



ZERO BEAT

<http://hcra.org>

December 2016

Special points of interest:

- January's Meeting
Rockwell Schrock WW1X
Remote Ham Radio
- [Visit the HCRA facebook page.](#)
- Don't forget to check out hcra.org
- [Visit Summits on the Air](#)
- [Visit POTA413 facebook page](#)

**No regular 1st
Friday night meeting
for the month of
December.
See you January 6th
"Remote Ham
Radio".**

5th Annual HCRA-MTARA Holiday Party

**Sunday December 4th at 1-5 pm, at the Castle of Knights,
1599 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, Ma 01020**

NO Tickets sold at the door.



[For directions to The Castle of Knights:](#)

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2017 H.C.R.A.'S MEETINGS

**1ST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH
JANUARY—JUNE**

- January 6th - Rockwell Schrock WW1X, Remote Ham Radio
- February 3rd - John from Hamsource
- March 3rd - Dick Frey WA2AAU, Northeast Weak Signal Group
- April 7th - Show N' Tell
- May 5th - Steve Davidson, Mgr HRO, Salem, NH, Everything wanted to know about Go Boxes
- June 2nd - Elections and Field Day 2017 TBA Short Presentation

**LARRY W1AST IS ALREADY BOOKING FALL/WINTER/SPRING
2017/2018 MEETINGS.**

**IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA OR SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OR
"SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE" SESSIONS.
CONTACT LARRY OR ANY MEMBER OF THE B.O.D.**

Win a KX2 !!!

Elecraft's Hottest New Transceiver



The New KX2: An 80-10 Meter SSB/CW/Data Station That Fits In Your Pocket!



NEW!

Quick Specs

- 5.8" x 2.8" x 1.5"
- Ultralight grab-and-go station
- 80-10 meters (9 bands)
- SSB / CW / Data
- Up to 10 W TX
- Li-ion battery option
- Amp-hour meter
- Built-in mic and 0.5-W speaker
- Wide-range Internal ATU
- Perfect for SOTA and field ops

\$1000 Package

Elecraft KX2 Transceiver

with

Elecraft MH3 Hand Microphone

Elecraft KXAT2 Antenna Tuner



Tickets only \$10 - all proceeds to HCRA

Only 250 tickets sold!

Drawing March 11th, 2017 @ MTARA Hamfest

(or at a preceding HCRA meeting if all tickets sold prior to March 11th)

FROM THE SHACK

JEFFERY BAIL NT1K



Holiday Party

It's that time of the year, it's Holiday season. I would like to wish all the HCRA members and their families a safe and happy holiday. HCRA and MTARA will be having a joint holiday party on Sunday December 4th. I hope to see you there, we will have good food, good company and prizes for those who purchased tickets. Of course, there will be no general meeting in December in lieu of the Holiday Party. Tickets already been sold. Hope to see you there!

ARRL 10M Contest

On the weekend of December 10th, the ARRL 10-meter contest will be taking place. Compared to the last few years, it may be quite the challenge considering the solar cycle and band conditions. However, there is still the chance to make a decent amount of contacts. HCRA does participate as a club. Please get on the air and make some contacts!! When you are sending in your logs, don't forget to put "Hampden County Radio Assn" (as written) as you club. There are other "HCRA" clubs in the US and we don't want to confuse anyone. Please look in this month's ZeroBeat for more information about the contest

Arduino Kits / Show and Tell

It seems that the Arduino type kits are a big hit at the meetings. HCRA plans on purchasing more units to satisfy demands. There is so much demand that it's very possible that we'll have another "Share the knowledge" class on the Arduino. Hopefully members will put these kits into great use and come up with stuff for the HCRA Show and Tell in April. I am talking about it now so you can get a head start. If you need a bit of encouragement, there will be prizes for the top entries from members.

