



December, 2018
Volume 56 Issue 12

MARANews



No December meeting Happy Holidays, Happy New Year, SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR.

KB1TEE will run the net on Tuesday December 18, 2018 if anyone is interested

Our next meeting January 15, 2019 at 6:30pm at the Bridgewater Public Library

Membership Renewal

With the beginning of each year comes the time for membership renewal and the payment of dues. Since Washington did not fall off the cliff I guess it is all right to use US dollars to make payment. You can bring your check to the next meeting or send it along to our post office box at **MARA P.O. Box 428 Bridgewater, MA 02324**. Our smiling treasurer will be happy to see or hear from you.

NEWSLETTER: KB1TEE Rick report's that he will be stepping down as the newsletter editor. His last newsletter will be the February news 2019.

Presidents KC1CFO Denise Sisson



Presidents Notes from KC1CFO Denise Sisson

MARA Facebook page: Our Massasoit Amateur Radio Association Facebook page with club events, meetings, photos, etc. It is occasionally updated so that it can be another resource for us on which to spark interest of our club, amateur radio and keep members informed of what we are doing outside of our club meetings and in our community. If you go to the "about" tab on our page you can find our <http://www.w1mv.org/> web page for our present and past newsletters and other club information. Please send Denise KC1CFO denigs1@aol.com any articles or photos you would like to see in our MARA newsletter, W1MV-MARA Website and Facebook page. Jeff N1ZZN has created a link to twitter to help get the word out even more!

It is hard to believe this is the last newsletter of 2018. There will be no meeting this month. Merry Christmas to all and Happy New Year!

Phil N1XTB and Jeff N1ZZN are still trying to get the antenna up and it looks like there will be some progress.

We are looking for ideas for speakers for our monthly meetings, please let us know if anyone has ideas they would like to share.

We will be needing a new newsletter person, Rick will be leaving his post as of the February newsletter. Thank you for such a great job all these years, you will be missed. If you would like to take over the newsletter or know of someone who would like to do it please let us know. I am looking forward to seeing everyone on Tuesday, January 15th, for our 2019 start of monthly meetings.

73 Denise KC1CFO
President-Massasoit Amateur Radio Association

SECRETARY NOTES - MARA MEETING: 10/20/2018 - DENISE SISSON KC1CFO

OPEN: President Denise KC1CFO opened the meeting at 6:35 PM 7/20/2018

ATTENDANCE: 5 members were present including 2 elected officers. We had one guest.

KC1CFO Denise Sisson (pres)	WA1BEE Allen Hiltz
N1XTB Phil McNamara (Sec)	NR1FD Bill Burke
KA1YL Connie Frauciosi	K1BAD Melo Serkano

MEETING MINUTES: Motion to accept the October 2018 MARA Secretary's report as published in October 2018 newsletter was made by Connie KA1YL, with a second by Bill NR1FD motion passed by all attending members, 0 opposed.

Club treasure Phil N1XTB read the October 2018 treasures report. Allen WA1BEE made a motion to accept the report as read, with a second by Bill NR1FD, motion passed by all attending members. 0 opposed.

There were three training sessions for the Plymouth power plant with Entergy, in two different sites, Bridgewater and Carver. With a total of nine folks from our club attending. There were a couple deposits to our club account.

Phil gave a report on the antenna, it is going to be a bit tricky on getting everyone lined up to get it done. There needs to be a 48 hour notice to the town, etc. It will be a good 4 to 5 hour job if all goes well, we do have the funds in the treasury, so this is a good thing.

Rick will be in need of a replacement for the newsletter, he has done a wonderful job over the time he has been the newsletter person.

2019 HAT will be in RI, there will be tours of the weather plane, at the Quanset airport. More information will be upcoming>

There may be a hurricane drill before June 2019. More information to follow.

Looking for speakers for our monthly meetings any suggestion please let us know.

Motion was made by Bill NR1FD and second by Allen WA1BEE to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 PM, motion was passed by all attending members.

