

HCRA Zero beat Dec. 2005

December, 2005



**Meetings Held at: Feeding Hills
Congregational Church
21 North Westfield Street
Feeding Hills, MA**



This Month's Meeting



HOLIDAY PARTY!!

It's food time! John, Kx1x, has graciously taken the task to run the holiday party this year, and we are greatly appreciate his efforts.



Welcome to Zero Beat!

Greetings all! The holiday's are upon us! Our meeting this month is the holiday party. We will be having a special presentation this month with our food. KB1FTX, John Cain, will be inducted as an Eagle Scout during the party. The HCRA congratulates him on this accomplishment. We will also be having Ham Jeopardy.

I wish you a great holiday season, and a great New Year!

KB1JVI Eric Richardson

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President's Corner

HCRA Holiday Party

Are you ready for Ham Jeopardy?

December is the month for a lot of activities but the most important one comes early this year. Mark December 2nd on your calendar now and plan on attending the HCRA Holiday Party. I can assure you it will once again provide great food, fun, raffle and door prizes and another chance to play 'Ham Jeopardy'. If you missed it last year you have another chance to win again!

As is our usual custom, the Holiday Party is free for every member and one guest. The HCRA will provide the following: *a cheese sampler, cold cut platters, ziti, meatballs, coffee, and sodas.* Tablecloths, plates, utensils, and cups will also be provided. We are asking, however, that you consider bringing a dish or dessert to supplement what is provided. If you would like to bring something, please contact John, Kx1x and let him know what you will be bringing. His email is kx1x@arrl.net. Another good way to keep John and everyone else informed is to drop an email to the HCRA mailing list and say what you are bringing, this will help avoid eleven people all bringing the same dish!

Thinking of what to bring? How about a toy for the ARRL/Salvation Army Toy Drive? Read more about it in the column on the right.



While we are on the subject of giving, how would you like to be on the receiving end for a change? We will be giving away an assortment of door prizes, a chance to win a free year's membership to HCRA by playing Jeopardy and for a dollar raffle ticket a chance to win a Radio Shack Trunking Scanner worth \$149.99. I'm sure it would look great under anyone's Christmas tree.

This year's party will host another special event. John Cain, KB1FTX, a member of HCRA, BSA and the Venture Crew will be receiving his Eagle badge at a small ceremony after dinner. Please join us and his friends in congratulating him on achieving the prestigious rank of Eagle.

So there you have it, will you be here on December 2nd? Food, great fun, lots of prizes, a chance to help out needy children, celebrate KB1FTX's achievement of Eagle, play Ham Jeopardy and most of all an enjoyable evening with your friends before the season gets into full swing. What's not to like?

Happy Holidays from HCRA!

ARRL Ten Meter Contest

Another club competition - December 10th & 11th.

Are you ready for another stab at the 10 meter contest again this year?

Why not? There's nothing much else going on, it's cold outside and it's way to early to go Christmas shopping. This will be the fourth consecutive year our club has participated in the contest. With the solar cycle near the bottom we may not make the 2002 scores but I'm sure we can easily best last year's 35,956 points made by the five participants. This is down from almost one million points in 2002! See - I know we can beat last year.

The really cool thing about this contest is you can compete on an individual basis and your score also counts for the club. Kind of like having your cake and eating it too. Check out the rules at: <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2005/10-meters.html> and HCRA's past performance at: http://www.hcra.org/arrl_10m_2004.htm.

TOY Drive

HCRA Members help out

We collected over a dozen great toys for donation during last month's auction but we still have time to collect more. If you would like to help out displaced children from the Gulf hurricanes here is your chance. The ARRL and Salvation Army have combined forces to for collection and distribution of toys to needy children of the Gulf. So far hundreds of toys have been collected and will be on their way south in early December.

To make it even easier for you, all you have to do is bring an unwrapped toy to the HCRA Holiday Party on December 2nd. HCRA will gather the toys and either ship them or bring them to ARRL HQ for shipment. Any unwrapped toy for boys or girls ages 1 to 14 is most welcome. Please attach a QSL card or other holiday message to your donation. Isn't this a great way to help make this holiday season happier?

Here's a quote from Jim Haynie, W5JBP, president of ARRL: *"I know we can't do everything, but it's something we can do as a small token of what Amateur Radio's all about and in appreciation of the troubles that people are going to be facing during the holiday season," Haynie said. "Our hearts go out to everyone displaced."*

Please join the ARRL, Salvation Army and HCRA and support their efforts to brighten the holiday season for some Gulf States children. An easy way to feel good for the holidays.

Auction Wrap-up

2005 - another winner!

