

The Compass!

Official Newsletter of the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club, INC.

March 2026

Volume 54

#3

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Long Island's Friendliest Amateur Radio Club!



Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club, Inc. Upcoming Meeting and Events Schedule



2026

- ~~January 29th: General Membership Meeting~~
- ~~February 12th: Board Meeting~~
- ~~February 26th: General Membership Meeting~~
- **March 26th: General Membership Meeting**
- **April 30th: General Membership Meeting**
- **May 14th: Board Meeting**
- **May 28th: General Membership Meeting**
- **June 25th General Membership Meeting**
- **July 30th: General Membership Meeting**
- **August 13th: Board Meeting**
- **August 27th: General Membership Meeting**
- **September 24th: General Membership Meeting**
- **October 29th: General Membership Meeting**
- **November 12th: Board Meeting**
- **November 19th*: General Membership Meeting**
- **December 17th*: General Membership Meeting**

**Note: November and December General Meetings 1 week earlier due to Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.*

Subscribe to us on the Web at www.gsbarc.org

On-the-Air Events

Babylon Village St. Patrick's Day Parade

The Babylon Village St. Patrick's Day Parade is scheduled for March 22, 2026. The parade will step off at 2:00 PM, and all operators are requested to arrive no later than 1:00 PM. Individuals interested in assisting with this event are encouraged to email info@gsbarc.org for more information and to volunteer their support.

Marconi Day

Marconi Day will be observed from April 25 to April 26, 2026. Operations will take place at the Babylon Village Historical Society Museum, the former home of the Marconi School for radio operators. On April 26, stations will be active from 13:00 UTC to 20:30 UTC. Three stations, operating in all modes, will be on the air. Participants who contact the special event station will receive a commemorative certificate.

American Air Power Museum Special Event

On May 16–17, 2026, GSBARC will honor all veterans by operating from inside the historic World War II hangar at the American Air Power Museum, where "Rosie the Riveter" became famous. Operations will occur from 13:00 UTC to 20:00 UTC on May 17. Two stations will be active using all modes, and participants who make contact with the special event station will receive a certificate. This event is dedicated to honoring those who have served and defended the country and democracy.

Field Day

Field Day is open to the public and will be held from June 28 to June 29, 2026, at 200 East Sunrise Highway, North Lindenhurst, NY. Operations will run from 18:00 UTC on June 28 to 18:00 UTC on June 29, with three stations using battery power in all modes. The public is warmly invited to attend, learn about amateur radio, and experience the excitement of live operations.

Fire Island Lighthouse Event

The Fire Island Lighthouse event will take place during the International Lighthouse Lightship Weekend on August 15–16, 2026. Set up begins at 12:00 UTC, and operations are scheduled from 10:00 UTC to 20:30 UTC on August 16. Two stations will operate using all modes. The lighthouse is designated US0019 and is also identified as IOTA NA-026 and POTA park US-0679. Participants who contact the special event station can receive a certificate to commemorate their involvement.

POTA Activation: Heckscher State Park

GSBARC will host a Parks on the Air (POTA) activation at Heckscher State Park on September 5, 2026. Set up begins at 13:00 UTC, and operations will continue until approximately 20:30 UTC. Operators are encouraged to use the club simplex channel upon arrival. All modes will be used, and the club trailer will be present. Members and guests are invited to join in for a fun and engaging experience.

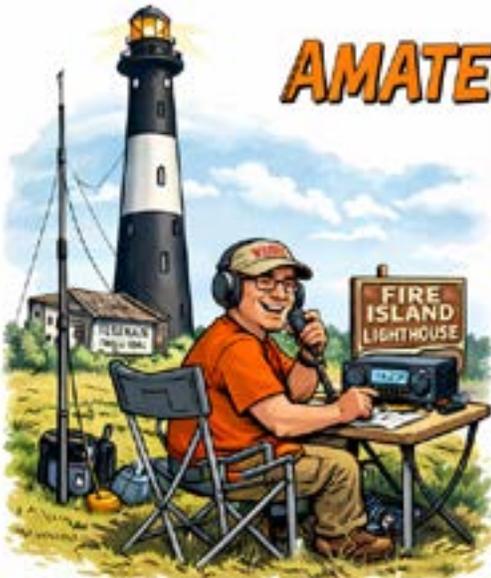
Suffolk County Marathon

The Suffolk County Marathon will take place on October 18, 2026. All posts are to be manned by 6:00 AM, and the marathon will start at 7:00 AM, running until approximately 2:30 PM. Many posts may be secured earlier. Volunteers interested in helping with this event should contact Suffolkcountydec@outlook.com.

