

The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association August 1998, Vol. 65, No. 8

In This Issue

President's Message

Field Day 1998

Page 2-

PacketCluster Update

FARA Picnic

Page 3-

ARRL Proposes...

QSL Card

and more...

President's Message

I hope you have all recovered from Field Day. Those of you who missed it, missed a great one! In spite of having to move that weekend, our Director came through in his usual fine style, with plenty of chile for all. I'm sure we all wish Dick and Marsha a quick and easy transition to their new home in Marlboro. In spite of a significantly lower attendance this year, Field Day went smoothly because each FARA member who showed up contributed to the effort. We could have used more people, but we managed because everyone worked as part of a team.

Our next activity is the FARA Picnic, held this year on September 6th (see the announcement and get your payment in early!). There'll be plenty of food, several radios and a waterfront (we'll guarantee lifeguards, something the Y seems to have trouble doing). You really shouldn't miss this annual FARA celebration of food and our salute to Labor Day.

It's not too early to start planning for the Flea Market, so start getting all that valuable stuff together, and start studying for those upgrade exams! This fall should be an interesting time. I should have a ham shack again, and with the progress on the packet node, it looks like I'll have to set up a TNC. There's still time to build something before the winter. There's always help available down at the shack on Wednesday evenings if you're not sure what to build, or need some advice on just how to cram all those electronics into the box you bought.

73,
Peter, KA1AXY

Thursday, Aug. 6 This Month's Meeting

Marjie, KA1HIA

Time's are a'changing. With the FCC and Amateur Radio. Read about it in this month's newsletter and talk about it at this month's meeting.

Field Day 1998: A New Record for W1FY!

by Dave Hoaglin, K1HT

In the last couple of years we've been aiming to raise our score to 10,000, and this year we almost made it. We wound up at 9,944, hampered in part by rain on Saturday morning, which kept us from getting our stations on the air on time. But once we got started, we really racked up the contacts, especially on 20 meters, where we made QSOs during each of the 24 hours. With 815 QSOs on CW and 510 on SSB, 20 accounted for nearly 45% of our 2,976 total QSOs! Here's the breakdown:

Band	CW	SSB
80	65	128
40	427	207
20	815	510
15	232	258
10	4	79
VHF/UHF	3	247
Novice/Tech		7
Total	1546	1430

Submitting Material to the Circuit

Material may be submitted for publication by sending it directly to the editor. This can be done by phone, by US Mail, or via the Internet (preferred). The deadline for each issue is the Thursday, one week before the monthly meeting.

by phone
(508) 435-2055 (before 9:00PM please!)

by mail
Robert Hess, N1UVA
1 Cold Spring Brook Road
Hopkinton, MA 01748

by internet
n1uva@ultranet.com

Our score is nearly 900 points better than last year (1100 points if you reduce last year's score by the bonus points that are no longer available). Propagation played a big role, as the totals on 15 meters and 6 meters also show. We've recovered from the bottom of the sunspot cycle and are well on our way

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toward the next peak; solar flux was around 120 this Field Day, versus 70 (nearly rock bottom) last year.

Last year 6 meters was flat, with only one QSO outside the Northeast. This year was a different story. We worked stations throughout the South and Midwest, and even two in Arizona! One hour Saturday afternoon yielded 54 QSOs.

At the other end of the spectrum 80 meters was disappointing. QRN levels were high, and at times during the night 80 CW had no activity. On 40 we held our own, thanks mainly to the two full-wave loop antennas (one vertical, one horizontal) that Danny T93M/N1ZPE built and put up for us, but conditions weren't up to par.

Beyond all these details the key to Field Day at W1FY is people. I'm grateful to everyone who helped with preparations, transportation, setup, take-down, errands, and all the little things that contributed to our success this year. Some of them deserve special mention.

Our logging computers were solid all weekend, thanks to the careful preparations and on-site work by Paul N1DGT.

Ed KB1CQI and Bob W1RH put together our emergency power. It was reassuring to have Ed's generator delivering power all weekend, with only a brief interruption Sunday morning for fueling.



Again this year we used the A-frame to safely raise and lower two 50-foot towers and one 40-foot tower, expertly choreographed by Dennis KE6DPL.

