



THE COMPASS

Official Newsletter of the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club

August 2015

Volume 43

Issue #8

Upcoming Club Events

Next General Meeting:

Thursday, Aug. 27th,
8 PM at the EOC

Operators Needed:
Babylon Village Fair:
Sunday, September
13th. The fair will be
from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. To
volunteer email Art at
wa2kxe@aol.com

**John, KB2SCS, Needs
Radio Operators for
the Suffolk County
Marathon on Sept. 13th.
Sing up at islipares.org**

**GSBARC's FREE
License Classes Tuesday
nights 7:30-9:30 PM.
Technician Class Starts
September. 1st**

Visit us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/gsbarc



Take a Hike!



John, W2JGH (l) and Walter, KA2CAQ on the trail in the Catskills

Inside this issue of The Compass...

- GSBARC Goes to the Catskills
- AMSAT News: Fox 1
- KB6NU's Guest Column
- Inside the Squirrel Cage (a column)
- New Raffle Coming!

Upcoming Special Events

**Fire Island Lighthouse
August 15th & 16th**
**Babylon Village Fair
September 13th**
**Hope for the Warriors
Run Saturday Nov. 7th**

President's Message



August is here and hopefully everyone's summer is going well. I hope that you have had time for those antenna projects that needed to get done. As you all know we will be at the [Fire Island Lighthouse](#) on the 15th and 16th this month. We will be setting up and operating 2 stations and hope to be on the air no later than 9 a.m. Set up will be starting at 6 a.m. for all you early birds. We will operate from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the 15th and then on Sunday, the 16th, we plan to start again at 6 a.m. and operate until we decide it's time to wrap it up.

I have confirmed with Pete, W2JV, that he will be at the event to operate satellites. I hope to see a big turn out as this is a great location and it's always a good time for all. The weather is looking to be great too!

As September approaches we are getting ready for a number of public service events. On September 13th there are 2 events going on simultaneously: we have the [Babylon Village Country Fair](#), which takes place at Argyle Park in Babylon Village. [Art, WA2KXE](#) is looking for operators for this event which is a very easy event for first time operators. The second event is the [Suffolk county Marathon](#). I will be helping out John, KB2SCS, with this event along with a number of other operators from GSBARC. This is a very big event and Islip ARES needs a large number of radio operators. So please consider volunteering to help out. Visit their webpage at www.islipares.org to sign up to volunteer.

November 7th is the [Hope for the Warriors Run](#) and we still need a lot of operators for this most worthy of causes. Please go to our website and click on the link to sign up to

help. If you have helped out in the past we thank you and would love to see you all again—if you have not helped out with this event we welcome you to do so as it is a great event to be part of.

We were discussing our next raffle at the board meeting and have decided on 3 pieces of test equipment for next year's prizes. They will be: 1st prize is a *Rigol DS1054Z* 4 channel digital oscilloscope, 2nd prize will be an MFJ-269C antenna analyzer, and 3rd place will receive an Extech EX330 Digital Multimeter. You can view these items on this [Amazon.com wish list](http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/giftlist/1C7U2UKC90GCM): www.amazon.com/gp/registry/giftlist/1C7U2UKC90GCM

I hope to see you all at the general meeting on the 27th. If you can't make it I hope to see you at one of the open houses or public service events.

Don't forget the *Fire Island Lighthouse* is the 15th and 16th!

73. *John Melfi, W2HCB* 



Bob, W2YW (left) talks back to LI Repeaters from the Fire Tower while John, W2JGH (right), finds a nice shady place to play with his KX3 and AlexLoop.



Kevin, AB2ZI (left) using an Arrow© Satellite Antenna for gain to talk back to Long Island. Check out the views!

A Catskills Adventure for GSBARC

By Kevin, AB2ZI



As many of you are probably aware, I like to hike and one of my favorite things to do while hiking is to set up a portable HF station and make some contacts to activate that mountain's summit.

One of the other clubs I belong to is the Catskills 3500 Club, which is named after the Catskill peaks whose altitude exceeds 3500 feet. Well, last year I was asked if I'd do a talk and demonstration on amateur radio on top of one of those mountains, Balsam Lake Mountain specifically. I said yes and set a date of August 8th for the event.

