

# The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association

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## POSTPONED

Stayed tuned to the reflector for news on when the meeting will be rescheduled.

## President's Message

Happy New Year folks!

It was nice seeing everyone that could attend the FARA Holiday Party! At the risk of repeating myself, I'd like to reiterate my thanks to John (KB1VXY) and LouAnn Iwuc for opening their home to us. The arrangements were very nice, and a good time was had by all. The food provided by the caterer (same as last year - Oliva's Market, Milford) was excellent, in quality, variety and quantity. This was a terrific event.

The January meeting is coming up soon (at the Framingham Police Headquarters Training Room) - weather permitting - the actual date will be sent out via the reflector. We will have an evening of show-and tell (or show-and-ask, if you have any mystery items), followed by a DXpedition movie. Check out your shack for any interesting items to show. Antique radios, mystery tubes and rare QSL cards are always interesting.

Other upcoming events include:

The Algonquin ARC Flea Market (15 February, 2014). This is a fun event, and their members support our flea Market. Go to <http://www.qsl.net/n1em> for more info.

Our Flea Market is also coming up soon (5 April, 2014). Go to <http://www.fara.org/flea> for details. One of the beneficiaries of the Flea Market is the FARA Scholarship Fund; if you know of anyone who would qualify, urge them to apply. Applications must be postmarked by April 15.

One more thing ... It's not too soon to be paying your dues. These may be paid at the meeting, or by mail (FARA, PO Box 3005, Framingham, MA 01705-3005). Dues are still only \$15, \$10 for students and seniors over 65 years of age, with an additional \$10 for the repeater.

## FARA Horizons

- Jan.: POSTPONED Show and Tell/DVD of a DX pedition. Prizes will be awarded for best Show and Tell entries!
- Feb. 6: Ed Parish K1EP on the Official Observer program.
- March 6: Bob Peloquin KB1VUA on Alternative Power Sources
- April 3: Mark Richards, K1MGY on Amateur Radio Public Service: More Than Just Communications
- APRIL 6: FARA FLEA MARKET AT KEEFE TECH!!!
- May 1: Post Flea Market Pizza Party
- May 3-4: New England QAO Party
- June 5: Election of Officers/Field Day
- July 17-19: ARRL National Convention, Hartford, CT

This month's Circuit sponsored by:

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## The Story of License in a Weekend by Ed, W1NXC

What happened to the LIAW (License in a Weekend)? Here is the rest of the story. Back in the mid-nineties the Framingham Radio Club tried something new. The executive board authorized the trial of a radical program aimed at increasing the number of Ham radio operators; the concept of running a special Technician class which would enable a person to attend a one weekend radio course and end up with an FCC Technician license on Sunday. A team of instructors was recruited and the class was given much publicity.

Not everyone was convinced that this would work, however. Skeptics joined in the chorus saying that getting a Ham license could not possibly be obtained in just one weekend. The concept did succeed however and was widely copied. The initial class in 1995 had 17 students and 13 obtained the Tech license. In 1996 and 1997, there was a class in the spring and one in the fall. None had less than 12 students. In more recent years however, the trend was obvious. The computer invasion and possibly changes in peoples lifestyles started to take a toll. The proliferation of Ham tests available widely on-line also was

a factor. Fewer and fewer people were willing to give up an entire weekend in order to obtain a Ham license. The fee charged for the class was not a factor; it actually included lunch Saturday and Sunday, the FCC exam cost and the text. Those last two items amounted to \$33 and since the total fee charged was \$42, that left only \$9 for lunch both days and drinks plus snacks were provided at no extra charge!

The student total dwindled to less than 10 in 2007 and 2008 plus the number of applicants in 2009 and 2011 was less than the number of instructors. In 2012 despite extensive publicity and distribution of flyers, not even one applicant applied for the class. Not a good sign, reluctantly the program had to be discontinued.

There were other signs that interest in Ham radio was waning. In earlier years the Radio club was open not only on Saturdays morning, but Sunday also. There were also weekday night classes on kit-building, soldering techniques, and other various topics of interest to anyone wanting to learn about Ham radio. Semi-annual contests brought many club members and others to the club on

Saturdays and Sundays. Martin AA1ON and Bev N1LOO were frequent visitors on these occasions, showing the rest of us how it was done! The annual ARRL field day evolved from a six station setup plus a Novice station to just a handful of club members clustered around an ICOM 430 feeding a half-wave dipole that Sumner W1VIV strung between two trees and Dick K1KTK's famous chili for Friday night supper!!

It is also interesting to note that the Radio club not too long ago had two Sunday night nets. One was at 7 pm run by Marc WA1R as net manager, primarily devoted to emergency communications. Another followed for general discussion among club members. Participation in both of these 2 meters nets was high and involved technical and social issues.

Ham radio is not dead and neither is the Framingham Radio Club. There are more than 3/4 million Ham operators in the USA alone. The club still has many active and technically competent people. The meetings held monthly at the Framingham police station are well attended, thanks to

continued on next page...

### Club Information 2014

President	Paul King	N1VAM		president@fara.org
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Director of Testing	Jim Weckback	W1EQW	508-435-6487	testing@fara.org
Publicity Coordinators	Sumner Weisman	W1VIV		w1viv@rcn.com
Emergency Coordinator	Alex Sayegh	KB1JYD	508-509-0328	
Activities Director	Gordy Bello	K1GB	781-891-5572	k1gb@arrl.net
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Newsletter Editor	Robert Hess	N1UVA	860-227-9188	circuit@fara.org
Webmaster	Eric Taylor	KB1PJN	508-653-7778	webmaster@fara.org

Meeting: Club meetings are normally held on the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30PM in the Framingham Police Station

Club Nets: FARA Net: Sunday, 7:30PM, 147.75/147.15 - social/chat, ARES preparedness

Club Station: W1FY, the club station and shack, is open Saturday mornings from 9:00-12:00. Call the club number, 508-879-8097 to confirm.

Club Web Site: <http://www.fara.org>

Mail Address: PO Box 3005  
Framingham, MA 01705

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Gordy K1GB who always manages to line up speakers presenting interesting topics related to Ham radio.

Change, however is not necessarily bad. We do have it easier today to obtain a Ham license. The Radio club is open every Saturday and prospective Hams are welcome to visit the well-equipped shack and meet people who can answer any questions on how to get licensed. The club also sponsors so-called "Crash" courses for anyone wanting to upgrade to General or Extra class. These are usually scheduled in the fall.

Licensing procedures were more stringent in earlier years. The changes have been drastic and obviously more lenient for Ham radio as anyone who has followed the history of licensing will attest. The initial class B and class A license required Morse code proficiency at 13 wpm. A typical exam question for the class A license might require a applicant to draw an entire schematic for a Xtal-controlled CW transmitter, including the power supply and push-pull amplifier output plus label all components. One also had to keep a log of ALL transmissions and certify in the last six months of the license term that you had contacted several stations. Mobile operation was limited to 25 MHz and above. So today we have it a little easier! No more Morse code; it vanished in 2007.

At this point a note of thanks to the very competent team of instructors who contributed their talents and most notably their time to the License in the Weekend classes. Over 200 Hams obtained their FCC Tech license and many are active all over the bands today.

Instructors were:

Lee K1GL

Jim W1EQW

Pete KA1AXY

Sumner W1VIV

Karen K1KEB

Dennis N1DB

Ed W1NXC

Mary KA1HGL-Staff Assistant