

W1WQM

THE HISTORY OF THE

Port City Amateur Radio Club

Established June, 1951 · Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Celebrating 75 years!

Compiled by Kenneth Gehalo, N1RP | First Revision: June 2026

CLUB AT A GLANCE

75+ Years of Amateur Radio Excellence

1951
Year Founded

75+
Years Active

100+
Current Members

324
WANE Awards Issued

70+
Years of W1WQM

Before the PCARC — Amateur Radio in Portsmouth

- Portsmouth's amateur radio history pre-dates the PCARC by decades.
- A newspaper article in the April 30, 1912 Portsmouth Herald reports the 'Southern NH Radio Club' disbanding due to lack of quorum.
- Remaining Portsmouth members were invited to affiliate with the Manchester, NH club instead.
- *[NP] Oct 14, 1948: Great Bay Radio Association held its first post-war meeting at the NH Gas & Electric recreation room on Daniels St. Twenty Portsmouth-area operators attended; a new constitution was adopted.*
- *[NP] Feb 16, 1952: A single newspaper article featured GBRA and PCARC news simultaneously, with Norman Polonsky W1TTT, Antonio Vaccaro W1LMD, and Thomas Kidd W1TDV appearing as members of both — confirming the direct lineage.*



Portsmouth Herald, April 30, 1912

The Great Bay Radio Association — PCARC's Predecessor

GBRA — Key Dates

- *[NP] Oct 1948: First GBRA meeting — 20 operators at NH Gas & Electric on Daniels St; new constitution adopted. Club had been active before WWII but was disrupted by the war.*
- *[NP] Jan–Jun 1949: Monthly meetings alternating between Dover and Portsmouth. Meetings drew guest speakers; code practice for beginners began at 7 p.m. before main meetings.*
- *[NP] Jun 1949: 20 GBRA members set up at Mount Tenneriffe in Milton for a 24-hour nationwide drill testing portable equipment.*
- *[NP] Jun 1950: Field Day at Mt. Agamenticus. Antonio Vaccaro of Portsmouth was on the Field Day committee. Thomas Kidd was in charge of meals. John Singleton and John Warburton also participated.*

The Transition to PCARC

- *[NP] Feb 1952: A newspaper article covered both a GBRA meeting and PCARC news — showing members were active in both. GBRA received club callsign W1DGV at this time.*
- *[NP] Jan 1952: The PCARC's first newspaper mention confirms it was already holding meetings, forming committees, and setting up a club station.*
- Several PCARC founders — Vaccaro, Polonsky, Kidd, Singleton — were all GBRA veterans who pivoted to the new Portsmouth-focused club.

A Living Memory — The Club's Earliest Home

f Facebook Post

The Comfort Station

Built ~1948 by Mayor Mary Dondero as a public 'Comfort Station' near the Post Office.

Affectionately nicknamed

"Mary's Pee Can"

by the locals who grew up there.

The PCARC met in the basement level from 1951 through the 1970s — its first and most storied home.

“

If that's the one right behind the Post Office, it used to be known as 'MARY'S PEE CAN'! Forward thinking Mayor Mary Dondero had that built approx. 1948 as 'Comfort Station'! In 1951, the Portsmouth Amateur Radio Club was in the Basement Level! Hats off to Norm Polonski and Anthony Vaccarro, founders of that Radio Club!

— Paul McClintock, Facebook

“

In the 1950s, we lovingly referred to the Comfort Station as 'Mary's Pee Can'! The Amateur Radio Club was in the Basement thanks to Mary.

Norm Polonski (Shoe Store on Daniel Street) and Anthony Vaccaro (Chief Engineer at WHEB!) and others guided us in getting FCC Licenses, operating radios that TALKED AROUND THE WORLD! Amateur Radio Ethics and Responsibilities were taught and enforced!

— Paul McClintock, Facebook

Note: Paul McClintock was himself a Novice station operator at the 1953 PCARC Field Day, and a prize-winner at the 1953 ARRL Hamfest in Concord.

The Founding Story — June 1951

- Founded June 1951 in Portsmouth, NH — first met in the basement of the city's 'Comfort Station' (public restroom) near the Post Office.
- Founders: Norman Polonsky & Antonio Vaccaro, both licensed ham operators and key civic figures.
- *[NP] Jan 13, 1952: First documented newspaper mention of the PCARC — a meeting at the Health Center discussing FCC TV interference. The club already had a committee to investigate interference claims, and formed another to create an emblem for stationery and membership cards.*
- *[NP] Oct 17, 1952: Article confirms 40 members and states the club was '**formed last June.**' David Meehan, then 16, was pictured as a student. John Barry, Armond Richards, and Thomas Kidd were teaching prospective hams weekly.*
- *[NP] Nov 8, 1952: Portsmouth Herald announces W1WQM callsign awarded by the FCC. John Singleton and John Barry assigned to manage a new multi-state contact award.*
- Non-profit status officially registered with the State of NH: October 29, 1962.

