

ZERO BEAT

HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION, INC.

Springfield, Mass.

ARRL Affiliated, 31st Year

December, 1979

REPORT ON WARC

8:00 PM Friday, January 4th
Agawam Middle School
Main Street
Agawam, Mass.

Bruce Johnson, ARRL representative to the World Administrative Radio Conference, has confirmed from Geneva that he will speak on the WARC at the HCRA meeting on January 4, 1980.

The meeting has been relocated to the Middle School on Main Street in Agawam (near the Agawam Police Dept.) to accommodate a larger-than-normal group.

This will be the first presentation anywhere in the United States on the radio conference which is held every 20 years and which allocates radio frequencies to the various radio services throughout the world. HCRA President Larry Soltz, WB1CJH, reports that the meeting will be open to all radio amateurs and that invitations will be sent to all amateur radio clubs throughout New England and New York, via club presidents, to attend this meeting.

Bruce's presentation will be followed by a question and answer period.

DUES

Dues were increased to \$7.00 on September 1, 1979, and can be mailed to the treasurer, Paul Kress, W1LZKT, whose address appears just above the address label on your issue of Zero Beat. The address label also shows when your membership expires. Please enclose an SASE when you renew by mail.



SWEEPSTAKES

CQ contest! CQ contest!
CQ contest! It's just about that time of year again. As always the Hampden County Radio Association will be participating in the ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes. This years 33ed annual running will be held on the weekend of January 12 and 13, 1980. Last year members of both the HCRA and the MTARA combined as one group and turned in a very impressive score (fifth in the country). This year the two groups will be competing independently. The Hampden County Club has turned in a score in all but two years in the 32 year history of the contest. Last year the highest score in western Mass came from one of our club members (Larry, K1GXU), and the club multi-op station took top honors in New England and fifth in the country overall. Our club is well known for it's participation in this contest as well as it's general VHF/UHF activities year round. This year should be no exception.

This is the time to test out that new converter, amplifier, preamp, antenna or whatever. Many of the members have picked up one of the new multimode rigs on the market and this should be a great time to try out all their Features (these things must have been designed for this contest). Those members who are limited to two meter FM should not think that this contest is not for them, some stations in the Northeast made close to 300 contacts last year using just this mode. Anyone who can spend only several hours of

(Continued on page 3)

HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSN. INC.
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

After the last meeting I was speaking to Ken Bolin, W1NG, our guest speaker. He explained that as Chairman of the A.R.R.L. contest Committee and an avid DXer he had many speaking engagements at which he spoke of the workings of the QSL Bureau. As he spoke of the great job that the bureau did, the importance it had to those who use it, and the pride H.C.R.A. should feel as the area 1 QSL Bureau sponser, I realized how much we take Eleanor Gray and her sorters for granted. It seems that other clubs in the first call area talk more about the bureau than we do. It is long overdue for us at H.C.R.A. to again thank Eleanor and her sorters for their thankless and diligent efforts, for the many hours they give us and the truly great job that they do. From all of us to them, a heartfelt - Thank You!

Larry, WB1CJH

As your editor completes his third year as an amateur radio operator and enters what he expects will be the first of many years in the amateur service, we also enter into the holiday season, a season of the year when we pause occasionally to give thanks for our many blessings and extend our friendship to all mankind.

This is a time when your editor wishes to thank all those who have made the amateur radio service a splendid public service organization providing emergency and technical assistance unselfishly throughout the world. I would also like to thank all those who have created a comradeship among individuals who stand ready to provide the same unselfish help and understanding to each other and to those who indicate a sincere interest in becoming actively interested in amateur radio.

Perhaps this camaraderie results from the humbling nature of participating in an activity in which very few people can be sufficiently knowledgeable to be expert in all phases and each of us knows of someone who is more proficient than ourselves. Perhaps the friendship comes from the fact that we can call CQ and the signal we transmit is indiscriminate as to the age, sex, color, height or political or religious convictions of the operator who answers our call. No where could this be any truer than a QSO on CW. Perhaps it is the courtesy we extend to each other whether on a repeater or on the low bands.

Whatever the reasons are that make amateurs great people, and we are sure you can provide some, we know that there are no strangers out there, only friends we have yet to meet. Best wishes for the holiday season.

