

The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association February 1999, Vol 66, No. 2

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Thursday, Feb 4 This Month's Meeting

In 1962, thirty strings of street lights at various locations on the Hawaiian island of Oahu simultaneously failed. The cause, an electromagnetic pulse from a high-altitude nuclear test explosion conducted in the Johnston Island area of the Pacific Ocean, more than 800 miles from Oahu. Jim Weckback, W1EQW, will talk about this and other nuclear radiation effects on electronics at the February meeting.

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 **Wednesday**, one week before the monthly meeting.

by phone

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

College:
(508) 910-5296

by mail

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

by internet

n1uva@ultranet.com

President's Message

It's very annoying to have writer's block, and that's what I have this month. I couldn't come up with a topic, and it's Sunday afternoon of the week before we have to mail the newsletter, so I'm going to write about what got done this past month, and hope it fills the page.

George and Jim finally got the SB-201 working! George found a broken grid resistor, and Jim swapped 572Bs until he found a pair that "matched". Then we put it all back together and connected it up with the new cables I made. As I was plugging in the cables, I noticed that neither of the SO-239s on the amp was doing a very good job of gripping the center pin. After examining them last Saturday, I decided that Heath had used some cheap connectors, and that they both needed to be replaced. Of course, this involved taking the amp apart again, and disassembling the SWR line inside the chassis, because they had mounted the connectors from behind the chassis. We finally have two good Amphenol connectors on the amp, and it's almost reassembled. Do yourself a favor, and spend the extra buck on good connectors. The stuff from Radio Shack just doesn't cut it.

The tube stash is history. Leo, WA1HAM, came over last week, and picked them all up. I hear they went to Rene, so they found a good home with someone who will use them. Given such a good start, I have been working to clean up the "General Radio" storage room, and we got rid of several boxes of trash last Saturday.

The Heath Warrior amp is out of storage, but we understand it has a power supply problem. If anyone knows exactly what that problem is, please enlighten us, so we don't have to figure it out on our own. We'd like to get the Warrior working as a backup for the SB-201. It runs about the same power, the tubes are half as expensive, and it's twice the size and weight of the 201.

The packet cluster is running in temperature regulated comfort. I went up to Martin's and checked on it, the temperature regulator is working just fine, and the recent single digit temperatures didn't cause any problems.

My K2 kit has been shipped and is supposed to arrive this week. I'll bring what I can to the meeting.

73,

Peter, KA1AXY

Note from the Treasurer, W1VIV:

by Sumner, W1VIV

The FARA board has voted to publicly thank those members who have put a little "extra" in with their annual dues. These donations are much appreciated and will be put to good use by your club. Those giving donations include --

Fred Rosebury, KA1GEN

Joe Sweeney, K1NCJ

Mark Stern, WA1R

Rick Commo, K1LOG/7

Dick Marshall, K1KTK

Some annual dues have not yet been received. Please send your checks to the FARA P.O. box, or pay at the meeting.

Ham on a Hot Thin Island

by Steve, AA1IZ
Part 3 of 3

By the time I had walked back to our apartment, Costas was just landing on the beach. The third floor walkup apartment had 48 steps. We had five packages of varying weight and size (small and light not being in the mix). The afternoon was moving quickly towards evening and sundown so there was no stopping for breaks. The temperature at the water edge was over 90. Adrenaline can carry you a long way. In very short time all the equipment was sitting in the apartment. As the sun began its slide down to the water I rounded up my helpers and we started to quickly assemble the beam. Since the guy wire collar had been lost from the tube we jury-rigged a replacement. Shortly after sundown the beam was sitting 20 feet up in the air on its mast which was on top of a twenty-five foot roof. Since I don't take electric rotators I "armstronged" the beam to a heading of approximately 315. I assembled the station in the kitchenette, attached the antennas to the tuner, turned on the power supply, turned on the radio and nothing happened! I checked the power. The computer worked. My meter told me there was power out of the power supply. The rig was down! I checked fuses - OK. I checked the connector at the end of the power cable - OK. I was stumped. I checked for an obvious bad connection inside the rig - nothing. I buttoned everything up and sat staring at my dysfunctional radio. "Why not try the on/off button again", my wife offered in an encouraging manner. Mumbling and thoroughly aggravated I leaned over and pushed the switch. Click, lights, and the music of off frequency side band - the radio was working. No explanation, but I didn't care. I quickly checked the beam on 10, 15, and 20. Good SWR, no problem loading. The center fed zep did pretty well all the way down to 80 meters. I was ready to go on the air. Everyone else went out for supper while I finished off another liter of spring water. We stocked the refrigerator with six more bottles of water and several containers of juice. Two of the water bottles were put in the freezer for cooling me off when things got really hot. Now I would find out how rare EU-113 really was. 14.260 was busy so I went down to 14.195 and called a short CQ

