

F.C.A.R.C. Inc.
P.O. Box 773
Greenfield, MA 01302

FIRST CLASS MAIL



THE COMMUNICATOR THE COMMUNICATOR

September 2015

Upcoming Events

- Club Breakfast: Saturday Sept 19, 8 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
- E-Board meeting: Monday Sept 21, 6:00 p.m.: at GCC
Program Meeting: Monday Sept 21, 7:15 p.m.: at GCC Topic: Public Service Net
Procedures: Lessons Learned
- Food Bank Bike4Food: Sunday Sept 27
- Club Breakfast: Saturday Oct 17, 8 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
- Crop Hunger Walk: Sunday Oct 18, 1 p.m. for radio ops
- E-Board meeting, meeting & Program: Monday Oct 19, Speaker: Dennis Markell
N1IMW on Historic Ship-to-Shore
Radio Sttions on Cape Cod

DUES are DUE now!

September 2015

DUES ARE DUE NOW!

Dues support the repeaters, the club activities and the Communicator.

General Adult - \$15/year

Family Group membership - \$18 /year

Repeater Patron donation - \$10.00 or more Suggested

You may pay for multiple years of membership.

Mail dues to:

Franklin County Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 773

Greenfield, MA 01302

or to

Howard Field

7 Laurel St.

Shelburne Falls, MA 01370-1512

Make checks payable to **FCARC**.

Please include SASE if you wish to have your membership card or a receipt mailed to you.

Calendar

PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT: WILLBIKE4FOOD:

The Western Massachusetts Food Bank is sponsoring a fund-raising bicycle tour event, WillBike4Food, on Sunday September 27. We will provide communications for this all day event that starts at the Food Bank headquarters in Hatfield, and cyclists follow various routes of up to 100+ miles. Contact Chris Myers KB1NEK at camyers_1@verizon.net, phone: 413-625-0344. Event info is at <https://www.foodbankwma.org/events/bike/>.

Secretary's Report

E-BOARD MEETING MONDAY, July 21, 2014 – CHRIS MYERS KB1NEK

Thanks to Ron and Elaine for hosting E-Board. The refreshments were very good!

FCARC e-board mtg, 20 July 2015

1. Bob Dickerman suggested looking at a different site for Field Day, specifically Mt. Sugarloaf in Deerfield. Mt Sugarloaf site is owned by the state, has a pavilion, not sure about bathroom facility. We cannot be sure how many more years Carter will bring his RV to Field Day, so having a better facility is worth checking into.

2. Al discussed ways to help Rich Stewart organize our participation at the Greenfield Triathlon. Rich wants to use club generator, but it still has not been checked out since Field Day, when it stopped working unexpectedly, even though it still had gas. Heavy rain may

have put moisture into carburetor. Chris intends to take it to Labelle's in Buckland for repair. Best option for power at event such as Triathlon or Bridge of Flowers Race is battery.

3. Chris reported on plans for Bridge of Flowers Race, which for the first time this year will include participation of the Northwest Mass. Incident Management Team(IMT). Planning for the race itself is no longer so much the responsibility of Mike McCusker, but more being taken over by Carmela Lanza-Weil, who has no previous experience with the event, but has been appointed interim director of the Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association. Chris reported that the plans have many unfinished parts, including recruiting sufficient number of EMT's. While this is not our problem to solve, it is a concern. Chris suggested using operator on top of Crittenden Hill for relay, to enable operators on the far side to use hand held radios and be more visible to runners. There was a more general discussion of how to make our people more visible, including buying special vests with labels showing "radio operator", buying signs to mount on vehicles, or political campaign style signs that can be planted into the ground. The ARRL sells magnetic signs for vehicles that say something like "emergency communications - ARES".

4. Al discussed present plans for the R2D2 cycling event in late August. He needs enough volunteers to cover four sites, and will start recruiting more energetically after the Triathlon and Bridge of Flowers events.

5. Al reported on efforts to fix the problem with the duplexer in the 440 repeater on Rocky Mount in Greenfield. He took the duplexer over to Richard Chedester, who did some work on it during his lunch break. In that brief period of time, he was able to tune one of six controls. Al says we need to have the rest of the duplexer tuned before we can rely on it. We still have the repeater operating through a separate quarter wave ground plane antenna, mounted near the bottom of the tower, but high enough to barely clear the roof of the shed. The repeater system works, but its transmit range is obviously less than it would be if both receiver and transmitter were using the same higher gain antenna at the top of the tower.

