



# THE COMPASS

Official Newsletter of the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club

August 2016

Volume 44

Issue #8

## Upcoming Club Events

### Next General Meeting:

Thursday, August 25th,  
8 PM at the EOC

### Next Special Event:

Fire Island Lighthouse  
Int'l Lighthouse/  
Lightship Weekend,  
August 20th & 21st.

GSBARC's FREE License Classes Tuesday nights 7-9:30 PM. Currently Running.

Open Education Nights Learn any topic you're interested in!

Open Houses on Wednesday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. and also Saturdays from noon to 3 p.m

Visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/gsbarc](http://www.facebook.com/gsbarc)

## CQ White House, NPOTA DZ10 GSBARC Activates White House!



### Inside this issue of The Compass...

- GSBARC goes to Washington (NPOTA DZ10: White House!)
- Maggie Fischer Cross Bay Swim photos
- Inside the Squirrel Cage (a column)
- KB6NU's Guest Column

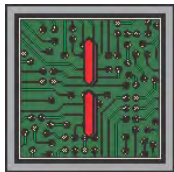
### Upcoming Special Events

2016 Annual Fire Island Lighthouse Activation for International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend. August 20th & 21st

JOTA Oct. 15-16 at Cathedral Pines Park in Yaphank

Hope for the Warriors Run, Saturday Nov. 12

# President's Message



hope everyone is enjoying the summer. As I sit here and write this month's president's message, the crew of our National Parks on the Air team is most likely still sleeping. At about 11:45 p.m. local time, I spoke with KC2SYF as they were on 440 in New Jersey. The White House activation went great—more than 1,000 QSOs!!!! I want to thank Mike KC2SYF for chairing this event. It took a lot of planning, phone calls and emails to get it done. It is good to know that we have such dedicated members in our club. I am sure we will see a write-up in an upcoming issue of The Compass.

We've also been talking about another national park to activate, specifically the Statue of Liberty, which is much closer to home. I have to reach out to a ranger I know to see if it's possible and as of this writing we are tentatively looking at the weekend of October 1st and 2nd. Operations would be on Ellis Island which is part of the same park as Liberty Island which is currently undergoing construction.

I hope you will make an effort to come to the lighthouse event on Fire Island on the 20th & 21st Please make note: there is no parking at the lighthouse. Parking is in Field 5. If you have a disability, please give us a call on 147.535 simplex with a 110.9 PL. Set-up team, see you all at 6 a.m. local time. We need cameras, including video cameras, to take lots of pictures and make a great video from some setup clips to wrap up.

I recently had a meeting with Babylon Town's Chief of Staff and department heads. It was a good meeting. There are a few things that came up which we have to keep in mind. When we are planning a work detail, I have to submit a work plan and wait for them to approve it. No big deal—it is something that has to be done. Please don't park in

the Director of IT spot. He works weird hours and would like to use his own parking spot. Just as reminder too—do not park in the central alarm spots. The official disability entrance is the west side wing doors with the ramp. One thing we have to do is never take anything off the E waste cart.

The meeting was a quick one—and it was a good one. Things will be better for us moving forward.

Everyone at the meeting was in a great mood. There were even a few laughs! I want to thank the Town of Babylon for their dedication in keeping Amateur Radio an important role in the town's emergency plan.

Once again, the summer has been interesting. I can't believe it's almost over. We are going to be busy in the fall. There are several events we need to be at including The Babylon Village Fair, September 18th, and the Suffolk County Marathon on October 30th

Please contact KB2SCS (email him at kb2scsjb@gmail.com) for the marathon. The Hope for the Warriors run is November 12th we need a lot of operators for this one. You all know the drill. Email me w2hcb@arrl.net if you can be there. Thank you to everyone for the past 7 years of dedication to this great event.

I hope to see you all at the lighthouse. Just a reminder that setup starts 6 a.m. and we would like to be on the air no later than 8:45 a.m. I will be bringing a cooler with water. Things you should bring include: sunscreen, sunglasses, some type of folding chair and whatever else you might need for yourself.

