

Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

December 2011



After the storm: WN1E's G5RV sags down to almost meet Dave's "new" Mosley Classic tribander. Both antennas survived the ordeal.

Visit our website at <http://www.hcra.org> .
We are also on Facebook Groups: *Hampden County Radio Association* and *SOTAJerks*. Join us!


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Don't Forget the "200" Raffle!

Frank, KB1LFD, is handling raffle ticket sales at our club meetings and club events for 2011/2012. If you would like to take home a new KX3 make sure you find Frank to get a ticket (or two or three).

HCRA KX3 RAFFLE



- 160 - 6 meters
- SSB/CW/DATA/AM/FM
- Only 1.6 pounds
- Advanced DSP
- 10W PEP, low current drain
- Be the 1st on your block!
- MSRP \$899.99 (estimated)

Elecraft KX3

«F5»

«F5»

DRAWING BY
JUNE 1ST, 2012

\$10/ticket - Only 200 tickets will be sold !

Name _____
Callsign _____
Phone _____

SKYWARN Recognition Day 2011 December 2 at 7 PM through December 3rd at 7 PM. For info, <http://www.wx1box.org/node/1556>

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>

Local happenings

(All times are local time)

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

First Monday: RACES Drill, 1900, 146.91; 1930, 146.94; 1945, 146.985

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

Fridays: 1200: BB's (Brown Baggers Luncheon)

Common Ground Restaurant
25 Park Avenue
West Springfield, MA 01089

Expect between 6 and 12 every Friday. Good food, great company!

Club Meetings & VE Sessions

1st Friday of the month 1930 HCRA Club Meeting, Feeding Hills Congregational Church 21 N. Westfield St., Feeding Hills (no meetings held in July or August)

3rd Friday of the month 1930 MTARA Club meeting, Red Cross building 506 Cottage St, SPFLD, MA (no meetings held in July or August)

4th Friday of the month 1800 License Exams, Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech Street, Holyoke, MA. Hosted by the Western Mass VE Team (WMVET)

Third Monday of the month 1900 Franklin County Amateur Radio Club meeting, Greenfield High School (no meetings held in July or August) (Meeting Jan 23, 2012, 4th Monday; meeting Apr 23, 2012, to avoid holidays)

4th Monday of February, May, August, November 1900 FCARC VE Exams, Unitarian Church, Main Street, Northfield

New England Flea Markets

3 Dec Windsor CT VR+C Mus 115 Pierson LN @8AM Indoor

25 Feb S Burlington VT HAM-CON @HI

3 Mar Feeding Hills MA MtTARA @ TurnverneinClb

4 Mar Hicksville NY LIMARC @LevitHall

18 Mar Southington CT SARA @HS

25 Mar Framingham MA FARA @KeefeTech

15 April Cambridge MA FLEA at MIT (Third Sunday April thru October)

28 Apr Gales Ferry CT RASON Auction @ FireCo

4,5 May Deerfield NH Nearfest XI @FG



Dust off that old key
or paddle and get
on the air!

HCRA Contact List

President, Jim Mullen KK1W (413) 245-3228
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Vice-President, John Pise KX1X (413) 532-7474
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FROM THE SHACK

Two HCRA members win ARRL 10M Certificates for 2010

With the 2011 contest on our doorstep, isn't it exciting to see how well we did in 2010? Two of us came away with certificates last year (nope, not me) – and that was without sunspots to liven up the action.

Frandy/N1FJ and Earl/KD1UU grabbed 1st Place Certificates for QRP and Low Power respectively. Neither of them were expecting the recognition, you just never know what your efforts will get you, do you?

Here's the breakdown of HCRA members from 2010 from the ARRL on-line database (all are WMA):

Call	Score	QSOs	Mult	Class	Pwr
N1FJ	4,120	54	20	A	A
KB1NWH	3,068	61	26	A	C
KD1UU	1,224	39	17	B	B
K1VOI	704	32	11	B	B
N1RNR	450	25	9	B	B
KB1JFQ	44	12	2	B	B
W1MSW	31,124	153	62	D	B
W1MJB	11,000	117	44	D	B
KK1W	146,096	445	92	D	C
Totals	197,830	938	283		

A 2011 Challenge to us: Now that spots have indeed returned to the sun last years scores should be nothing compared to what we can accomplish this year. In 2002, the last year we actually had good solar activity on 10 meters, HCRA scored 925,124 with 12 entries. This works out to about 77,000 per entrant. Last year we averaged 21,000/entrant. Do you think we can beat our 2002 performance? Rigs are better, ops are more experienced – it should be easy, right?

So Here's your challenge:

HCRA will sponsor a prize for every member operating in the contest that exceeds 77,000 points in the 2011 ARRL 10M contest? (the prize still is to be determined, but it will be something cool). Of course you can't win if you don't work the contest AND submit your scores *on time* to ARRL.

