

The following is a summary of the ARRL All-Hands Meeting held at the Boxboro Convention Center Holiday Inn in Boxboro Massachusetts. There were approximately 40 people in attendance. The roster was kept by Eastern Massachusetts ARRL Section Manager K1GBX-Art Greenberg's XYL, Shirley Greenberg. The meeting was started at 1030 AM by Art Greenberg-K1GBX.

Art started the meeting with a several minute speech concerning why he called the All-Hands Meeting and to try and get people more supportive of the ARRL and to drive more members into the organization. There are 9825 Amateur Radio Operators in the Eastern Massachusetts section but only 2500 are members of the ARRL. Art stated his belief that the ARRL is the only Amateur Radio organization that truly represents the interest of Amateur Radio Operators in Congress and was looking for information on why people don't support the ARRL further, what the ARRL can do to improve itself to attract more members and also stated an objective on how to get more youth involved in Amateur Radio. Art stated having a separate youth publication produced by the ARRL would be helpful in attracting youth into Amateur Radio. At that time, Art opened the floor to questions and comments from the people in attendance.

AB1GA-Dale Sinclair stated that the reason many folks are not joining the ARRL has to do with its shortcomings within the ARRL organization. Most of those licensees are just not interested in the ARRL. Dale stated that he believes merging magazines would be better versus separate publications. He stated his frustration with the fact that there are good articles in NCJ and QEX but it costs more money to get those publications. He stated that instead of having a separate youth publication that a youth section be put within QST versus a separate publication. Dale claims that because of the separate publications that the ARRL is unintentionally segregating within Amateur Radio and that QST is the best vehicle to unite the group. Dale stated his belief that the ARRL is practicing brand extension and that it is inappropriate for a membership organization to do and it's the wrong attitude for the ARRL to take.

W3EVE-Steve Schwarm made a few comments concerning getting youth involved in Amateur Radio and centered his discussions on how he operated during JOTA (Jamboree On The Air) and Kid's Day. He stated that getting on the air on JOTA weekend and getting on with scouts and do some operating is fun and that kids are fascinated that you can work Europe and they want to talk to scouts. Steve recalled a recent JOTA where he had a bunch of cub scouts who had a QSO with a station in Wales and the cub scouts told their parents that they talked to "whales" and how humorous that was. During Kid's Day in January, Steve commented on how he had a good friend who brought his 8 year old kid to work Kids Day but couldn't find any kids to work but did find a station in North Dakota who talked to the 8 year old. Steve stated having more Kids on for Kids Day would make the event more successful and that we should all try and make that happen.

AB1GA-Dale Sinclair discussed how if people were active in another group or organization to try and present Amateur Radio to those groups or organizations. Younger people and middle age folks aren't around as much and are involved in many organizations so outreach to youth in different venues and organizations is essential. He also stated that there needs to be more outreach to the people outside of the ARRL as to why they're not involved. This meeting was the first time there was an attempt made to figure out why people aren't getting involved with ARRL and try to figure out how to improve and grow the organization. Dale also stated that libraries are being turned to

after-school day care centers. Kids are becoming “nuisances” in the libraries and hanging signs and working with radio clubs to publicize Amateur Radio may help to get the word out about Amateur Radio. The problem then becomes that kids interested in Amateur Radio need a place to gather or club stations to utilize. Kids Day is a nice idea to bring these things forward. The other issue is that 12 year olds have many other activities and Amateur Radio may not stick with all the other interests out there. Dale is a life member of ARRL, and an American Ham for 8 months after being in Germany for many years. He also stated that the price tag of radios is a big barrier. A rig that covers the new tech bands that is cheap would be very helpful. Having the ARRL to design radios to work tech bands either via computer or designed in a way that is low cost working with the radio manufacturers may be a great way to go to alleviate cost issues.