From Phil McNamara MARA antenna info

Al Costello of Netecom, who did the last round of work, has not returned voicemails or emails. He agreed to do the work in September. The climber that Gary W1GRC knows is a no-go. Some issue with providing an insurance certificate.

I contacted Frank WQ1O with regard to some repeater work on the Cape they have planned. They have a ham in-house that will be doing their work. He is not available. Luke of LUKE WILLIS SERVICES LLC has provided a revised bid.

"After looking at your drone photos, it appears to be just a broken whip. With the antenna on site, timely access, I can work with you and do half a day. 2 men half day and mileage would be \$905.00, plus what ever materials I might have to supply." Jeff N1ZZN and I traded texts yesterday. He told me that W1TAV knows the "S&S Steve Child", the one the town hired the first time. W1TAV will get contact info. This is pending...

The Water Department has told me they need 48 hours notice and a copy of the Insurance liability policy for anyone doing the work. At this point in time, only LUKE WILLIS SERVICES is in a position to do the work and comply with this requirement. We would have to make arrangements to get the antenna moved to on-site. Jim, W1JT just gave me the dimensions of the shipping box. It is located at his workplace in Abington.

Length: 20 feet 6 inches

Width: 3 feet 8 inches

Thickness: 6 inches.

73,

Phil McNamara N1XTB

New Two-Ham ISS Crew Launched to ISS is the First Since Aborted October Flight

Three astronauts -- including two radio amateurs -- have docked at the International Space Station (ISS) on the first crewed *Soyuz* vehicle launch since a dramatic failure in October. The astronauts, from the US, Canada, and Russia, left Kazakhstan at 1130 UTC on December 3, and the Russian space agency Roscosmos confirmed their successful docking at the station. On board were David Saint-Jacques, KG5FYI, a Canadian engineer, astrophysicist, and medical doctor; space veteran Oleg Kononenko, RN3DX, of Russia, and Anne McClain, of the US. Investigators have blamed a faulty sensor, said to have been damaged during assembly in Kazakhstan. Crew commander Kononenko said his crew recognized the risks of spaceflight as part of their profession and expressed confidence in the flight preparation.



The three-person crew's mission was originally set for later this month, but officials moved up the date to avoid leaving the space station unstaffed, when the current ISS crew of cosmonaut Sergey Prokopyev and astronauts Serena Auñón-Chancellor, KG5TMT, and Alexander Gerst, KF5ONO, return to Earth on December 20.

Meanwhile, NASA astronaut Nick Hague, KG5TMV, who was on the aborted October 11 *Soyuz* launch, is getting ready for another try. Hague, NASA astronaut Christina Hammock Koch, and cosmonaut Alexey Ovchinin are scheduled to launch from Baikonur Cosmodrome on February 28 aboard the Russian *Soyuz* MS-12 spacecraft.

**(L - R) Expedition 58 crew members
Anne McClain, Oleg Kononenko, RN3DX,
and David Saint-Jacques, KG5FYI. [NASA
photo by Victor Zelentsov]**

The trio will join the ISS Expedition 58 crew that just went up, and they will return to Earth in October 2019 as members of Expedition 60. Hague and Koch will serve as flight engineers for Expeditions 59 and 60. Ovchinin will serve as a flight engineer on Expedition 59 and as the commander of

Expedition 60.

This will be Koch's first spaceflight. Hague and Ovchinin were on their way to join the station's Expedition 57 crew on October 11, when their *Soyuz*'s rocket booster experienced a malfunction shortly after launch, aborting the mission. Both returned safely to Earth. The MS-10 flight abort marked the first Russian human spaceflight booster accident in 35 years.

Investigators looking into the October 11 incident said afterward that other *Soyuz* vehicles may have been similarly defective, but pointed out that additional pre-flight checks had been introduced. NASA offered its own reassurances about continued cooperation with and confidence in the Russian space program.

Attorney Jane Hinckley Halprin Named as FCC's Administrative Law Judge

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has announced that Jane Hinckley Halprin will serve as the agency's Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). She succeeds Judge Richard Sippel, who retired on December 1.

