?

That night at dinner in the wardroom, I find out why. The mess boys serve us a nice meal as the captain sits at the head of the table with a big dish of Mr. Softee dripping in hot Hersey's chocolate sauce. This scene repeats itself for the next four nights of the post upkeep patrol. Mr. Softee and Hersey's hot sauce seem to be his primary source of nourishment.

I wonder what ever became of the Mr. Softee machine when the USS Sam Rayburn. SSBN-635 was decommissioned and made into razor blades. By the way, the radiation hazard badge showed ten times less radiation than I would get mowing the lawn on a cloudy day.



Summer bloom with varieties of 'radio activity'

Summertime is upon us, a time when vacations are taken during beautiful T-shirt and shorts weather.

Now is a great time to add your amateur radio hobby into the mix with a few events and activities you can participate in.

The first is Field Day on June 28 and 29. BVARC will be setting up at the Scituate Senior Center, 1415 Chopmist Hill Road, (Route 102), Scituate, R.I., on Friday, June 27. The club will operate several stations and a VHF station.

This is a great time to get out, maybe bring along the XYL or a friend that might be interested in amateur radio and converse with other hams, learn more about the hobby and have fun operating. Yes, even unlicensed people can operate the GOTA station with a control operator present. One advantage of attending is if you're a Technician or General, you'll be able to operate in the Extra portions of the bands under the club call sign W1DDD or at the GOTA (Get On The Air) station, NA1Q. Operation goes from 2 p.m. Saturday to 2 p.m. Sunday and is always a good time. Socialize, operate, and don't forget the potluck dinner Saturday at 5 p.m. Field Day is always a good



time to relax and talk to your fellow club members.

Following Field Day is the Marlborough HamXposition from Aug. 21 to 24, 2025 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center Hotel. Some say it's

expensive at \$18 advance purchase, \$20 at the gate, but it is well worth it. There are extra events to advance buy tickets to, like the trip on Friday to ARRL Headquarters and W1AW via bus for \$45, including lunch, and the Friday Night YCCC dinner and Saturday banquet dinner. I have attended the dinners, the keynote speakers were excellent, doing presentations on DX trips and expeditions, homebrewing and experimenting in the hobby, and even how the sun impacts daily life for everyone, just to name a few.

There is a lot to do and absorb. You will meet other hams you've talked to over the air, there are seminars and classes, and if your family member or friend is really interested in getting their license, they offer the Technician

in a day class Saturday with the FCC ARRL VE Exam at the end of the class, and two FCC ARRL VE test sessions for getting your license or upgrading to the next level.

1. The HamXposition flea market outside is a great place to scrounge through those gems that you won't see in the HRO or DX Engineering catalogs. Antennas, used equipment, cables, wires, odds and ends flourish. Don't be surprised to find some old boat anchors, which with some TLC and work will give you another rig for the shack.
2. Inside, the seminars and classes are well worth the price of admission for the knowledge you will gain. Picture the Consortium stepped up a few notches and many at the same time. Need to learn how to use that NanoVNA you bought off Amazon, well there's a session on that. How about POTA/SOTA/Portable Operating? Yup, there's a session on that. Need your Skywarn Certification, WX1BOX will be there giving a class to get certified. How about Satellite Operation or Foxhunting? Got that too. The banquet dinners Friday and Saturday evening are entertaining and the food isn't bad either.
3. Need to sharpen your homebrewing skills, well they usually have a few kit building classes and also the STEM group building kits so you can brush up on your soldering skills or even learn how to solder.
4. And don't miss the vendor area, where you can find info from the ARRL booth. Quicksilver Radio also is often there with those station needs like coax cable adapters and ends, antennas, power cables, tools, etc. You'll meet various vendors showing new stuff, like remote software or various oscilloscopes and

meters, antenna baluns, and even get some personalized amateur radio wear like hats, shirts and pins.

