

F.C.A.R.C. Inc.

P.O. Box 773

Greenfield, MA 01302

FIRST CLASS MAIL



THE COMMUNICATOR
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March 2016

Upcoming Events

- Club Breakfast: Saturday, Mar 19, 8:00 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
- Emergency/disaster Communications meeting, Saturday, Mar 19, 10:00 am: Hammond Studio, GCC
- E-Board Meeting: Monday, Mar 21, 6:00 p.m.: GCC Room S301 Main Building
- Program Meeting: Monday, Mar 21, 7:15 p.m.: GCC Room S301 Main Building
- E-Board Meeting: Monday, Apr 11, 6:00 p.m.: GCC Room S301 Main Building
- Program Meeting: Monday, Apr 11, 7:15 p.m.: GCC Room S301 Main Building
- Club Breakfast: Saturday, Apr 16, 8:00 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield

March 2016

Calendar

March Program Meeting: Monday March 21 at 7:15 pm.

Since the February meeting was cancelled due to GCC being closed, Lad Nagurney WA3EEC will present "Swedish Radio Museum and What's New in Ham Radio Across the Pond"

He spent part of the last 4 years as visiting professors in Gothenberg, and visited the Swedish Radio Museum there several times. It has ham equipment from the 1910s to a decade or so ago. Also commercial two way radio, ship, aircraft, and home entertainment systems. He would morph into new radios from across the pond including the combination UHF transceiver - Cell Phone now selling in Europe, the various Anytone, Albrecht, etc... and talk a bit about contemporary Ham Radio in Europe.

Secretary's Report

E-board meeting: Monday March 21 at GCC, Chris Myers KB1NEK

E-board meeting at GCC business center, Saturday, 13 February 2016

1. Tuning duplexer for 70cm repeater in Greenfield. Months ago, Al talked to Bruce Beliveau, KB1NKG, who said he could try, but might not succeed. He said it would cost about \$170. Bruce has been very busy since then. Rich, KB1NOX, mentioned Craig Gagne, N1PMA, who works for Bruce, who probably can do the job. Amy, AB1WH, has also mentioned someone who has done similar work for the West River Radio Club, in Vermont. Maybe we could get information from Ted Johnson at GCC, who used to be in charge of repeaters on Mt. Greylock. Al said he is inclined to get back to Bruce again. Chris suggested he could ask Bruce what he thinks about Craig's ability.

Bob D. has done some preliminary testing of the duplexer, but admits it looks more

complicated than anything he wants to really start to adjust. Al said the problem is the receiver gets desensitized by the transmit signal. So it is a notch frequency that needs attention the most, and it is probably a very sharp adjustment.

2. Lad Nagurney WA3EEC is available to speak at the next meeting on March 21, on the subject of operations in Sweden.

3. We need speakers for May and June. Jeanne suggested preparing for Field Day. Al said Tom Homewood, Yankee Clipper Contest Club spokesperson, could come to speak about contest operating, maybe for the June meeting. Bob D. suggested using April meeting to prepare for Field Day.

4. Al mentioned he and Keith both bought new digital capable radios, to take advantage of the new repeaters. There is still some interference from a Connecticut station on our 70cm repeater. Up on Pocumtuck Ridge, the signal level from CT repeater is very strong. Al said he has written to trustee of that station, and not received any reply. We may have to complain to the coordinators.

5. Chris mentioned need for more testers for license exams. Keith and Anne suggested some interest. Al explained what they would have to do in order to get the credentials. Rules of giving tests is somewhat complicated. Hal expressed interest. We already have several people who want to take the test on Feb.22

5. Al mentioned that we need more net control operators on the roster for Tuesday night nets. Bob D. volunteered to take a regular turn, starting this coming Tuesday.

6. Ron raised question about service at Denny's when we have breakfast. Generally service is good, but not always. Someone mentioned Pine Hill, on Greenfield Rd. in Colrain. Others mentioned it is more out of the way. Anne mentioned the Country Club in Greenfield.

7. Al asked if people want to have picnic in May at the pavilion in Leyden.. General agreement.

8. Bruce Fuller mentioned bill pending in Mass. Legislature restricting electronic devices in the hands of a driver while vehicle is under weigh. An attempt was made to pass an amendment exempting ham radio use, but it failed. Bruce suggested writing to legislators who will have a chance to vote on final enactment. Bruce volunteered to get more information. Bill S 2093. Al mentioned suits in other states that resulted in protecting the use by ham radio operators while driving. Chris mentioned that Massachusetts legislature may have written its law carefully enough to avoid that kind of failure. Bruce mentioned it is better to fix the law before it is finally enacted.

