

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



FIRST CLASS MAIL



# THE COMMUNICATOR THE COMMUNICATOR

**March 2018**

## Upcoming Events



- Mar 10 Sat 8:30 am MTARA Hamfest, Castle of Knights, Chicopee
- Mar 17 Sat 8:00 am Breakfast, Denny's
- Mar 17 Sat 10:00 am Franklin County Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Group, GCC Hammond Studio
- Mar 19 Mon 6:00 pm E-Board; 7:15 pm General Meeting, GCC Hammond Studio, topic: EchoLink (etc)
- Mar 26 Mon 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm Technician License Class, GCC, first of six Monday/Wednesday sessions, register on GCC website
- Apr 1 Easter
- Apr 14 Sat 8:00 am Breakfast, Denny's
- Apr 14 Sat 10:00 am Franklin County Amateur Radio Emergency Communications group, GCC Hammond Studio

Apr 16 Mon Patriots Day, Boston Marathon

Apr 23 Mon 6:00 pm E-Board; 7:15 pm General Meeting, GCC Hammond Studio

## Calendar

### MTARA HAMFEST AND FLEA MARKET, SATURDAY MARCH 10, 8:30 A.M., CHICOPEE

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| <p>31<sup>st</sup> Annual</p>   <h1 style="text-align: center;">Amateur Radio<br/>&amp; Electronics Hamfest</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">Saturday March 10, 2018</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Located<br/><b>Castle of Knights</b><br/>1599 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA 01020<br/><a href="http://www.castleofknights.com">www.castleofknights.com</a></p>   |  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>***Directions***</b></p> <p><b>From North:</b><br/>*Take I-91 South to the Mass Turnpike. Take exit 5 (Rte. 33) off the Turnpike. After the tollbooth bear to the right to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Memorial Drive and travel north for about 2 miles.</p> <p><b>From South:</b><br/>*Take I-91 North to the Mass. Turnpike. Take exit 5 (Rte. 33) off the Turnpike. After the tollbooth bear to the right to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Memorial Drive and travel north for about two miles.</p> <p><b>From East:</b><br/>*Travel on the Mass. Turnpike toward West. Take exit 5 (Rte. 33) off the Turnpike. After the tollbooth bear to the right to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Memorial Drive and travel north for about two miles.</p> <p><b>From West:</b><br/>*Travel on Mass. Turnpike toward East. Take exit 5 (Rte. 33) off the Turnpike. After the tollbooth bear to the right to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Memorial Drive and travel north for about two miles.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Castle is on the right for all of the above.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mail-in Registration Form</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Call sign _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Phone (cell preferred) _____</p> <p>Email Address: _____</p> <p># of Tables _____ x \$20.00 = _____</p> <p>Is 120 VAC Needed? _____</p> <p><small>Checks payable to: MTARA<br/>Mail to: Brian Mullarney-N1FI, 20 Spring Street,<br/>Easthampton, MA 01027</small></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>*** The Details ***</b></p> <p><b>Doors Open:</b><br/>6:30 AM Vendors <i>only</i>; help available for loading and unloading<br/>8:30 AM General Admission</p> <p><b>Admission:</b><br/>Adults: \$5.00<br/>Children: under age 12 are <i>FREE!</i></p> <p><b>No Tailgating</b></p> <p><b>Handicapped Parking Available</b></p> <p><b>Snack Bar</b> – hot and cold beverages, hot dogs, burgers, etc.</p> <p><b>Raffle Prizes</b> – six (6) tickets for \$5.00</p> <p><b>VE Exam -10:30 AM</b><br/>Bring <b>two</b> forms of positive ID; Two #2 pencils: originals and photocopies of any CSE's you hold; and if licensed, the original of your current license plus a photocopy.<br/>\$15.00 Cost</p> <p><b>Additional Information:</b><br/><a href="http://www.mtara.org">http://www.mtara.org</a></p> <p><b>Talk-In on</b> 146.94 (127.3 PL)</p> <p><b>Table Registrations contact:</b><br/>Brian Mullarney – N1FI<br/>20 Spring Street<br/>Easthampton, MA 01027<br/>Tel. (860) 478-6790<br/><a href="mailto:N1FI@arrl.net">N1FI@arrl.net</a></p> |

### MARCH PROGRAM MEETING: MONDAY MARCH 19 AT 7:15 PM.

Anne KC1CRC will be presenting about Echolink.