POTA Event to Honor W2TE

The second annual special Parks on the Air event honoring W2TE will be held at Captree State Park Overlook on November 8, 2026, from 13:00 UTC to 20:00 UTC. All operators—including CW, SSB, and digital—are welcome to participate in this meaningful tribute. 🇺🇸

AMATEUR RADIO... ON THE AIR!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



March is here: Let's hope that the weather gets better!

I know February brought lots of cold weather and plenty of snow not to mention a blizzard – yes, a blizzard. Could you believe we had a blizzard? Twenty-nine and half inches at my QTH with drifts as high as three to four feet!!

Of course, that's when your snow blower decides to break down. After three shear pins broke, the drive decided to fail. I got it up and running and continued to do snow removal for several hours.

Several of my neighbors needed help, which I am always happy to do. The snowplows created a huge challenge on my block. We finally got a real winter, making it difficult for us outdoor guys and gals who work outside.

Would you believe my whole-house generator decided not to start on the morning of the blizzard? I'm back up and running after a quick valve adjustment and new spark plugs.

Meanwhile, we have to thank our GSBARC repeater crew because our radio system continues to be dependable. The linked GSBARC network of repeaters has improved the coverage area for our members. You can use the repeater closest to your location and take part in the net operations on Monday nights at 7:30. The linked repeater system gives you access from all the way out east to Queens and even farther into the city.

Our open houses have been lively and well-attended. Jeff (KC2ZQO) and Steve (KD2X) are setting up a new server for our logging software to streamline operations. They will also replace the malfunctioning PC at the 20-meter station to enhance reliability. Steve (KD2X) has submitted our Winter Field Day paperwork, marking progress in our club activities. We've welcomed more participants and plenty of new

faces at open-house events. If you're new to our club, welcome! We hope to see you at meetings, events, and open houses. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Everyone is here to help you enjoy yourself and dive into radio activities.

GSBARC, as you know, does several annual special events and POTA gatherings. Over the past decade, we've worked hard to simplify our setup, minimizing preparation time and maximizing operating hours for members. Participation continues to rise, showing increased engagement and interest, we always encourage more member involvement. Looking ahead, all our special event stations have been submitted to the ARRL and are now listed on their website. These events will also be featured in QST, letting everyone know we'll be active on the air.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of off-grid communications. Our mesh network is gradually taking shape, and several GSBARC members have invested in mesh networking technology, purchasing repeaters to strengthen our off-grid communication capabilities. Dedicated channels have been established for club communications, including club events, W2GSB, GSBARC EVENT, TOB RACES, SC RACES, and SKYWARN LI. If you need assistance, feel free to contact Jeff (KC2ZQO) or Daniel (W2DIY).

The Babylon Village St. Patrick's Day Parade is scheduled for March 22. The parade will step off at 2 p.m. and all operators are requested to arrive no later than 1 p.m. Individuals interested in assisting with this event are encouraged to reply on the groups.io page.

As the warmer weather starts to arrive, we will need to finish the remote station project. It is hard to believe this all started in 2020. Remember that year? What a mess it was. There was COVID, then the rebuild of the club room. We had no place to hold a meeting! Zoom worked for a while but now we are back to in-person meetings and Zoom is used for presenters who are out of town. We are always looking for presenters for our meetings so if you think you know someone who would be a good fit for our members, please let us know.

Please keep up to date on events and visit our website the latest information on events and public service events as well. I would like to thank Jeff (KC2ZQO) for his dedication to making sure our website stays up to date. Click here to right to the events page <https://gsbarc.org/upcoming-events/>

Coming soon, a fox hunt! Will you be ready to hunt down the fox? We are planning on having some fun with this so stay tuned – watch for an announcement on the club's website.