The good results on 6 meters reflect the efforts of Robert N1UVA in putting together a strong VHF/UHF station.

Dick K1KTK and Marsha K1NGI kept us well fed again this year, even though Field Day was nearly a direct hit on their moving day! They had help from Michael Gerard and others. Thanks for

the special effort!

The Novice/Tech Plus operation would have been a no-show without the determined efforts of Leo N1VYF, who put together a 10-meter dipole, put it up, and got on the air! Sharon KC1YR put out a great press release that resulted in an item in the Middlesex News and several announcements on WBZ-AM. We had visitors from as far away as South Weymouth!

Several people made good use of our VE session. Congrats to Adam N1TYF, who upgraded to Extra (and then kept right on rolling to put in several good hours on 20 SSB).

To produce our new high score, a group of talented operators turned in a great performance. When I see hourly totals like 82 and 81 on 20 CW (K5ZD) and 103 and 101 on 20 SSB (NB1B, N1TYF), I know things are going well. Here's the lineup by band: 80 CW -- K5ZD, AA1ON; 80 SSB -- N4GNV, AA1IZ; 40 CW -- T93M, K1HT, WR1P, N1TYF, AA1ON; 40 SSB -- N4GNV, T93M, W1VIV, AA1ON; 20 CW -- NB1B, K5ZD, AA1ON, N1TYF; 20 SSB -- N1TYF, NB1B, KC1YR; 15 CW -- WR1P, W1RH; 15 SSB -- KA1USL, N4GNV, NB1B, KA1HIA, WA1R, N1JMY; 10 CW/SSB -- T93M; VHF/UHF -- N1XAS, K1SG, AA1ON, N1UVA, W1RH. (I hope I haven't omitted anyone, but you have to sign the sheet or use OpOn.)



Finally, I'd like to thank our hosts, Gerard's Turkey Farm; this is the fourth year they have let us use their field. We also appreciate the support of the Framingham Detachment of the National Guard, McDonald's on Route 30, Poland Spring Water, and the Sheraton Tara.

Photos taken by Anne, N1ECI

[More photos can be found in Field Day Central on the Club Web Site.](#)

PacketCluster Update

by Bob, W1RH and Charlie, NC1N

We are building it! Work is well along on our PacketCluster node to be located in Hopkinton at the QTH of AA1ON.

Here's a report as of July 20th:

On Saturday, July 18, a FARA crew took up shovels and a rented trencher to excavate a trench for the coax. AA1ON and W1RH manned the trencher, while KA1USL, N1UVA, N1JFO, KA1AXY, and others handled the shovels. W1NXC recorded the event in pictures, which we hope to have on-line at the FARA web site and in the newsletter in the future.

Part way through the trench digging, the crew encountered a rock the size of a small DXCC country (actually about the size of a coffee table) that was dead set in the middle of the path. Martin, Brian, Pete, and Bob chipped away on it. Eventually Martin and Pete got it to fracture and break in half. The half blocking the trench was removed.

If all goes well, the RF portion of the project will be completed around August 8.

The computer and TNCs have been assembled at another site and testing is underway. The PacketCluster application has been installed and partially tested. PacketCluster relies on G8BPQ packet switch software to "talk" to the two TNCs. This software is now being installed and configured, after which the entire digital system will be tested as a unit.

Our current plans call for the pieces to be brought together in early September. We hope the station will be on the air in pilot status shortly thereafter. We'll have more reports in the newsletter, and on the PacketCluster page on FARA's web site.

Check out <http://www.fara.org/~fara/dxcluster>

FARA Picnic
YMCA Harrington Outdoor Center
Boylston, MA
(off rt 290)
September 6, 1998
12-6 PM
Waterfront open 2 - 5 PM
\$5 per person over 12
Please bring a side dish or dessert

ARRL Proposes Simplified Amateur License Structure

ARRL

The ARRL Board has agreed to propose a simplified Amateur Radio licensing structure with four classes. Lengthy discussion and debate during the Board's meeting July 16-18 led to majority support for a plan for four written examination elements to establish amateurs' operational and technical qualifications instead of the present five, and two Morse code examination elements instead of the present three.

