



# The Compass!

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

May 2018

Volume 46

#5

**Next General Membership  
Meeting: Thurs., May 31st, 8 PM**

- **GSBARC Free Ham Radio License Classes!  
Technician License Class Tuesdays 7 - 9:30 p.m.**
- **GSBARC & Central Islip HS Make ARISS Contact!**
- **KB6NU's Guest Column**
  - **NJDXA Secret Weapon**
  - **Cedar Beach SET**



**Long Island's Friendliest Amateur Radio Club!**

# President's Message



**S**o April showers came to our area along with some of that white stuff. As I was driving to a service call, I heard Tracy Morgan blast Howard Stern for whining about the snow. Tracy said the trees and bushes needed it because they are thirsty and without them we can't survive. But nonetheless, April showers were here with us -- and it is what it is.

Hopefully all the April showers will bring May flowers. Meanwhile, what did we do this past month, you ask?

We had a lot of work to do but it all paid off – contact between school kids and the International Space Station! Thank you to Patrick KD2IFR for reaching out to us for a totally awesome event April 18 in Central Islip. Thank you to Bill WB2QGZ, Ed KD2ADC, Walter KA2CAQ, Mike KC2SYF, MATT KD2EXM, Pete W2JV, Ben K2CPU and Jeff N2OEP. And everyone else who helped in some way or another. Because of the dedication in the preparation, 20 Central Islip School District School kids got to ask their questions to the astronaut Ricky Arnold one of the flight engineers aboard the International Space Station. Thank you to the great hospitality of the Central Islip School District. The station setup was done the day before. Thank you to Able Equipment for donating the use of a 40-foot boom for a few days. The antennas were mounted on the boom to clear the houses and trees to get a direct line of sight as the ISS flew by. The new rotor cable extensions worked perfectly as did the new 200-foot runs of LMR 400. The Icom IC9100 worked great although while getting ready Bill WB2QGZ and I were very frustrated trying to program it. We were following all the steps in the manual -- yes, we read the manual for what we were trying to do and got so steamed up when every time we did what it said we did not get the result we needed. So, after a good hour and a half getting nowhere we went on the line to RT Systems and we purchased the software for that radio. No worries the

purchase was donated to the club for it. At that point it took us 10 minutes to program in all the correct frequencies we needed. That was the primary station. The backup station was a Kenwood TMV71a and an M2 Egg Beater which also worked surprisingly well if needed. Once again thank you Patrick KD2IFR and the Central Islip school district as well as Ricky Arnold and the ARISS team.

I am so proud of the calmness of Patrick KD2QGZ, Bill WB2QGZ and Pete W2JV but the problem was not on our end. Bob K2TV was listening on the downlink and heard NA1SS apologize. They reported the problem was on their end. Sounds all too familiar, right? How many times have you thrown out your call and hear nothing to realize your volume was turned all the way down.

We also took part in an emergency preparedness drill, testing digital communications, on April 21st at Cedar Beach. The club trailer was there and seen by a lot of Boy Scouts and the West Islip and Brentwood fire departments and the Suffolk County Marine patrol. I would like to thank Ben K2CPU, Phil KD2GFO, Lou NO2C, Salli K2RYD, John W2JGH, and John K2IZ. We sent messages via voice and digital to test the emergency communications from Cedar Beach to the EOC. It all worked great until an error with the laptop we were using at the beach location.

As we start May we always look forward to another event the Air Power Museum event May 19 and 20. We hold this event in memorial to Charles S. Egan, III, WA2QAV known to us as "Magic Airs Bud." Whenever he operated this event it looked he was holding a bombardier switch for his PTT. Bud served in the U.S. Air Force proudly for a very long time and always talked about the great times he had. Bud started this event to honor all military veterans so it is only fitting to honor him by holding this special event every year.

If you're headed to Ohio for Hamvention that weekend, make sure you sport your GSBARC pride.

Field Day is just a little more than a month away: June 23 and 24. We have a tremendous amount of work ahead of us. The success is in the preparation. When we get some nice Saturdays, we will once again go through the shelter boxes. We will assemble one shelter then the next the following week. The shelters framework is color-coded, which should make the assembly smooth. The trailer needs to be cleaned out, the job boxes must be emptied and all coax runs tested. We need to check all extension cords hardware for towers, brackets for the VHF 6-meter station and so on. We need to open every radio box up. Last year, the radios were not put away in their correct boxes with their correct cables.

