

# ZERO BEAT

*The Newsletter of the HCRA*



**February 2026**

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*Have you ever sat down at the radio to work some DX or check into a net, and discovered that the band you're on is full of noise? Most of us have experienced radio frequency interference (RFI) at some point. It can range from a mild annoyance to an absolute showstopper, depending on how bad it is and how weak the signals are that you want to hear.*

*The ARRL's RFI Help page (see the link on page 22 of this issue) has some good initial troubleshooting ideas, but what if you've narrowed the problem to the power lines in your neighborhood? Before calling the utility company, it helps to find out exactly which part of their network is causing it.*

*Ken Miller, WB1DX, is developing a semi-automated system for tracing power line RFI. He describes his progress so far starting on page 8. This should be a cool project to follow.*

*Also in this issue, we have President Ez Morales's ideas on creating a welcoming environment in our club, another packed "For Sale" section full of great gear at great prices, and all of our usual announcement and reference pages. So grab a hot beverage and enjoy another issue of Zero Beat.*

*73 de Alan, AB1XW  
Zero Beat Editor*

## **February 6, 2026 Meeting**

**S**hovel off the driveway again if you have to, then come out to our February 6 meeting and hear Michael Scantlen, KC1IZC talk about building a compact, multimode digital station for under \$100. Michael's projects are always interesting, so this should be a good talk. As always, the doors open for socializing and snacks at 19:00, followed by brief announcements and then the presentation at 19:30.

## Upcoming Meetings

✓ <b>September 7, 2025</b>	Shawn Warren, KC1NQE, spoke all about the Connecticut POTA group. This group holds numerous picnics, activations, and other activities around the area.
✓ <b>October 3, 2025</b>	Gary Thomas, AA1UE, took us on a deep dive into the popular FT8 mode and its cousin, JS8Call, including how to have real conversations with weak signal digital modes.
✓ <b>November 7, 2025</b>	Our annual auction was a big success, with lots of folks getting rid of gear they didn't want anymore and acquiring great stuff at fantastic prices.
✓ <b>December 13, 2025</b>	This year, we held a combined Holiday Party with our friends in the MTARA. It was an afternoon of good food, good friends, awesome door prizes, and fun!
✓ <b>January 9, 2026</b>	Najm Choueiry, AB1ZA, told us all about antenna analysis, an important skill whether you want to build your own antennas or troubleshoot ones you bought.
<b>February 6, 2026</b>	Michael Scantlen, KC1IZC, built a compact multimode digital station for under \$100, using DigiPi. Come hear how you can do the same.
<b>March 6, 2026</b>	Ken Miller, WB1DX, will give a talk about setting up your own remote station. Take your home shack with you on your travels, or use it from your living room couch.
<b>April 3, 2026</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 1, 2026</b>	In May, we'll have a special meeting for members to show the group their portable S/POTA gear. Come get ideas for making your park activations more fun.
<b>June 5, 2026</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

## A Welcoming Club

Ez Morales, W1AEZ

Reflecting on my tenure over the past eight months as President of the Hampden County Radio Association (HCRA), I am committed to fulfilling our vision of cultivating a “Welcoming Club” focused on having fun and camaraderie in all activities. This continued undertaking is made possible through the collective dedication and support of our members. Ultimately, it is the membership that forms the foundation of the club, uniting us in our shared interest in radio operations and our commitment to serving the community.

The Hampden County Radio Association is truly a club that belongs to all its members. Everyone is encouraged to share their unique talents and ideas, helping to shape an environment that is welcoming, meaningful, and enjoyable for everyone involved. As we approach new challenges and opportunities, standing together enables us to build a space where active participation is valued and the club thrives through our collective unity, enthusiasm, and mutual respect. By reaffirming our commitment to these principles, we lay a strong foundation for growth, shared responsibility, and ongoing accomplishments. This collaborative spirit is evident in the way our teamwork makes each event memorable, strengthens the bonds between members, and highlights the core values that are most important to our amateur radio community.

While researching “Welcoming Clubs”, I found many sources noting that ham radio clubs often struggle to be more welcoming. Most resources focus on why clubs are struggling and identify factors that can make radio clubs seem unwelcoming. Titles such as “Why Do Most Ham Radio Clubs Suck” illustrate the surrounding issues with club culture and the



challenges of fostering an inclusive environment.

A significant portion of these discussions centers on the behaviors and attitudes often associated with so-called “Sad Hams.” The lingering effects of such behavior can have a notable impact on the radio community, influencing the atmosphere within clubs and potentially discouraging participation. These observations underscore the importance of addressing club culture and actively working to overcome barriers to inclusivity and engagement.

