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FIRST CLASS MAIL



THE COMMUNICATOR THE COMMUNICATOR

April 2020

Upcoming Events

Because of Covid-19 social distancing precautions, and the unavailability of Denny's for our breakfast and GCC for meetings, the regular breakfast and meetings are cancelled for April.

- However – Club President Aaron KF1G, is planning a presentation on Arduino via Zoom, on Monday April 13th starting at 7 p.m. See inside for more info, and for last minute changes or additions check the club website, www.fcarc.org or Aaron's website, kf1g.net .

April 2020

Calendar

In April no meeting at GCC, no breakfast at Denny's. An on-line meeting using Zoom is planned for Monday April 13.

May is still up in the air, but it seems unlikely we will have a breakfast or a meeting in May. Watch the website for news.

Secretary's Report

E-Board and program meeting at GCC February 10, 2020 - AT GCC, Chris Myers KB1NEK

Note, because of unresolved discussions following distribution of a draft version of the February E-board Meeting Notes, these were not published in the March Communicator. This draft was approved at the March 9 meeting:

Board members present: Aaron, Erika, Howard, and Chris taking notes

1. Old business:

Aaron moved to make a second request for AI to provide user information needed to manage the website. Passed.

Aaron found out by calling the ARRL HQ, that the club is under no obligation to remit money left over in the account for the VE team. Since we no longer give tests, and no longer need to rent space for them, we are free to absorb the leftover money from previous test and use it for general club expenses.

Aaron moved to set up a separate account for ARES, Field Day, or other uses associated with emergency communications. There was no second to the motion, so after some discussion, it was dropped.

New business:

Aaron moved the following to guide in use or dispersal of club property: any sale or transfer of club equipment should be approved by the board. Seconded by Chris, and passed.

Keith moved that club members should be given first choice of purchasing club surplus equipment. After some contentious discussion, this passed.

Keith asked that if anyone is contacted via the club's websites official email to get help finding someone to purchase a collection of used equipment that it automatically becomes a matter for the E-board. As a club email was used, it should not be kept between one or two members deciding the gear is of no value/interest for the club or prevents any club member to have the opportunity to purchase and turn a personal profit. Instead it was only offered to one member in the business of dealing with older gear. It also prevents club members from seeing whether there is a piece of gear of interest to them. There was not a resolution to this and it did not pass.

Aaron proposed the club open an account with Paypal for accepting dues paid by renewing members. He said HCARA uses such an account for renewals only. Becky offered to research the technicalities of opening an account.

There was some discussion about improving the website. For example, a more up to date roster of

members is needed, as is someone to bring the “for sale” page back into useful service.

A question has been raised about whether the club plans to teach new license classes. In general, there is no move to do so, especially since GCC no longer support our licensing class activity.

E-board meeting ended at 7:15.

E-Board and program meeting at GCC March 9, 2020 - AT GCC, (from notes by AI, N1AW, acting editor)

E board meeting Notes

There are no formal notes of the March E-Board meeting. The main item of business was approval of the February meeting notes, as printed above.

The main part of the E-board meeting was scheduled to be a demonstration and talk about the website of the Nashua Area Radio Society by Fred Kemmerer AB1OC, via video link. This overflowed well past 7:15, the nominal time for the end of the E-board meeting and the beginning of the General Membership Meeting. The emphasis was on how the website serves the multiple activities of the club, using WordPress to enable contributions and responses from multiple members of the club. The two-way video link made it possible for members of FCARC to interact with Fred during the presentation.

General Membership meeting started at a time not recorded.

The announced topic of the General Meeting had been "Show and Tell" and two members brought things to show off following the video conference with Nashua:

- Silas, KC1BTV, showed his uBitx version 6 transceiver – an economical SSB and CW HF design developed and distributed as a kit by a company based in India. He also showed his Xiegu G90, an SDR (Software Defined Radio) from China for HF bands 160m through 10m, with a built in antenna tuner. Silas has been active with FT8 and WSPR.

- AI, N1AW showed his homemade NB6M-style CW paddle made of circuit board material. He uses this for SOTA (Summits on the Air) activations. He constructed it partly because the material to make it is so cheap and the effort to construct it so minimal that it would not be a great loss if it got damaged while hiking to a mountaintop.

News, Activities & Articles

The Nashua Area Radio Society Website

A timely example of how an interactive website can be used by a club is an article on the Nashua site on *Amateur Radio During a Pandemic*, at <https://www.n1fd.org/2020/03/25/amateur-radio-during-a-global-pandemic/> . This article was added by a Nashua club member and has responses from several members,.

April 13 Online Meeting via Zoom: Arduino.

Aaron KF1G

At the last breakfast there was some interest in Arduino and what Arduino is etc...