As we got closer to the November 4th I was wondering how successful this year's auction would be. Over the last five years I usually received some calls from people with either a large quantity of unique items or estate goods from a silent key. 2005 went well into October without a single call. But wait! I picked up my voice mail and there was a call from Dan Beaudry. Dan and I, along with his dad Jim (K1GIU - SK) worked together a long time ago doing electrical work. I returned Dan's call and guess what? He had some 'stuff' from his father's shack and was wondering what he could do to get it to people that could use it. The following week I stopped by Dan's shop, picked up a great assortment of used transceivers and enjoyed a breakfast with Dan reminiscing about his dad.

Auction night arrived, the weather was superb and the parking lot was filling rapidly at 6:00 PM. With help from AA1YW and others we got the tables set-up, seats arranged and the PA system working. Norm got the coffee started and Dave & Jim were selling raffle tickets. The tables were filled with one of the best assortments of ham radio items I'd seen in a long time. It looked like another long night at the auction! With Irv's help the auction flowed rapidly and 'stuff' changed hands. Now the hard work moved to Greg and Barry - trying to collect money and keep track of the sales.

We broke around 10:15 to hold the raffle and then went on to finish the auction. With everyone's help we got all the auction stuff sold, accounting done, the hall cleaned, tables put away and were one our way home by midnight.

Congratulations to Mike, W1MG on winning the Yaesu VX-7R HT, Dave, KB1HPG won the power supply and Betty, KB1CPZ won the antenna book. The real winners were all the participants who went home with either cash in their pockets or a new toy! See the accounting elsewhere for the totals but rest assured, the 2005 auction was the most successful ever!

See you at the party!

'73... Jim, KK1W

HCRA CONTACTS

Questions, Comments, and Suggestions Can Be Directed To:

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HCRA Name Badges



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Show the world you belong to the oldest club in the Pioneer Valley.

Jim, KK1W

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OUR SUPPORT PLEASE

WE NEED YOUR SUGGESTIONS

We are asking for your suggestions and ideas for future HCRA meetings. The recent success of HCRA has been, in part, because of its interesting and timely key speakers and topics.

If you can help, please contact John, Kx1x, (413) 532-7474 kx1x@arrl.net

Have you tried IRLP yet?

IRLP is the Internet Radio Linking Project, connecting radios over the Internet. With your 2m radio, you make contacts all over the world.

HCRA sponsors an IRLP node, in South Hadley, MA.

It is there for your use, please give it a try

(at least turn it on and listen)

146.46 simplex, 114.8hz PL

Rig Expert Review

A few years ago, I was using a rig Blaster Nomic with a Yaesu FT-920 hf rig. When I replaced the 920 with a Kenwood TS-570DG, I never got around to re-setting up the Nomic to work with the Kenwood. So it sits in the box.

A few weeks ago, while attending the Nutmeg Flea Market in CT, I picked up a RigExpert (www.rigexpert.com). One of the main things that attracted me to the RigExpert is that it uses just one cable to connect to the computer. Simple. It also uses one cable attached to the rear of the RigExpert (25 pin) that goes to the 570dg. It connects to 3 places: Radio Control, Key and Data. There is also a jack on the RigExpert front to attach a key or paddles.

The RigExpert box is small too. Only 1½ high X 3½ wide X 4½ deep. The unit has 3 LEDs on the front; on, cw and ptt. Not very big at all.

It comes with MixW software program that can handle many modes such as: psk31, cw, sstv, rtty, and many more. So you don't need to swap programs for different modes if you don't want to. But, MixW is only a demo and you have to purchase it to get more than 14 days of use with it. The cost is \$50, but well worth it.

Installation doesn't get much simpler than this: load the drivers and program off the enclosed cd; plug the RigExpert usb cable to the computer. The computer then recognizes it. Write down the virtual serial port. Plug the cable into the rig. Turn on the radio. Load the program. Tune to a psk31 station (14.070 Mhz or others). Tell the MixW software what virtual comport the RigExpert is using. Click on the waterfall signal and watch it copy. Installation to running takes less than 20 minutes!

I also tinkered with copying CW, which it does quite well. SSTV and RTTY are next on my list as well as other modes to tinker with. But I'm having fun on PSK right now.

PSK requires a lower power output. So I set the Kenwood to 30 watts. I answered a CQ and talked to a station in Casper, Wyoming. It was lots of fun and easy. After the qso, I programmed in my info into the function buttons (CQ, Brag, Etc). It's that easy.

The RigExpert can be purchased from www.rigexpert.com. It retails for \$229. (I got it for less at the flea market) Plus \$48 per cable for the rig, plus \$50 if you want to own the MixW software. Or you can use Digipan and many other free software programs out there.

RigExpert makes a nice holiday present for you. Just leave your hints where they can be noticed!

Listen for me on PSK31 on 20m.

73,

de WB1DBY – Larry

wb1dby@comcast.net

New SSB Tech's

By John Lenville, KB1LTC Membership Director

Believe it or not, we've got quite a few new Hams here in Western MA!