Many of the discussions highlight how crucial it is to improve club culture and remove barriers to inclusivity and member participation. A club creates lasting success by faithfully pursuing its purpose: connecting people, encouraging learning, fostering friendships, and supporting service. Every member should commit to respect and acceptance. It's inappropriate to judge others based on their radio gear, clothing, language, accent, or physical features like eye color, skin

# From the President's Desk

(continued)

Ez Morales, W1AEZ

tone, or hair color, as these judgments hinder inclusivity. Emphasizing shared goals and similarities helps clubs nurture environments of respect and belonging. This inclusive mindset ensures that everyone—regardless of background or preferences—feels appreciated and welcomed.

To maintain an inclusive atmosphere, clubs should welcome new members, help them acclimate, encourage their participation, and offer support when they are unfamiliar with equipment operation. Emphasizing mentoring over judgment reflects a welcoming culture characterized by professionalism and respect. Providing opportunities for member involvement—such as participation in on-air activities—and supporting the development of their confidence will ultimately enhance the club's overall resilience and membership engagement.

It has also been noted that amateur radio clubs play a significant role in cultivating an active and committed community of enthusiasts. However, some sources indicate that certain clubs face challenges in cultivating inclusive environments or embracing innovative approaches, which may lead to dissatisfaction among members, particularly newer or younger participants. Resistance to technological advancement and rigid club leadership may dampen enthusiasm and drive people away from traditional club activities.

One of the constant key recommendations to tackle these issues is that radio amateurs should promote positive changes within their organizations. Clubs need to reassess how they operate and be more receptive to fresh perspectives. Fostering inclusiveness and embracing modern technologies will help clubs remain relevant and encourage participation from everyone. By moving past outdated habits,

amateur radio clubs can renew their appeal and strengthen the ham radio community.

This is yet another conversation about many longstanding clubs holding on to outdated traditions and often overestimating their appeal to prospective members. If they don't adapt, including changing, growth won't happen. These clubs comprise numerous distinguished members; nevertheless, progress may be constrained if members are either not pursuing change or do not perceive it as necessary. When the benefits of membership do not align with members' expectations or interests, they may be less inclined to maintain their association with the club.

Creating a comfortable and respectful environment for all members is central to the club's mission. Expressing dissatisfaction in unconstructive ways can disrupt meetings, hinder collaboration, affect the quality of online communication, and potentially harm the reputation of a "Welcoming Club." To address concerns effectively, members are encouraged to engage with one another using positive and respectful communication rather than resorting to complaints or negative comments. Upholding the club's values requires open dialogue and responsible participation from everyone. Reluctance to embrace change, especially among long-standing members who value tradition, may inhibit innovation and discourage new participants, ultimately impacting the club's ability to foster an inclusive environment.

Continued club growth and recruiting young members is essential for success. It is important to consider whether the club is prepared to invest in strategies to attract new members. Potential initiatives include offering classes and workshops,

# From the President's Desk

(continued)

Ez Morales, W1AEZ

hosting special events, delivering engaging presentations at club meetings, employing targeted marketing efforts toward schools and college campuses, utilizing social media, and fostering community engagement. Make sure it's fun. Amateur radio is a hobby. If club events aren't fun, people aren't going to show up.

Transitioning from old guard leadership can be one of the most challenging aspects of revitalizing an organization. In many cases, this obstacle can prevent renewal efforts from moving forward. The club is encouraged to adopt a leadership model that integrates collaborative and democratic principles. Change is an ongoing process, and it is possible that some individuals may not readily embrace this notion. Forming subcommittees have aided decision-making, illustrating the collaborative and democratic principles as shown in the recent auction and holiday party. The club seeks to increase subcommittees, particularly among younger individuals, by fostering an environment that encourages open exchange of ideas and ensures all perspectives are acknowledged, valued, and respected.

As a "Welcoming Club", HCRA will continue its dedication to advancing the growth of amateur radio operators at every level by promoting active member engagement and providing resources, guidance, and an inclusive environment for both new and seasoned operators. Since 1948, as an ARRL-affiliated Special Service Club, HCRA has provided wide-ranging support for amateur radio enthusiasts, including contests, building kits, and educational programs.

Let's help shape a new era in ham radio by letting go of outdated perspectives and welcoming a fresh generation of operators with

diverse interests. Our club offers various ways for members to discover and expand their knowledge of radio communications. Operating repeaters is an accessible way for newcomers to learn about radio programming and proper etiquette.

Additionally, the Parks on the Air (POTA) program gives individuals an affordable chance to operate HF radio stations outdoors, supporting both technical skill development and an appreciation for nature.