Emergency Communications Meeting Feb. 13th

1. At Saturday's meeting we spoke several times about the advantages for emergency radio operators to go through the training for MRC or CERT. Not only is it a way to get CORI clearance at the expense of FRCOG, it is also a way to be invited to exercises that provide useful field training. The county CERT and MRC coordinator, Rob Quinn-O'Connor has sent a message to all members announcing that we are invited to play the role of injured survivors of a railroad accident, on the weekend of April 1 and 2. Friday, April 1, from 6 to 9 PM, there will be a briefing for all participants. Saturday, April 2, from 7 AM to 5 PM, the exercise will take place at the East Deerfield rail yard.

The exercise is the next step following a table top exercise held last summer, which included not only local first responders, but also Pan Am railway officials, national railway commission officials, the FBI, the National Guard, and MEMA. The table top exercise exposed weaknesses in the railroad's emergency response plan. It will be interesting to see if Pan Am has improved it since then.

2. We have received a notice of a one day training for MRC to be held in Hamden County in early March. Bruce Fuller and I have more details.

3. For people who have begun MRC or CERT training, but not taken the required ICS course, there will be an opportunity to take it here in Shelburne, on either Feb. 27 or Feb. 29 - your choice. If you are interested, contact Rob Quinn-O'Connor, at CitizenCorps@frcog.org.

4. The ARRL sent out its monthly ARES newsletter. You can read it at: <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/ares-el/?issue=2016-02-17>.

An important article within the newsletter describes a recently signed Memorandum of Agreement between the ARRL and the American Red Cross. You can read more at: www.arrl.org/files/file/Public%20Service/MOUs/2016_01_06_MOU_ARRL_Red%20Cross_FINAL.pdf

News, Activities & Articles

Sleigh Bell Road Race, Saturday February 6 – Richard Stewart KB1NOX



Dateline February 6th Hope and Olive Restaurant, Start/Finish Line (sorry, about the wrong date on the photo, my camera was misbehaving-Jeanne).

Greetings Franklin County Amateur Radio Club (FCARC) members once again, did a fine job providing radio communications. Christy Moore the Recreation Director for the Greenfield Parks and Recreation Department appreciates the willingness and diligence of our radio club through two radio let her know where, when and who, along the race course.

Volunteering for various events goes hand in hand with amateur radio. It is something to be proud of, and much appreciated by those we serve through radio communications. To some it is no great sacrifice, a half day for an event, is indeed a sacrifice. I truly enjoy getting out and using two way radio skills to provide an often thankless job to the community. Some of those who see us don't understand us geeky radio nerds. This was my fourth year providing radio communications for The Montague New Year's Day 10K race as well as the Greenfield "Sleigh Bell Run." My first year I drove up from Holyoke, where I used to live, to come and join in with FCARC.

This year was my second year at net control. Other volunteers included K8HSF Ron Niswander, KB1SNA Cathy Mitchell and male companion, KB1WVO Joe Henefield, KB1NEK Chris Myers, KB1TLX Bruce Fuller, KC1DCQ Jeanne Dodge, N1YPS Phil Grant, and WA1TVS Carter MacDonald

Even though there was a minor amount of snow, this year, as opposed to last year, and other previous years, the race went off without any problems, misdirected runners or any injuries. There were 79 runners this year. Here is a kicker for ya. The last person started running for about a mile then walked the remainder of the course. The week of the race, he turned 84, on the week he and his wife celebrated 64 years of marriage, wearing bib number 264. Somebody play those numbers!

My personal thanks to all who came out to participate. I appreciated working with you. We once again missed having N1AW with us. WA1QKT Bob Dickerman I hope your son wasn't injured because the morning of you called and said your son Chris needed some kind of Xrays. I hope he is well.

VE Session in Northfield, February 22 – Al Woodhull N1AW

Our VE sessions continue to be quite busy. Interest in ham radio is not dead.

- VE session report: we had four candidates at the February 22nd VE session in Northfield. Congratulations to Leon Small KC1BZD, who became a ham when he earned his Technician license at our May 2014 session, and upgraded to General later that year. He came back to us this time to pass his Extra Class test.

Brad Councilman ex-WA1ISJ will be a "new" General Class licensee . His General license expired 40+ years ago, but he took advantage of the recent FCC policy that allows renewal of expired-beyond-the-grace-period licenses of any class upon passing just the Technician-level test. Brad's original license expired so far back the FCC could not find a record of it, but he was able to find a record in an old Callbook online. Newbies are probably wondering, what's a Callbook? Back in the days before the Internet a bulky paperbound directory called

the Callbook was issued several times each year. Early editions attempted to list the addresses of every licensed amateur radio operator in the world, but later separate editions were printed for U.S. and foreign amateurs.

Also at our session, two new Technicians, Peter Brulotte and Tom Rabbitt. (Callsigns pending FCC processing).

A Few Remembrances of An Old Ham (W1DKY)

I received my license in 1934 after having taken a trip to the Boston Custom House. In those days you were expected to draw (schematic) both a transmitter and a receiver and to explain the functions of the various parts of both. In addition you were required to copy code at at least 10 words per minute.

