

http://hcra.org

May 2019

Special points of interest:

Next Meeting: DMR—digital mobile radio

Visit the HCRA facebook page.

 Don't forget to check out <u>hcra.org</u>

We have a new member in the HCRA. Welcome to the club!!

John Murray KC1EKC

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May Meeting

DMR. Digital Mobile Radio—this is an interesting and growing technology in VHF/UHF. It combines radio, internet, repeaters, programming all into a neat way to do long distance on VHF/UHF. This is a great way, especially for Tech licenses to get active on the radio. Come hear our guest speaker Tim Ver Voorn, KA2A tell us about this new mode. See more information about DMR in this issue of ZB.

The Swap / Sell table is back in action!—**Rob KC1KPF** has agreed to handle it at meetings. Bring your old stuff, get some new to you stuff. Check in with Rob when you get to the meeting.

<u>For the newer Hams</u>—want to try something new? Get a cool QSL card? Make a contact in a relaxed non-contest way? Try looking at special event stations, While at times the pileup can be intense, often you can break in, and actually have a minute or two to chat about the event. Special event stations are listed on the ARRL website— <u>www.ARRL.org/special-event-stations</u>, and in QST. Many commemorate historic events, some are large sports events (W9IMS has one for every race at Indy), military locations and some just simply the celebration of a Ham club's 5th year. This is an opportunity for new General licenses to wade in, work through a pileup, make a nice contact, and usually get a special QSL card, and sometimes a certificate. So got on the air, listen for that special event station, make the contact and send for the card. A nice start on your shack wall for your collection.

73, John N1JIE



Many of our members like to go to events / conventions, other meetings, etc. Not everyone has reliable transportation, or has traded off the spare Lexus for a Flex-9000 and a tower / SteppIR. Some folks don't like to travel alone, and would welcome company.

So—if you are going to an place (say... NEAR-fest, Boxboro,

Newington) and you have room, or you want to go to a place and don't have transportation—reach out and get together. Larry W1AST has agreed to be a clearinghouse via email (W1AST@arrl.net) for rideshares. But even easier—<u>use the FB page</u>. It's active, and allows quick contact between members.

Let's look out for each other, and help others participate in our hobby. Thanks Larry for helping by being a contact point.

FROM THE SHACK

LARRY KRAINSON W1AST



Back in the 80's and 90's there was a lot of activity on 2m (meters). It was where Technician class and above hung out while driving, going to work, taking your wife shopping or pretty much any time you were in a vehicle. 2m was a hot spot where you found your friends and pretty much everyone else.

Fast forward to the present. 2M now is pretty much dead with some rare occasions of activity. It's certainly not a welcoming spot for new hams.

Where to go? 10M is dead with the current sunspot cycle. I don't think UHF has any more activity than VHF. What is a new ham to do? Maybe DMR (Digital Mobile Radio) or other digital VHF/UHF (D-Star, etc) modes are the answer? DMR is certainly more affordable than Fusion & D-Star, due to the huge influx of Chinese DMR capable radios. A \$100 DMR radio and a ZumSpot can get on the Fusion system too. Digital VHF is certainly not only for Techs, everyone can participate.

All these and more will be answered at the May 3rd HCRA meeting. Tim Ver Voorn, KA2A is coming up from NJ to talk to us about DMR and Hot Spots. He will explain, demonstrate and answer all your questions.

Every May, the HCRA participates in the New England QSO Party. NEQP for short is a quick contest that is held the first weekend in May every year. The goal is to work people outside of New England and those outside of New England want to work those of us that are in New England.

This years NEQP takes place on May 4-5. The times are 4pm EDT Saturday until 1am Sunday and from 9am Sunday thru 8pm Sunday. See more info in this issue of ZB.

Now is the time to sign up for Field Day 2019. Make sure to mark your calendar! It will be June 22-23. Or, like a few of us, camping out Friday afternoon thru Sunday afternoon, June 21-23. We need people to volunteer and we need volunteer helpers.