It was mentioned that since the town of Greenfield replaced the tower last summer, and gave us new 2m and 440 antennas for it, we don't have the specifications for them. Al has written to the engineer who did the work to request the specs.

6. Al summarized some of the program topics possible for the coming season. He first mentioned the small Pixie transceiver that Phill made from a kit, and which Bob plans to test on a Snail Net session soon. Phill indicated a willingness to give a presentation on the techniques for making small radios such as the Pixie. Someone suggested we might also have a session, perhaps after a Saturday breakfast, where members gather to actually put such radios together. A possible site for wiring projects might be Ted Johnson's class room at GCC, or the Hammond Studio, where Jeanne has her office space.

7. Ron reported on the ARRL Division meeting he attended about a week previously. In response to requests made at the winter meeting, the League's test lab will start testing some of the Chinese imports. At many large hamfests, League lab members test radios brought by attendees. Ron reported that most of the name brands are almost always within FCC specifications, even though they may be old, or even modified. The new Chinese models fail basic FCC standards in a large percentage of the ones presented.

During the winter conference, it had been mentioned that the League has complained to the FCC for the many cases where imported grow lights emit a lot of radio interference, which can sometimes be picked up fairly far from the site where they are located. Tom Frenaye gave the opinion that the FCC has been lax at enforcing regulations aimed at preventing such interference.

Ron mentioned that attendance at the summer Division meeting was much less than at previous ones he has gone to. He said Tom Frenaye suggested using conference calls, hybrid meetings that allow conference calls for a fraction of attendees, or rotating the location of the meetings to make it easier for attendance of officials from northern New England.

8. Al mentioned old equipment that had been donated to the high school radio club, which Stue Elliott is trying to sell off in order to accumulate enough money to buy more up to date and compact radios. Al plans to attend the hamfest August 30 in Adams, to try to sell some of the surplus high school or club equipment. He asked for someone to volunteer to help him.

E-BOARD MEETING MONDAY, August 18, 2014 – BOB DICKERMAN WA1QKT

E-Board Meeting Monday, August 17, 2015 at 7:00 PM, at GCC East Building

1. D2R2 August 22, 2015
 - 1.1. Course is up to 180 Km, want up to about a half-dozen radio checkpoints, mostly at similar locations to those of last year's event - at Deerfield, and Greenfield, and well into Vermont. Cell phones don't work there, so race organizers use our radio net to pass logistics messages.
 - 1.2. Al N1AW is coordinating event. Ron K8HSF and Al will set up net control furniture on Friday. Al could use more radio operators.
2. Other Public Service Events
 - 2.1. Bike 4 Food, Sept 27, Chris KB1NEK coordinating.
 - 2.2. Crop Walk, Oct 18, Phill N1YPS coordinating, we think.
3. VE session August 24, 2015. The VE team's announcement that sessions may be cancelled unless at least one candidate contacts the team and indicates interest has led to pre-session contacts. This is facilitating planning for VE sessions.
4. Meeting topic possibilities:
 - 4.1. Dennis Markell N1IMW, speaking on maritime communications and Marconi Cape Cod station WCC
 - 4.2. Pixie presentation and/or build session, perhaps by Phill N1YPS
 - 4.3. Review of Public Service Event net procedures
 - 4.4. Spud gun, perhaps by Keith KU1N and Anne KC1CRS
 - 4.5. EME (Earth Moon Earth) by N1DPM
 - 4.6. Jeanne KC1DCQ suggested a talk by Jim Palmer KB1KQW, who is ham radio course coordinator at Boston Marathon, and Peabody EMD
 - 4.7. Field Day prep
 - 4.8. Ron K8HSF suggested session on antenna modeling on the computer; Bob W1SRB tentatively offered to present this in the fall.
5. Calendar: Al is finalizing calendar
6. Reports
 - 6.1. Field Day preliminary results: Event went well. Good score this year, but not as high as last year.

