

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



FIRST CLASS MAIL



THE COMMUNICATOR

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May 2018

Upcoming Events

- May 19 Sat 8:00 am Breakfast, Denny's
- May 19 Sat 10:00 am Field Day Planning, Poets Seat
- May 21 Mon 7:00 pm E-Board, GCC Hammond Studio
- May 26 Sat 11:00 am Club picnic, Leyden Pavilion at Leyden School
- May 28 Mon 7:00 pm VE exams, Northfield Unitarian Church

E-board meeting Monday, April 23, 2018

Chris Myers KB1NEK, Secretary

1. Al reported that radio engineer, Alex Rock tested the duplexer for the 70cm repeater on Rocky Mountain in Greenfield. He found there is nothing wrong with the duplexer settings. The problem is that the design of it is not adequate for equipment such as the Yaesu DX-1R, which uses a synthesized VFO. The old equipment we used to have there used crystal control, which emits far fewer side-bands or other spurious signals than most synthesized VFO's. Alex offered to look around to see if he can find a better duplexer for us.

2. Over the weekend, Al also ran some tests on the 2m repeater in Leyden, without being able to pin down why it does not always work well on weak incoming signals. Al thought it was being de-sensitized, perhaps from the duplexer needing adjustment, but the tests he was able to do were inconclusive.

3. Chris suggested we contact Eric Mazur, the president of NOBARC, who spoke at our last meeting. At that meeting Eric said that NOBARC had upgraded its Yaesu digital repeater by adding a separate control circuit allowing the use of standard controllers, and an amplifier to allow 50 watt output. Keith offered to contact Eric, although he thought Eric said they found a way to modify the DX-1R itself so it can run higher power continuously, not using an external amplifier.

4. Even though ten days have passed since we conducted the test for new technician licenses, the FCC issued no call signs for them. Al finally called the ARRL VEC bureau to find out the problem, and was told the packet of paper work sent from Greenfield on April 12 had not arrived in Newington. They told Al we might have to duplicate the 605 form and have it signed by both the test takers and the three test givers. [*See later report on p. 5*]

Some discussion took place about Field Day, but was repeated after the start of the regular full membership meeting.

At the full membership meeting a motion was made and passed to spend \$201.86 for a canopy Ron bought at DJ's. It has side panels, but no screens, An attempt will be made to use the screens from the canopy that was destroyed by high winds during last year's Field Day.

There was some discussion about moving the Field Day site to another location, such as Unity Park in Turners Falls next to the river. However, we concluded that it would be best to stay in Greenfield for at least another year.

Since Carter, WA1TVS, is in poor health, we have to plan for Field Day operations without his RV. We will use two new canopies, and a tent that Chris Barnes offered to bring. We will also pay for a porta potty. Anne has information from two local companies that can deliver early Saturday morning and remove during the afternoon Sunday, a requirement made by the Greenfield Parks and Recreation Dept. In order to receive the porta potty when it arrives, and to place it where we want it, we will start set up earlier this year - at 8 AM.

Chris suggested asking Citizen's Corp coordinator, Rob Quinn-O'Connor if we can borrow the CC 1KW generator for Field Day. This would be useful substitute for the generator in

Carter's RV, which won't be available this year. [Rob has agreed to our request.]

We have received notice that a new storage space will be rented for Citizen's Corps equipment, and that we have been invited to move our equipment from the jail to that space, sometime in May. We found out, after the meeting, that the equipment belonging to CC will stay in the container at the jail, and that the new storage space will be used for supplies currently stored in the Transit Center.

Al has reserved the Leyden Pavilion at the Leyden school for the club picnic on May 26.

On June 18, we will hold the annual meeting. The main agenda item will be election of three club officers: president, club secretary and one of the directors.

Emergency Communications Group

Chris Myers, KB1NEK, ARES emergency coordinator, Franklin County - West

After the monthly breakfast at Denny's, on April 14, members interested in emergency communications met at the Hammond Studio at GCC. We set up and ran tests for two types of portable short range repeaters, of the kind that might be used at a mass care shelter. We did try two different antennas, and two different cables, one set of antennas works fine to contact 6 meter repeaters on a normal basis as it is my normal mobile antenna. In the past, I personally have operated in a shelter where it was not possible to communicate from inside the building on simple hand held transceivers to local repeaters, presumably due to the amount of steel and other metal in the building.

At GCC, Aaron, KC1CXX set up a "parrot" repeater which he made himself. It works with a memory chip that simply records up to four minutes of incoming transmission, then re-transmits it on the same frequency. Aaron placed the repeater on a picnic table outside the main entrance, and then walked back along the corridors inside. He tested his ability to reach his "parrot" from several locations, including the opposite side of the building. He had no trouble connecting to it. He then switched from UHF to VHF and found very little difference.

