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The

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# Messenger 2.0



Blackstone Valley Amateur Radio Club's Quarterly Newsletter

W1DDD.org

## CHALLENGES, CAMARADERIE, COOPERATION HALLMARKS OF THE 2023 FIELD DAY



BY MARK HOFSTRA — *KW1X Field Day Committee Chairman*

First, I'd like to thank everyone that helped in this year's field day. The success that we achieved was due to the club's outstanding group effort, as we had 40 club members sign the roster.

Again we decided to operate using the club call, W1DDD, with a 2A (two transmitters, club portable) designation along with a GOTA (Get On The Air) station which was run by Mickey Callahan, K1WMC.

Our preliminary score was a whopping 7,497 points!!! Most of the contacts came from the CW/SSB station (1,358 QSO's) but the FT8 station had some awesome numbers as well (289 QSO's). The GOTA station, using the call NA1Q, made 67 contacts. Excluding the GOTA station, we had 1,647 QSO's, with the club making a whopping 1,714 QSO's! Thanks to everyone who operated!



### BVARC CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Saturday Dec 2 5-9pm**

**At Bella Restaurant**

Tickets will be available at the regular meeting on October 30 and on November 6th at the Consortium.

**Please Pay by Check.**

Tickets are \$32 per person for members & guest

Hurry, deadline for purchasing the tickets is November 24th

If you can't attend the meeting you can purchase tickets by mail sending your payment and information to either committee members:

Bob and Ginny Jones 49  
Farmview Drive, Cumberland, RI  
02864

Ray and Patty Vilnit 7 Park Street,  
Blackstone, MA 01504



I went back 16 years of field day scores and we surpassed the club's previous best effort by almost 1,500 points. Truly a field day for the ages! Bonus points played a big factor in our score this year. The club achieved 1,605 bonus points, as we were able to maximize bonus scoring in all but four categories. We'll aim for a clean sweep of all the available bonus points next year.

We started off on Friday with some initial setup, including getting lines up in the trees and hanging antennas. Randy, K5ZD, and his crew erected a 30-foot temporary tower that had the club's tri-band antenna mounted on top. This was shared between the CW/SSB station and the FT8 station by using the club's triplexer and band pass filters. It still amazes me how this hardware can make it so three stations can use the same antenna simultaneously.

For the lower bands, we used an 80-meter doublet for the CW/SSB station and a 4010 EFHW (End Fed Half Wave) antenna for the FT8 station. The GOTA station used the old reliable fan dipole.

Unfortunately, Saturday morning the weather didn't cooperate, as we had to deal with a downpour, which made station setup that much more challenging. By lunchtime, the weather was finally cooperating. I guess that's what field day is all about, operating in any and all environments and conditions. Thankfully, the weather for the actual operating portion of field day was awesome, although it got a little chilly Saturday night.

Thanks to everyone who brought food for the traditional potluck dinner Saturday night and a huge thank you to Jim Johnson, K1GND, and Anne Johnson for donating the always awesome sandwiches and treats for lunch. Sunday morning/afternoon we had cake for Bob Beudet, W1YRC, who just retired from 21 years of service as ARRL Rhode Island section manager and Randy Thompson, K5ZD, who celebrated his 50th year of being licensed. I'd also like to thank Judson Mitsok, W1JMZ, for accumulating and submitting all the scoring. Great job!

Special thanks to Paul Fontana, KC1IEN, for the use of his camper. It sure was nice to have a





place to relax and catch some shut eye. I'd also like to thank Martin Bayes, AA1ON, one of our newest members, who was only a guest during the event, but was there for setup and take down as well as several hours of operating. The inaugural BVARC scholarship was awarded Sunday morning to my son Benjamin. He's a freshman at WPI this year. Thank you from my entire family.

I hope everyone enjoyed field day as much as I did. It was my honor to have been the chairman of the field day committee, and it was actually a lot easier than I thought it would be with all the help and support I received from everyone. I can't wait to do it again! Being my first year I thought it went quite well, but there surely was a learning curve on my part. My competitive nature wants me to break 10,000 points next year but we'll leave it up to the Field Day Committee on what our goals will be for the upcoming 2024 event. As a final thought, I'd like to mention how excited I was assisting Evan Gerrish, KC1SOC, and his dad make their first HF contacts. The look on Evan's face when he made his first contact brought me back to a time when I was just 10- years-old and discovering the magic of our awesome hobby. For me that was the highlight of the whole weekend. Again, one for the ages!



