

ZEROBEAT

2-97

Hampden County Radio Association

Our 51st ARRL Affiliated Year

Issue 6

February 1996

1997

A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE H.C.R.A.

AS THE TIMES CHANGE, SO WILL WE!

The Board of Directors held their monthly meeting for January just before the regular meeting at the church. In an effort to increase attendance and participation, the Board has decided to change the way we are operating the club. The Board is looking at meeting every other month in order to obtain better speakers and give more interesting meetings.

The February and March meetings have been cancelled, so please note:

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE
H.C.R.A. WILL BE IN APRIL!**

**ANOTHER NEWSLETTER WILL BE SENT
TO YOU ANNOUNCING THE DATE AND
TIME.**

**Remember, if you have anything for sale
or swap, or if you have any technical tips you
would like to share, send them to Barry, N1IJK
at the return address on this newsletter.**

THE NEXT HCRA MEETING

IS ONE NOT TO BE
MISSED!

LOOK FOR
YOUR PERSONAL
INVITATION TO THE APRIL MEET-
ING IN YOUR MAILBOX THE LAST
WEEK IN MARCH!

Don't Forget.....

W1AW CW Qualifying runs are scheduled for 10 p.m. EST on Friday, Feb. 7, and 4 p.m. EST on Saturday, Feb. 22.

February 1 - 2

Delaware QSO Party
North American Sprint
New Hampshire QSO Party
Vermont QSO Party

February 8 - 9

IDRA World Wide RTTY WPX Contest
NW QRP Club Digital Contest
PACC Contest

QCWA Golden Anniversary QSO Party

February 15-16

ARRL International DX Contest

*For information on these and other contests, see
the February issue of QST Magazine.*

The New HCRA

By Bob McCormick WF1R (president)

Last year I was approached by a number of people to again participate on the board of the HCRA due to a lack of interest by the then current membership in the future of the club. Along with myself came a number of long time HCRA (and past board members) into your current board. We're all charged with trying to steer the course of the HCRA into the future.

I apologize for actually not having the time necessary to lead the club in the manner I would like to, or as I had devoted years ago ... but hopefully you'll find that we are moving forward in some positive manner.

What we need to do is both difficult and not easy: We're faced with dwindling membership, diverse interests and a lack of goals and charter. As the song goes "the times they are a changing" ... and the HCRA needs to change with them in order to continue to exist.

I realize that these changes will not be to everyone's liking. To that extent, please share with us any feedback you have, positive or negative. Otherwise we'll have no idea whether our changes are productive, etc.

After spending quite a few months talking with many of you, both individually and at club meetings, I've come up with a "package" of things that I think may help impact the club's move into the future.

The current club is organized under an infrastructure setup in the early 1950's - one that may have worked well then, and maybe even up into the early 1980's. But I'm finding that today it may not be optimal for our continued success.

Amateur radio has changed significantly since I got my first ticket (I think a novice license in 1967). And so hasn't society and life in general.

At the last club meeting we had a board of directors meeting prior to the general meeting, the minutes of which are attached. (Thanks to John Balboni AC1T for taking the time to take minutes as well as type them up so that I could include them for you here.)

I presented my six-point system for helping the HCRA adapt to the times. The board has approved some of these changes, and over the next few months the board (along with interested members) will be working on revamping what we do and how we deliver it.

What I proposed included:

1. Do away with dues

We have money in the bank. Our operating costs are insignificant. Through the generosity of one of our members Zero Beat is costing us nothing. Therefore I proposed that effective immediately we suspend dues, and offer to any member that has paid dues the option of obtaining a refund.

2. Disband the newsletter

As a long time HCRA newsletter editor (as well as newsletter editor for one of Digital's user groups for many years) I know well the effort required to put together a decent publication. Content is hard to get! And quality takes time & effort. I believe that the newsletter is neither worth the cost or effort; most of what we have to say can be found in other sources. I propose that we continue to make our membership aware of meetings, possibly with post card mailings, and also consider using new technologies, including email and the HCRA web site.

