

F.C.A.R.C. Inc.
P.O. Box 773
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FIRST CLASS MAIL



THE COMMUNICATOR THE COMMUNICATOR

November 2019

Upcoming Events

- Nov 9 Sat 8:00 am Breakfast, Denny's
- Nov 11 Mon 6:00 pm E-Board, 7:15 pm Meeting: Jeff NK1T on Software Defined Radios
GCC E110 -more info on next page
- Nov 25 Mon 7:00 pm VE Amateur Radio License Exams, GCC E110

... also, coming in December, date, time, and location TBA, probably a Monday evening:

- FCARC Holiday Potluck Party... check the website for info when available

MEETING – SOFTWARE DEFINED RADIOS: MONDAY NOVEMBER 11 AT 7:15 PM.

Jeffrey Bail (NT1K) will speak about Software Defined Radio (SDR) and its many uses. SDR in amateur radio is gaining popularity due to its decreasing prices and its advantages over other types of radios. Jeff will showcase various SDR hardware and software used by hams with a live remote demonstration of the Flex 6000s series radio.

Secretary's Report

E-BOARD AND PROGRAM MEETING MONDAY OCTOBER 14, 2019 AT GCC

Chris Myers, KB1NEK

E-board Meeting Notes:

Present: Aaron, Anne, Dick, Erika, Howard, Keith, and Chris (taking notes)

1. Erika reported on her efforts to catch up with the requirements of filing an annual report. She needs information from Chris on the annual meeting in June. She will also need to pay a fee, and made a motion to approve up to \$200 to do so. The motion passed.
2. Aaron said that he and Becky, who is maintaining a Facebook page, have been asked about the purpose of the club. After some discussion, he suggested asking Eric Sherman to write up a mission statement.
3. In a discussion about the Communicator, questions were raised about the use of pictures. There are some who object to having their picture taken at all, and others who want to be sure not to take pictures of children without permission. Someone suggested we need a release form to get such permission.
4. Aaron made a motion to request club members who are storing any club owned equipment at their homes to submit a list of what they have. Even small items may be useful to hams, such as Barbara in Charlemont, who are trying to put together a workable station on a shoe string budget. From time to time we also need to consider selling items no longer of any use to the club, and which are just taking up space.
5. Aaron mentioned he has been appointed as a technical specialist by the section manager.
6. In response to an e-mail message from Joe, the question was asked who would want to take on the responsibility of organizing volunteers for the Saw Mill River Run in Montague Center on New Year's Day. Rich, KB1NOX, volunteered.
7. Concern has been raised about the repeater equipment on Frizzell Hill in Leyden. We no longer have a working spare. Instead, we have equipment taken out about a year ago when it failed to work properly. No one has had the time to try to fix it. Some day we may need to think about buying an up to date repeater for what is the club's principal site.

8. After some discussion about the Fox Hunt, we decided to put it off until the spring, probably April. Keith said he is the Fox, and will be ready to run when the time comes.

9. A motion was made and accepted to reimburse \$43 to Aaron for a cable he bought. Chris mentioned that because of increased ARES attention to digital transmissions, the club might consider buying a Signalink USB interface for the recently purchased Kenwood TS-590. After several comments, Chris made this into a motion, which passed.

General Membership meeting:

After the e-board adjourned, the main meeting started. Aaron made a presentation on computer security, drawing a number of questions and comments.

News, Activities & Articles

FCARC SHIRTS AND HATS AVAILABLE AGAIN

Anne, N1YL

The FCARC store is live again now. Please check it out:

<https://cart.silverscreendesign.com/fcarc/shop/home>

Place your order online by or before November 25th. Your order should be available by the second week of December. Don't forget that you now have the option to display your name and call sign on your new FCARC gear.

Please check the website for an update telling where and when you can get your order. Email Anne at <mailto:N1YL@arrl.net> if you have any questions.



UPDATE: VE SESSION AT GCC NOVEMBER 25

AI, N1AW

As reported in the September *Communicator*, at the August E-Board meeting it was decided to switch from doing license exams through the ARRL VEC to doing them through the Laurel VEC, which has a local team, the Pioneer Valley VE Team, headed by team leader Jeff Bail. Advantages of using the Laurel VEC are almost instant response to exam results from the FCC, and elimination of the need to collect money from those taking the tests. Jeff's PVVET has administered tests for us following recent exam classes, and Jeff has agreed to help us maintain our tradition of four VE Sessions every year. Several of us who are qualified as Volunteer Examiners with the ARRL VEC have also qualified to work with the Laurel VEC; anyone else, whether already qualified with ARRL, or not, who would like to participate with the PVVET should get in touch with Jeff (see contact info below).

Here is Jeff's announcement for our usual fourth Monday in November VE Session:

FCARC and the Pioneer Valley VE Team (PVVET) will be hosting FREE amateur radio examinations for anyone wishing to obtain and/or upgrade their FCC amateur radio license. We do ask that candidates obtain a FCC Registration Number (FRN) and pre-register prior to the exam. Both can be done very easily at the PVVET.org website. Anyone upgrading must bring a photocopy of their signed FCC amateur radio license to the exam.

