



## Next Meeting

**Wednesday, October 10  
7:30PM  
Public Safety Building  
Lunenburg**

Due to a conflict with scheduling the Lunenburg library for October the October monthly meeting will be held in the training room of the Lunenburg Public Safety Building. Thanks to Lunenburg Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Sullivan for allowing us the use of the room under the auspices of the RACES program.

Do not use the parking area in front or to the right of the building; park in the far right rear corner to avoid interference with emergency vehicles. The entrance to the training room is in the rear center of the building.

## President's Corner

If anyone was operating during Sept 28-30 got one heck of a treat when Gordon, Charlie and myself were working the WW RTTY contest and found the bands W-I-D-E open! 10 and 15 were worldwide. It was very exciting to get contacts from New Zealand, Australia, and Japan on those bands. What impressed me was that one

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## Contributors To This Issue:

KB1LRL, W1HFN, NZ1D, KB1JXJ

contact, South Korea was a rare one. Each time I work a contest I find I learn a bit more as to how all this works. During that time I found myself coaching a newly licensed operator some of the techniques on operating that mode. This was a great opportunity to inspire, myself as well as others, and continues to enrich in the hobby.

The above kind of gave me an inspiration and an idea, I was kind of stuck for a presentation for this month and this will in turn challenge some of you. I want each one coming to the meeting to have a "mini lesson" someone will present a 5 minute topic on something radio related. It does not matter if you are 2 days or 60 years into the hobby. What this is designed to do is teach someone, as well as yourself as you will probably need to research it yourself.

If you are selected and you do not have

*continued on next page*

## 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/>

**Fri & Sat, 12 & 13 October, Deerfield NH**  
NEAR-Fest <http://near-fest.com/>

**Sunday 21 October, Cambridge MA**  
Flea at MIT; last one for 2012

**Saturday 3 November, Londonderry NH**  
Interstate Repeater Society flea market

Additional ham fest and flea market  
information can be found on the W1GSL  
New England Area Ham - Electronic Flea  
Market list at <http://www.swapfest.us>

## President's Corner

*continued from page one*

anything you will be quizzed from the  
question pools for that time. Now keep in  
mind, this is not meant to put anyone on  
the spot, and this is supposed to be fun, yet  
educational (I hope!)

Remember the meeting is at the Lunenburg  
public safety building. Don't forget to park  
on the right side in the back corner.

See you there!  
Ray KB1LRL

## VE Team Report

The MARA Volunteer Examiner team  
conducted an Amateur Radio licensing  
exam session in September for three  
individuals. One Technician Class, one  
General Class, and one Extra Class license  
were earned.

Thanks to Volunteer Examiners Tom K1JHC,  
Gary K1YTS, Paul KD1YH, John KK1X, and  
Ralph KD1SM for holding these sessions.

The MARA Volunteer Exam Team sched-  
ules sessions for the fourth Wednesday of  
every month at the Lunenburg Senior  
Center, 25 Memorial Drive, Lunenburg MA.

The October session is scheduled for 24  
October. All levels of examination are  
available. Candidates should pre-register  
with Paul KD1YH at 978.597.6535 or  
[phupham@verizon.net](mailto:phupham@verizon.net). If no candidates have  
pre-registered by the Saturday prior to the  
scheduled session the session will be canceled.

## 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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Club Secretary: Barry Fox W1HFN  
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.

## September Meeting Report

Minutes of the Montachusett Amateur Radio Association

12 Sept 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Ray KB1LRL. Introductions were made, those in attendance were: Ray KB1LRL, Gary K1YTS, Tom K1JHC, Norm W1BYH, Gordon N1MGO, Paul KD1YH, Tom AB1GF, Ralph KD1SM, Charlie KT1I, Chris KB1WKI, Paul WB1EWS, Al KB1TNN, Bob KB1JZU, Ken KB1UVP, Steve (no call yet), and Barry W1HFN. Our guest speaker was Dennis K1LGQ and his assistant, Jean K1AVM.

Ray proposed a new refreshment plan; a member volunteer each month to provide same for the next month's meeting. Tom AB1GF volunteered to handle refreshments for the Oct meeting. It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of last June's meeting as it appeared in the newsletter. Paul KD1YH was applauded for his efforts on the club web site. Gordon received similar plaudits for work on the echo link project.

