



Next Meeting

**Wednesday, April 11
7:30PM
Lunenburg Public Library
QSL Sort**

Come sort QSL cards at the April MARA meeting. This activity is a big draw; see QSL cards from around the world and if you're lucky you may find some addressed to you. We do the second-level sort; we have several boxes of QSL cards addressed to call signs in the "1" call area. Our task is to sort these into 27 piles -- one for each letter of the alphabet immediately following the "1" and a pile for cards that are not to "1" call signs.

When filing a card, look for a "VIA" indication; this indicates a QSL manager. The "to" call sign in such a case will be the manager's call in the VIA.

President's Corner

Hi there. I got fooled this time around; I actually forgot I needed to put my fine literature together for the newsletter. I guess there have been other things going on.

Spring is finally here and there is a hint of buds growing and grass greening and the

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Contributors To This Issue:

KB1LRL, W1HFN, AA2T,
K1JHC, W1SEX, NZ1D, N1MGO

amateur communicators are starting to stir and get stuff retuned, repaired, reworked, or revamped. Lets "git 'er done".

Now that April is here there is a bunch of things going on. There are 3 races, one big flea market, and who knows what else, oh, wait, a card sort in 1 week bring your reading glasses and fingers and play. As usual, pizza after. I'm looking for something in May and June is Elections and field day planning. Tom, AB1GF although absent of late, is going to plan out the event (with my back up as well) I don't know about you, but I look forward to field day as much as Christmas. I really would like to have the turnout we had when I first started. Maybe we'll get lucky this year. The permit is sent in, now we just need some good weather.

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Watt's Happening

Sundays, 0800 local 5330.5 (ch 1) USB
Western Mass Emergency 60M Net
Alternate frequencies are 5346.5 (ch 2),
5366.5 (ch 3), 5371.5 (ch 4), and 5403.5 (ch 5).

Sundays, 0830 local 3937
Western Mass Emergency Net. Alternate
frequency is 3942 in case of QRN, QRM, or
frequency in-use. Also a good idea to scan up
and down 10kHz if you cannot find the net.

Sundays, 0900 local 145.45-
Montachusett Emergency Net

Mondays, 2000 local 147.525 simplex
Worcester Emergency Simplex Net

Tuesdays, 1930 local 145.37-
Templeton Emergency Net

Wednesdays, 2100 local 28.341
Harvard Repeater Club
10 meter sideband net "Activity Night"

Nightly, 2100 local 146.97-
Central Mass Traffic Net

First Monday, 1900 local 3943, 7245
RACES Net

First Wednesday, 2000 local 3915
K1ARC Red Cross Net
<http://www.qsl.net/k1arc/>

Sunday April 15, Cambridge MA
Flea at MIT

Fri & Sat May 4&5, Deerfield NH
NEAR-Fest

Saturday 16 June, Brookline NH
New England Antique Radio Club

For more events, see the New England Area
Ham - Electronic Flea Market list at
<http://web.mit.edu/w1gsl/Public/ne-fleas>

President's Corner

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The linking project is moving along nicely, but there seems to be a wrinkle with our repeater and we are looking into it. The pc that powered the W1GZ link was being mental so we need to get another pc together. Gordon has been looking at the pc and software and KD1YH and myself took a trip up the elevator shaft and did a look over. We may have some things going on still so we may have more work to do on it.

That's it for now. Hope to see a capacity crowd at the card sort.

73, Ray KB1LRL

VE Team Report

The MARA Volunteer Exam Team conducted the scheduled exam session on March 28. One candidate earned a new General license. KK1X, K1JHC, K1YTS, KD1YH, KD1SM, and N1MGO were the Volunteer Examiners.

The April session is scheduled for Wednesday, April 25. All levels of examination are available. Candidates should preregister with Paul KD1YH at 978.597.6535 or phupham@verizon.net.

Welcome KB1WUG

Paul Woodcome KB1WUG of Leominster is MARA's newest member. Paul sported his brand new call at the March meeting.

Welcome, Paul and congratulations on earning your "ticket".

The MARA W1/GaZette

is published by the Montachusett Amateur Radio Association just prior to the monthly meeting. The newsletter is distributed free to members and friends of Amateur Radio.