3. **Meetings**

Our typical meeting attendance has been between a dozen and 20 people since last June's banquet. This is poor when you compare it to the 100+ we used to have at meetings some years ago. It is difficult to entice speakers to come present to such a small crowd. And it is even more difficult to get people to come to meetings when you don't have much to present. My proposal is that we move to a quarterly or bi-monthly (every other month) meeting schedule, with meetings held at a new location, possibly one with little or no cost to the club. Each meeting should be started with a board (business) meeting.

4. **Meeting times**

In addition to looking at changing the meeting frequency we should look at *when* we are having our meetings. In looking at other current-day successful amateur radio organisations (specifically YCCC and NEWS) I think that their concept of having meetings on a weekend afternoon is better suited for drawing and keeping members. I'd suggest longer duration and less frequent would be a better approach. The meeting agenda should also be increased to provide both time for social activities as well as time for formal presentation(s).

5. **Change board compliment**

The board is currently made up of four executive offices (president, VP, secretary and treasurer), and two groups of four directors at large (each of whom are elected to two-year staggered terms). This is fine for an organisation with hundreds of members, lots of activities, etc. But that is *not* the HCRA of the 90's. In recent times its been nearly impossible to obtain a full board compliment, and general meetings are attended by slightly more than the number of board members we have! I propose that we reduce the board to be four executive

positions augmented by two at-large directors. This would cut the size of the board in half, hopefully making it a smaller, better team that could work more closely together on the future of the HCRA. Hopefully we will be able to get the changes necessary to accomplish this implemented at the annual meeting in June.

6. **Change the by-laws**

The by-laws are fairly lengthy and involved. This is fine for an organisation that can have real property, employees, income, etc. - but is purely unnecessary for the HCRA of today. I propose we rewrite the by-laws to make them fitting on how we'd like to run the club for today and into the near future. (By-laws can always be changed again in the future as the needs arise.) Again, this will be something that I will be working on with a number of other board members so that we will have something for the general membership to ratify at the annual meeting in June.

Overall, we need to redefine our *charter* and *increase* membership. I'm still not really sure what our charter is, or even what it should be. Hopefully through the aforementioned changes we'll start to get a clearer picture of this. As for membership, if we start doing the right thing, certainly the membership will increase! We did it before - we can do it again!

Please take some time and review the meeting minutes in the next few pages. It provides some valuable feedback into the process we are going through, and what some of the board and fellow members had to say.

**Minutes of the HCRA
Board Of Directors Meeting
Friday, January 4, 1997**

Board Members present: Bob McCormick (WF1R), Fred Stefanik (N1DPM), Barry Mason (N1IJK), Shawn McCormick (NC1B), Frank Potts (NC1I), Greg Stoddard (N1AEH) and John Balboni (AC1T)

Meeting minutes submitted by: John Balboni (formatted & edited for Zero Beat by Bob McCormick WF1R)

The meeting was called to order prior to the general meeting by Bob McCormick at the Feeding Hills Congregational Church hall. A quorum of board members was present.

WF1R: I believe we have about 35 paid club members. There has been no communications between N1AEH and N1DUY. No meeting minutes have been received from N1DUY since June 1996.

We need ideas. How to move the club forward and give direction to people? We can't look back at the past.

Ideas for discussion:

1. Do away with dues. Optionally, give back dues to club members who request a refund.
2. Disband the newsletter. Instead, send out a postcard reminder to members of upcoming meetings and events.
3. Change the club meeting schedule to either quarterly or every other month. Find a new location for the club meetings that can be used without cost to the club. Start each meeting with a board of directors (business) meeting.

4. Consider having meetings on the weekend. They could be longer, to allow time to socialize and time for a "well done" presentation.
5. Change the compliment of board members. There are too many board members for the size of this organization. Consider 4 executive members and 2 members at large.
6. Change the bylaws. Should we get rid of the corporation? Either perpetuate the corporation or get rid of the overhead, which is too much for a club of our size.