Dave Upton-WB1CMG discussed two companies that make radios that Dale has described or is working towards designs that could potentially fit Dale’s description. A company called Expanded Spectrum System will have software/hardware that will allow for radio design similar to what Dale has mentioned. Soft-Rock is another choice for QRP and DSP radios. Another opportunity of sorts was missed with PSK-31 radios that could be utilized and alleviate cost and allow for Hams to utilize a digital mode. Many Hams were building PSK-31 devices and pricing was up to 140 dollars but could be less if specified correctly. Ten-Tec has a decent receiver kit and covers a bunch of shortwave and Amateur bands and it runs like 69 dollars. While the dial is not calibrated, it is good for listening and it has been redesigned with modern technology and tailor for Ham bands with synthesizers etc. that would be workable and doable at low power (up to 25 Watts).

Ralph Swick-KD1SM is a Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club (NVARC) member for 15 years and have tried a variety of things for low cost radio kits. For example, they have utilized and built single band SSB kits for 40-50 dollars and get everyone and young folks involved into the radio through those kits. Attempts by the radio club to try and get kids into radio clubs and get students and teachers involved with radio clubs at schools hasn’t worked.

W1EJJ-Dave Goncalves worked on particular project for AMSAT and received an email asking if someone can build this simple device for satellite and to get it to actually fly in space and threw down the specification. Several Massachusetts Amateurs built and designed it and got it flown into space. Dave feels the same sort of technique could be used here and that you could get some sort of reward for it. Dave ran the club at Northeastern for 4 years and it went from an empty room to a well-funded club and it was run not forgetting that there were a highly concentrated area of students for Engineering/technology and targeting these folks would be beneficial. Dave stated that he tried to get speakers to various meetings so that he could hold on to members and continue getting new Ham Operators. One professor setup a course where they setup a Norcal-48 radio and out of that course, there were 4-5 new Hams generated by running the course. **Maintenance of list of speakers would be helpful and Art took an action to work on that item to get the list of speakers updated.**

At this point, Ralph Swick-KD1SM pointed to Bryce Salmi-KB1LQC and Brent Salmi-KB1LQD to comment on their story on how they got into Amateur Radio and how they started a Radio Club at the Chelmsford High School. For the next hour Bryce and Brent told their story and answered questions from the audience.

KB1LQC-Bryce Salmi and KB1LQD-Brent Salmi are founders of the Chelmsford High School Amateur Radio Club, KB1NAY, since October 2005 and got licenses as sophomores in High School. Their parents weren't licensed until afterwards with their dad, John Salmi-KB1MGI getting licensed and it was an interesting adventure to start the club. They stated that the debate on how to get more youth involved is a tough one and has many variables. From their experience with club and becoming a Ham, they noticed two things among them and the students that are unique. Their first contacts were on home built stuff. Ramsey kit 1-watt radios were the first way to make contact and through other organizations and their radio equipment. They were able to get radios donated and when dad was licensed they got radios at home.

How the club got started:

Once Bryce and Brent got in Amateur Radio, they wanted to share with other kids. They stated that the way kids have changed is that they are not necessarily looking for new tech things. They are looking to hang out with friends and have fun or to do other activities together such as getting on the radio and do homework, do take home tests or studying and throwing questions on their homework and studying across the repeater as well as joking around with friends and other activities. For example, Bryce and Brent are involved with mountain biking and they met Dave Steeves-KB1MKW, an avid mountain biker and Dave got his license because it could help them on their mountain biking trips. We'd bring HT's on camelbacks in case something was needed or we split up and Amateur Radio could be used as part of their mountain biking trips. They could break up into groups and stay in touch in the State Parks etc. and it worked out well and now Dave is an advisor to the radio club. Dave is a Physics teacher at Chelmsford High School and has put Amateur Radio into the curriculum.

The club was started in October 2005 and they were able to get gear borrowed from other clubs along with gear that was donated by various groups. Over time, the club ended up getting 7 members at the high school. The club went for the ARRL big project grant and it went through and got a portion of the grant for 3,000 dollars worth of radio equipment from the ARRL and the club now has a transceiver, tuner, receiver etc. and the club now has HF. The next milestone will be antennas on the school. Currently, they are using portable Hamstick dipole antennas. The club did get from a generous donation from , AA1HO, Art Walsh, of 50 foot of Rohn-25 tower and they are trying to get that up at the school but the school wants someone insured to put the tower up. The club has had several Cushcraft beams and other items donated but they need backing to get this tower and met for 2 hours at the club on how to get that completed. **Art Greenberg stated that he has a contact who is insured that can put up the tower. Art requested that Bryce and Brent contact Art and Art could make the arrangements if the school agrees.**

What attracted Bryce and Brent to Amateur Radio?