Free EchoLink® software lets licensed Amateur Radio stations use streaming-audio technology to make contacts over the Internet. It allows for both individual contacts and nets with radio operators all over the world. There are currently more than 200,000 validated

users worldwide in 151 nations with about 6000 hams online at any moment according to <http://www.echolink.org/> . Mobile stations can connect through a repeater that has an internet connection to EchoLink® to any EchoLink® user who is either online or using a mobile radio through another EchoLink® enabled repeater or EchoLink® linking ham radio station. As there are no band restrictions on EchoLink and radiocontact through EchoLink® is UHF Or VHF FM or simplex, linking a newly licensed technician armed with either a handheld radio, an IPAD, a laptop, or a smart phone with Internet can gain access to the world just a few days after they get their license. I have enjoyed a Thursday night YL net on the Australian Ladies Conference Node 286905 Thursday evenings at 8pm EST as well as several worldwide nets. I have also enjoyed individual contacts with hams both inside and outside our club. By leaving EchoLink® on KC1DCQ had a nice surprise when a ham operator from Japan contacted her and shared information about his life and experiences.

## Secretary's Report

### **Minutes of FCARC e-board mtg on 12 Feb. 2018**

Chris Myers KB1NEK

1. Review of Sleigh Bell Race, Sat. Feb. 3. Because Net Control operator was late, there was no opportunity for new participants to call in to ask for directions, if needed. This lack of a second organizer for the event shows again the need to insist on having two. Anne and Chris heard direct communications between volunteer monitors and the race director, Christie Moore. It is not clear what radios they were using, but Chris remembers that at last summer's Triathlon event someone told him the city of Greenfield was providing radios, perhaps belonging to the Recreation Department itself, or another department, such as the DPW. Even though this indicates that our offer of communications is not really useful to the race director, it offers us the opportunity for practice and team building.

After some discussion, Anne, Belle, and Jeanne volunteered to coordinate our work at the Triathlon in August. Chris and Howard will once again coordinate for the Bridge of Flowers Race, also in August. Bob Solosko and Al will coordinate the Land Trust R2D2 bicycle tour in late August, and Ron will be the principal organizer for the Food Bank bicycle tour in September. It is not clear who will want to organize the Crop Walk in October. Phill has done it for several years, but last fall severed severed his club membership.

Field Day will be difficult to organize now that Carter can no longer drive. This will take his RV out of consideration as an operating shelter. Also, because of Phil's resignation from the club, we will have to scramble to find a way to operate on 6 meters.

Chris outlined the possibilities for us to participate in the FRCOG sponsored shelter drill that is supposed to take place at the Turners Falls High School. The first planning meeting will be on 20 Feb, and until then no date has been set, nor has amateur radio participation been invited. Another shelter exercise will take place on April 19 in Northampton. Hopefully at least Bruce Fuller will be invited, since he has worked actual shelters at that location in the past.

Questions were raised about whether ham radio operators who operate inside a shelter would need CORI and SORI clearance. The city of Greenfield police department has a

policy of using an internet connection right at the entrance if its shelters to run a CORI check on anyone coming in. On the other hand, the police chief of the town of Shelburne refuses to consider doing that, so there is obviously no consistency to be expected. Chris and Jeanne urged members who want to do radio work inside a shelter to go through MRC training, which include a CORI and SORI check and then the issuance of an ID card.

Chris mentioned that if ham radio operators are invited to participate in the Turners Falls drill, he hopes the town of Montage will allow us to set up operations in its EOC at the Public Safety Complex, which it probably would do in an actual event. Perhaps we can also try to set up operations in South Deerfield as a simulated MAC site. The town of Deerfield has already an installed FT-8900 radio connected to a tri-band antenna on a pole in its parking lot. The most ambitious plan would be to schedule transmissions to the MEMA Region 3 office in Agawam. Until we are actually invited to participate, it is premature to make firm plans.