As the day got closer I canvassed our membership for likely victims, er, I mean "volunteers," to accompany me and Bob, W2YW on this little adventure. The hike is not a very hard one, just under 3 miles each way with 1100 feet of altitude gain from the parking area, and so I thought it would be a lot of fun and would allow some members who may not be regular hikers to get out into the woods and have some fun together. Also, this mountain has a nice fire tower and restored cabin at the summit with some gorgeous views of the area.

From our pool of over 160 members I got John, W2JGH and Walter, KA2CAQ to come along in addition to 2 of my nephews who are also hams (Kyle, KC2CHF and Justin Smith, KC2CHG). One of John's friends named Pete also showed up on Saturday morning to make the long drive upstate with us.

We all made it up and back safely and everyone had a great time, especially after the hike when we visited Brio's Brick Oven Pizzeria in Phoenicia!

I'd love to take more people with me hiking, so if you'd like to go sometime, let me know! 📞



Signing in at the trail register (so the rescue party knows how many people to look for and next of kin to notify!)



Operating with my KX3 and AlexLoop antenna, you can also see Walter, KA2CAQ operating QRP CW in the background on a rock.



Walter shows how the REAL QRP hams do it!

How Much Performance Do You Really Need?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU



reader recently e-mailed me:

“Just a quick question – Are you still in the thinking stage about getting an Elecraft K3? Great rigs, aren’t they?”

“What I would like you to think about, though, is how many contacts you log in one year’s time. If you log 100 per year (check your log) then your cost will be \$50 per contact for that year. If you log 500, then your cost will be \$10 per contact. If you keep that rig for three years, and log 500 contacts over that time, then you will have spent \$10 per contact.

“Now, consider what that rig will be worth in three years. Will there be something come along that just blows the K3 away in terms of performance?”

I replied:

“K3s are great radios. I’ve just purchased a used KX3, though, so I am not planning on getting a K3 in the near future. I have purchased a 50-W HobbyPCB amp to use with the KX3, so I’m not going full QRP.

“I make a lot of QSOs/year. My average over the last 13 years is more than three per day, and that doesn’t include contacts made with other callsigns, such as the club station, or on Field Day. I’m sure that my cost/QSO will be low enough to justify my investment.

“In addition, rigs seem to keep their value pretty well. I’d guess that you can sell a three-year-old K3 for at least 80% of what you paid for it. I think that one of the reasons that an Elecraft K3 is worth the investment is that Elecraft provides such good customer support, and that they are continually improving their radios. For example, they just came out with a new synthesizer board, with better RF specs, for the K3.


“I don’t see anyone coming out with a radio that blows the K3 away in terms of performance in the near future, although I might be wrong. FlexRadio has perhaps the best chance of doing that, but you’ll have to buy into the Flex user interface philosophy to take advantage of that. I think that Elecraft and Flex, plus the three Japanese manufacturers, will make incremental performance improvements over the coming years, leapfrogging one another as they bring out new models.

“One thing to think about is how much performance is overkill? Just like you can now buy a computer that has way more computer power than the average user will ever need, I think that most of these high-end radios offer way more performance than the average ham will ever need. It’s cool to look at the Sherwood Engineering receiver tests and see that your rig is in the top ten, but will the average ham actually notice the difference? My guess is probably not.

“Thanks for sparking my thought process on these issues.”

My guess is that most amateur radio operators don’t think about what the rig will be worth in three years when buying an HF transceiver. Instead, they’re looking at what the radios that are currently available cost, and when there’s a big price difference between two models that appeal to them, they’re trying to figure out if the higher price is warranted. In many cases, the lower-priced model wins out. It’s not because the more expensive radio isn’t better, but it’s not that much better.

It all goes back to how much performance you actually need. Yes, you can probably do more with a \$10,000 radio than you can with a \$1,500 radio, but is it really worth the added expense? In other words, are you going to have more fun with a \$10,000 radio than you are with a \$1,500 radio?