Satellite communications represent a significant aspect of the field, enabling members to communicate via orbiting satellites and gain exposure to advanced technologies. Digital Data Modes, including CW (Morse code), broaden the spectrum of communication methods available, supporting both established and contemporary operating practices. Members may engage in activities such as contesting and DX chasing, which provide opportunities to assess technical proficiency and establish connections with operators worldwide; however, initial participation may involve considerable expenses.

HCRA possesses both the resources and commitment necessary to uphold its reputation as "A Welcoming Club." It is essential to continue fostering mutual support, unity, and encouragement among all members. By remaining aligned with the club's mission of "Having fun in everything we do," each activity is designed to be both meaningful and enjoyable for participants. Effective collaboration reinforces the notion that the club is a collective entity, where individual contributions are recognized and respected. Maintaining this ethos of teamwork and shared responsibility will further enhance the organization and provide valuable experience for all involved.

# From the President's Desk

(continued)

Ez Morales, W1AEZ

First, let's review the achievements the club has made over the past year. ARRL Field Day stood out as a memorable event, gathering both members and guests to take advantage of great weather, meet new people, socialize, and, above all, have a good time. The club's Foxhunting program was revived with a presentation by Larry, W1AST, followed by 2-meter Yagi antenna and attenuator kit building sessions where members brought their own soldering tools to improve their skills and confidence. Several members stepped forward to make this a success, especially Jerry, KC1VWB, by providing hands on training and volunteering to be one of the Fox Box handlers. The development of the HCRAssist program, initiated by Bob, K1YO, our club's technical director, has proven to be a pivotal asset for our organization and serves as an excellent resource for other radio clubs as well. Bob's participation in club building projects offers valuable mentorship to the entire radio community.

The club offers monthly meetings and presentations provided with valuable learning opportunities. Starting in September, Shawn Warren, KC1NQE provided a detailed overview of the Connecticut POTA group and its activities. The October session, presented by Gary Thomas, AA1UE, focused on FT8 and JS8Call digital modes, with particular attention to weak signal communications. In November, the organization facilitated an auction that allowed members to exchange equipment at affordable prices. December concluded the year with a Holiday Party organized in partnership with MTARA, offering food, networking opportunities, prizes, and entertainment. In January, Najm Choueiry, AB1ZA, delivered a presentation on antenna

analysis, sharing valuable guidance for both constructing and troubleshooting antennas.

A collaborative Winter Field Day between HRCA and MTARA will close out January, giving everyone a chance to test gear, sharpen emergency communication skills, and connect with fellow hams in authentic winter conditions. As Marvin, W0MET, HCRA member and Winter Field Day President, points out: "Winter Field Day isn't just about racking up numbers; it's about being ready." (Zero Beat, January 2026, Page 11). Looking ahead, February features Michael Scantlen-, KC1IZC, describing how he built an affordable digital station for under \$100 using DigiPi. March brings Ken Miller, WB1DX, who will discuss setting up a portable remote station. April's "Show and Tell" is your chance to display recent radio projects and learn from others, just as last year's event sparked great ideas and resource sharing. The May meeting focus will be on tips for S/POTA park activations, while June wraps up with the ARRL Field Day preparation, board elections, and planning for summer activities.

While the club has made notable progress in fostering a welcoming environment, several key areas would benefit from focused improvement. First, the club should consider forming several committees tasked with conducting an annual review of the inventories of the club's equipment and updating the club's constitution and bylaws. This committee would help ensure that policies remain current and that resources are properly managed, reducing overreliance on individual members providing equipment to club sponsor programs. Second, establishing a shared equipment fund could further support equitable access to commonly used items. The fund could operate through member contributions,

# From the President's Desk

(continued)

Ez Morales, W1AEZ

fundraising events, or a portion of annual dues, with purchases prioritized based on club-wide needs and input. Third, ongoing concerns about the club's trailer, including storage, inventory management, and maintenance—require practical solutions. Securing a reliable storage location and implementing a regular maintenance schedule would help preserve this essential resource for field day events and other activities. By implementing these improvements, the club can ensure fair access to resources, alleviate volunteer burnout, and encourage greater participation from all members.

The club website ([hcra.org](http://hcra.org)) connects members, highlights public service, and preserves club history through its extensive archive. The club's website maintains an extensive archive preserving our history and valuable resources. Members can easily access these archives through the club's website under the "Newsletter" section, ensuring everyone stays informed and connected with our ongoing initiatives. By exploring archived newsletters and meeting minutes, members gain valuable perspective on our club's evolution and key decisions. These records also provide a wealth of educational information related to radio operations, supporting personal development and technical growth for both new and long-standing members.