Updated Zerobeat Archives

HCRA has been slowly working at getting all our history online. Our history mostly consists of Zero Beat editions. Dave Isham (KB1MU) worked very hard at collecting and digitizing our history. He must have put in countless hours to scan over 1,500 documents. We are currently combining, optimizing and applying optical character recognition (OCR) so that we can have online viewable, downloadable and searchable files for all to see. If you visit our archives, you will see that every month we are adding content. We are still missing some editions (1954, 55, 56, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75 and missing months in various years). If you have anything that is missing or better (clearer) versions. Please contact the board. Also big thanks to John Balboni (AC1T), John Pise (Kx1x) and others for providing pieces of HCRA history.

Still Need Renewals

At the time of writing this, we have 83 members (71 Paid, 9 Family, 3 Prospect). If you have not renewed, please do so. We usually have about 90 paid members and we would like to reach those numbers every year.

This is your club, we need you!

I know I am sounding like a broken record but it's very important that all the members pitch in and help. For HCRA to thrive, we need your help. Suggestions and ideas are great. In fact, it's encouraged but it's more important to help make those ideas reality. It cannot be solely placed on the directors. Field day is our biggest event and we're looking volunteers for all spots including antenna captain, tower captain, setup team, tear down team, band captains, operators and more. If you are interested, please contact myself or Bob Menguzzo (K1YO at ARRL dot NET)

FIELD DAY 2016 RESULTS

JEFF BAIL NT1K



In the December issue of QST, the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) has released the results from Field Day that took place in late June 2016. HCRA participates as club to show the public what amateur radio is about. It's also a great event for amateur radio operators in the area to get together and have some fun.

HCRA entered in the 6A category. We had 6 stations on the air doing SSB, CW and a little bit of RTTY.

Amount of contacts: 2822

Final Score: 9592

US position: 41st (out of 2698 logs)

NE position: 4th (out of 155 logs)

6A position: 5th (out of 42 logs)

WMA position: 1st (out of 13 logs)

Visit the websites below for more information:

<http://www.hcra.org/zb/sept16.pdf> (ZeroBeat Sept. 2016) for detailed FD writeup

<http://www.hcra.org/field-day/field-day-2016/> HCRA FD Page

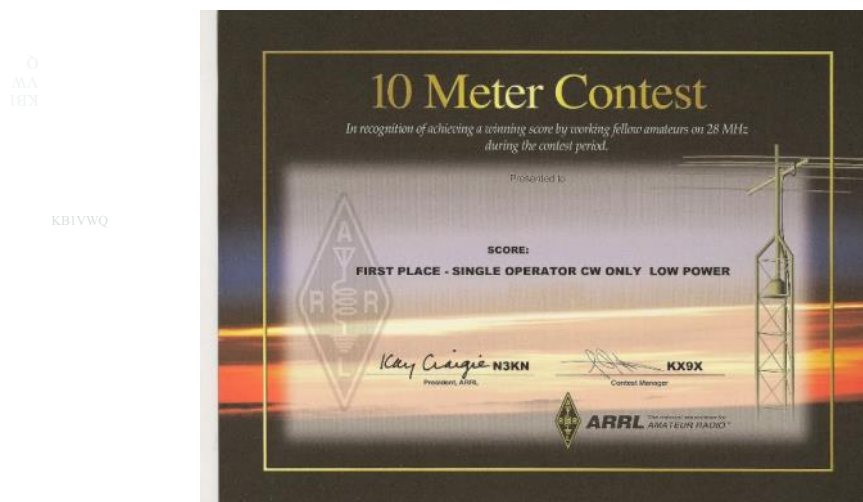
<http://hcra.org/fdstats/2016-ARRL-FD-W1NY/> FD 2016 Stats and raw log

Very impressive scores. It shows that HCRA can compete with most. A big thanks to all who operated, volunteered and supported HCRA. Please help and volunteer to make 2017 FD more successful and fun!

ARRL 10 METER CONTEST

December 9th – 11th

Jeff Bail NT1K



Represent HCRA On The Air!

When: Saturday 10th 0:00z to Sunday 23:59z

Local: Friday Dec 9th 8pm to Sunday Dec 11th 7:59pm

Bands: 10 meters

Modes: CW, SSB and Digital

Club: Hampden County Radio Assn

Objective: For Amateurs worldwide to exchange QSO information with as many stations as possible on the 10 meter band.