Bryce and Brent studied when they were in 8th grade and got interested as their Dad was a firefighter and they constantly had scanners on because of his line of work and they heard fire and emergency information from it. They never thought they would get into it but they always had some level of interest. The neighbor down the street, W1XH-AI, met them at the July 4th party and they found out he's a Ham Operator and AI gave them a QST and they got their license manuals and got licensed.

Bryce and Brent stated that they both were interested in the technical and engineering and that helped their attraction with Amateur Radio. It was noted that they applied for RPI (Rennselear Polytechnic Institute). They were very intrigued with the fact that they could use this piece of metal or wire and get on the air and make things happen. Some in the audience expressed concern about doing engineering as the job prospects are not as good as what it was because outsourcing.

At this point, Art-K1GBX requested a note be taken to have Bryce and Brent put on the speakers list.

Stan Pozerski-KD1LE asked about equipment issues and how they were overcome. Brent and Bryce stated that the equipment issues were overcome but that it was because they were ambitious to get on the air. Money was a huge issue and they never operated after the first 2 months of getting licensed.

Stan-KD1LE noted that a lot of clubs have loaner equipment and clubs have never loaned it and no one ever asked for it and was wondering if it was worth it. **A better job must be done in matching clubs that have equipment to donate with those that need the donations and this action was noted and may be a good item for the ACC or Affiliated Club Coordinator.**

A question was then asked on club continuity, advisor and students to back them up once they graduate. What Bryce and Brent are doing is when they leave, they know that no one else except for them will go outside every day and meet and setup the antennas and setup all the radios because they like the club and like doing it. They feel it's imperative to get the tower up to make for less work and more radio operating and contacts.

They currently have a couple underclassmen that are members. They have a couple sophomores interested but no freshmen. They are not prepared to really advertise to more kids because the setup work for the antennas and radios may be viewed by many kids as boring so they have to pick and choose their opportunities for advertising. Once they get the tower up and the radios installed, it will allow for a better chance of advertisement.

The question was asked on whether the Chelmsford High School club was affiliated with any other club. The answer is that it is associated with the PART-Police Amateur Radio Team and the BARS-Billerica Amateur Radio Society. It is noted that Bryce and Brent operated Field Day outside of the school working with these and other radio clubs.

The question was asked on whether members of the Amateur Radio Club interact with kids out of school and the answer there is no. Bryce and Brent feel that they should not push people to join outside groups and that there were other ways to generate interest by applying Amateur Radio to other hobbies that kids do.

KB1MSR-Dave asked a question on how important was the infusion of equipment to the club and Bryce and Brent stated it was extremely important to get this equipment. They were able to get a Yaesu 897 radio and to get a radio like that would be helpful. Once the tower is in place and a separate room for the radios connected to a good antenna is available, much more can be accomplished. For example, Dave Steeves-KB1MKW

could teach Electromagnetic waves in the Physics classes that he teaches and he can actually demonstrate with Amateur Radio equipment and show how it works in life.

Bryce and Brent also said that the mountain bike club was a big break in allowing for added interest. While an advisor doesn't necessarily have to be licensed to assist with the radio club as they would just have to teach the school, having a licensed advisor is very helpful and allows for a better and stronger connection.

A question was then asked about the Hello Radio campaign. Bryce and Brent state that it was a very good move. It is a better attempt than what he saw in the past promoting Amateur Radio despite their limited experience in Amateur Radio. One of the things they noticed was that it was catering to younger kids before their high school years. Bryce and Brent stated that it might be difficult to get them to carry through the interest. High School kids may be a better target because they have more freedom, jobs and can continue their interest and apply it to other activities. The Hello Radio campaign went more to middle school versus high school kids and it needs to advertise at the High school level and get kids interested at an old age. Their reasoning was that a kid with a job can earn the money to get the radio equipment and add Amateur Radio to other interests.