"Jane has done tremendous work at the FCC, and I congratulate her on this new role," Pai said. "The good judgment she displayed working on ethics issues at the agency for over a decade will serve her well as

our Administrative Law Judge." Pai also thanked Sippel for his 32 years of service as an ALJ, during which he handled several Amateur Radio cases.

Halprin joined the FCC in 1987 as a staff attorney in the former Common Carrier Bureau and has occupied positions in the former Mass Media Bureau, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and the Office of General Counsel. For the past 14 years, she has served in the Office of General Counsel as an Ethics Counsel and for the past year has led the agency's ethics team as Assistant General Counsel for Ethics.



The FCC Office of Administrative Law Judges is responsible for conducting Commission-ordered hearings. An ALJ acts on interlocutory requests filed in the proceedings, such as contested discovery requests. ALJs are appointed by a vote of all Commissioners.

Hamming It Up on the Trail: The Story of Alabama's Ham Radio Hikers



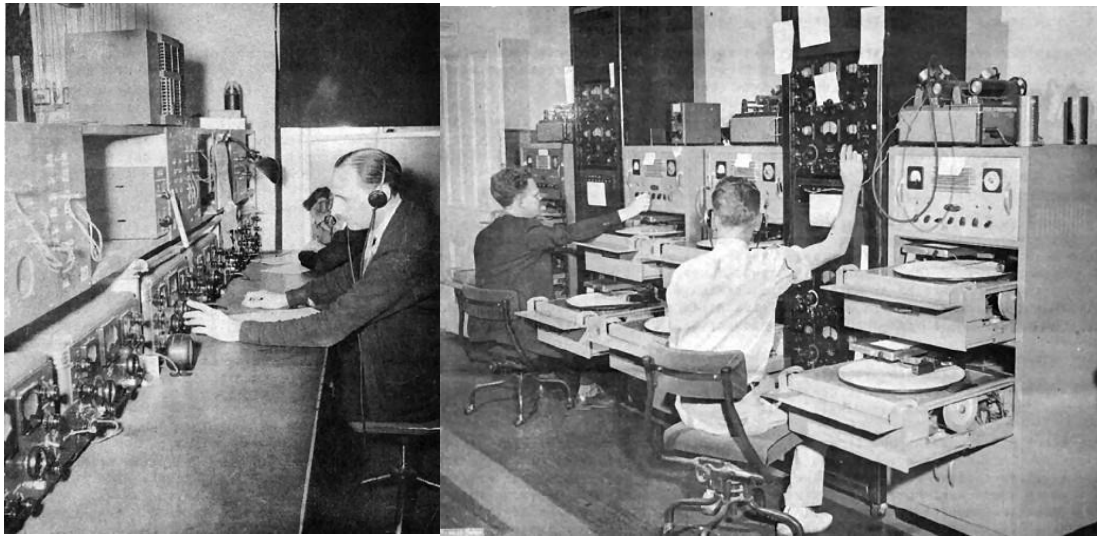
Most people head to the outdoors to be immersed in nature and escape crowds and our electronic world. Others escape to the outdoors to be immersed in nature—but with a twist.

Welcome to the world of Hiker Hams: amateur radio operators, better known as "hams", who hit the trail and bring along not only their hiking gear but their radio equipment as well. They hike to their favorite lake or rock outcropping, even hike the entire Appalachian Trail, and talk to the world. And several of them do it right here in Alabama.

