



ZERO BEAT

A Publication of the
Hampden County Radio Association
<http://www.hcra.org>



Next Meeting:

Friday, December 7th, 2007

HCRA Annual Holiday Party

7:00pm

DECEMBER
2007

Hello to all,

This month I want to write about two subjects. The first is the Holiday Party! This year, our Board of Directors worked hard on the party. I'm hoping that what we came up with for food will meet your expectations, as well, stay somewhat in the budget we set for this year. Ed KB1NWH is in charge of the party. He's announced a meal of **Chicken Marsala, Sirloin Beef tips w/shroom gravy, garlic roasted potatoes, Sauteed Veggies over penne, and lasagna**. Not to shabby, along with the dishes our members bring, and HAM Jeopardy, it should be a great night.

It's your Club and we're trying to do right by everyone. Come to the Party and support our efforts for you. With out you the H.C.R.A. would be just a name. Hope to see you on December 7th.

Now the second favorite thing I want to bring to your attention! Field Day 2007 and 2008! The figures came out and we had a recap instantly! #119 in Country! # 9 in New England Division! # 7 in 7 Transmitters! # 1 in Western Massachusetts! Thanks to N1SR for the above. Mike K1KAA gave us a mountain of information.

Seems we had 55 operators, and We did all this! Mike's report said there were groups of operators that were fewer in number but scored more points, there were clubs that had 90 operators that scored less points. So how do I see it? The groups that scored more points could be related to YCCC, hard contesters, don't sleep, operate in all modes and at all times. The 90 operators were having a party. So we fall in between, not hard contesters, not total party goers! I like it. We have a good group, have some fun, and have left room for improvement! Remember it's not a contest! Do the numbers give you any pride in what was accomplished? I hope so.. The A.R.R.L. Reports that 34,833+ took part of Field Day 2007. Our band of 55 did a great job. In New England there were 150 groups entered, In Western Massachusetts there were 10 groups.

One of the aims of Field Day is to make better operators of people that return year after year. We also look for ways to improve the number of contacts. Mike made the suggestion of moving the radio's out of sleeping quarters so overnight operations can be done without breaking sleep cycles for tired operators. We are always open to idea's to improve on our Field Day. Field Day 2008 is June 28 & 29th, mark your calendar, yes the new one! Seems we were just talking about the Holiday being 5 months away.. time moves so fast.. 73 for now,

Jim KB1JVF

New Hams!

The very successful VE session last night at the Moose Family Center in Chicopee netted 10 new technicians (9 new hams and an upgrade from Novice). The 10 successful candidates represent a 100% pass rate for the technician class that was held on Tuesdays at the Moose.

Of note, congratulations to (proud dad Ki'i's son) Mike Beauregard and (grandson of Glenn, KC7LW) Josh Avery. They, along with Jim Machia (Jr.), Chris Fotopoulos, and Jake McCurdy are all anxious to join Crew DX as licensed ham operators. Crew DX and NE1C will start to be active very soon!!!

Other successful candidates include (wife of Ed, KB1NWH) Sue Lacombe, (upgrade from Novice, KA1SFK) Duane Rinaldi, Jim Machia (Sr.), Basil Maurice, and Bob Larkin.

Many thanks to all the VEs that attended and helped out!!!

Please welcome these (and all) new hams on the air when you hear the new callsigns.

'73 de Kx1x,
John J. Pise, Jr.

Winter Field Day

[Society for the Preservation of Amateur Radio—SPAR Announces Winter Field Day 2008](#)

Field Day is perhaps the most popular of the many activities enjoyed by Amateurs. Every June the bands come alive with improvised signals proving the ability to respond to emergencies. The event also offers an opportunity for camaraderie and a chance to test ourselves in less than ideal circumstances, however, emergencies and natural disasters don't always happen in the summer. Winter winds, icy limbs and bitter cold replace the thunderstorms and blistering heat of summer. To test our abilities to operate in the winter, in 2007 SPAR established a Winter Field Day event and invited all Amateur Radio operators to participate. The event was enjoyed by many and considered a success. Therefore it is time to issue the invitation for the Second Annual SPAR Winter Field Day!