Antonio Vaccaro

W1LMD

WWII veteran (Flying Tigers) · Chief Engineer
WHEB · Lived to 102

Norman Polonsky

W1TTT / W1AWI

Club's first president · Civil Defense lead ·
Owned Sundial Shoe Store, 142 Congress St

Founding Member: Antonio Vaccaro • W1LMD



- Born 1919. Served as a wireless engineer & technician during WWII.
- Member of the Flying Tigers. Also served as a belly gunner in a B-25.
- Chief Engineer at Portsmouth radio station WHEB for more than 30 years.
- Co-founded the PCARC in June 1951 alongside Norman Polonsky.
- *[NP] Jun 1950: Served on the GBRA Field Day committee at Mt. Agamenticus — one of his earliest documented appearances in the Portsmouth amateur radio community.*
- *[NP] Jul 6, 1953: Vaccaro and Norman Polonsky manned mobile radios for Portsmouth Civil Defense as a forest fire raged out of control.*
- *[NP] Apr 1955: Among 11 PCARC members who received the 1954 Edison Radio Amateur Award for emergency service during Hurricanes Carol and Edna.*
- When 100 years old, U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen presented him with five overdue military medals. Lived to 102.

Antonio Vaccaro — approx. age 100

Founding Member: Norman Polonsky • W1TTT / W1AWI

W1TTT

W1AWI

*PCARC Co-Founder
& First President*

*Norman's Sundial Shoe Store
142 Congress St
Portsmouth, NH*

Now the site of "the Goat" restaurant

Old Old Timers Club (OOTC) #2422

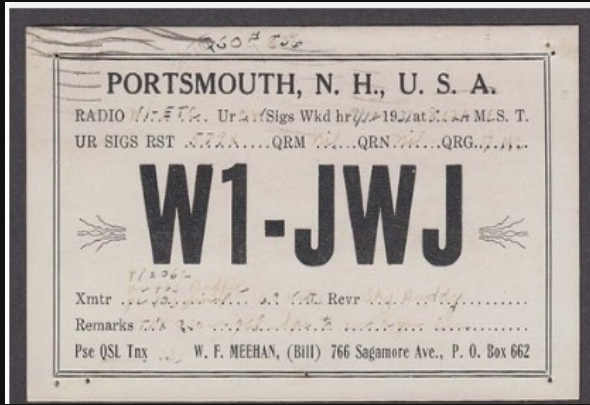
1919 – 1999

- Co-founded the PCARC in June 1951 alongside Antonio Vaccaro — the club's first president, elected in 1952.
- *[NP] Paul McClintock: 'Norm Polonski (Shoe Store on Daniel Street) guided us in getting FCC Licenses, operating radios that TALKED AROUND THE WORLD!'*
- *[NP] Oct 1952: The new Portsmouth Civil Defense Director's very first act was appointing Polonsky as Public Information Officer. He served as Portsmouth's Civil Defense Radio Officer from 1952–1958.*
- *[NP] Nov 1952: Appointed alongside John Barry to manage a new multi-state contact award — the precursor to the formal WANE Award.*
- *[NP] Jul 6, 1953: Polonsky and Vaccaro manned mobile radios for Civil Defense as a forest fire raged out of control in the Portsmouth area.*
- *[NP] Oct 1954: One of the nine PCARC members whose RACES plan was the first approved in NH by both the FCC and the Federal Civil Defense Administration.*
- *[NP] Apr 1955: Recipient of the Edison Radio Amateur Award for emergency service during Hurricanes Carol and Edna (1954). Listed as CD Radio Officer.*
- Moved to the Massachusetts South Shore area in the 1960's

John W. Singleton — Charter Member & Legacy · W1CDX

- Licensed in the early 1930's. Lived in Maine through the early 1950's.
- *[NP] Jan 1952: John Singleton was present at the PCARC's very first documented meeting — a charter member from the club's earliest days.*
- *[NP] Nov 1952: Together with John Barry, Singleton was appointed to manage a new multi-state contact award — a precursor to the formal WANE Award. Their award covered All 48 States, All Continents, or 100 Countries.*
- *[NP] Jun 1950: Singleton participated in the GBRA Field Day at Mt. Agamenticus — one of the founding-era members active in both the predecessor club and the PCARC.*
- *[NP] Singleton founded the Granite State Phone Net of the ARRL — a statewide communications net that connected New Hampshire amateur radio operators.*
- *[NP] Died 1958. In March 1961, a memorial trophy was established in his honor — to be periodically awarded to the amateur judged the best operator by NH ARRL Section officials.*
- The trophy presentation was documented in the Portsmouth Herald on March 28, 1961, alongside officials from the ARRL and Pease Air Force Base.
- His encouragement of young Portsmouth-area operators in electronics was cited as the primary reason the trophy was named in his honor.

Founding-Era Member: William F. Meehan · W1JWJ



William F. Meehan's QSL card · 766 Sagamore Ave,
Portsmouth NH. Dated 09/12/1937

A Member Remembers

Jeff Terrio, K1EOE, once lived across the street from Mr. Meehan back in the early 1960's. He remembers sitting with him a couple of times, and those meetings flamed his interest for Ham Radio.

- One of the most frequently mentioned members in 1950s Portsmouth Herald articles. Active ham since at least September 1937 — his QSL card documents a contact that year using a 'Sky Buddy' receiver.
- *[NP] Jan 19, 1953: Held code classes at the Health Center alongside John Barry, with ~30 people attending. Thomas Kidd taught circuit analysis in the same session.*
- *[NP] Oct 1954: One of the nine PCARC members whose RACES plan was the first approved in NH. Also an Edison Radio Amateur Award recipient (1954 hurricanes).*
- *[NP] Sep 1953: Prize-winner at the 16th Annual ARRL Hamfest in Concord.*
- *[NP] Oct 1958: Presented the 'Best in Electronics' prize at the Portsmouth High School Science Fair — a club tradition he continued for years.*
- Licensed in the 1930's. He was the contact listed in the 1960's non-profit filing. Died in 1974, at age 63.
- His son David Meehan, W1YFZ, served as club Secretary from at least 1979 (likely much earlier) through 1992.

