

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



FIRST CLASS MAIL



# THE COMMUNICATOR

## THE COMMUNICATOR

July-August 2014

### Upcoming Events

- Club Breakfast: Saturday July 19, 8 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
- E-Board meeting: Monday July 21, 6 p.m.: Greenfield High School cafeteria
- Triathlon: Sunday August 3, 7 a.m.: Nash's Mill Rd., Greenfield
- Bridge of Flowers Race: Saturday August 9, 7 a.m.: Shelburne Falls
- Club Breakfast: Saturday August 16, 8 a.m.: Denny's, Greenfield
- E-Board meeting: Monday August 18, 7 p.m.: Plan for next year, location TBA
- Franklin Land Trust Bicycle Tour (D2R2): Saturday Aug 23, All day: Deerfield – Vermont
- VE license test: Monday Aug 26, 7 p.m.: Northfield Unitarian Church

# July-August 2014

## Calendar

### **TRIATHLON, SUNDAY AUGUST 3: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

We will again be providing communications for the Greenfield Triathlon again this year, on Sunday August 3. 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 19th club breakfast. Call Richard, KB1NOX, at 413-863-2657 or e-mail him at stwricha@aol.com to volunteer.

### **BRIDGE OF FLOWERS RACE, AUGUST 9: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

The weekend after the triathlon is the Bridge of Flowers 10K road race in Shelburne Falls, Saturday August 9. We'll be working this one too. If you come to the July 19th 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 23**

FCARC will again 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. Unlike other races that FCARC supports, this is an all-day event. FCARC will set up communications between the starting/ending location in Deerfield and at several critical check points along the route. These check points are where lunch is provided to the riders and are at locations where there is no cell phone coverage. The communications that we provided between these locations and the race starting/ending location is the only communications available. Dinner, a beer and beer glass is provided to each volunteers. Call Bob, W1SRB, at 413-527-0725 or e-mail him at w1srb@arrl.net to volunteer.

### **OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

Non-FCARC happenings to be aware of this summer are several public service opportunities in Vermont and New Hampshire, the World Radiosport Team Competition, and the ARRL Centennial Celebration.

## Secretary's Report

### **E-BOARD MEETING MONDAY JUNE 16, 2014 – BOB DICKERMAN WA1QKT**

1. Jeanne Dodge mentioned that there will be a food pantry fundraising event Nov. 15 that the club may want to provide communications for. More information to come.
2. Bob WA1QKT passed around, and gave to Al N1AW, a letter that Bill N1EWK and Betty KB1DCG received from CW net organizer Mark Pererra in New Bedford soliciting participation in his net.
3. Chris KB1NEK suggested that we need to sell surplus club equipment, to make room at Casey Storage, particularly large, heavy Astron power supplies. Bruce KB1TLX said if he gets equipment list, he will announce on MTARA swap net on Wednesday evening; he also offered to donate small stepstool to club for use at storage facility. Club will keep IC-706 & MFJ ant analyzer that John KB1NOH & Barb KB1NOI donated.
4. Still some wire antennas & masts to be removed from Betty Congdon's place, from Walt W1ZPB (SK)'s station. We hope to have another work session there after our July 19 breakfast.
5. Field Day (FD) planning, June 28 & 29