Field Day is a lot of fun. It's easily the most fun contest/emergency communications practice that happens each year. You want to make the time to come and help and operate.

We will be once again holding a raffle only for the workers. Names will be logged of everyone that spends at least a few hours helping or operating. If you just come for the dinner, you won't be entered. But spend a few hours operating or putting together the stations or antennas or whatnot and your name goes on the list. The drawing will be held after tear down has completed on Sunday afternoon. Last year, we had two winners that each won a uBitX HF QRP transceiver kit. This year, we are offering a good SDR receiver as the prize.

FROM THE SHACK CONTINUED

Just a reminder about elections coming up in June. We have 3 new, very capable people joining the board replacing a few that are stepping down after years of HCRA board service.

- First we have Najm; AB1ZA taking over technical from Bob; K1YO who has already stepped down for technical duties to the W MA Section. You will be hearing more of Bob soon.
- Dave, WM1B is stepping down from the board. The board thanks Dave for his many years of service in a number of positions. Vanessa, W1IRL is running for Vice President. Vanessa has s lot of great ideas and is excited about many facets of ham radio and will make an excellent Vice President. Vanessa is also the clubs Web Guru, but that is not a board position.
- Todd; N1GNX is joining as the At Large empty position that was vacated by Ron; AB1ZJ who had his work time change and was unable to make the board meetings. Todd has already assumed the At Large position and is contributing.
- Rob; KC1KCF is coming in to the Program Director and will get lots of help from Larry, W1AST who has been doing programs for the last few years.

If others would like to submit their names for any position, please do. Everyone is welcome to challenge others already in their positions and staying. Even if you aren't interested in taking on a position, if something interests you, all of our Board Members would be glad to have someone in a learning role for the positions. Those positions are:

- President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Membership
- Zero Beat Editor

If you want to contribute, we welcome you to put your name in and run for office. Or contact a Board member, and get involved helping out.

We welcome those new people that are volunteering and look forward to them contributing in the coming year and into the future of the HCRA!

N1FJ

N1FJ

NEQP

New England QSO Party

Here we are folks—this is OUR party, focusing on New England as the target group. The goal is to contact as many New England stations (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont) in as many New England counties as possible on 80-40-20-15-10m. (New England stations work anyone). So everyone will be trying to contact us. Get on early, and be the popular county contact for the rest of the country.

The contest takes place on May 4/5. Yes, that's the same day as NEAR-fest, but it doesn't start until 4pm Saturday, so you should be able to be home early in the contest.

Your exchange is simple: signal report / state / county. You will receive the same from New England operators, out of region will give signal report and state, dx will give signal report and dx. I (John N1JIE) would send 59, MA, Hampshire. Larry W1AST would send 599, MA Hampden if he's using CW. Quick and simple.

Modes are CW and SSB. NEQP has not added digital modes.

Mobile operators—you can repeat contacts from each county you work from.

Points for each QSO, 2 for CW. Multipliers for us are each state (50), Each Canadian province (14) and each DX.

Now, the bonus! HCRA issues an award plaque for single operator low power (<150w) in Hampden County. Several past awards were HCRA members. Other awards are also available—see the NEQP page for details.

When you setup your log, please list Hampden County Radio Association in the header. There is an award for top club in New England from YCCC.

There are also 4 other contests going at the same time. NEQP.org has listings, and tips on how to log across the contests. See: <u>http://neqp.org/2003/so5c.html</u>

Everything you need to know is here-http://neqp.org/ Rules, log submittal, hours of operation, etc.

Now if I can just get done with my shack in time.....





DMR Radio

What is it? Is it radio? Is it expensive?

So, what the heck is DMR?

Digital Mobile Radio. Not digital like PSK31 or FT8, but digital as in a digital signal from one radio to another, using repeaters, the internet, a hot spot or even direct /simplex. It's your voice, and using a DMR capable HT or Mobile radio, you can make contacts literally around the world on 2M / 70cm.