Early Club Leader: Thomas L. Kidd Jr. • W1TDV / K3NLS / WB2VLD

W1TDV

K3NLS

WB2VLD

President, 1953

Treasurer, 1952

*Electronics Instructor
Portsmouth
Naval Shipyard*

*49 Circuit Rd
Portsmouth, NH
(neighbor of Vaccaro
at 72 Circuit Rd)*

- Electronics instructor at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard — one of the technically skilled core that gave the club its practical credibility with Civil Defense and the FCC.
- *[NP] Jan 1952: Present at one of the club's earliest documented meetings alongside Polonsky and Vaccaro — confirmed as a member of both the GBRA and the new PCARC.*
- *[NP] 1952: Elected Treasurer (under President Polonsky), then Sergeant at Arms — and taught prospective hams weekly alongside John Barry and Armond Richards.*
- *[NP] Jan 1953: Appointed with Blynn Davidson to wire the PCARC control room. Taught circuit analysis and DC theory at the same class where Meehan and Barry ran code sessions with ~30 attendees.*
- *[NP] Jun 1953: Operated the 75-meter station at the first documented PCARC Field Day at Pulpit Rock, Rye NH.*
- *[NP] Sep 4, 1953: Elected President of the PCARC. Also entered his mobile rig in a competition at the ARRL Hamfest in Concord (Masonic Temple) that month.*
- *[NP] Sep 1954: Taught electronics theory as part of the fall training program — William Meehan taught code in the same sessions. More than 25 men had obtained licenses through club training since 1951.*
- *[NP] Oct 1954: One of the nine PCARC members whose RACES plan was the first approved in New Hampshire by both the FCC and the Federal Civil Defense Administration.*
- *[NP] Apr 1955: Edison Radio Amateur Award recipient for emergency service during Hurricanes Carol and Edna (1954). Later moved to Pennsylvania, where he held the callsign K3NLS — continuing his amateur radio career.*
- Moved to the Norristown, PA area in the early 1960's, as K3NLS.
- Moved to the Homer, NY area in the late 1960's, as WB2VLD

Club Officers — 1952 to 1980

Year	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer
1952	Norman Polonsky	Ralph C. Craig	Grant Woodbury	Thomas Kidd Jr
1953	Thomas Kidd Jr	Antonio Vacarro	Myron Bowden	William Ayotte
1954	William Meehan	Thomas M. Dale	Dudley Hardy	Earl Schweizer
1959	Roland Brulette	—	—	—
1960	Clarence D. Hackney Jr	Edward L. Ramsdell	Curtis Knight K1NTC	Mrs. Calvin Knight K1NTD
1961	Clarence D. Hackney Jr	—	—	—
1962	Frank Waterman	Dick Weston	Kenneth King	Norman Cain
1963	Frank Waterman	Wesion Loundox	Kenneth King	Norman Cain
1975	Ted Brown	—	—	—
1977	Dick Wilder W1GGA	—	—	—
1979	Roger Smith	Herb Salls WB1DSW	David Meehan W1FYZ	Phil Hirtle KA1QF
1980	Herb Salls WB1DSW	Bill Holly K1BH	David Meehan W1FYZ	Phil Hirtle KA1QF

Note: Years with incomplete records shown with dashes. See source document for Board of Directors details.

Club Officers — 1981 to 1999

Year	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer
1981	Bill Holley K1BH	Jack Craig KA1CNT	David Meehan W1FYZ	Phil Hirtle KA1QF
1982	Dudley Hardy AG1W	Sue Teeter KA1HDD	David Meehan W1FYZ	Phil Hirtle KA1QF
1983	Dudley Hardy AG1W	Sue Teeter KA1HDD	David Meehan W1FYZ	Phil Hirtle KA1QF
1984	Wm Clapp-Hansen WB1ERL	Frank Pike W1JUW	David Meehan W1FYZ	Phil Hirtle KA1QF
1985	Dick Wilder W1GGA	Norman Smith KA1LFJ	David Meehan W1FYZ	Hirtle / Potter W1BPO
1986	Dick Wilder W1GGA	Norman Smith KA1LFJ	David Meehan W1FYZ	Phil Hirtle KA1QF
1987	—	—	—	Harold Potter W1BPO
1988	Norman Smith KA1LFJ	Rick WA1TOL	David Meehan W1FYZ	Bruce Stevens N1ENE
1989	Nick Csernelabics N1HKK	Bruce Stevens N1ENE	—	—
1992	Karen Garrison AA1AH	Dan Herzog W1IL	David Meehan W1FYZ	John Blowney KC1MJ
1995	Ron Gallant N1LBG	Kevin King N1JUX	Bill Pelletier N1TON	Paul Schreier AA1MI
1996	Jerry Needell N1SJQ	Kevin King N1JUX	Earl Miller N1LCK	Paul Schreier AA1MI
1999	Paul Schreier AA1MI	Kriss Kliegle KA1GJU	Neil Collesidis AA1SB	Tom Richardson KA1WZU