# From Our President

## Hello Fellow BVARC Members,

I don't know how you feel, but for me I'm about sick and tired of all this rain. While we have had a bit of nice weather here and there, our typical fall weather is just not the same with all the rain. New Englanders are a hearty bunch and it seems the more I speak with colleagues at work or with members of BVARC, we could use a few more really nice crisp weekends full of sunshine so we can go to our favorite farm to get pumpkins and apple cider.

As a reminder to all, we are quickly approaching that time of year where we better have put up all of our antennas and tied them down securely for the upcoming winter. While I have no weather prediction of what's ahead for us this year, if all this rain is any omen of things to come, we just might see a lot of ice and snow this year. WOW!! Something to look forward to.... Also, you need to know that the bands are becoming RED HOT and you need to strike while the iron is hot. Lots of DX for everyone if you take the time to seek it out. FT8, FT4 and the bands are all active. If you need help getting on, just ask!

During our September meeting we discussed and agreed that our **Annual Christmas Party** will held on **Saturday December 2nd** at Bella's Restaurant. Their food is excellent and if you all recall we were provided with a dedicated bartender each year. She is very good and last year actually remembered what my favorite "adult beverage" is. I only wonder if she will be there this year. Please be sure to get your tickets early from Ray and Patty Vilnit or Bob and Ginny Jones as soon as possible. As in previous years, a final head count needs to be given to the restaurant in November. Tickets are \$32.00 *per person* and will be sold at each of our monthly BVARC meetings and at the Consortium classes. Checks are the preferred payment method made out to BVARC. As in previous years, we are asking that if anyone wishes to contribute to the door prize

table, we will be accepting your donations at the restaurant.

As November approaches it's that time of year where we all elect certain BVARC officers based upon our Bylaws schedule. This being an odd ending year, the following positions are up for election. The election winners will serve a 2-year term in office. Candidates as of the writing of this letter are:

Vice President of BVARC – Open Position

Secretary of BVARC – Ray Vilnit, KC1HQB

Board of Directors, Secretary – Judson Mitsock, W1JMZ

Board of Directors, Member – Bob Beaudet, W1YRC

In order to solicit new ideas, at our next meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> we will be asking if there are any members interested in running for these positions please come forward. Then, at our November 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, we will conduct a formal election where candidates receiving the most votes will be announced and will take office in 2024.

Let's also begin to think about what specific activities we want to do during 2024. It's not too early to begin planning. This year a couple of events were put on the back burner for various reasons. I hope we bring them back to life so we all can continue to have fun! So give it some thought and make a suggestion. The crazier the better! Get involved. Run an event or a tour to somewhere YOU LIKE!

*If everyone does only one thing, there won't be anything left to do but to have fun!*

73,

N1RGK

Ken Trudel

President & CEO, BVARC



# QRP DXing

BY BOB BEAUDET—W1YRC

Many of us enjoy working DX stations, some even enjoy QRP. Jokingly, I consider DX operation to be when I do not use my amplifier and only use the exciter, 100 to 200 watts. But the real QRPer operates at 5 watts or less.

Let me tell you a 100% true story about three brave BVARC DXers who decided to have some fun in a DX Contest. Buddy K1CYQ, Mike K1ETA and the writer got together to try out K1ETA's newest QRP radio from Hill Toppers; a 4 band, 5 watt transceiver that included a keyer, tuner and even a coffee maker for early morning polar openings. I'm kidding about the coffee maker. It only heats water for tea. In any event, it looks sweet and I could hardly wait to see it working DX on 40 meters.

The weekend of Oct 21-22, 2023 contained the German DX Contest, called "Worked All Germany". I have a Force 12 design multi band Yagi atop a 92 foot Rohn 45 tower, fed with HeliAx, an ultra low loss coax feeding it. On 40 meters, I have no trouble at all working Europe. I have an Acom 1200S amp which can run a kw on CW, FT8, SSB

but I rarely run more than 750 watts. In QRP mode, I can run 100 watts with the IC-7300 or 200 watts with the FT-1000D. The station runs fine.

We connected the new Hill Topper transceiver to the 40 meter beam and heard plenty of DX stations, very strong and no noise, very nice conditions. Mike called and worked German stations with no trouble while running 5 watts. The new radio doesn't easily turn its power down but Buddy brought his KX-3 transceiver along and offered to see how the antenna performed at less than 5 watts. He made a few contacts at 5, 3, even 1 watt. Then, he decided to try 500 milliwatts, a half watt. Sure enough, a single call brought German calls to the logbook. How about 300? Yes, that worked OK as well. Then, at 200 milliwatts, even 100 milliwatts. It was harder. It required a couple of calls and a repeat to correct my call, but the contact was in the book.