The 2008 Winter Field Day will be held from 1700 UCT (12:00 noon EST) Saturday January 26, 2008 through 1700 UCT (12:00 noon EST) Sunday January 27, 2008. The object of the event is familiar to most Amateur Radio operators: set up emergency-style communications and make as many contacts as possible during the 24 hour period. The rules encourage as many contacts on as many bands and modes as possible, because during a real emergency, the most important factor is the ability to communicate, regardless of band, mode or distance.

The official rules can be found at the SPAR web site. The event is open to all amateurs, although we encourage everyone to join in the discussions and other activities sponsored by SPAR. Information about SPAR can be found on the SPAR Home Page. Membership is free and open to all amateurs who want to encourage technical and operating skills. You can register by going to the SPAR Forum and registering, using your amateur callsign as your user name.

Please join with SPAR in promoting amateur radio and keeping our bands alive!

<http://www.spar-hams.org/index.php>

HCRA Board Meeting – November 6, 2007

Held at the home of WB1DBY, Longmeadow, MA. Members present: Jim KB1JVF, George KC1V, Greg N1AEH, Johnny K11A, John N1JIO and Larry WB1DBY.

President Jim, KB1JVF: The club auction was very successful, with 112 people in attendance. Everyone seemed to enjoy the great job Jim, KK1W, did as auctioneer. The Field Day results have been published and the W1NY team made a very good showing, placing 1st in WMA and 119th nationally.

Treasure Greg, N1AEH: The auction raffle brought in \$427 and the cost of the prizes was \$400, for a net to the club of \$27. The net from the auction itself was \$1323, due in large part to the many generous donations. The November deposit was \$1738, there are no outstanding debits and the current balance is \$5718.

Secretary George, KC1V: Current regular paid membership is now 100 (last month's count was incorrect). There have been monetary donations from 28 members to date. The club currently has 91 members that are also ARRL members

Program Johnny, K11A: The January speaker will be Donna Halper, the radio historian that gave a presentation a year or two ago. The February speaker is going to be Jerry Condon from Segway and the March will be the "Show and Tell" meeting.

Technical John, N1JIO: N1JIO and K1YO are considering an Amateur Extra license course. They are trying to determine how many Hams would be interested. A possible site for the class is Noble Hospital. The course would be done independently and not as an HCRA club project.

Zero Beat Larry, WB1DBY: The Zero Beat deadline will be the 20th this month and there is a need for articles of all kinds for the coming months.

Old Business:

Holiday Party – Ed, KB1NWH, Larry, WB1DBY and Johnny, K11I, will be finalizing the arrangements for the party.

New Business:

10-Meter Contest – The club will be promoting activity in the ARRL 10-Meter Contest again this year. Dave, KB1MU, has expressed interest in the club activity.

Board of Directors Meeting: The next board meeting is scheduled for December 11th.

Respectfully submitted,
George Collins, KC1V, Secretary.

HCRA 10m Net

Join NCS, Tom Doyle (n1muv),
each Monday night at 7:30 PM (local) on

28.375 MHz

Get the latest local word, join good friends,
take part in good conversation each week!!!
Anyone can join in, don't be shy!!!

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 Kx1x, Node #7270, S.Hadley, MA

For a list of IRLP nodes and other IRLP information, go to:
<http://www.irlp.net/>

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 Johnny, Ki1A at
Ki1A@comcast.net or (413) 543-9367

Zero Beat Contributions: Anything of interest is welcome.
Please submit your ideas, articles and more to
wb1dby@comcast.net. Thank you,
Larry, WB1DBY, Zero Beat Editor

Questions, Comments, and Suggestions
Can Be Directed To:

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ARRL 10 Meter Contest just around the corner...

