

The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association August 2001, Vol. 68, No. 8

In This Issue

President's Message

W1DL Awarded Membership Plaque

[Page 2-](#)

FARA Scholarship Awarded

Help out FARA, Shop Online!

[Page 3-](#)

APRS on the Cheap

FARA - The Early Years

and more...

Thursday, Aug 2

This Month's Meeting

Show and tell night--Bring your latest and greatest gadget and show it to the club! Check out the article on page 3 for one of the gadgets that will be shown.

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) 910-5689

by mail

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

by internet

circuit@fara.org

President's Message

Wow, I made it through the first month as Prez of FARA. What I have discovered is that we have a lot of dedicated folks who keep this organization running like a clock. Hardly needs a president!

I want to mention a few of our dedicated members each month just to let them know how much they are appreciated. I'll start with Mary Weiss, KA1HGL, who without ever being asked, has always been there to organize the goodies (we're talking food) after most FARA meetings and during our License-in-a-Weekend sessions. Then there's our Webmaster, Sharon, KC1YR. What a job Sharon has done with the web site. If there were an award for the best radio club web site (and there may very be such an award. If there is I'll find it) I think the FARA site would get first place. Sharon is a wizard. You mention an idea and the next think you know the idea is reality on the web site.

The FARA Packet Cluster node has moved to a commercial site in Hopkinton operated by Rick Zach, K1RZJ. This is a temporary move. At some point, prior to winter, we will move it back to Martin's place in Hopkinton. Coverage should be about the same from the temporary location. FARA thanks Rick for his generous donation of space and power for our equipment.

Jay, KT2E, has donated a Cushcraft A3 to the Club. All we have to do is take it down, along with his tower in Holliston. The crew of AA1ON, KA1AXY, W1RH and W1VIV should have it all down prior to our August meeting.

One way or another, the FARA Shack WILL be open every Saturday morning. Sharon will have a FARA calendar up on the web site to post the name of the FARA member responsible for the Shack on each Saturday. I like to refer to our Saturday morning sessions as the FARA version of the Cheers bar, where everyone knows your name! No booze, but good conversation.

Don't forget the FARA picnic. See the newsletter and web site for details.

Bob, W1RH

W1DL Awarded 60-year Membership Plaque

Photo by Peter, KA1AXY

At the July FARA meeting ARRL Eastern Massachusetts Section Manager Phil Temples, K9HI, presented Julie, W1DL with a plaque commemorating 60 years of ARRL membership.



FARA Scholarship Awarded

Photo by Peter, KA1AXY



Club Members Robert Hess, N1UVA; Leo Laskin, N1VYF and Kristi Lees, N1JFP received \$400 each at the July FARA meeting. Robert will be a senior at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Leo will be a freshman at UMass Lowell, and Kristi will be a senior at Gettysburg College in the fall.

Help out FARA, Shop Online!

By Sharon, KC1YR

Now if you shop online at Amazon.com, you can help raise money for FARA -- and it won't cost you a penny more!

Simply go to Amazon.com via the FARA referral link. You can find that link on our home page now, or you can just use the link

<http://amazon.fara.org>. Then, if you buy anything there, a (small) percentage of your order will be sent back to FARA as a referral fee.

At the last FARA board meeting, the board agreed that our club could sign up for the Amazon.com associates program. This doesn't cost the club any money

So, if you're planning on shopping online and want to head to

Amazon.com, please remember to use the FARA referral link! That link again:

<http://amazon.fara.org> .

Change of Address

If you would like to change the address on your Circuit label, please email fara@fara.org. Or, you can call the Club at 508-879-8097

FARA Picnic - Sunday, September 2

We'll be at the YMCA Harrington Outdoor Center in West Boylston from 1:00 till 5:00 on Labor Day weekend. Plenty of fun for the whole family. There will be swimming, boating, games and, of course, food. Bring a dessert to share and anything else you feel would be appreciated. FARA will provide burgers, hot dogs, chips and soda.

Get your reservations and check for \$5 per person in to:

Bob, W1RH

1 Cold Spring Brook Road

Hopkinton, MA 01748

Directions to YMCA Harrington Outdoor Center

From 90 (East of Worcester)

Take the 495 North exit of 90. Follow 495 North to 290 West exit. Follow 290 West to 140 North exit Follow 140 North for 1 mile. Take a left onto Sewell St. The entrance to the center is 1/2 mile on the right.

From 495

Follow 495 to 290 West. Follow 290 West to 140 North exit. Follow 140 North for 1 mile. Take a left onto Sewall St. The entrance to the center is 1/2 mile on the right.

UPGRADE ANYONE ?

By Ed, W1NXC

Have a Novice or Tech plus license and want to move up ? Have a General license and want to upgrade to Extra ? Here is your opportunity-sign up now for FARA's special upgrade classes this fall. Two classes for General and two classes for Extra will be held on successive Saturdays, at the Club location in the Danforth Museum basement. These are "crash" type sessions, designed primarily to provide a little extra help to applicants who plan to take the exams at the Flea Market on November 4, 2001. There is no charge, texts are optional and all classes will run from 9:30 am to noon.

Schedule:

Oct 6 General

Oct 13 General

Oct 20 Extra

Oct 27 Extra

To sign up see any club officer or e-mail Ed, W1NXC at eweiss2934@aol.com

FraminghamARA-L@qth.net

The FARA email reflector is working well. It provides us with an easy way to reach all our members who have email. You have to sign up so it will reach you, though.