At the core of our club's mission is our dedication to being a "Welcoming Club." We are committed to fostering camaraderie and ensuring every event is enjoyable, so all members feel valued, engaged, and respected. Our shared enthusiasm and teamwork continue to strengthen this vision. Working together, we keep our club inclusive, provide meaningful opportunities for involvement, and celebrate amateur radio. None

of this progress would be possible without the commitment of our members and the leadership of our board. We sincerely thank everyone who has contributed.

*Ez, W1AEZ  
HCRA President*



# Power Line Noise Project

**Got Noise?**

**Ken Miller, WB1DX**

**I**s locating that pesky line noise giving you trouble? Maybe this can help!

I deal with very loud and intermittent line noise on a regular basis. Unwanted noise is one of the great equalizers in Amateur Radio. Whether you're chasing DX, checking into a net, or just enjoying a quiet evening on HF, a burst of S9+ power-line noise can turn a good signal into a frustrating mess. I'm sure I'm not the only one, and I've done the drive around the neighborhood with the AM radio turned on, but noise is noise. And if it is loud almost everywhere, discerning where the source might be can be frustrating. I think this approach is another tool that can provide an objective measure of the power line noise, map it, and most importantly, get you into the area where it appears to be coming from.

## ***Taking a systematic approach can help identify troublesome noise sources.***

I can't take credit for this idea. It came from Jeff, W4DD, after seeing a presentation on hunting power line noise. Jeff's solution was specific to a rig that I do not own, and the source code was not available, so I decided to break out my extremely rusty coding skills and see if I could reproduce what Jeff did.

The goal is simple: give hams a practical, measurable, repeatable way to survey power-line noise and other noise around their QTH, and visualize where the trouble spots might be. Once problem areas are identified, more specific and detailed interventions can take place. The project currently focuses on five core capabilities:

1. Establishing a baseline noise level.

Before you can identify a problem, you need

to know what "normal" looks like. Use the software to capture one or more baseline S-meter readings around your home QTH when the noise is absent, creating a reference point for future comparisons.

2. Capturing data during high-noise events.

When the noise suddenly spikes, conduct another survey along the same route as the baseline and compare the two. Problem areas should start to appear and begin to reveal patterns. Using an attenuator during this step can also help to further locate patterns of high line noise potential.

3. Logging key data while mobile.

As you drive, bike, or walk around the surrounding area, the system records:

- S-meter readings
- Latitude and longitude
- Distance from your QTH
- Bearing from your QTH

This creates a geotagged dataset that can be analyzed later.

4. Visualizing noise hotspots with Google My Maps.

Once the data are collected, they can be imported into Google My Maps, producing a visual map of potential noise sources. Clusters of high readings often point directly toward problematic poles, transformers, hardware, or other potential noise sources.

5. Flexible configuration.

The software includes adjustable settings for:

- QTH GPS coordinates
- Data capture rate
- Rig COM port
- GPS COM port

This makes it adaptable to different setups and driving conditions.

# Power Line Noise Project

(cont'd)

Ken Miller, WB1DX

Right now, the project interfaces directly with the Yaesu FT-857D, using CAT control to read S-meter values and GPS coordinates in real time. It works well, but the long-term vision is broader, something that can be shared on GitHub for others to use and enhance.

For this beta, I specifically wrote it for the rig I have in the vehicle. I did that to reduce complexity, iterate through adding features, and deliver the minimum viable product, as they like to say in sprint planning circles.

I'm hoping to add Hamlib integration, which would open the door to supporting a wider range of radios, at least a subset of radios suitable for this type of operating. That means more club members could participate in noise surveys without needing a specific rig.

There might also be a way to automatically compare surveys, eliminating the manual step of weeding through the details and coming up with a plan.

So how did it work in the field? Recently, I was lucky enough, or unfortunate, depending on your point of view, to have National Grid shut power off to the entire surrounding area. This gave me the perfect opportunity to take my time, survey the area, and establish a baseline during a period in which there was no power. The figure to the right shows what that looks like in Google Maps.

You can see a few spots where there was some noise recorded; remember power was out and folks had their generators up and running. One house with noise nearby had their generator out front, and it appeared to be an older model.

I surveyed the area again the next time there was that characteristic line noise. I drove the same route and captured another survey which

you can see on the next page with the S9+ records highlighted.

I also surveyed the hotspot with the rig's



attenuator turned on. More attenuation and driving slower would have been helpful, but I think this proved the concept. I was able to pinpoint a pattern of S9+10 and S9 signals in a specific area.