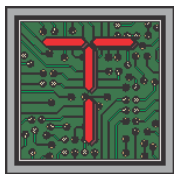
Let me know what you think. E-mail me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com. 

When he’s not agonizing over what radio to buy, Dan operates CW on 30m and blogs about amateur radio at www.kb6nu.com. He’s the author of the “No Nonsense” amateur radio license study guides and the CW Geek’s Guide to Having Fun with Morse Code.



Inside the Squirrel Cage

by Caryn, KD2GUT



Britain's King George III would feel a sense of satisfaction, no doubt, to learn that at least one of the original 13 Colonies is still as rebellious as it had been back in 1776.

In my case, that would be Pennsylvania: History records it as a welcoming and tolerant settlement – but on Independence Day Weekend, what was eventually to become our new nation's Keystone State did not have a particularly open door to my 100 watts. Well into the third and final day of the 13 Colonies Special Event, I was still one station shy of a “clean sweep,” an achievement that brings bragging rights to having worked all 13 states' stations – one in each original colony, all bearing the names of historical figures.

Missing in action was Special Event Station K2M in Pennsylvania, which carried the name of Paul Revere. I chased him up and down the band, aided by the spotter site we were encouraged to consult. And then, in the final minutes of Sunday, I finally heard him, K2M unmistakably calling CQ, clear as a cannon. (It was a much more welcome call than “The Sunspots are Coming, the Sunspots are Coming.”) Finally, my battle strategy was about to unfold: There wasn't even a pileup. The QRN was bearable.

But he just couldn't – didn't – hear me. Mine was not the transmitter heard round the world, much less in the 13 Colonies – and not this one colony, anyway.

I had already celebrated snaring of the two bonus stations

– WM3PENN – operating out of Philadelphia in, of all places, K2M's Pennsylvania back yard. So why was Paul Revere a traitor to my transceiver?

I may never know why. But that's not to say I didn't want to know. Then, the next weekend, watching a DVD of the 2000 sci-fi thriller, “Frequency,” I got inspired. In that film, a grieving son, tinkering with his late father's ham radio equipment, finds himself in a kind of time travel QSO with his then-young father, a day or so before dad was to perish in a firefighting tragedy in Queens. Through that fortuitous QSO, and the ones that followed during this rare atmospheric time warp, he was able to change the course of his own personal history.

So I got to thinking: Next time, why not CQ Paul Revere – the original one – and get the QSL card to end all QSL cards?

Now that would be a special event. Some might even call it downright revolutionary. ☺



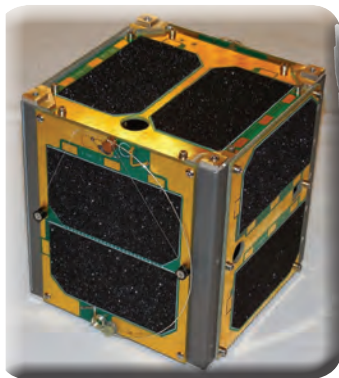


Imagine!

Your amateur radio contacts via satellite ...

AMSAT makes it possible ...

We'll show you how!



AMSAT Fox-1C will fly aboard the 2015 SHERPA SpaceX Falcon 9 launch

AMSAT pioneered the concept of small satellites in low orbits. AMSAT's next satellite effort, called Project "Fox", consists of a series of small CubeSats that will provide FM transponders with a 70 cm uplink with a 2 meter downlink that will match the ground performance of previous FM satellites.

AMSAT is preparing a fleet of five amateur radio cubesats ...

- **Fox-1A** will launch on a NASA ELaNa flight during the 3rd quarter of 2015 from Vandenberg AFB.
- **Fox-1B** will fly with the Vanderbilt University radiation experiments expected in 2016.
- **Fox-1C** will launch on Spaceflight's maiden mission of the SHERPA multi-cubesat deployer on a SpaceX Falcon 9 flight during the 3rd quarter of 2015.
- **Fox-1D** is a flight spare for Fox-1C. If not needed as a spare it will fly with the University of Iowa HERCI radiation mapping experiment.
- **Fox-1E** "Evolution" will carry a Mode J linear transponder. The transponder is planned to be 30 kHz wide and will also have a 1200 bps BPSK telemetry beacon. Launch opportunities are being developed.

