

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL



THE COMMUNICATOR

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April 2016

Upcoming Events

- 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
- Franklin County Amateur Radio Emergency Communications, April 16, 10:00 am; Hammond Studio, GCC
- Club Breakfast: Saturday, May 14, 8:00 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
- VE License Test: Monday, May 23, 7:00 p.m.: Northfield Unitarian Church
- E-Board Meeting: Saturday, May 14: 9:00 am, Hammond Studio, GCC sue to the May picnic there will be no club meeting.
- Club picnic: Saturday, May 21:Location TBA

April 2016 Calendar

Secretary's Report

E-BOARD AND PROGRAM MEETING Monday, March 21, 2016 AT GCC, CHRIS MYERS KB1NEK

1. Al announced that we have three new club members as a result of the test we administered at the end of February. Peter Brulotte, Colrain, and Tom Rabbitt, Heath, passed the technician test for the first time. Brad Councilman, of Winchester, NH, passed the technician test, but under the new FCC rules was able to re-gain his old call sign, W1BCC, at the general class level. This is the first time our VEC team has supervised a test under these rules. Brad's proof of prior license was merely an old call sign directory, not an actual paper license. The FCC, however, has accepted that proof as sufficient.
2. Howard gave a rough accounting of the club's finances. The balance in the bank is approximately \$1,892. Al still has some cash from the sale of equipment at the hamfest earlier in March. However, \$386 belongs to the VEC team, and soon a donation will have to be made to the church in Northfield where we organize the tests. Al suggested we now should send \$100. There were no objections.
3. Al mentioned that the high school radio club has no bank account of its own. The club will accept such money and include it in our account. As of the meeting, no such money has been taken in.
4. Howard said that he believes that most people who have paid in past years have already paid dues for this year.
5. Al asked about the antennas at Betty Congdon's house. Bob D. said that there is still a wire dipole draped over the roof of the house. Al suggested we could go up there and help some afternoon after the club breakfast.
6. Al asked for a report from the emergency communications club. Chris mentioned the focus will be on hands on training on the FT-60 and FT-8800 radios. Hal and Chris are interested in an experiment at the entrance of the Hoosic Tunnel. They want to test NVIS propagation on 80 m as well as 2m repeaters in Leyden or on Mt. Greylock.
7. Al mentioned that the 440 repeater is still transmitting signals that seem to be from another source, probably a repeater in Connecticut. We may have to complain to the CT coordinators about the interference. We should also move forward on the plan to re-tune the 440 duplexer. Al asked Bruce Beliveau if he has time to do the job. He may. Al has the actual duplexer at his home along with the new repeater. He plans to make up a cable to connect the new repeater to the duplexer, hopefully before the town starts the work of

repairing the water tank underneath the repeater shack. Keith mentioned that we have until June to use the new repeater pair on 2 meters. Keith wonders if the notch based duplexer, on the 440 band, will be overloaded by our use of a 2m radio. Chris mentioned that the town has one or more radios operating in the same shack, and that on Mt. Greylock there are about half a dozen, on separate bands, operating in close proximity. Al says recent interference is on our output frequency, but others aren't so sure. Al asked Anne and Keith to keep track of the interference, since they are the closest.

8. Al said that Carter's former student, Tony Russell would like to speak at one of our meetings, probably in May. Tony got his license while in school, and has gone on to a career in broadcast television.

9. For club picnic May 21, Jeanne volunteered to coordinate food.

10. Field Day needs a coordinator. No one has yet volunteered. Chris has to send application for the permit.

Franklin County Amateur Radio Emergency Communications

Ten of us met after the club breakfast, including newly interested non-ham, Erica LaForme.

We discussed training needed to help everyone use their basic radio. We decided to start at the next meeting working with the Yaesu FT-60 (handheld), since so many of us have one. We want to make sure those who have it know how to use it in action, as well as how to program repeater settings into memory.

The suggestion was made to work with the Yaesu FT-8800 and similar mobile radios at a future meeting. A Ft-8800 belongs to the club, and several members own one, or the very similar model, the FT-8900.

We invite those present with other hand-held or mobile radios to bring them on the day we work with the FT-60 or FT-8800 so we can compare their features.

Chris suggested people consider buying one of the Nifty! Mini-Manuals for their radios, since they are smaller, printed on water proof laminated paper, and in many ways easier to use than the manuals that come with radios.

We discussed obtaining credentials that would be useful for operators reporting for duty at mass care shelters. An MRC or CERT identification card proves recent criminal check has been done, and a basic level of useful training accomplished. We also can issue ID cards with the Franklin County Radio Club logo.

Jeanne asked what name we should call our group. Joe suggested "Amateur Radio Emergency Communications" so it would be similar but not quite the same as the League's copy-writed ARES name (Amateur Radio Emergency Service).

Bruce mentioned two public service events scheduled for the near future organized by the Hampden County Amateur Radio Club (HCARA). One is a river race in Connecticut, the other a half marathon in Westfield. Bruce will get us the details as soon as he finds them.

Jeanne mentioned that she will once again participate at the Boston Marathon. She and Bruce have both heard that they do not yet have enough radio operators.