If there is some interest I am willing to do a presentation via zoom, on it. I would do it on the date of the

next meeting, starting at 7pm. Once we get closer I will put a link on my site, and on fcarc.org to the zoom meeting.

The nice thing about using zoom.com is if your computer has speakers and microphone you can talk to me and ask questions, if you don't have a microphone I will get a phone call in number so you can join via telephone. And still see the presentation on your laptop, desktop or smartphone. Or just listen in via the phone.

Details of the presentation (from Aaron's site):

Arduino Introduction 4/13/2020 at 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm

You are invited to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Arduino

Time: Apr 13, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/135353951>

Meeting ID: 135 353 951

If you need help getting to know the Zoom tool here are some links you can use in advance of the meeting.

Test your zoom setup – <https://zoom.us/test>

Daily Demos <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360029527911-Live-Training-Webinars>

Zoom Video Tutorials <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

Dial by your location

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+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US

Meeting ID: 135 353 951

Find your local number: <https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/adXc9Jvw1G>

About Arduino:

AI N1AW

An Arduino is a microcontroller, which is a microcomputer system with multiple input and output ports, designed to interact with external devices. The Arduino is meant to be programmed using a specialized and simplified programming language. It is meant to be easy to use by students, artists, and others who have never studied computer science or written computer programs. All Arduino designs are freely available under a Creative Commons License, so although the name "Arduino" is protected, many clones and variants are available from multiple sources. The software needed to edit and install Arduino programs, called "sketches", is available free online. The basic Arduino circuit board provides easy-to-use connectors for connecting devices such as lights, switches, and speakers. There also many Arduino compatible "shield" boards which plug directly into an Arduino board and provide support circuitry and connections for more complex devices, including relays, motors, ethernet interfaces and alphanumeric displays.

Things To Do At Home

Aaron KF1G

During this strange and anxiety filled time, if you are one of the millions of people who are stuck at home maybe you want to:

Work on your next license class, or brush up on your current one:

Technician : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6aFXH_SQUo&list=PL07A7D1C9D7BF7F48

General : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXN41fwo43A&list=PL0R9jy9LZw_35KimLiSIOH0YdNtCeYcRe

Extra : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIUyP5UzpXg&list=PL0R9jy9LZw_3CHCH-5A8faeIA-H3e4ZNC

Learn a new mode:

ft8: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoCngsKW9tc>

js8call: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MS8hvfTap6s>

psk31: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UccT47K-QoA>

dmr: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gu-KelHRI2E>

Learn about antenna modeling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15qdzgYe24E>

If you have other items you think people should know about, maybe you want to take this time and write up something for the newsletter, or give a quick introduction on it over the repeater on the Thursday night net (8pm on the KB1BSS repeater).

Please take care of yourself and those around you. I look forward to seeing everyone once this is over.

Annual Club Picnic?

AI N1AW

For several years now we have held an FCARC picnic on a Saturday late in May at the pavilion behind the former Pearl Rose School in Leyden (now the Town Offices).

I have checked with the chairman of the Leyden Recreation Committee - there was already a tentative reservation for May 30th, but May 23rd is open, and he has pencilled us in for that date.

So... at this point who knows if groups will be allowed to have meetings or if allowed whether we will want to have a picnic by the end of May. And maybe we can't decide yet. But it is something we all should think about.

Some Coming Events, Non-events, and Schedule Changes:

ARRL headquarters is closed and W1AW is not open for visitors during the emergency.

W1AW bulletin, code practice, and qualifying run schedules morning sessions cancelled, evening schedules continue. ARRL VEC operations continue.

NEAR-fest May 2020 session has been cancelled. NEAR-Fest XXVIII will take place October 16th and 17th 2020

Boxboro is not Boxboro any more. Northeast HamXposition (formerly Boxboro!) is MOVING! The 2020 Northeast HamXposition will be held July 24th, 25th, and 26th at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center, conveniently located in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

The North Berkshire Amateur Radio Club (NOBARC) Hamfest will take place Sunday August 23, at the Adams Agricultural Fair Grounds

Problem (Solved) with TS-590

Chris KB1NEK

The club purchased a TS-590 to be used for Field Day and other occasions where we may want to use club equipment for HF operation. The previous owner noted, "I thought I noticed reduced power at times." In some initial tests the measured output seemed low on two bands, 50 W on 10 meters and 55 W on 20 meters when the radio was set for 100 W.

Problem has been solved. It had nothing to do with the power supply. It was all due to the fact that the internal tuner was turned on even though the radio was connected to the external dummy load. Apparently the radio's internal tuner failed to see the 50 ohm dummy load, and was retaining some previous setting. When I turned off the internal tuner, the power output on all bands actually exceeded 100 watts. According to both my MFJ-948 meter and the radio's internal meter, the power level was close to 120 W, except on 6m, where it was more like 100 W.