- 6.2.2 m Leyden repeater: Al said repair visit, to fix low power and whistling sound on transmitter output, was scheduled but cancelled last week. Visit will be rescheduled for this week. Will replace spare transmitter with original main transmitter; if that doesn't work, we could swap in new DR-1X repeater. Internet access at site may soon be available. Now limited to 2 hours maximum work session, escorted by station engineer, but Al will ask permission for 24/7 access.
- 6.3. Membership dues now due for many members.
- 6.4. Communicator: Jeanne would appreciate receiving articles and photos on any club or radio topic to for her to publish in Communicator.
7. NOBARC flea market: Al made list of FCARC and GHS equipment to sell, with tentative prices, for flea market on Sunday, Aug. 30. Stu is trying to raise enough money by selling older, larger equipment, so that he can buy small portable equipment for a GHS radio station.
8. Facebook page: Chet N1XPT started a Facebook page for FCARC that may help us with publicity and inter-member communications. Al showed us the page live, using a PC and a projector at our E-board meeting. It has quite a few postings already. Presently, Al and Chet are the page administrators. To see the Facebook page, just go directly to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1091163077562307/>. Or, click on the "Facebook Page!" link on our FCARC website's home page (www.fcarc.org).
9. Bruce KB1TLX will try to contact Amy AB1WH to ask if she is interested in tower sections at Betty Congdon's.
10. Bob WA1QKT noted that U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern is familiar with ham radio and has signed on as co-sponsor for HR 1301, a bill that supports reasonable accommodation of ham radio antenna structures in situations where there are private land use restrictions. This may benefit hams living in housing covered by homeowners' association covenants. The bill is supported by the ARRL.

News, Activities & Articles

August VE Session: One Upgrade, Five New Amateurs

Six candidates came to the FCARC's August VE session in Northfield yesterday. One upgraded from Technician to General, one passed both the Technician and General tests to earn a new General license, and the other four earned new Technician licenses.

Amy AB1WH, Belle KB1NOG, Ron K8HSF, and Al N1AW participated as Volunteer Examiners for this session.

TRIATHLON AUGUST 3RD, RICH STEWART KB1NOX

This year the course was reversed, going back to the old way of doing the route. This included using the Covered Bridge for the first time since Irene. There were also added water stops for us to provide communications for. Belle witnessed a bike crash, requiring an ambulance for the victim. We assisted in contacting his wife about his status, since she was also in the race. With only 10 radio operators and net control, we made it work to provide the needed communications for the day.

It was a cool morning when we started and became a warm sunny day. Food provided at the end of the race for all volunteers and t-shirts were also provided for all volunteers.

My thanks goes out to all who participated: KC1AEO Rich, Belle KB1NOG, N1AW Al, WA1QKT Bob, KB1TLX Bruce up from Florence, Ron K8HSF, Chris Dickerman K1SMY, Jeanne KC1CDQ, Roy KB1AEU, Roy K1OAY, Carter WAITVS, Kathy KB1SNA, Chris Myers KB1NEK, Chet Chin N1XPT, and myself KB1NOX.

BRIDGE OF FLOWERS RACE, AUGUST 8TH, CHRIS MYERS KB1NEK



This year the club again provided communications support for the annual Bridge of Flowers Race. We were part of a larger effort, Northwest Incident Management Team, and the Incident Management Assistance Team used the race as an opportunity to do a Disaster Drill. We decided to try adhering to ICS principles; we modified our communications plan. Instead of having one net involving 14 to 20 operators, we split the coverage into two nets, each on its own frequency.

Jeanne Dodge will be the net control operator for the village area. Ron Niswander will be in control of the part of the course on the far side of Crittendon Hill. Ron positioned himself at the top of the hill. This gave operators on the far side of the hill the ability to use hand-held transceivers instead of being tethered to more powerful radios in their vehicles. I acted as over-all coordinator, in the same location as Jeanne. At that table we had three radios available: one mostly for the village area net, one dedicated to communications with the IMT van, and one for me to monitor or communicate with net control (Ron) on top of Crittendon Hill.

Many thanks to our radio volunteers: Bob W1RSB, Rick KB1NOX, Anne KC1CRS, Keith KU1N, Cindy W1CAP, Chris K1SMY, Roy K1LKY, Rich KC1AEO, Bob WA1QRT, Chet N1XPT, Belle KB1NOG, Ron K8HSF, Carter WA1TVS. Jeanne KC1DCQ, Chris KB1NEK

DEERFIELD DIRT ROAD RANDONEE (D2R2), AUGUST 23RD, BOB SOLOSKO W1SRB

We had 9 volunteers, enough to keep communications open between the race HQ and four other sites, including one new for us this year near the halfway point of one of the longest routes at the Charlemont- Rowe town line. We relayed the usual kinds of messages - lunch materials were late, supplies of water were short at one site and in excess of the need at another. One cyclist had a serious injury somewhere, I don't know whether ham radio had a part in getting medical attention to her. (Maybe you know more about this?) Most who helped during the day stayed for the dinner under an enormous tent in the Deerfield

meadows, as in past years it was a welcome and fun end to a long day.



We relayed many messages between Deerfield and the remote sites and the event sponsors were very glad for our help. It was a long day, we were on the air at our net control station from 8:30 a.m. to almost 5 p.m.

