

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



FIRST CLASS MAIL



THE COMMUNICATOR THE COMMUNICATOR

July - August 2013

Upcoming Events

E-board Meeting: Monday July 15, 7 p.m.: Plan for next year, Location TBA
Club breakfast : Saturday July 20, 8 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
Triathlon: Sunday August 4, 7 a.m.: Nash's Mill Rd., Greenfield
Bridge of Flowers Race: Saturday Aug 10, 7 a.m.: Shelburne Falls
Club breakfast: Saturday August 17, 8:00 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
E-board Meeting: Monday August 19, 7 p.m.: Plan for next year, Location TBA
Franklin Land Trust Bicycle Tour: Saturday August 24, All day: Deerfield - Vermont
VE license test: Monday August 26, 7 p.m.: Northfield Unitarian Church

July - August 2013

Calendar

DATE CHANGE: JULY BREAKFAST MOVED TO JULY 20

The 2013 Station Test for the 2014 World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC 2014) is scheduled for the weekend of July 12-13-14. Those present at the June 15 breakfast agreed to change the July FCARC breakfast date from July 13 to July 20.

Did you miss Jim Mullen's presentation about WRTC at the June 10 FCARC meeting? Read the meeting minutes below. To learn more about the WRTC, go to the WRTC 2014 website at <http://www.wrtc2014.org/>. To learn about the July 2013 preparations, go to the WRTC 2013 Station Test website at <http://www.wrtc2014.org/competition/2013-station-test/>. To see more about the Hampden County Radio Association's role in coordinating Western Massachusetts support, look at this article on the HCRA website at <http://www.hcra.org/2013/03/16/wrtc-is-coming-in-2014-are-you-ready-to-pitch-in/>.

TRIATHLON, SUNDAY AUGUST 4: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We will again be providing communications for the Greenfield Triathlon again this year, on Sunday August 4. As was the case last year, the covered bridge at Eunice Williams Rd is unusable due to damage by Hurricane Irene, and the route will be the same as last year. Runners will follow a loop course on the west side of the Green River and bicyclists will have a different route on the east side. The Greenfield Recreation Department has given us a list of locations along both routes where they would like to have communications volunteers. There will be a sign up list at the July 20th club breakfast. Call Richard, KB1NOX, at 413-863-2657 or e-mail him at stwricha@aol.com to volunteer.

BRIDGE OF FLOWERS RACE, AUGUST 10: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The weekend after the triathlon is the Bridge of Flowers 10K road race in Shelburne Falls, Saturday August 10. We'll be working this one too. If you come to the July 20th club breakfast, please sign up when the clipboard for this one comes around. Or contact Chris, KB1NEK, (413) 625-0344, e-mail camyers_1@verizon.net.

FRANKLIN LAND TRUST THE DEERFIELD DIRT ROAD RANDONNEE (D2R2) BICYCLE TOUR, SATURDAY AUGUST 24

New this year: FCARC will be providing communications for the Franklin Land Trust D2R2 bicycle tour. In this tour, cyclists can choose from routes that are 112, 93, 72, 62 or 40 miles in length through Massachusetts and Vermont. See <http://www.franklinlandtrust.org/randonnee.html> for more D2R2 information. FCARC will set up communications between the starting/ending location in Deerfield and one or more check points along the route. Call Al, N1AW, at 413-773-3522 or e-mail him at n1aw@arrl.net to volunteer.

Secretary's Report

E-BOARD MEETING, MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2013 – BOB DICKERMAN WA1QKT

1. Chris KB1NEK not present, so Al N1AW led meeting
2. Annual business meeting later this evening
 - Howard N1LUP will give treasurer's report
 - Election - if no contests, secretary cast one vote to elect slate
3. We are considering another \$50.00 or more donation to Unitarian Church for use of building for VE sessions, thinking about donation to Shelburne Fire Station for use of facilities for Technician Licensing class, perhaps from VE team balance of \$168.00

4. Field Day

- Gary KB1AKU not reachable, and Gary KB1WTR out of town, so Dan N1VFN may tow trailer
- Emphasize sharing of operating positions so everyone who wants to try operating can, with sign-up list to reserve timeslots and help coordinate scheduling
- Scott N1LYW will bring laptops with CT logging, paper dupe sheets or log OK for VHF, satellite, digital; Bob WA1 QKT said will try get FIDigi logging working, and we will try to use his laptop for any PSK31 or other digital, so we'll have one log that will block dupes on that mode
- Al N1AW suggested that perhaps having "mode captains" might help to keep stations operating
- We will use bandpass filters at all stations
- Bob W1SRB said he sent Field Day press release to Recorder, but no one has seen article yet, please report to him if article is published
- Phill N1YPS will try 2 m FM and SSB, will use vertical co-linear ant from W1SRB; Phill will have entire station in a "shack" on top floor, to eliminate climbing of stairs when pointing 6 m beam
- We will use AC1L rain shield on tower, if needed