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Annual Dues: Regular \$25
Family \$30
Fixed income \$15
Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 7:30pm
September to June

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MARA owns and operates the W1GZ repeater on 145.45 (CTCSS 74.4) in Fitchburg.

March Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Montachusett Amateur Radio Association

14 March 2012

The meeting was called to order by the president at 7:30PM. Introductions were then made and our newest member, Paul Woodcome KB1WUG was welcomed to the club. Those in attendance were: Ray KB1LRL, Gordon N1MGO, Barry W1HFN, Norm W1BYH, John KK1X, Paul WB1EWS, Tom K1JHC, Al KB1TNN, Gary K1YTS, Tim WQ1Y, Jean K1AVM, Dennis K1LGQ, Walter K1CMF, Mickey WI1Y, Ken KB1UVP, Chris KB1WKI, Ralph KD1SM, Rob KD1CY (guest speaker) and our newest member, Paul KB1WUG.

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the previous meeting as published in the newsletter, seconded and passed. The Treasurer's report was given; current balance-\$1493.18 and \$182.50 in the repeater fund.

Gordon N1MGO gave a short talk on the status of the IRLP / ECHOLINK system. An ECHOLINK node has been added and all appears to be working FB.

Paul WB1EWS mentioned that the Fitchburg 220 repeater is available if MARA wants to take it over. Subject to be discussed at a future board meeting.

Gary K1YTS mentioned that Mount Wachusett permission for Field Day is being pursued. Also that the Townsend Lion's Club annual canoe race will be held 14th April and all are urged to volunteer.

Tom K1JHC stated that contact has been made with Sholan Farms for permission to hold the 2014 The World Radiosport Team

Championship event there. He is planning to set up a temp station there to check on QRN, etc. It is hoped that three stations could be set up there. There will be three in Pepperell and six at Fort Devens.

Ray KB1LRL read an email he had received from a Jeff Gill regarding a pirate FM station in either Shirley or Lunenburg that was rebroadcasting 2M FM repeater traffic as well as some local commercial broadcasting. He mentioned that he thought it was incumbent upon us to locate this person and advise him of his transgressions.

Rob KD1CY, our guest speaker, gave a talk on SKYWARN and presented a slide show on the recent severe weather events in the area. These included the June 2011 tornado, Hurricane Irene, "Snowtober" and Tuesdays hail storm. We were all urged to attend a SKYWARN training class.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn at 8:59PM.

Respectfully Submitted
Barry W1HFN, Secretary

Leominster OEM Open House

de Jerry AA2T

Saturday, April 21 - 9:00-11:00 am,
37 Carter St., Leominster, Mass.

Learn about how you can help during a disaster or emergency event. We have many areas you can help including sheltering, communication, Rehab to name a few. Stop by to learn more about what Emergency Management is about and see how you can prepare yourself and help the community.

For more information call 978-534-7580 or email dconsalvo@leominster-ma.gov

W1QUO/W2IVI SK

de Tom K1JHC

Leominster – James M. Moran became a silent key on Tuesday March 27, 2012.

Jim was born in Sherwood, Indiana, September 25, 1918.. He graduated from High School at 16, worked and went to night school, receiving his Electrical Engineering degree from Rutgers University in 1940.

During the war he worked in the Laboratory at Harvard University on Radar Countermeasures. After the war he went to work for Barkley & Dexter Engineering Company in Boston, rising to President. He moved the company to Fitchburg, and there developed Metal detecting equipment for the Baking Industry.

Jim also developed Instrumentation for charting anomalies in the earth's gravity, as a geophysical consultant for United States and Finland. Jim was an instrument rated private pilot and also flew sail planes and balloons. He enjoyed cooking and writing and published "Cuisine Apres Dentist" (Rutledge Books, 2001).

Jim had his amateur License for 75 years. He lost his eyesight in 2004, but still continued playing the piano and violin and operating his ham radio. Sunday Mornings he carried on with his fellow Rotarians as net control on their world wide radio net.

Jim leaves his wife Claire, two sons, James Jr. of Concord, MA and Mark of Randolph, NJ.