Enjoy the rest of the summer

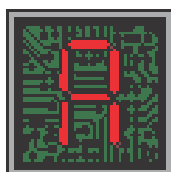
*73. John Melfi, W2HCB* 





# Inside the Squirrel Cage

by Karen, KD2GUT



nytime I'm tempted to curse the propagation gods, I will now think of Neil Armstrong and Apollo 11. I've learned a lesson or two remembering the day America walked on the moon.

You would think the same science that propelled us to the lunar surface and put American footprints there would have devised mastery over the signals that transmitted the proof back home to all of us on Earth. These were black and white images, of course, not amateur radio transmissions. But they were radio signals nonetheless.

This past July 21 marked 47 years since that extraterrestrial trek, and on the advice of a visiting friend, I borrowed a library copy of the DVD of the 2000 film, "The Dish."

"It has some funny moments," he'd told me. "I think you'll like it." He was right, of course: beyond the one-liners, the retro automobiles and the sounds of some very classic rock, there was the uncredited costar, a supporting player called radio. In the film, a chain-reaction of situations – some of them fictionalized -- play havoc with the giant receiving dish that was to capture transmitted images of the Apollo walk and feed everything to a moonstruck world holding its breath. The script tweaked the facts here and there (the dish suffered no power outage in 1969; besides, we all know, from Field Day, that generators are second only to magic when the juice is gone.) But the 11th-hour violent wind squall, apparently, was very real – as was the anxiety over whether the distant signal from Apollo would survive it all.

Those of us who remember seeing those moments, or have since seen the footage, know the images made the trip as successfully intact as the astronauts they depicted.

Knowing this now, and comparing it all to ham shack challenges right here on Earth, I've curtailed my colorful language when the weather curtails my QSOs. It's nothing personal, after all, and I'm not the first and only amateur in the universe to be pre-empted this way. Sure, I still grit my teeth at the pile-ups and, of course, the jammers, but I'm a little more patient with the rhythms of the universe, however they may jostle my plans, whether for DXing, a contest or a ragchew. It worked for the Apollo crew, so who am I to complain? That's one small step for this ham, one giant leap for hamkind. ☺

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## *Sunday October 30, 2016, Suffolk County Marathon Request for Assistance*

Well, it is that time of the year again. I am looking for volunteers for the Suffolk County Marathon. This year's event is on Sunday October 30.

This event is for a very worthy cause and all the proceeds go to local Suffolk County Veterans organizations.

Thank you to all the volunteers from last year's run. With your support, \$160,000 was raised for Suffolk County Veterans organizations. You helped 3,500 runners safely run the course in the Half and Full Marathon.

This year, there are some changes to the route of the run. Instead of starting and ending in Heckscher State Park, the race will start and end in Patchogue. The start of the 5K, Half Marathon and Full Marathon is at the intersection of Waverly Avenue and Montauk Highway. All three races then run west along Montauk Highway. The 5K turns around a little east to of Gillette Ave Bayport. The Half Marathon turns around at the Saint Johns Campus. The Full Marathon turns around at Heckscher State Park. All three races end a little west of the Briarcliffe College Montauk Highway entrance.

Last year we had 28 operators. Again thank you for your support and professionalism shown on race day. As noted above we have the addition of a 5K race this year. We will need even more operators this year. Please check your calendars and mark the date Sunday October 30, 2016.

Please volunteer by sending an email to: [kb2scsjb@gmail.com](mailto:kb2scsjb@gmail.com) with the subject: email: Marathon

Body of email should include:

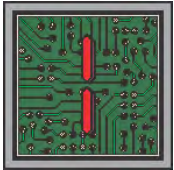
First name, Call Sign and your email Address.

Thank you for your time in reading this article. I hope to hear from you soon.

73, John KB2SCS

# 5...4...3...2...1: Readability Reports

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU



I'm big on Twitter. It connects me to a lot of interesting amateur radio operators, and I find a lot of food for thought there. Yesterday, I saw the following Tweet:

Charlie – M0PZT @M0PZT

Blog updated: RST and Speed Matters <http://www.m0pzt.com/blog/rst-and-speed-matters/> #hamradio

Being a CW geek, of course I was interested. Charlie's point is that if you get a bad report, you probably should send more slowly. I certainly have no argument with that. What I do take a little bit of an issue with is that Charlie says, "A Readability 4 report should really make it known that information needs to be brief, but repeated—Certainly no ANT/RIG/WX waffle!"