5. Remember, beautiful weather is a great time to string up a new antenna, do some operating in a park or on a mountaintop or maybe take the radio with you to your family vacation spot this year. Take a HT or QRP rig along, maybe that spare 50w or 100w mobile rig, rechargeable battery or power supply and a portable antenna. Work some DX or a new state or band.
6. The goal is to have fun, especially on the higher bands, as this is pretty much the peak of the solar cycle. Give it a few years and the bands over 10 Mhz will be very quiet, then a few years later the upper bands will pick up and repeat.
7. Finally, don't forget in September the Consortium and BVARC Club meetings resume. Monday, Sept. 8 is the Consortium and Monday, Sept. 29 is the BVARC meeting.
8. Also the bi-annual hamfest, known as NEARFEST, will be held Oct. 3 and 4, 2025 at the Hillsborough County 4H Fairgrounds, 17 Hillsdale Lane, New Boston, N.H. A dusty spot, but fairly flat, and remotely located about two hours away. I recommend using GPS unless you've been there many times.
9. This used to be Hosstraders, and bounced from Deerfield, N.H., to Hopkinton, N.H., to Deerfield, N.H., and now it's new home is New Boston, N.H. This is where you find some good deals, oddball parts and accessories, lots of boat anchors, and meet up with other hams from the area.

*Do have fun this summer
and see you on the air or
at one of these events.*

British hams help break Axis codes in WWII

BY LARRY FREITAS N1KLF



While vacationing in England this May I visited Bletchley Park, which is an English country house and estate in Bletchley, Milton Keynes (Buckinghamshire), that became the principal centre of Allied code-breaking during the Second World War. During World War II, the estate housed the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS), which regularly penetrated the secret communications of the Axis Powers.

What does Bletchley Park and WWII code-breaking have to do with amateur radio ?

From 1939 throughout the war years ordinary British citizens were secret listeners known as Voluntary Interceptors (VIs) and were part of the Radio Security Service originally within the

administration of MI5. The VIs were amateur license radio operators that had their own equipment and could copy morse code and were private citizens. Estimates put the number of VIs between 1,000 and 1,700.

During WWII Voluntary Interceptors were used to monitor the airwaves for signals from spies and foreign agents, who might be transmitting to their controllers within British territory.

The RSGB National Radio Centre (NRC) is located at Bletchley Park that looks deceptively small from the outside. But once inside, you discover it's full of equipment, interactive displays and hands-on activities, as well as a short video presentation and GB3RS, a state-of-the-art radio station.

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National Radio Centre



*While visiting the RSGB National Radio Centre I got to meet a fellow ham
Fadel Derry M0SFD operating GB3RS.*

Across

Spectrum

BVARC FIELD DAY

June 28 and 29, On the grounds of the Scituate Senior Center, Route 102, Scituate.

NORTHEAST HAMXPOSITION 2024

August 21-25 at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlborough, MA. Tickets on sale at: <https://ticketing.hamx.org/>

BVARC simplex net

Every Wednesday at 7 p.m. on 146.565.

RI SWAP AND SELL NET

Net: Saturdays 9 a.m. on the NB1RI repeaters

Website: RISWAP.NET

A place where RI amateur radio operators can swap and sell items free! The net runs on Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. on the NB1RI network.

SKYWARN:

Every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. on the NB1RI repeater network.

Website: <http://www.wx1box.org>

RI ARES NETS

Repeater net every First & Third Tuesday 7:30 p.m. on the W1RIA repeater network.

VHF Simplex is held every second Tuesday on 147.420 starting at 7:30 p.m. The Digital net is held the Fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Check RIARES.org for details of the digital net

ARRL audio news can be heard each Sunday at 8 a.m. on Woonsocket radio station WOON 1240 AM and 99.5 FM.

ARRL Rhode Island Monthly Newsletter:
ARRL RI Section News

RADIO EXAM SESSION DATES

LOCATION: our Saviour Parish,
500 Smithfield Road,
Woonsocket, RI 02895

TIME: Sessions Start at 9:00 A.M.
Here Are the Dates for 2025:

JANUARY 11

MARCH 08

MAY 10

AUGUST 9

OCTOBER 11

DECEMBER 13

FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
BOB JONES, WB1P AT 401-333-4787 OR
BGJONES49@VERIZON.NET

Or on the Website at:

[HTTP://WWW.W1DDD.ORG/EXAMS.HTML](http://WWW.W1DDD.ORG/EXAMS.HTML)

