

Zero Beat



Our 76th Year as an ARRL Affiliated Club

September 2024

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From the Assistant Editor:

This issue of Zero Beat looks different, doesn't it? Don't worry, it's not a permanent change. Ken, KD1KU, our club's outstanding Newsletter Editor, is currently neck-deep in renovating one house while moving out of another. As a result, I'm taking over production of the newsletter this month. Ken works his monthly magic with the page layout in Microsoft Publisher, which I don't have and can't install because I run Linux. Instead, I'm doing the layout in LibreOffice, which works, but not in exactly the same way. Also, my professional work in publishing has been almost entirely in the content-generation department; I turn in text, and someone else makes it look pretty on a page.

Despite those snags, we knew it was urgent to get the September issue out, because this is when our club starts its new season. There's a lot coming up, and you can read all about it here - even if it doesn't look as good as you're used to.

Thanks for bearing with us.

73 de Alan, AB1XW

September 6th Meeting

At our September 6th meeting, we'll hear all about the Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network, a high-speed digital network built by hams around the country. Orv Beach, W6BI, one of the pioneers in developing this system, will give a talk and answer questions so HCRA members can start building their own nodes.

Upcoming Meetings

September 6, 2024	All about AREDN™, the Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network. This is a high-speed digital wireless network built by hams. Guest speaker Orv Beach, W6BI, will tell us all about it and explain how we can build our own nodes.
October 4, 2024	HCRA member Jeff Bail, NT1K, will talk about 3D printing for ham radio projects. Need a case for that nifty new thing you built? Print one! Jeff will tell us how.
November 1, 2024	Our annual auction is back! Bring any ham radio gear or related accessories you want to sell, and get a good price on that thing you've been looking for. Ham gear only – NO computers, monitors, or PC parts.
December 6, 2024	The annual HCRA Holiday Party is traditionally held at The Steaming Tender restaurant in Palmer, MA. Come join us for a night of good food, good friends, and fun. Watch for more details soon.
January 3, 2025	TBA
February 7, 2025	TBA
March 7, 2025	TBA
April 11, 2025	April is our “Show and Tell” meeting. Bring whatever radio-related project you've been working on and show it off. Find out what neat stuff your fellow club members have built, too. This is always a popular and fascinating event
May 2, 2025	TBA
June 6, 2025	Field Day, Elections, and more! June's meeting is when we make final preparations for Field Day, elect the club's Board for the next year, and generally get ready for summer.

From the President's Desk

Who, me?

By Alan Dove, AB1XW

When Larry, W1AST, approached me about becoming President of HCRA, I was hesitant. Sure, I've been a member of the club for awhile, and have participated in various events with the group over the years, but my involvement was sporadic. Ham radio is just one of my several hobbies, and I'm nowhere near as hardcore about it as a lot of our members. I also have work and family commitments eating up a lot of my time. I didn't have any major agenda to enact, and running a radio club certainly doesn't come with any great prestige, privileges, or power. Why me?



The simple answer is that it's hard to get anyone to accept an official position in a volunteer organization. Just by agreeing to help with the web site, and showing up to the virtual Board meetings reliably, I had inadvertently marked myself as leadership material.

Now that I'm here, I intend to take the job seriously, but not too seriously. I see my role mainly as one of caretaker. Larry left the club in excellent shape. We're now an ARRL Special Service Club, and with over 130 members we're one of the biggest radio clubs in New England. My main goal is to try and keep us doing what we've been doing, and not lose any ground.

That's not to say I'm averse to change. Quite the contrary. If you have ideas for projects the club should pursue, speakers we should have at meetings, events we should add to our calendar, or topics we should discuss more on our email list, web site, or in person, speak up. The HCRA exists to help its members pursue their radio-related interests, and part of my job as President is to make sure we do that.

There is one thing we need to change soon, though: we need a new Treasurer. George, KC1V, has graciously agreed to extend his term until we find someone to replace him, or until the end of this year, whichever comes first. We can't run the club without a Treasurer, so this is an urgent need. If you can manage a spreadsheet, submit a report about it once a month, and be trusted not to steal, you're qualified. Please step up!

Now let's talk about radio stuff. I had big plans to do a bunch of SPOTA activations this summer, but between blazing heat, pouring rain, and a deluge of other commitments and distractions, all I've managed to accomplish so far are a few minor repairs and updates to my gear. I'm hoping autumn will bring better weather and more free time. How about you? Did you do any portable operating recently, and if so, how did it go?

