

# ZERO BEAT



*Our 76th Year as an ARRL Affiliated Club*

**December 2024**

## Renewal Reminder

Annual Dues were due at the beginning of September. It's an easy thing to forget, so please check the membership list at [hcra.org/current-members](http://hcra.org/current-members) to see if yours has expired. We gladly accept renewals by mail or online - see the site for details.

**Thanks for renewing!**

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*From the Assistant Editor:*

*Here's the thinnest issue of Zero Beat I've produced so far in my tenure as temporary editor. Larry, W1AST, contributed a couple of short reviews of items that might interest HCRA members, and of course there's my obligatory President's column. We also have a decent selection of ads from members selling various items, so be sure to look through those. All of the usual monthly reminders and reference pages are also here to keep useful information handy.*





*As I've said before, getting content is one of the hardest parts of editing this thing. I was able to write a couple of extra columns last month, but this time around my regular work (which is also writing) has kept me too busy to do that. While this will hopefully be my last month substituting for Ken, I'd really love to see more people submit stories and photos to the newsletter in the future. Don't worry if your spelling, grammar, or the lighting in your pictures isn't perfect. We're a ham club newsletter, not *The Atlantic*. Just send what you have to Ken or me, and we'll work with it; whatever you've produced is better than content that doesn't exist.*

*73 de Alan, AB1XW*

## December Break

The Holiday Party originally planned for December 3rd is canceled. Enjoy the holiday month, and please join us when regular meetings resume in January.

## Upcoming Meetings

 <b>September 6, 2024</b>	In September, we heard all about AREDN™, the Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network, in an excellent presentation by Orv Beach, W6BI.
 <b>October 4, 2024</b>	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.
 <b>November 1, 2024</b>	Our annual auction is back! Bring ham radio gear or accessories to sell, and get a good price on that thing you've been looking for. NO computers, monitors, etc.
 <b>December, 2024</b>	The Holiday Party originally planned for December 3rd is canceled. Enjoy the holiday month, and please join us when regular meetings resume in January.
<b>January 3, 2025</b>	As the chill of winter grips our area, Nick Maslon, K1NZ, will tell us about his DXpedition to the South Pacific nation of Vanuatu. Hear about palm trees, coconuts, and pileups.
<b>February 7, 2025</b>	Do those hills near your house affect your HF signal, and what can you do to improve it? Ken Miller, WB1DX, will tell us all about terrain analysis for DXing.
<b>March 7, 2025</b>	Have you ever bounced signals off the moon? Bill Larned, KA1WHT, will tell us how even relatively small stations can set up to tackle Earth-Moon-Earth (EME) communication.
<b>April 11, 2025</b>	April is our "Show and Tell" meeting. Bring whatever radio-related project you've been working on, show it off, and hear what other club members have been doing.
<b>May 2, 2025</b>	TBA
<b>June 6, 2025</b>	Field Day, Elections, and more! June's meeting is when we make final preparations for Field Day, elect the Board for next year, and get ready for our summer hiatus.

# From the President's Desk

**When the fun runs out**

**Alan Dove, AB1XW**

The Pareto principle, also known as the 80/20 rule, is an idea that crops up in many fields. It says that roughly 80% of results stem from 20% of causes. Fundraisers, for example, often notice that a small group of donors - about 20% - contribute 80% of the money in a funding drive. While the figures are not exact, the same general pattern surfaces in epidemiology, classroom participation, crime statistics, and many other data sets.

In ham radio, we might expect about 80% of on-air activity to come from 20% of licensed amateurs. That aligns with ARRL statistics that about one in five US-licensed hams are members of the League. While there are certainly ARRL members who aren't currently active on the air, willingness to pay ongoing dues is a pretty strong measure of interest in the hobby.

Extending the Pareto principle to the HCRA, we might expect about two dozen of our club members to be the most active participants in our events. Indeed, in years past we seem to have gotten about that number showing up for major activities such as Field Day and the annual Holiday Party. Lately, though, the numbers have fallen.

As someone whose own involvement has fluctuated widely over the years, I'm certainly not going to lay guilt on anyone for skipping events. This is a hobby club, and nobody should feel obliged to show up for something that doesn't interest them. I get it. Sometimes I like playing radio, other times I'd rather play video games, or go fishing, or read. The pandemic also recalibrated a lot of our attitudes toward in-person activities, perhaps permanently.

Whatever the reasons, the decline in participation creates some real problems for those



of us responsible for running the club. Grand plans for Field Day won't work if only a handful of people show up. At the end of the October picnic, I was handing out still-sealed packages of burger patties and kielbasa to everyone, since we'd massively overbought food. Then, of course, there's the Holiday Party, which we had to cancel because we couldn't come close to the 50-person minimum the venue required, and paying for 20 empty seats would've broken our budget.