I will once again service all the club generators. No worries: I only use Mobile One synthetic oil. Our Field Day site is a huge undertaking. We love to put up whatever you like but the problem tends to be at the end on Sunday

after 2pm. If it takes an army to set it up please don't leave the takedown to just a few. We have noticed in the last few years there are fewer and fewer around to help for takedown and putting everything away. The timeline for Field Day weekend is: Friday the 22nd at 5 p.m., we will set the dipoles on the north side up. The equipment will be staged in the big room ready to load up. On Saturday, June 23rd the tower crew at 6 local will assemble all the antennas and get the towers up. Shelters will go up that same day at 7 local time. Note: no radios are to be unpacked until the shelter is assembled and have tables for their set up.

If all goes well we should have a fantastic Field Day and once again for the set-up crew. No worries about lunch. Once again my wife and I will provide lunch for you all. I thank you all for the hard work that you all do for making all our events as great as they are .

Whatever you do this month, remember to always lend a hand to help another amateur radio operator or anyone who may need a helping hand with something. And have fun no matter what you are doing, whether it's DXing, contesting or ragchewing.

*73. John Melji, W2HCB* 

***GSBARC 2018 Field Day Raffle***  
***Tickets now available for our newest club fund raising raffle. Help keep our dues at their current level and have a chance at 2 great prizes.***



***First prize is a Yaesu FT-891 HF/6M mobile transceiver\****  
***Second prize is an ICOM ID-5100A VHF/UHF/DSTAR mobile FM transceiver\****  
***Donations are \$5 per ticket or a book of 5 tickets for \$20 — the best deal!***  
***Drawing to be held during Field Day dinner barbecue on Saturday June 23rd.***  
***\*Winners need not be present to win and may choose the cash value of the prize in lieu of the prize itself.***

## **Radio Matters**

### ***The North Jersey DX Association's Secret Weapon***

By Urb LeJeune W1UL;  
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#### **Background**

September 1957 witnessed the introduction of The North Jersey DX Association (NJDXA). This event encountered broadly based yawns. Little did they know. The DXCC Mixed Honor Roll in the September 1957 issue of QST contained only 21 calls and the Phone Honor Roll contained only 13 calls. There were no W2s on either list although NJDXA member W2AGW was one country off the honor roll and NJDXA member W2BXA led the second call area on phone.

By 1966 the mixed DXCC honor roll swelled to 149 of which 28 (19%) were NJDXA members. There were only two W2s non-NJDXA-members who were on the Honor Roll. How could the NJDXA become a DX force of nature in such a short period of time? The answer is simple; we had a secret weapon, semi-private 2 meter channels.

#### **Two Meters**

Shortly after the end of WWII the pre-war 2.5 meter band was assigned to broadcast TV. Hams were assigned the current 2 meter band obsoleting all pre-WWII VHF equipment. At the time huge amounts of surplus military electronic equipment became available in various "Radio Rows" around the country. However, that's a story for another time. If you're interested check out Wikipedia;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio\\_Row](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_Row)

The SCR522 quickly became one of the more popular VHF transceivers. It was designed as an air-to-ground 125 to 150 MHz transceiver and its 832 final tube delivered about six watts of AM. Four switchable crystals provided

*Continued on page 5*

# “Alexa, help me with ham radio”

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU



I have had an Amazon Alexa (<https://www.amazon.com/Amazon-Echo-And-Alexa-Devices/b?ie=UTF8&node=9818047011>) for nearly a year now. Mostly, I just use it to listen to internet radio stations or tell me a joke, but I think it has more potential than that. For example, I’ve written before about how I’d like to develop an Alexa skill to control my IC-7300 (<https://www.kb6nu.com/use-alex-a-amateur-radio/>). I haven’t gotten around to that yet, but, Joe, N3HEE, has just published an Alexa skill called Continuous Wave ([https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B07C7HS47J/?ref=skill\\_dsk\\_skb\\_sr\\_0](https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B07C7HS47J/?ref=skill_dsk_skb_sr_0)). It’s designed to help you learn Morse Code.

To use this skill, you have to first enable it. Once enabled, say, “Alexa, open Continuous Wave.” This opens the skill at the main menu. You can then say any of the following at any voice prompt...

- Learn
- Practice
- Alphabet
- Common words
- Random words
- Words
- Sentences
- Call signs
- Contest
- Quick Brown Fox
- QSO
- Help
- Stop – To end your session.