Our attempt to get a cross-band repeater working was not so successful. Joe, KB1WVO tried to get the FT-8800 in his car working in cross-band mode, with no success. We suggested different settings on his radio, without any luck. Five days later, at the shelter drill in Northampton, Aaron noticed Joe's audio output was not sounding right, and suggested he might have a problem with his microphone. Using a different mic, the FT-8800 sounded much better. We believe a problem in the microphone may also have prevented his radio from working properly as a cross-band repeater, but have not tested that theory.

At the shelter drill on April 19, four of us tested direct simplex communications between the Smith Vocational School and the parking lot outside the Northampton Fire Station, where the city's EOC is usually set up. That line of communication proved to be fairly easy, using HT's inside the building. We then tested a direct simplex link with the MEMA region office in Agawam. That link was not as hard as we thought it would be. We communicated on 2 meter simplex, using a portable antenna suspended from a fishing pole, whose tip was up about 15 feet.

We had no success, however, using 6m. I suspect that is because the team at the fire station did not put up a good enough antenna. The group decided to return to Northampton in a couple of weeks to try again on 6m, at least to connect to the obvious important repeaters on Mt. Greylock and Mt. Wachusett. We will also try a repeater in Vernon, CT, which is not far from Agawam, and would give us a good idea of how hard it might be to contact MEMA on 6m simplex.

Since March 16, the last planning meeting I attended for the Turners Falls shelter drill, there has been no progress even to set a date. Since the original idea was to conduct a drill as early as May 12 or as late as June 2, the prospect for such a drill now does not look so good.

Annual Meeting in June

AI, N1AW

Although we meet in one way or another ten months of the year, the FCARC's June Meeting is the official Annual Meeting, the main business of which is election of officers.

Club officers are elected for two-year terms. There are six positions, three are voted in odd-numbered years and three are voted in even-numbered years. At the June 2018 meeting the positions of the President, Secretary, and one Director come up. The incumbents are President, Al Woodhull N1AW, Secretary, Chris Meyers KB1NEK, and Director, Belle Dwyer KB1NOG.

Ron, K8HSF, will act as the Nominating Committee - please contact him if you want to nominate someone.

From our By-Laws: The officers of the FCARC shall be Members of the FCARC and shall be elected by majority vote of the Members at the Annual Meeting of the FCARC. Nominations shall be reported in the newsletter immediately preceding the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations may be made and accepted at the Annual Meeting provided the nominee is present and consents to the nomination.

See the Club Officers page (<http://www.fcarc.org/clubofficers.htm>) on the website for a complete list of elected and appointed positions, along with phone and e-mail contact information. The Club By-Laws are also posted on the website at [http://www.fcarc.org/Files/FCARC Bylaws Ver. 2.pdf](http://www.fcarc.org/Files/FCARC%20Bylaws%20Ver.%202.pdf)

Two Ham Events in Early May

AI, N1AW

NEAR-Fest – New England Amateur Radio Festival: This is a really big hamfest in Deerfield NH, Friday and Saturday, May 4 & 5. It's a long drive but an exceptional event. It has been called "The Woodstock of Amateur Radio". Info at: <http://www.near-fest.com/> . If you can't make this one there should also be a Fall version in October.

NEQP – New England QRP Party. Saturday and Sunday, May 5 & 6. QSO Parties are good low-key introductions to HF contesting. Participants try to work different counties, hams in

small counties like ours are sought after. Info at <http://neqp.org/rules.html>.

News, Activities & Articles

Report: March-April Technician License Class and VE Session

AI, N1AW

Our license class at GCC which began during the last week of March felt like a success. The three-week schedule allowed us to do a much better job of covering the material than the two-week version we presented last October. Eight club members participated in teaching. On the last evening a VE session was held; resulting in twelve students passing their Technician license exam, with one going on to pass the General license. Nine Volunteer Examiners handled the administration of the exams. Especially noteworthy, Becky, K1BKY, was one of our VEs - she passed her Technician test after our October class and subsequently passed General and Extra exams and became a VE.

Unfortunately, as this is being written, we still do not know callsigns of our new hams. Immediately after the VE session documents were mailed to the ARRL Volunteer Examination Coordinator. Normally we expect processing to go very rapidly, and by a week later we were checking the FCC database and QRZ.com – but new licenses for our students did not show up. After a few days we checked with the ARRL VEC and learned they did not receive our documents. The likely cause was that our class ended less than a week before Income Tax day, and that the Post Office misrouted our package.

This is not tragic. We have copies of documents to prove that exams were passed, nobody will have to retake an exam. But we may have to get signatures of candidates and examiners on new 605 forms, for which we don't have duplicates. The ARRL VEC has advised us not to be too impatient, they have experienced delayed mail before. But we are sorry we cannot introduce all our new hams in this issue of the Communicator.

