



THE COMPASS

Official Newsletter of the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club

March 2016

Volume 44

Issue #3

Upcoming Club Events

Next General Meeting:

Thursday, Mar. 31st,
8 PM at the EOC

Dues are now Overdue!!!

Pay at any meeting or by PayPal on the club's website: www.gsbarc.org (see PayPal link at the bottom of this column)

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

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

National Parks

ON THE AIR

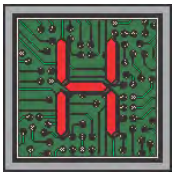
2016



Inside this issue of The Compass...

- *GSBARC Activities*
- *NBEMS: What is it and how do you use it?*
- *Inside the Squirrel Cage*
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- *W2HCB's New Family Member!*

President's Message



i - all of you may have heard that I am off the air at my QTH. Yes, it IS true: A radiator froze and spilled water, taking out a lot of my station. I am keeping this month's message short. Typing on an iPad is a pain.

Thanks to the crew that worked countless hours at my QTH before I got home. It will take some time before I am back on the air.

Hopefully winter will fade away soon. I know a lot of you have some antenna projects. Speaking of which, we still have plenty of work to do at the EOC. We have antenna work, weather station setup - and many other projects.

I hope you all have been enjoying the Robotics Class taught by George K2KVI. I want to remind everyone that we now have Amateur Radio Newline on Mondays after the Info Net on 2 meters. (To hear it, turn off the CTSS on your radio or program in the repeater with a 136.5 and you will hear it.)

And if you have any computer questions, check out our Computer Net on the second Thursday of every month on our 2-meter repeater.

The busy season for our club starts now -- special events, public-service activities and public-service events.

Thanks again to the GSBARC crew for helping me and my family out.

One last thing: Our house now has Man's Best Friend in residence: Her name is Bella, she is 10 weeks old and she is a real sweetheart!

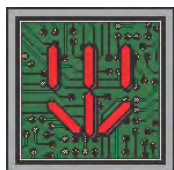
I hope everyone has a great month - GO GREEN!! - St. Patrick's Day is coming soon. That means corned beef and cabbage - and I can't wait!!

John Melfi, W27CB 



Inside the Squirrel Cage

by Caryn, KD2GUT



hat Heinrich Hertz discovered in the 1880s - that radio waves exist - the universe has known all along: The Earth, the Sun and distant supernovas have all been tossing their electrons wildly about forever, certainly well before the time of Hertz. This is, after all, the oldest and most effective form of communication in the cosmos.

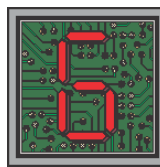
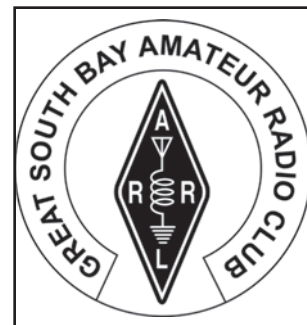
And now radio has a shining role again in literature and film. Andy Weir's 2014 novel, "The Martian," which Hollywood has since turned into a movie, relies heavily on an entity known to most of us with an FCC license. It's a superstar known solely by the initials RF: In Weir's sci-fi saga of astronaut Mark Watney, it is radio communication, and then the lack of radio communication, that proves key to whether the stranded scientist will be rescued from the red planet where his crew had inadvertently left him stranded.

After painstaking repair work to storm-damaged equipment, Watney struggles for radio contact with his crew as well as the mission team on Earth -- a situation even earthbound hams stranded in a bad sunspot cycle can relate to. Watney gets his connection, then loses it. Then gets it again but - SSB contesters, can you feel his pain?

And that unfortunate turn of events brings him to rely on another 19th century radio pioneer: Samuel F.B. Morse who, if not a main player in this sci-fi drama, is without question a patron saint. Watney takes Morse's messaging system, treasured for its effective grace in QRP operations, to a new and even lower level -- yes, even below flea-power. Stripped of any telegraph key, transmitter or even a usable power source, the astronaut teaches himself Code. Then, relying on visual monitoring back on Earth that has been established by satellite surveillance, he employs not Straight Key but Extremely Round Key, using oversized rocks to spell out his messages across the barren landscape.

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Some of Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club's Activities:



SBARC has many activities available on an ongoing basis for everyone. No matter what your interest in Amateur Radio is, we probably have an activity covering it. Here are a few samples of them.