I’ve just played around with this app for a short time, but I’ve found it to be quite entertaining. It does, however, have one big drawback. You can’t set the speed. It’s currently limited to sending at 20 words per minute only.

Also, the learn function could use a little refining. When you give the command “learn,” it asks you for a character, sends that character three times, and then asks you for another. If you could set the speed at which the skill sends characters, it could teach a character like the K7QO Code Course, first sending the character slowly, then ramping up the speed.

Overall, though, I think this is a great first shot at a usable Alexa skill for teaching Morse Code. I hope this is the first of many versions of this skill.

## Other ham radio skills

While I was poking around on Amazon, I decided to see what other amateur radio skills might be available. Here are a few that I found:


- Ham Exam ([https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B01N7NQ3JE/?ref=skill\\_dsk\\_skb\\_sr\\_6&qid=1524602919](https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B01N7NQ3JE/?ref=skill_dsk_skb_sr_6&qid=1524602919)). Ask Alexa to ask you questions from the Technician Class question pool.
- Ham Lookup ([https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B073YL88SL/?ref=skill\\_dsk\\_pnps\\_dp\\_1](https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B073YL88SL/?ref=skill_dsk_pnps_dp_1)). Allows you to look up amateurs by call sign. Information is provided from the callbook.info database.
- Ham Radio Propagation Forecast ([https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B073THV6ZP/?ref=skill\\_dsk\\_pnps\\_dp\\_0](https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B073THV6ZP/?ref=skill_dsk_pnps_dp_0)). Reports the latest forecasts directly from HamQSL (run by NONBH).
- ARRL Audio News ([https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B078Y7NGYT/?ref=skill\\_dsk\\_skb\\_sr\\_1&qid=1524750783](https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B078Y7NGYT/?ref=skill_dsk_skb_sr_1&qid=1524750783)). Adds ARRL Audio News to your Alexa flash briefing.

## Building your own voice app

The Continuous Wave Alexa skill was developed using tools found at VoiceApps.Com. Two other websites—Pullstring (<https://pullstring.com>) and StoryLine (<https://getstoryline.com>)—also have tools to help you build voice apps. And, Amazon has an online tutorial that will teach you how to build an Alexa app. I’m just getting started with these tools, so I can’t recommend one over the others, but they do look like they’ll make developing voice apps easier.

Since I’m currently in the process of updating my No Nonsense Technician Class License Study Guide, it occurs to me that I should also develop an Alexa skill for drilling students on test questions. I guess you could call them audio flashcards. Stay tuned for that.

*When he's not trying to figure out how to build voice apps, Dan blogs about amateur radio at [KB6NU.Com](http://KB6NU.Com), teaches ham radio classes and operates CW on the HF bands. Look for him on 30m, 40m, and 80m.*

*You can email him about the voice apps that you like at [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).* 

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### *Radio Matters... continued from page 3*

the ability to move around the band. Another popular "Radio Row" item was barrels of crystals, typically 25 cents each or 5 for a buck. Another very popular item was brand spanking new J38 keys in a box for 50 cents.

Most of the general 2 meter activity was in the lower MHz of the band. The early pre-NJDXA operators set up shop at the very high end of the band where they were essentially undetected. There were two frequencies used, channel A for general DX chatting and channel D for serious DX-related communications. Channel D was barely inside the band and channel A occupied a spot slightly lower.

In the late 1950, Gonset introduced the famous "gooney bird." In the early 60s CD organizations were purchasing CD colored Gonset Communicators and routinely "loaned" the rigs to local hams for CD drills. All the 2 meter operation was simplex because repeaters were still in the future.



### The NJDXA Secret Weapon

Simplicity was the keynote of the NJDXA channels. On channel A one might ask, "What's happening on 40 meters." The "secret" operation was a bit more complex. Every member of the NJDXA received a current DXCC wish list from Ted Marks, W2FG, at the club's monthly meeting. It was an ARRL DXCC county list embellished with a letter designation and a telephone numbers for each member. To illustrate, my letter identification was "D" (I was W2DEC at the time.) Next to KA0 (That's KA zero, the prefix for Iwo Jima) Ted would place "D" and the letter designation of any other members needing KA0. Another list contained the phone number for "D."

Our alert protocol was a "single jingle." If you heard some rare DX while in your normal listening phase you checked the wish list. If someone needed that country, you called them on the "twisted pair." You it ring once. Phone calls outside your immediate area were expensive back then,

Here is an example of what typically happened. Bob, K2GMO hears KA0IJ and calls W2DEC on the phone, letting it ring once. W2DEC then goes to channel "D" and simply says, "W2DEC." Bob would say KA0IJ 14035. That was it. Any additional communications shifted to channel A.