Within the following two weeks I received my license which was typed on a three inch wide strip of paper, indicating that I had passed the test and that my new call letters would be W1DKY.

Almost needless to say, there have been monumental changes in Ham Radio since then. Today the hobby is probably describable as “push button” and the intricacies of the equipment are for the company responsible for the equipment rather than for the user.

Back in those days the most common ham station consisted of a one tube transmitter and a two tube regenerative receiver, the latter consisting of a detector (regenerative) feeding a one tube audio amplifier. (We used high resistance earphones then)

While the receiver was powered by a 6 volt automobile battery (filament) and the “plate voltage by a 45 volt dry battery, the transmitter filament voltage came from a transformer (6volt) and the plate voltage came from a power supply consisting of a high voltage transformer, a suitable vacuum tube rectifier and a capacitor/choke coil filter. Almost always not enclosed in a cabinet. Thinking about this today gives me the creeps because the power supply was almost never shielded and the voltage available could have been very dangerous from the standpoint of shock. Whatever, we worked the world,so I guess that’s what counts.

The standard antenna, commonly in use then, was an end fed wire cut to the length, per formula, for 80 meters (about 132 feet) or for 40 meters,66 feet. Whichever, the wire was then connected to a parallel tuned coil/capacitor circuit which was then placed near the plate coil of the transmitter. By moving the antenna coil closer to the transmitter plate coil the amount of energy going into the antenna could be controlled (and the tube could be used within its specifications.)

Interestingly, those two-tuber little receivers, while crude, were probably just as sensitive as are our modern transceivers. What we have today, while amazing, is equipment with a lot of things most of us never use. It shouldn’t be too long before we get both hot and cold running water merely by pushing a button.-from Bob Bessette

Other radio clubs

- **Hampden County Radio Association:** Friday 3/4, First Robotics Competition: Gary Fields WA1MOW. (more info: <http://www.hcra.org/>)

- **Mt Tom Amateur Repeater Association:** Friday 3/18, (more info: <http://mtara.org/>)

-HCRA License Class & Study Group in April

The Hampden County Radio Association will sponsor a Technician License Class and General and Extra License Study Groups at Holyoke Hospital in April. This will be an accelerated series of sessions. Classes and study sessions will take place on the evenings of Wednesday April 27th and Thursday April 28th, and in the morning of Saturday April 30th, followed by license examinations on that Saturday afternoon.

More information and signup form at <http://www.hcra.org/>. Al N1AW will be one of the facilitator/instructors.

Facebook

We have a Facebook page it is: Franklin County MA Amateur Radio Club

If you know of other groups on Facebook, please send them in and I will share in upcoming newsletters.

Other radio FB groups:

Hampden County Radio Association

Mount Tom Amateur Repeater Association

ARRL National Parks on the Air

QRZ Now - Ham Radio

Social Media and Ham Radio

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

In the last ten years, there's been an explosion in social media. I've found some to be really great. Others, I haven't found to be to my liking. Here are my opinions on a few of the most popular social media websites:

* Twitter (twitter.com). I like Twitter. I have more than 3,000 followers on Twitter, and it's not only helped me sell more books, I've found out about a lot of great projects, and I've met and corresponded with a lot of great hams there. It's a lot of fun. If you have a Twitter account, follow me there. I'm @kb6nu.

* Facebook (facebook.com). I have a Facebook account and I even have a page for my study guides. I don't like using Facebook, though, and avoid it when I can.

* Reddit ([reddit.com/r/amateurradio](https://www.reddit.com/r/amateurradio)). Reddit hosts a very active amateur radio forum. What I like about Reddit is that these guys, unlike say the forums on eHam.Net or QRZ.Com are really interested in doing stuff, not just complaining or arguing. A lot of the hams on Reddit, and it's associated IRC channel (talk about retro!), #redditnet, have used my study guides, and apparently, I'm quite popular there.

* Blab (blab.im). Blab is an interesting concept. It's kind of like an interactive podcast. You can record the blab sessions and then post them to YouTube or your own website. When I suggested having a regular Blab session to talk about ham radio topics to my blog readers, they weren't very enthusiastic about it. Even so, I think that I'm just going to do it. Sometimes you just gotta go with your gut, and my gut says this could be fun and eventually popular. Blab is integrated with Twitter, so if you follow me on Twitter, you'll find out when I'm blabbing.

The biggest problem with participating on these social networks, of course, is that it takes a lot of time, time that could be used for building stuff or getting on the air. Even so, I would say that, overall, using them has certainly increased my enjoyment of amateur radio and has connected me to people that I probably would not have connected with otherwise.

What do you think? What social media accounts do you have? Which do you prefer? What have they done for you?

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 (camyers1@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 A. Dodge, KC1DCQ (j.anndodge@gmail.com).