

The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association

December 1995, Vol. 62, No. 12

This Month's Meeting

This is the month when we eagerly await the arrival of a celebrated high flyer. Well, the meeting may not have much to say about that one, but some other high flyers will be discussed. Come hear Dennis, KE6DPL, and Dave, WA6ILT, talk about their experiences working through amateur satellites and what it takes to communicate through the "birds".

President's Thoughts

From where I sit the club seems to be functioning very well. We have the shack back in full swing as evidenced by the contest we worked a month ago. We manned the radio for the full 48 hours and a total of 31 different operators were involved in one way or another in the operation. A special thanks to WA1KUG and KA1JIR for their efforts in feed the hungry multitudes. Chili is good at 3AM!!! Our score was 506,000 points, that is 599 contacts, 73 zones, and 233 countries. This was a great effort on everyone's part and I think we even had some fun!!!!

The club continues to be open every Saturday from about 8:30am until at least noon and Wednesday nights from 7:30pm to 9:30pm. There is a crowd there most openings and everyone is always welcome to drop in to chat or even operate the radios. Informal instruction on the operation of the radios and packet and computer operation is always available.

We will be electing a new director for the club at this month's meeting. There will be more information in the following article. As hard as it is to fill Lew's shoes we must try.

This is the close of the year for FARA and it is time again to renew your membership with the club. The dues are still only \$10.00 per year (students and retirees pay \$5.00) with an additional voluntary \$10.00 to support the repeater if you use it. The repeater portion also entitles you to the phone patch codes and the codes will be changing after the first of the year. Your dues help pay for the newsletter, shack improvements, Field Day, etc. Please see Dennis, KE6DPL, with your payments.

Well, I hope everyone will have a happy holiday season and a joyous New Year.

73, Bev
N1LOO

To All Our Friends At FARA

Karen and I are presently staying in Orlando, FL where I am working for the Raytheon Company. Sometime after January 1st my job will permanently relocate to the Montgomery Alabama area. We have found a house there and as soon as we move in I plan to put up at least a 20M antenna at first so we can work back to Framingham. Karen and I appreciate the great send-off so many of you gave us before we left.

Having been FARA members for over 20 years the club has been a big part of our lives. We will certainly miss being there with all of you. However, we will continue to be FARA members from Alabama and will be in constant communications with many of you.

It is good knowing that FARA is as strong and active as at any time in its history with a membership that is growing at a steady rate. I feel most proud to have served over the years as club president, director and W1FY trustee. Keep up their good work! We will keep you informed of our activities down south. We will also plan a trip back next year for a visit.

73s Karen, KA1BYP
Lew, K1AZE

Election for Director

The position of director has been vacated by the departure of Lew Nyman and as a club we are mandated by our bylaws to elect a new director at the next general meeting. Therefore, we will be electing a new director at the meeting this month.

The position of director as described in the bylaws: The Director shall provide continuity and advise to the Association. (Article 2.4.5 Director) The vacancy shall be filled by vote of the Membership at the next Regular Meeting. The Officer so elected shall serve the unexpired term of the vacant office. (Article 3.4 Filling of Vacancies)

The term of the director is 3 years and the unexpired portion of this term will be 2 years 6 months. Nominations for the vacancy will be taken until immediately prior to the election. Nominations may be from the floor or in written form. Signed absentee ballots, enumerating specific candidates for specific offices, shall be accepted at any time prior to the vote for that office. No proxy ballots shall be accepted. (Article 3.1 General Elections) The election will be held at the start of the meeting on Thursday.

Sad News

It is with a great feeling of sadness that we note the passing of Sylvia Hoffer early in November. Sylvia was the wife of Julie, W1DL, and well known to most FARA members and many more amateurs as the other person behind Julie's flea-market table.

Sylvia had been stricken with the same type of cancer that took the life of Dave Crocker, W1TMO, our former ARRL SM. Despite Sylvia's valiant fight, assisted with new, experimental therapies, the battle was lost.

We shall all miss her presence and join with Julie in a sense of shared loss at her death. Our condolences go out to him during this time of grief.

Repeater Tips

by Charlie Ross, NC1N

I often think that the most important thing about FARA is our collective commitment to welcoming newcomers. In my years in the club, I've made a number of friends who were either new to ham radio or returning after a long absence.

This philosophy extends to our repeater, as well. Some repeaters are well-known for their cliques; not ours. If an unfamiliar call shows up on 147.15, chances are that someone will come back and welcome him or her. We have roundtable discussions with people constantly joining or dropping out.

It's a sometimes a challenge to maintain a coherent discussion under such circumstances. Who goes next? Did so-and-so sign out? I'd like to offer some suggestions. I've picked these up by observing club members that I think are good at working in roundtables.

- When there are three or more people in the roundtable, always explicitly say who you are passing it to. Either use callsigns ("KA1USL, NC1N") or, preferably, a simple "Over to Lee!"
- Worry only about who you have to turn it over to next. Try hard to keep track of drop-outs or additions that come immediately after you. There's no need to try keep the whole list in your head, especially if you're driving.
- When someone drops in their call before your turn, take your turn, then let them in afterward. (Assuming it's not an emergency, of course.) If one or more calls are heard, mention them in the order you hear them, at the beginning of your transmission. ("Dick and Marsha acknowledged...")
- When turning it over to a person joining the roundtable, let them know the order through the point where the original rotation is resumed. They may not have been

listening long enough to know. ("It goes to Dick next, then Marsha, then over to Lee.")