Last minute update – on the same day AI received Jeanne's final draft of this newsletter we had a call from the ARRL VEC saying our lost packet had arrived. They expedited processing of the information, passed it on to the FCC, and that same afternoon we found new callsigns posted. Keep an eye out for these new hams :

Sean	KC1JQC	Technician
Mark	KC1JQD	Technician
Alex	KC1JQE	Technician
Kevin	KC1JQF	Technician
Thomas	KC1JQG	Technician
Kamille	KC1JQH	Technician
Ken	KC1JQI	Technician
Richard	KC1JQJ	Technician
Taylor	KC1JQK	Technician
Nathaniel	KC1JQL	Technician
Gina	KC1JQM	Technician
Erik	KC1JQN	General

Field Day Site Planning

AI, N1AW

Instead of an Emergency Communications Group meeting after the May 19th Club breakfast at Denny's we have scheduled an after-breakfast meeting at Poets Seat to do some Field Day planning.

Field Day is not until the weekend of June 23-24, but this year we are planning to do things somewhat differently than we have done in recent years. For many years the club had either a trailer or an RV available as a shelter and operating position for one of our stations. This year we do not expect Carter's RV to be available, and we no longer have a trailer. We will still be able to shelter one of our operating positions, probably the GOTA (Get On The Air) station, on the ground level of the Poets Seat Tower. But with no RV we will need to rent a Porta-Potty.

We have purchased another shelter, and the lack of a shelter with wheels opens up an opportunity for a different geography, putting one of our tents off the paved area. Better separation between our SSB and CW stations should reduce interference problems. In addition to checking locations for operating positions we also need to plan how to locate a second generator, one or two tents for resting or sleeping, and a tent for food storage and preparation.

We discussed some of this at the April meeting. But it seems that on-the-ground scouting is in order. It is one thing to look at a satellite view and choose a location for a tent, but on-the-ground inspection is needed. So that is the rationale for meeting at Poets Seat after breakfast on May 19th. We will look at possible locations for our tents and antennas. All are welcome.

FCARC Picnic, Saturday May 26th

AI, N1AW

As usual we will have a Saturday picnic instead of a Monday meeting in May 2018. The location will be the same as in other recent years, the Leyden Pavilion behind the Pearl Rhodes Elementary School in Leyden. Save the date: Saturday, May 26th. As in the past this will be a partial pot-luck - soft drinks, hot dogs, burgers, etc., will be provided, but other items - deserts, salads, whatever you feel like bringing will be welcome. If you want a suggestion of what to bring, call AI, N1AW, at 773-3522, but uncoordinated pot-luck is OK. Activities starting at 11 a.m. may include a mini flea market, local fox hunt, a demo portable HF station. Want to sell or trade something, show off a mobile rig, or test your Pixie? Bring it along. We will plan on eating by 12:30 or 1:00.

To get to the Leyden Pavilion from Greenfield, take Leyden Rd, which becomes Greenfield Rd at the Greenfield-Leyden town line. At about 2.8 miles from the town line bear right (still on Greenfield Rd, but Mid County Rd (steep hill) goes straight here. After another half mile bear right on Brattleboro Rd - the school is here. As you pass the school you will see the playing fields and the pavilion down the hill on the right, the entrance is at the far end.

Directions and a link to a map are on the website Directions page

(<http://www.fcarc.org/directions.htm>).

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Robert Solosko, W1SRB



Photographer Bob Solosko of Easthampton, seen here in his studio. At left is one of his photographs from New York City, 'Going South.'

Robert Solosko started taking photographs years ago, but his work has picked up steam since he retired from an engineering job in 2009. Since then he's exhibited his photos in

many places in the area and in some private collections. He's also an Adobe Lightroom Certified Expert, and he teaches photography, camera handling, Lightroom and Photoshop.

Solosko, of Easthampton, likes to create carefully crafted photos, but he's also partial to seizing the moment. "One of my favorite images is of a homeless person sitting on a street in Manhattan with his dog," he says. "I was walking down the street, saw him when I turned around, snapped two quick pictures, put some money in his cup, and then walked on. When I later looked at the image, I thought 'Wow, look at that!' It was the epitome of what street photography is about."

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: Joe Henefield, KB1WVO (joehenefield@comcast.net), Treasurer: Howard Field, N1LUP (howfield@comcast.net), Secretary: Chris Myers, KB1NEK (camyers1@verizon.net), Director: Belle Dyer, KB1NOG (bdyer582@juno.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: Jeanne A. Dodge, KC1DCQ (j.annododge@gmail.com).