It's easy to rationalize any of these low-turnout results individually. Field Day weather was awful; the picnic was Columbus Day weekend; we moved the date of the Holiday Party in early November. None of those explanations seem definitive, though. Heat and rain are common on Field Day, lots of people stick around Columbus Day weekend, and a date change announced a month ahead of a dinner isn't exactly last-minute. Rather than chalk it all up to poor timing, maybe

# From the President's Desk

(continued)

Alan Dove, AB1XW

we should re-evaluate our events.

Meeting attendance remains high, so it's clear that HCRA members are interested in a wide range of radio-related topics. From talking to members about their individual projects, I know that a lot of you are active, deeply engaged in this hobby, and doing very cool things with it. Has Field Day simply lost its luster? Are holiday parties out of fashion?

The purpose of the HCRA is to help our members get more out of amateur radio. If the activities we organize aren't doing that for you, let us know what you'd prefer. This club serves its members, not the other way around.

One event we have coming up is easy to participate in: the ARRL 10-meter contest on December 14-15. Even Technician-class licensees have access to a significant portion of 10 meters, and the band has been hot lately. The HCRA enters this event every year as a club, competing with other similar clubs around the country.

Even if you don't consider yourself a contester, this is a great contest to enter. 10 meters is mostly a daytime band, and the HCRA score is the total of the scores of all of our members, so even if you just get on for an hour on Saturday or Sunday afternoon, you can have a lot of fun and be part of our team. You can use SSB, CW, or both in this contest.

The exchange is simple: just a signal report and state/province for North American stations, and a signal report and serial number for DX stations. Listen to a few contacts and you'll pick up the pattern quickly. You can log by hand or use logging software, but after the contest you'll want to convert your log into the standard "Cabrillo" file format. There are online tools to do that if it's not built into your logging program. In the

"CLUB" field of your Cabrillo file, be sure to put "Hampden County Radio Association."

For complete rules and more pointers on operating in this contest, see the ARRL's official page about it at [arrl.org/10-meter](http://arrl.org/10-meter). If you still have questions or need help, just ask on the HCRA email reflector. We have lots of experienced hams in the group who can lend a hand.

73 de Alan, AB1XW



# Two Reviews

## A shack decoration and a book

Larry Krainson, W1AST

First, here's a perfect gift for any ham: a lit sign with your call and "On The Air."

It can sit anywhere. Mine is on the mantle above my fireplace. The plexiglass word part sits in a hockey puck-sized base, which is powered by a USB cable. There is an on/off switch on the top. The whole thing is controlled via a small 2x3 inch remote control. From the control you can control brightness, color, flashing or a smooth or gradient change of colors.

Brian Goldberg; KG6BKI, who is the ham radio owner of AG Custom Gifts, sells this and many variations of this sign. The prices are very reasonable and the quality is excellent. They're available on his site at <https://agcustomgifts.com/services/amateur-radio/>.

Second, how about a good book? Do you like reading Clive Cussler and James Rollins or other thriller adventure stories? If you do, you will enjoy *Terror at 12.4 Degrees* by Eric Knight.

It's a fast moving story that involves ham radio, cool techy stuff and a fast moving story line. Once you get a few pages in, you won't be able to put it down.

The author, Eric Knight is KB1EHE from Farmington, CT, just 30 miles south of the Springfield area.



# For Sale

## Ham globally, buy locally

### From Harold, N1FTP

Heathkit RF Generator (Laboratory Generator) \$80.00  
Heathkit VTVM \$30.00  
Heathkit Audio Generator \$50.00  
Heathkit DX-35 w/VF-1 and separate PS for VF-1 \$90.00  
Hammarlund HQ-129A \$90.00  
Hammarlund HQ-110 \$90.00  
Drake R4-C/T-4XC/MS-4 \$500

All items are in working condition. All units come with manuals. The Drake also comes with manuals and 2 sets of cables and has all 3 filters installed.

I can be reached at N1FTP@yahoo.com. Thank you, Harold de N1FTP

### From Larry, W1AST

Kenwood TS-480SAT

Remote head standard. 160-6m at 100 watts. Buttons backlit for easy night operation. Built in antenna tuner. Rig easy to remote. Beautiful Kenwood audio. Mic, power cord, manuals and original box included. Big, easy to read display.