Then, Buddy decided to try less than 100 mw. How about 50 mw? It was not easy. It took a few calls and a patient

operator in Germany, but the contact was logged. We decided to push further and went for 10 mw. That's 1/100 of a watt!! That's close to nothing. After some doing, we got a German station to recognize our call and give us our 599 report. Obviously, we were not S9. We must have been S1 or 2. Buddy turned to power down to zero, that's no watts being transmitted according to the meter. I called, using W1FH, for which I am trustee. That call belonged to Charlie Mellen, the greatest DXer of all time, at least in my book. I heard nothing. I called clearly again. The station came back with W1???. That meant that he heard me. He heard what? I was running NO POWER. After a few exchanges, we logged a contact. I was running less than 10 milliwatts. Buddy was going to take some accurate instruments to measure how much power, but it was VERY little.

How in the world can you make a contact running no power. Well, of course we cannot. No one can do that except possibly using ESP, Extrasensory Perception.

# THE CONSORTIUM

BY JIM JOHNSON - K1GND

## First, What Is a Consortium?

The simple answer is, a gathering of individuals with a common interest. The common interest in our case is amateur radio. Next the effort of the group is to present a problem requiring a group solution. Usually, the consortium is led by an individual or individuals that have a level of knowledge, background, and the ability to convey the information to either solve a problem or promote further understanding of ham radio.

The Blackstone Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC) Consortium was created by Bob Beudet (W1YRC). The idea came from a conversation that Bob overheard in which a discussion between two operators who were talking incorrectly about power supplies.

This event took place over 20 years ago. From that point on Bob decided it was time to organize an informal training program to promote the fundamental concepts of ham radio.

A change in the licensing tests eliminated essay type questions and replaced them with multiple choice type answers. This change removed an element of understanding of basic ham radio. The Consortium attempts to restore that basic knowledge.

Over the years the subjects of the Consortium sessions have encompassed a wide range of topics. Some of those topics are:

**Antenna basics & design** •  
**Grounding** • **Propagation** •  
**Soldering** • **Radio Etiquette** •  
**QSLing**

*This is just a short list and there are many more.*

The discussions include video, power point presentations, as well as hands on demonstrations using actual radio equipment.

The Consortium has been joined by Jim Johnson (K1GND) as Bob's co-instructor. From time to time, we ask other members of BVARC and guest speakers to fill in as subject matter specialists.

As of September, 2023, (not counting the two years of covid), approximately 162 separate sessions have been conducted with an average attendance of 30 persons per session.

Further information about the Consortium can be found on the BVARC web site ([W1DDD.org](http://W1DDD.org)).

### Upcoming Consortium Schedule

2023 - 2024

November 6

December 4

January 8 - All About Vertical Antennas

February 5 - All About Horizontal Antennas

March 4 - All About Half Wave End Fed Antennas And Transformers

April 1 - All About SSB Settings , Protocol And QSLing

May 6 -Getting Ready For Field Day





# BVARC's First Scholarship Award

*Benjamin Hofstra, front left, accepts the Blackstone Valley Amateur Radio Club's inaugural scholarship from Steve Hokeness (K1DOC) & Lee Smith (K1LRS), BVARC scholarship committee chairmen, during the club's annual field day, June 25. They are joined by the recipient's parents, Pamela and Mark Hofstra of Franklin. The scholarship is awarded to a person pursuing a higher education focusing on a science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) curriculum. A 2023 graduate of Franklin High School, Hofstra plans to attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute in September and concentrate in electrical and computer engineering.*



# Jones relinquishes BVARC purse strings

*Bob Jones, WB1P, left, accepts a certificate of appreciation from BVARC President Ken Trudel, N1RGK, in recognition of the retired school administrator's dedication and outstanding support to the radio club spanning more than 65 years, including more than 22 years as club treasurer. Bob also is ARRL's VE liaison, which he has spearheaded for 26 years. The presentation was a highlight of the club's June 2023 Field Day event held at the Scituate Senior Center.*





# An Inexpensive Clamp-Spike Vertical Antenna Mount

BY PETER SICHEL, K1AV

I've been using the Wolf River Coils (WRC) mini-tripod with good results but when used with a 17-foot whip it can blow over in moderate wind. Seeing the spike from WRC was \$50 I ordered the ubiquitous [truck mirror antenna mount](#) from Amazon to make my own. The next question was what to use for the spike. After trying a metal rod I had on hand I got the idea of using a [ratcheting bar clamp](#) and found one at Harbor Freight Tools for \$5. The result is what I've dubbed a clamp-spike antenna mount.