As with many things, the Chinese made DMR radios enable you to take up this mode of Ham radio for \$100-\$200. A bit of programming, a way to connect to the network (repeater or hot-spot) and boom—you are regional or world wide. The major players (Motorola, Yaesu, Icom) also have their own network protocol and are all over \$200. But the Baofeng / Radiooddity type rigs seem to be most prevalent, largely due to cost. However, you get what you pay for—do your radio research. Many of the Chinese imports have very bad reviews, while others from the same company, or having a very similar model name will do better. A buggy radio, that is hard to program, or that won't connect to repeaters will not make for an enjoyable time. NEDECN, EHam, some of the links below will give you some info. But realize, this is a mode that is new, and exploding, and there are constant updates and changes both in hardware and software.

So what do you need?

A Radio-see above-do your research, ask others for opinions.

A way to access the DMR network. This can be a repeater (must be a DMR repeater, not the usual analog repeater). Mt Tom is not a DMR repeater. However, there is a VHF/UHF DMR repeater in Northampton. Or you can use a hot spot. This is a digital interface between your radio and your phone / wifi to access the internet. Again, do your research— <u>http://www.dmrfordummies.com/hotspots/</u>

A codeplug—this is the address book for DMR—it contains frequencies, offsets, timeout values, etc that make the network work. Much like other Ham stuff—there are those that delve into the details, and those that look to others for help. Codeplugs for most areas are available for download, and can then be loaded onto your radio. Once you get into it, you can make your own specific to your needs codeplug and share it with others. http://www.miklor.com/DMR/DMR-CP101.php

If you are a new Tech license, I'm sure you have already heard how little is going on with local repeaters. Have no fear— DMR (and other technology like Echolink) will get you into a network with much more ability to communicate—just what you got your license for, right?? For other hams, this is another interesting mode to try, without having to sneak another expensive rig past the XYL ;-)

This month, we have Tim Ver Voorn KA2A coming up from NJ to give us more information. But if you are interested in learning before the meeting—here are some links that will get you started:

http://www.dmrfordummies.com/

https://www.raqi.ca/~ve2rae/dmr/Amateur Radio Guide to DMR.pdf

A bunch of info / pundits on You Tube: <u>https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=dmr+radio</u>

A regional emcomm net for DMR: <u>https://www.nedecn.org/</u>

Come to the meeting. Listen to Tim KA2A, and see if DMR is something that may be fun for you. Ask other members (I know Ted K3FEC is into it) and perhaps get together to work thru things

73,

Larry W1AST and John N1JIE

Show and Tell

We had a great turnout of projects for show and Tell. From the cheap and simple, to the complex. An EmComm setup that bundles everything up neat, a beast of a full legal limit amplifier, a very nice homebrew carry box for a rig, a simple small-space antenna, a noise filter, a packet radio card for an HT, and a PC interface. A couple of the projects were still in development, but it was very cool to see the innovations.



May 3, 2019: Timothy, KA2A is coming up from NJ to speak and give a demo on DMR and hotspots. This should be a great opportunity to learn about a new, growing type of amateur radio technology!!

June7, 2019: Election of officers and finalizing plan for Field Day.

Give some thought to how you can get more involved in the club—volunteer for a board position!

Field Day is June 22-23 2019. There will be things to do setting up on Friday June 21—help setting military towers, assemble an antenna, setup linked logbooks. Then be there from Noon to Noon and operate with the club.

July and August—no meetings. Go out there—do a SOTA or a POTA. Go QRP. Or setup in your back yard, and pretend. CQ in a tent, CQ in a garage, CQ there, CQ everywhere! Keep an eye on the FB page—impromptu and planned things WILL happen during the summer! Have a great summer!

September 6, 2019: Bob Hassett, KB1IVG; Director of the Springfield Emergency Preparedness and EOC Facility. Specifically: What it is, how they respond and operate and bring a few examples of the technology tools they use and tell some examples of how they were used in the past.

October 4, 2019: Rich Collins, K2UPS will come up and speak to us about the group he helped to start, the Long Island CW Group and also show some of his key collection. A night of CW.