The big club event this summer was, of course, Field Day at School Street Park in Agawam. Josue, KP1JLD, did an amazing job organizing it. Despite some of the worst Field Day weekend weather in recent memory, a lot of folks showed up and had fun. We all learned a lot, too - especially about the importance of weatherproofing our outdoor operations and preparing for the unexpected. Our

From the President's Desk

(cont'd)

By Alan Dove, AB1XW

score may not be spectacular in the final tally, but the in-person contacts we made with members of the public and each other were well worth the effort.

We're already talking about next year's Field Day, including the possibility of entering as a QRP/solar operation. With decent antennas and good sunspot numbers, five watts can go a long way, especially on CW or FT8. Portable solar panels and batteries have also improved a lot in recent years, and unlike generators they're silent. This is just a preliminary idea right now, though, so if you want the club to take a different direction for Field Day, let us know.

Coming up, Ez, W1AEZ, is organizing a combined cookout and operating session this October. This will be a casual event. Bring a portable setup if you have one, or just show up and enjoy some food and camaraderie. Ez is still finalizing the details, but we'll post all the information on the HCRA web site and email reflector, so watch for those updates.

Be sure to take a look at page 5 in this issue for a report on a POTA road trip a few club members took recently. Looks like they had a blast!

I also want to congratulate Ken, KD1KU. See page 8 for the news, but suffice it to say that you're reading the #1 ham radio newsletter in New England! That's entirely Ken's doing.

This month, we have our September meeting on the 6th. It will feature a talk by Orv Beach, W6BI, one of the main developers of the Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network (AREDN). AREDN nodes have sprung up in many areas of the country, especially out West, allowing hams to maintain their own high-speed digital networks independent of commercial infrastructure. These systems operate on microwave frequencies, with enough bandwidth to carry live video and full-duplex audio. This is cutting-edge stuff, and it should be a very interesting presentation.

We'll have another cutting-edge, or at least extruding-tip, talk at our October 4th meeting, when our own Jeff Bail, NT1K, will tell us how we can use 3D printing for our ham radio projects. Why buy a case that kind of fits your circuit board, when you can print one to fit it exactly? This is a technology I've been eyeing for years, and it seems as if the latest generation of printers has finally matured to a point where I might take the leap and buy one. I'll wait until I've heard what Jeff has to say first, though.

The 2025 meeting schedule still has a few openings. We have a couple of speakers lined up but not scheduled, and are looking for more. Is there some topic you want to hear more about? Someone you met at a hamfest who seemed like they'd be a great speaker? Drop a line to our Programs officer, Gary, AA1UE, and let him know.

73,

Alan, AB1XW

alan.dove@gmail.com

A Sunday Adventure

With Chris, Bob, and Larry

Larry Kraison, W1AST

This past Sunday I picked up Bob, WA1OJN and Chris, KC1BDL and headed to Trekonderoga. The original set recreation of Star Trek which is located in Ticonderoga, NY.

If you are an original Star Trek fan, you MUST go take the tour and visit the set. It's best described as wicked cool.

Here is WA1OJN in the "Captain's Chair".



After the tour we set out towards Vermont. Heading into a thunderstorm as we crossed the Crown Point bridge into Vermont. We ended up in Middlebury for lunch and then started looking for POTA locations to activate.

One thing we didn't plan on was the loss of cell signals and missing the turns to where we wanted to activate. Eventually the phones came back online and we decided to activate Fort Drummer State Park which is US-3114.

Bob sweet talked the ranger into letting us into the park without paying a fee. We drove up and into the campground and into an empty campsite. Checking propagation only to find out a solar storm had recently hit and the bands were awful. So Bob set up his station on a picnic table and started sending CQ POTA on FT8.

A Sunday Adventure

With Chris, Bob, and Larry

Larry Kraison, W1AST (cont'd)



After the requisite 10 contacts (more than that). We decided to do another activation.

We decided to do another activation since we were having so much fun. We worked our way to Satan's Kingdom Wildlife Management Area in MA. Off we went.

We got set up along side the road across from the area (swamp). We couldn't safely park next to the swamp, so we parked across the street.

The mosquitos were not yet fierce, but would be once it started getting dark. We literally were half on the road and half off. There was no place to park. The truck tailgate became the operating table.

A Sunday Adventure

With Chris, Bob, and Larry

Larry Kraison, W1AST (cont'd)



It started getting dark and we expected a moose or bear to make an appearance or the police to show up. A few cars did pass us but not many and it got very dark. But Bob worked the needed amount plus a few, and we packed it up and worked our way back to Chris's house. It was a fun adventure and a long day. After leaving my house at 8:30 am, I returned home around 10:30 pm.

We had a blast and will definitely do another "guys' day away" plus more POTA adventures.

Zero Beat is #1 in New England

Officially the best!