To assemble I pushed out the metal stops at each end of the bar and drilled a new hole to reattach the top side of the clamp. I shortened the bolts that came with antenna mount and added stainless steel wing nuts and washers to attach the radials. The bar fits perfectly in the antenna mount to hold its orientation.

I extended the bar slightly above the top of the mount so it can be hit with a hammer. Using a clamp with 12-inch capacity leaves 11 inches for the spike. If you want a longer spike or smaller package, the clamp pieces can be removed easily.

For radials I use three bundles of six 14-foot wires with a matching lug for the WRC mini tripod. [Flexible silicone insulated wire](#) is easy to manage. I call these "rapid deploy radials." I bunch them up without winding and put a clip on the loose end of each bundle. To deploy I just toss them out, unclip, run my fingers through to separate, and then spread them out. It takes only a few minutes to setup the radial field.

The reason for this many radials is to get 250 feet of wire on the ground while still being easy to handle. About four wavelengths on 20m. With a fully extended [17-foot Chameleon whip](#) this provides a low SWR across the entire 20m band. The key is having enough wire on the ground for effective coupling. [The loaded vertical on 40m had an SWR around 2:1 so I used a tuner.]

By splitting and straightening the ring terminals the radials can be attached without removing the wing nuts or after the WRC mini tripod is assembled. The end of each spade is bent upward



to prevent the terminal from slipping out while straightening the radials.

The clamp can be attached to a table, fence, tripod, ladder, etc. A simple grounding clip can connect to a nearby metal object if needed. Total cost was under \$20.



If the location doesn't afford pushing in the spike, it can be clamped to the up wind leg of the WRC mini tripod for additional stability. This has been very effective for me with the small tripod.

The clamp is a bit heavy for SOTA but provides nice flexibility for operating from a campsite or hotel balcony. It's easy to imagine other variations with these materials. A second antenna mount could be added to create a clamp dipole for example. Maybe even a V or delta loop.

Time will tell how it holds up. It's probably not a good idea to leave it outside for extended use since the steel spike and clamp mechanism might rust.



# Across THE Spectrum

## **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](http://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.

Weekly listings of VE sessions, club meetings, nets on the air, bulletins, flea markets, used and wanted ham radio equipment for sale and weekly ARRL audio news.



# *Annual* **THE BVARC CHRISTMAS PARTY**

is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Once again it will be held at the Bella Restaurant (Banquet Hall) located at 1992 Victory Highway, Glendale, R.I.

The Christmas party is open to "all" club members, along with your family and friends.

Bella will be serving family style roasted chicken, soup, salad, rolls, pasta, potatoes/french fries, coffee and ice cream. There will be a cash bar as well. Matt Pentilla (NA1Q) will provide the cake. Judson Mitsock (W1JMZ) will be providing the music.

Tickets to the Christmas Party will be on sale at the Nov. 6 Consortium. The cost for the tickets will be \$32 per person which includes tax and tip. The preferred payment method is by check made out to BVARC, or else cash, exact change.

If you can't attend the meeting you can

purchase tickets by mail sending your payment and information to either committee members:

**Bob and Ginny Jones,**  
49 Farmview Drive, Cumberland, R.I., 02864

**Ray and Patty Vilnit, 7 Park St., Blackstone, MA,**  
01504

*Note: Tickets requested by mail will be held at the door.*

The feedback on the past Christmas parties has been very positive and we expect this to be a great evening as well. Your participation in this club event would be much appreciated.

If there are any questions please reach out to one of the Christmas Party committee members.

# 7300 and PowerPoles

BY MATT PENTTILA — NA1Q

This is not an easy task, and going from a simple 15-minute job to 90 minutes later, I finally did the near impossible, my Icom IC-7300 now has a direct power pole socket.

Emergency communications (ARES/RACES) are big on using the 30-amp Anderson Power Pole Connectors. They are quick connect, color coded and depending on the equipment, will plug directly in, so no random power plugs to try to adapt to with various equipment in the field if they all use the same power plugs.

