

# The Spark Gap

Newsletter of the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society  
Founded in 1950

;



May 2026



## President's Message

Ken's Steak House, in Framingham, was the scene of our WARS 75th anniversary party. From the comments received, the 38 attendees had a wonderful time. Phil Temples, NE ARRL Vice Director, presented WARS with a plaque from ARRL Headquarters. Dan Brown's world premier of WARS history was truly spectacular! Former presidents, Tom Kinahan and Barb Holdridge, regaled us with stories from WARS past.

Leandra MacLennan received an award for her 2+ years of editing the *Spark Gap*; our honored member was Scott Sminkey, who was so surprised! Lastly, Dan Brown, who was the club's president for 25 years, was honored for his enthusiasm, support, and hard work at making the party (and stories of WARS history) so memorable.

Congratulations to them all!

George Maier, W1LSB, is speaking at the Wellesley Police Station on Tuesday night. His talk will be on vintage radios of the National Company. Hope to see you there!

- Charlie, WA3ITR

## This Month's Events

**May 19, 7:30 pm**

**Monthly meeting**

***"The National Company –  
Radios, Friends, and Stories"***



**by George Maier W1LSB**

## Short Transmissions...

*This column will present brief news items about our club, events, and other things of interest to our members. If you have something to share, please contact the editor at [ssminkey@alum.wpi.edu](mailto:ssminkey@alum.wpi.edu).*



- **Elections are coming up and we need candidates for President and Secretary!** More info below.
- **Dan Brown W1DAN** has put his **75th anniversary retrospective video** on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4LC5NSaWu4> and his **1976 Field Day slide show** at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13324zqMyN8>.

## Elections Are Next Month and We Need You!

Our annual meeting and elections for officers and Board of Directors members-at-large will be at our meeting on Tuesday, June 16. At that time, nominations will be accepted for all of those positions. Our President and Secretary are not running for reelection and right now there aren't any members that have expressed interest in holding those positions. We need you! You can run for those two positions or any of the other positions. All officers and Board members-at-large are elected for a one-year term.

Serving as an officer or Board member-at-large is a great way to get more involved with our club and help to plan activities and make a difference in our future! **Any member is eligible to run for any position and that includes new members. Being licensed as a ham is not required. If you would like to offer yourself to be nominated for a position, send an email to [President Charlie Bures](#) or [Secretary Bill Nicholson](#).**

The officer positions and a summary of their responsibilities are:

**President** – The President supervises the business and affairs of WARS, presides at meetings of the membership and the Board, and takes on other duties prescribed by the Board.

**Vice President** – The Vice President acts in place of the President when the President is unavailable, and takes on other duties prescribed by the President or the Board. If the office of the President becomes vacant, the Vice President shall serve as Acting President until a new President is chosen.

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Secretary – The Secretary takes and keeps the minutes of meetings of the membership and the Board, sees that proper notices are given when necessary, keeps the records and the membership list, and takes on other duties prescribed by the President or the Board.

Treasurer – The Treasurer is in charge of the funds of the club, including such things as managing bank accounts, receiving funds and giving receipts, paying bills and other funds due, and takes on other duties prescribed by the President or the Board.

The complete description and duties of each officer are stated in Article 6 of the Bylaws, which can be downloaded [here](#).

There are eight members-at-large on the Board. Four are elected by the membership and four are appointed by the President. Although the duties of Board members-at-large are not specified in the bylaws, they work with the officers in managing the club. Being a member-at-large is a good way for new members to get more involved in the club!

Current members of the Board of Directors are:

#### Officers:

President – Charlie Bures WA3ITR  
Vice President – Jabus Tyerman KC1SMY  
Treasurer – Leandra MacLennan AF1R  
Secretary – Bill Nicholson N1WEN

#### Members at large:

Dan Brown W1DAN  
David Fox WA1QGC  
Barbara Irby KC1KGS  
Rob Jaczko WA1UMU  
Scott Sminkey WA1TEW  
Scott Nacey KK6IK  
Frank Ventura N1FMV

## Think Field Day!

**It's coming up in a month!** This year it's on Saturday, June 27 and Sunday, June 28. Leandra AF1R, Scott WA1TEW, and Dan W1DAN are starting to plan for Field Day and they want your ideas and help. **Let's do things differently this year!** We're hoping to have new club members and younger folks be active and included in our planning so we all can have fun and try new things! If you want to be a part of the planning, drop a note to Scott at [ssminkey@alum.wpi.edu](mailto:ssminkey@alum.wpi.edu).



*Dennis N1FXG and Jill N1IBG at FD 1992*

## Upcoming Event Details

### **May 19, 7:30 pm – General meeting**

***Topic: The National Company - Radios, Friends, and Stories***

***Speaker: George Maier W1LSB***

*We will track the history of the National Company and its products, combined with personal anecdotes from a long association with people that worked there. In the 1990s, I had the great pleasure of attending several National Company annual reunions, and will share those experiences with you.*

*The meeting will be at 7:30 pm in the Kingsbury Room of the Wellesley Police Station, 485 Washington St. (rt. 16). Please remember to park on the street, not in the parking lot.*

## Station Reports

Compiled by David Fox WA1QGC. Send reports to [fox.david@verizon.net](mailto:fox.david@verizon.net).

- Dan W1DAN sold almost a carload of gear at Near-Fest and bought a 1945 National HRO5 receiver for \$50. After replacing a bad mixer tube, the radio came to life!
- Scott WA1TEW writes:

Although I'm renting a basement apartment, I have a yard and now I have an antenna to put up: I bought all the pieces to a Wolf River Coils antenna setup from Greg AC1NY. Together with the Icom IC-705 rig I got from Rob WA1UMU, my Kenwood LiFePO4 power station, and a bunch of accessories, I finally have a complete HF station for home or portable use. I tried out the setup at our ham radio demo on May 16 at Wellesley Wonderful Weekend and it seems to work great, but it was hard to tell with such lousy propagation. It's been years since I've had a home station and I'm looking forward to getting back on the air from my QTH.

