

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL



THE COMMUNICATOR

THE COMMUNICATOR

November 2016

Upcoming Events

- Club Breakfast: Saturday Nov 12, 8 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
- Fox Hunt: Saturday Nov 12, ~10 a.m.: Location TBA
- E-Board meeting: Monday Nov 21, 6:00 p.m. : GCC
- Program Meeting: Monday Nov 21, 7:15 p.m.: Topic: APRS (Phill and Al)
- VE license tests: Monday Nov 28, 7 p.m.: Northfield Unitarian Church
- Dec 12 Mon 6:00 pm Holiday Potluck Shelburne Senior Center
- Club Breakfast: Saturday Dec 17, 8 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield 10:00 am
Franklin County Amateur Radio Emergency Communications group at GCC Hammond Studio
- E-Board meeting: Monday Dec 19 at GCC Hammond Studio

- Dec 31 Sat 9:00 am Public Service: Sawmill River 10K, Radio Ops report at 9 a.m. (12/31; 1/1 is Sunday)
- New Year's net: Wednesday Dec 31, 11:50 pm. on KB1BSS 2m repeater

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 a receipt mailed to you.

Calendar

Fox Hunt following the club breakfast on Saturday, November 12th.

Al Woodhull, N1AW

After the November breakfast we are going to have a hidden transmitter hunt - a Fox Hunt! In the past fox hunts were a frequent club activity. Four years ago we revived this activity.

Secretary's Report

E-Board meeting Monday, October 17th at 6:00 pm

Eboard Meeting minutes for Monday October 17, 2016

Meeting called to order by Al N1AW at 6:00 PM

The receipt of a thank you note from Fred Smead was acknowledged for the invitation to the annual club picnic last May.

Upcoming events were reviewed :

- November program to be on APRS presented by Al N1AW and Phil N1YPS, also fox hunt to follow club breakfast.
- December Holiday party to be at Shelburne Falls Senior Center, arrangements by Howard N1LUP, food arrangements by Jeanne KC1DCQ.
- January and February possible build projects, need ideas, possible indoor/stealth antenna build and education.

License class as part of PCC Community Education to be in March, need to provide dates for schedule, need volunteers (currently Al, Belle, Chris)

Discussed May picnic location, all seem satisfied with the Leyden park used for past picnics.

Discussed Field Day location, some have indicated a desire to consider an alternative location, the board is looking for suggestions to consider.

Jeanne KC1DCQ discussed the possible need to do some recruitment for public service events as recently we have a bit on the short side.

Al N1AW reviewed the status of the repeaters, posted suggestions on the web site. Access to the Greenfield repeater site is currently restricted due to construction work at the town water reservoir, will be completed prior to November 10th. The Leyden repeater needs antenna replaced, Al to research replacement and present to board. This work can hopefully be coordinated with the tower owner to minimize cost.

It was confirmed that the Berrigans are honorary members bllased upon their generous donations to the club.

The board meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

October meeting notes - Monday, October 17th

General Membership Meeting minutes for Monday October 17, 2016

Meeting called to order by president Al N1AW, followed by self introductions.

Al presented a review of upcoming events. A discussion of possible methods for identification at public service events to provide better interaction with event participants followed.

Al reviewed the need to replace the Leyden repeater antenna. Also the current Greenfield repeater access issue was discussed.

Jeanne KC1DCQ, newsletter editor, requested that all materials for the newsletter be submitted to her before the months end, the newsletter to be published first of month.

The next meeting of the Franklin County Emergency Communications Group will be in December 17th following the club breakfast.

Reminder that dues are due.

The program presentation for the evening was Fox Hunting, presented by Rich KB1NOX and AI N1AW.

Following the main presentation, Phil N1YPS discussed the offset attenuator he built and utilizes for Fox Hunting.

All were reminded of the actual Fox Hunt which will follow the November 12th club breakfast.

The Fox Hunt will commence at 10 AM at Poets Seat.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM

News, Activities & Articles

Some thoughts on how to teach a licensing class - AI, N1AW

Many of you have probably heard of Dan Romanchik, KB6NU. He is the author of the No-Nonsense Study Guides for amateur license exams which I have recommended for reviewing before taking license exams. He also maintains a blog on ham radio topics and sends out monthly posts for possible use in club newsletters to hundreds of ham radio clubs - we have occasionally used these for the Communicator.

He happened to call CQ on 80 meters last night just after our Snail Net and very close to our frequency. I recognized his callsign and went back to him, and we had a short QSO. I mentioned being familiar with the study guides and he asked how we used them. I told him we did not do one-day classes, and had a preference for classes that didn't just prepare for the exams. But I told him that I recommended his study guides for review before taking license exams. You can't say much in a 20 minute CW QSO and 80 meters was noisy last night, so today I sent him an e-mail to say a bit more. I got a response from him that I thought would be interesting for us to think about as we plan for another class in February. I thought his reply might be of interest to some of us.