using the voice keyer. No answer. Tried again. No answer. I decided I would search someone out who was calling a CQ and responded to them. Good contact, good reports. It was time to try calling CQ again, but this time I used the microphone. Finally a response - from the Ukraine. I checked out the voice keyer and was told I sounded distorted. Pack up the new technology. I thanked the other station for his time and patience helping me work out the problem, told him I looked forward to working him during the contest, and said 73. As I signed with the first station another called from Italy and then one from Israel and then the rush was on. I picked



Steve running a pile up

out a few stations in as many different locations as possible to get a feeling for propagation, but having learned from experience, I quickly went QRT. If you have too many QSO's before the contest you can burn out interest in your location. Since the contest did not start until 1400 local time I slept late, had breakfast, and then rechecked all the equipment. The beam had slid down the mast about three feet. We had attached the guy wires to the u-bolt holding the beam in place and the tension had wiggled the beam loose. Costas was aboard the boat, but we had walkie-talkie communication. I described the problem and in less than an hour he was helping me drop the tower. He created a new attachment point for the guy-wires using some hardware that he had on the boat and then we locked the beam in place at the top of the mast. With everything back in order I made one more quick tour of the bands. Everything checked out. I was hearing a funny sound in my earphones as I tuned up, but I couldn't really pin it down as anything I had experienced before and it wasn't very loud. There was time left for

a quick swim, a shower, a light lunch and another liter of water.

About 15 minutes before the contest I picked a frequency on 20 meters, called CQ, and started a QSO. With a few minutes to go I started another QSO and as the starting time came up I made it my first QSO. Things went well as my rate climbed to over 100 QSO's per hour, but I didn't feel I was getting the action I expected. There were times I had to call CQ for a few minutes before getting an answer. It was as if I wasn't getting full power out. Each time I changed frequency it became more difficult to tune the rig. Some time shortly after sundown as I re-tuned on a new frequency the rig shut down. At first I thought I had hit a dangerously high SWR. I dropped the power and started loading up again. The best I could do was 30 watts before the rig would cut out. Now I was really limited. I thought that the heat had possibly caused the problem. With no air conditioning, no fan, and no breeze I had to get creative. The two frozen bottles of water were pulled from the freezer. I carefully placed them on top of the Yaesu and hoped that the rig would cool down enough to get back some power.

The other decision was to shift to CW where low power would have a better chance of making a statement. Slowly my QSO rate started to climb, but never to a high enough number to make a serious dent in the competition. In the wee hours of the morning the rig could not take anymore and completely shut down. I decided it was time for a power nap. I remembered that the YCCC big guns had said that 45 minutes was the proper length of sleep for optimum recovery, so with alarm set I crawled into bed with thoughts of air conditioning drifting through my head.

Precisely on time my body responded to the alarm and within minutes I was seated at the station. I pushed the "on" button. Liftoff! I had power, well at least 30 watts. That was better than zero. And so it went, through the night. Every once in a while I would get brave and try to increase loading, and every time I tried the FT890 made it clear that I would not be granted that privilege. Sunrise brought back 20 meters, but with so little power it was not until 15 opened that I could start picking up multipliers. My family came by mid morning to see how I was doing. They had learned to

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FARA Jacket order for: one Royal Blue Masterfleece™ Sportsmaster™ model #401 jacket, embroidered by PopTops® with name above callsign.