We have competition in ham radio: MTARA, YCCC and NEWS. They have a good focus that holds the clubs together. Where does the HCRA fit?

The goal is to redefine our charter. This is difficult, as not everyone in the club fits the model. We have to increase our membership. We don't have anything today that we can market!

N1AEH: We currently have 31 paid members.

NC1I: I agree with most of that - quarterly meetings, elimination of dues, optional refund, another club meeting location. We don't need 12 board members. What we are doing now isn't working. What are we marketing? What draws people to the club?

N1DPM: Don't do away with the newsletter. I agree with everything else.

NC1I: Keep the newsletter.

WF1R: Problem with the newsletter is that content is hard to get. It should reflect the content of the club. Why publish the newsletter if we don't have anything to say?

WA1EYF: It has always been a problem with the newsletter.

NC1I: Part of that is lack of club focus.

KA1ZE: Ask 20 people what their focus is.

WF1R: We did that. Every aspect of ham radio is represented. It was a "social" that bound us together. Really, the issue is how to bail out amateur radio.

AC1T: We used to have good speakers and a good newsletter. That brought people to the meetings.

WA1EYF: Look at what licenses are issued today. Technician plus.

WF1R: We don't keep track of who comes to our meetings. We cannot participate in club competition. Would break the rules if we do. At YCCC meetings, you have to sign-in at every meeting.

Are we in agreement on these 6 areas?

KA1ZE: Unincorporated. Move the meeting location. Don't stop the newsletter.

WA1EYF: I'm against unincorporating. Even if we are not exactly following the charter.

N1AEH: Corporation paperwork is up to date.

WF1R: Should we just modify the bylaws?

WA1EYF: That is not a big deal. The real issue now is to get the club moving forward.

N1AEH: We have minimal assets. The state would not be concerned.

WF1R: I'd keep the corporation around, but simplify the bylaws to one page. Change it at the June meeting. We have to sell it to the members.

WA1EYF: Keep the club intact until June.

N1DPM: You can't let the rules stall you in the meantime.

WA1EYF: We have had meetings without a quorum in the past.

KA1ZE: You won't have a problem if the board meetings are held before the regular meeting.

WF1R: We don't need 12 people to run the organization. We aren't using any of the original club infrastructures. We can't keep doing the same thing. We aren't reacting to change.

KA1ZE: Hit the members with good meetings early in the year.

K1WVX: There is no one assigned to do meeting announcements on the nets. This would improve attendance. Also, I don't receive the newsletter until Wednesday before the meeting.

N1AEH: Eliminate the dues.

WF1R: The room costs us \$35 per month.

NC1I: Meetings would be more relaxed on a Saturday afternoon. It would be better for older people who don't care to drive at night.

WF1R: We could start the meeting at 1:00 PM. Do a board meeting. Allow social time. It is hard to get someone in to do a meeting for 20 people. Saturday meetings have been proven by YCCC and NEWS.

N1IJK: Where are we going to go with that?

KA1ZE: I think we can come up with some good topics. Everyone should be excited about some ham radio topic. I could be excited about anything!

WF1R: I'm not convinced I know the interest of people who have been licensed in the last few years. I think they are more into computers. I believe that doing some of these things will keep the club going. How do we define the club's charter and increase membership? We have to offer people something. Do like the NEWS club. Start without dues, like a new club.

KA1ZE: You have to offer a reason for people to go to a new meeting location. The NEWS club meeting locations are not cheap.

NC1I: We should revisit the ideas. Think about them.

WF1R: We've thinned our numbers out. Have to draw from a larger area. Let's try to put some value back in. A lot of things are pulling us apart.

K1WVX: The Tech Topics used to pack in quite a few people.

AC1T: At a new location, for a weekend meeting, the club could offer an agenda like this: 12 Noon - 1:00 PM - lunch with club members; 1:00 - 1:30 PM - Tech Corner; 1:30 - 2:00 PM - chat time; 2:00 - 2:30 PM - the main meeting topic.