- Gregory AC1NY writes:

While I had my QMX 60-15m rig built in Turkey, there are two members of the Artisans

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Asylum makerspace that are building the kits. Good idea because mine took nine months to be built. It's innovative, small, requires only 12+V and has 5w SSB.

Also – check out LoRa and MeshCore! I'm helping to build out the New England MeshCore network by building out repeaters. Costs are very low and you can run the app on your phone



## Learn More About Software Defined Radio (SDR)

From the arrl.org website, submitted by Charlie Bures WA3ITR

The Boston Software Defined Radio User Group (SDR-Boston) is hosting the New England Workshop for Software Defined Radio 2026 ([NEWSDR](#)), June 4 and 5, at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The primary goal of this workshop is to provide a forum that enables software defined radio (SDR) enthusiasts to get together, collaborate, and introduce SDR concepts to those interested in furthering their knowledge of SDR capabilities and available resources. NEWSDR 2026 welcomes experienced SDR enthusiasts as well as individuals who are interested in getting started with SDR.

NEWSDR 2026 will be held at WPI, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, Massachusetts. The main event is scheduled for Friday June 5, 2026, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Eastern). Tutorials are scheduled Thursday June 4, 5:00 to 9:00 PM (Eastern). Attendance is free, but advance registration is required. Visit [newsdr.org/workshops/newsdr-2026/](https://newsdr.org/workshops/newsdr-2026/).

## Event Calendar 2025-2026

Events in normal type face are WARS events. Events in *italics* are not WARS events and for information only. A comprehensive contest calendar is at <https://hamradiolive.org/contest-calendar>.

Date	Event	Location	Notes
June 16	Monthly meeting	Wellesley Police Dept.	Park on the street
June 27-28	Field Day	Needham Memorial Park	At the gazebo

## Building a QRP Go-Kit for the Car

by Gregory Kenley AC1NY

I know it's just what I need – another radio. QRP Labs has delivered on their promise of releasing a firmware update to support SSB. This tiny “deck of cards sized” radio is now available as both a kit form (which you can get for about \$100 in a few weeks) or pay for it to be built by a team in southern Turkey then biked up to Istanbul to find Fedex and make it to the USA. You can even avoid the \$17 tariffs now! We have a few people building the kits at the Artisans Asylum makerspace (takes about a week for experienced makers). I have the 12V model but it's also available in 9V for those who want to carry a tiny 9V battery. So far the receiver is pretty darn good and I suspect you need to use a very efficient antenna – like a dipole. My goal is to have a small bag that has a throw line, EFHW dipole, RG316 coax feedline with choke (ABR Industries cables), small 12V battery, tiny microphone, and headset/small speaker. I tried Herter Park for a POTA with it after a rain, but discovered the life cycle of the mosquito. We'll try again soon and publish.



## We Had a Great 75<sup>th</sup> Party!

by Dan Brown W1DAN (photos by Dan unless otherwise noted)

The weather was variable; rainy, then overcast, then sunny. Tablecloths, glasses of water, place settings, and napkins were in place. Soft music was playing. Dan Brown W1DAN arrived early at Ken's Steak House in Framingham and set up a TV, audio mixer, microphone, and speakers. Folks started to trickle in, and we enjoyed seeing some old friends we have not seen in a long time, and many regulars, as Barbara Irby KC1KGS started setting up our memorabilia and signs and our President Charlie Bures WA3ITR arrived with unknown goodies and nametags, and made sure the setup was good. Dan played a slide show with old and new images of our activities. Our 75th anniversary party had begun!



*Barbara and Steve enjoy a laugh before lunch.*

# The Spark ⚡ Gap



*Greg and Don catch up*



*Leandra and Bob chat with Nina and Frank (photo by Barbara KC1KGS)*

# The Spark ⚡ Gap



*Jim and Bill discuss our memorabilia*

After cheese, crackers, and good conversation, there were opening remarks by Charlie, then a speech by New England Division ARRL Vice Director Phil Temples K9HI, who presented us with an ARRL plaque commemorating our 75 years of ARRL affiliation. Dan then played a club retrospective video that highlighted our rich history and fun achievements over the decades.



*Charlie as Master of Ceremonies!*

# The Spark ⚡ Gap



*Phil K9HI presents the ARRL plaque to Charlie*



Folks then visited the buffet tables, and we enjoyed chicken parmesan, baked crumbled haddock, and roast beef. Tom Kinahan N1CPE took the microphone and explained the famous Field Day balloon incident, then Barb Holdridge N1ICQ explained how some boaters got her into our club. Charlie then began presenting awards with Leandra Mac Lennan AF1R first receiving an award for two years as editor; our honored member was Scott Sminkey WA1TEW, and Dan W1DAN received a 75th anniversary appreciation award.



*Past President Tom N1CPE*



*Past President Barb N1ICQ*



*Leandra receives her award  
for serving as newsletter editor*



*Scott enjoys his Honored Member award*



*Dan accepts his 75th anniversary appreciation award  
(photo by Barbara KC1KGS)*

Before our party, the ARRL created a proclamation; here it is from the minutes of the ARRL 2026 Annual Board Of Directors Meeting, January 16-17:

*Director Frenaye moved, seconded by Director Tharp that:*

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*WHEREAS, the Wellesley, MA, Amateur Radio Society (“the Society”) was established to serve the town of Wellesley, Massachusetts and surrounding areas,*

*WHEREAS, The Town of Wellesley appropriated funds to establish a Civil Defense agency in 1950. In 1951, Wellesley amateurs became involved in the Town’s Civil Defense Agency, forming the Society to support the town and bring in new prospective hams,*

*WHEREAS, many youths from the local high school attended the Society’s weekly radio classes, a few of whom are still club members today,*

*WHEREAS, Society members supported communications during the Northeast blackout of 1965 and the flood alert of 1968,*

*WHEREAS, in the 1970s, the Society created a monthly newsletter called The Spark Gap, which is still published today,*

*WHEREAS, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Society hosted net command and control for the Boston Athletic Association’s Boston Marathon, one of the nation’s largest public service events that involve numerous radio clubs and amateurs throughout New England, the club still supports today,*