Also, if you have not subscribed to our website do not delay any longer as notices will be sent out via the website for any upcoming event or public service events.

Next month we will have a Marconi station on April 25 in Babylon Village. We will set up the Buddi-HEX and the shorter end-fed dipole for 40 meters. Most of our activity will most likely be on 10, 15, 20 and 40 meters. Please remember to bring a chair to relax in when you are not operating. We hope to see a lot of you there. Club participation is what makes our events great.

Lots of outdoor events will be starting for GSBARC and we hope to see more activity there. We would like to have all our members get on the air at these events and to have fun.

Well, DXing has been pretty good: I have managed to get some good ones that I needed. To my surprise I have been receiving QSL cards from 2015 and as far back as 2005. Pretty crazy when you open the mail. I just got one that's from 10 years ago!

Please note this update for our new mailing address:

GSBARC, 200 East Sunrise Highway, Lindenhurst NY 11757

If you mail your dues, use the above address please.

At our February general meeting, a vote was held on the update to our constitution – and it passed. It takes effect on Feb. 26, 2026. The update is posted on the GSBARC groups.io page in the “Files” section.

Bob (W2YW) brought back the box for the remote station all punched out ready to be mounted

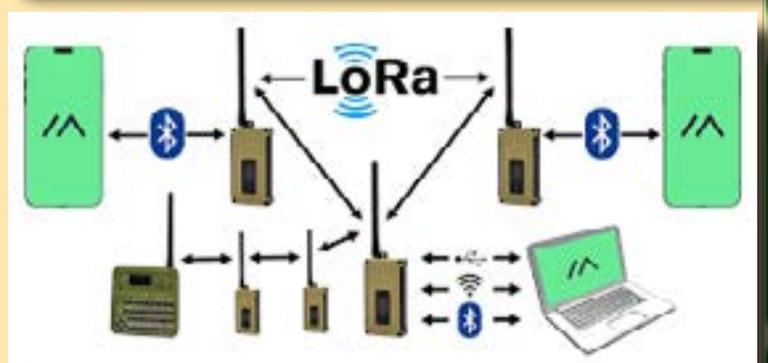
Daniel (W2DIY) did great job at the meeting with his in-depth presentation on mesh. He even got to pick on Bill (WB2QGZ) and that was quite funny. To read all about mesh, go Danny's website <https://w2diy.com/>

Congratulations to Walter (KA2S) for winning the door prize at our February general meeting which was donated by Drew (N2AKJ).

Congratulations to John (W2JPM) for winning the 50/50

Remember to have fun trying new things, antennas, modes, portable powered stations, QRP etc. We look forward to seeing you at our next general meeting on March 26 at 7:30 p.m.

— John Melfi, W2HCB ©



Where did “73” and “88” Come from?

By Kevin, AB2ZI



Telegraph roots (1800s)

In commercial Morse telegraphy, operators used numeric codes to speed things up.

One popular set was the Phillips Code (1850s).

In that system:

- 73 = “best regards”
- 88 = “love and kisses” (originally literal, later softened)

These were operator-to-operator shortcuts, long before amateur radio existed.

Early radio amateurs adopt them (1910s–1920s)

When radio amateurs started forming communities, many early hams were:

- Former telegraphers
- Trained in Morse for commercial or military work

They naturally carried over:

- Q-signals
- Abbreviations
- 73 and 88 sign-offs

By the 1920s, these were already common on amateur CW.

Codified in ham culture (1920s–1930s)

- Organizations like ARRL promoted standard operating practices.
- Early ARRL handbooks, QST articles, and operating guides referenced 73 routinely.
- 88 became the “affectionate” counterpart—used sparingly and intentionally.