- HF CW station: Hope to use club screen tent if weather is nice, for more exposure to public, else, if weather is inclement, we'll use 6-person pop-up tent from Bob W1SRB. Radio will be IC-706. May use Al N1AW's 80/40/20 m dipole or Rich KB1NOX's 80/40 dipole. Chris KB1NEK will bring cinder blocks. Al will bring ground rod pounder. Bob & Al will bring table & chairs for station. Al said Richard AC1L gave permission to use his callsign for event.
  - HF SSB station: Shelter will be Carter WA1TVS's RV and radio will be Bob WA1QKT's FT-450AT. Will use a shorter 40 m dipole raised to a greater height, and hang 20m Moxon from tower. Bob will bring 2 chairs for misc. use, orange safety cone to help protect RV, & Signalink for GHS students to try PSK31, if needed.
  - VHF station: We believe Phill N1YPS will bring table, chair, and entire VHF station, as he has in the past. Phill will also bring rain shields for tower.
  - GOTA station: Al N1AW will bring station, Stuart KB1MFM said we could use GHS station call KB1MSU. Stuart will try to bring some GHS students to event.
  - Cindy W1CAD will help with food for Saturday lunch, grinders Sat night, Carter will make breakfast in his RV Sunday morning. Board voted & approved up to \$150.00 for food costs and at least \$50.00 for Carter's gas and breakfast costs. Consensus: just water is OK for drinks.
6. Upcoming Public Service Events:
- July 12, Prouty Race, Hanover, NH.
  - July 19&20, Vermont 100.
  - August 3, Greenfield Triathlon, Rich KB1NOX organizing.
  - August 9, Bridge of Flowers, Chris KB1NEK organizing.
  - August 23, D2R2 Franklin Land Trust
  - Sept. 28, Food Bank
7. Other upcoming events:
- WRTC, week of July 7-13
8. Election will be held in general meeting at 7:15 PM today.
9. There is a possibility that we will hold another Technician licensing class in the near future. Considering "quick" class, with 2-3 night sessions and 1 Saturday class with exam session. Students would have to buy books and read ahead of class.
10. Summer E-board meetings will be at various members' homes. We think that space at GHS will continue to be available for regular meetings, starting in the fall.

#### **FCARC PROGRAM MEETING, JUNE 16, 2014 – BOB DICKERMAN WA1QKT**

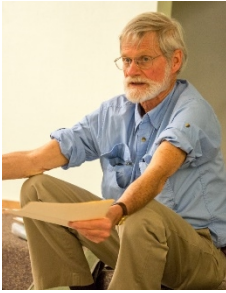
Before the meeting we had refreshments in the GHS cafeteria. Al N1AW brought coffee, and Belle KB1NOG brought blueberry muffins. The meeting was brought to order at 7:15 PM by Chris KB1NEK in the small auditorium.

First, Al N1AW showed us a piece of old ladder line that had been removed from Walt W1ZPB (SK)'s station. The feedline was so intertwined with pieces of vines and branches and debris that it was barely recognizable. Al suggested that it might serve as a Wouff-Hong, a legendary instrument of punishment used to discipline radio operators with poor operating practices, said to have been invented by Hiram Percy Maxim. See more regarding the original dastardly instrument at <http://www.hamconinc.org/wouff-hong.html>.



Next, Chris KB1NEK announced the annual election. Nominees for open offices were Al N1AW for President, Chris KB1NEK for Secretary, and Belle KB1NOG for Director. Since the nominees were uncontested, a motion was made and seconded to accept the slate of candidates as presented. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Plans for Field Day were reviewed (see E-Board minutes for summary).



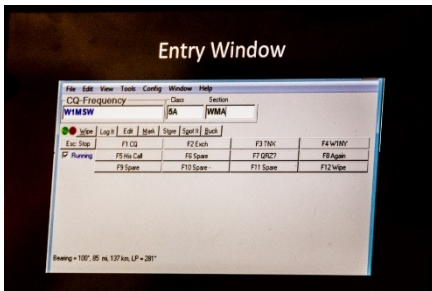
Chris announced that the club has surplus equipment to sell, in order to make room at our small space at Casey Storage in Bernardston. We hope to list these things on the club website soon. Also, Stuart KB1MFM may be selling the older GHS equipment so that the high school radio club can purchase a newer radio. Further, John KD1OE in Montague still has a 40' tower with two HF beam antennas that he is willing to give away.

Our guest speaker was Matt W1MSW, who gave a talk on N1MM, the "new" logging program that we will use for Field Day this year. Matt has been heavily involved in organizing the Field Day events for the HCRA in the past few years. This year, he will be responsible for scheduling operators as band captain for both CW HF stations, and tower captain for raising one of the CW towers at the HCRA Field Day. He has also been responsible for setting up the computers used for logging using N1MM, and has even networked the computers using WiFi at the event. Matt is an active contester and member of the Yankee Clipper Contest Club. (A day after he spoke to us, Matt was named as the new ARRL Contest Branch Manager - Congratulations, Matt!)