Cold War Context & Civil Defense Ties

- Post-WWII & Korean War (1950s): Civil Defense dominated civic planning.
- Portsmouth was especially sensitive — home to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and the new Pease Air Force Base.
- *[NP] Oct 17, 1952: The new CD Director's very first act was appointing Norman Polonsky as Public Information Officer. Polonsky also served as Portsmouth's Civil Defense Radio Officer from 1952–1958.*
- CONELRAD (1951–1963): Commercial AM stations switched to 640 or 1240 kHz during air-raid alerts. Antonio Vaccaro, as WHEB chief engineer, was directly responsible for compliance.
- *[NP] Oct 8, 1954: Nine PCARC members became the first amateur operators in New Hampshire to have a RACES plan approved by both the FCC and Federal Civil Defense Administration — an 18-month effort.*
- *[NP] Apr 5, 1960: PCARC member T-Sgt Burnell W. Welch won a Commendation Medal — he was Agadir, Morocco's sole radio contact for 48 straight hours after a devastating earthquake while stationed at Pease AFB.*
- After the 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake, Portsmouth operators relayed 'Health & Welfare' messages for families of service members stationed in Alaska.



Motorola AM radio showing CONELRAD markers at 640 & 1240 kHz

CONELRAD was replaced by the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) in 1963.

RACES Plan Approved & Edison Award — 1954 —1955

RACES Plan Approved — Oct 1954

[NP] Nine PCARC members became the first in New Hampshire to have a RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) plan approved by both the FCC and the Federal Civil Defense Administration. The process took 18 months of planning, equipment preparation, and security checks.

The nine members:

Harold K. Campbell W1QZR · Thomas M. Dale W1TWP ·
Dudley D. Hardy W1YSU · Thomas L. Kidd Jr W1TDV · David
W. Meehan W1YFZ · William F. Meehan W1JWJ · Bruce E.
Mitchener W1YIM · Antonio Vaccaro W1LMD · Norman
Polonsky W1TTT

Edison Radio Amateur Award — Apr 1955

[NP] The club received the 1954 Edison Radio Amateur Award for public service during Hurricanes Carol and Edna in the fall of 1954. Recipients were:

*Norman D. Polonsky (CD Radio Officer) · Richard D. Currier ·
Dudley D. Hardy · David W. Meehan · William F. Meehan ·
Antonio Vaccaro · Charles W. Harrington · Thomas L. Kidd Jr
· Thomas M. Dale · Charles Harmon · Bruce Mitchener*

The 1950s — A Decade of Building

- *[NP] Sep 1953: Club members attended the 16th Annual ARRL Hamfest in Concord (Masonic Temple). Blynn Davidson won a communications receiver; Paul McClintock, William Meehan, and Wesley Singleton also won prizes. Commander Frank Dawley USN entered his mobile rig.*
- *[NP] Sep 18, 1953: Club erected a 35-foot antenna tower on the roof of the Health Center, enabling 10-meter transmissions over surrounding tall buildings as part of Portsmouth's Civil Defense program.*
- *[NP] Jun 9, 1954: Club set up a free radio message service in a local theater lobby — six members worked in shifts to send public radiograms nationwide. Club was licensed by the FCC and Rockingham County CD.*
- *[NP] Sep 25, 1954: PCARC training program noted 'more than 25 men' had obtained licenses since the club was formed two and a half years earlier.*
- *[NP] Dec 8, 1954: Lt. Cmdr. Earl G. Schweizer USN — a PCARC Treasurer — spoke at the club's Ladies Night banquet about his experience as a prisoner of war in Japan during WWII. About 20 couples attended at a Kittery venue.*
- *[NP] Oct 8, 1958: PCARC awarded a prize to the best electronics project at the Portsmouth High School Science Fair. William F. Meehan presented the award — a tradition the club continued for years.*
- *[NP] Nov 25, 1959: Forty members, families, and guests attended the annual banquet. Attendees included USAF officers from Pease AFB, the treasurer of the Exeter Radio Society, and Frank Waterman as VP of the Great Bay Radio Club.*

