



The Communicator

Franklin County Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 773
Greenfield MA 01302

October 2026

October Events

October 10	Saturday	8:00 am	FCARC Club Breakfast, Denny's, Greenfield
October 12	Monday	6:30 pm	FCARC Club Meeting, 1 Aviation Way, Turners Falls
October 16-18			Jamboree on the Air – Interact with Boy Scouts
October 22	Thursday	Noon	FCARC Club Luncheon, Denny's, Greenfield

Check groups.io and the Club Nets for updates

Future Public Service Events (tentative)

January 1, 2027	Sawmill River 10k Run (see article on the next page)	Organized by Mark NX1K mark.nx1k@gmail.com
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If you are willing to help in this event, please contact the organizer.

Non FCARC October Events

October 2	Friday	HCRA Meeting – Holyoke Hospital – 7:30
October 3	Saturday	Mt. Tom ARA Picnic – see http://www.mtara.net
October 11	Sunday	Nutmeg Hamfest and CT State Convention, Meriden, CT https://nutmeghamfest.org/

Membership Renewal / DUES Reminder

FCARC Membership runs from September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027. The dues for a individual member has been increased to \$25 per year. For families with more than 1 licensed amateur the dues are \$25 for the first family member, \$10 each for the next two, and free to additional licensed family members. (\$45 maximum)

Please pay your Dues ASAP..

For those who previously prepaid their dues for several years, their dues will not increase until they renew.

You can mail your check to the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 773, Greenfield MA 01302.

Net Control Schedule October 2026	
Emergency Net --- Tuesday 8 PM	Information Net --- Thursday at 8 PM
	October 1 Gary KB1AKU
October 6 Beth WU1S	October 8 Dick N1RCM
October 13 Chris KB1NEK	October 15 Bob KA1HAH
October 20 Gary KB1AKU	October 22 Chris KB1NEK
October 27 Bob KA1HAH	October 29 Gary KB1AKU
The Emergency and Information Nets are on the KB1BSS Repeater 146.985 -- Negative Offset – 136.5 PL	

Local ARES Nets

ARES on Mt. Tom W1TOM repeater 34/94 (127.3) and 443.2/+5 (127.3)

Sunday 8:45 AM and 9:15 AM --- Tuesday 7:30 PM

For the Pioneer Valley W1TOM is the primary repeater used for Skywarn nets during foul weather.

ARES nets on the NoBARC K1FFK repeater Sunday mornings

9:00 146.91 MHz, 9:15 for 53.23 ,9:45 for 449.425, and 10:00 for 224.10. Tone is 162.2,

Pioneer Valley 10 Meter Net

Wednesday Mornings at 9, on 28.354 MHz +/-, NCS is Ralph WA1UOL

Massachusetts Rhode Island Digital Net (MARIDAN)

Tuesdays at 6 PM, on 3.583 MHz using Fldigi - check in using Thor 22

GMRS Net

Wednesday at 7 PM, on the Mt. Tom GMRS repeater, 462.575 MHz, +5 MHz, tone 151.4.

(Remember one needs a GMRS approved radio and GMRS license to check into this net.)

Sawmill River 10k Run Update - January 1 2027

Mark NX1K

The Sugarloaf Mountain Athletic Club has adopted this annual run from the Montague Recreation Department. Although it is not yet listed on their web site, I have been told they welcome our help and that the run will go on at the usual time.

I will post more information and a call for volunteers as the date gets closer. In the mean time, please mark the date on your calendars.

September 14, 2026 Monthly Meeting Notes

Present

Chuck - KC1CHA
Vic - NA1K
Dick - N1RCM
Chris - KB1NEK
Lad - WA3EEC

Erika – KC1IJJ
Brad – W1BCC
Dick - K1RMJ
Al - N1AW

Zoom

Mark - W1MHG
Steve – N1IBS

9 - Members present in person, 2 - Members present on Zoom, Total 11 Members present.

Steve N1IBS opened the Meeting at 18:30

Gary (KB1AKU) and Steve (N1IBS) thanked everyone who volunteered for the D2R2 and the Green River Marathon for all they did and all the hours they put in for the events. Thank you all.

Chuck (KC1CHA) spoke about the .985 repeater installation happening this week We hope to correctly programming and set up the new Kenwood repeater. Thanks to Ralph (WA1UOL) who supplied the laptop, programming software and cables and to Gary who ordered the USB programming cable. Chuck also explained that the current set up on the repeater puts out approximately 47-48 watts output after the duplexer. This results in an output of under our 50 watt limit while doubling our output power. We are also hoping that, since this is a much newer repeater, it will have a better receiver.

Gary (KB1AKU) has updated most of the info with the NESMC we will still need to give them our output Power and some other figures once the Kenwood Repeater is installed.

Dick (N1RCM) asked if the organizer of the Will Bike For Food event will be sending out the position assignments? Steve (N1IBS) has sent out assignments and can or will send them out again. He also stated the primary repeater will be the 146.985 with the secondary one will be the 145.130. If there are any issues we can also be reached by cell phone if you have service.