License Course

de Paul W1SEX

With the successful conclusion of the Community Emergency Response Team training course, the City of Gardner Office of Emergency Management is now offering a full nine week Emergency Communications Amateur Radio Course.

The very natures of the disasters emergency management agency's respond to encompass working with multiple agencies and more often than not multiple jurisdictions. Often, in this type of environment the first thing to fail is communications. While most public safety agencies have reliable, hardened communications infrastructure, these systems cannot interoperate easily. Furthermore, during disasters the systems that are in place and designed for every-day use are often overloaded with excess traffic. Amateur Radio offers a solution to these problems.

Amateur Radio is an educational hobby that promotes technical excellence and international good will through two-way radio communications. Amateur Radio Operators or HAMS provide communities and emergency managers with well trained and disciplined radio operators during times of disaster. HAMS have provided communications assistance in New York City during the 9/11 terrorist attack, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, during tornados, earth quakes, wild fires, and yes of course ice storms. To see the importance of Amateur Radio to the City of Gardner please visit this website:

www.qrz.com/db/w1gcd.

Below contains information about the course and student requirements. While the class will provide 100% coverage of the hobby nature of Amateur Radio, the class is

structured to emphasize the emergency communications aspect of the hobby. An FCC examination will be offered at the end of the class. Additionally, an emergency communications exercise will be held the weekend of June 25th. Please note that class size is limited due to space availability at the EOC.

Start/End Dates: 04/24/2012 - 06/19/2012

Times: 6:00 to 9:00 P.M.

Number of Sessions: 9, Tuesday evenings

FCC License Class: Technician

Pre register required: Yes

Class Fee: \$0.00

Exam offered: Yes w/\$15.00 fee

Sponsoring Organization: City of Gardner Office of Emergency Management

Contact: Paul Topolski, Director

Phone: (978) 632-9432

Email: ptopolski@gardner-ma.gov

Class Location: Gardner EOC, South Gardner Fire Station #1

61 East Broadway

Gardner, MA 01440

Additional Information: The class will encompass all facets of Amateur Radio however emergency communications will be emphasized. Students are required to bring to class the current edition of the ARRL Technician Class License Manual, a scientific calculator, the TI-30Xa is recommended, and a digital multimeter. Please contact the instructor at ptopolski@gardner-ma.gov with any questions.

Student materials may be found at these and many other locations:

TI-30Xa calculator at Walmart

Digital Multimeters at Walmart

License Manual at ARRL.org

License Manual at Amazon.com

TI-30Xa Calculator at Amazon.com

Digital Multimeters at Amazon.com

In The Glow Of The Filaments...

de Bill, NZ1D

Part 2: In Search of Nestor Stolba's Call Sign

In Part 1 of this series (W1/GaZette vol. 54 no. 1; October 2011), I introduced the first known amateur radio club in our area, the Worcester North Radio Association, founded in late 1920, shortly after the “rebirth” of amateur radio following WWI. There were several local “hams” much earlier than that, for example, a review of 1916 ARRL membership records shows two members from Townsend, high school senior Francis Struthers, 1OQ, 18, son of the local Congregational clergyman, and Ian Rusk, 1RR, 19, son of the granite quarry operator in West Townsend. Townsend was a small town; thus it is safe to assume a larger population in the greater Fitchburg-Leominster area, but it is not known whether any organized club activity existed.

In his MARA history, Ellis Holden, W1GUI (sk), said that Nestor Stolba, W1GZ received his first license in 1911 (but the first official call letters weren't issued until 1912 or 1913). Nestor's family said he received his first radio license on his 15th birthday, which would have been on February 27, 1914 [Genesis of a Call Sign, NZ1D]. Unfortunately they did not reveal the call letters of that first license.

The ARRL membership list of February 1916 contained one-by-three calls in the first district (e.g., 1ABC was a member) so if Nestor had received his license in February 1914, he undoubtedly had held a one-by-two format call similar to 1GZ. The

December 1915 list of ARRL members clearly shows that calls beyond the 1G-series had been issued by that date. The ARRL boasted 25 league members in the first district, with a range of calls from 1AC to 1TI. Obviously, all amateurs were not league members, although H.P. Maxim undoubtedly would have preferred that they were. By 1916 Arthur Stansfield of Lawrence held the call letters 1GZ.