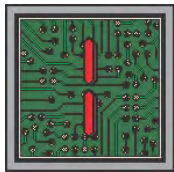
GSBARC "Open House." The GSBARC Open House is an event held every Wednesday from 7:30 to 9:30 PM and from 12 Noon to 3 PM on Saturdays. On Wednesdays we usually have kit building projects or help with your Ham Radio related projects. On Saturdays we have a general open house with help programming radios, project help and instruction on the various operating modes. On both sessions we have our club station W2GSB available with three HF positions using several types of radios including a Flex Software Defined radio for your operating pleasure. The coffee pot is usually on and there is a great deal of information exchanged on almost every topic you can name. Today's Amateur Radio has so many facets and there is usually someone at the open house that is an expert on one or more of them. Sometimes we have special kit building classes that meet earlier in the day on Saturdays. For instance George K2KVI has been running a robotics class and kit building sessions several times a month on Saturday mornings when there are no VE sessions. The open house location is 200 East Sunrise Highway in North Lindenhurst, NY. Entrance is the stairway to the basement around the rear of the building between the two wings of the building. Push the TOP doorbell button and you will be buzzed in. Follow the signs to the Emergency Operations Center.

Free License Classes: We have free Amateur Radio License classes on Tuesdays beginning with the Technician license in the Fall, followed by the General class license class and ending with the Extra class. These classes are free and you need not be a member to attend. Every month we also have a Volunteer Examiner session for those

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Social Media and Ham Radio

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU



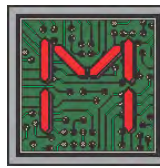
In the last ten years, there's been an explosion in social media. I've found some to be really great. Others, I haven't found to be to my liking. Here are my opinions on a few of the most popular social media websites:

- *Twitter (twitter.com)*. I like Twitter. I have more than 3,000 followers on Twitter, and it's not only helped me sell more books, I've found out about a lot of great projects, and I've met and corresponded with a lot of great hams there. It's a lot of fun. If you have a Twitter account, follow me there. I'm @kb6nu.
- *Facebook (facebook.com)*. I have a Facebook account and I even have a page for my study guides. I don't like using Facebook, though, and avoid it when I can.
- *Reddit (reddit.com/r/amateurradio)*. Reddit hosts a very active amateur radio forum. What I like about Reddit is that these guys, unlike say the forums on eHam.Net or QRZ.com are really interested in doing stuff, not just complaining or arguing. A lot of the hams on Reddit, and its associated IRC channel (talk about retro!), #redditnet, have used my study guides, and apparently, I'm quite popular there.
- *Blab (blab.im)*. Blab is an interesting concept. It's kind of like an interactive podcast. You can record the blab sessions and then post them to YouTube or your own website. When I suggested having a regular Blab session to talk about ham radio topics to my blog readers, they weren't very enthusiastic about it. Even so, I think that I'm just going to do it. Sometimes you just gotta go with your gut, and my gut says this could be fun and eventually popular. Blab is integrated with Twitter, so if you follow me on Twitter, you'll find out when I'm blabbing.

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It's Only a Baseball Cap, but Look What It Started

By John Smale, K2IZ



Most of you who know me have seen me wearing my ship's baseball cap, from the USS Norris DD-859. I was a crew member for less than a year but I'm kind of proud of that, the same way I was when we came back from a seven-month Mediterranean cruise. There had been a bad storm in the Arctic and for the entire 10-day crossing of the Atlantic, with the constant 10- to-15-foot swells, walking became an art. When we arrived in Newport, most of the crew ended up at Providence Airport and I remember one little boy asking his mother: "Why are those sailors walking funny?"

I was recently on vacation in Disney World in Florida. Lately people have been thanking me for my service to my country. It's a heck of a lot better than the reception we got back in the late '60's. Anyway, we were having dinner at one of the resorts and, due to a monorail malfunction, and not being able to get my wheelchair on one of the boats, I became separated from my family. When I finally arrived at the resort I was getting into the elevator and someone who was coming out saw my cap and asked, "What ship is that?" I replied "Norris DD-859." He told me what ship he had been on and my next question was "What was your rate?" He answered Radioman Second and I replied back that I was Radioman Third, amateur call K2IZ. His immediate reply was "K3MP."

We both got off the elevator and had a very nice chat. I posted a note on a Facebook group I belong to -- "U.S. Navy Radiomen, A Vanishing Breed" -- about how we met up. The next day K3MP commented too, he is also a member of the group! Since then, I've had many replies to my post. Turns out quite a few radiomen and women have gone on to get their amateur licenses.