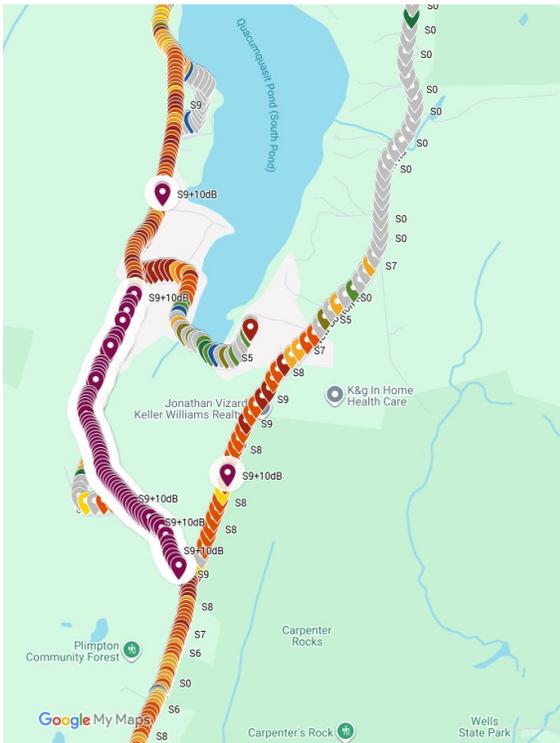
For the most part, it worked well. The cumbersome part is comparing the two mapped surveys, but I found that once you have the data

# Power Line Noise Project

(cont'd)

Ken Miller, WB1DX

uploaded to Google My maps, you can view it in Google Earth, which gives some better filtering opportunities. Filter out the S-Meter readings below a certain value and just see where the high noise spots are; there may be more than one.



Got a bad noise problem? Maybe this approach can help.



## HCRAssist Mentoring Program

Our team is here to help with whatever ham radio activity you want to pursue, whatever your experience level. Just follow the appropriate link below.

### New Ham Mentoring



### Experienced Ham Continuing Education



# For Sale

## Icom IC-7300

Icom IC-7300, excellent condition, non-smoking environment, original box, etc., used gently by little old lady ham in tennis shoes.

\$750.00

Contact Carol, W1LGU: [cgawle73@gmail.com](mailto:cgawle73@gmail.com)

## Estate Sale

Model #	Brand	Description	Price
FT-1000MP	Yaesu	HF Transceiver (100w)	\$750
MFJ-1262	MFJ	Microphone Switch	\$35
MFJ-901B	MFJ	Versa Tuner 200 watt	\$45
FT-990	Yaesu	HF 100w Transceiver	\$475
Delta-2	Alpha Delta	2 Position Switch (2)	\$75 ea.

All gear is from one owner, an elderly ham who is selling all of his gear and getting out of the hobby. Please contact me at the email address below and tell me what you're interested in and I will put you in contact with the owner's son who is handling his father's ham gear. The HF radios are in excellent condition!

73, Ken - KD1KU  
[kd1ku@arrl.net](mailto:kd1ku@arrl.net)

# For Sale

## Xiegu X6100

This is a very cool portable, all-mode SDR QRP transceiver that was reviewed in the July 2022 issue of QST. Features include a built in antenna tuner, 160-6-meter coverage, 10 watt maximum output (5 watts with built-in battery), 4" color screen, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi built in, TCXO, microphone, DNR, SWR scanner, and backlit keys. This one also comes in excellent working condition with a microphone, a protective plastic case, and much more. The full user manual is available online. Asking \$375. Contact Larry, W1AST: 413.348.3289 or [Hamop.W1AST@gmail.com](mailto:Hamop.W1AST@gmail.com).



## QRP Labs QCX Mini 20m



About the size of a deck of cards, this tiny transceiver was professionally assembled by QRP Labs. It's in excellent, like-new condition, and comes with a TuftIn front panel protector, and a PowerPole-terminated power cable. See the review in November 2021 QST for all of the specs, but highlights include: 5W maximum output (no internal battery), very low current consumption, backlit screen, low-pass filter, 200 Hz CW filter, iambic or straight keying, CW decoder, memory keyer, tilt-stand leg, on-screen S-meter, full or semi-break-in CW operation, A/B VFOs, split, RIT, beacon mode. This is an amazing little rig perfect for portable CW operation. \$100. Contact Larry, W1AST, 413.348.3289 or [Hamop.W1AST@gmail.com](mailto:Hamop.W1AST@gmail.com).

# For Sale

## Icom IC-9700

**144/430/440/1200 Mhz 100W all mode transceiver**



Got your eye on the amazing Icom IC-9700 VHF/UHF all-mode transceiver, but it's a little too pricey for you? Here's a one-owner unit with very low usage for a steep discount. Comes with an unused original power cord plus a spare unfused power cord (connect it to a fused source), a microphone, a Diamond MX-72N VHF/UHF duplexer, Heil Pro Headset and boom mic, deluxe model with AD-1-IC adapter, FS-3 foot-operated PTT, printed basic and advanced manuals, original box and packing materials. This package would sell for \$2,400 new. Asking only \$1,900. Contact Smitty, KC1KA at [KC1KA.Smitty@gmail.com](mailto:KC1KA.Smitty@gmail.com).