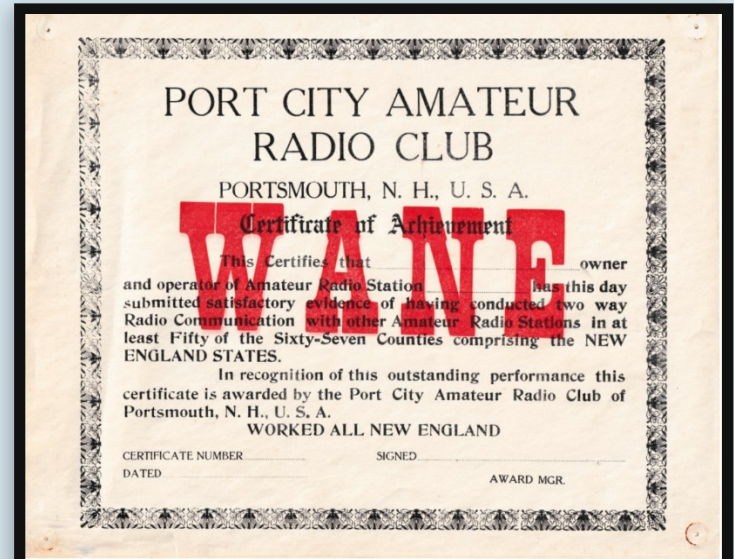
Special Events & Notable Moments

- *[NP] May 17, 1960: Club hosted a talk by 16-year-old Richard Wyekoff of Portsmouth High School, who demonstrated a wholly transistorized digital computer he built — it could add, subtract, multiply, and divide. It won first place at the PHS Science Fair and second in the state. The club awarded him 'Best in Electronics.'*
- *[NP] Jan 18, 1961: ARRL Section Manager David Strout visited the PCARC to discuss the possibility of ARRL affiliation and showed the film 'Ham's Wide World.' The club achieved ARRL affiliation in 1975.*
- *[NP] Aug 1973: T/Sgt William Dodge and PCARC members operated special event station W1PORT during Portsmouth's 350th Anniversary, with Congressman Louis Wyman's support. The station operated August 1–19 from the local Holiday Inn.*
- *[NP] Feb 13, 1976: Club members Jim Andrews and Frank Gibson donated 13 books on amateur radio to the Portsmouth Public Library.*
- *[NP] Jun 30, 2003: Stratham Patch/Seacoast Online article reported on the PCARC's 70th ARRL Field Day at Stratham Hill, noting the elevated post-9/11 profile of amateur radio and the club's continuous 24-hour operation from the fire tower.*
- *[NP] Apr 9, 2019: A Concord Monitor article on local amateur radio quoted PCARC members Mark Pride K1RX, Neil Collesidis AA1SB, and Kriss Kliegle KA1GJU: 'We can throw some wire in the trees, connect a radio to a battery, and get the message out when the grid is down.'*

The WANE Award — Worked All New England

- Sponsored by the PCARC beginning in 1953 — one of the club's earliest formal programs.
- Operators must confirm a 2-way QSO with at least 50 of the 67 counties across all 6 New England states.
- First announced in September 1953 QST Magazine, page 63. Updated in August 1954.
- Contact address listed John W. Singleton, W1CDX as DX Manager.
- The program ran for over 40 years — up to 324 certificates awarded total.
- A certificates were preserved by Thomas Dubek, AA1CA (SK), and survive today.
- The award is a testament that by 1953 the club was not just informal — it was organizing multi-state radio competitions.

Should this award be revived for PCARC club members?



The original WANE Certificate of Achievement

W1WQM — The License & QSL Cards

FCC Form 660 Rev. Nov. 1950 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA EXPIRES
STATION CALL SIGN FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION 3 a. m., e. s. t.
W 1 W Q M AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE 10-29-57 M1

Fixed transmitter location: (and remote control position when authorized)
PORTER ST.
PORTSMOUTH, N.H.

Licensee and P. O. Address:
JOHN C. BARRY, TRUSTEE
THE PORT CITY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
Secretary

(This license issued subject to conditions shown on reverse side)

Operator Privileges	Issuing Officer	Date of Issuance
Class CLUB STA.	<i>John C. Barry</i>	6-18-53
Class		
Class		

THIS MARGIN MAY BE TRIMMED
DO NOT TRIM INSIDE THIS LINE
NOT TRANSFERABLE
Countersigned *John C. Barry* Licensee

Original FCC Amateur Radio License — issued June 18, 1953 · Trustee: John C. Barry · Porter St, Portsmouth NH



Vintage W1WQM QSL card — City of Portsmouth seal, 1950s

Key facts: First call mention: Nov 8, 1952 newspaper · License date: June 18, 1953 · In continuous use 70+ years · 14 trustees to date

The Club Callsigns

W1WQM

Primary Club Callsign

- First newspaper mention November, 1952
- First trustee: John C. Barry, W1POK (1953–54)
- Active 70+ years with 14 successive trustees
- Used for Field Day, special events & contests
- Current trustee: Kenneth Gehalo, N1RP (2023–present)

NM1JY

USS Albacore Callsign

- Assigned March 2001 (KB1GLZ); vanity NM1JY July 2002
- Linked to USS Albacore — groundbreaking Navy research sub, now a Portsmouth museum
- PCARC restored the Albacore's original radio equipment
- Used annually for Museum Ships on the Air
- Also used in CQ WPX
- Current trustee: Mark Pride, K1RX (2017–present)

The Port City Amateur Radio Club Logo

January 2003

Original Design



February 2003 — Still in Use Today

Updated Design (current logo)



The Logo – Design Story & Meaning

- For many years the club had no formal logo. A 1952 newspaper article shows the club soliciting emblem designs for stationery, QSL cards, and membership cards. No copy survived.
- A 1997 Longwire notes member 'Sigi' designed a logo and brought it for feedback — no image of this survived either.
- The current logo was designed by Chris Sloane, K1YU in the early 2000s. Chris was working as a graphic designer and offered his skills to the club.
- The submarine silhouette represents the USS Albacore — a Navy research sub built at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard whose hull design became the basis for all modern submarines. The sub is now a museum, and the club holds the NM1JY callsign in its honor.
- First appeared in the January 2003 Longwire newsletter; an updated version appeared in February 2003 and remains in use today.
- In 2025 a club member led the effort to produce a high-resolution version ensuring its use well into the future.



Club in Action — 1976 PBS Pledge Night



Members of the Port City Amateur Radio Club, Portsmouth, NH, participated in a fundraising Pledge Night to benefit WENH-TV, New Hampshire's PBS station and its New Hampshire Network affiliates. Shown awaiting telephone pledges that totaled over \$1000 are (front) Dudley Hardy, W1YSU/W1ATW; Bob Gardner, WA1WGH; Frank Gibson, WA1SJJ; (rear) John Merrill, WA1LZV; Dick Wilder, W1GGA; and Jim Andrews, WA1UTO.