First of all, Matt said that one thing to remember with N1MM, if you want to keep track of which operator makes which contacts, is for each new operator to type Ctrl/O. This will bring up an operator callsign window, into which the new operator can type his or her callsign. Thereafter, contacts will be credited to that operator, until the next Ctrl/O operator change.

Matt explained that N1MM has various windows including Entry, Log, Score, Bandmap, and some others. These all have the "look and feel" of standard MS Win 7 program windows.



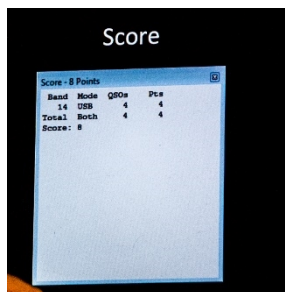
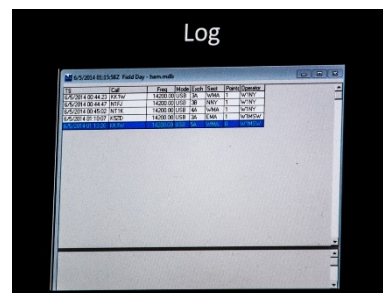
The Entry window is the one that is constantly used during a contest to enter the other station's exchange. For Field Day, the contest exchange is callsign, class and section, that is, AC1L 2A WMA. These are just typed into the three open fields in the Entry window. You change fields by pressing Spacebar or Tab. You can "wipe" (erase) the contact with Alt/W. You log the contact by pressing Enter after filling the 3 fields.

Because we will have each HF transceiver connected to a laptop through a USB cable, the laptop will automatically read the transceiver's operating frequency, which will be displayed at the top of the Entry window on the laptop, so we don't have to manually "change bands" in the logging program anymore.

As for most logging programs, if the station you are contacting has already been worked, a red DUPE! message shows up when you enter station's callsign, to tell you you've already worked that station. This is one of the most useful aspects of any computerized logging program while operating, especially if you are working in "Search & Pounce" mode (vs. calling CQ, where you normally expect the other guy to not call you unless you haven't already worked each other).

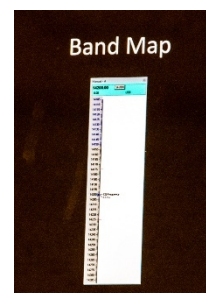
In any of the Esc key may be used to stop, exit, abort, or back out of whatever you are doing.

The Log window shows most of the actual logged data, so you can refer to it to see if a recently logged contact registered correctly. You can Right-Click on contact to edit it, if need be.



The Score window shows your current score. However, since our two laptops (CW & SSB) were not networked, each only knows the QSO count and score contribution for its local log (again, either CW or SSB).

The Bandmap shows a list of callsigns recently entered, superimposed on a bar scale of radio frequency, at the frequencies they were encountered at. One way this can be helpful in "Search & Pounce" mode is that callsign are shown on the bar even when a contact is not logged. Because of this, if you can't get through to a station, you can change frequency, work someone else, and later easily return to the first station just by clicking on his callsign on the Bandmap. This will tune the radio to his frequency, and fill in his callsign automatically, so you easily set up to try again!



Because the Bandmap will pile up a bunch of callsigns at the same frequency if you "park" on a frequency and call CQ, it is good to enter "Run" mode to prevent this, by pressing Alt/U. You can go back to normal Search & Pounce mode Bandmapping by pressing Alt/U again.

If the keying interface is set up, N1MM will send various voice, CW, or digital mode signals when you press special keys, such as the Function keys. The following are a few examples of how Matt had his laptop set up - note that your experience may vary if your laptop function keys have been configured differently for N1MM:

Ctrl/K to ad lib keyboard send, F1 sends CQ, F2 sends AC1L, F3 sends TNX, Return sends TNX DE AC1L.

Matt said it is good to keep the USB cable from the radio plugged into the same USB port on the laptop, otherwise Windows may change the com port assignment, inadvertently killing the link.