November 1, 2019: Jeff, K1ZM : The Amazing Transatlantic Feat of 1901 by Marconi via Skype from PEI (Prince Edward Island)

December 2019: HCRA / MTARA Holiday Party

ARRL STUFF

Things are happening in the world of Amateur Radio. ARRL is our advocate for Government, education and organization. I hope everyone that is a member of HCRA is also a member of ARRL.

ARRL Advocacy:

Our own **Jeff/NT1K** has proposed a rule change to the FCC concerning the method of awarding vanity callsigns. See this article from this week's ARRL letter for the details: <u>http://www.arrl.org/news/additional-amateur-radio-related-petitions-now-open-for-</u> comment?fbclid=IwAR33JzYzvYUIjAk2UPmcykNHHuzIkgUw8jPxpPNo7JSFqJsWx7JdHaxQX9E

Its been given number RM11385 and the FCC is inviting comments. Here's an opportunity to chime in and perhaps promote change in the rules governing our hobby.

To file a comment to Jeff's petition go to the following website: ht<u>tps://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/</u> and enter RM-11835 in the specify proceeding box, then search.

On the left hand side, at the bottom of the RM-11835 box click on "+ Express" and post your comment.

I feel Jeff is correct with his proposal but it will take a lot of comments to sway the FCC to make changes. If you feel strongly you shouldn't have to fight with folks from all ten call areas to get a vanity call for the W1 area then go for it. I remember losing to a W2 when I tried for W1JM years ago - it just didn't seem fair (and still doesn't).

Thanks to Jeff to taking the initiative on this.

Jim/KK1W

ARRL Education:

Have you ever listened to a podcast? It's basically a lecture, digitally recorded, and you can download it to listen to later. Kind of like Tivo for radio.

ARRL has been producing podcasts for a while— "The Doctor is In", and "So Now What?" are 2 of my favorites. You can download an app on your phone and do a search for ARRL to get podcasts. They are generally short, very informative, and sound just like a good radio show with expert hosts, interesting Q&A and topics that are relevant.

I use castbox as my app, there are others (stitcher, blubrry, etc). You can often play them thru your car radio if you have an aux connection to your phone, makes a commute a bit different.

Go to http://www.arrl.org/news-features and look over the podcasts, and other info there. It's all good!!

ARRL Membership:

We here in Region 1, especially WMA and CT, have an advantage over the rest of the country—ARRL headquarters is right in our back yard!! About an hour down the road in Newington, CT is the headquarters, the store, and WA1W. I haven't been down to see WA1W yet, it's on my list, but I know that several of our members have been, most recently Vanessa W1IRL. She posted a bit on the HCRA FB page about the visit. You can visit the radio station, operate it, see all the test equipment, learn about the equipment and antennas, and meet some very nice folks.

To learn more about W1AW—<u>http://www.arrl.org/w1aw</u>

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

ARRL STUFF CONTINUED

A special message from ARRL WMA section Emergency Coordinator:

Hello, fellow Western Massachusetts Radio Amateurs !!

I'm sending this email to both introduce myself and to update you on my plans to revitalize the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) program within our Section. My name is Bob Meneguzzo, K1YO, from Southwick MA, and I'm your new Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) for the five counties that comprise the WMA Section.

For many of us, a large part of Amateur Radio's appeal is the potential it offers to serve our respective communities using the communications and technical skills we've developed while engaging in its wide-ranging activities. Frequently, segments on the media or in publications reflect what seems to be an increasing incidence of hazardous situations where amateur radio has played an important role in preserving the health and welfare of the public. This is entirely due to the skill and dedication of those amateurs involved. We need to ensure that these efforts are effective, with an eye to continuous improvement through practice and the application of new developing technologies available to us.

Various agencies also depend upon our assistance during emergencies, and the requirements they ask of us have grown significantly in recent times. So we will need to comply with their changing needs while at the same time keeping ourselves proficient at our technical and communications skills.