# ARRL America250

It's America's 250th year of existence, and among the many celebrations is the ARRL's America250 Award. You can get the basic award just by working all 50 states in 2026, but there are bonus endorsements for contacting ARRL Affiliated Club callsigns and W1AW/Portable operations in all 50 states. To accommodate the latter, hams around the country are stepping up to work the pileups under the W1AW callsign.

Each week throughout the year, one or more W1AW/# stations will be on the air. The goal is to work them all. The fun started on January 7th. On February 11th, Massachusetts will be activated by 20 activators, including our own W1AST and KX1X, along with 18 other hams across the state. There's another opportunity for the Bay State in August. If you're interested in being an operator for that, contact Larry, W1AST, at [FunHamRadio@gmail.com](mailto:FunHamRadio@gmail.com).

Here's the schedule of other upcoming activations in February:

02/04/2026	Alabama	W1AW/4
02/04/2026	Indiana	W1AW/9
02/04/2026	Vermont	W1AW/1
02/04/2026	Kansas	W1AW/0
02/11/2026	Massachusetts	W1AW/1
02/11/2026	Florida	W1AW/4
02/18/2026	Texas	W1AW/5
02/18/2026	Michigan	W1AW/8
02/25/2026	Arizona	W1AW/7
02/25/2026	Georgia	W1AW/4

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## Advertise in Zero Beat

Any HCRA member can advertise ham radio-related gear in Zero Beat for free. Just write up the text of your ad, include any images you want to go with it, and send everything along to [alan.dove@gmail.com](mailto:alan.dove@gmail.com). Please *do not* do any page layout on it - I'll handle that. Just send the text and images.

# Calls for Participation



## HamX - *The Northeast HamXposition* August 13-16, 2026

HamX is the largest amateur radio convention in the Northeast! With close to 1,800 attendees each year, HamX draws radio amateurs from all over and is an ideal venue to present your ideas and experiences.

This is a call for speakers on topics of general interest to the amateur radio community. Some examples include: Operating practices, contesting, DXing, mobile stations, emergency communications, emerging activities, STEM outreach, club improvement, radio history, restoring antique gear, test equipment, kit building, antenna design, AI in amateur radio, VHF/UHF/Microwave/Mesh, EME and more. If you have a story to share, we would like to hear about it.

To submit a talk proposal, please go to the following website and enter the requested information.

<https://registration.hamx.org/speaker/>

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the program chair at the e-mail address listed below.

We look forward to your contribution at HamX 2026!

Mark Noe KE1IU  
HamX Program Committee Chairperson  
[ke1iu@hamx.org](mailto:ke1iu@hamx.org)

## Volunteer for the Boston Marathon

This year's Boston Marathon will take place on April 20, 2026. Volunteer registration is now open! This is a major public service opportunity for ham radio operators, and all you need to participate is a Technician-class license and an HT. To sign up, visit the [Boston Marathon Volunteer Registration](#) page, and scroll down to "Race Day Amateur Radio Volunteers."

# *Smitty's Switches, Splitters, and Stuff* At MTARA Hamfest



**Come see me at the Castle of Knights, Chicopee, MA  
at the MTARA Hamfest from 8:30 to 1:00  
on Saturday, February 28th,  
where I will be showcasing some new designs**

For a preview, check out my website:  
[www.smittys-switches-splitters-and-stuff.square.site](http://www.smittys-switches-splitters-and-stuff.square.site)  
Online ordering is now active.  
73, KC1IKA, Smitty

Scan for my website





# Amateur Radio & Electronics Hamfest

## Saturday February 28th, 2026

Located

### Castle of Knights

1599 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA 01020

[www.castleofknights.com](http://www.castleofknights.com)

### \*\*\*Directions\*\*\*

#### From North:

\*Take I-91 South to the Mass Turnpike. Take exit 5 (Rte. 33) off the Turnpike. Bear to the right to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Memorial Drive and travel north for about two miles.

#### From South:

\*Take I-91 North to the Mass. Turnpike. Take exit 5 (Rte. 33) off the Turnpike. Bear to the right to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Memorial Drive and travel north for about two miles.

#### From East:

\*Travel on the Mass. Turnpike toward West. Take exit 5 (Rte. 33) off the Turnpike. Bear to the right to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Memorial Drive and travel north for about two miles.