Exchange: US/CA stations send State or Province

Rules and More Information: <http://www.arrl.org/10-meter>

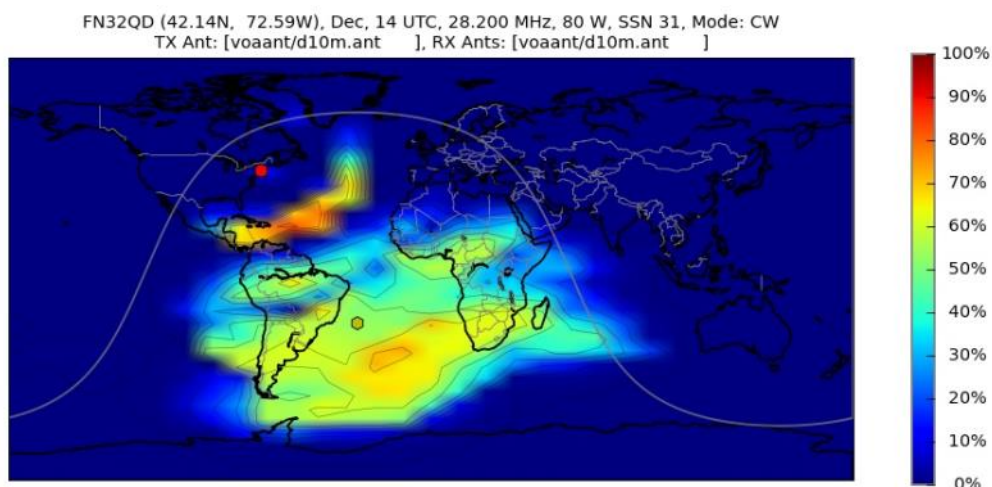
This is one of the few contests where HCRA operates as a team. It's encouraged that every HCRA member get on the air and make as many contacts as you can. It doesn't matter if it's one or 1,000 contacts. Anything will help our club score. This year will prove quite a challenge due to declining propagation due to where we are in the solar cycle.

Propagation Prediction

One of the many challenges of contesting is knowing when and where to be on the air.

Well since it's 10m, we know where to be. However, when to be on the air and where to point your antenna is a different story. We have some excellent online sources that could give us a prediction of when to be on. Let's look at the coverage map.

It appears that most popular activity will be south from our location. The Caribbean, South America and

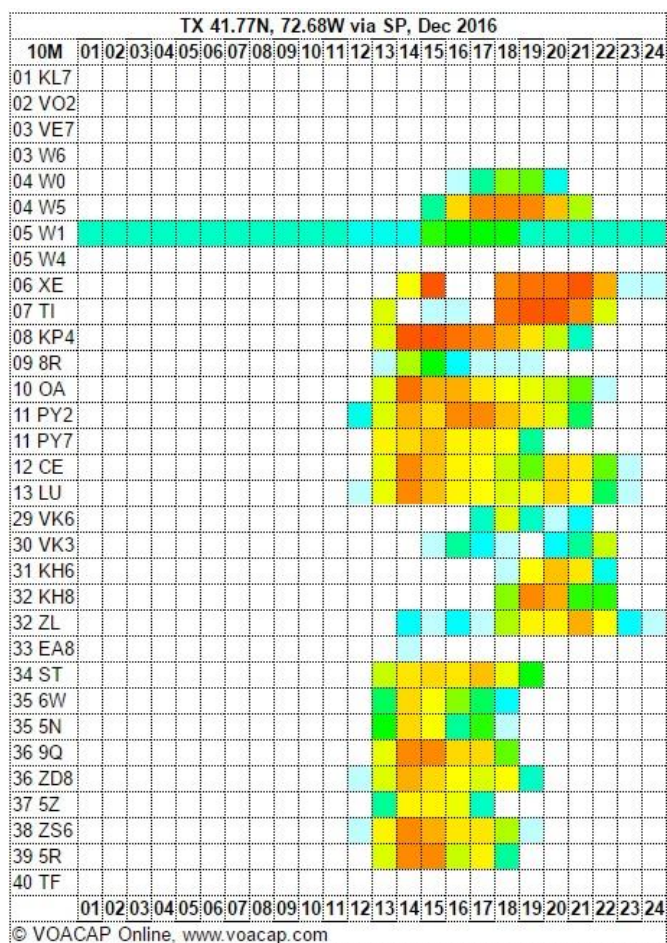


Southern Africa will be the best chances to make contacts. Mexico, Central America and Northern Africa is possible if you have a directional antenna with gain. This was modeled using a dipole installed 10m high from FN32. This map serves as an educated guess.

