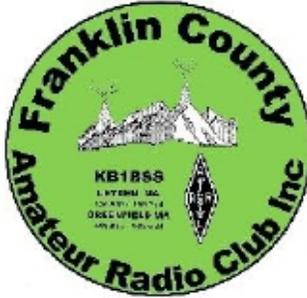


F.C.A.R.C. Inc., P.O. Box 773, Greenfield, MA 01302



FCARC mini-Communicator February 2017

Our Communicator editor is temporarily not able to produce the usual newsletter. Is there anyone willing to step up to edit and produce the next few issues? Please contact AI, N1AW, e-mail n1aw@arrl.net if you can help.

Dates to note in February:

- Monday February 13: **E-Board**, 6 p.m.; **Membership Meeting**, 7:15 p.m., GCC Hammond Lounge. Discussion and decision on Leyden repeater antenna replacement; also, **Antenna Modelling** – a talk and demo by Bob Solosko, W1SRB. . *Note, this meeting is not on the customary 3rd Monday because February 20th is the Presidents' Day holiday.*
- Saturday February 18: **Club Breakfast**, 8 a.m., Denny's.; **Emergency Communications Group**, 10 a.m., GCC Hammond Lounge.
- **License Exams** Monday February 27, Northfield Unitarian Church. See website: www.fcarc.org/venews

Dates to note in March:

- **Amateur Radio Technician License Classes** are planned for Tuesdays and Thursdays, March 7, 9, 14, and 16 with final review and a License Exam session Saturday March 18. Can you help teaching? Contact N1AW.
- Mt Tom Amateur Repeater Association Hamfest: Saturday March 11

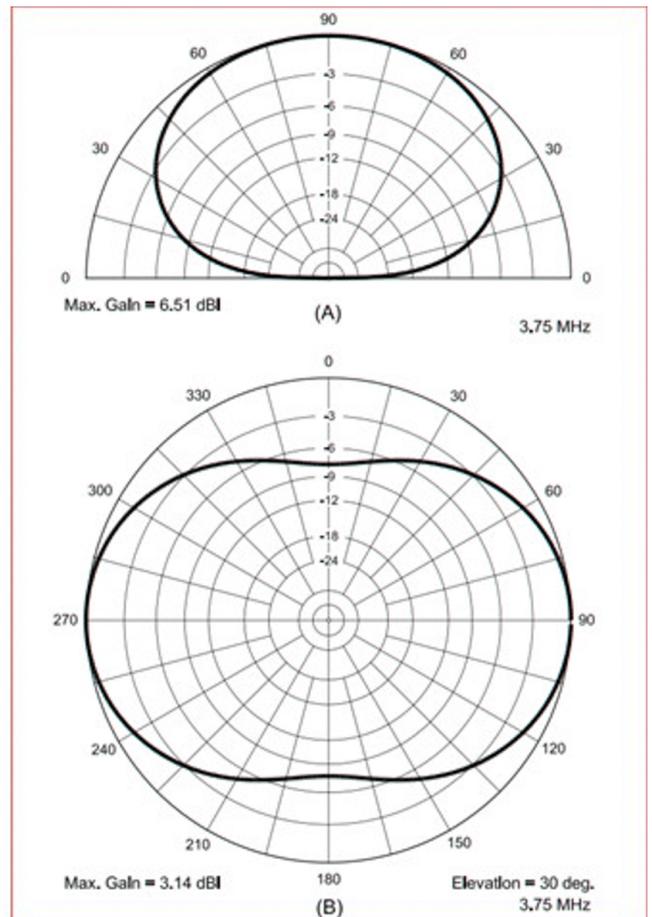
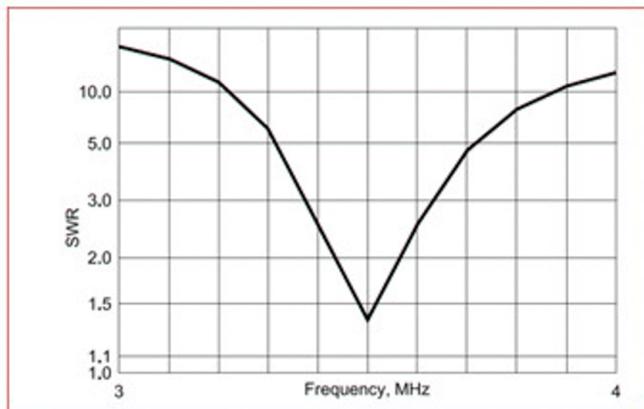
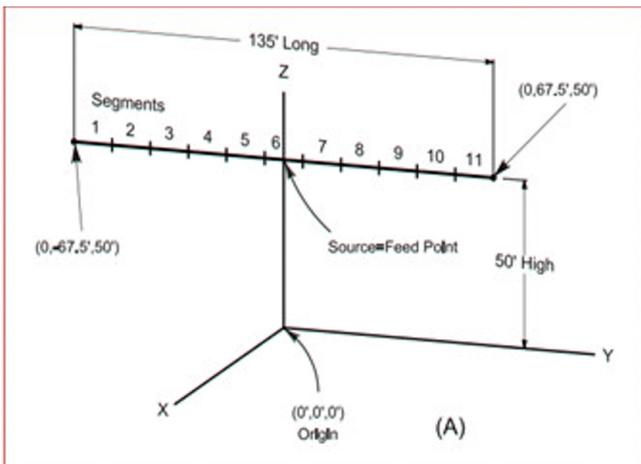
News