Paul, WALZKT

VHF SWEEPSTAKES (Cont'd.)

the weekend operating the contest should try to get on between 8:00 and 10:00 PM local time on Saturday/ an, or Sunday night. Be sure to read the rules (Dec. QST) regarding some limitations of certain simplex frequencies.

This contest could well turn out to be of the wildest on record. Two meter activity (both FM and SSB/CW) has exploded in the last several years. The six meter band is surpassing it's peak of the late Fifties. Most every morning contacts can be made into Europe on crossband using 10 meters for receiving since most Europeans do not have 6 meter privilages. (note: crossband contacts do not count for contest crdit) Several stations have special privilages, e.g. (EI2W, ZB2BL and others) to get on six and have been worked by hundreds of stations here in the Northeast using six meters both ways. During the last several weeks there have been many outstanding openings to the west coast with signals as strong as 30 and 40 over S9. Even Alaska and Hawaii have been coming through with big signals. On at least one occasion the band has opened into Japan. The JA's are more active on 6 meters than we are here in the States and if the band was to open to Japan during the contest scores could be tremendous. There has also been very good openings to South America and the Pacific. All indications now are that 6 meters will continue like this (or even better) for some time and then most likely conditions like this will never appear again. This sunspot cycle could well turn out to be the greatest of any, that we have or will have ever experienced, on the 6 meter band so let's be prepared and take full advantage of it.

Don't forget the UHF frequencies, any contacts made on 220, 432 and above will count for twice as many points as those made below 148 MHZ. Activity in this area is good on FM as well as SSB/CW on the UHF bands.

Full contest rules will appear in December QST. Log and summary sheets will be available at the January club meeting as well as from ARRL's communications department. (Be sure to include a s.a.s.e. envelope if you send to the league. Logs should be forwarded to Frank Potts, 154 South Loomis St., Southwick, Ma. 01077 within two weeks after the contest so they can be forwarded to the league in time for the club to get full credit. Logs can be sent directly to ARRL but be sure they are filled out properly and that the club name appears on them. Make sure to get them in regardless of your score. This is a club effort!

Anyone wishing to operate but does not have equipment please contact W1RWU. Also, anyone with surplus equipment who does not mind loaning should do the same. As usual the club multi-op station will be active and people are always needed there whether it be for operating, logging, cooking or whatever.

Everyone should try to make an effort to get on and make even two or three contacts as this could mean literally thousands of points for the club if some of the larger stations with high multipliers totals are worked. So don't forget the weekend of January 12th and 13th, 1980 and make this the best running of the January VHF Sweepstakes yet.

73's es gud luck!

Frank Potts
W1RWU

NEWS FROM OTHER CLUBS

MOUNT TOM AMATEUR REPEATER
ASSOCIATION

Rick Zwirko, K1HTV, will speak on Phase III Satellite (Oscar) on February 15, 1980.

Meetings are held at 7:30 PM at the Western Mass. Electric Company building on Brush Hill Road in West Springfield. Everyone is welcome. For more info contact Heather, W1LABF.

PROVIN MOUNTAIN AMATEUR
REPEATER ASSOCIATION

BUYERS AND SELLERS NET

I'm happy to announce that the Provin Mountain Amateur Repeater Association's Buyer's and Seller's net once again is on the air. As in the past, the net will meet each Thursday evening at 8:00 PM local time on the 10-70 repeater WR1AEF. The purpose of the net is to provide an outlet for area Ham's to sell or buy amateur radio equipment and associated articles. You never know, but maybe a piece of equipment you are looking for will be listed some night, and at an attractive price too! Also, for those of you with equipment you feel only a novice class licensee would be interested in, I would like to mention that I have been told by many novices that they too listen to the net, either on their scanners or along with friends who have upgraded. The list of equipment will also be posted at PEARA club headquarters at 125 Maple St., Springfield; for inspection by novices, students and others who may be interested. We look forward to another successful year for the "Horsetraders Net", and invite all to participate, whether or not you have any plans to buy or sell.

George - W1FXI
PEARA

COUNT ONE WIN WARC !!!

For those who do not get QST, or if you do and did not read the editorial article in November 1979 QST, you will find this article of great interest.