This a graph is showing locations around the world with possible predictions. The horizontal line shows time and the vertical line show different locations around the world using the callsign prefix. The darker color, the better the chance of making contacts at that time with that location. It appears that band will be open to the south from around 1300z (10am) to around 21z (5pm). There might be some chances to work New Zealand and other pacific islands. Once again, these are just suggestions. You won't know exactly unless you get on the air and make contacts. You might be surprised.

You can get a more detailed propagation prediction by going to the VOAcap website. They have tools online where you can pinpoint your exact location and put it better antenna details. Of course, directional antennas with gain will have better results.

Check it out: <http://www.voacap.com/>



Participating As A Club

HCRA does have a decent presence on the air during this contest. If you participate, please place "Hampden County Radio Assn" as your club. Please do not use HCRA as there are other clubs that share the same initials as us. In 2015, 13 members participated with a combined score of 543,526 points. Let that serve as our goal to beat as a club. Hopefully we can move up a couple spots in the medium category.

IF YOU MAKE A CONTACT IN THE CONTEST, PLEASE SUBMIT A LOG AND USE "HAMDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSN" AS YOUR CLUB!!

Please send HCRA your score summary (QSO's, Multipliers, Total Score) to Scores@hcra.org. That way we can have a good idea what our score will be.

Hope to see you on the air!

**Hands-Only™
CPR**

1

Call 911

2

**Push hard and fast in
the center of the chest.**

Learn more at handsonlycpr.org

**American Heart
Association**
Learn and Live

THE NPOTA MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR

RICH LAVIOLETTE KC1AEO

KC1AEO Rich Laviolette has been an active participant in the ARRL's yearlong celebration of the National Park Service's 2016 Centennial... National Parks On The Air or NPOTA. During this time Rich has been involved in over 66 National Park Service unit "activations" including over 33 unique NPS units during the course of the 2016 event.

The latest set of activations brought him through portions of 7 states...New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina. On the ARRL's NPOTA Facebook page Rich referred to the trip as his Bucket List/NPOTA Quest/ "Magical History Tour".

During his 15 day trip Rich had the opportunity to activate over 22 NPS units including 2 National Parks, NP51 Shenandoah National Park and NP26 Great Smokey Mountain National Park.

Rich used a Go Box that includes a Yaesu FT-857D and an LDG Z11 Pro II auto tuner. Power was sourced from a 35 A/Hr AGM battery that was recharged at nightly stop-overs.

The preferred band on the trip was 20 meters, but some contacts or activations were made on 40 meters or 17 meters. The mode was always SSB. The antenna of choice was an MFJ 20 meter "Ham-tenna" on a magnetic mount to the roof of his minivan. On a few occasions band conditions called for either 17 meters or 40 meters and in that situation, the appropriate Ham-tennas were employed.

On a few occasions Rich had to use "ole reliable" a vertical endfed wire antenna on a 33 foot MFJ 1910 telescopic fiberglass pole. It was employed to accommodate an NPOTA contest rule. This particular rule does not allow any portion of your station to be attached to a vehicle of any kind when activating certain trails; in this case it was TR01 Appalachian National Scenic Trail in NP51 Shenandoah National Park.

Rich planned this trip as a way to activate new and unique NPS units. At the same time he found this to be a tremendous opportunity to be able to visit places in our country that played such an important role in our history. He enjoyed the beauty, solemnity and the honor to be able to walk on hallowed ground.



First Stop at MP03 Gettysburg National Military Park



HP14 Harpers Ferry National Historic Park and the Visitor's Center located in Harpers Ferry, WV

THE NPOTA MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR (CONT.)



