

The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association December 2000, Vol. 67, No. 12

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President's Message

We had another *super* Flea Market! Thanks to all who helped carry, move, take tickets or just made it happen. I am now convinced that a bit of extra effort can turn a mediocre event into a great one. The flea market committee is continuing to refine our strategy.

For those of you who participated in last fall's kit building project, but didn't get to finish it, we are picking up where we left off, on Wednesday nights, at the shack. Some changes have been published which seem to improve the performance of the receiver. Nels, K1UR, and I have been working to debug his receiver, and it seems to be working. I'll be ordering enough of the new parts to update all the receivers, and I have some more documentation, which will better explain how the circuit works.

If you like to build stuff, don't miss "Junkyard Wars" on the TLC cable channel, December 6th at 8:00. Imagine being told you have to build a machine, and being given a whole junkyard to scrounge from. Just watch it, you'll be glad you did.

And finally, start making those holiday wish lists; you won't get what you want unless they know you want it ☺

Peter, KA1AXY

FARA Flea VE Session Nets New Hams & Upgrades

By Jim, W1EQW

The VE session held at the November 5, 2000 FARA Flea Market was a success resulting in two new hams and thirteen license upgrades. Twelve of the thirteen test elements administered had passing grades. And there were six paper upgrades for hams taking advantage of the FCC license restructuring. All seventeen applicants received new licenses, upgrades or credit for advanced elements

Congratulations to our two new hams -

Randy Blue KB1FWD Technician

David Belfer-Shevett KB1FWR Technician

Congratulations to the following upgrades -

Ed Bardfield W1RES General

Gary Cumisky K1GJS General

David Tangredi KA1JYW General

David Mills K1WEI General

Frank Sibley N1PYF General

Robert McDonald KB1FUF General

Ernest Borden Jr. N1HYL General

Kenneth Stover KB1FRP General

Norman Stetson W1GYE Extra

Carl Buhner W1GNP Extra

Clayton Juckett KF4EYL Extra

Jim Blumenfeld W1JIM Extra

Thursday, Dec 7

This Month's Meeting

It's that time again. Mario and Guido (I8PZA and I8MOR) will again give us their bi-annual update on DX doings from the isle of Pepperoni! Come and enjoy them. They've never failed to give a feast of an evening!

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

n1uva@ultranet.com

Packet Radio Network Changes

By Tadd, KA2DEW
ka2dew@torborg.com

There is an Amateur Radio packet network which has existed in our area for about 13 years. It lets a ham with a 2 meter radio make a connection to another ham at a distance of hundreds of miles to exchange text messages and data. We use it for Dx spotting, e-mail and bulletin traffic, national traffic system, round table chats, weather instrument messaging, and many other applications. Our packet network is kind of like the Internet except that it is done entirely over ham radio, by hams, and it is quite a bit slower. The hardware and software that are used on packet are much simpler and we hams can go look at the network architecture and play around with it. We can even add to it. It's rather inexpensive to do so. We can also use the network from our portables or leave our home stations connected into the network 24 hours a day.

There are a couple of hundred backbone node sites in the connectable network ranging from Erie PA to Montreal to Baltimore to Boston. These sites make up the backbone of the packet network. The nodes are connected via dedicated point to point ham radio links on 51Mhz, 223Mhz, 420-450Mhz, and higher frequencies.

This article isn't about what exists now. It's about what is happening to it. In short, we're going to be using a new software package to run our network node sites.

Up until 3 years ago the network nodes were all running a software package called TheNET. TheNET sits in a TNC. That's the same TNC that makes up a home packet radio station. A TNC is a rather dumb device compared to the state of the art desktop computer. Heck, a TNC is a rather dumb device compared to a desktop computer of the early 1980s! TheNET suffers from the limita

tions imposed by the tiny amount of memory and computing power available in a TNC.

In the late 1980s a German ham Gunter Jost, DK7WJ, created FlexNet along with what is now known as "The FlexNet Group". FlexNet is much more powerful than TheNET. In the US we run FlexNet on 80386 based PCs using the TNCs as dumb modems, a task they are well suited for. FlexNet is compatible with current packet stations and will require only a minor amount of learning on the part of the users to take full advantage.

FlexNet allows many more sites to be in the network and to be visible from the other sites than TheNET. It makes connections much faster than TheNET and when a connection is not going to work, makes it much more obvious much sooner. This improves the user experience. FlexNet automatically performs routing and chooses fallback paths so the network survives outages better. Powerful features are available including Polling user ports, route tracing, searching for users across multiple nodes, and even HTTP when used with MSWindows95. TCP/IP operation over FlexNet is much easier and takes no intervention on the part of the node operators to add users.