Last month I read the article concerning the FCC proposed change of ITU Article 41, which would have eliminated Morse Code requirement below 144 MHz (QST October 1979, page 9). Well, the other members of the WARC countries, in their great wisdom, (which I think the FCC-Washington could greatly use) voted against the proposed change. So for now, we can breathe a small sigh of relief, but not for too long. As you know, the FCC still has a monster on 27 MHz to deal with, so it wouldn't surprise me that they try some type of home-rule solution. Remember Japan when they created a special license and frequency allotment?? So even though we might have won the battle for now, let's hope we won't lose the war.

If you didn't write a note to Mr. Carlos Roberts - Chief Personal Radio Bureau FCC, Washington, D.C. 20554, please do it now, so that they won't get further ideas. Also in the November 1979 QST League Lines, they requested that you send a copy of your original letter to the Office of International Telecommunications Policy, Department of State, Washington, D. C. 20520, so they will also know your feelings about preserving the high standards of amateur radio.

So in closing, if the first article slipped your mind, or you put it off and haven't got to it, please do it now, while it is fresh in your mind. Remember that only if we all pull together, will we succeed.

Paul A. ...
K1YOU ... RA

CQ CONTEST

Inspired by last months club talk on how easy it is to work DX and win contests with low power and simple antennas, I decided to give it a try. I decided to start on a small scale, the "Delaware QSO Party". Not a large contest for sure but.....

In November QST were the details, a simple exchange of contact number, signal report, and ARRL section or county. I figured that a low profile contest like this would not attract any "BIG GUNS" and I may stand a chance of winning, or at least of obtaining some new wall paper for the shack. The WDEL award is even easier to get than the HCRA worked 25 members certificate. For the WDEL award all you need do is work all three Delaware counties. With my modest station of a YAESU FT101ZD, a dipole, and a homebrew antenna tuner I set out to conquer DELAWARE.

Three hours and two cups of coffee later and I still have not worked 1 single Delaware station. I did manage to work all the rest of "3" land several times over and a ham who lived 1 mile over into Maryland side of the border, (close but no contest contact).

My hopes of WDEL wall paper and winning the Delaware QSO Party were fading fast. This is not to say all was lost, on the positive side is a log full of FB QSO's with hams in 2, 3, and 4 land. It is also fun (hi hi), but I must run now to start gearing up for December 1 and the Connecticut QSO Party.

Bruce, W1PUX

QSL Bureau

Jeff, K1BE, has asked for comments about the QSL bureau from our membership, especially from sorters and ex-sorters. Please do your part and send your comments to:
Jeff Duquette, K1BE
P. O. Box 346
Southwick, Mass. 01077

BR. BERNARD FREY, W1FKY
CAPUCHIN-FRANCISCAN BROTHER
KEEPING IN CONTACT WITH OUR
MISSIONARIES

Br. Bernard Frey is a BIG HAM! That's no insult. He is a HAM. That's the popular word for someone who is an amateur radio operator. But when he's on the radio Br. Bernard doesn't make idle chatter. He's contacting our missionaries around the world: Bringing their requests back to us and sending news from home to them, and by means of a "phone patch" he can let some of our missionaries speak with their relatives and friends in the States via short wave radio.

Br. Bernard was born in Yonkers, NY, in 1915. He became a Capuchin-Franciscan in 1934. He has spent the last 45 years serving our Province well as cook, sacristan, tailor, maintenance manager AND "ham" radio operator.

Br. Bernard is a well known member of the International Mission Radio Association. He has just concluded four years as its president. He is an example of the many faithful and talented friars who serve many people well.

(For those of you who may want to contact Br. Bernard, his address is:

Br. Bernard Frey
Capuchin Friars
Glenclyffe
Box 192, Garrison, NY 10524)

WELCOME

We welcome four new members to the Hampden County Radio Association:

Leo Tourigny K1LCPG
Malcolm Merchant W1MQK
Irving Fease
Bert Sirkin K1DFY

Welcome to the club and we hope that our association will be long and enjoyable here in the HCRA.