HP06 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove near Middletown, VA site of one of the last battles of the Civil War



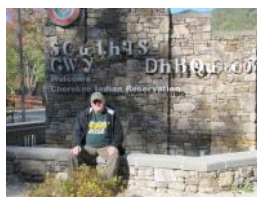
Shenandoah National Park

The NPOTA multiple location of NP51 +TR01



The rarely activated AA26 Natural Bridge State Park in Natural Bridge, VA

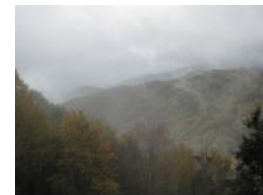
Entrance to the Blue Ridge Parkway near Cherokee NC



The entrance to Great Smokey Mountains National Park along the Oconaluftee River just outside the Cherokee Indian Reservation near Cherokee NC

Entrance to the Cherokee Indian Reservation one of the starting points of TR12 Trail of Tears.

This trail follows the route of the Cherokee's shameful deportation in the early 1800's to what is now Oklahoma



TR10 Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail of the Revolutionary War in Abingdon, VA

The Muster Grounds

Clingman's Dome shrouded in clouds at 6600FT ASL

THE NPOTA MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR (CONT.)



BF01 Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg , MD Over 23,000 Americans lost their lives here. Truly, this is hallowed ground.



BF06 Monocacy National Battlefield by the Monocacy River near Frederick, MD, again truly hallowed ground.

WR03 Delaware National Scenic River near Washington's Crossing, PA original site of George Washington's famous crossing of the Delaware River



AA17 NJ Coastal Heritage Trail + AA19 Pinelands National Reserve



Great activation site for propagation and the view of Atlantic City in the distance and a 2 for 1 NPOTA Multiple!



Minivan with 20meter MFJ Ham-Tenna. NPOTA 3 for 1 WR04 Great Egg Harbor River + AA17 New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail + AA19 Pinelands National Reserve Gaskill Park Mays Landing, NJ



WR24 Maurice National Scenic and Recreational River Millville, NJ

DOTS & DASHES:

Things I can't think where to put, but are interesting.

ARRL CALLS ON MEMBERS TO PRESS FOR US SENATE PASSAGE OF AMATEUR RADIO PARITY ACT

ARRL once again is calling on its members to urge their US Senators to support the Amateur Radio Parity Act (H.R. 1301) when it comes up in the Senate during the "lame duck" session of Congress that adjourns in mid-December. The House of Representatives approved the bill in September, but if the Senate does not follow suit, the bill will die, and the entire process will have to be repeated. ARRL Hudson Division Director Mike Lisenco, N2YBB, who chairs the ARRL Board's Legislative Advocacy Committee and has been heavily involved in efforts to move H.R. 1301 forward, said today, "The clock is ticking." It is important to have this completed, there is concern that the new administration will not support the bill.

ANNUAL SKYWARN RECOGNITION DAY DECEMBER 3RD

The annual SKYWARN Recognition Day (SRD) on-the-air activity will take place Saturday, December 3, from 0000 until 2400 UTC (starts on the evening of Friday, December 2, in US time zones).

SKYWARN Recognition Day was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service and ARRL to honor the contributions that SKYWARN volunteers make to the NWS mission - the protection of life and property during threatening weather. During the SKYWARN Special Event, hams will operate from several NWS offices. W1AW will take part in the event.

The object of the event is for all participating Amateur Radio stations to exchange contact information with as many NWS stations as possible on 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meters plus 70 centimeters. Contacts via repeaters are permitted.

Stations will exchange call signs, signal reports, locations, and a one or two-word description of the weather at their respective locations (e.g., "sunny," "rainy," "partly cloudy," "windy"). NWS stations will use various modes, including SSB, FM, AM, RTTY, CW, and PSK31. While using digital modes, special event stations will append "NWS" to their call signs (e.g., N0A/NWS).

Event certificates will be electronic and printable from the main website after the conclusion of SRD. An online submission form is available to submit your log summary for SRD at, <http://www.arrl.org/srd-form>.

INTERESTING HAM RADIO WEB SITE:

Ever wanted to print out maps with Amateur Radio prefixes. Here is a website where you can print out world maps with prefixes.