NC1I: I make a MOTION to eliminate dues and optionally return the money to people for the 1996 - 1997 year, with club membership based on showing up at meetings.

N1DPM: Modify the motion so you must attend the minimum meetings required to participate in club competition.

There was a general discussion and agreement that the issue of membership should be part of a separate motion.

N1DPM: I SECOND the motion.

Bob McCormick called the vote.
The vote was unanimous.

KA1ZE: Announce this in the newsletter.

NC1I: I make a MOTION that club membership be based on attendance or notification of desire to be a member of the club.

KA1ZE: I SECOND the motion.

Bob McCormick called the vote.
The vote was unanimous.

W1UWX: What will fund the club?

NC1I: Zero Beat has not cost the club a nickel this year.

WF1R: Should club meetings be quarterly or every other month? Integrate the board meeting?

KA1ZE: Stop meetings until the club regroups.

N1MUW: Have meetings on Sunday afternoon?

WF1R: Do meetings in April and June?

WA1EYF: I thought the bylaws require a monthly meeting? Sunday afternoon meetings?

N1IJK: Stay monthly for the next few months.

WF1R: I'm opposed to monthly meetings.

KA1ZE: Me too. I make a MOTION to do away with the February and March meetings.

NC1I: Keep the newsletter monthly.
I SECOND the motion.

KA1ZE: Have a "killer" meeting in April.

N1MUW: The board members should get together and review the bylaws for conflict.

N1DPM: I'd like to modify the motion to have meetings on an every other month basis.

KA1ZE: That is a bylaw issue. I REVISE my motion: That we cancel the February, March and May meetings, but have a "killer" April meeting and the June (annual) meeting.

NC1I: I SECOND the motion.

Bob McCormick called the vote.
The vote was unanimous.

The issue of reviewing the bylaws was discussed.

WF1R: Who has copies of the bylaws?

AC1T to provide a copy of the bylaws to WF1R, who will make copies for the board members.

WF1R: Who wants to participate in a bylaw review? (A bylaw review sub-committee.)

Responded: WF1R (committee chair), N1IJK, N1DPM, N1MUW, AC1T, NC1B

WF1R: We have an open position on the board of directors. Jeff Hugabone cannot participate due to other activities.

N1MUW: I would like to volunteer to fill the position.

N1DPM: I make a MOTION to appoint N1MUW to the board of directors.

AC1T: I SECOND the motion.

Bob McCormick called the vote.
The vote was unanimous.

NC1I: I make a MOTION to adjourn the board meeting.

N1DPM: I SECOND the motion.

Bob McCormick called the vote.
The vote was unanimous.

The board meeting was adjourned and the regular meeting commenced with Stan KA1ZE providing the presentation.

Post Meeting Thoughts

By Bob McCormick WF1R

As you have read elsewhere in this issue of Zero Beat, we will *NOT* have a February 1997 HCRA meeting ... nor a meeting in March, either. The next meeting will be sometime in April - followed by a June annual meeting. Our intent is (in using Stan KA1ZE's words) to "come up with a killer meeting." Over the next few weeks some of your board members will be working on just that.

My expectations are the following:

- The meeting will be held some weekend in April.
- We will provide a social time for members to meet and chat with each other (possibly lunch, etc.)
- We will have a board meeting at this time.
- There will be one or more presentation ...
- Presentations will not necessarily be amateur radio related.

If you have ideas, or would like to participate in helping get this organized, please contact or any one of the other board members. We really are looking for both creative ideas as well as assistance to pull this off.

FEBRUARY MEETING CANCELLED!!

SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS OF THE NEW H.C.R.A.

Editor: Barry M. Mason N11JK

36 Kenwood Terrace
Springfield, MA. 01108



Forwarding and address correction requested

FIRST CLASS MAIL

RC1T E V C R 26 I 08/97