Lessons learned: if we use external tuner for Field Day, which may be necessary for band pass filters, we have to make sure all operators keep the radio's internal tuner turned off. We may also want to refrain from setting the radio's power to maximum, because this may ultimately shorten its life span. We have to be conscious of the possibility that the previous owner modified the radio to make it possible to increase the power over 100 W.

When connected to the Astron 35M power supply, the maximum current draw was 17 amps, at full key down, when I observed the power output was about 120W. The radio performed just as well on the battery, using the MFJ voltage regulator as it did when connected directly to the Astron. So while it may be sensitive to low voltage, the regulated voltage, while connected to a battery, held up fine.

KC1BID

Info from Richard, KB1NOX

John Bickett KC1DIB of Heath received his ham ticket through the FCARC and has been a truck driver for NBC Studios hauling a portable TV studio for the NBC Golf Channel. He has been laid off until who knows when. John has a bucket truck and chipper for tree work. He has also used his bucket truck for the assistance of installation of antennas. If anyone needs tree work done and or needs assistance putting up an antenna he can go up to 55 feet. Please consider calling John at 413-342-1856

About the TS-830s I Bought at the Auction...

Brad, W1BCC

I finally got it working on SSB. Just made a couple of quick QSOs on 40. Played with it off and on for weeks. After re-wiring a couple of old CB mics to no avail, I assumed that I had lost my ability to squint a proper solder joint. In frustration, I ordered an aftermarket "Kenwood" mic on eBay which arrived a few days ago.

Earlier this afternoon I tried the store bought microphone: same result. At the time, I was tuned to the Antique Wireless Association Sunday net on 7.237. At the next call up I switched to the 7300 and checked in.

I was looking for a Central Electronics resource but mentioned my current frustration. Net control told me a Kenwood hybrid expert was on frequency. Sometimes this hobby is amazing.

In a quick exchange with WB0IQK I learned the mic input first passes through the speech compression on/off switch. Sure enough, after a little Deoxit..... no more audio problem. Nothing like talking with a guy who owns three of them.

He also pointed me to some interesting URLs. The Kenwood guys mark this rig as the pinnacle of the hybrid transceiver. Of course the Yaesu guys say it's the FT-102.

Weekly Nets Reminder

AI N1AW

The FCARC sponsors two weekly nets on the Leyden 146.985 MHz repeater. On Tuesdays at 8 p.m. the Emergency Net is a time for practicing formal net procedures and sharing information about emergency readiness. On Thursdays at 8 p.m. the Information Net is a less formal occasion for chatting about news and activities, just about anything of interest. For details, including schedules of net control operators, see the www.fcarc.org/netlistings.htm page on the website.

On Sunday mornings the weekly Western Massachusetts Emergency Net meets on the Mt Tom 146.940 MHz repeater at 8:45 a.m., and again on the Mt Tom 443.200 repeater at 9:15 a.m. FCARC members are encouraged to check in. You can also check into a similar net on the Mt Greylock 146.910 repeater at 9:00 a.m.

Are you interested in practicing Morse Code? The Snail Net is a slow speed CW practice net which meets on the 80 meter band on or near 3.532 MHz on Sundays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m. - more info can be found on the website at www.fcarc.org/SnailNet.htm. Even if you have a Technician license you can operate CW on this part of the 80 meter band.

Club members with licenses allowing voice operation on the 75 meter band are also encouraged to check into the Sunday morning 75 meter net at 8:30 a.m. on 3.944 MHz. Checking into nets like this is a good way to become familiar with net procedures and to be assured that if an emergency occurs your equipment will be adequate.

Home Repair Advice

From a 1975 IBM maintenance manual

All parts should go together without forcing. You must remember that the parts you are reassembling were disassembled by you. Therefore, if you can't get them together again, there must be a reason. By all means, do not use a hammer.

THE COMMUNICATOR is an informational publication for members of the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club. Officers: President: Aaron Addison, KF1G (rangerfriday@gmail.com), Vice President: Richard Merriott, KC1JQJ (rcmpilot@comcast.net), Treasurer: Howard Field, N1LUP (howfield@comcast.net), Secretary: Chris Myers, KB1NEK (camyers@protonmail.com), Director: Belle Dyer, KB1NOG (bdyer582@juno.com), Director: Jeanne Dodge, KC1DCQ (j.anndodge@gmail.com), Clerk: Erika LaForme, KC1IJJ (etlaforme@yahoo.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).

*Change of address or missing an issue? Please contact Al Woodhull, N1AW, aswoodhull@yahoo.com
This issue and back issues of the **Communicator** are online at <http://www.fcarc.org/commun.htm>*

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