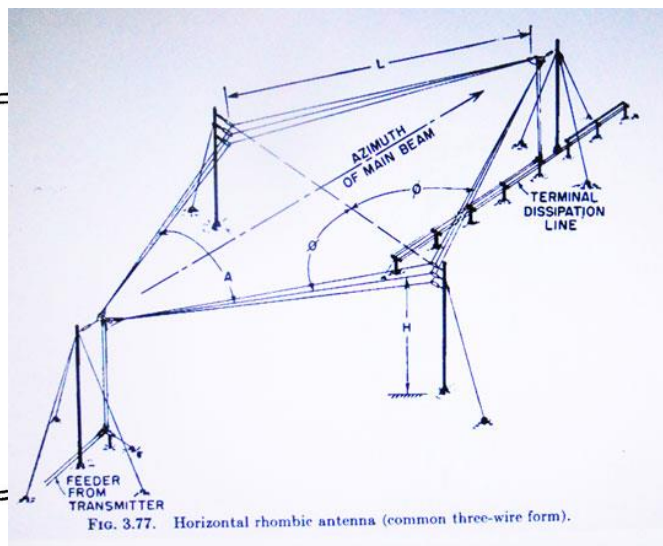
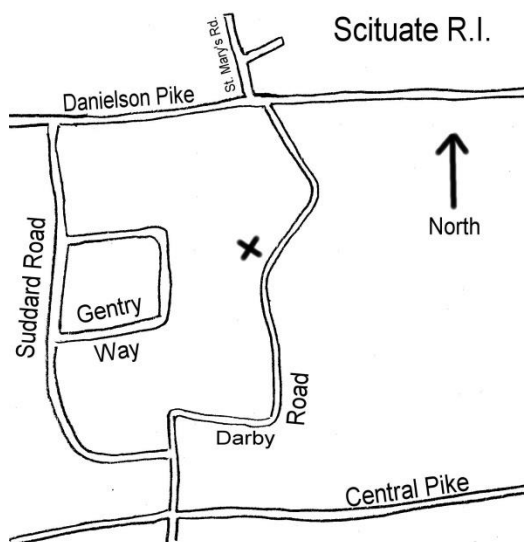
Chopmist Hill Listening Post

I found out about this thought some of you may be interested KB1TEE

Radio Listening Posts were established by the Federal Communications Commission within the United States to listen to radio traffic during World War II. One of these was at Scituate, Rhode Island. Others were at Fort Ward (Washington), Winter Harbor, Maine, Amagansett, New York, Cheltenham, Maryland and Jupiter, Florida.



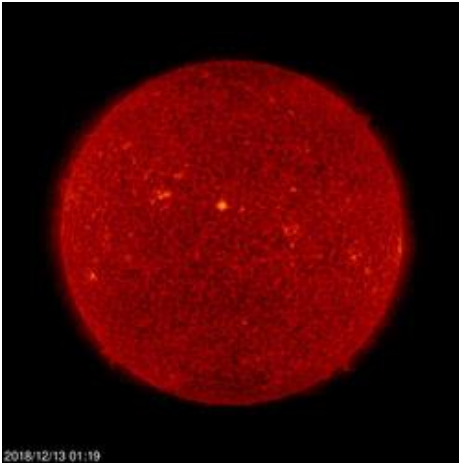
About one year before the United States entered WW2 Thomas B. Cave was sent to Rhode Island to set up a secret radio listening post. The purpose of the post was to detect radio transmissions from German spies in the United States and assist in locating downed aircraft. In March 1941 he abandoned his first choice of Greenville, RI for a farmhouse with 183 acres of land located on Darby Road near Chopmist Hill in Scituate, Rhode Island. The FCC leased the farmhouse from Mr. William A. Suddard.



The completed listening post contained over 80,000 feet of wire, 11 antennas and many advanced radio receivers.^[2] The site included two direction finding antennas. These could be rotated to get a bearing on the transmitting station. This information when compared with similar measurements from other distant stations allowed the transmitting location to be triangulated. The use of two of these antennas meant both parties in a conversation could be located.

The K7RA Solar Update

Tad Cook, K7RA, Seattle, reports: Our recent reporting week (December 6 - 12) had sunspots on 5 of the 7 days, with an average daily sunspot number of 9.7 -- up from 2.3 from the previous 7 days. The average daily solar flux rose from 68.9 to 70.7. Geomagnetic indices were moderate, with the average daily planetary A index increasing from 7 to 8, and the mid-latitude A index rising from 4.9 to 6.4.