With that said, there is ONE very important thing I need to ask of you: to register for new membership on our WMA ARES website or login as a member to update your existing one. Please sign-in if you have not done so in 2018 or later. I am trying to clean up our membership database and there are a LOT of folks that have shown no Log-In activity prior to 2018 (or never!).

Here's the url: <u>https://wma.arrl.org/</u> then choose Emergency Communications and scroll down to the ARES Membership line in the document to register or Login.

Thank you for your time today -- I hope to meet up with you at your club meetings and will keep you posted via the WMA ARES website on my progress at the many tasks ahead.

I am in 95% LISTEN mode right now ... if you have comments, questions or suggestions please do not hesitate to contact me. I sincerely appreciate your inputs,

Very 73 Bob Meneguzzo – K1YO Section Emergency Coordinator – WMA Section k1yo@arrl.net

Note:

There was lots more info in the email—it has been forwarded to Vanessa W1IRL to put on the web page. If you are interested in Emergency Communications, reach out to Bob K1YO—he is a fantastic resource, and the ARRL is lucky to have him.

DOTS & DASHES:

INTERESTING HAM RADIO WEB SITE:

www.youtube.com

Didn't think of this as a Ham Radio website? Well, you are mistaken. You tube is an unbelievable place to learn about almost anything. I have used it to fix my truck, cook a turkey, and yes, help with setting up my radio.

Doing a quick search of you tube for CW got me: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPwxgH-BE10&t=1s</u> a tutorial on CW for the beginning Ham. Setting up a DMR radio: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=li86AR8fPXE</u> Setup DXLab Keeper for contesting: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSeD-mJt5M8</u> Build a small space 20m antenna: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmeZ25jabWQ</u> FT8 ham radio: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoCngsKW9tc

Now these are other hams sharing their knowledge, kinda like having an Elmer / mentor on skype. There are ads on some of them, and you may have to go through a couple to get the actual info that applies to you. But if you can phrase a search question, there is something on You Tube that will answer it.

AREA SWAP/HAMFESTS:

May 3-4 NEAR-f	est	Deerfield NH	https://near-fest.com/
May 17-19	ARRL National Convention	on—Dayton Hamvention	www.hamvention.org
Jun 22-23	ARRL Field Day	HCRA—Agawam MA	http://www.arrl.org/field-day

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	<u>http://cnpota.ca/</u> <u>http://usislands.org/</u>	All All
Now England OSO Porty	http://www.poop.org/mlos.html	All
	http://www.nedp.org/rules.ntml http://ws7n.net/7QP/new/Page.asp?content=rules	All
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C C	http://www.arrl.org/field-day	All
	ar) Canada POTA (all year) US Islands 25th ann (all yr) <u>New England QSO Party</u> 7th Call Area QSO Party June VHF Kids Day Field Day	Canada POTA (all year) https://cnpota.ca/ US Islands 25th ann (all yr) http://usislands.org/ New England QSO Party http://www.neqp.org/rules.html Att Call Area QSO Party http://www.neqp.org/rules.html Mune VHF http://www.arrl.org/june-vhf Kids Day http://www.arrl.org/kids-day

Many more contests listed at: <u>http://www.arrl.org/contests</u> or <u>https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html</u>

ARRL Field Day

Now is the time to sign up for Field Day 2019. Make sure to mark your calendar! It will be June 22-23. Or, like a few of us, camping out Friday afternoon thru Sunday afternoon, June 21-23. We will be setting up / operating at the School St. Park in Agawam. There is plenty of parking, plenty of space, plenty of food, plenty of on-air time, and plenty of knowledge being shared and darn sure plenty of fun!!

We need people to volunteer to chair the following categories:

- Antennas
- Food Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast
- Publicity
- Generators & Fuel

I'll be coordinating everyone and Chris, W1TRK has volunteered again to be the tower guru.