SHOW AND TELL

Responses and comments about the show and tell feature at the meeting in November were favorable and the Board of Directors has voted to make this a regular part of the coffee hour at each meeting. Please bring your homebrew projects to the meetings and give everyone the chance to see what amateurs can do. Projects that seem simple to an experienced builder may be just the inspiration necessary to encourage another ham to try a "homebrew" piece of equipment. For those of you just starting, bring your project to a meeting if you need help and put a sign on it that says "HELP". We usually have more than 100 members at a meeting and many will be capable and willing to give you assistance.

On Being a Harmonic...

CQ 10, CQ 10, CQ 10. This is WALZKT. This is what I have to go through about 3 or 4 times a week. But my father isn't in the room...it comes over my stereo speakers while I'm trying to sleep. But ham radio isn't all that bad. It has some highlights too. Like when the Yaesu is off or the two meter rig is broken. But ham radio must be good. When the boy was lost in Webster, Mass., who did they call on? Right, Ham radio. And what about hurricane David, then Fred? The tornado? Ham radio! Ham radio is the only means of communication for the St Patrick Day parade. From my point of view, ham radio is a good hobby for people who want to get involved. From novice to extra, from 34/94 to 31/91 and from club meetings to field day, I'll say again, ham radio is an all around good hobby.

Eric Kress

(Editor's note: The little monkey won't study for his ticket, though)

CONGRATULATIONS

Barb Murnane, WBLEHS, and Gent Lam, W1LCQF, have both passed the Amateur Extra Class exam. Both plan to continue using their current calls. Our sincerest congratulations to both on this outstanding achievement.

Letter To The Editor

I read with great interest (and much amusement) the article about the New England ARRL convention. When I first heard about it, I figured the \$6.50 admission must be a misprint... but, alas, no. They were serious. On October 20 and 21, the ARRL Roanoke Division held their convention in Norfolk, Va. The admission was \$3.50 with advance tickets going for \$2.50. Some of the major manufacturers and dealers who were also at the New England convention said the folks in Hartford seemed reluctant to purchase all those nice little goodies, partly because of the admission, especially if they came with their families. By the way, the Roanoke convention had all the usual forums, shows, etc. This proves (to me at least) that it is possible to put on a super show without mega-buck prices. The exhibition area here was divided 50/50 between dealers and flea market, all of which was indoors. It sure was nice not to worry about missing 95% of the flea market had the weather been bad.

Chris Hushak, W1ZXX/4
2-28th Street, Apt 10-A
Newport News, VA. 23607

(ED: Thanks, Chris. Good to hear from you.)

TIDBITS

WAIYYW put up a new tower and beam. Nice way to spend a vacation, Rich... Al, WA1SMH, had six students for his novice course. They left when they found out they couldn't spin records on his station. One stalwart is left learning the code...WB1DTZ has a new colinear 2 meter beam up that gets him into the repeaters...WA1URB passed his second class commercial license. FB, Paul... WB1ETS taking a night course in real estate...Zero Beat has been entered in the ARNS newsletter competition...W1RRW got into the HCRA ten meter net last month...WB1BZW working DX like crazy with the new tribander on his tower... K1BUB still working on the Olympic ham set up...Door prizes are solicited for the Christmas party, especially YL gifts!...N1CQ listed in the November QST for his contest score...KA1AVJ now has .34/94 mobile...W1UKR went to Florida...WB1HIH passed amateur extra... KA1CRG studying to upgrade, but when, Ray?...W1KK built a rhombic just to try it out, nice to have a big backyard, Art...WA1SOF busy at school, courses are getting tougher ...KA1BNN supports Brazil's economy by drinking so much coffee every day.....

SORTING QSLs FOR THE BUREAU

Anon

Every other month I receive two to three big shopping bags filled with QSL cards and envelopes. I sort one letter group for the W1 bureau. The envelopes are filed under the ham's call sign, according to suffix. All of mine start with the same letter, so I look at the next letter when I sort them. The QSLs are sorted the same way. A good friend of mine took pity on me so I have a nice "pigeon-hole" rack for the cards. As the slot fills up, I sort the cards by individual calls, and then they go into envelopes or the dread "DEAD FILE!!!" My DF is huge! Too lazy, cheap, or dumb to file an envelope, that's where your rare DX cards end up.

The "Bum Box" is tossed out and begun anew every January. Stamps from all over the world are saved for collectors.