Meaning in ham usage (important nuance)

- **73:**
 - Means “best regards”
 - Already plural → saying “73s” is technically incorrect (but very common)
- **88:**
 - Means “love and kisses”
 - Traditionally used:
 - Between spouses or close friends
 - Occasionally toward YLs in old-school usage
 - Never meant as a general-purpose sign-off

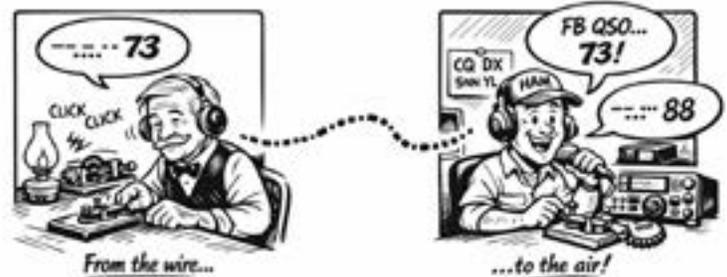
Many old-timers were very particular about this distinction.

When did hams start using them?

- **73:** effectively from the birth of amateur radio (~1910s)
- **88:** shortly after, but always less common, and socially contextual

So if you hear “**73 and 88**”, you’re hearing a phrase with **150+ years of lineage**, passed from wire telegraphy → spark radio → modern ham radio. ⚡

73 & 88 – A Tradition on the Air —



BAOFENG UV-7 B Review

By John Smale K2IZ



Recently I saw a listing on Amazon for another Baofeng HT. What I noticed about this one was that it was a tri-band radio; it had, 2m, 220 and 440. It had a few additional features like NOAA Weather bands, FM radio and USB-C charging instead of a charging stand. The main thing about the radio is that Amazon is offering it for under \$30.00! It comes with the battery, USB charging cable, radio, external microphone and an earpiece with transmitter module. Along with this is the ability to program the radio via Bluetooth on your cell phone, I have read a few reviews and the comments seem to lean towards the belief that the programming via Bluetooth is not that good. I was able to program my UV-7 B via CHIRP.

Note: The latest version of CHIRP (020626) still doesn't list the UV-7 B, Either the UV21 ProGPS or the UV21ProV2 has to be used under the BAOFENG listing.

One of the YouTube reviews compares the supplied antenna to the Nagoya NA-320A VHF/220/UHF, of which I have one. Both antennas seem to do the same job. The same review tested the power out, 5w at VHF, 4w at 220 and 3w at UHF, which seems to be standard for most HTs. The club's 220 repeater antenna is on the very top of the tower at Babylon Town Hall. From my QTH, inside the house, I had no problems keying the repeater and in QSOs with W2HCB and KB2GSM all the conversations were of a good quality. KD2QDM also checked in from Half Moon, NY via Echolink with no problems.

One of the reviews pointed out that the battery is locked in place by a slotted screw and the USB charging port is right above it, the display is in color and seems to be almost twice the size of my UV-5x3. The same goes for the touchtone pad. Again, it looks to be twice the size of the UV-5x3 and whereas the 5x3 has four

rows of small buttons, the 7B only has three per row. The older features have been repurposed on different keys, which makes things a lot easier for those of us with failing eyesight and arthritic hands. In addition, instead of the single light for the flashlight there are two and they are a lot brighter than the single bulb.

On Feb. 11, 2026 with the permission of GSBARC president, I started running a net on the W2GSB 220 repeater at 2030 local. Previously I had been running the club CW net on 28.B050 but many nights the only check-in was NA2MM and my occasional QSO with a station in Bowling Green, Ohio. The reason I started the 220 check-in involves a bit of history: Back in the early 70s, the FCC was considering removing amateur privileges on most of the 220 band. At the National Convention held in 1974 at the Waldorf Astoria in NYC, everyone seemed to be wearing "I'm on 220" buttons. At the time Clegg Radio was marketing a 220-only transceiver. Hams kept their privileges.