#### From West:

\*Travel on Mass. Turnpike toward East. Take exit 5 (Rte. 33) off the Turnpike. Bear to the right to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Memorial Drive and travel north for about two miles.

Castle is on the right for all of the above.

Mail- in Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Call sign \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (cell preferred) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Tables \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Is 120 VAC Needed? \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to: MTARA

Mail to: Brian Mullarney-N1FI, 20 Spring Street, Easthampton, MA 01027

### \*\*\* The Details \*\*\*

#### Doors Open:

7:30 AM Vendors *only*; help available for loading and unloading

8:30 AM General Admission (8:00AM if Vendors ready!)

#### Admission:

Adults: \$10.00

Children: under age12 are *FREE!*

#### No Tailgating

#### Handicapped Parking Available

#### Snack Bar – Coffee, Soda, Donuts

#### Raffle Prizes – six (6) tickets for \$5.00

#### VE Exam -10:30 AM FREE Exams\*

##### Provided by PVVET

Candidates must pre-register for the exam prior to the Hamfest. Visit <http://pvvet.org> for registration and more information. \*FCC application fees may apply  
Contact: Jeff Bail (NT1K) 413-238-1992

#### Additional Information:

<http://www.mtara.org>

#### Talk-In on 146.94 (127.3 PL)

#### Table Registrations contact:

Brian Mullarney – N1FI  
20 Spring Street  
Easthampton, MA 01027  
Tel. (860) 478-6790  
[N1FI@arrl.net](mailto:N1FI@arrl.net)



# HCRA Miscellany



## Find Us Online

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

Join our email reflector: **groups.io/g/hcra**

Check out our Youtube channel: **youtube.com/HampdenCountyRA**

Visit us on Facebook: **facebook.com/groups/HampdenCountyRA**

## 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-qs1**

Or contact Paul, NF1G at:

**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 Alan:  
**alan.dove@gmail.com**.

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

# Dots and Dashes

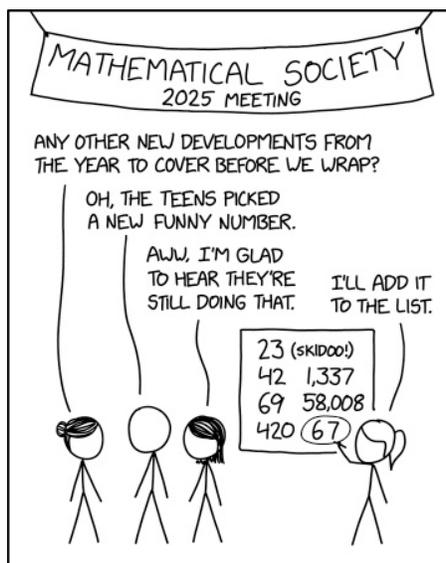
## Stuff that doesn't fit anywhere else

### 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!

### Become an HCRA Mentor

The recently launched HCRA Mentoring Team is expanding - come join us! Are you a die-hard DXer, an emergency communications expert, or a soldering savant? We'll connect you with hams who want to learn what you know. Share your passion for the radio arts, and help others grow in the hobby. Just click this box or scan the QR code below to get started.



# Local Nets

Whether you're looking for a casual conversation, a place to practice sending and receiving NTS-formatted radiograms, or some good emergency communication training, there's probably a net on the air to meet your needs. Try some of these.

<b>Day and Time (local)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Net</b>
Sundays 8:45	146.94 (-) 127.3	Western MA VHF Emergency Net
Sundays 9:15	443.200 (+) 127.3	Western MA UHF Emergency Net
1st Monday 18:45	146.490 (simplex) and 3.930 MHz LSB	MEMA RACES Drill
Mondays 19:00	146.910 (-) 162.2	RACES Drill
Mondays 19:00	28.375 MHz USB	HCRA 10m Net
Tuesdays 18:00	3.5825 MHz USB (digital)	<a href="#">NTS: MA-RI Digital Net</a>
Tuesdays 19:30	146.94 (-) 127.3	Hampshire County Emergency Net
Tuesdays 20:00	146.985 (-) 136.5	ARES Emergency Net
Wednesdays 9:00	28.354 MHz USB	FCARC Wednesday Morning Net
Wednesdays 19:30	146.94 (-) 127.3	MTARA Info Net
Wednesdays 20:00	146.94 (-) 127.3	MTARA Swap Net (immediately after Info Net)
Wednesdays 20:30	146.94 (-) 127.3 and 146.550 (simplex)	N1RLX Simplex Net (immediately after MTARA Swap Net)
Thursdays 20:00	146.985 (-) 136.5	FCARC Information Net
Daily 17:00	3.978 MHz LSB	<a href="#">NTS: MA-RI Phone Net</a>
Daily 19:00	3.565 MHz CW	<a href="#">NTS: MA-RI CW Net</a>
Daily 21:45	146.910 (-) 162.2	<a href="#">NTS: Heavy Hitters Traffic Net (statewide)</a>

# Local Ham Radio Meetings

**1st Friday of each month, September through June:** Hampden County Radio Association general meeting. Doors open at 19:00 local time, followed by the meeting at 19:30. For details, visit [hcra.org](http://hcra.org).