After the meeting ended, Hal and Chris discussed communications to difficult spots, such as the entrance to the Hoosic Tunnel or the Tannery Falls in the Savoy State Park. We may decide to run a test later in the spring to compare HF communications, relying on NVIS propagation, with UHF transmissions using the highway department repeater on top of Mt. Massaemet.

The next meeting will be Saturday, April 16 after the club breakfast

SKYWARN Training **updated 3/28/2016**

There are several opportunities for SKYWARN training coming up in Western MA:

- Tuesday April 26th, 2016: 700 PM-930 PM
Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA
Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecaster; Registration: not required
- Thursday May 5th, 2016: 700-930 PM
Fitchburg Fire Department Headquarters - Community Room, 33 North Street, Fitchburg, MA
Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecaster
Pre-registration required - RSVP to Rob Macedo KD1CY rmacedo@rcn.com
- Monday May 16th, 2016: 630-900 PM (*)
Orange Fire Station 2, 50 Millyard Road, Orange, MA 01364
Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecaster
Pre-registration required - RSVP to Rob Macedo KD1CY rmacedo@rcn.com

Additional sessions (generally further away) and other information can be found at <http://www.weather.gov/box/skywarn#fragment-2>.

Update: The information above came from the Taunton MA National Weather Service office. The Albany NY NWS office sponsors SKYWARN training in Berkshire County MA, western Connecticut, and Vermont. There will be a session in Pittsfield in April:

- **Thursday April 14, 2016: 7:00-9:00 p.m.**
Berkshire Medical Center Auditorium, 752 North St, Pittsfield MA

Information on registering and on other Albany-sponsored sessions can be found at <http://cstar.cestm.albany.edu/skywarn/Talks.htm>.

(*) An FCARC E-board meeting was scheduled for Monday May 16th. At least a couple of E-board members want to attend the SKYWARN training that evening; thus the April E-Board meeting has been rescheduled for Saturday May 14th, at 9 a.m. at GCC, after the breakfast

KB1BSS Greenfield Repeater

For many years we have had a repeater located at the Greenfield Water Department's underground reservoir site on Rocky Mountain in Greenfield. The old 70 cm repeater previously in use consisted of surplus Motorola and GE commercial transceivers modified for use as a 448.875 MHz repeater with a 10 meter simplex link. WE had serious problems making it work right in recent years, and last June it was replaced with a brand new Yaesu DR-1X repeater with digital audio capability.

Here is the repeater, on site and in operation -- nothing to see here, folks, just a little green light that indicates it is working.



The new repeater contrasts physically with the old one. Backing up, you can see it in place. The old repeater, now unused, occupies with its power supplies most of the big gray cabinet the new repeater sits upon. The large light brown box to the left that looks like it could be a small refrigerator is actually a 2 meter duplexer. More on that below ...



We are not done yet with our upgrades. Currently the 448.875 repeater is using separate antennas for transmitting and receiving. This is the duplexer that was used with the old repeater to allow both the receiver and the transmitter to share the same antenna. We

haven't been able to make it work right with the new repeater, we hope to either get it adjusted or replaced soon.

Another change is in the works: Yaesu extended the generous discount offer under which we purchased our first new DR-1X repeater, and we are now testing a second one. We plan to put it into service on 2 meters (the DR-1X is a dual band repeater) at the Greenfield site, using the 2 meter duplexer seen in the first photo and a new 2 meter antenna on our tower there. We hope to announce the availability of this repeater soon. It will not replace the Leyden 2 meter repeater; it will operate on different frequencies.

A final note: At our January meeting Al N1AW gave a talk on repeaters, and the PowerPoint from that talk is available on our website, at <http://www.fcarc.org/Files/RepeaterTalk20160111.ppt> also at that meeting Al passed out a list of some of the special commands that can be used on our Leyden 2 meter repeater. This is also online at <http://www.fcarc.org/Files/PublicRepeaterCodes.txt>

News, Activities & Articles

UPDATE: Results of February FCARC VE Session – AL WOODHULL N1AW

New callsigns from the February 23rd VE session. Greet them if you hear them on the air.

New General: Brad KC1FEM

New Technicians: Peter KC1FEN and Tom KC1FEO

... and congratulations to Leon, KC1BZD, upgraded to Extra.

Boxboro 2016 / ARRL New England Division Convention

Boxboro 2016 / ARRL New England Division Convention, now an ANNUAL event, will be held on the 1st weekend after Labor Day. This year's dates are September 9, 10 and 11. There is some exciting content this year with presentations and forums and we are looking for more.

Please note the "Call for Speakers" information attached for those who would like to be a presenter. Sign up NOW. Good time slots will go fast. We had great attendance last year and participation at several events was at capacity!

Both Friday and Saturday night banquets promise to have great keynote speakers. The flea market is always a great take for both buyers and sellers. Ham radio licensing-in-a-day classes. VE exams and more. The exhibitor hall will have the standard fare as well as some newcomers.

Admission is \$15, good all weekend - Flea Spaces \$10, good for Saturday and

Sunday - Free admission for high school students and younger.

Keep watch on the event website at www.boxboro.org for more news and updates. Ticketing, directions, hotel information and much, much more is posted on the website. Sign up for Boxboro "discussions" on the website as well.

Terry Stader - KA8SCP
Boxboro 2016 / ARRL New England Division Convention

MTARA Flea Market, March 05, 2016



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, (perkindsdowns@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).