Today most of the time, it seems our 220 repeater, which has a very wide area of coverage, seems to be idle, I don't want to repeat the possibility of "Use It or Lose It" hence the starting of weekly activity on the 220 repeater. 📶



BAOFENG UV-7B Handheld Ham Radio, Chirp & Wireless APP Programmable, UV FM Aviation NOAA Receiver, 1000 CHs 10 Zones, USB-C Port, Channel Copy, SOS Strobe, with Speaker Mic & Extra High Gain ANT

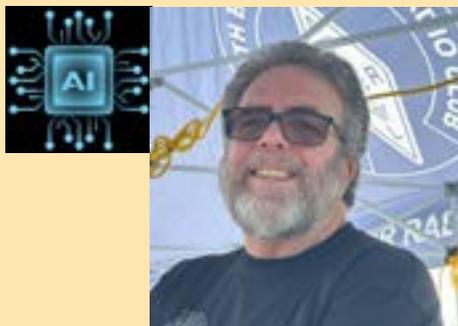
Brand: BAOFENG

4.3 ★★★★★ (34) | Search this page

100+ bought in past month

The Address That Wasn't There

By AB2ZI (with ChatGPT)



There are places that slip through the cracks.

You don't notice them at first.

They sit in plain sight—brick walls, fluorescent lights, folding tables with coffee rings baked into their surfaces. Radios humming softly. A corkboard sagging under old Field Day photos. The smell of warm dust and coax insulation.

The Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club had been meeting there for years.

Same building. Same street. Same front door that stuck in humid weather.

The problem started with a returned envelope.

White. Official-looking. One of those heavy-stock ones that usually contains something mildly important—maybe a certificate, maybe a renewal notice. Across the front, in red ink, were the words:

NOT A DELIVERABLE ADDRESS.

Someone laughed about it at first.

“Post office glitch,” said one of the older members, turning a dial absently, listening to static roll in from somewhere far beyond the Atlantic.

But then another envelope came back.

Then another.

Soon it wasn't funny anymore.

Because across the parking lot—less than two hundred feet away—Town Hall was receiving mail without incident.

Same street. Same number.

Same building.

The only difference was the name.

Town Hall existed.

GSBARC did not.

The Database

Frank—who trusted databases about as much as he trusted cheap coax—pulled up the USPS lookup tool during one Tuesday night meeting.

He typed carefully. Street. Number. ZIP code.

He hit enter.

The room was quiet except for the faint hiss of a powered speaker and the ticking of a wall clock that had been wrong since 2009.

The screen refreshed.

Address Not Found.

He tried again.

Same result.

Someone suggested adding “Suite B.”

Someone else tried “Lower Level.”

Nothing worked.

But when they entered “Town Hall”?

Valid.

Deliverable.

Recognized.

The building, apparently, could exist only if you were conducting municipal business.

If you were bouncing signals off the ionosphere at midnight... you were a ghost.

The Feeling

That's when the feeling started.

A subtle thing.

The kind you don't mention because once you do, it becomes real.

The hallway outside the meeting room seemed longer than usual. The fluorescent lights flickered—not dramatically, just enough to make you wonder if they'd always done that.

During one meeting, while someone was explaining SWR to a new member, the repeater in the corner keyed itself.

Just a carrier. No voice.

It lasted five seconds.

Long enough.

They checked the logs later.

No one had transmitted.

The Old Map

It was Charlie who found the old map.

Yellowed. Folded into quarters. Tucked into a filing cabinet drawer beneath decades of newsletters.

It was a zoning map from 1968.

The building was there—but under a different number.

Different street designation, too.

The road had been renamed after a councilman who'd died in the seventies.

Town Hall's records had been updated.

Somewhere along the line, GSBARC's had not.

Or maybe they had.

And then something... forgot them.

The Night It Happened

The glitch came on a cold evening in February.

The kind of night when HF bands stretch long and strange.

Frank entered the address again.

This time, for just a second—less than a blink—the screen changed.

Valid. Deliverable.

The ZIP+4 even populated automatically.

Then the page refreshed.

And it was gone.

Back to:

Address Not Found.

Across the room, a radio crackled.

A voice—thin, distant—slipped through the speaker.

"...any station at this location... do you copy..."

It wasn't a callsign anyone recognized.

It wasn't on the scheduled net.

And the strangest part?

The frequency was dead silent except for that voice.

They never found it again.

What It Means

Maybe it's a clerical error.

Maybe it's a database oversight from a municipal consolidation thirty years ago.

Or maybe some places—like some people—can exist perfectly well in the physical world and still slip through official recognition.