**2nd Monday of each month:** Franklin County Amateur Radio Club (FCARC) meetings at the Turners Falls Airport, 1 Aviation Way, Turners Falls, MA. Social hour starts at 18:00 local time, and the meeting starts at 19:00. Details at [fcarc.org](http://fcarc.org).

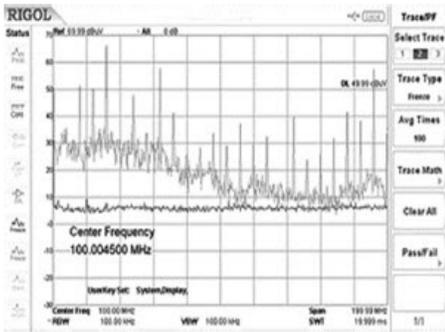
**2nd Saturday of each month (before the FCARC meeting):** FCARC breakfast at Denny's Pantry, 496 Bernardston Rd., Greenfield, MA. 8:00 local time. Contact Brad Councilman for details ([bc@councilman.com](mailto:bc@councilman.com)).

**3rd Friday of each month:** Mount Tom Amateur Repeater Association (MTARA) meeting, Castle of Knights, 1599 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA. 19:00 local time. See [mtara.org](http://mtara.org) for more information.

**4th Friday of each month:** The Western Mass VE Team (WMVET) holds Volunteer Examiner sessions at the Holyoke Medical Center Auxiliary Conference Center, at 18:00 local time. Email Jim, KK1W, at [kk1w.jim@gmail.com](mailto:kk1w.jim@gmail.com) for information, or call or text 413.237.4666. For directions, see [www.hcra.org/meeting-location](http://www.hcra.org/meeting-location).

## HCRA Contacts

President	Ez Morales, W1AEZ	<a href="mailto:president@hcra.org">president@hcra.org</a>
Vice President	Josué Lugo Delgado, KP4JLD	<a href="mailto:tipoacrata@gmail.com">tipoacrata@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Frandy Johnson, N1FJ	<a href="mailto:treasurer@hcra.org">treasurer@hcra.org</a>
Secretary	Vacant	
Program Director	Gary Thomas, AA1UE	<a href="mailto:programs@hcra.org">programs@hcra.org</a>
Newsletter Editor	Alan Dove, AB1XW	<a href="mailto:webmaster@hcra.org">webmaster@hcra.org</a>
Technical Director	Bob Meneguzzo, K1YO	<a href="mailto:k1yo@comcast.net">k1yo@comcast.net</a>
Membership Director	Al Giguere Jr., KB1VNH	<a href="mailto:membership@hcra.org">membership@hcra.org</a>
At Large Director	John Belhumeur, N1CB	<a href="mailto:JRB.it413@gmail.com">JRB.it413@gmail.com</a>
Webmaster	Alan Dove, AB1XW	<a href="mailto:webmaster@hcra.org">webmaster@hcra.org</a>



# 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 !!**

## 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



# HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 562  
Agawam, MA 01001



## Application for New or Renewal Membership

DATE: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CALLSIGN: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: Home (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Work (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ext ARRL Member:  Yes  No

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_  I don't want to be a member of the HCRA mailing list

Type of application:  New  Renewal (see below)

If renewal use data already on file?:  Yes  No

Class of application:  Regular  Family

*Donations are tax deductible!  
Thanks!*

Please list additional family members (family members at same household are free!)

Name	Call	ARRL Member	e-mail
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### My interests: (please check all that apply, even if renewing)

<input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Power	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Modes	<input type="checkbox"/> QRP
<input type="checkbox"/> Antennas	<input type="checkbox"/> DX'ing	<input type="checkbox"/> Satellite
<input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Ham Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> Club Events	<input type="checkbox"/> Field Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Training (Elmering)
<input type="checkbox"/> Contesting	<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Hunting	<input type="checkbox"/> VHF/UHF
<input type="checkbox"/> CW	<input type="checkbox"/> Kit Building	<input type="checkbox"/> ?

Thoughts for improving 'our' club:

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Entered in database by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Payment received by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Annual Dues:	<b>\$15.00</b>
Donation:	\$ _____.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ _____.00</b>