This year's Ten Meter Contest starts at 0000Z December 8th (Friday at 7 PM EST.) and ends at 2359Z on December 9th (Sunday at 7:00 PM EST.). That's a total of 48 hours, but you are allowed to only operate for 36 of these hours. The ARRL Ten Meter contest is a fun time that won't take up your entire weekend.

So what's so good about the Ten Meter Contest? For starters it is a contest that both allows you to compete as an individual, AND submit your score for the HCRA. It's a short contest not a weekend killer. You will get a chance to make contacts across the country and around the world.

Do you have newly acquired Ten Meter Privileges? Have you tried Ten Meters and given up because it was "dead"? Well there is a surprise waiting for you during the contest. That "dead" band will spring to life and you will have a difficult time finding a space to call "CQ".

So you have never worked a contest and don't know how to operate. It is really simple. Where do I start? You will find that most of the activity is SSB between 28.300 and 28.500. So start by tuning around in this area, and listen to what is happening. Shortly you will hear a station that "I just have to work." All you need to do is give your call after the station either calls "CQ" or "QRZ". Simply give your call, and the calling station will acknowledge your call with his report. You, in turn, will both acknowledge his report and send your report. The report consists of the calling stations signal report (Usually 59.) and your state ("MA" or "CT"). That's all there is to it, you have just made your first contact. Don't forget to log this contact. Logging the contacts can be done many ways. Simplest is just a handwritten paper log, up to computer interfaced logging software, which reads the frequency and other data directly from the radio. Just use what you have.

When the contest is over simply send your logs to the ARRL and list "Hampden County Radio Assn." as your affiliated club. Not a member of the HCRA? You have two options. You can submit your score as an individual, or better yet, for a mere \$15.00 become a HCRA member. This will allow you to help the club, and add you to the great group known as the HCRA. (Two for the price of one.)

For additional information, there are two sources in the Internet. Jim Mullen KK1W has written an excellent article about participating in the 10-meter contest on the HCRA web pages. www.hcra.org. All the details on the contest are also available on the ARRL web pages <<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2007/10-meters.html>>. If you have Internet capabilities, it is worth your time to check this site out.

If you have any questions, just ask me or any member of the Board of Directors.

Dave Isham KB1MU
Kb1mu@Charter.net

Did you know that the technician & novice class licensee is the most sought after class in the 10 meter contest? That's right; if you have one of these licenses, everyone contacting one of these classes earns 8 points. This contest is unique in that you can also enter your points for our club and yourself, and you do not need to be a member of the ARRL.

Second full weekend of December. Starts 0000 UTC Saturday; ends 2359 UTC Sunday (December 8 - 9, 2007)

See our www.HCRA.org website for a link to the 10 meter rules...73's from Jim; K1JAW

JUST TALKING - How is Your SWR?

How's your SWR? While I have been known to comment that I usually do not worry about radiation angle; a good (electrical) ground when I am hilltopping, or many other measurements, I do pay attention to SWR - always. The survival of my finals, and prevention of TVI dictates this. When I started to write this, it turned out to be 4 pages long; too long for a newsletter so this is a less wordy version. However, if you do not know how to use a quality SWR meter, you need to get more information.

An SWR meter, which should be connected directly to your transmitter with a short piece of quality coax (not after the tuner/transmatch), will tell you the condition of the most important part of your radio station - your antenna system.. System means the antenna, coax and connectors, baluns, and if you know how, the SWR meter itself and will also give you an idea of the antenna impedance. Many SWR problems are directly related to poorly made connectors. (I just had to say that!)

A low SWR is **NOT** the answer to everything; just another piece of information - vital information. Hopefully, I will correct some myths and convince you of the merits of a good VSWR meter.. And although I am not going to dwell on the differences between directional couplers and VSWR meters, I think that you should investigate the advantages and decide if the additional cost is right for you..