Dale Sinclair-AB1GA agreed with Brent's and Bryce's assessment and mentioned that recruiting young people is best served from the roughly 15 years old and above category. Younger kids at ages 8, 9 or 10 are the exception and are either very smart or part of Ham Radio families.

A good friend of Art's, K1BXC, Daniel Burbank, mentioned that you have to be a good teacher/salesman and be enthusiastic and have to sell it to others. He bought a Heathkit and had kids put it together and the kids had the realization of putting on the air at the end. Buying L-crafts and put it together and adds impetus to those kids and for old timers to get interested and on the hook. A negative that he has seen is that in North Carolina, a friend of his who is interested in Ham Radio is looking for an interesting club to join and has been to several clubs where they show videos and old guys talk about the "good old days" versus doing more within Amateur Radio and his friend is still looking for an Amateur Radio club to join.

Bryce and Brent noted at the last meeting that they brought a circuit board and have done some home-brewing and built audio oscillators and that it ended up being a great way to get people interested. One of the things they noticed was that one of the girls was trying to solder and people look on and interest formed and they didn't expect it. Shirley Greenberg, Art's XYL offered support as she is a certified in soldering. Bryce and Brent appreciated and noted the offer from Shirley.

Bryce and Brent stated that their main interest in radio is on the technical side but their schedule being a senior in high school and with college applications has not allowed them to be quite as active. They also discussed how a lot of the setup of equipment and showing others how to operate has taken time out from Bryce and Brent being able to operate themselves. It's noted that their club advisor has been able to get additional Amateurs by offering extra credit points in their Physics class. This worked to get Amateur Operators last year but they were seniors so they didn't contribute to the club. Their advisor has done the same thing this year but earlier in the year so its hoped to get additional Amateurs that are underclassmen because they are doing this earlier.

Karen Brothers-K1KEB mentioned that there is a License-in-a-weekend class in mid March and that it's a one weekend commitment. This is another way to get young Amateurs to get their licenses through the Chelmsford Club.

Marcia Forde-KW1U, when she was living in Concord noted that her son, 7 or 8 years old took a Morse Code class and got their license. She then saw just recently that her grandson who is 12 also wanted to learn CW and noted that CW, while not required, may get more interest in it because it's not required. Bryce and Brent noted that they are on CW a lot from home with some VHF voice work. The view is that taking away CW from licensing is going to be helpful for those kids that like HF and now can do that without CW as a requirement. Novelty talking on repeater wears off fast because it's the same folks that you talk to all the time and people that are living fairly close together but many students want HF because you never know who you're going to reach and who will "emerge from the static".

Another piece that was noted is that showing one's station, being on the air and communicating, showing the technical and public service piece is key in getting people excited and generating interest.

Ed-W1FBI noted the recent, NSRA, North Shore Radio Association success with Jim-KB1KQW getting a Venture Club crew of kids from ages 14-20 that is co-ed and working with the NSRA. Ed also noted that there are 60-80 members attending a monthly meeting. Ed asked Art-K1GBX to attend a NSRA Club meeting in the future.

Dave-WB1CMG stated how he got interested Amateur Radio in mid-90's and went and found a book on Amateur Radio and got into it that way. People are still interested in electronics in some form whether it is working on an audio system, wireless etc. and there is a pool of people that need to be tapped and make Amateur Radio a part of these interests. Bryce and Brent agreed and they recalled listening to their scanner on the Ham bands and hearing a discussion on guitar amps which is an interest they shared and listened to learned more about and fed further interest into Amateur Radio.

A question was asked on whether Bryce and Brent have seen or heard of any other after school programs, Boys Clubs etc. where there was interest in Amateur Radio. They stated they didn't hear of any but at their High School they would grab kids who were in other after school programs when they were doing something within the club that might interest these other kids.

It was stated by the body that giving presentations by those members who were available during the day would be helpful and in the evening when more are available to other groups such as the Lions Club, Knights of Columbus, Masons etc. The presentation would have to be a higher level to gather interest and not confuse folks that are not familiar with Amateur Radio.

A round of applause was given to Brent and Bryce for their presentation. The group then broke up for lunch.