By Alan Dove, AB1XW

At the Northeast HamXposition in August, the HCRA's own Zero Beat was named the number one ham radio newsletter in New England. This is entirely due to the tireless efforts and outstanding skills of Ken, KD1KU, who plans to resume his usual role editing this newsletter once he's finished moving into his new house. In the meantime, be sure to congratulate him on this well-earned honor.

Congratulations, Ken!



Club Business

September: Dues are Due!

Help Needed: Treasurer

Can you maintain a spreadsheet, submit regular reports from it, show up for Zoom meetings once a month, and be trusted not to steal?

WE NEED YOU!

The HCRA needs a new Treasurer as soon as possible. George, KC1V, will orient you to the job, and you can start helping your club as a member of the Board of Directors.

Dues are Due

It's September, time to renew your HCRA membership. Please use the PayPal link on the club web site (hcra.org), or send a check for \$15 with "Membership renewal" in the memo line to:

Hampden County Radio Association
P.O. Box 562
Agawam, MA 01030-0562

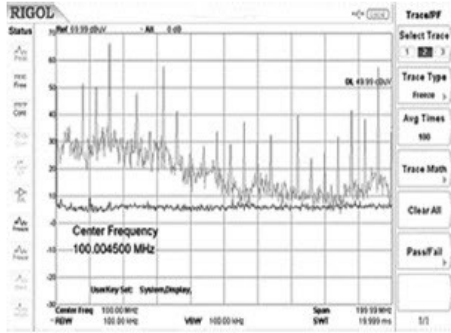
Useful Links

Western Massachusetts Section News
<https://wma.arrl.org>

ARRL New England Division: <https://nediv.arrl.org>

ARRL Western Massachusetts Section Manager - Raymond P. Lajoie, AA1SE -
aa1se@arrl.org

To learn more about an ARRL membership, and how it can help you -
<http://www.arrl.org/membership>



Need Help With RF Interference Issues ?

If you have been experiencing RF interference there is a WMA resource available that's ready to assist you. Each section has established an RF interference investigative team that can help identify and possibly remedy your problem.

To initiate your request for help you can simply send an E-mail to k1yo@arrl.net with your contact information and a description of the problem and anything you may have already tried.

A member of the WMA RFI team will contact you with directions on how to initiate the formal request for assistance. This then may require several steps / tasks on your part which provide us with essential information to guide further investigative processes.

Additionally, helpful information can be found on our [RFI Troubleshooting Guide](https://nediv.arrl.org/rfi-troubleshooting-guide/) online at:
<https://nediv.arrl.org/rfi-troubleshooting-guide/>

We are ready to help - just give us a call !!


ARRL Club Commission Program

Join or Renew your ARRL Membership through the HCRA!

The HCRA now earns a **\$20 commission** for each **NEW** ARRL member we recruit and **\$5** for each **renewing member**, at no **additional cost to the member**. Download the form, fill it out completely including payment, and mail it to **Hampden County Radio Association, P.O. Box 562, Agawam, MA. 01001**

Be sure to send it to the HCRA P.O. Box above and **NOT** directly to the ARRL

<https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Membership/Club%20Commission/ARRL%20Membership%20Application%20CLUB%20rev%20Jan%202024.pdf>



ARRL

The National Association for
Amateur Radio®

Membership Application

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Name _____ Call Sign _____

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Your Annual Membership Dues*
 Circle Your Choice (rates effective Jan. 1, 2024)

	1 Year	3 Years
Standard membership	\$59	\$174
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Student (must be under age 26)	\$30	
Blind (requires one-time statement of legal blindness)	\$12	\$36

Add-on ARRL Subscriptions

QST, ARRL's membership journal for active radio amateurs.
 1 Year \$25* 3 Years \$75*

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Your membership supports benefits, services, and programs that keep you active and on the air.

Membership Includes:

- Access to four digital magazines and archives (*QST*, *On the Air*, *QEX*, & *NCJ*)
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For Sale

Ham Globally, Buy Locally

By Marvin, W0MET:

Ameritron ALS-600 HF Amplifier & matching Ameritron ALS-600PS Power Supply. \$1400 or best offer.

No tuning, no warm-up. Output power is 600 watts PEP, 500 watts CW. Includes A continuous coverage from 160 m thru 20 m. SWR protection prevents amplifier damage if you switch to wrong band, use wrong antenna, or have high SWR. Plus more.

Separate ALS-600PS power supply can be placed conveniently out of the way and plugged into your nearest 120 Vac outlet. No special wiring needed. Remote capability and setup. Asking \$1400.

I also have a 600 watt LDG tuner that works with this. About 42lb for shipping, so will ask for half of the shipping cost. Obviously Local pickup would work too. I am located in Western Mass.