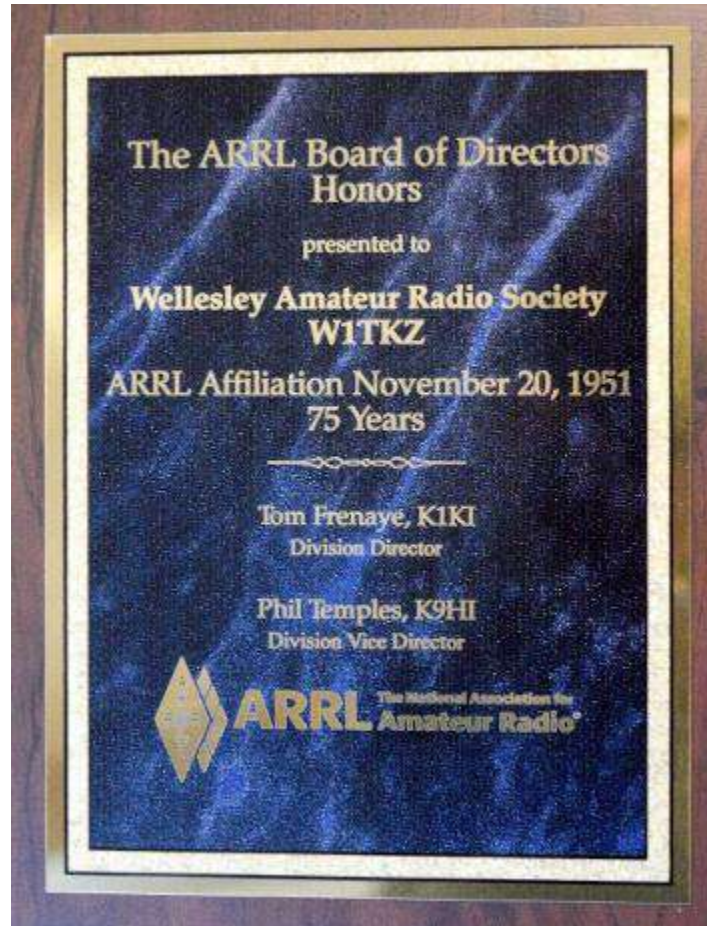
*WHEREAS, the Society became an ARRL Special Services club in the 1980s,*

*WHEREAS, throughout the 1990s, the Society offered new digital modes, satellite communications, and sponsored volunteer communications like for the Wellesley Veteran’s Parade, Head of the Charles Regatta, and The Walk for Hunger, etc,*

*WHEREAS, the Society holds monthly meetings featuring speakers and presentations about educational technical or operating topics,*

*WHEREAS, the Society has researched and is writing articles about its rich history in issues of The Spark Gap, and is currently promoting its history and 75th anniversary milestone via outreach to the Town of Wellesley and local media, and*

*WHEREAS, the Society strives for inclusion and instruction, enriching the lives of its*



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*members while serving the public.*

*THEREFORE, be it resolved that the ARRL Board of Directors hereby congratulates and recognizes the Wellesley Amateur Radio Association for its contributions to amateur radio on its 75th anniversary.*

*The motion was **APPROVED** unanimously (with applause).*

We had some notable visitors at our celebration: Rich Kumpf WF1V and YL Deb came from New Hampshire, Erik Thoresen K1OGF and YL Maria, and Nels Anderson K1UR. Erik and Nels were members in the 1970s and '80s, with Nels being a president for a few key years.



*Erik and YL Maria.*

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*Tom and Nels catch up after many years!*



*Chris peruses our memorabilia.*

## The Spark ⚡ Gap



*Phil chews the fat with Stu and YL Cheryl*

Ken's Steak House then served us apple crumble and cookies for dessert. Not much was left and folks left with handshakes, hugs, and smiles! I would like to thank the folks on our 75th anniversary committee who worked hard to make our year-long celebration a fun success:

### WARS 75th Committee

Charlie WA3ITR: Reservations, coordination, food selection, management

Barbara KC1KGS: Coordinated the menu, assisted with display

Jabus KC1SMY: Coordinated the menu, assisted with tear-down

Steve K1STK, Leandra, and Dave Roberts: Registration form, attendance list, money management

Dan W1DAN: Media scanning and transfers, some history articles, videos and public relations

Frank N1FMV: Past member outreach



*Many folks of the 75th anniversary committee: Dan, Charlie, Jabus, and Barbara  
(photo by Jim WB4EJR)*

Our attendees were

Elaine Kile KB1IBF  
Dan Brown W1DAN  
Barbara Irby KC1KGS and OM Jim WB4EJR  
Stephen Babbit KC1LPZ  
Leandra MacLennan AF1R  
Frank Ventura N1FMV and YL Nina Kagan N1NGK  
Greg Kenley AC1NY  
Barbara Holdridge N1ICQ and OM Doug  
Richard Kumpf WF1V and YL Deb  
Stephen Hibbard (no call yet)  
Tom Kinahan N1CPE  
Derek Rowell AK1WI  
Phil Temples K9HI  
Steve Kondo K1STK  
Bill Nicholson N1WEN  
Don Bumpus KB1OTQ and YL Odette  
Charlie Bures WA3ITR and YL Nena  
Scott Sminkey WA1TEW  
Nels Anderson K1UR  
Chris Hepburn K1JTO  
Bob Devine WA1SZY and YL  
David Fox WA1QGC  
Greg Livingston WA2EHV  
David Roberts KC1UKL  
Jabus Tyerman KC1SMY  
Stu W1SHS and YL Cheryl

Charlie notes, *“It was a wonderful party with 38 folks. It was one of our biggest events to celebrate our longevity, public service, and social aspects.”*

75 years! This is our crowning event, and it was G-R-A-N-D!

Dan  
W1DAN

## Our Wellesley Wonderful Weekend...

By Scott Sminkey WA1TEW

It's always fun to teach people about amateur radio and to demonstrate it. On Saturday, May 16, Leandra MacLennan AF1R and Scott Sminkey WA1TEW did quite a bit of the former and not too much of the latter.