After lunch, it was discussed that recent but old QST's to doctor's, dentist's offices, Barber Shops etc. might give additional exposure to people on Amateur Radio. A

question was asked on what the ARRL does with QST overruns. Many are sold via Amateur Radio stores and other areas but it was recommended that QST's be distributed and that a subscription just to the magazine be available versus full ARRL membership to spread the word to places. Also, putting QST's in libraries would also be helpful.

Art mentioned that a good way to learn about what the ARRL is doing is to request an ARRL annual report. He stated that he learned a lot about the ARRL through that report.

The next item discussed was how the latest frequency allocation changes have jammed CW with digital stations and are mixed with Canadian and digital stations and that it appears they are running CW off the band. It was also noted that the auto digital stations are spread out and causes problems. Jack-N1OTC mentioned this concern given he does a lot of CW work for NTS.

Tom Kinahan-N1CPE took a moment to thank the ARRL for fighting to keep the digital WinLink modes usable as they were in the past after the FCC' mistake in taking it away in the band plan reorganization. ARRL's fighting in this area allowed a key digital mode on HF that was utilized during Katrina to remain on the air despite some of the issue concerned raise on the CW piece of things.

At this point, Rob Macedo-KD1CY gave a pitch on ARES and SKYWARN and discussed the partnership that the ARES program has with RACES and how ARES serves in an auxiliary capacity to support RACES and to assist with starting RACES programs when contacted by Emergency Management or Hams getting involved with Emergency Management. The SKYWARN program was discussed and the success that has occurred there along with discussing ARES primary role with Red Cross and Salvation Army. The Red Cross Background check piece was discussed and how local Red Cross chapters are concerned about the new national policy and how there will most likely changes that get negotiated between the ARRL and Red Cross with the statement of understanding now coming up for renewal this year. The NERPC report was discussed and how we are still awaiting details on that report which brought us to the national database and the fact that Eastern Massachusetts has taken a strong stance against the national database. Rob commented that the concern is on the implementation and that the section is awaiting details on the report before further judging the national database and raising additional concerns about it.

Marcia Forde-KW1U asked about her concerns regarding the lack of NTS traffic and the lack of participation on the NTS traffic nets and how they need help. There was also discussion about how the NTS traffic fits into the ICS-213 forms. Based on that information, Rob-KD1CY took an action to get a meeting together in the spring to go through the concerns and problems of the NTS nets and how to get them more active passing traffic and take on the NTS traffic versus ICS-213 form piece of things. Ralph Swick-KD1SM also discussed how their nets have had little traffic unless Gil-W1GMF passes traffic. Ralph would like to work with Marcia in this regard as the NTS nets are becoming ragchew nets or nets that run for a very short period of time with no traffic. Ralph would also like to see more traffic get passed to the Trans Continental Corps or TCC. Some suggestions include NTS Birthday greetings/new license messages to bring to the nets. Its noted that certain states such as Utah, North and South Dakota and others are not passing the traffic and labeling it as "spam". This is happening to Gil-W1GMF. The ARRL needs to do something in this regard given that the National Traffic

System personnel should not be making these decisions at the local level and the ARRL should be enforcing the policy here.

Rob-KD1CY noted that there will be a SKYWARN Class in Walpole, Mass. Thursday May 3rd, 2007 from 7-10 PM and that more classes were planned in the Eastern Massachusetts section and that the web sites and email lists will have this updated information soon.

The KD1SM Public Service list was announced to everyone as a way to get volunteers to participate in public service events. The link to the list appears below:
<http://www.n1nc.org/PSLIST/>

It is noted that the Boxboro Hamfest for 2008 has been set for August 22nd, 23rd and 24th and serves as the New England Division Convention. The W1 QSL Bureau is looking for clubs to sign up and participate for a year in the sorting and forwarding of QSL cards.

It was also stated that Club database updates should be posted on the ARRL web site and that those looking to attract more members should give further information on their club meeting sites instead of saying meeting at the "usual place" so that newcomers can find the meeting location. Also, a reminder on Field Day web site updates for those clubs participating in Field Day was given by Bill Ricker-N1VUX. Finally on legislative matters, Art stated that he is working with K1KI-Tom on the legislative action plan due to Art's government connections. At this point, the meeting was secured at approximately 2 PM.