Chuck (KC1CHA) spoke about the repeater install again stating that the old repeater had been moved over to allow room for the new repeater. The old repeater will be left intact so if the Kenwood goes down we can switch the repeater back over easily to the Motorolas. He also explained that the CAT Controller given to us was a CAT 400 that is very similar to our current one. Both the Current CAT 1000 and CAT 400 were extremely good units in their time, however they are old and it is very very hard to get parts for. The Company Computer Automation Technology (CAT) effectively closed on October 31, 2019 so we were advised that, until something newer comes along, we leave it as it is. The Kenwood repeater that we received is a very clean unit with matching power amplifier, power supply and cabinet.

Dick (N1RCM) gave a Treasurer's Report. He has received numerous Dues Checks at our PO Box and a check from a new Member, Leon Small from Leverett , who is new to town. Chuck (KC1CHA) stated Leon actually got our info off of our Web Page and had contacted him through the club's email. Our Club Treasury balance is now \$7172.75 before a reimbursement of \$111. to be paid to Chuck (KC1CHA) for a new surge suppressor and microphone for the new repeater.

Chuck (KC1CHA) brought up the dues rate for family membership 's and the fact that we never set it. After much discussion we decided, the first licensed family member will pay \$25.00 and each additional Licensed family member in the same household will pay \$10 up to a maximum of \$45 per

family. Lad (WA3EEC) moved that we accept this rate and Brad (W1BCC) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Steve (N1IBS) brought up the Life Membership and it was decided to leave it at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Chris (KB1NEK) brought up the idea of getting some more/extra banners to hang/stand at other sites along our routes when we do our Public Service events. The other members agreed and suggested we talk to a John who has a business doing logos, <https://www.allaboutpromos.com/>

Brad (W1BCC) suggested we create a QR Code for our Banners to link to our Website and/or Facebook page also Club Stickers. Steve (N1IBS) suggested a single page type handout to have on hand for those looking for more info. Erika (KC1IJJ) mentioned ID's for us and our vehicles for use during Public Service Events. Chuck (KC1CHA) will contact John and get some ideas.

Dick (N1RCM) and Bob (KA1HAH) were wondering about feedback on our meeting with Justin from the Franklin County Technical School. Chuck (KC1CHA) reported that Justin has had some feedback, but is not sure how many interested. Justin said a person is interested in donating a radio and antenna.

The meeting was adjourned at approx. 19:10.

146.985 Leyden Repeater Upgraded

On September 16th, a technical team consisting of Ralph WA1UOL, Steve N1IBS, Chuck KC1CHA, and Gary KB1AKU traveled to our repeater site in Leyden to install the new Kenwood repeater. The installation took most of the day, but in the end, KB1BSS is now a modern repeater. The original Motorola radios used for the repeater were left on the site as spares.

Here is an assessment of the new repeater from Chris KB1NEK.

For about ten days, the club's new Kenwood repeater has been in service on KB1BSS on top of Frizzell Hill in Leyden. It has been used for four nets and the *Will Bike For Food* public service event. Each time we have put it to the test, I have found it to be a consistent and welcome improvement.

For the last three years, since I moved to Northampton, the performance of the old repeater has swung from good to terrible, for no reason that I can pinpoint. I know my home is across the street from a tower loaded with antennas at the state police station, and about a mile from several broadcast TV or FM radio transmitters. Probably the most likely source of noise, however, has been the mass of electrical equipment in my retirement community. The management keeps replacing old equipment, indicating that constant wear and tear may have been causing arcing or other types of noise, but all is behind the scene where the noise is impossible to locate.

In contrast, the new repeater hears my signal, even when I use a handheld set for one or two watts connected to an outside antenna raised up about 20 feet above the ground. And its signal is well above the noise I listen.

I would like to thank Ralph, WA1UOL, Steve N1IBS, Chuck, KC1CHA, and Gary, KB1AKU for the work they performed to connect the equipment up at the tower site. My only regret is that the repeater has lost its VoiceID. However, one of them mentioned that the old controller could be connected to the new repeater if they can obtain the right connectors. They are in no hurry to do this until the new equipment has proved to be solidly working. The old controller would allow for voice identification once again.

New Repeater Installation



Will Bike For Food

Steve N1IBS

On a rainy Sunday, the club provided communications support for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts Will Bike For Food Bike Rides. The event raises money for the Food Bank and consists of 100, 50, 25, 12, and 4 mile rides. Despite the weather, the event went smoothly.

It was the first event using the new 146.985 repeater and the repeater performed very well.

The race committee was very pleased with our performance and has asked us to assist them again next year.