When: Monday, November 25, 2019

Exam Start: 7:00pm

Where:

Greenfield Community College

East Building: Room 110

1 College Drive 01301 Greenfield MA

Registration: <http://pvvet.org/register>

If you have any questions about the registration, the exam or about the PVVET, please visit the FAQ section of the website, <http://pvvet.org/faq>

Jeffrey Bail, NT1K, is the contact person. Phone is 413-238-1992, e-mail nt1k@nt1k.com.

We continue to maintain the [Amateur Radio License Exams](http://www.fcarc.org/venews.htm) page, <http://www.fcarc.org/venews.htm>, on the website, with additional information about exam session procedures and FCC Registration Numbers.

MONTAGUE SAWMILL RIVER RACE

Richard, KB1NOX

It is still some time away, but let us put this on our calendars. The Annual Montague Saw Mill River Winter Race, will be on January 1st, which falls on a Wednesday this year. I am coordinating this year. This is the 10th year the race will be run, an anniversary of sorts, and my 10th year doing this race. John Dobosz, who is the Director for the Montague/Turners Falls Parks and Recreation Department loves the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club because of our radio communications. I have ridden with John Dobosz for the

past 6 years in his car as lead vehicle. He always has questions and loves the fact we can communicate with each other as well as we do and during a race he can get immediate questions, answered immediately.

We will need to set up between 8:00 AM and 9:00 AM. All volunteers will need to go and be in position by 9:30 and the Race will begin at 10:00 AM. The Net Control, will not be upstairs but be downstairs on the first floor in the room to the right, just inside the front door, where it was last year. I am hoping for 12 volunteers a couple can be moved around after the beginning of the race. I will need a volunteer to be a last person sweep vehicle. There will be hot baked potatoes and sandwiches for runners and volunteers in the basement again as per usual after the race.

Editor's Note:

Jon Dobosz, Montague Director of Parks and Recreation, has always been appreciative of our efforts. He wrote this fall:

The Sawmill Run has been fortunate to have received volunteer assistance from many individuals and organizations over the years. The Franklin County Amateur Radio Club has been a key player by providing critical safety, security, and communication services along the race route. ...

I appreciate the efforts of all the coordinators I've worked with over the years, in addition to the professionalism and passion of the group as a whole. I look forward to working with the club for the foreseeable future.

MYSTERY ANTENNA

Brad, W1BCC

Does anyone have an idea of what it is, or can you point me to someone who can?

Doesn't resonate anywhere below 170MHz per my MFJ-259B.

No manufacturer marks but appears well made.

Type N connector.

Vertical element and ground plane elements (3) are approximately 19" long, and Two short vertical elements at angle to base. What are they for?



BOB SOLOSKO, W1SRB PHOTO AT HOSPITAL EXHIBIT

Club member Bob Solosko is a skilled photographer – he has provide many pictures we have included with *Communicator* articles about FCARC events. The Baystate Franklin Greenfield hospital displays works of local artists in its hallways. One of Bob's photos has been selected for the current exhibit in the hallway of the Oncology Department.

ARRL SWEEPSTAKES AND CONTESTING HINTS

AI, N1AW

The ARRL Sweepstakes contest takes place on two weekends in November. This newsletter is probably going to reach you too late for the CW weekend, November 2-4, but the phone weekend is the third full weekend of November (November 16-18, 2019). The contest period begins at 2100 UTC Saturday and runs through 0259 UTC Monday. This can be a fun contest for a new ham. The ARRL Contest update for October 30, 2019 has a note especially for new HF operators:

“Kirk, K4RO, posted a message to the new ARRL Contesting group noting that the "Contesting 101" columns he originally wrote for NCJ (National Contest Journal) aimed at beginning contesters are also available on the Tennessee Contest Group website. Topics of the fifteen columns range from Searching and Pouncing to SO2R (Single operator, two radios).”

These article can be found online at <http://k4tcg.org/contesting-101/> Full information on Sweepstakes is available at <http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes> .

FOR NEW HAMS: SO, NOW WHAT?

For some time now the ARRL has produced podcasts on subjects like those in "The Doctor is In" column written by Joel Hallas, W1ZR, in QST magazine. Recently the ARRL has expanded their podcast offerings with the "So, Now What ?" series, aimed at answering questions of newly licensed hams and introducing new hams to some of the many aspects of ham radio. A new topic is available every two weeks, and there are already fifteen topics available, on topics such as choosing equipment, available operating modes, ham lingo, -- quite a wide range. You can see what is available and download what you want from the website: <http://www.arrl.org/so-now-what>