Cash, Venmo or Paypal. Contact Marvin Turner - W0MET 651-357-3592.

By Bob, W1SRB:

1. Alinco DM-330MV, 32A, 16 VDC variable power supply. Hardly used. At 32A, it has the capacity to easily power a 100w radio, and being variable from 0 VDC to 16 VDC, it's a very good bench power supply to power radio projects, \$35 or BO.

2. SCG SG-230 Smart Tuner remote tuner for 160M through 10M, 10w to 150w. Will tune almost any kind of antenna. I used it with an off-center fed dipole through 50' of ladder line but can be used with just a single wire random length antenna, or most anything else that will radiate. It's designed for outdoor use in a weather proof housing, \$35 or BO.

3. Simpson 260 multimeter (a classic) – needs a new rectifier for AC measurements, works fine for DC, resistance, etc. With leads, \$20 or BO.

4. 8' copper clad steel ground rod with clamp – new, never used, \$5

5. Two 10" screw in type ground anchors – great for antenna guy wires, \$2

Contact Bob Solosko, W1SRB at bandj92@outlook.com or 413-585-5767

By Larry, W1AST:

Daiwa CN-901 Cross Needle High Power & Swr meter, 20, 200, 2000 watts. Meter illumination, PL connectors, back lit meter, box & manual, excellent condition. Large visible meter., 1.8 Mhz to 200 Mhz.

New: \$199.99

For Sale: \$140

Located in Longmeadow, MA. Contact Larry at 413-348-3289, or W1AST@arrl.net

Local Nets & Happenings

Sundays: 8:45 am Western MA. VHF Emergency Net on 146.94, PL 127.3 W1TOM/R

Sundays: 9:15 am Western MA. UHF Emergency Net on 443.200, PL 127.3 W1TOM/R

1st Monday: 6:45 pm, MEMA RACES Drill, 146.49 Simplex and 3.930 LSB

Mondays: 7 pm, RACES Drill, 146.910, Mt. Greylock

Mondays: 7 pm, HCRA 10 Meter Net on 28.375, New topic every week. Have a topic to suggest? Contact kd1ku@yahoo.com

Tuesdays: 7:30 pm, 146.94, PL 127.3 - Hampshire County Emergency Net

Tuesdays: 8 pm, ARES Emergency Net, on 146.985, PL 136.5

Wednesdays: 7:30 pm, MTARA Info Net on 146.94, PL 127.3

Wednesdays: MTARA Swap net: 146.94, Following Info Net

Wednesdays: N1RLX Simplex Net, Check-In's on 146.94 then QSY to 146.42 Simplex immediately following the swap net

Wednesdays: 9 am, FCARC Experimental Net, 28.354 MHz

Thursdays: 8 pm, FCARC Information Net, 146.985 - 136.5

Club Meetings and VE Sessions

1st Friday of the month at 7:30 pm HCRA Meeting. In-Person meetings began in Sept. of 2022. Meetings start with a meet & greet at 7 pm followed by the regular meeting at 7:30pm sharp. <http://www.hcra.org/>

2nd Monday of the month at 7 pm, FCARC meeting. 1 Aviation Way, Turners Falls, MA. (airport). Social Hour 6-7 pm, meeting at 7 pm. <http://www.fcarc.org/>

2nd Saturday prior to FCARC meeting. 8 am Breakfast at Denny's Pantry, 496 Bernardston Rd. Greenfield, MA. Brad Councilman bc@councilman.com

3rd Friday of the month, MTARA Meeting, 7 pm, Castle Of Knights, 1599 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA, 01020 <https://mtara.org/>

4th Friday of the month, The Western Mass VE Team (WMVET) VE sessions at the Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Room beginning January 27th and every 4th Friday at 6pm to perform VE exams. E-mail Dave, W1FAB wa1dc@yahoo.com. Call or text 413-575-2950. Need directions? <http://www.hcra.org/meeting-location/>

Start or Renew Your ARRL Membership!

ARRL members enjoy:

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Members-Only Web Services

Technical Information Service

Member Discounts

Outgoing QSL Service

Continuing Education

ARRL as an Advocate

Regulatory Information Branch

Public Relations for Amateur Radio

ARRL Field Organization

ARRL-sponsored contests

Operating Awards

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Hamfests and Conventions

Volunteer Examiner Coordinator Program

<http://www.arrl.org/membership>

HCRA

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webmaster@hcra.org



**Here is your
fabulous September
issue of Zero Beat!**

***Our 76th Year as an ARRL
Affiliated Club***

Hampden County Radio Association
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Agawam, MA 01030-0562