Leandra spent a lot of time making up a posterboard presentation on ham radio. Since we were set up at the Wellesley High School's cafeteria during their Pancake Breakfast, she expected to get young adults stopping by, so she designed her message to be aimed at that age group. This meant using the message that *"This is not your grandfather's ham radio!"* to dispel the notion that ham radio is just a guy on a Morse code key or talking into a microphone, but instead is full of modern technology like digital modes that are combined with a computer. Her materials pointed out that ham radio contesting is akin to computer gaming; the adventure operating in the field, doing things like POTAs and SOTAs; many of the radios in our daily lives, often in our pockets, like cell phones and RFID-enabled devices, but also in our houses and cars, like wifi, Bluetooth, and home automation; ham radio through our own satellites; and public service activities.



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Our demonstration station consisted of an Icom IC-705 10w HF/VHF transceiver and a Wolf River Coils portable vertical antenna. The demo of ham radio in action didn't turn out so well, though. Propagation was awful for the entire time with 20m through 10m supposedly wavering between poor and fair and the K value spending most of its time at 4, as reported by NIST, which was not good at all. The reality was that 20m was empty except for occasional CW and FT8 signals. We didn't hear a single station on 15m. It wasn't even worth it for Leandra to run home and get her laptop to run FT8. Nevertheless, there was interest in the radio itself and some people tuned around as we explained what the few signals were as they were encountered.



But... was it fun? Yes, it was! The people who stopped by were genuinely interested in ham radio and although their level of knowledge varied quite a lot, Leandra was great at keeping it simple and tying modern ham radio into modern life. One visitor in particular had wanted to get involved in ham radio for a while, saw WARS would be at the Wellesley Wonderful Weekend, learned a little about ham radio and our club, and was so enthusiastic to meet us and absorb everything we could tell her. We're certain to see her at a meeting and probably Field Day!

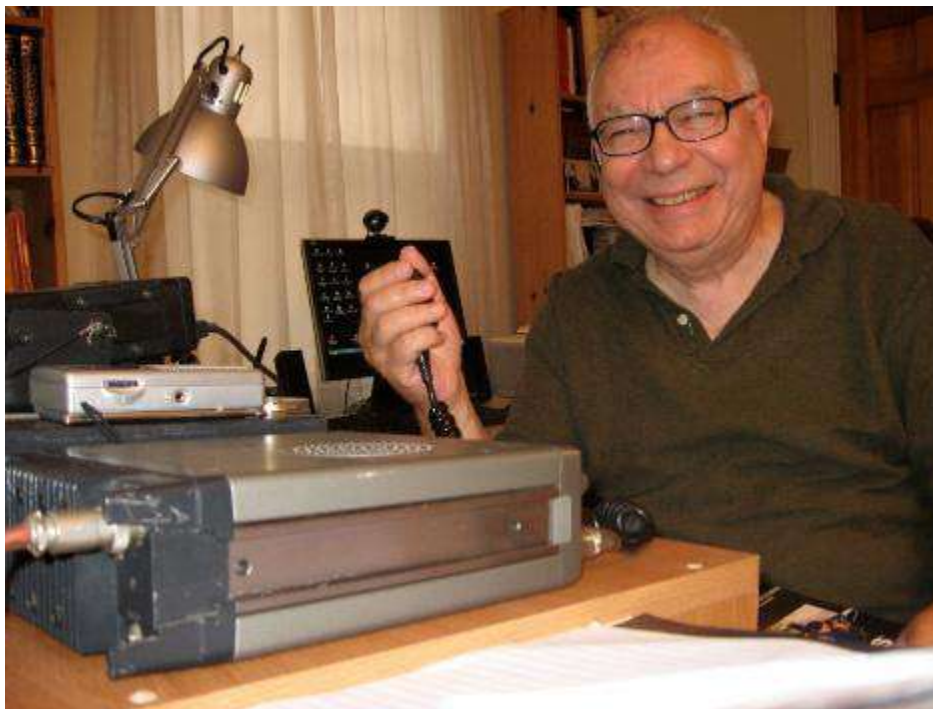
And remember, *“This is not your grandfather’s ham radio!”*

WARS CLUB HISTORY SERIES

## The Wellesley Amateur Radio Society: 2010 - 2024

by Dan Brown W1DAN

In my final history article, I will share our experience from 2010 to 2024, when I was still president, and share some fun photos. During this time, we had some great times and some painful losses. In January 2010 I gave a tour of the new WGBH studios as I changed jobs in 2008. In April longtime member Barry Hawkes N1BAN passed away, and in May Arline Berry W1LIO passed. These folks were major contributors to our Society, and I made it a point to tell their story in the *Spark Gap*. Even today they are missed. In May Bob Jeffrey N1KCX donated a bunch of his ham gear to the club, and later Barry's YL Barbara asked us to sell his gear, so we held a silent auction at Field Day.



*Harold Binder KB1LTO in his Waltham shack, August 2010*

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*Gary Schwartz N1ZCE perusing the auction items at Field Day 2010*



*Mum's the word at Field Day!*

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*September 2011 QST with Gary Schwartz N1ZCE and Don Koch NT1L doing Boston Marathon duty*

On the cover of the September 2011 *QST* were members Don NT1L and Gary N1ZCE operating Boston Marathon communications. In December Jerry NV1T sadly passed away and we told his story in the *Spark Gap*. Larry K1QW and YL Lois moved to Texas for retirement life. Over the last few years Rich WF1V had been editing some of our *Spark Gaps*, giving me a much-needed break.