It appears that Nestor did not pursue a license after the WWI hiatus. After the armistice in November 1919, licenses had to be reapplied for (and applicants retested) and all call letters assigned starting from scratch. Regardless of what call letters, if any, had been assigned before the war, all call letters had gone back into the “pool” and were up for grabs. (Stew Perry, W1BB, noted 160m enthusiast, recalled going to the Boston office in the wee hours on the first day of new licensing, hoping to get 1AA. To his amazement, when he arrived he found 20 or more applicants already lined up. He received 1BB.) By December, only one month after licensing had been re-established, all the one-by-two G-series calls had been issued; e.g., 1GW, Herbert K. Nock of Newburyport; 1GX, William J. Hill of Boston; 1GY, Lee A. Bates of Worcester; and 1GZ, William H. Buffinton of Fall River.

In Genesis of a Call Sign I wrote that 1GZ had been vacant after WWI until assigned to Willis Brown c. 1924 or '26. New research shows that William Buffinton received the call letters in 1919, but for some reason apparently did not renew (terms were two years). The 1922 list showed the call letters vacant. Buffinton had been very active prior to WWI and probably had a license then (unknown call letters) for he was president of

the Fall River Amateur Wireless Association at its founding in late 1915 or early 1916.

Meanwhile, Nestor, 18 and fresh out of high school, already had gone “down to the sea in ships” in the summer of 1917, not as a radioman but as a fireman on the SS Gov. Cobb. The following year he was the third assistant engineer on the SS Lake Annette, a profession he remained in for at least the next five or six years.

We know the government generally assigns call letters sequentially from the pool. Thus it didn't look likely that Nestor could have received W1GZ as part of the sequential draw in 1947. All of the one-by-two format call letter sequences had been assigned years before. For example, Bill Voedisch, W1UD (sk), received W1QKX the same year. The FCC had not yet started wholesale re-issuing vacant call letters. That system didn't start until about 1953. So how did Nestor get W1GZ?

It turns out that the FCC did have a heart after all and they made exceptions to the sequential system, especially to former holders of station licenses. Further, if you could show that you held a previous license, even as far back as before the WWI hiatus, the FCC would try to reissue your old call letters or ones reasonably close. Since Nestor received W1GZ when he returned to amateur radio in late 1947 (a previous newsletter showed one of his earliest hand-made QSL cards of January 1948), it seemed logical to believe that he received the one-by-two format call because he had held a similar call prior to 1917.

As to what those first call letters were, “We'll probably never know for sure,” I ventured in Genesis of a Call Sign. The FCC and its

predecessor agencies' license records had been lost to fire in the late 1960s, thus short of some fortuitous but highly unlikely discovery in a dusty Fitchburg attic, or painstakingly pouring over old call books, if and where available, his first call letters probably would never be known to us. But the keeper of history must embrace the idea that his story is never finished. New facts may, and often will, surface.

Call it inspiration, perspiration or perhaps just serendipity, but after pouring over years of Fitchburg newspapers looking for various subjects, an article in September 1949 virtually leaped off the page at me. Entitled “Man Stricken Blind Flying Given Radio Transmitter by Insurance Co. Group,” the caption underneath the accompanying photograph read in part, “Nestor W. Stolba blind local ace radio ham, is shown...fondling the costly amateur radio voice and code transmitter presented by former fellow workers and officials....” The article went on to relate how he had gone blind while flying (and landing) a company plane in Pennsylvania and his coworkers at Employers Liability Assurance Co. had presented him with a Collins transmitter upon his retirement. Alas, my elation at this exciting discovery plummeted into disappointment -- the article did not mention any former call letters or reference to his earlier licensing. “Rats!”

Ah, but if it made the local newspaper, I thought, maybe it somehow had caught the attention of the ARRL. Nervous as a boy on his first date, I scanned QST magazines of the same time frame. My reward appeared in the December 1949 Operating News column, in a photograph with the caption, “At a dinner in Fitchburg, Mass., representatives of his many amateur friends and

business colleagues presented a Collins 32-V-2 transmitter to Nes Stolba, W1GZ. Completely blind for the last four years, Nes (formerly 1GY) has turned to amateur radio after a lapse of many years....”