We need volunteer helpers to do the following:

- Bring big tents we can put an operating station in
- Help to put up the towers Friday
- Help to take down and put away the towers Sunday afternoon
- People to assemble the antennas and disassemble and put them away
- Someone to pick up the trailer Friday morning
- Someone to tow the trailer to the parking location Sunday afternoon
- Operators for CW and SSB for the whole 24 hours Night owls are welcome
- Donations of food stuff
- General help

Field Day is a lot of fun. It's easily the most fun contest/emergency communications practice that happens each year. You want to make the time to come and help and operate.

We will be once again holding a raffle only for the workers. Names will be logged of everyone that spends at least a few hours helping or operating. If you just come for the dinner, you won't be entered. But spend a few hours operating or putting together the stations or antennas or whatnot and your name goes on the list. The drawing will be held after tear down has completed on Sunday afternoon. Last year, we had two winners that each won a uBitX HF QRP transceiver kit. This year, we are offering a good SDR receiver as the prize.

At the May meeting, we will send around a sign up sheet. You do not have to wait until then, email me at W1AST@ARRL.NET what you'd like to do and when you'll be there. You do not want to miss Field Day!

73,

Larry W1AST

Local happenings

Sundays: 0845: Western Mass Emergency Net 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R

First Monday: Southwick Regional RACES Drill, 1845, 146.49 Simplex

Mondays: 1930: HCRA 10m Net 28.375

Tuesdays: 1930-2000: 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R - Hampshire County Emergency Net

Wednesdays: 1930: MTARA Info net 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R - includes NTS Net

2000: MTARA Swap net: 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R

2000: MTARA Simplex Net - starts on 146.94 - PL 127.3, then goes to 146.42 direct (simplex) Usually starts immediately following the swap net.

Thursdays: 2100: Weather Net (Roger, K1PAI Net Control), 1st Thursday of every month: 147.090 MHz, All other Thursdays: 147.000, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R

2nd and 4th Fridays: 1200: BB's (Brown Baggers Luncheon)

Munich House

13 Center Street

Chicopee, MA 01013

Expect between 6 and 12 attendees every Friday. Good food, great company! $\ensuremath{\mathsf{Company}}\xspace$

Club meetings & VE sessions

1st Friday of the month 7:30 PM, HCRA Club Meeting, Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech St. Holyoke MA 01040 (no meetings held in July or August.) <u>http://www.hcra.org/meeting-location/</u>

3rd Friday of the month 7:30 PM, MTARA Club meeting, Red Cross building, <u>150 Brookdale Dr. Springfield, Mass</u>. (no meetings held in July or August)

4th Friday of the month 6:00 PM, Technician, General, and Extra Class License Exams, Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech Street, Holyoke, Mass. Hosted by the Western Mass VE Team (WMVET). Contact: David Cote, w1fab@arrl.net

Second Monday of the month 7:00 PM, Franklin County Amateur Radio Club meeting, Greenfield Community College, East Bldg. Rm 110 (no meetings held in July, August, December—check website) <u>http://www.fcarc.org/</u>

4th Monday of February, May, August, November 7:00 PM, FCARC VE Exams, <u>http://www.fcarc.org/</u>

Join the ARRL or renew your 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
- Local Clubs
- Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- Hamfests and Conventions
- Volunteer Examiner Coordinator Program

http://www.arrl.org/membership

HCRA contact list

President, Larry Krainson W1AST wlast@arrl.net Vice-President, Dave Fant WM1B wm1b@arrl.net Treasurer, Juergen Malner NV1Q nv1q@arrl.net Secretary, Harold Woering N1FTP n1ftp@yahoo.com Programs, Rob Bolling KC1PF (uponelection) westsidesound@icloud.com Membership, John Plaster K1VOI klvoi jp@charter.net Technical, Najm Choueiry AB1ZA njc2@cox.net At Large, Todd Hoessler N1GNX (upon election) blzrls@yahoo.com Newsletter, John Ewell N1JIE n1jie@arrl.net Web Page, Vanessa Oquendo W1IRL votrailblazer@gmail.com

The Board members in **Bold** are filling in, and will stand for election at the June Meeting.





Here is your exciting copy of Zero Beat!

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