To sign up, send a message to majordomo@qth.net with contents "subscribe FraminghamARA-L". (Without the quotes, of course). The subject can be left blank, the server only looks at the contents of the message. You'll get back a confirmation, follow its instructions exactly, then you're on the list!

Contest Corner

2000 ARRL November Phone Sweepstakes, low power

K1HT, Third place, Eastern Mass.

ARRL 160 meter contest, low power W1VIV, 2nd place, Eastern Mass.

Quite a few FARA members are contesters and now there is a place to share your scores. If you would like to submit your reported score to be in the Contest Corner, please email it to me.

READ THE CIRCUIT ONLINE... SAVES PAPER AND POSTAGE

Now available as an Adobe Acrobat file email fara@fara.org and we'll set you up!

Membership Dues

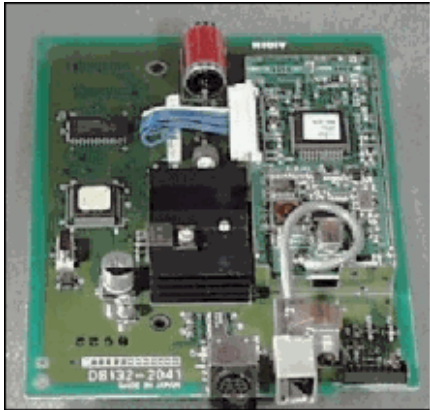
Annual membership dues are as follows: (Make checks payable to FARA)

Regular FARA \$15

APRS on the Cheap

By Peter, KA1AXY

A couple of years ago, I saw an offer of surplus GPS "engines" for \$20 each. These units were surplus from a discontinued Japanese vehicle navigation system. They consisted of a printed circuit board, a voltage regulator, a processor and the two key components, a tin box containing the GPS receiver and a GPS antenna on a long piece of coax.

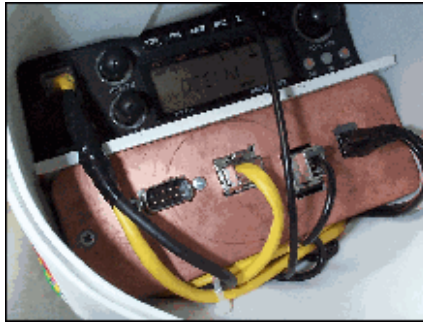


The surplus GPS board

Luckily, I bought three of them. There were apparently enough of these units so that many on the internet bought them. Shortly thereafter, a web page was started to act as a meeting place for those wishing to share information. Some of this information consisted of kits and pre-programmed PIC microcontrollers.

I purchased a few of these microcontrollers. They are quite clever, and convert the proprietary output of the surplus GPS engine to the standard NMEA messages used by APRS, Street Atlas, and just about every other piece of software that takes a GPS input. The best thing about these microcontrollers, is that they are 8-pin DIP parts, and require NO additional components!

Now, along comes a gentleman by the name of Byon Garrabrant. Byon created a gadget called the Tiny Trak II, which is an encode-only APRS modem. You purchase a kit of parts for about \$35, and an hour or two later, you're sending



The tracker pack, showing the HTX212 and the packaged GPS/TinyTrak II

APRS packets! Yup, another pre-programmed PIC.

So, last month, I spent some money and bought one of these, and packaged one of the surplus GPS engines, a converter PIC, and a Tiny Trak II into an old printer buffer case. The whole unit is about the size of a standard mobile rig. I could have made it a lot smaller, but I wanted to see it work. It works better than I ever expected. I added a DB-9 connector, so that I could access the NMEA messages to use with a laptop running Street Atlas. The audio from the Tiny Trak II goes into a Radio Shack HTX-212 2-meter mobile, which cost me about \$150. So, the whole tracker cost about \$250 (and I already had the 2-meter rig!).

It's been working for several weeks now, and you can see the results at <http://map.findu.com/n1vzw>.

I have used it hooked into Street Atlas, and it works equally well. Mike will be driving out to school in Colorado in mid-August, and he'll be taking the

tracker along.

[Check out this month's newsletter on the FARA website for two additional pictures of Peters project.](#)

FARA - The Early Years

Transcribed by Karen Hess

The Framingham Amateur Radio Association, formerly called the Community Radio Association, is fortunate to have the notes dating back to the Club's first meeting. Karen Hess, W1RH's XYL, has transcribed the handwritten notes, verbatim, and they will appear in this and future issues of the Circuit. They make for fascinating reading!

February 9, 1934

The 20th regular meeting of the C.A.R.A. was called to order at 8:30 p.m. by Vice Pres. Dr. Crosby. The secretary's report was read and accepted. Dr. Crosby reported that combination membership and dues receipts could be obtained by the club at the price of \$1.50 per hundred. It was voted to have one hundred printed.

It was suggested by Bill LaBarr that the club sponsor a contest to take advantage of the Radio Shack's offer of donating a prize. Fred Ruland offered to donate another prize and the matter was referred to the Activities Manager.

Because of the cold weather the attendance was small and the moving pictures which were scheduled for the evening had not arrived.

No further business being before the meeting, it was adjourned by unanimous vote.

After the business meeting, the theory class, for beginners held the floor.

Respectfully Submitted, A. L. Schaltenbrand, Sec.