Anne mentioned the Newcomers' Roundtable held on the Mt. Greylock repeater on the first and third Mondays of the month, at 7:30. She found the one on message handling very informative.

## [News, Activities & Articles](#)

### **Club Breakfast**

Our Club gets together at Denny's Pantry every month for Breakfast. Anne, KC1CRS took these pictures from our February Breakfast-come join us!!



### **New Columns for our Communicator!!!**

We will now have an ongoing column highlighting Community Service possibilities-our club and other options. We will also have a Elmer/Elvira Corner-a place to ask for help and to offer information. The third new column is Resources-please send in any resources you have found that you think others could find helpful.

**These will be ongoing spaces in the newsletter.**

### **Elmer/Elvira Corner**

This is a new section for folks who have a question/concern/need some help. Send in what you need help with and this will be a place to see if someone can help. Also, if you have

learned/figured out/had some help with something that you think could help others, send it along.

Definition below comes from this site.... <http://www.w6ek.org/elmerhelp.html>

What's an Elmer? An Elmer is a mentor, a guide, a guru that offers help or assistance to Hams and will be hams to help them along in this fine, fun hobby. Maybe explaining something, assisting with a new radio, passing along experiences, or helping with antennas.

Another Elmer site: <http://www.hamuniverse.com/elmer.html>

Also see ARRL re: Elmer award <http://www.arrl.org/elmer-award>

### **Resources!!!**

This is another new ongoing space in the newsletter.

What resources to you think could be helpful to others? Where do you get supplies? If you have suggestions, please send them in.

Newcomers Round Table Net on first and third Mondays 7:30 to 8:45 pm Sept to June on 2 meters 146.91 Mt Greylock

**Here is a video that a club produced for new members:**

### **Repeater 101 for new Amateur Radio Operators**

Are you a new Amateur Radio Operator and aren't sure what to do next? Amateur Radio in our area has been growing, and because we had several new operators the Northern Colorado Amateur Radio Club decided to put on an event to teach some of the basics of amateur radio. In this

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNxyfRDpwpA&feature=youtu.be>

### **Community Service Possibilities**

Our club plans to help with the following events this summer:

Amherst Triathlon in August  
Bridge of Flowers Race, also in August  
Land Trust R2D2 bicycle tour in late August  
Food Bank bicycle tour in September

There will be more details coming as we get closer to these events.

Also, if you would like to help with MS walks and bike events, they use Hams for many.

Here is the link for more information: [https://secure.nationalmssociety.org/site/SPageServer?starting\\_postal=&state=MA&pagename=WLK\\_HOM\\_all\\_events](https://secure.nationalmssociety.org/site/SPageServer?starting_postal=&state=MA&pagename=WLK_HOM_all_events)

### **VE LICENSE EXAMSESSION IN NORTHFIELD, FEBRUARY 26 – AL WOODHULL N1AW**

We had five candidates at the Northfield VE session. Bruce, KC1FRF moved up to a General class license with an almost-perfect score. New Technicians are Amy from Rowe



and Dennis from Ashfield; we should be able to announce their new callsigns in next month's Communicator. Two candidates attempted the Extra exam without success.

More opportunities: there will be a VE session at the MTARA Hamfest in Chicopee on Saturday March 10th, and we will have another session at GCC on April 11, the last day of the six-session Technician license class that begins on March 26th.

### **Technician License Class Plans: March and April**

This time we plan to have six evening classes on, Mondays and Wednesdays for three weeks, instead of four evenings plus a Saturday. We hope the extra session will help everyone get off to a good start, and having the exam on the last evening class day will avoid another scheduling problem. Also, we believe there are some potential participants for whom a Monday-Wednesday schedule will work better than Tuesday-Thursday.

Club members and experienced hams: Please consider coming and meeting the folks taking the class, we will need mentors. Also, if you would like to teach a section, please contact us.