Once again this year I'm opening my station for a group effort under the WB1Z club call. If you would like to participate in a multi-operator effort contact me and I'll put you on the list. So far it is me and Matt/W1MSW but we have room for lots more. SSB and CW, maybe even data if you want. Yep, only one transmitter but we will be running a decent station. Icom 756PROII, beam, amplifier, spotting and of course the fun of getting together for an afternoon/evening of ham radio fun. Email me now and let's do this!



Auction Success!

Once again, through the efforts of and generous donations of time and merchandise, our annual auction was a great success. Results are shown in this month's Treasurer's report. Between the donations and the silent auction we really did well this year. The proceeds will go far in funding our events for the next few years – thanks!

Beyond the gifts of rigs and accessories we really need to thank our volunteers for helping to setup, run and tear it all down at the end. They make it look simple but without them it wouldn't be an HCRA auction. I'm always hesitant to publish the list as I always forget a few but I'll take a stab at it once again. Marty/W1MJB and Dave/AA1YW for keeping track of the money, Bob/W1SQ for the software and cashiering, Matt/W1MSW and Frank/KB1LFD for raffle ticket sales, Al/KB1XG for the sound system, Jim/NN1Y and the DXCrew for feeding us, Ed/KB1NWH and Rich/N1KXR for setup and cleanup, all the folks that help move stuff along the tables and of course buyers and sellers for actually bringing/buying! Omissions are purely my mistake so don't shoot the editor! See you next year for more fun and bargains.

Loose Ends:

Thanks to Al/KB1XG setting up a great sound system for the auction. [Editor's note: Test 1 2, test 1 2, test 1 2...]

The January meeting presentation is still in the planning stages. We have a few exciting possibilities, watch the website for developments.

The HCRA facebook page is up to almost 100 members. Have you joined yet? There's lots of activity and it is a great place to keep abreast of all HCRA activities: Simply go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/13909010799/>.

'73... Best holiday wishes to you and yours from all of us at HCRA.

Jim, KK1W

The Barefoot DXer

This is the second in a series of Zero Beat articles entitled the “Barefoot DXer” which explore the wonderful and often frustrating world of low power DX operation. Most modern transceivers now have a maximum power ceiling of 100 watts; at that power level you will be operating “barefoot” in the low power category. Understanding, accepting and adhering to the DX Code of Conduct is your passport to many hours of pleasant and rewarding barefoot DX contacts.



If the increased sunspot activity is truly indicative of the arrival of Solar Cycle 24, we can expect the bands to have increased activity due to better propagation, a sure boon to the barefoot DXer. This month I thought we would delve into the art of operating “Split” since increased band activity usually results in more DX stations resorting to that form of operation. In general, if you are trolling the band or following a spot and come upon a DX station calling CQ, the first thing to do is LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN.

Before making your initial call you need to ascertain:

1. Do you hear the station well enough for a good QSO?
2. Is the station working simplex or is the station working split?
3. Is the station only working a particular geographic region?

If the station is working simplex and you have satisfied these three criteria, then put your call out when the DX station indicates that he is ready for the next contact.

If the station is working split then here are a few things to remember: Generally, DX stations operating in rarer DXCC entities where deep “pile ups” are the norm will begin by operating simplex only to establish their presence and will quickly go split when the growing pileup forces them to utilize split frequency operation in order to maximize the number of QSO worked while eliminating much of the fatigue associated with operating under “pile ups” conditions for long periods of time.

The DX station will be listening a few kilohertz higher or lower than their transmitting frequency and should announce a listening frequency or more likely announce the direction and number of kilohertz above or below the operating frequency on a regular basis.

For example, during voice transmissions “W1MJB listening 5 up” or for CW “W1MJB U 5” or the operator may specify that he/she will be listening across a range such as “up 5 to 10” which would indicate that the operator will be moving and listening across 5 kilohertz but will be transmitting on one frequency or working split. If the DX

station has indicated split operation utilizing one listening frequency, just wade in and join the fray.

But if the station has indicated that he will be listening across a range of frequencies you need to find out where the DX station is actually working and assess whether or not your barefoot signal is strong enough to allow you to work the DX station in a reasonable amount of time. Now, the trick is to find the pile up and while the DX station is trying to pull a call sign out of the pileup noise, scan the pileup to find where the DX station is listening.

If you have a dual watch function on your transceiver activate it and scan across the listening range until you hear a calling station and the DX station complete a contact. If the pile up density is low on this frequency join in; if not continue to scan until you find a listening frequency where your barefoot signal has the best chance of penetrating the pileup which gives you the best chance to have the DX station come back to your call.

If you are operating CW you can use this tactic or simply increase your receive bandwidth and determine where the DX station is listening then pick your transmit frequency accordingly. If the current listening range is extremely dense you may want to wait for better conditions.