*Our gang at our holiday party in December 2011 at Rich WF1V's QTH in Medfield*

# The Spark ⚡ Gap

## 2012/2013 WARS Officers:

President: Dan Brown W1DAN

Vice President: Don Bumpus KB1OTQ

Secretary: Rich Kumpf WF1V

Treasurer: Elaine Kile KB1IBF

Editor: Dan Brown W1DAN

## 2012/2013 WARS Directors:

Charlie Bures WA3ITR

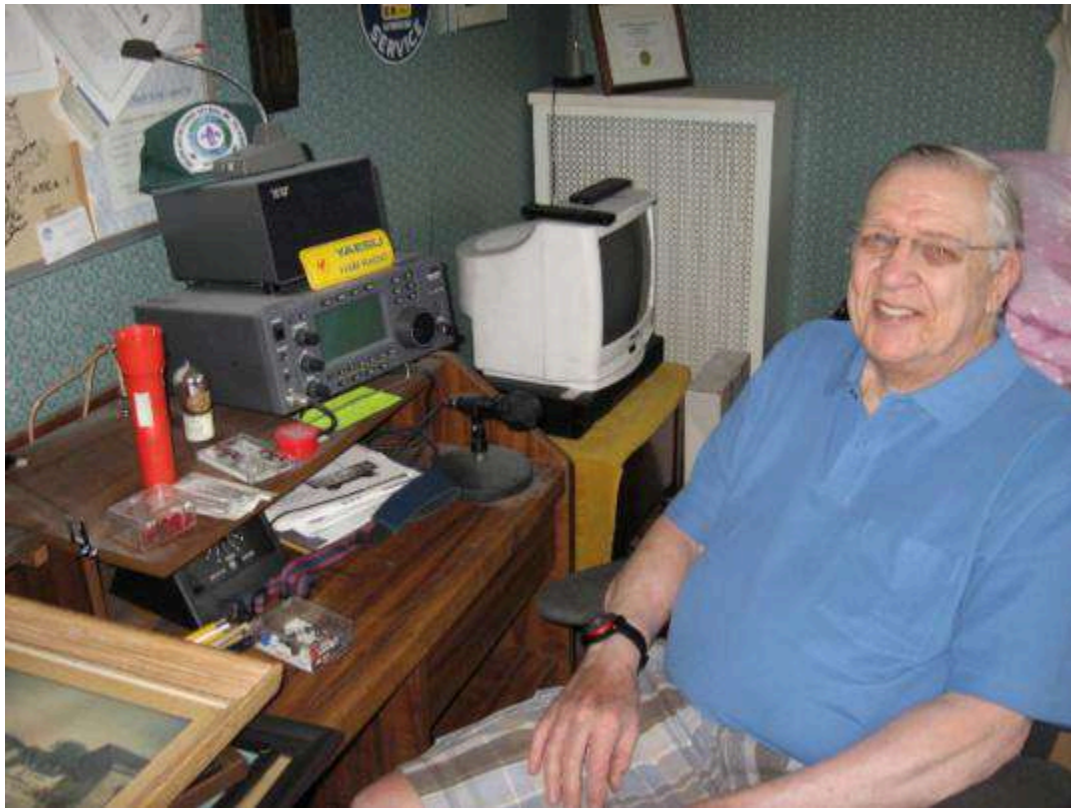
Harold Binder KB1LTO

Don Koch NT1L

In March of 2013 Mauri AG1LE gave a talk on the fldigi computer program that supports many digital modes, and Steve W3EVE spoke about Boston Marathon communications. We continued to support the Veterans Parade and enjoyed occasional dinners at Agostino's in Natick. We became involved with the Zola center with Eric K1NUN, who soon passed away in November. Gary N1ZCE got involved with the Dover and Somerville Maker Faires in October. In November Bob N1KCX passed, and I visited Larry and Lois in Texas.



*Zola gang builds a kit*



*Bob Jeffries N1KCX at his home ham shack in Needham, May 2010*

After difficult discussions, in January 2014 we withdrew from the Wellesley Veterans Parade due to club attrition and growth of the parade. Founding club member Ed Dillard W1RPM passed, member Mauri AG1LE visited the Arecibo observatory and Gary N1ZCE was net control for the Boston Marathon. In the summer several members visited the ARRL in Newington, Conn. for their 100th anniversary. Charlie initiated our fall pizza parties. For many years since Arline's passing, I ran our 2-meter FM nets each week.

In 2015 Radio Shack filed for bankruptcy, and we enjoyed having 37 club members. In May Mauri AG1LE explained the Raspberry Pi and Arduino mini-computers, and Charlie attended the Dayton Hamvention. I took over repeater maintenance from Bruce KC1US.

2016 brought us advances in Software Defined Radio, Charlie enjoyed IRLP and promoted the distribution of our new coffee mugs. Gary continued to support public service communications. In May Charlie and I attended the Dayton Hamvention.

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*Charlie WA3ITR at Dayton in May 2016, the last time we'd see the tired Hara Arena*

In September Charlie spoke about the JT65 digital mode and later contributed to a book on the subject. Mauri got into writing technology-based fiction books. In October, Dan and Rich hiked Red Hill in Moultonborough, N.H. to operate an early Summit On The Air (SOTA). New member Bruce KC1FSZ built a WSPR beacon.



*The author at a fire tower on Red Hill with Rich WF1V in New Hampshire, October 2016*

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Over these years, our holiday parties were held at various member QTHs, including Arline's, Larry's, Rich's, and Barb's.

2017 brought Mauri AG1LE building an Amazon Alexa skill that allowed the control of a radio from DX spotting websites. In April Jack Logan N1TPU passed to a better world, and we held Field Day in his honor. He is missed. In the fall we enjoyed the annual pizza party, a fun idea that Charlie started.



*Mauri AG1LE, February 2013*

In 2018 we helped the Zola gang learn how to solder, we held a meeting at the Clay Center in Brookline with New England Sci-Tech, and formed our Google Group online. Charlie spoke about FT8, Bruce built an HF transceiver, and we trained the Zola gang on the use of a voice-enabled digital volt meter. They joined us for Field Day and our board then was