If you know of anyone who would like to take the class, here is the link to register:

<http://greenfieldcc.3dcartstores.com/search.asp?keyword=radio+license&search=GO>

The class will again be at GCC.

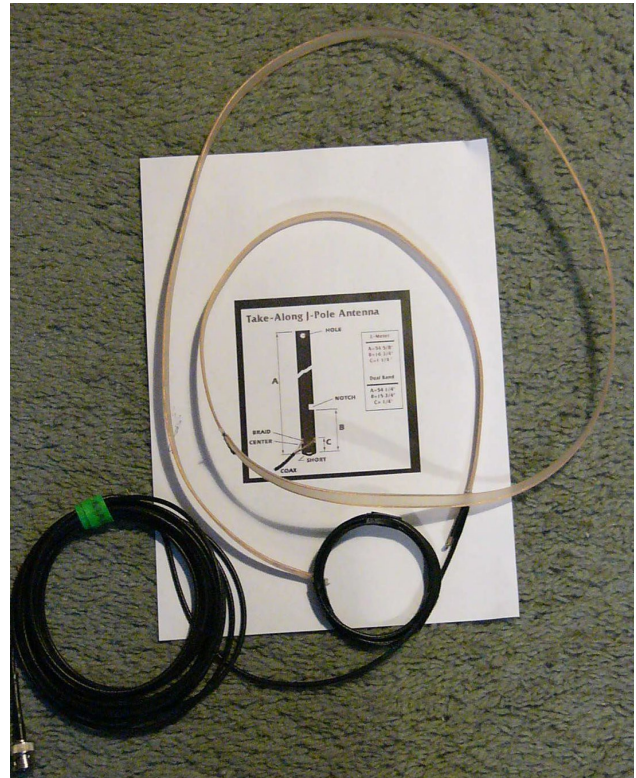
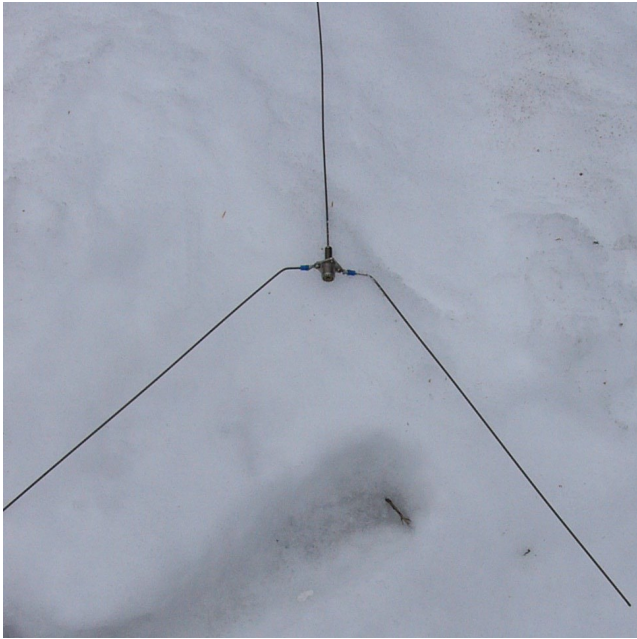
### **Two Easy Antennas**

AI, N1AW

At the February meeting I sketched ideas for two easy-to-construct but useful 2 meter antennas on the whiteboard. Here are a pictures of both types, as I made them at home. On the left is a simple ground plane: materials are three pieces of stiff wire, an SO-239 coax connector, and a couple of screws and nuts. I used welding rod for the wire parts, but I had occasion once to use ordinary #12 copper wire, scraps from a home wiring project. Conventionally a ground plane antenna uses 3 or 4 radials, but two will work quite well.

On the right is a J-pole antenna, made with approximately 5 feet of TV twinlead cable, and about 15 feet of small-diameter coax. The small coil, about 5 turns 5 inches in diameter, is held together with electrical tape, and is a functional part of the antenna – it prevents current from flowing on the outside of the coax. The large coil is about 15 feet of coax, coiled for convenience in storing. I used a BNC connector and will need an adapter for the SMA connector on my HT.