NAME: _____
(all caps)

CALLSIGN _____
(please indicate numeral clearly!!!)

Size (circle one): S M L XL (\$57.60); XXL (\$61.06)

...Continued from previous page

look at the rate readout and cheered every time I notched it up. Or encouraged me with a "Come on dad, you can do it" as I tried to crack a pileup for a multiplier.

Finally the last seconds of the contest clicked by and my intention of staying on the air for people who might have missed the opportunity of working EU-113 became a thing of the past. I was tired and the radio was tired - we had both reached melt down.

Everyone joined me as we dismantled the station as quickly as heat and exhaustion would allow. Everything was repacked, carried down the 48 steps and loaded into the inflatable dinghy for its return to our boat. After everything had been stowed away I rested up for a real supper and a chance to say goodbye to Elafonisos. The owner of the little restaurant came over to meet me. It seems my family had been eating their meals here during the weekend and he had heard all about the missing member of the family. He represented the friendly, courteous population that lives in Elafonisos. An island most often left to itself, but of late becoming more and more a tourist destination for many Greeks and a few foreigners. Would I return to Greece and Elafonisos? Yes - in the late spring, not mid summer. Will I do the contest again? Yes. Plans are already underway to return to the Boston Harbor islands NA-148 for 1999. And for the year 2000: maybe the Canary Islands or by then the Caribbean may sound good.

Steve's score for the contest was 293,896

[This article, in its entirety, is available in this month's newsletter on the club web site.](#)

QSL Card

Submitted by Peter, KA1AXY



I worked these guys (not QRP) on CW. They were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the CIA. A couple of my relatives have worked there, so I thought it would be neat to get a QSL. I tried to get them on 40 from home, but they weren't operating when I was looking. One night when I was down at the shack, I tuned around and found them. I thought it was important to work them on CW, considering the history of agents huddled in attics with GRC-109 "spy sets" sending back their reports.

FARA Members on the Spice Isle

by Steve, AA1IZ

Steve AA1IZ, Bob W1RH, Ed K1EP will be operating from Grenada for the ARRL cw contest the weekend of February 19-21. The station will operate during the next two weeks including the 160 meter contest on the middle weekend. Finally we will compete in the phone contest on the weekend of March 5 - 7. We hope to have two rigs operating. We will look for FARA members on all bands. Break the pile up by calling "cousin, cousin".

**READ THE CIRCUIT ONLINE...
SAVES PAPER AND POSTAGE**

FARA Jackets

by Jim, WN1A

The back of each jacket will be screen printed with the famous FARA telegraph key logo.

Please make out a separate check to "Framingham Amateur Radio Association" in the appropriate amount for each jacket. Each check should be attached to copies of the above filled-out form and mailed to: FARA jackets, P.O. Box 3005, Framingham, MA 01705-3005, or conveyed to Jim Congdon at FARA--call to find out if I'll be there.

Please contact Jim Congdon WN1A (978-443-5720 jim_congdon@ibm.net) if you have any questions; also see the flyers on the FARA bulletin board and our own pres., PETER KA1AXY modeling one at <http://www.qsl.net/fara/announce/jackets.html>



"Node in the Freezer" Update

by Charlie, NC1N

The W1FY PacketCluster node was transferred to its new cabinet in early January. The cabinet is a modified freezer, donated by Pete, W1VAB with expert retrofitting by Peter, KA1AXY. The results are shown in the picture.

Color photos are now on the FARA web site at <http://www.qsl.net/fara/dxcluster>. The ARRL has expressed an interest in placing one or more of these photos on their members-only web page! Way to go, Peter!

FARA Horizons

Feb 4: Monthly Meeting
Feb 19-21: ARRL CW Contest
Feb 22: Board Meeting
Mar 5-7: ARRL SSB Contest