The predicted solar flux over the next 45 days is 70 on December 13 - 20; 68 on December 21 - 22; 70 on December 23 - January 4; 68 on January 5 - 18, and 70 on January 19 - 26.

The predicted planetary A index is 5 on December 13 - 27; then 8, 12, 10, and 8 on December 28 - 31; 5 on January 1 - 2; 10 on January 3 - 4; 8 on January 5 - 6; 5 on January 7; 8 on January 8 - 9; 5 on January 10 - 12; 8 on January 13 - 14; 5 on January 15 - 23, and 8, 12, and 10 on January 24 - 26.

On December 11, N0JK reported from Kansas on the ARRL 10 Meter Contest:

"Much better conditions this year than last. On Saturday afternoon, had E-skip to W4 and W5, which allowed links on to F₂/TEP propagation to South America. Running just 5 W, I logged CE, CX, LU, and PY stations via E_s link. Double hop E_s to HK, P4 and PJ2. Single hop E_s to W4 and W5.

"Sunday the band conditions not nearly as good, but I see the northeast states had strong E_s to Florida. This in turn allowed them to link on to South America. Also strong single-hop E_s along west coast.

"Had some weak E_s in Kansas, heard CO8RH, but he faded out while I was fiddling with my hand key. I was able to work 9Z4Y on 10-meter CW."

Sunspot numbers for December 6 - 12 were 17, 16, 12, 12, 0, 11, and 0, with a mean of 9.7. The 10.7 centimeter flux was 69.7, 70.1, 70.5, 71.6, 71, 71, and 70.8, with a mean of 70.7. Estimated planetary A indices were 5, 10, 10, 9, 11, 7, and 4, with a mean of 8. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 3, 8, 10, 6, 8, 7, and 3, with a mean of 6.4.

Emergency Antenna Platform System Tool

December 8, 2018 - by K9HI

A fusion of robotics, amateur radio, and emergency service the Emergency Antenna Platform System (E-APS) is a tool for Amateur Radio operators (ARES, RACES) as well as First Responder organizations to turn any parking lot lamp post into an instant antenna tower.

See: <http://wc2fd.com/index.php?title=Emergency_Antenna_Platform_System> for details.

Hello Club Newsletter Editors

Vic, VE3YT and Fred, KE7X are pleased to introduce "The Successful Ham Radio Operator's Handbook", a new book aimed at new or returning hams to help them learn about the exciting challenges ham radio offers us today and to help them be successful. Attached is a news announcement describing the book in more detail. We would be pleased if you would be able to use it as an information article in your club newsletter.

73,

Fred and Vic



International Museum of World War II, Natick

Rob, WA1UMU, writes in the Wellesley ARS "The Spark Gap", November, 2018: I had a terrific visit to the WWII Museum in Natick recently. To my surprise, they had a lot of radio gear including this biscuit tin radio, which reminded me of Bruce, KC1FSZ's peppermint bark tin QRP rig ...

WA1NPO Winterfest

The first hamfest of the year Whitman Amateur radio club will be at the K of C hall route 18 in Whitman. 9am-1pm vendor set up 7am \$5.00 entry fee with raffle prizes drawn at noon. VE sessions for tech/general/extra talk in on Whitman club repeater 147.225 + pl67.

Vendors call 781-523-5010 or visit www.wa1npo.org table cost \$15.00

Connecticut Valley FM association

You are invited to a Springfield Amateur Radio Swap Fest. It is sponsored by the Connecticut Valley FM Association an ARRL affiliated Amateur Radio Club. Door Prizes, 50/50 Raffle. Coffee and donuts will be available to stave off those early morning hunger attacks. Saturday February 2nd, 2019 at the VFW Post 771, Springfield, VT is the date and place. Setup starts at 7:00AM with the main event kicking off at 8:00AM. NOTE: The entrance to the VFW is to the right of the Mobile gas station at the junction of River Street and Route 11, across from the Springfield Shopping Plaza. Free admission for all attendees! Winning the 50/50 raffle could pay for that new handheld you always wanted or cover the cost of gas, snack, and possibly a table or two. There will be a \$5.00 per table charge for hams and vendors with a two-table maximum. Set up a table to make some room in your shack for that new radio you have been looking at and recycle some of your older equipment to another Ham. Maybe set up a table to show off your favorite aspect of the hobby. (Free tables will be available for anyone wishing to present only No selling!) Can you demonstrate your logging program, do a satellite demo, show off your home brew antennas? This day is for "us"(you), to socialize with each other, make new friends and catch up with old friend. Bring your favorite presentation and share it with others. There will be plenty of fun, good times and good friends to be had by all.