December 1976 97

PCARC members at WENH-TV PBS pledge night — December 1976. Pledges totalled over \$1,000.

- PCARC members participated in a fundraising Pledge Night to benefit WENH-TV, New Hampshire's PBS station.
- Shown answering phones (front): Dudley Hardy W1YSU/W1ATW; Bob Gardner WA1WGH; Frank Gibson WA1SJJ.
- (Rear): John Merrill WA1LZV; Dick Wilder W1GGA; Jim Andrews WA1UTO.
- This typifies the club's consistent community involvement throughout the decades — long before modern volunteer programs were formalized.
- The PCARC also supported annual Market Square Day road races, Christmas parades, fishing derbies, charity bike rides, and walk-a-thons throughout the 1980s–1990s.

Community Service & Notable Events

Emergency Comms

- Civil Defense backbone since the 1950s
- Relayed 1964 Alaska Earthquake health messages
- Active ARES team for East Rockingham County, NH
- Seabrook Nuclear Plant EPZ emergency support

Public Events

- Market Square Day Road Race coverage (1980s–90s)
- Christmas Parades, Fishing Derbies, Walk-a-thons
- Tour de Cure & Diabetes Association walks
- Annual NH Seacoast Flea Market (since 2016)

Radio & Education

- WANE Award: 324 certificates over 40+ years
- Licensing classes since early 1950s
- Monthly VE exam sessions in Greenland, NH
- Elmer's Village — equipment loans & mentoring
- Phillips Exeter Academy school club consult (2025)
- Public and school presentations

The David W. Meehan Community Service Award



Al LaPanne KC1MW & Stella LaPanne KC1MX — June 2, 1999

- Named in honor of David W. Meehan, W1YFZ — son of founding-era member William Meehan.
- David joined the PCARC as a student in October 1952. By 1954, at age 18, he was already on the Board of Directors.
- He was a long serving club Secretary.
- He worked as an engineering technician at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and remained a club volunteer until his death in 1993 at age 53.

Award criteria — recipients must exemplify:

- Public service
- Training for new ham operators
- Leadership at Field Day and community events
- Coordination of road races, parades, and charity events

Should we consider reinstating this award?

Field Day & Repeater Network

ARRL Field Day

- First documented Field Day: June 1953 at Pulpit Rock, Rye, NH — 4 stations, 30+ contacts
- Continuous tradition since 1958 (documented in QST Magazine)
- Historic locations: Mousam Lake ME (1954), Hilton Park Dover, Fort Dearborn Rye, Fort Stark Newcastle
- Current home: Stratham Hill Park — antennas on a fire tower, aimed SW for maximum US coverage
- Special event callsign K1R used for Field Day since early 2000s

W0CVJ/0	Tube & Shutter Club,	28-	B-10-	156
W1WQM/1	Port City ARC,	21-	AB-12-	147
W8DYA/8	Geneva AR Assn,	16-	A- 5-	144

Repeater Network

- 146.805 MHz — operational since early 1980s; originally on Portsmouth Police Dept roof
- 145.150 MHz — current primary; 128-ft tower, commercial power; Yaesu System Fusion
- 444.400 MHz — 'Quad-Four'; since April 2003; linked to UFB Fusion network in New England
- Digital links extend coverage into ME, RI, and MA

1958 QST Field Day scores — W1WQM/1 · Port City ARC: 21 contacts, 147 pts.

Field Day Locations — The Full Record

Year	Location	Notes
1949	Mt. Tenneriffe, Milton	<i>[NP] GBRA 24-hr drill — 20 members testing portable equipment. Pre-PCARC era.</i>
1950	Mt. Agamenticus	<i>[NP] GBRA Field Day · Vaccaro on FD committee · Kidd managed meals · Singleton & Warburton participated</i>
1952	—	<i>[NP] February — committee formed to plan first PCARC Field Day</i>
1953	Pulpit Rock, Rye NH	<i>[NP] 30+ contacts · Polonsky 20m · Kidd 75m · Vaccaro 10m · Dale/Mitchner/McClintock Novice stn</i>
1954	Mousam Lake camp site	<i>[NP] 15 members · 4 rigs (75/40/20/10m) · 3kW + 2×1kW generators · 500 stns, 6 countries, 39 states</i>
1959	Hilton Park, Dover Point	<i>[NP] Scored nearly 10× the prior year's score</i>
1960	Dover Point	<i>[NP] 3 stations, nearly continuous operation</i>
1961	Fort Dearborn, Rye NH	<i>[NP] 3 transmitters · Father-son pairs: Calvin & Curtis Knight; Hackney Jr & Alvord</i>
1975	Fort Stark, New Castle NH	<i>[NP] U.S. Navy Comms group co-participated · Generators: Rockingham Co. Sheriff & PNS Fire Dept</i>
1976	Fort Stark, New Castle NH	<i>[NP] 4 stations · Bicycle alternator attempt · OSCAR satellite attempt (W1JSM equipment)</i>
1978	Fort Stark, New Castle NH	<i>[NP] 14 participants · Score: 2,620 · CW: 482 QSOs · Phone: 342 QSOs</i>
1979	Fort Stark, New Castle NH	<i>[NP] 14 participants · Score: 3,456 · CW: 685 QSOs · Phone: 252 QSOs</i>
1981–present	Stratham Hill Park, Stratham NH	<i>Current site · Fire tower · Special callsign K1R since early 2000s</i>

GBRA = Great Bay Radio Association (predecessor club) · Gaps in record = years with no documented location.