The ground plane just needs to be connected to a length of coax which is clamped or tied to the top of a pole of some sort. The J-pole can be suspended from a nail above a window frame with a piece of string or small diameter rope.

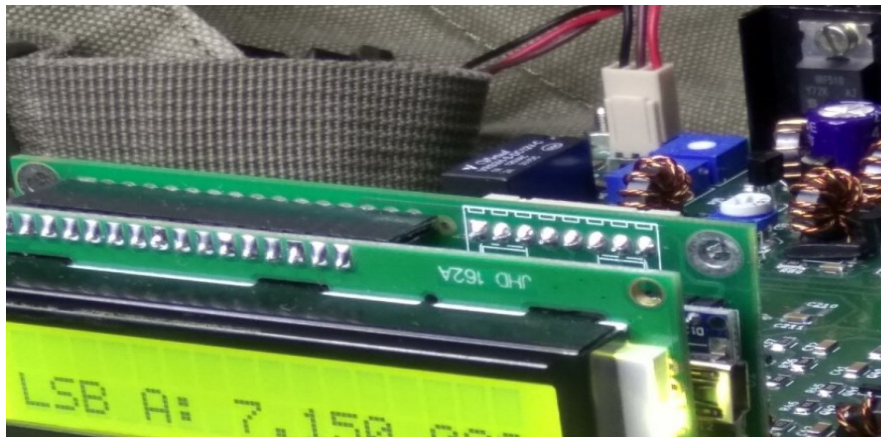


If anyone wants more info e-mail me ([n1aw@arrl.net](mailto:n1aw@arrl.net)) and I'll send you an article with exact dimensions.

## The MicroBitX Kit

AI, N1AW

I am very excited about a piece of radio gear I haven't even seen yet – the uBitx (the 'u' is “mu” in the Greek alphabet and is pronounced "micro").



This is a kit, manufactured in India, that uses an Arduino microcontroller to control a frequency synthesizer chip at its heart. It will put out 20 Watts, CW or SSB, on 80 and 40

meters, less on higher bands. The firmware is open source, as is the design of the circuit boards. There is a very active Internet discussion group. The cost is US \$109 plus US\$10 shipping from India. The demand is very great, and I don't expect the unit I ordered in mid-January to be shipped until March, but I hope to be able report some experience with it in the April **Communicator**.

The excitement for me is the potential of this to give a new generation of hams an inexpensive way to get on the air on the HF bands, comparable in some ways to the Heathkit transceivers that provided such a gateway for many who became hams in the period from the 1950s to the 1980s. This seems like a necessary counterpart to the ARRL's intention to petition the FCC for HF voice and digital privileges for amateurs with Technician licenses.

If you want to know more, check out the manufacturer's website, <http://www.hfsignals.com/>.

## **STOP THE PRESS – New Technician Privileges Coming?**

*As we go to publication on March 1<sup>st</sup>, the ARRL has announced they have petitioned the FCC for SSB and data mode privileges for Technician licensees on the 80/75, 40, 15, and 10 meter bands. More info next month! Check the ARRL website [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org) for more info.*

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**THE COMMUNICATOR** is an informational publication for members of the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club. Officers: President: Al Woodhull, N1AW ([n1aw@arrl.net](mailto:n1aw@arrl.net)), Vice President: Joe Henefield, KB1WVO ([joehenefield@comcast.net](mailto:joehenefield@comcast.net)), Treasurer: Howard Field, N1LUP ([howfield@comcast.net](mailto:howfield@comcast.net)), Secretary: Chris Myers, KB1NEK ([camyers1@verizon.net](mailto:camyers1@verizon.net)), Director: Belle Dyer, KB1NOG ([bdyer58@mtdata.com](mailto:bdyer58@mtdata.com)), Director: Ron Niswander, K8HSF ([reniswander@gmail.com](mailto: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: Jeanne A. Dodge, KC1DCQ ([j.anndodge@gmail.com](mailto:j.anndodge@gmail.com)).