According to most sources, Readability 4 means, "Readable with practically no difficulty." When I receive an R4 report, I might slow down a little, but it doesn't mean to me that I have to cut the contact short or repeat information over and over. I replied on Twitter that if the operator at the receiving station is having so much trouble copying, then the report should probably be 319 or even 219.

Of course, RST reports are open to interpretation. With that in mind, I thought I'd explain a little more fully how I decide what Readability report to give:

R5: Perfectly readable. To me, this means that copying a signal is no work at all, and that it sounds like it's coming out of a code practice oscillator. I can put my feet up on the

desk or putter around the shack while I'm ragchewing with the other operator.

R4: Readable with practically no difficulty. "Practically no difficulty" is the key phrase here. There may be some QRN or QSB on this signal, and I have to pay some attention while copying. An R4 is still solid copy, though, and ragchewing is definitely possible.

R3: Readable with considerable difficulty. A signal that rates an R3 needs my full attention. I have to work at copying the signal, and even then, might miss characters here and there. Even though I don't copy every single character, I'm able to fill in the gaps. An R3 signal might not be good enough for a ragchew, and repeating information is probably a good idea.

R2: Barely readable, occasional words distinguishable. A signal that rates an R2 is usually so weak that it's below the noise level or drops below the noise level occasionally. At this level, the contact will definitely be brief and any important information, such as the callsign needs to be repeated.

R1: Unreadable. Generally, I would never give out this report, as I would never attempt making contact if a signal was truly unreadable.

Although my explanations above reflect the fact that I'm primarily a CW operator, I think they also apply to phone or even digital contacts. For example, an R5 for a phone contact would mean that the signal sounds like it could be coming from just down the street or coming through the local repeater.

What do you think? How do you decide what Readability report to give? 🗣️

*Dan is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides, and blogs about amateur radio at [KB6NU.Com](http://KB6NU.Com), and you can contact him by e-mailing [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com). If you want an honest Readability report, look for him most evenings on 40m CW.*







*Couldn't have asked for better race day weather!*



*Check-ins started slow...*



*...but then picked up quickly!*



*Race participants and their Kayak support arrive via ferry*



*Racers and their Kayakers prepare for the race start.*



*And they're off! Another Maggie Fischer Cross Bay Swim is underway!*





*Kayakers keep a close eye on their racers...*



*The leader board*



*Uh, I guess that's the finish line...*



*The boat captains giving orders to their mates*



*At least you can see the Kayaks.*



*For Hams Only: Can you identify this antenna?*



# *GSBARC Activation of DZ10, White House (President's Park) for National Parks on the Air (NPOTA)*

*See more pictures and read all about this magnificent event in next month's super-sized double edition of The Compass!*



*CQ White House, CQ White House. The GSBARC Crew flying our country's flag and the GSBARC and NPOTA banners.*



*So you think YOU have antenna restrictions? Try negotiating with the Secret Service!*



*(Crew-photo on right, l-r) Phil, KD2GFO, Tom, KA2D, Eric, KD2GXN, Lou, NO2C, Salli, K2RYD, Mike, KC2SYF, Howard, WB2UZE, Sam, W2JDB and Paul, N8HM*



# 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:*

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

*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](http://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, KB2JOE, 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: < Unknown — no longer in state. >*

*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*

# 2016 VE

## Session Dates

- August 27th
- September 24th
- October 22nd
- November 26th
- December 17th

*All sessions are at the Town of Babylon EOC at 10 a.m., 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".*

## GSBARC

### Free License Class Schedule:

*Technician: Sept. 6th thru Nov. 15th*

*General: Nov. 22nd thru Jan. 31, 2017*

*Amateur Extra: Feb. 7th thru May 23rd.*

*Note: All Classes Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9:30 PM. Class text book is the current ARRL License Manual for that level. For more info email [Kevin, AB2ZI at kmorgan6@optonline.net](mailto:Kevin, AB2ZI at kmorgan6@optonline.net)*

## Club Name Badges

Club name badges are available from *The Sign Man* ([www.thesignman.com](http://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"



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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.*