Field Day Through the Decades — Then & Now



Pulpit Rock WWII Harbor Defense Tower — Rye, NH. First Field Day site, 1953.

Pulpit Rock (left) is the only remaining one of 14 WWII observation towers built around Portsmouth Harbor. Ships were triangulated for the guns at Fort Dearborn, now Odiorne Point State Park.



Stratham Hill Park fire tower — current Field Day site, with K1R antennas installed.

The NH QSO Party — Sponsored by PCARC Since 2010

- The PCARC has been the official sponsor of the New Hampshire QSO Party since 2010.
- Originally held each year in February — later moved to September in 2017 to make travel to NH's more remote counties easier and increase multi-county activations.
- The contest allows amateur operators across all 50 states to make contacts with NH stations. NH operators try to activate all 10 NH counties on the air.
- PCARC distributes Award Certificates each year to the individual winners in each category.
- The event promotes NH amateur radio nationally and drives club participation in portable operations.



NH has 10 counties. Operators aim to activate all 10 — from Rockingham on the Seacoast to remote Coös County in the north, over 200 miles away.

USS Albacore — Radio Restoration & NM1JY Operations



Payoff time! With the RT-618 and AM-3007 reinstalled in Albacore's radio room, Alex establishes a 20-minute CW contact with UA1CJX in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Alex AI2Q at the restored RT-618 / AM-3007 radio room aboard USS Albacore — first 20-min CW contact with UA1CJX, St. Petersburg, Russia.

- The USS Albacore (AGSS-569) was a groundbreaking Navy research submarine built at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Her teardrop hull design became the basis for all modern submarine hulls.
- The PCARC made a \$50 donation to the Portsmouth Submarine Association in 1985 to help create the museum at its current waterfront site.
- The club began operating from the Albacore in 2000 and undertook a full restoration of the sub's original RT-618 and AM-3007 radio equipment.
- The restoration is fully documented in the Antique Wireless Association journal. The first QSO after restoration was a 20-minute CW contact with a station in St. Petersburg, Russia.
- The club continues this tradition annually during the Museum Ships on the Air weekend. The NM1JY callsign is used for all Albacore activations.
- Motto of the USS Albacore: Praenuntius Futuri — 'Forerunner of the Future'.

Honoring the Fallen — USS Thresher

In 1963, the USS Thresher (SSN-593) was lost with all 129 men aboard. Two were PCARC members.

Tilmon Joseph Arsenault

W1SNO — Chief Engineman

Born May 29, 1926, Chelsea, MA. Multi-talented musician, athlete, avid ham operator. Active PCARC member and Explorer Scouts officer. Lost at sea April 10, 1963.

Don Roy Dundas

W0WBD — Electronics Tech 2nd Class

Born July 21, 1940, Dodge City, KS. Licensed ham at age 14. Chief electrician for his high school's dramatic department. Enlisted Navy 1958. Lost at sea April 10, 1963.

The PCARC voted a 'substantial' donation to the Thresher Memorial Fund in September 1963. The amount was \$50, which at the time, was half the money in the club treasury. In 2023, the club activated W1WQM from the USS Thresher Memorial in Kittery, ME — the first time in 60 years.

USS Thresher — The QST Report & PCARC Response

Two amateurs were aboard the Navy's nuclear submarine *USS Thresher* when she was lost on April 10 off the New England coast. Tilmon J. Arsenault, W1SNO, and Don R. Dundas, W0WBD, were stationed at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and were members of the Port City ARC.

June 1963 QST Silent Key notice — Tilmon J. Arsenault W1SNO & Don R. Dundas W0WBD

- The June 1963 issue of QST Magazine carried a Silent Key notice for both PCARC members lost aboard the Thresher.
- The club voted at their September 1963 meeting to make a 'substantial' donation to the Thresher Memorial Fund.
- The 129-foot flagpole at the USS Thresher Memorial Park in Kittery, ME represents each of the 129 men lost.
- In 2023, during Museum Ships on the Air, the club used W1WQM to activate the USS Thresher Memorial for the first time.

129 feet

Height of the Thresher Memorial flagpole — one foot per man lost

The Thresher was built at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, ME — the same shipyard that gave the PCARC so many of its earliest members.

The Modern Era — 2000s to Today

- 2000** | First operation from USS Albacore; PCARC restores sub's original radio equipment
- 2003** | 50th Anniversary (K1R special event). Website & club logo finalized by Chris Sloane, K1YU
- 2005** | Current meeting location: Piscataqua Fish and Game Club, Greenland, NH — with 100-ft tower
- 2020** | COVID pivot to Zoom; 'hybrid' meetings continue today with strong virtual attendance
- 2022** | Elmer's Village launched in honor of Dave Farrington, W1DWF — equipment loans for new hams
- 2023** | USS Thresher Memorial activation (W1WQM) during Museum Ships on the Air
- 2025** | Assisted Phillips Exeter Academy in establishing a school club station
- 2026** | Official coordinator for ARRL WAS250 W1AW/1 event; DIY antenna switch prototypes underway

Club Meeting Locations — Then to Now

1951–1970s

Comfort Station Basement

Public restroom basement near Portsmouth Post Office — the club's original and most storied home. Morse Code lessons given here.