I was surfing the web and came across a site selling Power Pole Kits for the Yaesu FT-817ND/818 and FT-891. The kit for the FT-891 changes the four-pin cheap Molex plug to a nice flush fit Anderson Power Pole Socket for the Power Cord with the Anderson Power Pole on it. No jumper or short adapter cord needed to go from Power Poles to Molex.

So I'm looking at this and I thought, the Icom IC-7300 has the same plug. Wonder what would happen if I took the old plug out and put in one of these kits.

It works, but it takes about 15 to 20 minutes to perform this on a Yaesu FT-891, Icom not so easy, more like 90 plus minutes to do. But the results are worth it.

Toughest part is getting the pins out of the old plug. They are rectangular and push and lock in style, and difficult to remove. So after 20 minutes of getting all four pins out. It's easier to remove the pins while the plug is still locked into the radio frame, I removed all four pins, two red and two black.

Now looking at this I realized one of three things. First, there isn't much wire between the power plug and the radio circuit board. Secondly, we're going from four pins to two pins. Third, the wires still had the crimp on pins installed.

The first thing I did was mount the red and black power pole housings into the frame of the radio, and then ran the wires to their perspective final spots. About 1/4" of slack at most if I cut the pins off, 1/2" if I can get the old crimp pins off. Well 45



minutes later and out comes the snippers, those pins are crimped so tight that I don't think even solder would wick in there. Problem 1 down, now to problem 2.

Looking at the wires, they're 16 gauge stranded wire. I have the crimp inserts for the power poles in two sizes, 12-14 gauge and 16-18 gauge. Well twisting two 16-gauge wires together just fits in the size 12 pin. So I stripped the 1/4-inch I needed and twisted the two reds together and put a crimp end on it, then the two black wires got the same treatment.

Now with power poles you need to take care of orientation. The crimps are designed with a lip on the end to engage the spring in the housing and lock in the opposite side is the actual contact surface that makes the electrical connection. Before crimping make sure you have the pins oriented in the right direction.

Now the crimps looked good but I wasn't pleased with the bare wire at the crimp, so I got some red and black shrink tubing to neaten the appearance and make sure nothing can short out.

And now we're half way home. So I did a rough fit of the power pole housings, but failed to check the two mating pieces of the plug enclosure that seal



the original molex hole and lock everything in place. On the Yaesu, there's plenty of room to fit the mating plates. On the Icom IC-7300, Icom put a screw location for the top cover right next to the Molex plug from the top requiring some form of standoff. So Icom used a poured cast frame for the radio and had the standoff built into the rear of the frame, only instead of making it 1/4" long, they went the whole thickness of the radio, top to bottom. So the inside plate was made for a Yaesu, and surprisingly close to fit, I actually had to take almost 1/16 of an inch off one side about 3/32 of an inch deep off the plastic inside plate. Once I did that I was now almost home. But not quite yet.

So I found that I couldn't put the power pole housings on the wire ends with the power pole housings in place. So I had to take them out, press the pins in, reconnect the power pole housings together to form one plug. (Black to the outside of the radio, red next to the fan.) If you're set up for Power Poles you'll know the small side of the power pole housings go up, to mate with the other ones.

So now the assembly. Put the rear plate with the screw hole up over the power pole plug, slide plug in place and surprisingly they will slide into the tabs on the sides that held the old Molex plug in place to help keep it from moving. Then place the outer plate in place, install screw clamping outer plate to inner plate. Done and done.

Check it for shorts before installing the top cover back on the radio. As luck would have it, it looks

like a factory install and removes a possibly questionable plug from the troubleshooting portion of my gear.

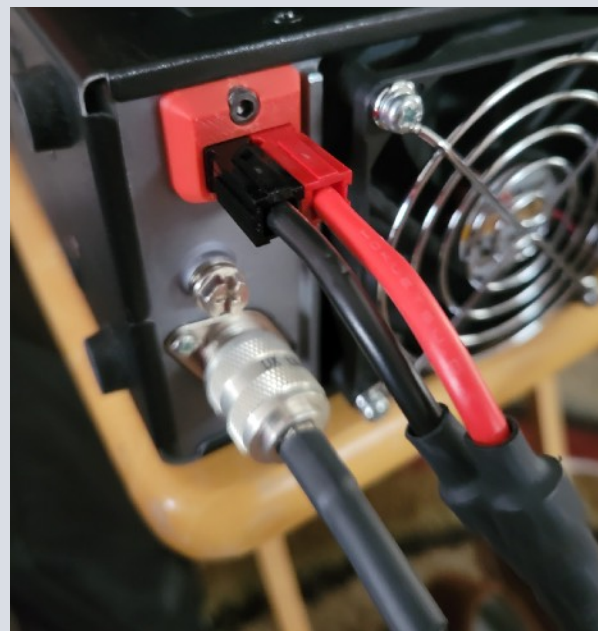
More info on the kits, check out KB9VBR's article and website, note there's a YouTube video and link to where to get the kit there.