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR JUNE 10, 2013 FCARC MEETING – BOB DICKERMAN WA1QKT

We met in the GHS cafeteria. Al N1AW brought coffee. The meeting was brought to order at 7:30 PM by Al.

(Note that construction has begun at GHS, so we had to park on the north end of the school, which is the side closest to Silver Street.)

Al announced that this was our annual business meeting, with election of Vice President, Treasurer, and the Director position held by Bob W1SRB. Richard AC1L solicited nominations for us again this year by mail. Nominations received prior to the meeting were:

Al N1AW, Vice President, incumbent, accepted
Howard N1LUP, Treasurer, incumbent, accepted
Bob W1SRB, Director, incumbent, declined
Cathy KB1SNA, Director, declined
Ron K8HSF, Director, accepted

Al asked for nominations from the floor, but none were made. Since there were no contests, Secretary Bob WA1QKT cast one vote to elect the slate of candidates:

Al N1AW, Vice President
Howard N1LUP, Treasurer
Ron K8HSF, Director

Howard N1LUP moved that we allocate \$200.00 to Field Day food and RV gas and other expenses. The motion was seconded, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Howard then gave a treasurer's report. The club balance on June 1 was \$2090.16. With expenses of \$17.02 for newsletter printing, \$196.79 for new cable and connectors and \$492.50 for labor for Cardinal RF tower climber on 2 m repeater, our remaining balance is \$1333.85. The VE team balance is \$168.00. A motion that we accept the report was made and seconded, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Phill N1YPS will organize radio support for the Crop Walk again this year, which will be on October 20, and start at Trinity Church in Shelburne.

Al mentioned that he, Bob W1SRB and Chris KB1NEK are interested in helping with the D2R2 bike tour, which goes from Deerfield into Vermont, and which happens later in the summer. He said that he has not made any commitments, and is still finding out what is needed, but he was told that satellite telephones did not work for organizers last year, and operators at only a few points on the routes might be helpful.

Al said that we had a list for operator signups for Field Day, if anyone wanted to reserve a particular operating time slot.

Frandy N1FJ mentioned that Harpoon Brewery will be soon hosting a bike race from the brewery in South Boston, to the brewery in Essex, VT, and is looking for hams with 50W to 100W mobile 2 m radios to cover the route. Al mentioned that he has posted information at fcarc.org about several events in Vermont.

Our guest speaker for the meeting was Jim Mullen KK1W, President of Hampden County Radio Association (HCRA). Jim is also known to many of our members as an active Summits On The Air (SOTA) participant. Jim came to talk about and solicit support for the World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC). This is a contest held once every 4 years that Jim said might be called the "Olympics of Ham Radio". The object is to identify the best ham radio operators in the world, by requiring the two-person team contestants to use the same towers and antennas, and operate from closely located geographical positions with similar propagation, noise and interference characteristics. Some of the best amateur radio operators from around the world will be flying into Logan to participate next summer. Operators for the contest are chosen on the basis of their performance in other contests. The special callsign assignments will be "double-blind" - that is, neither the contest operators or anyone else knows who will get which contest callsign until just before the contest starts. Past contest stations have been clustered at various locations around the world, but the for the next contest, on July 12 and 13 of 2014, the 59 contest stations will be placed in the Boston area, near Route 495. A lot of work, using skimmers and reverse beacon networks, has gone into qualifying the station locations to make sure that they are as similar as possible radio propagation characteristics, as well as for noise and interference. Jim, other HCRA members, and our own Bruce Fuller KB1TLX, have already been participating in preparations for next year's contest. Besides needing test operators for qualification of station locations, manpower is needed to deploy and tear down the basic station equipment for the contest operators. There are two deployment teams for each radio station -



a site team that sets up generators, tents, and tables, and a tower team that sets up towers and antennas. Preparations are continuing for the upcoming contest, and the next deployment practice and station test will be July 12 and 13, 2013.