Mostly Tech's, and with the latest Technician Class license course (sponsored by the H.C.R.A.) about half-way through we'll soon have some more, freshly licensed Tech's on the air (which in itself is great news)!

So... to all of you who are newly licensed, congratulations and welcome to the hobby!

Aside from the local Ham population and club membership growing, another neat thing

(I think) is the buzz going around with the new Hams (and even some "old" ones) about 2-meter SSB!

Now, I know of course that there has always been an interest in VHF SSB, which explains the ARRL VHF contest. But other than that, until recently that is, there really hasn't been very much activity on the 2-meter band except for FM, and even then, the local repeaters aren't all that busy.

At least not much that I've heard here in Indian Orchard!

Recently, there's even been a decent amount of activity on 2-meter simplex.

So, the next time you "play radio" and the DX conditions aren't agreeing with you, or there's no response on your favorite FM machine, spin that VFO and have a listen around the simplex portion of the band. Or if you have the capability, spin the afore-mentioned VFO, click the "Mode" button and check out some 2-meter SSB!

Chances are that you'll find someone to chat with but watch out!

You just might have some fun!

73 de John-KB1LTC, and here's wishing you all a happy and healthy holiday season!

P.S. If my J-Pole fell over (now an Inverted J-Pole), do I really have to use Lower Sideband? Hi-Hi

**HCRA Board Meeting
November 10, 2005**

Held at corporate boardroom of Rocky's ACE Hardware Springfield, MA.

Members present: Jim KK1W, Greg N1AEH, Dave KB1MU, John KB1LTC, John N1JIO, Jim KB1JVF, Eric KB1JVI, John Kx1x, and Irv W6IS.

Vice President W6IS:

Irv has confirmed the speaker for the Jan meeting.
We will have two drawings for the Holiday party. One as the normal monthly raffle, the other will be an assortment of door prizes.

Treasurer N1AEH:

Current balance is \$5086.00. The raffle grossed \$418.00 about broke even, and the auction, including all the generous donations, added \$1321 to the treasury.

Secretary KB1MU:

The current roster:	Courtesy:	8
	Family	22
	Life:	1
	Prospect:	31
	Regular:	94
	Sponsors:	1
	Venture Crew:	1
	Un-renewed 2005	31

Program Kx1x:

Monthly meeting programs, with the exception of Feb, are all set through Oct 2006.

Membership KB1LTC:

John will be contacting all un-renewed members.

ZeroBeat Editor KB1JVI:

Deadline for November ZeroBeat is Nov 21. Hopefully the E-ZeroBeat addressing problem has been solved. Anyone who does not receive his or her copy of ZeroBeat (Electronic or USPS) should notify either Eric or Dave.

Technical N1JIO:

The fall license classes are going well. John N1JIO and Norm W1BMK are considering a "General" level class, possibly next Sept/Oct.

At Large KB1JVF:

Nothing at present.

Venture Crew Not Present:

Old Business:

The HCRA will participate in the ARRL Ten Meter contest to be held Dec 10/11. Please refer to the ARRL web site for details. Any club member can participate. Be sure to list "Hampden County Radio Assn." as your club affiliation. Planning for the Holiday party is now complete. The menu is determined. The entertainment will include an Eagle Ceremony, and a session of "Ham Jeopardy" using redesigned electronics

New Business:

The HCRA tri-fold brochure was updated. The changes will be made and copies supplied to the VE Team for distribution to newly licensed Amateurs

Eric KB1JVI has agreed to be Field Day Chairman. Jim KB1JVF and John KB1LTC will be his assistants..

Respectfully submitted by Dave Isham KB1MU Secretary.

On the Internet

<http://www.hcra.org>

Updated often to bring you timely Amateur news and info

Next Meeting:

Friday, December 2, 2005

IRLP Node #7270

146.46 Mhz -- PL 114.8

A free service of HCRA

See www.hcra.org

Get Your Zero Beat Electronically each month

HCRA members can receive their monthly club newsletter in any or all of three ways!

First Class Mail, just like you always have. This costs HCRA approximately 75 cents per copy. This is one of the benefits of your membership with HCRA.

E-mail. If you would like to get on our e-mail list, just write eZB@hcra.org from the account that you wish to receive your copy from, and request that you join our list. HCRA respects your privacy and will not under any circumstances give your e-mail address to ANYONE.

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NOTE 2: There is a cost savings to the HCRA if you receive your Zero Beat electronically only. If you prefer to NOT receive your newsletter by First Class Mail, please contact Eric, KB1JVI, Dave, KB1MU, or Jim, KK1W, to be added to the eZB only list.