I find it amazing: Two people, getting on and off an

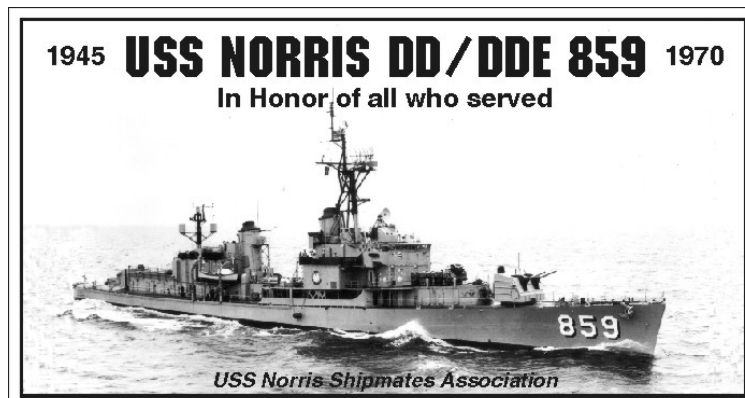
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Only a Baseball Cap... cont'd from page 4

elevator in Florida, having so much in common, but we would have never known it if it hadn't been for the fact he spotted my ship's baseball hat.

I used to wear a custom-made brass belt buckle with my call sign on it. I was doing a telephone repair at NEC one time and one of the employees from Japan came up to me and introduced himself. He too was a ham. He said he had been looking for a ham from the local area (this was way before the Internet) and said he had spotted my belt buckle. Another great conversation-starter!

Many of us have vanity plates with our call signs; veterans have ball caps and shirts. These are great ways to start a conversation and then find out we have so much in common, including being amateur radio operators. ☺



KB6NU's Column... cont'd from page 4

The biggest problem with participating on these social networks, of course, is that it takes a lot of time, time that could be used for building stuff or getting on the air. Even so, I would say that, overall, using them has certainly increased my enjoyment of amateur radio and has connected me to people that I probably would not have connected with otherwise.

What do you think? What social media accounts do you have? Which do you prefer? What have they done for you? ☺

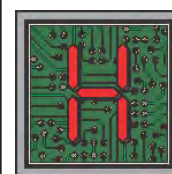
(When he's not blabbing or tweeting, KB6NU likes to work CW, build stuff, and teach ham radio classes.)

He's also a prolific blogger (www.kb6nu.com) and the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides: (www.kb6nu.com/study-guides).

If you have any comments, questions, compliments, or complaints, email him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Inside the Classroom with AB2ZI

TMRS (Too Many Radios Syndrome)



Have you ever found yourself involved in an ongoing QSO for an extended period of time on a repeater only to find out later that you were inadvertently cross-band the whole time?

If so you may be suffering from **TMRS**—Too Many Radios Syndrome.

Sure, it all started innocently enough with the purchase of your first dual VFO rig for the car. You thought to yourself, hey, this is great! I can monitor more than one frequency or band at the same time! I can even scan multiple bands at the same time—neat! Then one day it happened... You were driving along and heard someone throw their call out into the ether. You picked up your microphone without looking down and replied with your callsign and soon you were having a nice QSO with a fellow ham.

What you and the other ham didn't realize, however, was you were talking on a 440 repeater and the ham you were talking to was replying on a 2 meter machine. How can this happen? It's simple really, you were both probably monitoring 2 of the club's repeaters on dual VFO rigs. You had your transmit selection set for the 440 side and the other ham had theirs set on 2 meters when they threw their call looking for a QSO. When you answered the call you were transmitting on the 440 side, which the other ham was also listening to, and he, assuming you were answering his call on 2 meters, replied to you on the other repeater which you were also listening to.

We have dual-band, tri-band and quad-band rigs to choose from. We have mixed mode rigs (FM analog/D-Star for example). Now there's talk of rigs that will combine even more modes!

Continued on page 6...

No big deal for you guys, but to anyone listening in you probably both sounded like you were crazy people talking to yourselves!



Now add in some more complications like a D-Star radio, maybe a 900 Mhz transceiver, DMR, Fusion and maybe MotoTurbo for good measure. Also, let's not forget those of you out there with GMRS licenses too, and there's probably no room for your XYL (or even a napkin) left in your vehicle.

Hams are nothing if not collectors of technology. We love our toys—essential emergency communications infrastructure is the excuse we use to try to convince ourselves and others that we're not suffering from something that can only be diagnosed by a visit to a professional and a deep search of the DSM-V.

Oh, and don't get me started on the emergency service fanatics! Some of these hams are carrying so many HTs and spare batteries that they wouldn't be allowed on a cruise ship for fear they may cause it to take on excess water or at the least cause it to ride dangerously low in the water and risk running aground on a reef or sandbar.

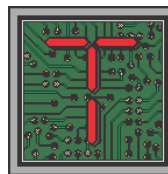
Just how many different modes do we need for FM repeaters? We're approaching a tipping point where it will soon be possible for every ham on the planet to have their own individual personalized mode at which time they won't have anyone else to talk to.

Don't think it could happen? Next time you go to a large event with ARES support look around at some of the people who are there to help. I can guarantee you will see hams there with 4 or more radios operating with at least as many different modes.

We have to stop this insanity while we still can. ☺

What is NBEMS?