There is a short (4 minute) video at the WRTC homepage <http://www.wrtc2014.org/> that summarizes the contest. The contest organization still needs volunteers to help with site and tower deployment teams, as well as some test operators, for the

upcoming deployment practice and station test on July 12 and 13, 2013. Jim is in charge of the Medfield State Hospital and Mansfield sites, but he can also direct you to contacts at other sites. If

you would like to get involved with this exciting event, contact Jim at kk1w@arrl.org or (413) 237-4666.

The ARRL Centennial Convention will be held the following week in Hartford, CT, on July 17-19, and it is possible that some of the WRTC contestants will be attending.

12 people attended the meeting.

News, Activities & Articles



FIELD DAY EXPERIENCES – BOB DICKERMAN WA1QKT

I was happy that Chris K1SMY made a few PSK31 contacts on 20 m. I believe that these were the first HF digital contacts made on Field Day by our club, at least since I've been a member. Chris said it went OK, but he didn't quite settle into a rhythm over the 7 contacts he made. Setup was straightforward.

I think that next year perhaps we should use a 40 m dipole instead of 80 m for SSB. We couldn't get 80 m to tune on the 80 m dipole, even with an external tuner, perhaps because it was touching trees; a shorter dipole would be easier to deploy between the tower and the first set of trees, and easier to keep clear of branches, and would end up higher from the ground.

I was very happy with lunch, which was the smoothest part of the event, hosted by Cindy W1CAD and Jenna KB1SMZ.



At about 8:00 PM or so, after settling down from the trailer disaster, the CW radio troubles, and the RV incident, I thought to call Cindy at home to check in, and she informed that she and Jenna and several other people had been trying to reach us at the Field Day site on the 2 m repeater. None of us at the site had kept a 2 m radio on, so I asked Carter WA1TVS if he would turn on his 2 m radio, which he did. I apologize to anyone who was trying to reach us by radio and couldn't. In the future, we should plan on having at least one 2 m radio on in the yard, or in one of the stations, so that off-site members can reach us by radio, and maybe try to keep someone near it to act as liaison to the outside world.



We again attempted to make a satellite contact. Phill N1YPS was poised to talk to the International Space Station on Saturday afternoon at the top of the tower with his IC-706, but the astronauts must have been working. At any rate, he didn't hear anything on the FM downlink frequency. On Sunday morning I got out the equipment to try to catch an SO-50 pass. Saudi OSCAR-50 is a Saudi satellite that was launched in 2002. It weighs about 22 pounds, and is in the shape of a cube, about 10" on a side. It orbits the earth at a height of about 390 miles, and travels at about 17,000 miles per hour. It has a 1/4 Watt transmitter on board. On Sunday morning it was to come into radio

view for about 13 minutes, in a arc across the sky that rose from the northwest, peaked in the northeast, and set in the southeast. In the week before Field Day I had improved my setup from prior years by using a IC-706 50 W 2 m uplink transmitter. Also, I had discovered that my homebrew 440 MHz receiver antenna was not tuned to the downlink frequency of 436.795 MHz, so I used a commercially-made antenna with a larger driven element that tested 1.1:1 on the RX frequency. Further, I had realized that my IC-706 440 MHz RX sensitivity was low, so, instead, I just used an FT-60 for the receiver. At the appointed time, Chris K1SMY pointed antennas, Al N1AW tuned the FT-60 receiver to compensate for Doppler shift, Walter KB1ZYY ran the audio tape recorder to capture receiver audio, and I got ready to transmit on the IC-706. We heard the satellite about 1 or 2 minutes into the pass, and soon were trying to make a contact with WA3COM in Pennsylvania, but he couldn't hear the first letter in our callsign. Suddenly Al, Walter, and Chris heard a station call us and say we were "loud and clear" and "1 Delta Connecticut", so I frantically transmitted "Alpha Charlie One Lima 2 Alpha Western Massachusetts", to which he replied, "Roger, roger, good luck!". We were elated for a few seconds, but then I realized that I had not yet copied the other station's callsign. We listened to the tape recording, and could hear "WA...", but the rest of the callsign was not discernable. Because we weren't sure we had the full exchange, we tried again on another pass 90 minutes later, with help from Alex KB1YZA, but weren't able hear the satellite very well. At the time of our first contact, I believe the satellite was about 1000 miles away, over Newfoundland or the Atlantic Ocean in that vicinity.