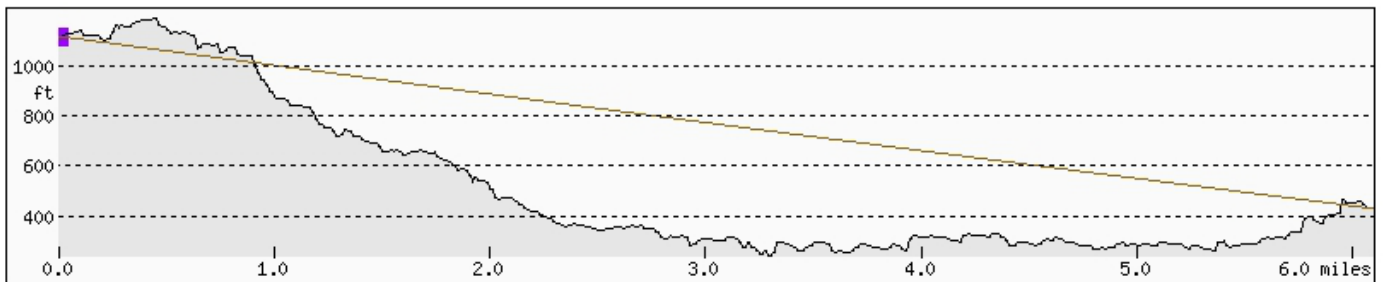
NIFTY SOFTWARE FOR PATHS AND PANORAMAS

AI, N1AW

VHF and UHF radio are usually thought of as "line-of-sight" modes. Although radio waves can be reflected and a repeater can often be accessed even if there is a hill that blocks your line of sight, it is interesting to be able to examine the path between your location and another station or a repeater in order to see what may be in the way.

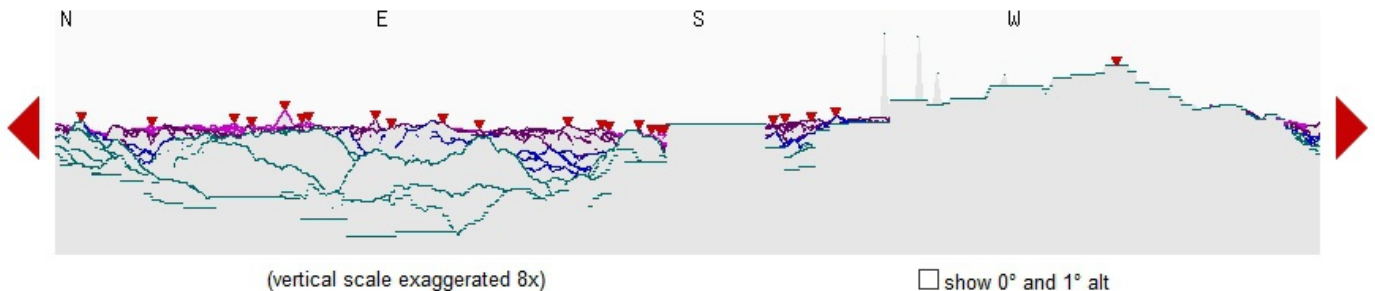
A few weeks ago I was asked about problems an amateur in Charlemont was having accessing our Leyden repeater. I knew I had seen plots that showed the elevations of the hills along a line between any two points, and a search led me to a nifty free software program called "HeyWhatsThat" – on the internet at <https://www.heywhatsthat.com/> . The plot showed that the line of sight from Charlemont to our Leyden reepater was blocked by several hills.

To generate a profile you select your position on a map, and then select another position. The program draws a line between the points on the map and generates a profile. For instance here is a profile of the route between my home in Leyden, at a little over 1100' elevation, and the FCARC 2 meter and 70cm repeaters at 400' elevation above Greenfield, just off the road to Poets Seat. Now I know why it is so hard to get to those repeaters – although I'm pretty high up, a higher hill close to home is in the way.



Another feature of this program is that it can generate a panorama, showing what's on your horizon (or blocking your horizon) for 360 degrees around you. It also generates a list of high points and their compass directions, from 0 to 360 degrees. So if you are planning to take a hike to a hilltop and you want to identify all the hills you can see, you can prepare a panorama to print and take with you.

Here's a panorama of the view from the site of our repeater on Frizzell Hill in Leyden...



... and here is part of the list of bearings to various summits you can see from there:

65° 28' 20"	Monadnock Mountain	28 miles 3087 ft
70° 13' 39"	Gap Mountain	25 miles 1788 ft
72° 12' 42"	Little Monadnock Mountain	21 miles 1873 ft
91° 7' 34"	Mount Grace	13 miles 1611 ft

THE COMMUNICATOR is an informational publication for members of the Franklin County Amateur

Radio Club. Officers: President: Aaron Addison, KC1CXX (kc1cxx@arrl.net), Vice President: Richard Merriott, KC1JQJ (rcmpilot@comcast.net), Treasurer: Howard Field, N1LUP (howfield@comcast.net), Secretary: Chris Myers, KB1NEK (camyers1@verizon.net), Director: Belle Dyer, KB1NOG (bdyer582@juno.com), Director: Jeanne Dodge, KC1DCQ (j.anndodge@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).

Back issues of the Communcicator are online at <http://www.fcarc.org/commun.htm>