### Officers:

President: Dan Brown W1DAN

Vice President: Don Bumpus KB1OTQ

Secretary: Charlie Treciokas N1QIQ

Treasurer: Elaine Kile KB1IBF

### Board of Directors:

Gary Schwartz N1ZCE

Don Koch NT1L

Charlie Bures WA3ITR

Harold Binder KB1LTO

Greg Kinchla W1KIN

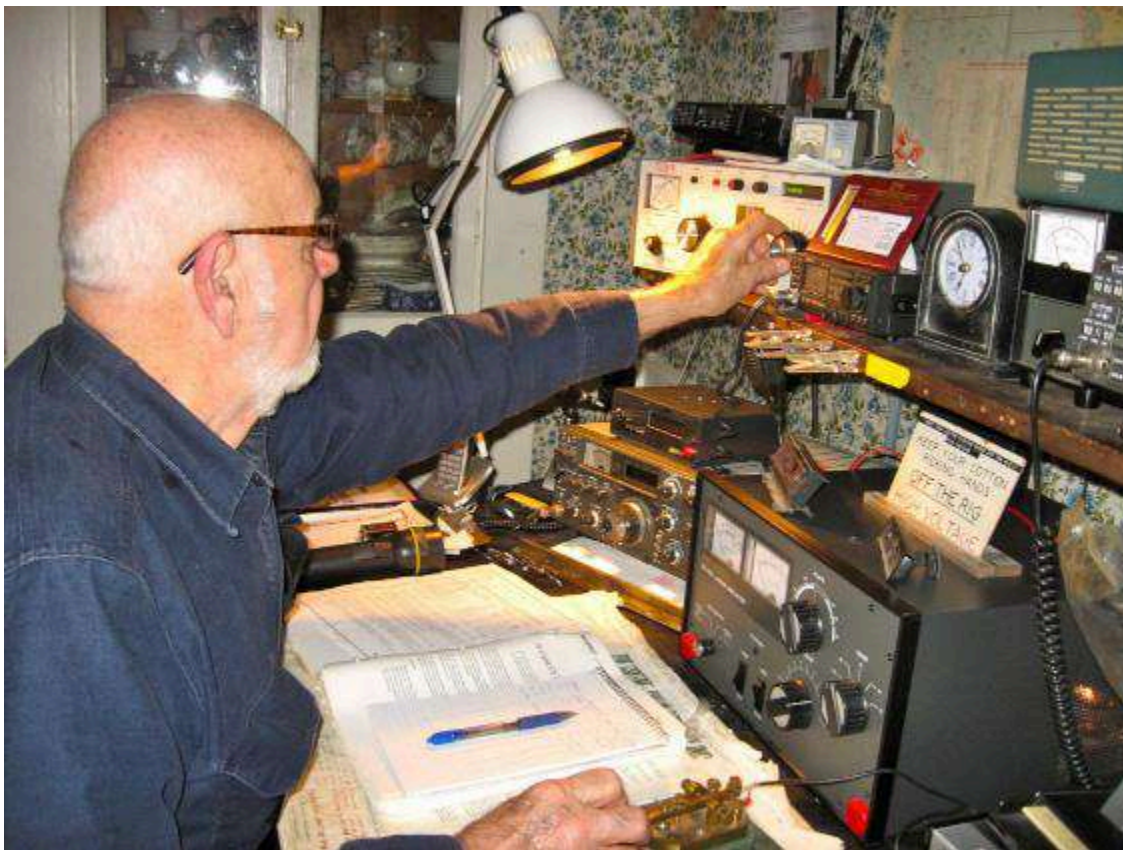
In early 2019 Ted K1QAR showed us his magnetic loop antennas for HF and Frank N1FMV explained ham radio gear for the visually impaired. Member Lowell KB1FHJ passed away in March. Our 2-meter repeater started failing and Harry WA1VVH and I worked on the system. We soon bought and installed a new Yaesu DR-1X repeater that provided analog and Fusion C4FM modes. In the fall of 2019, we visited the Steam and Wireless Museum in Rhode Island again. In November Leandra and Charlie climbed Blue Hill and operated Parks on the Air (POTA). Leandra did the November

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Sweepstakes in Vermont. We also started working with New England Sci Tech in Natick and Bruce KC1FSZ built an FM transceiver for 2-meters.



*Lowell Bursch KB1FHJ enjoyed photography*



*Bill Marchant WA1VAV in his Newton shack, December 2008*

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In 2020 we moved our website from Don NT1L's KRL server to the Eastern Mass ARRL's site, managed by Phil K9HI. Member Bill Marchant WA1VAV passed away. Tom N1CPE spoke about MARS at our January meeting. As COVID-19 ravaged the world, Leandra started a 10-meter SSB net. We did Field Day from our homes and moved to Zoom for our meetings. Charlie built a WSPR beacon that was heard all over the world. We started putting our past *Spark Gap* newsletters on our website and Don NT1L relocated to Colorado for retirement. In the fall members held COVID-safe POTAs at Callahan State Park, Hopkinton State Park, and Cochituate State Park, spearheaded by Mindy KM1NDY.



*Mindy KM1NDY's Blue Hills POTA group, May 2021*

2021 brought more POTA operations from the Otter River State Forest in Winchendon, Mass., and Leandra did the New England QSO Party contest. In May Mindy gathered a large group of people for a Blue Hills POTA. In July WARS and WPI alumni visited Worcester Polytechnic Institute to reminisce on old times, Gary did the Head of the Charles as he usually does, and I interfaced the Yaesu repeater with our repeater controller to re-link VHF and UHF.

Past member Dave W7VHM wrote about his 1952 WARS class in our November 2021 *Spark Gap*. His first license was WN1VHM. Here is what he wrote to us back then

*I stumbled onto the WARS website today and had a nostalgic moment. I was a member in*