I have found that out of perhaps 1,000 hams, as few as 15 get all the cards. One guy alone gets about 500 every month! These "big guns" have their own pigeonholes, and this makes sorting faster and easier. One problem is that people with new call signs don't send in separate envelopes for every call. It's impossible to cross-reference back to the bureau due to the sheer numbers involved. So these go into my dead file. It's been suggested that we charge the big users a fee; not a bad idea, actually.

Little itzy-bitsy envelopes and "DL" cards don't go well together. Two of these folded and stuffed into the envelope make it bulge so much the Post Office might refuse it. I also receive huge envelopes that won't fit into my file cabinet. Envelopes without postage might sit there forever. I mail the ones with .13¢ and .10¢ stamps postage due, but again the PO gnashes their teeth. Envelopes that come in sealed are hard to open without ruining, but I try.

Many hams send in nice notes with their envelopes, which I appreciate. Donations usually go for the annual picnic or for postage for others. No one gets paid to sort so you might wonder why anyone does it. Well, it's fun, interesting, and a service to others. If you're interested in sorting, send a note to the Bureau. Let them know you're a club member and you'll get preference on the waiting list. Your comments about the system would be interesting to hear, write in to Zero Beat. Oh well, time to sort some more cards, let me see now, is it "E" after "F", or first "G", then "F".....



D X News

Anew net has been established to swap information about DX. The net meets Tuesdays at 8:00 P.M. on 146.40/147.00, Courtesy of the M.T.A.R. A. The net is open to all and Rollie, WB1AAP, assures that all are welcome to join in.

Ed Tilson, W1HDQ

It has been reported to your editor that Ed gave a super presentation at the Mount Tom meeting on November 16. Sorry we missed that one and congrats to the MTARA on another good meeting,



FRANK H. KOZAK
LORRAINE KOZAK

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Weather-alert radios

—they could save your life

Silently they monitor the weather band—till there's cause to sound the alert

By EVAN POWELL

Only two days after POPULAR SCIENCE assigned me to do this story, I was awakened at three in the morning by a screeching weather-alert radio in my living room. The noise jolted me to complete consciousness of the warning: A severe thunderstorm was headed toward our home.

Less than a month before, such a storm had struck without warning, felling large trees and severely damaging nearby buildings. My pop-up tent camper was destroyed in that storm, but this time, thanks to the advance warning, all was secured and I was back in my house before the first drops of rain fell.

Weather-alert radios are not the same as conventional weather receivers. Sure, they receive the broadcasts from the National Weather Service, but there's no need for you to monitor them continuously; an electronic circuit does that. If danger is near, the alert sounds and the radio breaks its silence to report the potential danger.

A variety of these radios is now available, and no matter where you live in the U.S., it's possible that one could save your life some day. Cost? Low—from just \$16 for the alert-only models. But the radio itself is actually the end of the story—it's the end of a system that begins at a special radio station as far as 40 miles from where you live.

The NWS Network

Established by the National Weather Service, the NWS Network has

transmitters at key weather stations that broadcast regularly updated weather information continuously on the public-service VHF high band. The most common frequencies are 162.400 MHz and 162.550 MHz, but 162.475 MHz is used in some areas where interference is encountered on the other two.

In addition to normal weather reports and forecasts, other special information, tailored to the local area, is broadcast. Transmitters along the coast, for instance, give ocean temperature and tide information, while those inland in rural areas may include soil temperature and other agricultural reports.

But the most dramatic transmissions are emergency bulletins, which are aired immediately. The criterion for determining if an emergency exists is simple: any condition (not necessarily weather related) that officials believe could endanger life or property.

Once this determination is made, a bulletin is recorded on a tape cartridge—called a "cart" in D.J. jargon—and it's inserted into the transmitter's tape playback deck. (Stock carts, previously made, are available to cover various "conventional" catastrophes.) Before the tape is played, however, a red button is pushed that actuates a 1050-Hz tone, automatically timed for 10 seconds.

The tone is intended to call attention to the warning if you happen to be listening to the broadcast, but it also does a lot more if you're not.