Repeater Antennas: There is no room or time to publish full minutes of the last few e-board meetings, but it should be noted that we have spent a lot of time discussing problems with the Leyden 146.985 MHz repeater. For quite a while there has been a problem of excessive noise on repeated signals, especially so on windy days and with relatively weak input signals. Back in August the engineer for the WPVQ radio station that owns the tower had climbers doing a routine inspection take a picture of our antenna. The photo clearly shows a bend in the antenna where it should be straight. The antenna was one manufactured for the ham market; it has been in service for 15 years, but we would like to replace it with something better if we can. Keith KU1N has done a lot of research and found a commercial grade antenna purchased for a repeater in New York but never put into service available for a bargain price. It is a four-bay folded dipole array. We are still evaluating whether we can make use of this antenna – there are questions about how it can be mounted. It will also be heavier, depending on how it is mounted possibly much heavier, than our old antenna and the engineer for WPVQ has to evaluate whether he can put it on the tower. Whatever we do, it is going to require us to pay a considerable sum to professional climbers – the last time we did antenna work it cost almost \$500 to have a new feedline installed. We will probably have to wait until Spring or Summer when the FM station will have professional climbers on hand for some other work and we can buy a few hours of their time.

License Class: As noted above we hope to conduct a Technician Amateur Radio license class at GCC during March. Rather than the six-week long classes that we conducted several years ago we want to compress this into two weeks – four evening sessions, a Saturday morning review, followed by an exam session Saturday afternoon. Some of us have helped to conduct such sessions or have participated as students in such courses conducted by the Hampden County Radio Association in recent years. As a former teacher I am not fond of the idea of “teaching for the test” but it seems to work for many people. The idea is to get people licensed and on the air, and let practical experience and “Elmering” complete the job of really learning about radio. Anyone willing to help with this, either during the class meetings or in the follow-up would be welcome.

Public Service: On December 31st we assisted with the annual **Sawmill River 10K** road race in Montague. Joe, KB1WVO coordinated the event. For various reasons we were concerned up until just a few days before the event as to whether we would have enough volunteers. Some last-minute recruiting saved the day, and everything worked out. Richard, KB1NXO coordinated our effort for the Greenfield Winter Carnival **Sleighbell Race** on February 4th. We had a similar problem with volunteer signups until a day or two before the event. Once again it all worked out in the end. But worrying about whether we will have enough volunteers for an event is not a lot of fun. These events are fun to participate in and are very useful practice for emergency operations. They also make amateur radio visible to the community. So please pay attention to the club calendar, and don't wait for a frantic phone call asking you to volunteer when an event is coming up. It has been a while since we have been called out to assist after an ice storm or a hurricane but it will happen again.

Antenna Modeling: Antenna Modeling is the computer analysis of an antenna configuration to determine the gain, near and far field pattern and SWR characteristics. In this talk, I will describe how antenna modeling software works and discuss limitations and factors that affect the accuracy of the results. I will demonstrate the modeling of several antennas using the EZNEC modeling software. A limited version of this software comes with the ARRL Antenna Book, and is available for free on the internet. - Bob Solosko, W1SRB



Franklin County Amateur Radio Club Officers:

President: Al Woodhull N1AW

Vice President: Ron Niswander K8HSF

Treasurer: Howard Field N1LUP

Secretary: Chris Meyers KB1NEK

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Director: Belle Dyer KB1NOG

Alternate Director: Keith Rowley KU1N

Past President: Carter MacDonald WA1TVS

Communicator Editor Jeanne Dodge KC1DCQ

This is your newsletter. Articles, announcements and news items are welcome. Please send Communicator submissions to the temporary editor: Al Woodhull, N1AW n1aw@arrl.net

FCARC website: <http://www.fcarc.or>

Al, N1AW was a biology major in college: Did you know that Lincoln's Birthday is also Darwin's Birthday?)