The important thing about this article is the change that is happening. I'm one of the principals behind the K1TR packet node in Windham. We have 8 radios providing packet network support at the site, linking to Andover MA, Concord NH, Chester MA (in the Berkshires), Kingston NH, Nashua NH, a DxCluster, the TCP/IP repeater in Marlboro MA, and a 2 meter user port. As I type this, Thanksgiving Day, only one of the sites that K1TR links to is running FlexNet. That's the node in Chester MA. Our site, K1TR in Windham, is running both FlexNet and TheNET. Since we're in the process of changing the site, it becomes interesting (hopefully not difficult) for the users of our equipment be

cause they have to figure out what's going on as we slowly migrate equipment to FlexNet. Since our neighbor sites in New Hampshire are not yet running FlexNet, in order to connect to or from those sites and K1TR, you will have to manually connect from one network to the other. This isn't difficult. A little poking around will lead you to the information you need. Try the I command on the FXWNDM node or on the FlexNet node to get help. Since the K1TR site is the first node site in New Hampshire (or even in the Boston Metro Area) to use FlexNet we're sort of early adopters and are feeling our way around. Limitations of print media will make it difficult for me to keep you updated as to the current situation at the node site. I can only offer you clues and guidelines as to what we INTEND to do. There are a few things we can regard as solid.

1. We'll do our absolute best to not lose any connectivity on or through the site at all, at any time.
2. We'll try to make it easier, not harder, to use the network for all users and all services.
3. There will be a node in the TheNET network called FXWNDM:K1TR-13. From there you can reach the K1TR FlexNet node. Use the I command on FXWNDM to find out how.
4. Connecting to K1TR-1 on 145.07 will get you into K1TR node. Once K1TR-1 is converted to FlexNet, you will get a welcome text that gives clues to other late breaking info including how to connect to K1XX DxCluster.

For more information on FlexNet, packet radio networking in general, technical and user info, point your web browser

at <http://www.packetnetwork.org/k1tr>

You can connect to my packet station on 145.07 or from the K1TR node. Beep wildly but not after 10pm. Thanks.

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

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

...Continued from Page 1

Pierre Besson AA1XJ Extra
Thanks to members of the VE team -
Ed Weiss W1NXC
Leo Canton WA1HAM
Kevin Goodwin N1JMY
Jim Congdon WN1A
Sumner Weisman W1VIV
Jim Weckback W1EQW
(VE Team Liaison)

A Friendly Reminder From Your President

I'd like to remind those of you who haven't yet paid your 2001 dues, that we need to have them by DECEMBER 15th. That's so we can make sure you get your January issue of the Circuit. If we don't have your dues by that date, you won't get the January issue.

And to those of you who have already paid, my thanks for your support. We wouldn't have such a great club without you!

Happy Holidays

For Sale:

US Tower MA-455 crank-up tubular tower. Excellent condition, currently stored in my garage. \$750

HyGain TH-6 six element triband beam. \$175

Bob, W1RH

508-435-2055

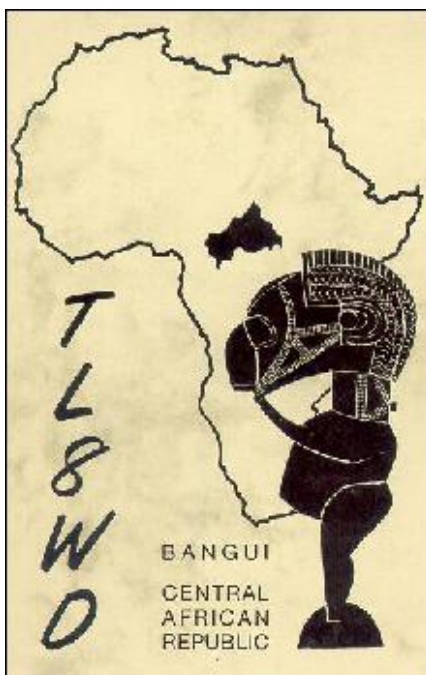
FREE complete QST from 1986 through 1998, you pick up in Framingham. This offer expires on Saturday December 16th.

Richard, AA1VI

508-877-8241.

QSL Card

Write-up by Bob, W1RH



This month's card comes from the W1FY archives. TL8WD, from the Central African Republic, worked W1FY in April of 1990, on ten meters. This was right at the peak of the last sunspot cycle. The operator at TL8WD was Dieter, DL5DAB.

The former French colony of Ubangi-Shari became the Central African Republic upon independence in 1960. After three tumultuous decades of misrule - mostly by military governments - a civilian government was installed in 1993.

The Circuit is in need of QSL cards!!! If you would like to share your favorite QSL card, which could be your own, with the club, please send it my way!

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!

June 23, 1933

The 11th regular meeting of the C.A.R.A. was called to order at 8:50 p.m. by Pres. LaBarr.

The reports of the Secty. and the Treas. were read and accepted.

Discussion of suspension of club meetings was opened.

It was unanimously voted to suspend meetings until the 2nd Fri. in October.

Moved by Mr. Tedford that written notice of next regular meeting be given by Secty. Seconded. So voted.

Discussion of a club outing was then taken up. It was unanimously voted to have the outing on Sunday or the next fair Sunday following in case of storm.

No further business being before the club the business meeting was adjourned and remainder of the evening devoted to open discussion between members.

C. R. Crosby

Secty.

FARA Horizons

Dec 7: Club Meeting

Jan 1: Board Meeting

This month's Circuit sponsored by:

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