Get On The Air

(all times local)

Mon., Tues, Thur, Fri	19:00	National Traffic Sys (NTS) Net	146.94 (W1TOM)
Sundays	08:45	Western Mass Emergency Net	146.94 (W1TOM)
Mondays	19:30	HCRA 10m Net	28.375
Wednesdays	19:30	MTARA Info net	146.94 and 147.000 (link) (W1TOM)
	20:00	MTARA Swap net	
	(right after SWAP net)	N1RLX Memorial Simplex Net	Starts on 146.94, then moves to a simplex frequency
Thursdays	21:00	Northern CT Weather Net	146.79(-) PL 82.5 (except 2 nd week, on 147.000)

Club Meetings & Testing Sessions

1 st Friday of the month	19:30	HCRA Club Meeting	Feeding Hills Congregational Church 21 N. Westfield St., Feeding Hills
3 rd Monday of January, April, July, and October			Amherst Machine KD1XP License Exams Amherst, MA
			Contact Richard, KD1XP, 413-665-2211 or 145.130 Repeater http://www.kd1xp.org
3 rd Friday of the month	19:30	MTARA Club meeting	Red Cross building

Join us each week on the HCRA 10m Net!

Join NCS, Tom Doyle (n1muv), each Monday night at 7:30 PM (local) on 28.375 Mhz (+/- QRM)
Get the latest local word, join good friends, take part in good conversation each week!!!

Anyone (with HF privs) can join in, don't be shy!!!

KD1XP Repeater Group News

53.350 (-) PL 71.9 Amherst, MA
145.130 (-) PL 173.8 Amherst, MA

442.200 (+) PL 173.8 Deerfield, MA (near Greenfield)

443.700 (+) PL 71.9 Belchertown, MA

The next ham radio testing session will be on Tuesday December 6th. The new address is

*117 North Plain Road
Sunderland, MA*

*ALL test elements given. Contact Richard,
KD1XP at 665-2211 for details*

*Breakfast meetings every first Saturday of the month
at Bickfords in Northampton.
Talk in on the 145.130 repeater.*

Mt. Tom Amateur Repeater Assn.

www.mtara.org

Info Net, Wednesdays at 7:30 PM local
146.94 (-) or 147.000 (+) with Joe, NA1X, NCO

The next meeting of the MTARA will be on Dec. 9th

Meeting topic: Holiday Party

Meetings are held at the Red Cross Building



QCWA Pioneer
Chapter #183

Schedule of
Events

Meeting January 21st, 2006 -- 11:30AM

CJ's Restaurant, Rte. 20, Palmer, MA

**The Hampden County Radio
Association's next meeting
FRIDAY, December 2nd.**

Doors open at 7 p.m., Meeting
begins at 7:30

**Feeding Hills Congregational Church,
Feeding Hills, MA**

In case of inclement weather, check:
www.hcra.org or the 146.94 repeater.
Meeting cancellation information will be given out by 6:00

If you would like to see your notice here, please e-mail the editor, Eric, KB1JVI at kb1jvi@arrl.net

Items for sale

By Larry - WB1DBY

1. Rig Blaster Nomic - \$35.00 – barely has 10 hours of use. Excellent Condition.
2. MFJ – 1112 DC Power Distribution Panel - \$20.00 – mint condition, never used.
3. Kenwood MC-60 desk mic - excellent condition, original box. \$75.00

Contact: Larry – WB1DBY at 413-348-3289 or
wb1dby@comcast.net for more info.



HCRA
P.O. Box 562
Agawam, Massachusetts 01001

PLEASE HAND CANCEL



Insignia Club Wear to be Available soon!

Here's something that every club member should want. Jackets, caps and shirts with the beautiful HCRA logo and your callsign emblazoned for all to see. Something for every HCRA member to proudly display. Larry, WB1DBY has been working on just such a project and it's ready for prime time at the upcoming Holiday Party. Here's what Larry has to say,

"While tinkering around and always being observant, I ran across an ad for club wear. They are located here in the pioneer valley. After exchanging some emails I stopped into their store today. I provided them with our club logo and they are going to provide me with a sample with the logo and more. This is something I've wanted to do for years and now even more with our new logo.

If all goes well, I will be bringing to the holiday party samples of a hat, wind breaker jacket, fleece and polo shirt to show everyone. Plus I'll have info and prices to take orders from whoever is interested. The logo will be on one side with the persons call and name on the other side of the chest. Hats will have the logo on the front with name and/or call on the back.

I'm hoping for a mixed order of 35 or so pieces from the party. That will be order one. Then, advertising it on the web site, Zero Beat and the next meeting and provide another follow up order. The minimum order would be 6 pieces and than can be mixed. They can also do follow up orders during the following year any time with a min of 6 pieces. If all went well, we could be showing off our new stuff at the Jan meeting and provide enough interest to place another order at the Jan meeting.

I do not need any money from the club and there is no setup fee for us to pay for which is unlike every other place I've contacted the last few months.

Sounds interesting, bring your checkbooks to the Holiday Party and buy yourself a Christmas present!