



PROSPECT HILL INTERMOD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WALTHAM AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

WWW.WALTHAMARA.ORG

WINTER 2024

PHI EDITOR NEEDED!

Patrick Whitney, K1PJW – Outgoing Editor

Hello fellow radio enthusiasts! Alas, I am failing at my editor duties due to life catching up to me. If you have a penchant for editing and sharing info, please reach out ...

73,
Pat

A Few Thoughts from our President

Eric Balles, W1ENB – President, Waltham ARA

I haven't been directly involved with the Waltham ARA for all that long yet, but I've enjoyed so many aspects of the adventure. First and foremost are all the folks involved in the club and I owe a debt of gratitude to those that have guided me along the way. Rich K1RBC and Eliot W1MJ have been bedrock support in helping lead the club. Plus there's a wide range of other members helping to keep our repeater site and physical assets up and running, or chasing down pesky issues.

Now that we are (mostly) past the worst of COVID, I was happy to meet folks in-person at our holiday meet-up, some of whom I've only ever heard on the repeater. Next comes an embarrassing confession (with a nice outcome). I enjoy operating in the field immensely, and some of you have heard of my cycling / hiking QRP adventures... BUT... I've never participated in an ARRL Field Day event ... until last year's event on Mt. Wachusett. Participating with Eliot, Ned, Christine, with photographic support from Rich, I had a memorable, albeit soggy, experience which I hope to repeat often, soggy or not.

Lastly, an important focus of mine is to help the club continue to thrive. There are numerous ways we all can help on that front. Personally, I had a blast being a ham radio ambassador of sorts on the top of Mt. Wachusett chatting with any hiker that even glanced our way! Recently, Christine and I started working on an approach to help get newly licensed hams actually get on the air. And by extension, potentially in the fold as a new member of WARA. And the very last part of that effort for the club to

thrive is a shameless pitch for new volunteers to help run the club. Wishing everyone the very best in the new year. Stay safe.

73,
Eric

WALTHAM ARA HOLIDAY PARTY RETURNS

The Waltham Amateur Radio Association held a Holiday Meetup on December 13, 2023. It was our first since 2019 and was also our first at Great Wall Restaurant in Bedford. Our old venue, Sichuan's Garden in Waltham, has closed.



Rowdiest table at the WARA Holiday Meetup – What the heck is John K1BOS doing?



Holiday Meetup photo courtesy of George, W1LSB



Holiday Meetup photo courtesy of George, W1LSB



Happy raffle prize winner Ned, W1NED. Photo courtesy of George, W1LSB

WARA & MARA JOINT 2023 FIELD DAY OPERATION

Eliot Mayer, W1MJ

The Waltham ARA has participated intermittently over the years in the ARRL Field Day (FD). This event is held every June as a test of amateur radio emergency preparedness, and typically doubles as a social event. For more information, see <http://www.arrl.org/field-day>.



WARA 1941 FD operation in Prospect Hill Park

While FD is nominally a full-weekend event, it doesn't have to be. On several occasions, WARA operated for just a few hours in conjunction with a club picnic in Prospect Hill Park (within sight of our repeaters). For 2023, there was interest in doing a full FD operation, but finding an operating site proved to be troublesome, and the number of interested members wasn't high. To address those issues, Christine, N1AUP, arranged for a joint operation between WARA and the Montachusett Amateur Radio Association (MARA). The Montachusett club had a permit to operate on Mt. Wachusett in Princeton, MA, and needed more participants.

The operation went well, but even with two clubs it proved difficult to keep the 3 stations on the air for the full 24-hour planned operation. Still we managed to make just over 1,000 contact with other FD stations, all on the HF band; the planned VHF station might have been fruitful from our 2,000 foot elevation, but never materialized.

A few things of note:

1. CW is still the most productive mode for FD, contributing about 60% of the contacts. The simplicity and narrow bandwidth are hard to beat under field conditions using simple wire antennas on crowded bands.
2. Digital modes FT8 and FT4 proved to be surprisingly effective, contributing almost 40% of the contacts.
3. Based on the numbers above, you can surmise that we didn't make so many SSB contacts. The HF phone bands get *very* crowded during FD, so making contacts can be a struggle.
4. While several WARA members participated in FD 2023 to some extent, only two of us stayed for the entire weekend. Mediocre weather and the distance from Waltham to Mt. Wachusett may have been factors, but it might just be because the club's focus is VHF/UHF repeaters rather than HF-centric operating events.



WARA President Eric W1ENB operating the SSB station at FD 2023

For more photos, see the [FD 2023 Photo Album](#).

SEEKING NEW HOME FOR '64 ECHOLINK EQUIPMENT

Eliot Mayer, W1MJ

The WARA 146.64 MHz repeater has featured Echolink since 2007 or so, based on records that I have found. Echolink allows linking of repeaters, and access to a repeater from a computer or any mobile device. For more information, see <http://echolink.org/>.

Ideally, the interface between the repeater and the Internet should be done directly at the repeater site. The club didn't have Internet service at the site back in 2007, so Jim K1UGM set up a computer, a transceiver tuned to the repeater, and an interface at his QTH in Wakefield. That setup eventually moved to the QTH of John K1BOS and stayed there for some years.

We have imposed on John for long enough, and we need someone else to take a turn. For now, the Echolink equipment is in my ham shack. It is using my only 2m/70cm antenna, so I cannot use my own station on these bands. I am hoping that one of you will volunteer to do either of the following:

1. Let me move this equipment to your home, your mother-in-law's home, your office, or anywhere else in range of the repeater where you can supply an Internet connection and a 2M antenna (I could homebrew a J-Pole antenna if needed). Or...
2. Set up equipment that would connect directly to our Motorola Quantar repeater in the Waltham radio tower. Some of our Technical Committee members could offer guidance on doing this.

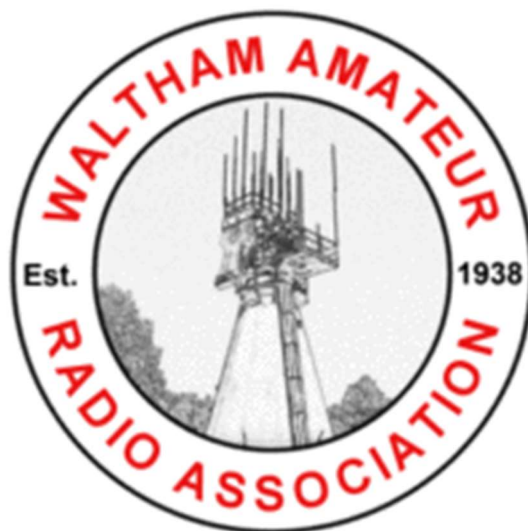
Contact me for further information, eliotmayer@yahoo.com.



Hopefully-Temporary Echolink setup in W1MJ's ham shack

WALTHAM A.R.A. REPEATERS

Input	Output	Tone In	Tone Out	Notes
146.040	146.640	136.5	136.5	NAC 293 for P25 use EchoLink W1MHL-R Node: 490278
223.34	224.94	103.5	103.5	
444.075	449.075	88.5	None	
902.1375	927.1375	131.8	100	Linked to NEAR 900 Network via IRLP



Club Officers

President – Eric Balles (W1ENB)

Vice President – OPEN

Secretary – OPEN

Treasurer – Rich Comer (K1RBC)

Assistant Treasurer – Eliot Mayer (W1MJ)