## The Spark ⚡ Gap

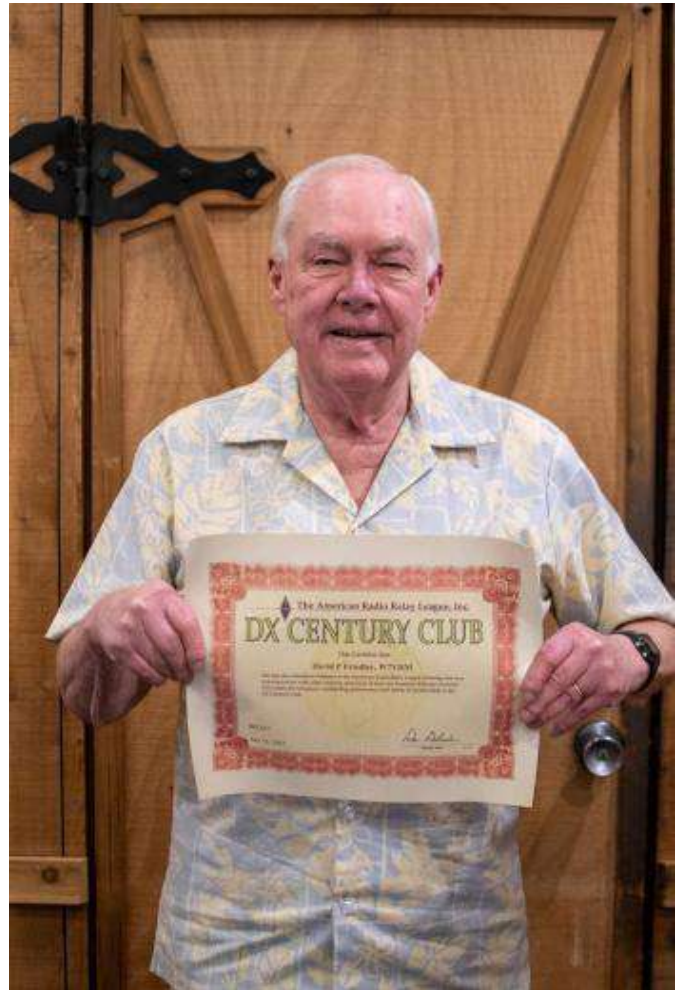
*1952. I was 12 years old. My father drove me to club meetings in the basement of the Wellesley Hills Library. I practiced code with about 5 others using a paper tape code practice machine. One of the members had a war surplus electronic parts business and promised he would supply all the parts necessary to build a novice transmitter if we passed the novice test.*

*I took the bus from Wellesley to Boston (by myself) and took the Novice test at the Customs House and passed. I am now WN1VHM. I got the parts, as promised, and built the transmitter from the ARRL book "How to Become a Radio Amateur" (I think that was the title). Wooden chassis with lollipop sticks to wind the final coils. Thanks to a half dozen surplus 80-meter xtals I burned up the 80-meter band. I think my best DX was Worcester. The focus of the club was CD emergency comm.*

*I ended up with a 2-meter AM transmitter and receiver (xtal controlled) for the Wellesley CD net which met on Sunday morning and was a great excuse to miss going to church. I made a ground plane antenna and had reliable signals around Wellesley.*

*Since the Novice was only good for 1 year I got my code speed up to 13 wpm and passed the General test. I sold the Hallicrafters S-20R receiver and got a well-used HRO-50 and an Eldico transmitter (807 at about 50 watts). Got tired of CW and saw a schematic for a cathode modulator in QST. Essentially it turned a CW transmitter into an AM phone transmitter. Actually plugged into the key jack. It worked and I burned up the 80-meter phone band. Mostly local of course. Still xtal controlled. Thanks to Santa I ended up with a Viking II transmitter, a VFO, and keyer. Later I added a Telrex tribander on a 30 ft tower. Thanks to amateur radio and the Elmers in WARS I pursued a career in electronics.*

*I was inactive for most of my working life. After retiring in 1996 I bought an IC-706 and operated from our motor home, both HF and UHF. Recently I moved into a retirement condo and went QRT. Two years ago I ran into a bunch of guys operating Field Day at a local park. I learned about FT-8 and its ability to enable weak signal contacts. I broke out the old IC-706, an obsolete laptop, and a Signal Link Rig Blaster and hung a wire from our 3rd floor condo. Three months ago I received my DXCC certificate (all FT-8). For those of us*



Dave W7VHM, in Sunriver, Oregon

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*who are antenna challenged and have noise levels of S-9 on most bands FT-8 is great. BTW my next challenge is 7 band WAS and DXCC, however I think 160m is hopeless.*

*I owe a lot to the original WARS guys – calls and names are forgotten – but I'm thankful for their mentoring.*

*Cheers and 73,  
Dave W7VHM*

What a great story, and an excellent circle back to our roots! In the same issue Bruce KC1FSZ explained his LoRa birdhouse and Derek AK1WI described his SDR receiver project. I had extra filtering installed on our repeater and new member Dom N1DM re-tuned our duplexers, increasing efficiency. In November Leandra did Sweepstakes in Vermont again, and in December 2021 we held our holiday party at NEST, donning COVID masks.



*Bruce with his LoRa birdhouse.*

In February 2022 Bruce explained his LoRa birdhouse further and Leandra worked DX from Hawaii. Bruce and I got an article published in *QST* about the LoRa birdhouse. In June we returned to our normal Field Day site. In the fall Derek Rowell AK1WI started designing Field Day filters and end fed half wave antennas. In October members visited the Chatham Marconi Wireless Museum. In

## The Spark ⚡ Gap

December member Peter W1ZZZ passed away; and Dom N1DM, Charlie WA3ITR, Bill N1WEN, and I replaced the UHF repeater antenna. To cap the year we held our holiday party at NEST.



*Peter Costa W1ZZZ in his “domed city of Wellesley” shack in May of 2012. I would often work on his AM setups. Peter started the Lonely Guys net that still operates on Saturday mornings on 3875 kHz AM.*

In March of 2023 Gary N1ZCE passed away. After three years of COVID we returned to the Wellesley Police station for meetings in April. In May Charlie WA3ITR, Stu W1SHS, Bill N1WEN, Tom N1CPE, Steve KC1QAY, and I replaced the 2-meter repeater antenna. Leandra attended Dayton and Derek improved his Field Day filters. Leandra became the *Spark Gap* editor after my long run. She brought

## The Spark ⚡ Gap

in a fresh style and expanded the newsletter. Members did a POTA at Elm Bank with Mindy KM1NDY. Derek got deep into the SCAMP digital mode, improving the reliability. We moved from Google Groups to Groups.io. Leandra once again did November Sweepstakes in Vermont. We held our holiday party at The Chateau in Waltham.



*David Fox WA1QGC in his Norton ham shack*

In 2024 Dave WA1QGC started our Station Reports column and Leandra AF1R, Greg WA1VIL, Stu W1SHS, Bob WA1SZY, Bill N1WEN, Don KB1OTQ, and Rob WA1UMU did Winter Field Day. Bruce designed an Echolink interface, reverse engineering the protocol, just because he could! At Charlie's recommendation we started having board meetings on Zoom a week before the general meetings. At home I built a Hermes Lite 2 SDR transceiver. We helped the Zola gang build a radio kit. In June Bruce built an Echolink interface on a single board. Finally after many years I passed the presidential baton to Charlie WA3ITR, who breathed new life into the club. He will explain our experiences in the next article that will cover 2024 to the present.