And there you have it amigos mios. When Nestor applied for his license, his old call “1GY” was taken but W1GZ was vacant. The previous holder, Willis Brown, had relinquished it in 1942 when he moved to “three-land.” So now we know that our club call letters, W1GZ, actually have their roots not in 1GZ, but in 1GY, one of the earliest amateur radio licenses in the area, issued to the 15-year-old son of an immigrant cigar maker less than two years after amateur radio was officially instituted in the U.S.

Breaking News!

de NZ1D

“Curiouser and curiouser!” cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English). “Now I’m opening out like the largest telescope that ever was!”

On the last day of December, I happened to be reading about ARRL's 2012 Straight Key Night and I was inexplicably drawn to an announcement of AMSAT's version of SKN on OSCAR, conducted by AMSAT for all radio amateurs throughout the world. I was somewhat surprised to read, “This year's event is dedicated to the memory of Don Brown, W1JSM....Don was a longtime, enthusiastic VHF/UHF and satellite operator, and one of our most frequent Best Fist winners.”

What's so unusual about that, you ask? Well, I don't normally read AMSAT bulletins and, as a matter of fact, this was the only time in 48 years of hamming that I recall doing so. But I was drawn to it like Alice was drawn to eat that small cake marked with the words “EAT ME.” Why?

Club members who have been following my little saga about the origins of the club's call sign know that the owner of the 1929 QSL card that sparked this journey into our past was the former 1GZ (aka W1GZ), Arlington school teacher Willis Brown. As I wrote in the W1/GaZette (May 2011), I had recently discovered that Willis Brown's son Donald, a microwave engineer, had been living among us all this time. Born in Rutland in 1920, where his father had started out as a young school teacher, Don later attended Arlington schools and Tufts University and worked in Wilmington, MA, until his retirement in 1993.

But wait, there's more! Recently I more or less stumbled on another interesting piece of information: Willis Brown's son Don was himself one of us...an amateur radio operator, whose call sign was...yup, you guessed it! W1JSM. I don't know when he was first licensed but if the call is an original issue, it goes back to about 1936 or 37, when his father was still W1GZ.

It's fun to contemplate whether Don was aware of Nes Stolba or our club, both of whom, at different times, held his father's former call. Who knows, one of us may have worked W1JSM on some band in the past.

Townsend Squannacook Canoe and Kayak Race

The Townsend Lion's Club will hold its annual Squannacook River Canoe and Kayak race on Saturday April 14.

ARES operators have supported this event for several years, providing coverage at a dozen strategic points along the river course from the VFW in West Townsend to Harbor Pond. Over 100 canoes and kayaks typically enter into this event.

The radio operators track each of the race participants from start to finish allowing the event organizers to dispatch assistance if needed more rapidly and to the part of the river where it may be needed.

Interested operators should contact Gary K1YTS to learn more.

Groton Road Race

The 21st Annual Groton Road Race is scheduled for Sunday, April 29. This event consists of a 5k and 10k foot race along starting down Main Street in Groton and continuing along scenic back roads to return to the starting point. Over a thousand runners participate in this event.

ARES operators have supported the Groton Road Race since the second year. We provide vital communications links between the several public safety agencies who assist the Groton Police Department with traffic control for this event.

Interested operators should contact Ralph KD1SM to learn more.

W1GZ Echolink/IRLP node

de Gordon N1MGO

I have finished the work on the IRLP node and installed ECHOLINK software, so our node is now a dual node. You can connect to the ECHOLINK side by using echolink software or nodes to connect to W1GZ-R (node number 688832).

The incoming ECHOLINK server will allow up to 8 simultaneous connections.

You can also use the repeater to connect out to echolink nodes the same way you would IRLP nodes.

USING DTMF tones:

Send "C0*", unkey, wait for the announcement

If IRLP node:

Send the 4 digit node number

If ECHOLINK node:

Send # plus the node number

To end the call send "73" or "D1*" to bring the link down and return the repeater to normal.

Have fun!

Gordon N1MGO



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