When I got home I listened to the tape again. "Whiskey Alpha ... 1 Delta Connecticut" was very clear, but the balance of the callsign was hard to hear under the noise. I listened to tape in a quiet room several times, until I clearly heard "Mike Echo " at end of call - "Whiskey Alpha ... Mike Echo ". Then I searched QRZ for "WA * ME". I got a few dozen hits. Then I searched that subset for "CT", and got 3 hits. One was WA8SME, which sounded likely. I went back to tape, and could clearly hear "Whisky Alpha 8 Sierra Mike Echo", after getting the hint (part of my confusion was caused by the "8", which sounds like "A", when I was expecting "1" - I remember thinking I was hearing sort of two A's , as in "Whiskey Alpha A"). So, with 4 or 5 people operating the setup, and some fancy database processing, we finally were successful!



It turns out that Mark Spencer, WA8SME, is an extraordinary guy, who does a lot with satellites. He served in the U.S. Air Force for 20 years, flying T-58, B-52, U-2, and TR-1 aircraft. He is currently the ARRL's Education and Technology Director. He has designed a preamp for satellite reception that is for sale on the AMSAT website, and which I will probably be purchasing, and has written software for a satellite tracking device that will control an antenna rotator. His home station is in Gales Ferry, CT, near New London on the Connecticut shoreline.

FIELD DAY EXPERIENCES - PHILLIP GRANT N1YPS



The VHF shack on top of Poet's Seat was quite a surprise to many. There was a lot of interest in the two antennas and their purposes. The solar panel was the first thing everyone recognized. The radio was just a black box until they saw me talking into the mic. I bet I received comments and, or questions from



~10 people who were interested in the portable//emergency aspect of amateur radio, especially during severe storms.

Telling them I had the 'potential' of talking to someone half way 'round the world didn't impress them (after all, they have a radio strapped to their waist that can do pretty much that).

FIELD DAY OBSERVATIONS – AL WOODHULL, N1AW



Even with a piece of equipment we have used before, if we haven't used it for a year someone should be in charge of checking it out before Field Day. I'm referring of course to the crazy situation with the TS-950 in the CW tent where several of us puzzled over how to set the offset as we made numerous attempts to reply to CQers and we obviously weren't being heard.

Where did the TS-950 manual go? I was looking for it later, did not see it.

Not having the trailer was a blessing in disguise from the point of view of public relations. Operating in the tent resulted in a lot of interaction with passers-by which just would not have occurred if we were inside the trailer. I think we should plan on having one of our main stations this visible all the time.

Yes, the GOTA station is visible, but it is not always being used, and it has always been a security concern to have stuff out there when it is not in use.

Being in the tent at night was a little strange in one regard - people came and went to the tower area during the night and I couldn't see them. Next year I'd suggest arranging a station in the tent so the operator faces out. Visibility will still be a little difficult looking out to the dark area through the screen, but it made me a little nervous to have my back to the parking lot.

Also about the tent - it was good to have it occupied all night (I slept there when I wasn't operating). I moved most of the extra stuff from the tower to the tent for security. We were lucky it didn't rain. I had tarps on hand; even in the tower we have found that equipment needs protection from rain. But if we had had bad weather it would have been good to have some pallets so things would not be resting right on the pavement. Also, we were lucky in having no high winds; the tent was not tied down in any way.



I would like to get more people operating CW. Maybe when the new room is complete at my house we could do a multi-op operation for some kind of CW contest next year, as a training session. (I haven't told Barbara about this idea yet, so it's very tentative).

What I know of the scoring at this point is that we had 212 CW contacts (but some were dupes). This is way down from what we had last year, mostly because we didn't have Al Mason this year. We had over 300 phone contacts, that's better than last year. Phill had about 20 VHF contacts, there were 7 GOTA contacts. Last year that was reversed, but I think some VHF and GOTA contacts were on CW.

I copied the W1AW message, did that last year as well. Things we did this year which we hadn't done before included a satellite contact, a message by NTS to the section manager, and digital HF operation.



THE COMMUNICATOR is an informational publication for members of the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club. Officers: President: Chris Myers, KB1NEK (camyers_1@verizon.net), Vice President: Al Woodhull, N1AW (n1aw@arrl.net), Treasurer: Howard Field, N1LUP (howfield@comcast.net), Secretary: Bob Dickerman, WA1QKT (rld@dickermanelectronics.com), Director: Belle Dyer, KB1NOG (bdyer58@mtdata.com), Director: Ron Niswander, K8HSF (reniswander@gmail.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 Bob Solosko at w1srb@arrl.net.