73 and good DX,
Marty, W1MJB

10 Meter Contest beckons!

The bands are alive with the sweet sound of DX, compliments of solar cycle 24, with Solar Flux Index (SFI) as high as 180 with low to moderately low A and K indices. Such numbers are a sure recipe for fantastic activity on the amateur radio bands, which has not been experienced for at least eight years. A particular treat has been daily openings on the 10 meter band. Beginning at local dawn with European stations and continuing throughout the day until well past local dusk most days with JA’s galore is a parade of sequential openings with various parts of the world. Imagine what may be in store for us during the annual ARRL 10 meter contest, which starts 0000Z Saturday and runs through 2359Z Sunday (December 10-11, 2011). This is one of the ARRL sponsored contests that HCRA participates in as a club event. Your score, no matter how modest, will add to the HCRA aggregate score and raise our position in the final scoring. So, get into your shack, dust off your mike and key. For more information on the ARRL 10 Meter contest go to: <http://www.arrl.org/10-meter> or send a query to info@HCRA.org and our 10 meter contest coordinator Matt W1MSW will answer your questions. Hope to work you on SSB and CW during the 10 meter contest!

73 and good DX,
Marty, W1MJB



HRCA Auction 2011

HCRA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, November 8, 2011

The meeting was called to order on November 8, 2011 at 7:00PM at the Hampden Bank in West Springfield.

OFFICER REPORTS

Vice President, KX1X: Tech Class Schedule for January 2012—Classes on 1/9, 1/16, 1/23, 1/28 at the Moose Club in Chicopee. KX1X will have SAMnet point our info@hcra.org to w1msw@arrl.net in order to facilitate communications with potential students. Should we charge for the classes? Discussed but no motion to carry ensued..

Treasurer, AA1YW: Current financial Report - \$10,303.07 (includes \$1,000 for donation to Citizens Fund for WMA)
Long Term Raffle Report – 51 tickets sold to date
Auction Proceeds \$524.05

Secretary, W1MJB: Holiday Party – status report-52 tickets have been reserved and/or purchased. Jim KK1W will send a postcard to all non registered members by Nov 17th..

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Technical, KB1NWH: Bruce's/KB1RNU tower and antenna is up; Dave/WN1E tower and antenna is up; Duane/KA1SFK needs help with a tower project.

Zero Beat, N1FJ: Publication date for December ZB-November 23th. The board commented that Frandy was doing a fine job.

Membership, W1MSW: Current member count: Regular 82, Family 16, Life 3, Prospective 5
10 Meter Contest-Exposure on facebook, ZB, and mailing list. Marty will help with ZB article. We need to put out a request for members to open their stations for guest operators.

At Large, N1KXR: Report-Late arrivals pulled attention away from the auction. Dutch auctions were a problem, propose a separate administration for the Dutch auction items.. The sound courtesy of Al KB1XG was excellent.

Program, NN1Y:

November – Auction

December – Holiday Party

January – K1ANX on submarine radios (pending confirmation by KK1W)

February –Show & Tell

March – John Eldridge/Antique Radio Museum

April – KB1NWH on Emcomm

May – Open

June – Tailgate Party

Crew DX President, N1ELI: Report on crew activity – Food at auction netted \$54.00; some damage at the Camp Moses radio shack as a result of the recent Nor'easter..

OLD BUSINESS

KK1W- N1CQT Donation – completed-\$1607.56 collected; KK1W-N1IKD Donation – completed-\$1998.09 collected
N1NY -program speakers for 2012 only May remains open.

KK1W- looking for a new webmaster to bring the HCRA website into the 21st century-ongoing

W1MJB- Is our ARRL SSC status current? completed renewal

W1MJB- door prizes for the Holiday Party-purchased

KB1NWH &W1MJB- Status of the exploratory work to purchase a storage trailer-created specification for ideal trailer, discussed specifications and cost, AA1YW & KB1NWH will visit a local trailer currently for sale.

NEW BUSINESS

KX1X- continues planning the Technician Class in January 2012. Seeking volunteer teachers.

KK1W- Motion to reserve Dufresne Park for Field Day 2012 carried, Treasurer issued a \$50 check for the deposit.

KK1W- possible alternate meeting site in Feeding Hills. Jim will schedule a visit to the site.

KK1W- Looking for a new Trustee for W1NY, volunteer needed. Tabled until the January meeting.

KK1W & AA1YW-to coordinate the payment to the Community Fund of WMA per agreement with Charlie/N1IKD - \$1,000 donation approved.

NN1Y- Program (speaker) for the May 2012 meeting.

W1MJB- complete holiday party arrangements

Should we roll the tailgate party into the Field Day weekend? Much discussion, no consensus.

Respectfully submitted on November 17, 2011

Marty Bowen/W1MJB