New England Area Ham - Electronic Flea Market DATES 2018

2018

1 Dec Windsor CT VR+C Mus 115 Pierson LN @8AM Indoor John 860 673 0518 +

2019

19 Jan Whitman MA WARC @KoC Rt18 Chris N1CFB 508 224 8528 +

16 Feb Marlboro MA AARC @MidSch Timothy KA1OS 508 919 6136 A+

23 Feb S Burlington VT RAoNV @HI I89x14 \$9@8 \$15@6 Mitch W1SJ 802 879 6589

3 Mar Nashua NH NEARC/NEVEC Radio50@Marriot CourtYard @8A 603 772 7516 F+

9 Mar Chicopee MA MtTomARA @Castle \$5@8:30 S@6:30 Brian N1FI 860 478 6790 +

24 Mar Southington CT SARA \$5@8@HS \$20/sp@6:45 John WA1JKR 860 621 8791 F+

29,30 Mar Lewiston ME AARC ME Conv @Ramada @8 Ivan N1OXA 207 784 0350 +

7 April Framingham MA FARA 9AM@KeefeHS \$25/T Andy KC1DMM 508 310 5913 +

28 April Thompson CT ECARA @ Raceway \$3 \$15/sp Jon KA1MPG 508 943 4467 F+

3-4 May Deerfield NH NEARfest XXV @FG Mike K1TWF 978 250 1235 +

12 May E Greenbush NY EGARA FireCo Bryan W2RBJ 518 894 3500 A+

18 May Brookline NH NEARC antique 603 772 7516 +

2 June Queens, NY HOSARC @HOS Stephen WB2KDG 718 898 5599 A+

25 Aug Newtown CT CARA @TownHall \$7@8 \$20/T John W1JGM 203 417 0160 +

28 Sept Brookline NH NEARC antique 603 772 7516 +

11,12 Oct Deerfield NH NEARfest XXVI @FG Mike K1TWF 978 250 1235 +

HAM RADIO LOCAL AREA NETS

If you know of a Ham Radio Local Area Net that is not listed here, a typo on the information, or a Net listed which is no longer active, please contact John – N1UMJ at: N1UMJ@arrl.net, so this list can be updated. All Frequencies are in MHz and 6 Meters (50.0 MHz and up.), are FM Mode unless otherwise noted. Thanks!

Sunday: WA1NPO – WARPSN Net, 8:30 AM, Whitman ARC Rptr, 147.225 +, PL 67.0

8:45 AM New England phone net, 3.945 +/- LSB

NE Cracker Barrel Net, 7:00 PM Daily (Matt – W1AEM, NCO on Sun), 3.921.00 MHz LSB

Pilgrim Amateur Wireless Assoc. 10 Meter Net, 7:00 PM, 28.375.0 USB

Cape & Island Traffic Net, Mon. Tue. Thur. St. Night at 7:30 PM, Falmouth N1YHS Rptr, 147.375 + PL 110.9

Genesis ARC CW Training Net, 7:00 PM, Plymouth N1ZIZ Rptr, 146.685 – PL 131.8

Eastern MA 2 Mtr Traffic Net, Every Night at 8:00 PM, Boston W1BOS Rptr, 145.230 – PL 88.5

Norfolk County Radio Association Net, 8:00 PM, Walpole Rptr, 146.895 – PL 123.0

Monday: Cape and Islands Weather Net, 6:00 AM, Mon – Sat, Dennis K1PBO Rptr, 146.955 – PL 88.5