If a member was out of 2 meter range the "single jingle" the meeting took place on 14.295 MHz. Twenty meter phone ended at 14.300 back then and all the DX activity took place at the low end of the phone band so 14.295 was a good hiding place.

### Epilogue

Hindsight is required to fully appreciate of the effectiveness of our clandestine operation. There was no internet, no spotting networks, no bulletins and propagation forecasting was in its infancy. The DX columns in QST and CQ were only sources of public DX information. By the time you received the magazines the information was three months old.

In the 1950/1960 era any DXer worthy of the name spent at least 20 hours listening for every hour of transmitting. The leveraging effect of 30 sets of ears listening for you was dramatic. Contrast that with a good friend of mine who has various spotting networks running all the time. When he sees a country he needs he turn on the rig works the DX and goes back to whatever he was doing. After years of this operational mode honor roll status is within sight.

I'm not proclaiming "search and pounce" as the preferred method of DXing; however, the old way provided a fantastic sense of accomplishment because honor roll status required years of concentrated individual activity. It has been my experience that the greater the challenge the greater the feeling of accomplishment when the task was finally completed.

When not writing articles for newsletter Urb can typically be found working on his website [ham-cram.com](http://ham-cram.com). The W1UL Ham Cram method had three distinguishing characteristics:

We don't study incorrect answers.

We only study the questions most likely on the test.

It's FREE

73 Urb W1UL [urb@ham-cram.com](mailto:urb@ham-cram.com) 68 Years a ham.

[Radio Row pictures here.](#) 

# GSBARC AND CENTRAL ISLIP HIGH SCHOOL IN SPACE, SPACE, SPACE...





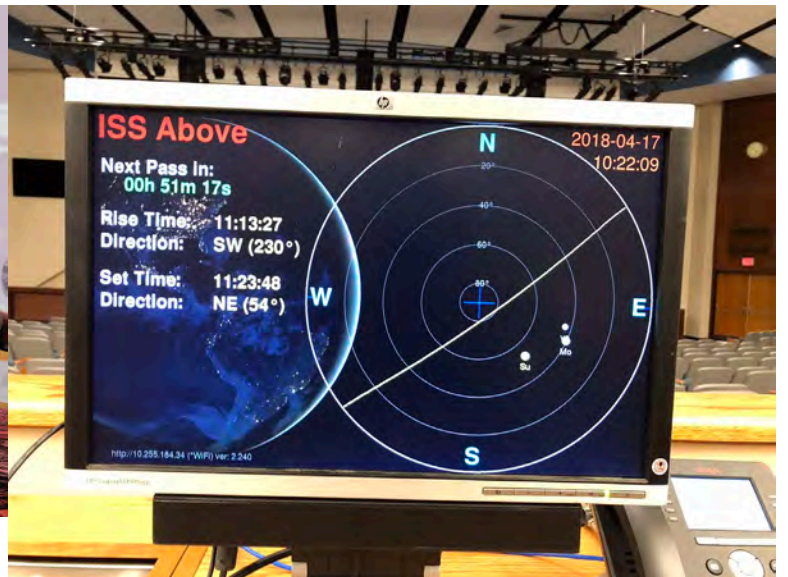
*Patrick Hait and Brianna Wilms*



*Hait and Nixon Gonzales*



*Hait and Isaac Cardenas*



# *Inside the Squirrel Cage*

by Caryn, KD2GUT



**I**t's getting harder and harder to find some good real estate. I'm not referring to antenna space or even room in the shack: I mean a spot on some nice usable frequency where I can park and bark.

The bands don't exactly hang out a "vacancy" sign and, of course, your ear is your best real-estate broker when you're in the market for a spot you can live with. But crowded band conditions – when the even bands are usable, that is – have made frequency-shopping into a game of musical chairs except, of course, music isn't permitted. (Tell that to the guys who generate that kind of QRM regardless.)

So how drastic a remedy do we need to consider? Anyone who survived the odd-even rationing of gasoline during the shortage of the 1970s knows the meaning of desperation. As KD2GUT, should I only get on the air, then, on even days? Or perhaps get on the air every day but be restricted to even-numbered frequencies? Am I banned forever from 7.215 – or do I need to use a Special Event call sign to sneak on there? Will holders of odd-numbered call signs start befriending hams with even-numbered call signs (and vice versa) so they can get their fix and operate out of their QTH – appropriating their call - on days they'd be otherwise unauthorized?