Club Members Participation

Steve N1IBS
Brad W1BCC
Beth WU1S

Gary KB1AKU
Anne N1YL
Dick N1RCM

Lad WA3EEC
Keith KU1N
Bob KA1HAH

Dick K1RMJ
Erika KC1IJJ
Gary AA1UE



SDR Remote Receivers

Chris KB1NEK

At the August club lunch, Dick, K1RMJ, mentioned that he had discovered a network of SDR receivers connected to the internet, allowing anyone to listen to HF signals. I immediately thought of the HF nets whose signals I cannot receive as well as I could when living in Shelburne Falls. Back then I had space for a much better wire antenna than the one I have squeezed into the available opening next to our apartment at Rockridge.

Following some notes Dick gave me, I found a map on the internet <http://rx.linkfanel.net/> . It shows SDR based remote stations around the world. Zooming into a region of interest, you can click first on a "balloon" , which will then show the actual location and other information. Clicking again on this information, takes you to the web page of the remote station, showing a waterfall image of the spectrum from 1 MHz to 30 MHz.

With some practice, a user can focus in closer to the part of the spectrum of immediate interest, then click on traces of signals to listen to. There is a box of controls off to the right allowing a user to choose ways to make it easier to copy the content of the signal.

Many, but not all of the remote stations use a device called Kiwi SDR. The February issue of QST carried an article reviewing an updated version of that device. Instructions on using KIWI Remote Receivers can be found at http://www.kiwisdr.com/ks/using_Kiwi.html On the site <http://rx.kiwisdr.com> there is a list of Kiwi receivers on the web with a search box to narrow one's choice.

Several of the nets I participate in each weekend are digitally based. They use the suit of modes that come as a part of NBEMS (narrow band emergency message system). To decode them you need to download software from the website: <https://www.w1hkj.org>. Other commonly used digital modes such as FT8 etc. do not need additional software downloaded.

For the last several weekends I have found that a couple of RX SDR sites help me fill in signals that I cannot copy directly. Strangely, though, there have been times when my own radio could copy a signal that my chosen remote site could not. With experience I found I could make use of RX SDR to complement my own radio-antenna set up.

For those interested in other nets covering a large area, for example the hurricane watch net at 14.325 MHz during actual storms, it could help a lot for hearing more distant stations. Currently, many of the remote receivers cover only up to the 10 m band.

Editor's note: The frequency limitation is primarily because outside the US, many nations, including ones that we think of as being similar to the US, have strong prohibitions on receiving VHF/UHF signals, except for the Ham Bands. For example, while sitting in a pub in Oxford England with the Oxford Radio Club and getting local repeater frequencies from the members for my Baofeng, one member looked at 146-148 MHz frequencies programmed in it and warned me listening to some of those frequencies could put me in the Windsor Castle Dungeon!

Photos From FCARC Public Service Activities



NEW ENGLAND
GREEN  RIVER
MARATHON



You're on the Internet

Lad WA3EEC

When I began operating HF more consistently in the Fall of 2020, I was amazed how many operators on 17M SSB said they were also live-streaming their QSOs. Recently, Brad .W1BCC sent a cryptic message suggesting members watch Youtube video, <https://youtu.be/8kU1Enb5vVg> and, at 2:55 into the video, there would be someone that we all know.

Watching the video reminded me of a link to a the VE2ZDX Ham Radio Toolkit site <https://ve2zdx.com/toolkit/> that I had received a few weeks earlier. It allows you to enter your call and find videos of mostly POTA operations that include QSOs with you. I put in several members calls and besides my own, W1BCC, N1YL, KU1N, and NX1K and found their QSOs. (Please forgive me if I left your call out.)

October 2026 OPERATING EVENTS

Lad WA3EEC

October 3-4	Collegiate QSO Party California QSO Party 6 Meter Sprint
October 10-11	Arizona QSO Party Pennsylvania QSO Party South Dakota QSO Party
October 16-18	Jamboree on the Air
October 18-19	New York QSO Party Illinois QSO Party
October 19-25	ARRL School Club Roundup
October 24-25	CQ Worldwide DX – SSB
November 1	North America Sideband Sprint (Evening of October 21 st EDT)

For an exhaustive list of Contests see the WA7BNM Contest Calendar

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/>

THE COMMUNICATOR is an informational publication for members of the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club. It is produced as a collaboration between Lad WA3EEC, who collects and formats the articles and Al N1AW who distributes the newsletter. Any complaints on the contents or formatting of this newsletter issue should be sent to Lad at WA3EEC@arrl.net. Contributions to future issues should be sent to him. The next issue will be published on or about November 1st!

Club Officers 2026-2027			
President	Gary Roy	KB1AKU	groy773@gmail.com
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Director	Chris Myers	KB1NEK	camyers@protonmail.com
Director	Vic Augusta-Summers	NA1K	victoriaaugusta1997@gmail.com

This is your newsletter! 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: Lad Nagurney WA3EEC (wa3eec@arrl.net)

Franklin County ARC on Social Media	
Website	https://fcarc.org
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/groups/1091163077562307
Groups.io	https://fcarc-ma.groups.io/g/main

Change of address or missing an issue? Please contact Al Woodhull, N1AW (n1aw@arrl.net).