Fairhaven Weather Net, 8:00 PM, SEMARA Rptr, 147.000 + PL 67.0

Norfolk County Emergency Preparedness Net, 8:00 PM, Walpole Rptr, 146.895 – PL 123.0

New England DMR net, DMR-MARC repeaters talk group 3181 New England

Falmouth ARA Net, 8:30 PM, Falmouth K1RK Rptr, 146.655 – PL 88.5

Boston ARC Rag Chew Net, 9:00 PM, Boston W1BOS Rptr, 145.230 – PL 88.5

Tuesday: Massasoit ARA Net, 8:00 PM, Bridgewater W1MV Rptr, 147.180 + PL 67.0 (Except 3rd Tue!)

Genesis ARC 2 Mtr Rag-Chew Net, 7:30 PM, Plymouth N1ZIZ Rptr, 146.685 – PL 131.8

Fairhaven Weather Net, 8:00 PM, SEMARA Rptr, 147.000 + PL 67.0

Norwood Amateur Radio Club Net, 8:00 PM, Norwood Rptr, 147.210 + PL 100.0

220 MHz Day! Try to find a 220 Repeater near you and give a call out!

Wednesday: Whitman ARC 10 Meter Rag-Chew Net, 8:00 PM, 28.333.0 USB (Except 1 st Wed!)

Blackstone Valley ARC , 2 Mtr Simplex Net, 7:00 PM, 146.565

Fairhaven Weather Net, 8:00 PM, SEMARA Rptr, 147.000 + PL 67.0

Cape and Islands ARES Net, 8:00 PM, Dennis K1PBO Rptr, 146.955 – PL 88.5

Waltham Wranglers Swap Net. 9:00 PM, Waltham W1MHL Rptr , 146.64 – PL 136.5

Thursday: Fairhaven Weather Net, 8:00 PM, SEMARA Rptr, 147.000 + PL 67.0

Genesis ARC CW Training Net, 7:00 PM, Plymouth N1ZIZ Rptr, 146.685 – PL 131.8

10 Mtr General Class Rag-Chew Net, 8:00 PM, 29.470.0 FM

Sturdy Mem. Hosp. ARC ARES Practice Net, 8:30 PM, K1SMH Rptr, 147.195 + PL 127.3

900 MHz Day! Try to find a 900 Repeater near you and give a call out!

Friday: Fairhaven Weather Net, 8:00 PM, SEMARA Rptr, 147.000 + PL 67.0

Saturday: South Shore Skywarn Net, 8:00 PM, Bridgewater W1MV Rptr, 147.180 + PL 67.0

VKEMCOMM Echolink Conference node: 270177/IRLP 9508 (due to *WX-TALK* Echolink

conference node: 7203/IRLP 9219 outage) Refer to: <http://www.voipwx.net/>

Massasoit Amateur Radio Association Executive board

President Denise Sisson KC1CFO
Vice President Jeff Lehmann N1ZZN

Treasurer: Phil McNamara N1XTB

Secretary:

Call sign Trustee: Phil McNamara N1XTB

Repeater Trustees: Carl Aveni N1FY., Lou Harris N1UEC, Bob Mandeville N1EDM

2M Repeater 147.180+ (Tone 67.0)

440 Repeater 444.550+ (Tone 88.5)

APRS Node Node 144.39 W1MV-1

Packet BBS 145.09 N1XTB-4

Packet Node Brockton 145.09 W1JOE-7 (BROCK)

MARA Web page <http://www.w1mv.org/>

Newsletter Editor kb1tee@gmail.com

WARC Web Page <http://www.wa1npo.org>

Qsl via www.eqsl.cc

Skywarn www.powersrvcs.org/w1gmf/skywarn.htm

Mailing Address P.O. Box 428 Bridgewater, MA 02324

Monthly meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM at the Bridgewater Public Library in Bridgewater Center. Talk-in is on 147.180+

Our **Meetings-On-The-Air** are held all other Tuesday evenings at 8PM on 147.180+ and includes the Westlink News Report with the latest news about happenings in the world of Amateur Radio.