Under the plan adopted by the Board, the entry level to Amateur Radio would be known as Class D and would convey the privileges of the present Technician license. The written examination would be at the same level of difficulty as that of the present Technician examination, but consistent with the privileges of the license. All amateurs now licensed as Technicians would become Class D.

The next step would be known as Class C and would convey the privileges of the present General license, but with phone subbands expanded by 50 kHz on 75 and 15 meters and by 25 kHz on 40 meters. Class C would be the entry level to high frequency (HF) operating privileges. To upgrade from Class D to Class C, an amateur would pass a written examination on the operational and technical qualifications required for HF operation and a 5 word per minute Morse code examination. All amateurs now licensed as General, Technician Plus, and Novice would become Class C. The expansion of the telephony subbands would result from "refarming" of the Novice CW bands that are no longer required for their original purpose.

The third step would be known as Class B and would convey the privileges of the present Advanced license, but with phone subbands expanded by 50 kHz on 75 and 15 meters and by 25 kHz on 40 meters. To upgrade from Class C to Class B, an amateur would pass a more

advanced written examination similar in difficulty to the present Element 4A and a 12 word per minute Morse code examination. All amateurs now licensed as Advanced would become Class B.

The final step would be known as Class A and would convey the full privileges of the present Amateur Extra Class, with telephony subbands expanded by 50 kHz on 75 and 15 meters and by 25 kHz on 40 meters. To upgrade from Class B to Class A, an amateur would be required to pass the most difficult written examination in the sequence. Consistent with the practice in many other countries, no additional Morse code examination would be required beyond 12 words per minute. All amateurs presently licensed as Amateur Extra Class would become Class A.

In their discussions, Board members emphasized that the objective is to rationalize and simplify the amateur licensing structure without reducing the requirements for any class of license. Where reductions in Morse code requirements are proposed, there would be a corresponding increase in written examination standards. On the other hand, Board members were adamant that simplifying the structure should not come at the expense of privileges already earned by amateurs. Therefore, present Novice and Technician Plus licensees, having earned entry-level HF operating privileges, would be granted the new entry-level HF license. Adoption of the simplification plan marks the culmination of 30 months of work by the Board, during which time the input of literally thousands of ARRL members and other amateurs and prospective amateurs was considered. The Board debated a wide variety of options including both smaller and larger numbers of license classes, higher and lower qualification levels, and different privileges. Nine of the 15 Directors voted in favor of the plan, with six opposed. Following the meeting ARRL President Rod Tafford, W6ROD, observed, "The debate was at times contentious and the result was not unani



How many of you have heard of Tommy Tompkins? I'm sure, if you have read any of Walker Tompkins Books, you'll remember Tommy Tompkins. How about *SOS at Midnight*? Or perhaps *CQ Ghost Ship, Death Valley QTH or DX Brings Danger*? Well, Walker Tompkins, K6ATX, now a silent key, wrote a series of books that are still sold and read today. All of his books feature the adventures of Tommy Tompkins and how he used amateur radio to rescue him from various predicaments. I read *SOS at Midnight* in 1963 when I was 14 years old and was so enthralled with the adventures of Tommy Tompkins that I wrote K6ATX to tell him how great his book *SOS at Midnight* was. Walker sent me one of his QSL cards which I still treasure today. I never did work him on the radio but I did read all his books. Walker, an accomplished television screen writer, newspaper columnist, historian and biographer, passed away a few years ago.

mous. Some Board members preferred greater simplification; others were uncomfortable with some of the changes being proposed. However, every Board member, without exception, left the meeting knowing that each of his or her colleagues did what they believe is best for the future of Amateur Radio."

Members are urged to contact their ARRL directors to comment on this proposal. E-mail addresses are on page 10 of any issue of QST. Members also may comment on the proposal via the ARRLWeb site,

<http://www.arrl.org> or via e-mail at restrux@arrl.org.

Membership Dues

Annual membership dues are as follows: (Make checks payable to FARA)
Regular FARA \$10
Student / Retired \$5
Repeater (voluntary) \$10

FARA Horizons

Aug 6: Monthly Meeting
Aug 24: Board Meeting
Sep 6: FARA Picnic

Change of Address

If you would like to change the address on your Circuit label please direct all requests to Bev, N1LOO. She can be reached by the following:
Email: b-blees@juno.com
Phone: 626-2012