Early 1960s

Clinic Building, Church St

Behind the Post Office — used alongside the Comfort Station during this period.

1970–1979

40 Deer St — Maxam Laboratories

Upstairs at the business of David Maxam, WA1JNF. First mentioned April 7, 1970. Club returned to Comfort Station by 1979.

1987

North Church Parish House

Spinney Road. Documented in the December 1986 Longwire newsletter.

Late 1980s–2003

Edgewood Centre Cafeteria

Senior living facility. Note in newsletter: 'patients in the TV area complained the members were too loud.'

June 2003–2005

First United Methodist Church

129 Miller Ave, Portsmouth.

2005–present

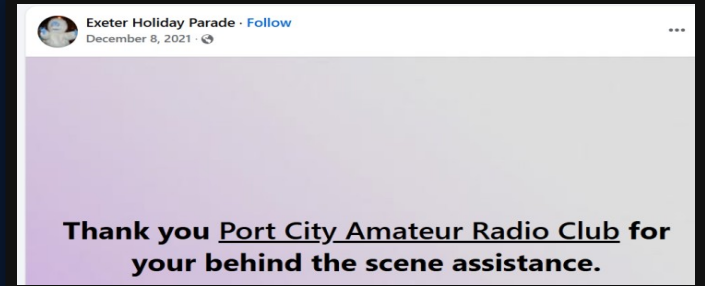
Piscataqua Fish & Game Club

Greenland, NH. Current location. 100-ft tower, full equipment, hosts monthly meetings, Lab Nights, ARES, and VE exams.

Outreach in Action — Education & Community



A club member presents Amateur Radio at a local library — live demonstration followed.



Exeter Holiday Parade, December 2021 — thank you from organizers.

A Note on Our History

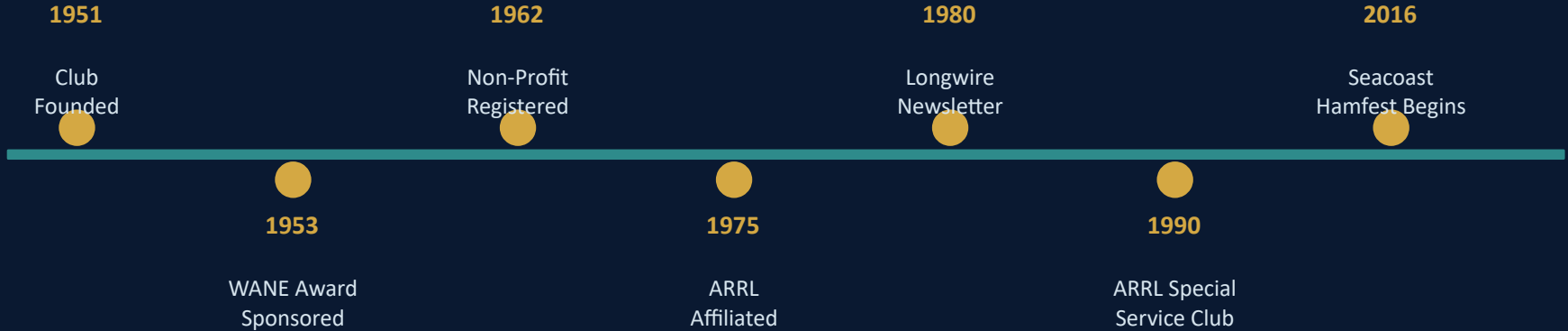
- This document captures only a part of the PCARC's 75-year story. It is not possible to list every club accomplishment, or the efforts of every individual who contributed to its longevity and success.
- Large gaps remain, especially through the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. If you have memories or documentation from those years, the club welcomes contributions.
- Contact: board@w1wqm.org · Subject line: 'Club History'

From the compiler (Ken Gehalo, N1RP):

"I'm sure that our founding members, including Norman Polonsky and Antonio Vaccaro, could not have envisioned that the small group of hams they assembled in June of 1951 would be the beginning of an organization that has lasted for more than 75 years, serving generations of ham radio operators. We hope we have done your legacy proud."

KEY MILESTONES

Seven Decades of Achievement



1952 W1WQM callsign issued · **1954** *[NP] First NH RACES plan approved* · **1963** *[NP] USS Thresher — 2 PCARC members lost* · **1973** *[NP] W1PORT, Portsmouth 350th*

2001 NM1JY / USS Albacore operations · **2010** NH QSO Party sponsor · **2022** Elmer's Village launched · **2023** Thresher Memorial

STILL ON THE AIR

75 Years Strong and Growing

- 100+ members across NH Seacoast, southern Maine & northern Massachusetts
- Monthly meetings (in-person + Zoom hybrid) · Regular 'Lab Nights'
- Three fully portable stations for Field Day, POTA & special events
- Monthly VE exam sessions · Elmer support · Equipment loan program
- Analog & digital repeater coverage (145.150 / 444.400 MHz) into ME, RI & MA
- Active ARES team · Weekly HF net (3.895 MHz) · Weekly VHF net (145.15 MHz)
- NH QSO Party sponsor since 2010 · Annual Seacoast Flea Market since 2016



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WWW.W1WQM.ORG

- Club History PDF file
- ~100 newspaper articles with extracted highlights
- Archive of Longwire newsletters
- Document Images