Like for other logging programs, N1MM stores the log information to the hard drive frequently, as each contact is logged.

Matt gave his talk under difficult conditions - a working projector that he needed for his presentation was not available in the auditorium, due to the fact that, apparently, preparations for demolition had started there that very afternoon (in fact, this may have been our last meeting in the small auditorium!). He gracefully adapted his presentation to use the available resources. We thank Matt for an informative and entertaining presentation!

16 people attended the meeting.

## **News, Activities & Articles**

### **FIELD DAY 2014:**

**Preliminary Results:** Our Field Day score as submitted was 4510 points, the highest since we began posting a [Field Day History](#) web page showing results back to 2006.

There were a total of 744 HF CW QSOs, 69 HF SSB QSOs, 10 QSOs on 6M, 18 GOTA SSB QSOs and 28 GOTA CW QSOs. We received bonus points for GOTA QSOs, Youth (5), Emergency power,

Media publicity, Public location, Message to SM, Alternate power, Educational and Web submission. In 2013 it was 2418.

Triple or double digit QSO totals were racked up by Al Mason WG1H (633 CW), Chris Dickerman K1SMY (184 SSB), Al Woodhull N1AW (136 CW and SSB), Belle Dyer KB1NOG, (32 SSB), Keith Rowley KU1N (29 CW and SSB on GOTA), Kevin Tracy KC5KKS (25, SSB), Bob Solosko W1SRB (14 SSB).

**Bob Solosko W1SRB:** Phill Grant N1YPS set up the 6 meter station at the base of Poet Seat tower and mounted a non-rotatable 6M folded dipole at the top of the tower. Mid-afternoon on Saturday when Phil was off officiating at a wedding, I decided to give 6 meters a try. I heard someone calling CQ and responded. The other station heard me and gave me his exchange. When I went to write it down, I discovered that there was neither log sheets nor writing implements. Ron K8HSF, who was standing behind me saved the day by running over to the GOTA station and grabbing a pen and a log sheet. Ron again saved things when the first pen ran out of ink in the middle of a QSO, getting yet another pen for me. While, most QSOs were easy, one person had trouble copying me and told me that I should turn my antenna toward him. I just looked up at the tower wondering how long it would take me to turn it.

**Bob Dickerman WA1QKT:** The weather was good - we had no interruptions due to thunder and lightning. I made my first 6 m contact on Phill's SSB rig by calling CQ on 50.140, I think, which my son Chris K1SMY later told me I had already done each year for the past few years - each year it seems like a brand-new experience!

There was some crosstalk between the 6 m station and the GOTA 20 m station, and between the SSB HF station and the GOTA HF, even with bandpass filters, but the ends of the three antennas were very close to each other, and the two HF stations were occasionally on the same band. At one point in last minutes of the contest, Phill, who trying to get a few more QSOs on 6 m SSB paused for a minute or so and let us get one more first-timer on the air without QRM, before continuing - thanks, Phill! Many of the GOTA contacts were made with what was probably an untuned antenna, because I could not figure out how to use the automatic tuner correctly. I'm sure that did not help. Al showed me how to work it when he got back Saturday night. All in all, it was OK though, because we were able to get a record number of people on the air to make their first HF contact.

Thanks to:

- Jake KB1VPN and Rory WC1Y, for running to Subway for sandwiches and to get ice Saturday night.
- Ron K8HSF and Bob W1SRB, for propping up the RV steps Saturday afternoon.
- Phill N1YPS and Bob WA1QKT, for installing the new RV battery Sunday morning.
- Stuart KB1MFM for bringing in the GHS students to make their first HF QSOs.
- Cindy W1CAD and Jenna KB1SMZ, for preparing Saturday lunch.
- Carter WA1TVS and Linda for the use of their RV (it didn't get hit this year!)
- As well as many others ...

**Jeanne Dodge (no call yet):** I've been thinking about what a wonderful time I had over the weekend. Although, it was my first Field Day, I enjoyed helping and feeling like I could help. Everyone was so encouraging. I got to try the radio. One of the biggest things for me, was all of the wonderful informal tutoring! The practice questions are definitely making more sense.