Treasurer's report; the balance for July and August is \$1,285.23 with \$182.50 in the repeater fund.

Due to the library using the meeting room for another function next month, we will be meeting at the Lunenburg Public Safety building. Members are requested to park in the far right hand side lot away from all other vehicles.

It was suggested that all new licensees who test with our VE group be given a year's

free club membership, also that a “lending library” of equipment might be a good idea to help get these newcomers started.

Paul WB1EWS gave the club the repeater controller for the 220 repeater that we will be installing at Burbank in the future. Gordon N1MGO mentioned that the CQ WW RTTY contest will be held at the end of Sept and all are welcome to his QTH to observe and/or participate.

There was a refreshment / socializing break at 7:55.

The meeting resumed at 8:05 and the floor was given over to Dennis K1LGQ. He gave a most interesting talk on QRP rigs and operations.

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:00, seconded and carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barry W1HFN  
Secretary MARA



Dennis K1LGQ gives an animated talk about QRP at the September meeting

## In the Glow of the Filaments...

de Bill, NZ1D

Part 3: Local Radio Pioneers...The Pre-War Years

In the last part of our trip back into the club's genesis and evolution, I wrote, "...the keeper of history must embrace the idea that his story is never finished." As I continued researching the early local ham activities, I uncovered new information, some of it expected, and some of it unexpected, such as Nes Stolba's original 1948 W1GZ QSL cards found in a collection in North Carolina. That said, it is equally important to "right written wrongs." I also found that several errors had crept into my little booklet written back in 2007. The curse of those who write things down for all to see is, of course, that they are written down for all to see. So for those who purchased and have retained the little booklet I apologize for the errors, the most egregious of which will be corrected in the unfolding narrative of this series.

Why this new series? For the newer members of the club, the impetus for the 2007 booklet was to pursue the origin of W1GZ, Nestor Stolba's, and subsequently the club's, call sign. Stolba was a founder and first president of what has become the current club. Secondary to that was to confirm whether Stolba had had an earlier license and, if so, what the call letters were. As I gathered and sifted ords and tidbits, this new project seemed to lean more toward the "genesis of an amateur radio club." The grail has been found (i.e., Nestor Stolba's 1914 call letters) as described in Parts 1 and 2 of this narrative. "The cat is out of the bag," so to

speak. We're basically done with the 1GY transition to W1GZ, the rest of the story is now the genesis of the current club itself.

This narrative is an attempt to document the rise of organized amateur radio in our little corner of the world, comprising Fitchburg, Leominster and the immediate surrounding towns in northern Worcester and western Middlesex Counties. In the process perhaps we can get to know something of some of the local pioneers of our hobby, who they were, where they got their start in the hobby and when, and why they pursued amateur radio, which must have been seen by many of their contemporaries as some arcane magic art. To our parents and grandparents, talking long distance over two thin strands of copper was enigmatic enough, but talking without the wire...preposterous! Wireless signals spanning the continent... incredulous!

I have often wondered about the pull that wireless had on "small-town" boys like Fitchburg's Stolba, Townsend's Rusk and Struthers, Pepperell's Malcom Woodman, and other yet undiscovered early local radio experimenters. What was happening that caught their attention? Maybe it was a teacher, for radio was often part of the manual arts curriculum in schools at that time. (All I got was woodworking!) Emerging technologies like the aeroplane, the wireless and the motorcar were heavily romanticized in the books and magazines of the day. Magazines like *Amateur Work* published in 1904 was soon followed by *Modern Electrics*, and *Electrical World*. Hugo Gernsback started *Modern Electronics* in 1908.

By 1912 there were an estimated 10,000 unregulated "amateur" radio experimenters in the US. Maxim and Tuska organized the

ARRL in 1914 and started QST the next year. Rival Gernsback countered with *Electrical Experimenter*. Although this burgeoning "ham" secret circle initially dropped to about 1,200 after the government instituted testing and licensing, it gradually regrew to about 6,000 until stopped by war in 1917.