<https://www.jpole-antenna.com/2023/07/19/new-and-improved-yaesu-ft-891-powerpole-conversion/>

And to order the kit, you'll have to order using Google Docs and Paypal.

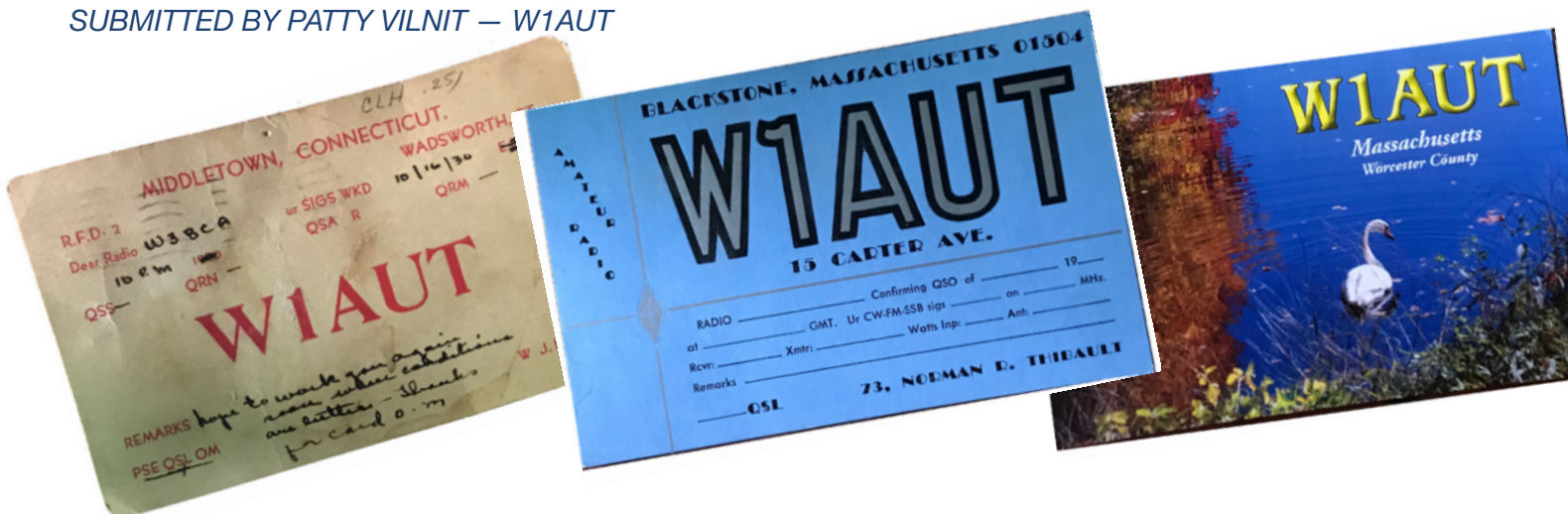
<https://forms.gle/EGKaYYa485J8wiMW9>

Takes about a week to come in via USPS.



# W1AUT QSL Cards for 3 Generations

SUBMITTED BY PATTY VILNIT — W1AUT



# MARKETPLACE

Matt Penttila — NA1Q — Cleaning out the shack before Winter, figured I would give Club Members first shot before I post online. All items are used.

Chameleon F Loop 3.0 Total 80-10m Magnetic Loop Antenna and storage bag. \$550.00

Phazer 40 4W 40m FT-8 Digital Transceiver with Case and Manual Used \$75.00

(2) QRP Labs QDX Digital Transceiver Version 3.0 with enclosure and power plug pigtail. \$50.00 each (Note: both units are wired for 12VDC)

USDR HF QRP Transceiver 5W 160m-6m with built in rechargeable battery pack Blue Aluminum Case and charger \$120.00

TR(U)SDX Classic HF QRP Transceiver 80m-20m CW/LSB/USB/AM/FM Orange Case with matching Li-Ion Battery Case attached, 3 Li-Ion 3.7V 5000 mAh Batteries verified official registration number for software updates. \$130.00