**Keith Rowley KU1N:** Thank you all for your friendliness and support, it was fun.

- Bob Dickerman: Thank you for the time and patience working with my son Devin and young
- Keith KC1BZB on the GOTA station. Also for giving us tours of the setups including antennas.

- Al Woodhull: Thanks for the use of your equipment. The straight key has to go though)
- Al Mason: Very impressive watching your CW contesting skills hence my nickname for you "Clark Kent" of CW. Thank you for spending time with me explaining things.

Al N1AW to Keith: I think your explanation of why you qualified to use the GOTA station and your comments on the operation itself would be interesting. And BTW, in addition to racking up a lot of points making CW QSOs on the GOTA station, Keith also acted as control op for his son and grandson there.

Keith's reply: I would expect to be asked, especially an extra class licensee, operating on a high speed exclusive extra class frequency range on 40 meters..... but.....I think this qualifies me as an inactive ham:

Around 1965-66ish, I was first licensed around the age of 11 or 12 and was VERY active in CW only. I copied quite well in my head. Ham radio influenced me as I got an associate's degree in electronic technology from STCC and also became licensed as a FCC 2nd Class Radiotelephone (for repairs and commercial operation). Once an adult, with a career and children, ham radio was put on the back burner. In hindsight that was a mistake. I am now retired. I have not had a station or used anyone's station in at least 27 years. It could be as long as 34 years. Not even a receiver. I do remember that I upgraded to Extra when talk was coming out about VEC's which would have been over 30 years ago. I would have listened to code to pass the 20 wpm test in Boston I took. I own a non-functional Yaesu FT DX400 HF transceiver purchased new from October of 1967. It is improperly stored in a barn. I own a Heathkit HW-8 purchased as a kit on November 11, 1979. I am restoring this and now that I have the smaller tuning tool for the coils. I have no antennas up or antenna material for that matter. I do have a tuner of yours that I appreciate your lending me and that we need to talk about (i.e. do you have a price in mind if it is for sale?). I need to get an HF transceiver with a general coverage receiver not to mention antenna materials. I would actually like to get Keith his own too for when he stays at his dad's. 2 low cost transceivers for CW use only, with general receiver coverage, and ability to hook up to computer. The only functional radio I have is a 2meter/70cm Baefung that has not been used for a QSO yet.

Julie Page mentioned several times about wanting to get the cadets into ham radio. That is what got the ball rolling for me around February 2014. I decided I would like to teach young Keith and have him get his license. I then reached out to N1AW who generously showed young Keith his shack and lent the Technicians manual. Myself, I started listening to the W1AW code files via the web. I found my code speed after all these years was a solid 15 wpm. I listen to the 20 wpm files several times a week. Some sessions are 95%ish and others less. I purchased an electronic keyer kit and a used Bencher BY-1 that sits on the counter for practice.

On field day I struggled with all the congestion though. Wow. I would listen to stronger stations (hence a couple dupes) and you will note from the log I would find and listen 5-10 minutes between contacts, finding and getting the exchange info first. Regarding the straight key, that is all I ever used other than fooling around with a Vibroplex. At first my fist was horrible sounding but improved with practice. My sending speed around 18ish improved with practice too. Please note I did do 1 SSB contact!

I was there from 2100 (9pm local) but Stu's student did not wrap up until 11pm. So I started at 2345 (11:45) local time until 0258. I went home and came back and used the station at 0919, 0923, and 0935 local time, Bob then gave Keith and I a tour/break for an hour, and then I went back on until I had to take Keith for his airplane flight. I then returned with Keith's dad Devin who stayed there while I went to retrieve Keith from the airport post-flight.

Regarding 6 meters, no one was on the radio from when I arrived Saturday 8:30 pm until I left the first time to go home at 0300 Sunday local times. When I came back though it was very hard to use the GOTA with Phil N1YPS on the 6 meter station. I needed a pair of headphones bad!!!



THE COMMUNICATOR is an informational publication for members of the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club. Officers: President: Chris Myers, KB1NEK (camyers1@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)

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