GSBARC still meets.

The antennas still stand.

Signals still arc into the sky, bouncing invisibly over oceans and mountains.

Somewhere in Europe, someone logs their callsign every week.

But here at home?

According to the system that decides what is real and what is not...

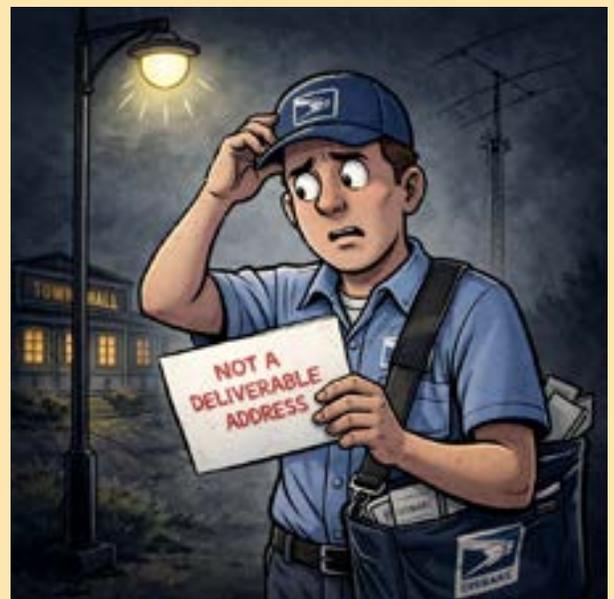
They aren't there.

And if one night, while tuning across the bands, you hear a faint signal calling from a location that doesn't officially exist—

You might want to answer.

Just once.

73...If the mail can find you. 📧



TOONING UP

AB2ZI's YouTube Pics



"Well, I guess it's a horizontally polarized ground plane now..."



Typical GSBARC Open House





Babylon ARES/RACES Information

Div. 1: Town of Babylon ARES/RACES

Net: 440.850/R, Sundays 8:45 AM

EC/RO: John Melfi, W2HCB, 631-669-6321

Suffolk County ARES/RACES Net:

Mon 2100 Local, 145.330/R (136.5 PL)

Alt. Frequency—146.820 (136.5 PL)

Current License Pool Expirations



Technician (Element 2)

July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2026

General (Element 3)

July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2027

Amateur Extra (Element 4)

July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028

Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club, Inc., currently has all **ARRL License Manuals** in stock and available for purchase at the discounted rate of \$30 (normally \$32.95 plus shipping).

2026 VE Sessions

- ~~January 31st~~
- ~~February 28th~~
- March 28th
- April 25th
- May 30th
- June 20th
- July 25th
- August 29th
- September 26th
- October 31st
- November 28th
- December 26th

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 CSCEs you may have. Nonprogrammable calculators are allowed. The exam fee is \$15 payable by cash or a check made out to "ARRL VEC."

IMPORTANT!

If you do NOT already have an FCC FRN (Federal Registration Number) you MUST [Visit the FCC Universal Licensing page](#) to register for an FRN to use on the paperwork.



Club Name Badges

Club name badges are available from **The Sign Man** (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"

GSBARC REPEATERS

2026 Contests

ARRL DX CW Contest:
February 21st – 22nd

ARRL DX SSB Contest:
March 7th – 8th

ARRL Int'l Digital Contest:
June 6th – 7th

VHF Contest:
June 13th – 15th

ARRL Field Day:
June 27th – 29th

IARU HF World Championship
July 11th – 12th

CQ WW SSB Contest
October 24th – 25th

ARRL November Sweepstakes:
CW: November 1st – 3rd

CQ WW CW Contest November
28th – 29th

ARRL November Sweepstakes:
SSB: November 21 – 23

ARRL 10 Meter
December 12th – 13th

Club Apparel

Want a shirt, jacket, hat, sweatshirt or T-shirt with a Great South Bay club logo?

We use **VIKING** (previously Mr. Shirt) located at 80 East Montauk Hwy. in Lindenhurst. We now have a group order page.

[Click Here to Place an Order](#)

Now you can get color matched backgrounds on your logo too. Check them out...