FCARC operators participating were, Al N1AW, Chris K1SMY Cathy KB1SNA , Jeanne KC1CDQ, Chet N1XPT, Bruce KB1TLX, Carter WA1TVS, Ron K8HSF, Roy K1LKY, Anne KC1CRS and Keith KU1N

KX3pedication

Anne (KC1CRS) brought her KX3 to Nickerson State Park Brewster, MA during a week of camping this July. It was powered by a Zippy 4200ma LifePO4 (a 4 cell lithium iron phosphate) battery which was recharged off our car battery a couple of times through the week using a HobbyKing EC06 charger. The advantage of the 4 cell Life vs a Lipo (lithium polymer) is that the individual cell voltage is lower so no reducer is needed. The antenna was an end fed approximately 36 feet long with the near end connected to the KX3 on a picnic table inside a screen tent and the far end suspended by a rope over a tree branch 25 feet up. It was run pretty much vertically with an end height of 25 feet. An 18 foot wire lying on the ground was used as a counterpoise. The KX3 is known for its rather robust ATU which can handle up to 20:1 mismatches. The antenna tuned well on 20, 30, and 40 meters. The best swr obtained on 80 meters though was 4.4:1 which probably dropped transmit power from 10 watts full power to 3 watts. Anne made several 20 meter 10 watt SSB contacts including Belgium and French Guiana. Myself, KU1N, I enjoyed doing 80 meter cw snail net Sunday July 26th. Signals were stronger on the Cape than I usually experience at home, probably due to NVIS (Near Vertical Incidence Skywave) propagation, the phenomenon that signals from a horizontal antenna close to the ground can be reflected by the ionosphere to locations up to 100 miles distant. This included working Bob WA1QKT who was using Phil's Pixie at less than one watt. On Wednesday's snail net it was just Carter WA1TVS and I and we enjoyed a long cw qso. During the week using 20, 30 and 40 meters I made multiple cw contacts in the states, Europe, Russia, South America and Egypt.



Here is a picture of the KX3 set up on the picnic table inside our screen house “shack” at our campsite with Flax Pond in the background:

Greenfield High School Amateur Radio Club Plans

Stuart Elliott KB1MFM is a teacher at Greenfield High School and the advisor of the Greenfield High School Amateur Radio Club. FCARC members will note that for several years we have used the GHS ARC club call, KB1MSU, for our Field Day GOTA station.

In the run-up to the demolition and rebuilding of the school, Stuart lost a space to set up a permanent radio station and even a place to store equipment. Over the years quite a few items had been donated by local hams, but much of it was old and of little use, yet requiring considerable storage space. So Stuart plans to sell some of the old equipment and wants to use the proceeds to buy modern, compact equipment. The idea is to have a complete station that will fit in a desk drawer or a milk crate. For a club meeting or an event like the ARRL School Club Roundup the station could be set up quickly in a classroom, perhaps next to a window where a feedline could run to a temporary antenna set up outside.

On the day after school closed in June demolition was scheduled to begin on the part of GHS housing Stuart's classroom. He moved most of the surplus equipment out to temporary storage in Al N1AW's garage. On the last Sunday in August Bob WA1QKT and Al N1AW took most of this equipment to the NoBARC (North Berkshire Amateur Radio Club) hamfest in Adams MA and managed to sell some of it. We also took along some surplus items belonging to the FCARC. We raised more than \$200 for the GHS ARC and almost \$100 for FCARC.

A graduate of GHS, a former member of the GHS ARC, is interested in buying some of the equipment that is still in Al's garage. With this the fund for the GHS ARC will be close to its goal. Although a final decision of what to buy has not been made, it has been suggested that something like an IC-706MKIIG, capable of all modes on all HF bands as well as VHF and UHF, would be suitable.

THE COMMUNICATOR is an informational publication for members of the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club. Officers: President: Al Woodhull, N1AW (n1aw@arrl.net), Vice President: Ron Niswander, K8HSF (reniswander@gmail.com), Treasurer: Howard Field, N1LUP (howfield@comcast.net), Secretary: Chris Myers, KB1NEK (cmyers1@verizon.net), Director: Belle Dyer, KB1NOG (bdyer58@mtdata.com), Director: Bruce Fuller KB1TLX, perkinsdowns@yahoo.com. This is your newsletter! Amateur radio information of general interest, club member project descriptions and doings, radio applications to other activities, corrections, or suggestions are all welcome. Individual submissions make for variety! We need more writers! Send submissions to Jeanne Dodge, KC1CDQ (j.anndodge@gmail.com).