We use a VSWR meter is to determine the amount of reflected (wasted) power in an antenna system. This is accomplished by first placing the VSWR meter in the FORWARD position; energize the transmitter with just enough power to be able to adjust the VSWR meter to full scale; stop the transmitter; place the SWR in the REVERSE position; again energize your transmitter without making any changes and read the scale. Great, you now know that you have a SWR of 1.5 to 1, but what does that mean? Here is an easy table for you that show how much of your power is being lost in a coax fed antenna system:

1.3:1	2%	2:1	11%	(Impedance 25 or 100 ohms)
1.5:1	3%	3:1	25%	
1.7:1	6%	4:1	38%	

(Be aware that most non-tube type transmitters start reducing the power as soon as it detects a 2:1 SWR and some cut in as soon as 1.5:1. Know your radio specs).

Since you need a good, non-inductive, dummy load to check the operation of a transmitter, and since a good dummy load will have a SWR of about 1.1:1 over its operating range, and since your dummy load is a known, it can also be used to check the VSWR meter across the same frequency ranges. The connections will be from your transmitter, to the VSWR meter, to the dummy load with short pieces of properly built coax cable. Record the results of your test, both frequency and the SWR. Now with the meter switch in the forward position, reverse the coax connectors on the SWR meter and do it again. Simple math will tell you how accurate your meter is. If you do not know the accuracy of your meter, it will have no value to you. A HF VSWR meter is NOT a good choice for VHF measurements

Now if you want to test that cable for your new antenna before you connect the antenna to it. Simply replace the short cable between the VSWR meter and dummy load with your installation cable and run your test. Be sure to recalibrate the VSWR meter as the increase length of the coax will have some loss. If you have a major jump in the SWR, the cable/connections should be suspect. If the results are reasonable, then you may proceed with the installation and to the tuning of your antenna with confidence that the VSWR meter and the coax are in good shape.

Tuning an antenna with a SWR meter is easy. You simply tune for lowest SWR (lowest reflected power). Tuning an antenna is when you are making an installation and means to adjust the length, or coil tap, to give low SWR over the range you intend to operate. The end result if you are graphing the SWR should be a nice smile.

With a dipole, you would check the SWR of the antenna at fixed intervals across the band it was cut for, and graph the measured SWR vs. frequency. The point where SWR is at a minimum is considered the resonant point. Once this point is known, the length of the antenna can be adjusted to move the resonant point to the desired frequency. If this resonant point is higher in frequency than you wish, the antenna is too short; conversely, if the resonant point is lower in frequency than you wish, your antenna is too long.

HCRA Ham Shacks

Mike DeCristopher—K1KAA (ex: KB1FWN)



The NEW K1KAA and KB1FWM

The position to the right is the run position; to the left is the multiplier position. Both use Kenwood TS440's, homebrew (4)811A's (loaf around 900W; one is by W1KK/sk), and run N1MMlogger. Usually used for M/S or M/2. Not seen are some bandpass filters and band decoder (software driven) switches. Antenna work still going on, but right now we have 3ele@ europe, 40 wire N&S, 80 end-fed E&W. Both positions share all antennas. Looking to get another wire up E&W for 160. Only VHF gear is a Kenwood TR7930 and amp for 2. More information at k1kaa.413ma.org.

HCRA Ham Shacks

Richard W. Strycharz Jr.—KD1XP



Yaesu FT 890, Icom 706 and many Motorola/Vertex portables. Also, I have a Tram Titan 23 Channel CB, Motorola Radius UHF radio and several scanners which can not possibly fit into the picture.

<http://www.kd1xp.org>

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Franklin_Hampshire_County_Scanning

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RLX>

Repeaters:

53.350 - PL 71.9/71.9

143.130 - PL 173.8/123.0

442.200 + PL 173.8/173.8

443.450 + PL 173.8/173.8

442.200 and 443.450 are linked

Field Day 2007 Scores & Info

Call Score Category QSOs Power Mult GOTA Call Sec Club

W1NY 6,912 7A 1,820 2 WB1Z WMA 55 Hampden Co Radio Assn

HCRA had the top score in the WMA Section.

We were 119th nationally (that's out of all FD operations).

See http://www.arrl.org/members-only/contests/scores.html?con_id=133 (you must be an ARRL member to access these pages).