- AI

Here is part of what I wrote to Dan about our club's and my own experiences:

Since you asked about how my group does classes, I'll amplify a little bit what I hinted at on CW. I was a college teacher for many years, and for the Technician license classes our little club has put on in recent years I and my colleagues felt that just teaching to the test did not appeal to us - we mostly used the ARRL book and taught our classes once a week for six weeks. We did distribute on CD your No-Nonsense Study Guide and recommended using it during review for the exams. We did this twice, in 2012 and 2013, and found it somewhat unsatisfactory in several ways. First we were not happy with the number of participants we got - about a dozen in 2012 and fewer in 2014 - and we had a lot of dropouts, with only about 8 and 4 participants from each class continuing through to the exam sessions. Most passed,

the main exception being an 11 year old boy who I think was just not intellectually ready for the elementary algebra needed for Ohm's Law and wavelength-frequency relationships (I actually discussed this with one of his 6th grade teachers). But we were pretty discouraged, which is part of the reason we have gone so long without teaching another class.

Our Franklin County ARC is in one of the most rural areas of Massachusetts (I live in a town with population about 700). There are perhaps 120 licensed hams in our county and if we get 15 at a monthly meeting or 30 to participate in Field Day we think we are doing well. We do regular VE sessions four times a year and we typically get 2, 3, or 4 applicants at each session. There is a much larger club, the Hampden County Radio Association, based in the large city of Springfield MA, which runs week-long, four session classes - two weekday evenings and a Saturday morning study sessions, and then the VE session on Saturday afternoon. They generally do one of these each year, with the main emphasis being preparation for the Technician license using projected multiple-choice materials. They also offer small group review (not study) sessions for General and Extra class exams. Participants are told of the No-Nonsense materials and they are recommended for review, but I'm not sure how much they are actually used.

I'm also a member of the HCRA and I have volunteered to help with these sessions on three occasions so far. For me it's a long drive for an evening session and I often have Saturday conflicts, so I schedule myself as a floater available to help when I can make it. I was initially motivated by a desire to see how the quick exam-oriented classes worked, and I have become convinced they do work. I've told members of my own group that the emphasis on getting people licensed will get people involved in the hobby, and that this will in turn motivate them to gain the understanding and the context that could come from a more conventional class.

So, in Franklin County we are now planning a Technician exam class for late winter. It will not be as compactly scheduled as the Hampden County sessions because we are doing it on the campus of our local Community College. We hope to get participation by students. Two evenings a week for two weeks plus a Saturday morning exam session seem to be the best way to be compatible with student schedules. I expect we will use a combination of mini-lectures and multiple choice materials for the evening sessions, but I am planning to also make the Non-Nonsense materials available and recommend them for final review.

I'd welcome any comments on this.

AI, N1AW



P.O. Box 150
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
(413) 625-9151 Executive Director
(413) 625-9152 Donor Services
www.franklinlandtrust.org

September 8, 2016

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Franklin County Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 713
Greenfield, MA 01302

Dear Al:

On behalf of everyone at the Franklin Land Trust, I want to thank you for your generous donation of radio support valued at \$500.00 in support of our D2R2 bike event. Your support was instrumental to the safety of the riders and we greatly appreciate it.

The event was a great success! This year we had just under 1,500 riders from 31 states and 3 provinces of Canada riding throughout Franklin County and Southern Vermont.

Thank you again for your donation, Al and for your commitment to the work of the Franklin Land Trust. I have attached your membership card and enclosed our FIT decal.

Sincerely,

Mary Lynn Sabourin
Mary Lynn Sabourin
Development Director

*Thank you, Al!
It was just perfect
this year - such
a wonderful relief
to have your folks
as part of our
team!*

Your membership card is enclosed, as well as a new FIT decal that shows your support for local land conservation.

The Franklin Land Trust did not provide any goods or services in consideration of this gift. Tax ID# 22-2744488

Franklin County Amateur Radio Club,
Inc.

Membership Level: Defender
Membership Expires: 8/31/2017

FRANKLIN LAND TRUST
www.franklinlandtrust.org

Franklin County Crop Hunger Walk, Sunday October 16, Phill Grant N1YPS

October 16th CROP Walk went next to perfect. Weather was good and the walk pleasant. Holy Name of Jesus in South Deerfield was the host church and supplied all kinds of refreshments. We had no trouble using the 146.985 repeater. During the walk, I brought in one person who became sick about half way out. I wish to thank Al, N1AW; Bob, WA1QKT; Anne, KC1CRS; Howard, N1LUP; Keith, KC1BZB and Net Controller, Richard, KB1NOX. We have a great group of volunteers. -Phill, N1YPS.

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 (bdyer582@juno.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).