TR(U)SDX High Band HF QRP Transceiver 20m-10m CW/LSB/USB/AM/FM in Green Case with verified official registration number for software updates. \$100.00

Kenwood TS-850S HF Rig. Internal Antenna Tuner doesn't work, needs new servo motors due to age. This was the one the club had for sale a few years ago at the club auction. Manual, Hand Microphone and Fused Power Cable with Anderson Power Poles included. \$200.00

Yaesu FT-817ND 160m-70cm All Mode QRP Transceiver with Portable Zero 817 Escort Side Rails and Folding Tilt Bail, Hand Microphone, Internal Rechargeable

Battery Pack, AA Battery Case, Wall Charger, Stock VHF/UHF Antenna, Shoulder Strap, Manual and Original Box. \$600.00

Connect Systems CS-800D VHF/UHF DMR Mobile Transceiver with remote head mounting bracket and Optional CS-BFD Touchscreen Display, Programming Cables aFor Sale by NA1Qnd fused Power Cable. \$350.00

Anytone AT-D868UV Digital DMR VHF/UHF Handheld Transceiver with box, charger, programming cable, and poor excuse of a manual from manufacturer. \$130.00

Digirig V1.5 set up for RTS PTT control. No cables \$40.00

(2) Wolphilink Android Audio Interface for Yaesu FT-8xx radios and others to use with Android devices. Both come with a 3 foot 4 conductor audio cable and 1 foot a 6 pin to 6 pin mini DIN cable for Yaesu FT-8xx (possibly others radios using 6 pin mini DIN) \$40.00 each

MFJ-1840 40 meter BNC Telescopic antenna with counterpoise wire. \$45.00

Baofeng Direct Audio Connection cable for Digital Modes. One end fits Baofeng / Kenwood Handheld radios, other end is separate Microphone and Speaker plugs for computer sound card. \$5.00

Email [NA1Q@ARRL.NET](mailto:NA1Q@ARRL.NET) or call / text 978-828-4322 (please include Name and Callsign)

*QRPing Continued From Page 5*

But three of us witnessed the event and will swear in court that it happened.

Now, I've heard of QRP, even QRPp, but what do you call this? DXing with no power.

We proved beyond debate that the antenna makes the difference. The operator's skill is still the most essential ingredient in the recipe, followed closely by the antenna system and last by the radio system. We proved to ourselves how much an antenna will add to a station's performance. A two element beam at nearly 100 feet, fed with nearly zero loss coax can spell the difference between a successful contact and a failure running a dipole in a tree to a gain antenna at 100 feet. It will present about a 7.8 dbi gain over a reference dipole.

So, if you think QRP DXing is fun, try DXing running no watts. What can we call that? QRPpppp? See you on the low end of 40 meters.



## Ham Radio Enthusiasts vs. High-Frequency Traders: A Battle for the Airwaves

Trading firms are asking FCC to open shortwave frequencies to greater commercial use

Here's how it all went down.

I was at work on July 25th and got a call from a number I didn't recognize at 2:38 p.m. So I let it go to voice mail. Five minutes later Cassie, K1GTC, is calling me, says that a reporter from the Wall Street Journal is trying to reach me for an interview about the FCC Proposal by the Shortwave Modernization Coalition which I commented to the FCC on. So I called Alexander Osipovich back, and we had a rather lengthy 45-minute conversation and interview, several texts back and forth and a few emails. He asked for a picture of me operating, the only one I had was from Field Day at the QSO-a-Go-Go, which is what I sent and they used in the article. He emailed me when the article was coming out, I couldn't say anything about it prior to publication, but as soon as it came out, I let everyone I could think of know. So that's how this all came about, and how I was quoted in the Wall Street Journal.

73 Matt NA1Q

Sending data from Chicago to Frankfurt is nine milliseconds quicker by shortwave than by undersea cable, according to data from Deutsche Börse. That is less time than it takes for a hummingbird to flap its wings.

As ultrafast traders have pushed into shortwave, they have aroused the ire of hams such as Matthew Penttila.

Penttila, a 51-year-old mechanic in Blackstone, Mass., routinely uses shortwave radio to chat with hams in other states and countries. Once he even spoke to a cosmonaut aboard the Mir space station, he recalled.



Matthew Penttila uses shortwave radio to chat with ham enthusiasts in other states and countries. PHOTO: MATTHEW PENTTILA

He is indignant that the traders want to use shortwave to save milliseconds and [juice their profits](#).