I'm not sure I'd even want to put the solution in the hands of the FCC but on some days, we hams sure seem to be operating fist to fist or even cheek-to-cheek (I'll leave you to figure out which cheeks). It's tough being the odd one out when you're even. (And even when you're not). ☺

## **Proposed Amendment to the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club By-Laws**

- Submitted by Walter, KA2CAQ and read to those members present at the April 27th, 2018 General Membership Meeting.
- For distribution via publishing in *The Compass* newsletter and posting on the GSBARC Groups.io group and to be voted on at the May, 31st General Membership meeting and requiring a 3/4 vote of a quorum of members present to pass.

### **Proposed Amendment to Section 4, Governing Board, of the By-Laws of the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club, Inc.**

*Section 4 Governing Board as it currently reads:*

#### **4. Governing Board**

- a) The Governing Board shall be authorized to spend up to ONE HUNDRED dollars (\$100.00) without prior approval of the membership. All expenditures must be reported at the next General Meeting.
- b) All expenditures in excess of this amount must have prior approval by the membership.

*Proposed Change:*

#### **4. Governing Board**

- a) The Governing Board shall be authorized to spend up to FIVE HUNDRED dollars (\$500.00) without prior approval of the membership within a period limited to that time remaining prior to the next General Membership meeting. All expenditures must be reported at the next General Meeting
- b) Expenses are limited to any existing pre-approved budget line, otherwise limited to not more than \$2000 total per year.
- c) All expenditures in excess of this amount must have prior approval by the membership.



*ARES Simulated Emergency Test (SET)  
Cedar Beach, Babylon 2018*





*GSBARC is no longer using Yahoo Groups due to issues with the platform. We have transferred everyone over to <https://groups.io/>*

*If you were a member of any of the Yahoo groups just sign up for a free [groups.io](https://groups.io/) account and you will have access to the new groups. [Groups.io](https://groups.io/) has most of the same features as the Yahoo groups and some additional ones as well, like the ability to have live chats. ☺*

### 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,  
<http://www.huntingtonnyaresraces.org/>
- Div. 3—Town of Islip ARES/RACES  
Mondays 8:30 PM  
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: Rich Johnston, KC2TON, 631-872-4039
- Div. 5—Town of Brookhaven ARES/RACES  
EC/RO: Ted Debowy, AC2IR, 631-751-6576
- Div. 6—Riverhead ARES/RACES  
EC/RO: Steve Casco, W2SFC, 917-701-3919
- Div. 7—Southampton ARES/RACES  
EC/RO: Removed & Currently Vacant
- 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: Eddie Schnell, W2ZY, 864-973-9250
- Div. 10—Shelter Island ARES/RACES  
EC/RO: Vacant (Neal Raymond, N2QZA, SK)

#### Suffolk County

#### ARES/RACES Net:

Mondays 2100 Local—145.330/R (136.5 PL)

Alternate Frequency—146.820 (136.5 PL)

#### New York State

#### RACES Net (HF)

Sundays 0900 Local, 3993.5 KHz LSB

## 2018 VE Session Dates

- May 26th
- June 16th
- July 28th
- August 25th
- September 22nd
- October 27th
- November 24th
- December 22nd

*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".*

*Visit [FCC Universal Licensing System site](http://www.fcc.gov) to register for an FRN number to use on the paperwork.*

### The GSBARC Repeater List

- 146.685 W2GSB - shift 110.9 Hz Enc/Dec
- 223.860 W2GSB - shift 110.9 Hz Enc/Dec w/ ECHOLINK
- 223.860 - shift 156.7 Hz Enc/Dec Local use
- 440.850 W2GSB + shift 110.9 Hz Enc/Dec
- 446.775 KB2UR - shift 110.9 Hz Enc/Dec
- 927.3125 W2YMM - shift D606 Enc/Dec
- 440.250 W2TOB/B + shift DSTAR REF020A Babylon
- 445.725 WD2NY/B - shift DSTAR REF020A Selden

Grow Giant Vegetables with **MAGIC MANURE**, manufactured daily on the farm. 40-50lb bags free for the taking, already bagged. Pick-up or Delivery to EOC available. References available upon request. Contact Salli at:

[k2ryd@arrl.net](mailto:k2ryd@arrl.net)



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## 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" ☺