Recommended checklist for your station gear to get started using AMSAT's Fox-1 satellites

Dual-band radio operation
FM transmitter capability on 435 MHz and FM receiver capability on 145 MHz. A full-duplex radio (capable of receiving and transmitting simultaneously) is recommended. Options include:

- A dual-band, full-duplex handheld radio
- Separate handheld radios (one to transmit and one to receive)
- Separate multi-mode radios such as a Yaesu FT-817 (in FM mode).
- Even if you don't have a UHF transmitter you can still monitor the 145 MHz downlink on most 2M FM rigs - get started by listening.

External antenna
To make successful contacts, operating with your HT's flexible antenna is not recommended as your only antenna. These popular directional antenna options include:

- Dual-band Arrow Antenna
- Dual-band Elk Log Periodic Antenna
- Building your own, to get started see: http://www.amsat.org/?page_id=2144
- Some satellite passes may be occasionally received with just the flexible antenna so don't let lack of a beam prevent you from receiving experimentation!

Satellite Tracking Applications
You'll need to know when the satellite is in range of your station. You'll also need to know where to point your antenna. Web-based trackers will get you started:

- <http://tinyurl.com/amsat-predict>
- <http://www.n2yo.com/>
- <http://amsat.org.ar/sat.htm>
- Linux orbit prediction software includes the Predict and GPredict programs.
- Windows orbit prediction software includes SatPC32 (visit the AMSAT store)
- Mac software is MacDoppler (visit the AMSAT store)

AMSAT® is dedicated to keeping amateur radio in space. Its membership includes a worldwide group of radio hams who monitor amateur radio satellite signals and use satellites for QSOs. They also design and build the satellites, and control them once in orbit.

Since 1961, more than 70 amateur radio satellites have successfully reached orbit and begun operation. Our Vision is to deploy satellite systems with the goal of providing wide area and continuous coverage. AMSAT will continue active participation in human space missions and support a stream of Low Earth Orbiting satellites developed in cooperation with the educational community and other amateur satellite groups.

We are always interested in future development for opportunities to reach higher orbits and pioneering communications capabilities.

We'd Like to Have You as a Member

Both you and AMSAT will benefit when you join. You get the AMSAT Journal bimonthly and support from AMSAT Area Coordinators. Member dues and donations provide AMSAT's primary support.

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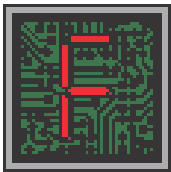


THE AMSAT REPORT:

FROM PETE, W2JV

JULY 2015

FOX 1 TO LAUNCH IN SEPTEMBER...



ox-1 will launch on an NRO mission therefore the exact September launch date is classified and will be released a few days before liftoff.

Fox-1 Frequencies:

	Uplink FM (67 Hz tone)	Downlink FM
Fox-1A	435.180 MHz	145.980 MHz
RadFxSat/Fox-1B*	435.250 MHz	145.960 MHz
Fox-1C*	435.300 MHz	145.920 MHz
	1267.300 MHz **	145.920 MHz
Fox-1D*	435.350 MHz	145.880 MHz
	1267.350 MHz **	145.880 MHz

* Pending IARU Coordination. If needed, changes will be announced.

** U/V and L/V operations switchable by command station, not operational simultaneously. According to Buxton, the team is planning to have an affordable L band uplink ground station available to amateurs by the time Fox-1C is on orbit.

+ Fox-1A will launch on a NASA ELaNa flight scheduled for September, 2015 from Vandenberg AFB. Fox-1A is a passenger aboard this launch driven by the schedule of the primary payload. When updates are available they will be announced via the ANS and in the AMSAT Journal.

+ Fox-1B will fly with the Vanderbilt University radiation experiments expected in 2016.

+ Fox-1C will launch on Spaceflight's maiden mission of the SHERPA multi-cubesat deployer on a SpaceX Falcon 9 flight planned for late 2015.

+ Fox-1D is a flight spare for Fox-1C. If not needed as a spare it will fly with the University of Iowa HERCI radiation mapping experiment.