"I'm just a regular, ordinary guy. I work 2 to 10:30 five days a week to try and keep a roof over my head and food on the table for my family. And these guys are going to try and exploit this for millions and billions of dollars. It just doesn't seem right," Penttila said.

If the FCC approves the traders' petition, Penttila worries it will lead to further encroachment by private firms into bands of the radio spectrum used by amateurs.



# ARRL News

## An important message from our ARRL New England Division Director follows:

The FCC has corrected the dates for comments and reply comments on the 5 MHz (60m) matter. The FCC adopted a comment/reply comment period of 60/90 days from Federal Register publication. When published in the Federal Register, however, the dates were erroneously based on the more standard 30/60 day period.

On Friday a correction was published in the Federal Register. The correct dates are:

**Comments: Nov. 28, 2023**

**Reply Comments: Dec. 28, 2023**

As of Friday, Oct. 27, there were over 2,000 comments filed, most by amateurs expressing support for the ARRL position in this matter.

Here's some background on this matter. If you have not yet published your comments, we encourage you to do so before Nov. 28th.

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This item's ET Docket No. is 23-120

### **The FCC has issued a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) which effects Amateur Radio use of the 60m band. Details include:**

- + The FCC proposes to allocate 15 kHz of contiguous bandwidth between 5351.5 - 5366.5 kHz on a secondary basis with a maximum power of 15 W EIRP (equivalent to 9.15 W ERP). This allocation was adopted at the 2015 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-15).
- + The NPRM leaves open the question of whether the existing five 60m channels can still be used for Amateur Radio operation as well as if the 100w power level may still be used.
- + The FCC has requested comments relative to existing channels and power issue.

In 2017, the ARRL petitioned the FCC to keep the four 60-meter channels that fall outside the new band, as well as the current operating rules, including the 100 W ERP limit.

We need as many Hams as possible to comment on this NPRM and urge the FCC to keep 1) the 4 existing channels allocated to Amateur Radio on a secondary basis and 2) keep the 100w power limit for these channels.

You might also want to note that the 60m band is important for Amateur Radio emergency communications during disasters.

You can file comments using one of these links –

<https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings/express> (for directly entering comments)

<https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings/standard> (for uploading a document containing comments)

Please try to find time to help us protect our 60m privileges. Your help will be much appreciated by all Hams.

ARRL New England Division

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## FCC To Vote on Removing Symbol Rate Restrictions

10/27/2023

ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio® welcomes news of a scheduled vote by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to consider removing symbol rate restrictions that restrict digital modes, foster inefficient spectrum use, and dampen incentives for innovation.

In the draft Commission decision, the FCC would replace the current HF restrictions with a 2.8 kHz bandwidth limit. The Commission also announced that it will consider a Further Notice in which it will propose eliminating similar restrictions where they apply in other bands and consider relying on signal bandwidth limits. If both actions are adopted by the Commission, there will be a period for public comment on the Further Notice issues.

In announcing the proposed Commission actions, FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel said that "We're bolstering amateur radio. We will vote on a proposal to incentivize innovation and experimentation in the amateur radio bands by removing outdated restrictions and providing licensees with the flexibility to use modern digital emissions."

ARRL requested and strongly supports replacing the symbol rate limits on the HF bands with a 2.8 kHz bandwidth limit. ARRL also supports eliminating the symbol rate limits in favor of the already-existing bandwidth limits where they apply on the VHF and UHF bands and eliminating the similar limits 2200 and 630-meter bands.

ARRL Director of Emergency Management Josh Johnston, KE5MHV, said the changes will result in a tremendous time savings during disasters, when every second counts. "We will be very pleased to have the FCC remove the restrictions on symbol rate for the amateur bands. This will eliminate the need for temporary waivers during an event and provide the ability to train and exercise using the higher symbol rate, allowing increased data capability to our served agencies and partners."

Congresswoman Debbie Lesko (AZ-08) introduced *The Amateur Radio Communications Improvement Act* (H.R. 3241) on May 11, 2023, to require that the FCC eliminate the obsolete HF digital symbol rate limit with a 2.8 kHz bandwidth limit.

The Congresswoman subsequently addressed the issue with Chairwoman Rosenworcel in a Congressional oversight hearing. The changes are supported by many state emergency management officials.

ARRL will continue to engage on this matter.

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Please find here **your October 2023 ARRL RI Section Newsletter:**

<https://ri-arrl.org/welcome-to-your-october-2023-ri-section-newsletter/>