The **South Shore Skywarn Net** is held every Saturday evening at 8PM local time on 147.180+ and is open to all hams.

VE Exams are held the 2nd Saturday of every month, in Braintree contact Steve Cohen , W1OD via email w1od@arrrl.net. Walk-ins are no longer permitted. We will be hosting VE exams at 8:45 at the Watson building. If you know of anyone planning to take an exam, please have them drop a note to Steve to confirm a reservation.

We are in need of a newsletter editor as of February I will not have time to do the news for our club please step up and keep it going

Rick KB1TEE

Editor Rick Emord KB1TEE

TV and Movies using radio communications



Sahara is a 1943 American drama war film directed by Zoltán Korda. Humphrey Bogart stars as an American tank commander in Libya during the Western Desert Campaign of World War II. The story is credited to a story by Philip MacDonald. In *Sahara* events are depicted which point to the Battle of Gazala, an important battle of the Western Desert Campaign of World War II, fought around the port of Tobruk in Libya.



The Medium Tank M3 was an American tank used during World War II. In Britain the tank was called "General Lee", named after Confederate General Robert E. Lee, and its modified version built to British specifications, with a new turret, was called the "General Grant", named after US General Ulysses S. Grant.

Bogart makes reference to events that occurred in May–June 1942. The battle had begun with the British stronger in terms of numbers and quality of equipment, and had received many of the M3 tanks, which was the tank used in the film. A small group of American advisors and crews had come to train them in use of the equipment.



The SCR-508 radio was a mobile Signal Corps Radio used by the U.S. Army during World War I

The SCR-508 series was standardized on 22 July 1941, and used by armored forces for command and control of tank units

The British forces were routed, and as shown in *Sahara*, many tanks which were only damaged, were unable to be salvaged because of the 8th Army's retreat. The British lost virtually all their tanks, although a number of damaged tanks could be evacuated. General Rommel pursued the British into Egypt, trying to keep his opponent under pressure and denying him the opportunity to regroup. As both sides neared exhaustion, the British were able to check Rommel's advance at the First battle of El Alamein, which is where the radio report calls Bogart and tank crew to rally in the film



The crew of an M3 Lee tank, attached to the British Eighth Army, commanded by U.S. Army Master Sergeant Joe Gunn (Humphrey Bogart), and nicknamed *Lulu Belle*, become separated from their unit during a general retreat from German forces after the fall of Tobruk. Heading south across the Libyan Desert to rejoin their command, they come across a bombed-out field hospital, where they pick up a motley collection of stragglers, among them British medical officer Captain Halliday (Richard Nugent), four Commonwealth soldiers and Free French Corporal Leroux (Louis Mercier). Halliday, the only officer, cedes command to Gunn.



The group comes upon Sudanese Sergeant Major Tambul (Rex Ingram) and his Italian prisoner, Giuseppe (J. Carrol Naish). Tambul volunteers to lead them to a well at Hassan Barani. Gunn insists that the Italian be left behind, but, after driving a few hundred feet, relents and lets him join the others.

En route, Luftwaffe pilot Captain von Schletow (Kurt Kreuger) strafes the tank, seriously wounding Clarkson (Lloyd Bridges), one of the British soldiers. The German fighter aircraft is shot down and von Schletow is captured. Arriving at Hassan Barani, the group finds the well is dry. Clarkson succumbs to his wounds and they bury him there.



Tambul guides them to the desert well at Bir Acroma, but it is almost dry, providing only a trickle of water, and the group must delay their departure until they can collect as much as they can. When German scouts arrive soon afterwards, in a half-track, Gunn sets up an ambush.

Gunn finds out from one of the two survivors that their mechanized battalion, desperate for water, is following close behind. He persuades the others to make a stand to delay the Germans while Waco takes the half-track in search of reinforcements. The two Germans are released to carry back an offer: "food for water", even though there is hardly any water left.