*The author at Field Day 2005 (or is it 1955?)*

The Wellesley Amateur Radio Society has been a large part of my life, and I have grown with you. I am very thankful for your company along this fun ride! We accomplished a lot and I enjoy your radio interests, activity, and accomplishments. Our club is not made just of technology or events, but mostly from vibrant people like you. I'd like to give a deep thanks to those who wrote articles, gave presentations, ran our radio nets, managed Field Days and other events, assisted with many club tasks, and just enjoyed our meetings. We're having a great 75th anniversary!

73,  
Dan  
W1DAN

## Club Dues

Club membership runs from September 1 to August 31.

Your membership dues support the operation of the 147.03 and 444.600 repeaters, the club insurance, and supplies for Field Day and other activities.

To join or renew, print the membership page, fill it in, and either bring it and your dues to one of the in-person meetings in Wellesley or mail the form and the dues to the address at the bottom of the form.

## WARS Executive Team

### Officers:

President – Charlie Bures WA3ITR  
 Vice President – Jabus Tyerman KC1SMY  
 Treasurer – Leandra MacLennan AF1R  
 Secretary – Bill Nicholson N1WEN

### Board of Directors:

Dan Brown W1DAN  
 David Fox WA1QGC  
 Barbara Irby KC1KGS  
 Rob Jaczko WA1UMU  
 Scott Sminkey WA1TEW  
 Scott Nacey KK6IK  
 Frank Ventura N1FMV

Spark Gap Editor - Scott Sminkey [ssminkey@alum.wpi.edu](mailto:ssminkey@alum.wpi.edu)

## Wellesley Amateur Radio Society website

[witkz.org](http://witkz.org)

## Wellesley ARS Repeaters

The club repeaters are located at the Newton-Wellesley Hospital and are cross-linked.

Receive frequency	Transmit frequency	Transmit tone
147.03 MHz	+600 KHz	123 Hz
444.600 MHz	+5 MHz	88.5 Hz

## Club Net

Wednesday	8:00 pm	Wellesley 147.03/444.600 repeaters
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## Monthly Meeting Summary – April 21, 2026

Attendees: Steve, Leandra, Bruce, Oudette, Bill, Don, Dan, Charlie

Zoom : Jabus, Scott S, Jim Brown, Frank, Nina, Barb Irby

Since the Wellesley Police station needed our usual room, this meeting took place at the Warren Building on Washington Street. John Webster, NN1SS, was the presenter speaking on how to get started in contesting with a modest station. He was first licensed in 1963 and later changed his callsign for a shorter one (in Morse code).

He began with a slide of a painting titled “Gallery of the Louvre 1833”. He said it ties in with ham radio. The connection? It was painted by Samuel F.B. Morse, who was a famous painter before inventing Morse code.



He then told us how he waits for certain times in the contesting hours, like he works a lot of Europe on 40m at 2am from his QTH in lower N.H. He gave the following tip to be heard in a pileup - - First, listen until he has the station’s callsign. Then, when he ends his CQ call, don’t immediately click your PTT button. Instead, first mentally say your own callsign in your head and *then* push the PTT and announce your callsign. The reason? To give all the simultaneous callers (who are on top of each

other) to die down so *your* call stands out. Here's some of the tips John told us (Please [email me](#) if you'd like the full slide deck):

## Propagation for CQWW SSB

10m could be the go-to band

- Lots of “room” – up to 29.000 MHz
- Lower antennas (30'-50') will play
- A place to run

15m should open early am and remain open late into the pm

- “Around the World” propagation
- EU and AF from early am through about 4pm local
- East Asia (JA,BY,YB,DU,HS,9V) late morning & early evening local time
- Pacific mid afternoon
- SA all the time the band is open

Another good contest is the ARRL DX since the “DX” stations will be trying to work as many USA stations as they can. He mentioned the CQ WW contest in October and suggested studying the CQ WW Zone map. Your score depends on the number of QSO's x multipliers. He recommended setting a goal for yourself. [3830Scores.com](#) is a good place to view last year's results. The main thing is **to have fun!**

*Submitted by Charlie Bures WA3ITR*

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – May 13, 2026

Wellesley Amateur Radio Society  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
May 13, 2026

Attendees: Scott S., Dan, Leandra, David Fox, Jabus, and Charlie.

*Due to a technical error in using the Zoom AI reporter, the minutes of the May board meeting were lost. To the best of my recollection, the major points are shown below. - Charlie WA3ITR*

The secretary (Bill) was unable to attend the meeting.

There were 2 motions made, seconded, discussed and approved unanimously. First, there was a motion to spend up to \$700 for a set of 4 bandpass filters for use at Field Day,



## Wellesley Amateur Radio Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

Please print this page, fill it out and include this form with your dues

We need your email address to send you the Spark Gap

We only use your information for informing you about WARS club information

The other optional information helps us plan club events.

Name	Call Sign
Address	Day Phone
Address 2	Evening Phone
Town and State	Zip Code

Email address (please print clearly)
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License Class (Novice, Technician, Advanced, Extra or Not Yet a Ham)	ARRL member? (Yes or No)
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Circle your interests (optional)

CW	SSB	FT8	Keyboard chat via Digital Modes	SSTV	JS8 Call	VarAC	Winlink
FreeDV(HF)	DSTAR	Fusion	DMR	M17			
SOTA	POTA	Ragchewing	DX	Contesting	Satellites		
Kit Building	Homebrew/experimentation	ARES/RACES	Public Service				

Membership Category/Dues: For the year beginning September 1, thru August of the following year

Individual	\$40.00
2nd Household member	\$5.00
Legally blind	\$5.00

Please make check payable to: *Wellesley Amateur Radio Society*. Bring this form and dues to any WARS meeting or mail to the WARS treasurer:

**The Wellesley Amateur Radio Society, P.O. Box 812223, Wellesley, MA 02482-0015**