The new weather-alert radios have a "monitor" position—the set remains silent, but its electronic circuitry is monitoring the weather broadcast for the 1050-Hz tone signal. When it comes, the circuit "listens" for about

three more seconds to be sure that it's not a stray signal. Then it actuates the alarm, usually an "electronic siren" that sounds through the speaker. Most alarms are easily capable of arousing you from the deepest sleep—as I happily found out.

If you looked at a U.S. map that contained all weather-related happenings of the past year, you would quickly see that there is almost no area totally exempt from hurricanes, tornadoes, or severe weather. Add to that its potential use in other emergencies (tacked to the bulletin board next to one transmitter I visited was an ominous sealed envelope containing instructions for use "in the event of enemy attack"), and it's easy to see the importance and reasoning behind this rapidly expanding system.

Each station, with transmitter power from 100 to 1000 watts, can cover a radius of about 40 miles. There are almost 200 stations now on the air, and plans call for another 150 stations to be operating by next year. That will put a weather station within range of almost 90 percent of the country's population, but, to take advantage of them, you need a receiver.

Listening in

Weather radios come in several different forms. Most multi-band portable radios and scanning radios can receive the weather band, but don't rely on them for 24-hour surveillance without the additional weather-alarm feature.

The market is booming for specialized receivers with the weather band only. (But watch it—not all have the alert feature.) While they are basically battery-operated (a must, since severe weather conditions often cause

Continued

power failure), they have an AC adapter that powers them in routine use, reserving the battery for power failure.

Weather radios are either tunable or crystal-controlled. The tunable models that I tested for this report didn't drift nearly as much as earlier units I've tried, but I much prefer the crystal-control method: There's no tuning to do—you simply flip a three-position switch to a position that receives the signal.

The Weatheralert TA-3CH is the unit that aroused me from my sleep earlier. It was in another room some 40 feet away and—take it from me—its loud electronic siren does the job. One problem with it, however, is that its duration is no longer than the weather-bureau tone. So, if you're not there to hear it, you could miss the warning.

Other Weatheralert models provide different capabilities (though all are crystal-controlled). The TA-3F appears identical to the TA-3CH, but adds a continuous beeper alarm and flashing warning light, as does the cube-style TA-5F. The TA-10, an AM-

FM radio with alarm, and TA-20 give you a choice: You can select a siren for the time the alarm sounds, or a continuous beeper with flashing light that signals until reset. The newest Weatheralert, the TA-25, has this, plus a battery-condition indicator.

Once triggered, the alarm on the Midland model 13-907 continues to sound until you push the button to monitor the forecast. The Regency ACT-C1W and Electra Bearcat BCW not only sound the alarm but turn the radio on so you can hear the bulletin without going to the set. The Electra includes a flashing light that signals until reset. With these radios, even if you're away from home, you'll know that an alarm has been triggered when you return.

Some weather radios are completely silent when in the monitor position. With the others, it's possible to hear a slight but unintelligible sound even when the volume is turned down. This isn't noticeable a few feet away, but it doesn't make them ideal bedside companions.

This, of course, is one thing to listen for when you shop, and the EIA (Elec-

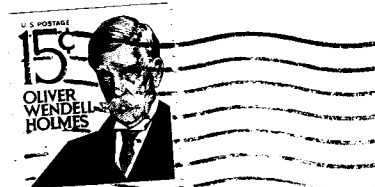
tronic Industries Assn.) has other suggestions:

- Sensitivity: one microvolt for 20-dB quieting (± 5 =kHz deviation).
- Selectivity: 45dB down at ± 25 kHz.
- Number of channels: three.
- Channel tuning: preferably switched, crystal controlled.
- Power source: AC/battery, preferably automatic switchover to battery during power failure.
- Antenna: Collapsible indoor type, and if possible, a 300-ohm external connection.
- Operating temperature range: 10 to 40 degrees C.

All the radios I tried are easy and convenient to use, yet there are times when it isn't easy to get along with them—as when the alarm goes off in the middle of the night to alert you to a flash flood condition, and you live 10 miles from the nearest creek.

But despite the possibility that I might be too well informed, the weather-alert radios are welcome in my house. They are an inexpensive insurance policy against injuries and damage from natural disasters. **EI**

Hampden County Radio Association, Inc.
Paul J. Kress, WA1ZKT, Editor
216 Eastwood Drive
Westfield, Mass. 01085



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Zero Beat
December, 1979