For Sale at: \$550.00

More info: <https://www.kenwood.com/usa/com/amateur/ts-480sat/>

Contact: Larry, W1AST  
W1AST@arrl.net

# For Sale

(cont'd)

## From Carol, W1LGU

### Elecraft KPA-500 amplifier:

500W, compact, solid state FET amplifier for 160-6m. Works and automatically selects band with any radio that provides key-out and RF signals. Used sparingly, non-smoking household. Originally \$2795. Asking \$2200.

### Brand-new FX-4CR QRP transceiver:

This is a new SDR transceiver developed by BG2FX. It covers all major HF bands, and includes wide-band receive capabilities. Its small size (1 lb) and built-in speaker and microphone allow ultra-portable operation. A simple built-in USB sound card interface enables simple operation on digital modes.



Transmits and receives on 80-6m; 2.0" TFT display screen; spectrum display and 48 kHz waterfall plot, dual VFO operation, and many more features. \$500.

Contact Carol, W1LGU: 413.527.7165 or [W1LGU@arrl.net](mailto:W1LGU@arrl.net)

Located in Easthampton, MA

# For Sale

(cont'd)

## From Marvin, WOMET

### Three Small Form Factor Computers:

All similar to the one shown here:

- 1 HP i5 6500T 256GB SSD. 8gb Ram Windows 10
- 1 Lenovo. Thinkcente M910q i7 -6700. 16gb Ram and Win 10
- 1 Lenovo Thinkcentre 73 i5 256GB 8 GB Ram and Win 10

Asking \$50 apiece for them. All still really good computers. I just dont need that many. They have been completely factory reset with a fresh install of Windows 10 as of November 1st.

Email or call me at 651-357-3592

These are great still for doing logging, Winlink Express and WSJT-X.



## From Larry, KD1RV

### Elecraft KPA-500 amplifier and KAT-500 tuner for sale:

Elecraft KPA-500, \$2,000; KAT-500 tuner, \$500. Both used very little and have manuals and accessory items that came with them, and original boxes and packing.

Contact Larry, KD1RV at 413.592.5994 or email [larrydziobek@gmail.com](mailto:larrydziobek@gmail.com).



## Join or Renew your ARRL Membership through HCRA!

We earn a commission for memberships and renewals processed through the club. Please fill out the form and mail it to **Hampden County Radio Association, PO Box 562, Agawam, MA 01001**. DO NOT send it directly to the ARRL, or we don't get the commission.



## Membership Application

New     Renew     Previous Member     Unlicensed

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**My Family Member is Joining or Renewing: (\$12 per member)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Please note my new address     I do not want my name and address made available for non-ARRL related mailings

### Your Annual Membership Dues\*

Circle Your Choice (rates effective Jan. 1, 2024)

	1 Year	3 Years
Standard membership	\$59	\$174
Family (same membership exp. date and address)	\$12	\$36
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\*

**On the Air**, For beginner-to-intermediate-level radio amateurs.

1 Year \$25\*     3 Years \$75\*

### Member Benefits

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*)
- Unlimited courses through the ARRL Learning Center ([learn.arrl.org](http://learn.arrl.org))
- Logbook of The World®, contests, and award programs

...and more!

\*A print subscription for *QST* and/or *On the Air* requires an ARRL membership. Dues and subscription rates are subject to change without notice and are non-refundable

### Payment Information

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Charge to:     Visa     MasterCard     AmEx     Discover     Check Enclosed

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holder's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Toll Free (US) 1-888-277-5289 or 860-594-0200 • ARRL, 225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111-1400  
membership@arrl.org • [www.arrl.org/join](http://www.arrl.org/join)

CLUB  
form rev 1/24

# HCRA Stuff

## HCRA is an ARRL Special Service Club

### Groups.io and HCRA.org

In between Zero Beat issues, keep up with what's going on in the club by visiting our web site at:

**[hcra.org](http://hcra.org)**

We also discuss club activities and ham radio in general on our email reflector. Sign up by visiting:

**[groups.io/g/hcra](https://groups.io/g/hcra)**

### HCRA Member Outgoing QSL Service

Outgoing cards from members are sent to the ARRL Outgoing QSL Bureau quarterly: January 15th, April 15th, June 15th, and September 15th. For details, visit:

**[hcra.org/dx-qsl](http://hcra.org/dx-qsl)**

Or contact Paul, NF1G at:

**[paulkelliher@comcast.net](mailto:paulkelliher@comcast.net)**

### Zero Beat Ads

If you have radios or other ham-related gear you'd like to sell or trade, or if you're searching for something, you can list it right here in Zero Beat at no charge. To submit ads, simply send an email to Ken:

**[kd1ku@arri.net](mailto:kd1ku@arri.net)**

Include a brief description of the item or items, a way for people to contact you, and your asking price.