<http://www.mapability.com/ei8ic/maps/prefix/>

AREA SWAP/HAMFESTS:

Jan 21	Whitman ARC WinterFest	Whitman, Ma	http://www.walnpo.org
Feb 4	Connecticut Valley FM Swapfest	Springfield, VT	http://www.cvfma.org/
Feb 18	Algonquin ARC Flea Market	Marlborough, Ma	http://www.qsl.net/n1em/
Feb 25	White Mountain ARC Flea Market	Chocorua, NH	http://www.w1mwv.com
Mar 5	New England Antique Radio Show	Nashua, NH	http://www.nearc.net/
Mar 11	Mt. Tom ARA HamFest	Chicopee, Ma	http://www.mtara.org/
Mar 31	Androscoggin ARC Convention	Lewiston, Me	http://www.w1npp.org/
Apr 8	Seacoast Amateur Radio Flea Market	Hampton, NH	http://www.w1wqm.org
Apr 15	Portland Amateur Wireless Hamfest	South Portland, Me	http://www.qsl.net/pawa/
Apr 16	Flea at MIT	Cambridge, Ma	http://www.swapfest.us
Apr 22	Radio Association of Norwich Swap	Gales Ferry, Ct	http://www.rason.org/
May 5/6	NEARFest XXI	Deerfield, NH	http://www.near-fest.com/
May 13	East Greenbush ARA Hamfest	East Greenbush, NY	http://www.w2egb.org/
Sep 8/10	New England Convention	Boxborough, Ma	http://www.boxboro.org/

DECEMBER'S CONTESTS:

Dec 2	ARRL 160-Meter CW Contest	www.arrl.org/160-meter	CW
4	10-Meter RTTY Contest	www.rttycontesting.com	Dig.
10	ARRL 10-Meter Contest	www.arrl.org/10-meter	CW, Ph
	AWA Bruce Kelly 1929 CW QSO Party	www.antiquewireless.org	CW
17	RAC Winter Contest	www.wp.rac.ca	CW, Ph
18	ARRL CW Rookie Roundup	www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup	CW
19	Run for the Bacon CW QRP Contest	www.qrpcontest.com/pigrun	CW

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

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!

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.)

<http://www.hcra.org/meeting-location/>

3rd Friday of the month 7:30 PM, MTARA Club meeting, Red Cross building, [150 Brookdale Dr. Springfield, Mass.](#) (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

Third Monday of the month 7:00 PM, Franklin County Amateur Radio Club meeting, Greenfield Community College. (no meetings held in July or August)

<http://www.fcarc.org/>

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

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>

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VE Session Liaison, Dave Cote W1FAB

w1fab@arrl.net

A Ham's Night Before Christmas

Yet another corruption of Clement Clarke Moore's classic Christmas tale,
this time distorted by Gary Pearce KN4AQ
December 2, 1996

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through two-meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up
From the tower, quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Technicians,
Took their HT's to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
By a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,
And, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX PacketCluster,

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam -
A flying sleigh,
With an eight element beam,

And a little old driver
Who looked slightly mean,
So I thought for a moment
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa,
The Santa of Hams,
On a mission this Christmas
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,
And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of *CQ*,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late
QSLs, for a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded
It into the earth
Till the station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Resoldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp...
(Never worked right before -
Now it works like a champ).

A new low-pass filter
Cleaned up the TV.
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That wouldn't compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep
In the bag that he brought,
And he pulled out a big box.
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?
A Yaesu, for me?
An Elecraft, TEN-TEC
Or Flex, could it be!"
(If he thought I'd been bad
It might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those weekends
I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy.
It was *my* call he sent.
But the cards and the postage
Will cost a month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,
And the pile up was big.
But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final
Came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What an old ham expects:
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX."

© 1996, 2010 Gary Pearce [KN4AQ](#)
Permission granted for any print
or electronic reproduction,
no advance approval required.
[audio version \(mp3 download\)](#)

[Audio version with no music to play on
the air](#)

[YouTube Video Version](#)



**Here is your exciting copy
of Zero Beat!**

*Happy Holidays
From the
HCRA !*

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