+ Fox-1E "Evolution" will carry a Mode J linear transponder. The transponder is planned to be 30 kHz wide and will also have a 1200 bps BPSK telemetry beacon. Launch opportunities are being developed, to be announced at a later date.

73, Pete W2JV

The Prizes for our next raffle. Please consider buying a book of tickets when they become available to help support the club!



1st Prize: Rigol 1054Z Oscilloscope



2nd Prize (left) MFJ-269C Antenna Analyzer
3rd Prize (right) Extech EX330 Digital Multimeter

YAHOO!

GSBARC has a New Yahoo Group and the old one has been deleted

If you are a member in good standing and want to join the club's new Yahoo group, go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/gsb-arc/>

and click on "Join Group" Be sure to add a note when filling out your information with your call sign so we know who you are!

Club Apparel

Want a shirt, jacket, hat, sweatshirt or t-shirt with a Great South Bay club logo? We now use *Mr. Shirt*, located at 80 East Montauk Hwy in Lindenhurst (www.mrshirt.com). Now you can get color matched backgrounds on your logo too. Check them out...

ARES/RACES Information

Div. 1—Town of Babylon ARES/RACES

Net: 146.685/R, Mondays 8:15 PM
EC/RO: John Melfi, W2HCB, (631) 669-6321

Div. 2—Town of Huntington ARES/RACES

Net: 147.210 MHz +600/ PL 136.5,
Mondays 7:00 PM

EC/RO Steven W. Hines, N2PQJ, (###) ###-####

Div. 3—Town of Islip ARES/RACES

EC/RO: John J Blowsky, KB2SCS, 631-467-2410

Div. 4—Town of Smithtown ARES/RACES

Net: 145.430 MHz, PL136.5, Mondays 7:30 PM
EC/RO: Joe Albertus, KB2IOE, 631-664-6709

Div. 5—Town of Brookhaven ARES/RACES

EC/RO: Ted Debowy, AC2IR, 631-751-6576

Div. 6—Riverhead ARES/RACES

EC/RO: Donald Rollock, W2EUL, 631-929-0705

Div. 7—Southampton ARES/RACES

EC/RO: Dennis O'Rourke, KB2ZWW, 631-728-5424

Div. 8—Southold ARES/RACES

EC: Don Fisher, N2QHV, 631-765-2757
RO: Charles Burnham, K2GLP, 516-779-4983

Div. 9—East Hampton ARES/RACES

EC/RO: Nat Raynor, N2NEI, 631-324-3738

Div. 10—Shelter Island ARES/RACES

EC/RO: Neal Raymond, N2QZA, 631-749-9330

Suffolk County

ARES/RACES Net:

Mondays 2100 Local - 145.330/R (136.5 PL)
Alternate Frequency - 145.370 (136.5 PL)

New York State

RACES Net (HF)

Sundays 0900 Local, 3993.5 KHz LSB

2015 VE Session Dates

- August 22nd
- September 26th
- October 24th
- November 28th
- December 26th

2016 VE Session Dates

- January 23rd
- February 27th

All sessions are at the Town of Babylon EOC, located in the basement in the rear of town hall. Please bring photo ID, a copy and your original amateur radio license (if you have one), and any CSCE's you may have. Non programmable calculators are allowed. The exam fee is \$15 payable by cash or a check made out to "ARRL VEC".



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Need Antenna Work?

Sign-up on the list at the EOC. Please supply as much information about your situation so the committee can be properly prepared with assistance and tools when they come to your QTH.

Club Name Badges

Club name badges are available from *The Sign Man* (www.thesignman.com) of Baton Rouge, LA.

The badges which are 1-3/4 in. x 3 in. If you visit *The Sign Man's* webpage you can order the badges by using a drop down selection on the orders page and clicking on "Great South Bay ARC - NY"



August Birthdays

Linda KA2JGX

Joe, KC2ZUK

Bill, N2ZUL

Frank, W2FCD

Mike, KC2SYF

Bob, N2MPJ

Cliff, KC2EXP

John, KD2AKX



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