I work with software a lot, so let me close with a "nerd" analogy. I like to think of a roundtable as a linked list. Each node in the list keeps track of the next node. If nodes are inserted or deleted, each must be given a pointer to its next node.

We're all guilty of saying "I don't know who gets it next" from time to time. These suggestions aren't a panacea, but I've found that they can help.

A Posting From the Internet DX Reflector

I posted the following over on a Usenet newsgroup, but since it is sort of DX-related, I thought I would post it here as well. As DXers we all get in the mode of making quick contacts. Perhaps many of you can recall the similar thrill of a first DX QSO on CW.

The other evening, I received a most surprising phone call. An Australian Ham called and said that he had spent the last 2-3 years trying to find me just to say "thanks" for having taken the time to give him his first CW QSO almost 4 years ago. He asked if I remembered our QSO and I actually replied - "My God, you must be VK2GPN". That CW QSO was one of the most memorable of my own 32 year ham career as I'll explain below.

~~Around midnight on a November '91 evening, I had already~~ been living in Japan for quite a number of years and was tuning the low end of 20m looking for some DX. I found this station calling CQ at about 3-4 wpm around 14020 KHz and knew right away that he was a "fish out of water". Over the next 90 minutes, Tony (then VK2GPN) overcame his nervousness and his code speed went from being very erratic to being a much smoother (or exhausted?) 10-12 wpm. The heavy QRN and QRM were also additional challenges to his concentration.

Although Tony had made some SSB QSOs, this was his first CW QSO and his first DX on CW as well. Yep, even a 7J1 (JA) is DX to some people. :-)

Anyway, he copied my Tokyo address, no mean feat mind you, and sent me a letter and photo. I replied with my own letter and one of those nifty "FIRST QSO" certificates that are (were?) available from the ARRL. Not long thereafter, I moved back to the California and later to Portland, Oregon.

Well, when Tony, an electrical worker by trade as I recall, telephoned me the other evening it was quite a pleasant surprise. He mentioned that for over two years he had telephoned (from his home, not an office phone) to several places in Japan and the USA trying to find me. He told me that his only reason for calling was to say "Thank You" for taking the time to work him that November evening. He

said he had almost "given up" on Ham radio thinking that almost all hams (incl. DXers) ever want to do is exchange name, QTH, and RST. This QSO had been his first chance to have a real ragchew (and on CW at that!).

Tony is now licensed as VK2MS living near Sydney and hoping to get back on the air in the coming months. Personally, I'd love to talk to him again because that long QSO back in 1991 has been a reminder to me many times since about how magical Ham Radio really is. The expression "a stranger is just a friend you haven't met yet" is never more true than in Ham Radio. It's one of the things that make me so proud of this hobby.

Anyway, Tony's call just made my whole day (week/month?). In some ways, his efforts to track me down were not dissimilar to the tenacity with which he "stuck to it" to make that original CW QSO. In many respects, his nervousness and excitement at making a first QSO was very thrilling to me because it brought back to me the memories of my own first awkward steps on the air as a novice so many, many years ago.

This is probably a boring story to most (all?) of you, but I was just so touched and thrilled by it that I had to dash off this message. Thanks for taking the time to read it.

Warmest 73
Sandy - WA6BXH/7J1ABV
Portland, Oregon USA
WA6BXH@N0ARY.#NOCAL.CA.USA.NOAM
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Thanks - And a Call For Articles

by Rick Commo, K1LOG

As we approach a new year my stint at publishing the Circuit approaches its first anniversary as well. Actually I have to confess that I can't remember when I put out the first issue - it was either January or February of this year. But that's not the point. The point is that I could not have done it with out a lot of support from a lot of different people. I would like to say "Thank you very much".

The newsletter tends to get put to bed in the wee hours of a Saturday morning. Usually the Saturday morning when it's due to go out in the mail!

As the deadline for each issue of the Circuit approaches I sometimes experience a minor panic - I have 3 pages to fill and not many articles! "But Rick, every issue so far has had 3 pages so what's the beef?" OK, I admit it - I do some ghost writing from time to time.

So let's make a deal - a simple one! You write and I'll edit and publish. This is a "home folks" newsletter - written for us to be enjoyed by us. For many of you writing may be an intimidating task. Don't let it be! Everyone has something to share, and *you* are part of everyone. It doesn't have to be "deep" or "technical" ; just something that you might want to share with the club. Like a good band opening on VHF, a really rare country you've finally bagged, family news the rest of us would like to hear - the list could go on and on.

Write about what you think FARA members would like to read. As editor it's my job to make you look like a pro when your article goes to print! You do your best and let me do my best. Season's Best and Happy New Year!

Ham-Ricks

by K1_OG

If you find on a Chanukah night,
That your QSO rate is quite light.
Spin a Dreidel or two
Eat some chocolate coins too!
While you wait for the bands to ignite.

In this season our members might mingle
On the air with a chap named Kris Kringle.
With ham gear in his sleigh,
He's within reach while away.
So why don't you give him a jingle.

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 an issue is the Saturday before the FARA board meeting.

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FARA Horizons

Dec. 8: December meeting.
Dec. 26: Board Meeting - Note: This date is subject to change listen to 147.15 for more details.
Dec. 27: Deadline for January Circuit articles.
Saturdays: Join us at the shack for coffee, munchies and good friendship!
Sundays: Don't forget to participate in one of FARA's three nets.