By Bob Myers K2TV



There has been a lot of talk about NBEMS on the GSBARC repeaters. Of course Ham Radio is loaded with a lot of acronyms and jargon and everyone thinks the other operator knows what they mean. Well, NBEMS stands for "Narrow Band Emergency Message System. It is a digital transmission system that allows stations to transmit and receive formal and informal messages over the radio.

It can be used on AM, FM and SSB on HF, VHF or UHF. The formal messages can be sent in many digital and message formats using the proper software with your computer. For instance you can send an ARRL Radiogram message via the system and the other end will format the NTS Radiogram form automatically. An ICS-213 form used by many governmental agencies can be sent on one end and the ICS-213 will be formatted on the receiving end. All this done on the air. If a printer is available, you can print out the message already formatted in the correct message form.

The software used is called FLDIGI and FLMSG. These, and several others written by Dave, W1HKJ, are available free on the Internet. The website is <https://sourceforge.net/projects/fldigi/files/>.

Setting up the software is fairly easy because there is a lot of help available on the Internet. A Google search using NBEMS will bring you to a plentiful amount of websites and videos with instruction on how to setup and use the W1HKJ software.

On VHF/UHF it isn't necessary to have an interface to transmit and receive some of the digital signals. To receive you can hold the radio's speaker up to the microphone on the computer to have the software read the incoming digital signal. To transmit hold the radio's microphone up to the computer's speaker and simultaneously start the software

and press the transmit button. Most laptops have built-in microphones and speakers. You may have to experiment a bit to set the levels correctly.

Interface units are available from several manufacturers that enable you to connect from your computer to your radio without acoustically coupling the computer. On HF it is really necessary to have an interface. Tigertronics makes an excellent sound card interface called Signalink USB that costs about \$100. It comes with a cable to interface the device with your rig and another cable that connects to the USB port on your computer. Just make sure that you order the correct interface cable for your radio as there are several different model numbers depending on which interface cable comes with it. The instructions for the Signalink are pretty good, but if you run into trouble setting it up, there is a help number to talk with Tigertronics on the telephone.



The advantage of using an interface is you can use it to operate a plethora of different digital modes including RTTY, PSK, JT65, etc. There is a lot of software available free on the Internet to operate these digital modes. Another interesting facet of Ham Radio. 📡

Squirrel Cage... cont'd from page 3

Here's the takeaway, which we amateurs can appreciate: As advanced as space exploration may eventually become - and as software-driven and digital as the hardware of our hobby aspires to be - it's no surprise that there will always be reason to keep the basics alive. RF is, after all, nothing more than a good old-fashioned galactic homebrew project that worked at creation, and keeps on working. And sometimes Morse, so revered for being effective at low-power, can save the day on NO power.

Or can it?

OK, no spoilers here - you'll have to read the book (or see the movie, which I haven't done) to find out whether Watney gets home, gets his amateur license, upgrades to Extra and perhaps even joins ARES. Perhaps he'll even opt to join a DXpedition to Navassa. But the crew had better not leave him behind this time. 📡

GSBARC Activities... cont'd from page 3

that would like to take the Amateur Radio licensing test. Email Kevin AB2ZI at kmorgan6@optonline.net for more information.

Special Event Stations are set up several times a year to bring attention to different organizations or activities and test our skills at setting up temporary stations in the field during emergencies. We set up a station in the American Air power Museum at Republic Airport in East Farmingdale every May to celebrate Armed Forces Day. In August we also set up several stations at the Fire Island Lighthouse for International Lighthouse and Lightship weekend. Besides being a great location for Amateur Radio operation, it is a great way to meet and greet people and show them what Amateur Radio is and what it does for the public.

This year, individuals from the club will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the National Park System by operating from various National Parks facilities in the New York City and Long Island area.

Amateur Radio field day is held at the end of June to test our emergency operations capabilities. This is one of the club's premier events and if you have never been on a GSBARC field day you are in for a treat. We set up many stations in the park adjacent the Babylon Town Hall in North Lindenhurst. Power is generated by portable emergency generators and we build the stations from the ground up just prior to the on the air operation. The on-air operations take place for a twenty four hour period with us contacting as many other stations as possible. The stations are then dismantled and put away for use in the event of a real emergency.

As we are a public service oriented club, we provide communications for many charitable events throughout the year. The Hope for the warriors run is the premier event that we cover each year and it benefits the nonprofit organization that provides aid to wounded military and their families, as well as the families of those killed in action.

For a full list of all the events and more club information consult the GSBARC website at <http://www.gsbarc.org> and check there frequently for updated information. 📡



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, 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

- March 26th
- April 23rd
- May 28th
- June 18th
- July 23rd
- 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".

The Prizes for our next raffle.



1st Prize: Rigol 1054Z Oscilloscope



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

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"



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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.