The infant wireless also was fast becoming the life-blood of the shipping industry. Although early use was primarily for the convenience of the company and passengers, disasters such as the RMS Republic in 1909 and the RMS Titanic in 1912 and the wireless' role in the ensuing rescues caught the world's attention. The leaders of the world's maritime services, both commercial and military, realized that they couldn't survive without the wireless and thus recruited heavily. What young man could resist the idea of sailing away to far off, exotic lands as a shipboard "sparks"? While Stolba (ex-1GY) went to sea to be an engineer, at least one of the local amateurs, Struthers (ex-10Q), appears to have worked as a shipboard wireless operator and later as a "radio engineer" for the Navy.

Was Stolba influenced by the Titanic disaster? One unplanned influence on young experimenters may have been the Titanic, whose urgent calls of "CQD DE MGY" and "SOS DE MGY" crackled across the airwaves on that fateful April night in 1912. This momentous event, and the wireless "chatter" that accompanied it, was the thing of headlines for weeks in practically every newspaper throughout the land.

On Monday, April 15, Fitchburg residents woke up to "breaking news" on the *Daily Sentinel's* front page. Datelined Halifax, Nova Scotia, an oversized, bold headline screamed, "SEA HORROR IS AVERTED, Monster White Star Liner Titanic Remains

Afloat After Collision with Iceberg on Maiden Trip and Her 1400 Passengers May All Be Saved -- Wireless Brings Ships to Rescue."

Of course, we all know how it really played out even if our imaginations weren't captured by Leonardo and Kate on the silver screen. Almost two-thirds of the 2,224 passengers and crew -- over 1,500 souls -- lost to the frigid waters of the Atlantic. Over the next several days, as the conflicting reports of the disaster trickled in via wireless to the rescuers and the general public, it became painfully apparent that the initial news had been wildly optimistic.

Nestor Stolba was an impressionable youth of 13 when the "unsinkable" behemoth went down. Was he influenced by discussions in the Stolba household? His brother Edward was already at sea as a marine engineer. Brother Ernest, a newspaper reporter at the Daily Sentinel, certainly would have been up on such a momentous event. Less than two years after the Titanic disaster, young Nes, sporting his new amateur radio "ticket," became one of the area's first amateur radio operators.

Was Nes aware that his own station's call letters 1GY were strikingly similar to the Titanic's MGY? (Like the numeral prefix designated US amateur call letters, the letter prefix "M" designated Marconi, the owner of the ship's station. All Marconi-owned stations carried an "M" prefix regardless of the ship's country of registration, thus one could argue that 1GY and MGY had the same suffix.) A meaningless coincidence, you say, but perhaps of significance to an imaginative fifteen-year-old schoolboy.

Next time: "What do you suppose he's doing with all those wires in the trees?"

## Leominster Shelter Drill Postponed

The sheltering drill planned by Leominster Emergency Management for September 22 was postponed. A new date has not yet been announced as of the GaZette deadline.

## CQWW RTTY contest

Gordon N1MGO and Pauline KB1JXJ hosted at Multi Operator 2 Transmitter effort for the CQ WorldWide RTTY contest.

The contest ran from 0000Z Saturday September 29 to 2400Z Sunday September 30.

Pauline KB1JXJ provided the following photos.



Gordon N1MGO at operating position 1



Charlie KT1I at operating position 2



Above: Tom AB1GF hard at work on a computer project outside of the radio shack.

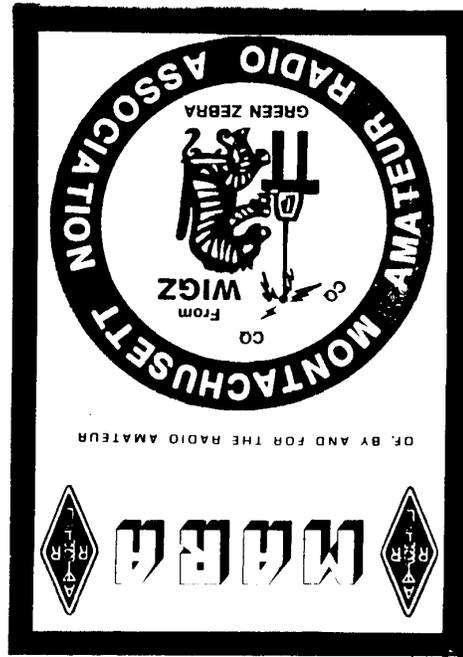


Above: Bill N1UZ operates



Ray KB1LRL at operating position 2

Photos courtesy KB1JXJ



**Montachusett Amateur Radio Association**  
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