# Dots and Dashes

## Stuff that doesn't fit anywhere else

### Join Brown Baggers for Lunch

"Brown Baggers" is a friendly lunch get-together held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, for the benefit of all HCRA members. It's held at the Munich Haus Restaurant, 13 Center St. in Chicopee Center, across from City Hall, at 12:00 noon local time. Enjoy lunch, conversation, and camaraderie with your fellow hams!

### POTA Subgroup on HCRA Email Reflector

POTA, POTA, POTA. It's everywhere these days!

And for good reason. Go to a park, set up a portable radio and antenna and get on the air. There are hams out there who are collecting the parks for their own hunter awards. Help them to achieve that!

The HCRA now has a POTA/SOTA/Field Operating sub group. You can join for free:

<https://hcra.groups.io/g/POTA>

Go there and join.

Then post your operating or activating info so other HCRA members can share in your POTA activities. Photos are very welcome.

Let's share and talk this up. We can all learn more and maybe get some ideas of our own.

I look forward to reading your posts!

73,

Larry, W1AST

W1AST@arrl.net

# Dots and Dashes

(cont'd)

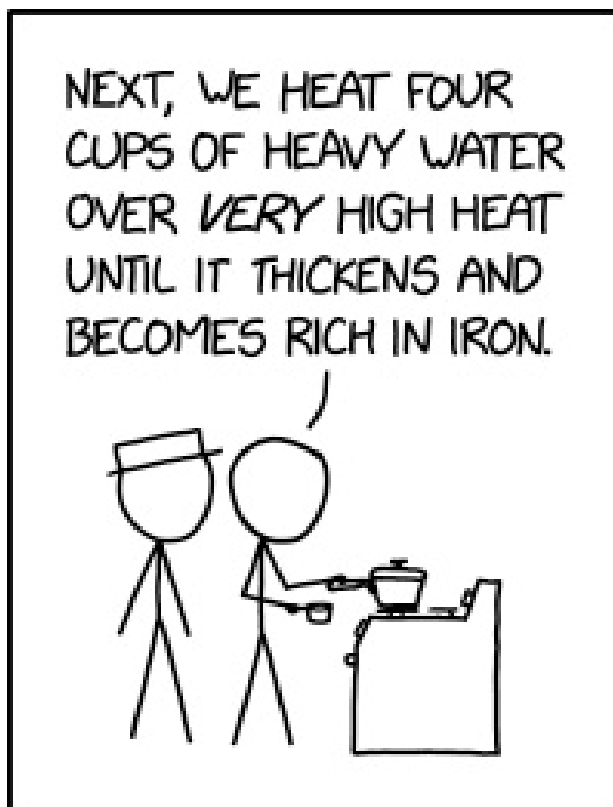
## Major Upcoming Contests and State QSO Parties

December 2-8: ARRL 160-Meter Contest

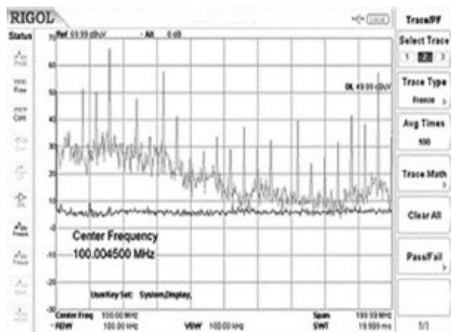
**December 14-15: ARRL 10-Meter Contest - ENTER WITH HCRA!**

December 31-January 1: Straight Key Night

(click this box for a complete monthly contest calendar)



I'M GETTING REALLY INTO FUSION CUISINE.



# 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](mailto: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 !!**

### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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:**

QST Magazine

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**

**President** - Alan Dove, AB1XW  
[alan.dove@gmail.com](mailto:alan.dove@gmail.com)

**Vice-President** - Ez Moralez, W1AEZ  
[ez.w1aez@gmail.com](mailto:ez.w1aez@gmail.com)

**Treasurer** - George Collins, KC1V  
[hcra.kc1v@gmail.com](mailto:hcra.kc1v@gmail.com)

**Secretary** - Paul Kelliher, NF1G  
[paulkelliher@comcast.net](mailto:paulkelliher@comcast.net)

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**Zero Beat Newsletter** - Ken Dion, KD1KU  
[kd1ku@yahoo.com](mailto:kd1ku@yahoo.com)

**Website** - Vanessa Oquendo, W1IRL and Alan Dove, AB1XW  
[webmaster@hcra.org](mailto:webmaster@hcra.org)