#119 in Country (missed #118 by 56 points, #117 by 66 points, #116 by 78 points)

9 in New England Division (missed #8 by 676 points)

7 in 7 Transmitters (missed #6 by 80 points)

1 in Western Massachusetts (by 1,974 points)

K1KAA: I had a quantitative analysis assignment today, and I found the perfect "subject"...

W1NY Field Day analysis by Points, QSO's, Operators, and Spots with an affixed conclusions sheet (the conclusions sheet will open first, I believe; don't forget about the other "real" worksheets).

<http://k1kaa.413ma.org/w1nyfd07.xls>

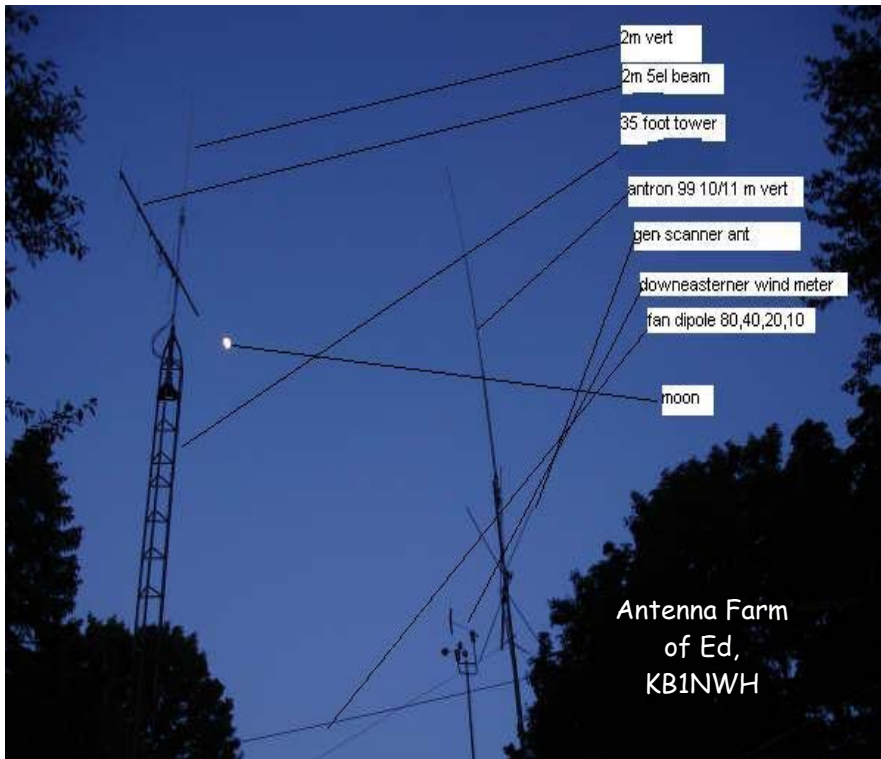
Just some quick "analysis": We were 7th in the 7A category. Looks like 4-land (with the exceptions of W7DK and WY3P) beat us out. We missed out on some Q's...W4IY had 2.3 times the Q's as we did. Of the six stations that beat us (in points and Q's), only W7DK (105) and K4EAC (90) had more operators (we had 55). WY3P [who may have been at WX3B] was 6th, edging us by 85 Q's and 80 pts, with their 19 operators. All top 7, with the exception of K4EAC, had a GOTA station (with their 90 operators, must just have been no one there to operate it).

Just behind us in 8th place, VE3SPC trailed W1NY by 1068 pts and 247 Q's, with their 20 operators.

HCRA Auction 2007 Pictures

(Thanks to Rich, N1KXR)





Meeting Location:

Meetings are held at the Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 North Westfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA 01030.

The church is located across from a Pride gas station.

Parking is in back of the church. Access is HP accessible.

Talk-in is available on the 146.94 repeater.

Club Annual Holiday Party on Friday, December 7th..



The Hampden County Radio Association
 P.O Box 562
 Agawam, MA 01001



PLEASE HAND CANCEL