

September 2020 HCRA Presidents Message & ZeroBeat Substitute

The September meeting on Friday the 11th at 7:30 pm is fast approaching.

September is the month for the rescheduled Show and Tell meeting from April. With the self quarantine time and the hot summer, hopefully many of you have been assembling and building interesting things and will be able to show them to the attendees of the September meeting.

Each person will have 10 minutes to show their project, explain and demo it if appropriate. Anything built since April of 2019 is eligible. There are prizes for the top 3 entries. No project or kit is too simple or complex. This is a very fun meeting.

To participate, you will need a webcam, smart phone or tablet. Something with a video camera that can be controlled from the Zoom computer, phone or tablet device.

To be an observer, you just need to click the link that will be sent out a few days before the meeting. Then turn up your sound and watch and listen. But if you have a smart phone or tablet and no webcam on your computer, you can check in that way.

The Zoom meeting link will go out a few days before the meeting on the HCRA email reflector and on the club's FaceBook page. All are invited, you do not have to be a member to attend.

We have been averaging 40 people at the Zoom meetings we have held so far. They have been fun, too. It's great seeing everyone.

The club has some excellent meetings planned for the upcoming HCRA year. They include:

- Show and Tell
- How to Start Contesting
- SDR Demo and the Flex Radio
- *Special December Virtual Holiday Party with a guest speaker – more info soon!*
- Ham Radio Awards – beyond the obvious
- Three Different Fox Hunting Techniques & Gear Used
- What is ClubLog & what can it Do For Me?
- We are working on more exciting meeting ideas. We're always looking for your ideas, please contribute.

It certainly has been a HOT summer. Did you have a chance to get outside and enjoy the warm weather? While it certainly was not a normal summer, we did some camping, kayaking and fox hunting to spend some time outdoors. Of course, when it was very hot, we tended to stay in the air conditioning. This is normally a good time for me to get on my home HF station, in between clients, but I seemed to have picked the wrong times to get on, as the bands were often near dead.

Now, September is upon us and normally everything starts ramping up. Club meetings, ham fests, and more. But again, this is not a normal year. I know of no hamfests that will be held in this area this year and probably into at least part of next year too. The HCRA is following along with health standards and not planning any in person meetings until it is safe. I did a poll on Facebook and the HCRA email reflector. Over 90% of respondents that normally attend the Friday night meetings said they are not ready to meet in person and they prefer Zoom and the safety it offers for now. As of right now, our

meeting location is not available to us anyways. We'll be doing more Zoom meetings at least for the next few months.

A few months ago the board purchased a year subscription at a discount for Zoom. It's being used for the monthly meetings, the board meetings, the HCRA classes and future club events.

A reminder to everyone: DUES ARE DUE. September first starts our renewal month. The club is going strong and we need your continued support to keep moving forward. It would be great if, while you are reading this, click this link <http://www.hcra.org/membership-payment/> and pay your dues via PayPal. It will be super quick and easy. If you don't have a PayPal account, sit down and write a check for \$15 and make it payable to the HCRA. The club also accepts donations. Make sure to put your call on the check. The club also accepts donations. Make out an envelope to this address:

**Hampden County Radio Association
P.O. Box 562
Agawam, MA 01001-0562**

If you are reading this and would like to join the club, here is the link for the membership application:

<http://www.hcra.org/membership/>

Send your check to the same address above. Or pay via the above PayPal link AND email a filled in copy of the club application to: K1VOI@arrl.net

If you monitor 147.550 simplex, you may hear the HCRA foxbox occasionally when it is activated. That's the frequency we use. As a base station, even if you are not hunting, you can participate and help the hunters. By joining the WMAFoxhunters group on groups.io (free), you can learn when the foxbox has been hidden. You can learn how to activate it and try to do so from your home or while you are mobile. Then you can post a remark saying you can do so, how strong you hear it and what your general Qth is. All this will assist the foxhunters that go out and try to find the foxbox. Each week the foxbox gets taken down, recharged and placed in a new hiding spot. It might just be near you next. Join in the fun!

One of the things I picked up in Dayton in 2019 when I attended was a DMR HT and Hotspot. While I don't use it a lot, I do use it on occasion. My hotspot is wirelessly connected to the house wireless and sits on the mantle of the fireplace. I added a better antenna to extend the range over the basic one that comes with it. My HT is an Alinco DJ-MD5 and works great and fits perfectly in the palm of my hand.

Just the other day, I was outside grilling dinner and had my DMR HT on the world wide talk group and with 2 tenths of a watt into my hotspot, was making new friends around the world. I spoke to Frano in Bosnia, Dave in Sarasota, Florida who told me he was originally from Waterbury, CT. I also spoke with two hams in Pennsylvania and compared notes with them as I'll be going to Gettysburg in a few weeks. One of them was a nurse and is looking for a nurse job in MA, as he wants to relocate back to MA which is where he is from. Sometimes it can be a very small world.

Often the world wide is a spot where people say hello and then a quick good bye. But if it's quiet, like it was yesterday, I was able to chat for 40 to 50 minutes continuously and have a real conversation. One

of the things I like about my hotspot is I take it camping with me or occasionally mobile in my vehicle and hotspot my phone and work from the wireless that way. My hot spot allows multiple wireless settings with out needing to reprogram it.

DMR is a mode I use occasionally. It's pretty cool to be able to make a conversation with 2 tenths of a watt and talk to someone anywhere on the planet. It's just one of many exciting things you can do with our wonderful hobby. If you would like to learn more about DMR, start here:

<http://www.hcra.org/dmr/>

I was working on a little project and needed a part. Not wanting to resort to online/mail order yet again I remembered a store not too far away that my friend Bob; W1BOB uses. It's called Cables & Connectors down in Newington, CT. I took a ride as it's not far from the ARRL. The store reminded me of a Radio Shack. I schmoozed and noticed they had a lot of different things. Electronic parts galore. It's worth the ride, bring your mask and have fun shopping. The store is located at 2307 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06111. Call for store hours: 860-665-9904. www.cablesandconnectors.com. Yes, you can order online. But drive down and look around. You never know what you'll end up taking home for your next project.

Many thanks to Mike, N1TA who ran a successful online Tech class in July. So far, 5 of the students have taken the test and passed. With Mike's help, the club will be holding another online Tech class. Mike is working out the logistics and more info will be provided soon. In the mean time, pass the word around that there will be an online Tech class forming soon and we will get a sign up page on the web site soon.

For the past few years, Vanessa, W1IRL has been the HCRA web guru and she has been doing a FANTASTIC job. We're looking for a helper for Vanessa. This person MUST know WordPress. Someone who knows it and is comfortable working in all aspects of Word Press. We are keeping the site in Word Press. If you are interested, please contact Vanessa at webmaster@hcra.org.

Every Monday the HCRA hosts a 10m net on 28.375 MHz at 7:30 pm local time. This net is run by Marcel, AA1WH and is open to anyone. You do not have to be a HCRA member to participate. A few times in the past months, we've had check ins from down south and out west, not just locals.

The commitment to be net control every Monday can be difficult. We are looking for a few alternate people to be able to sub for Marcel as net control on Monday nights once in a while. It's a very easy job. If you are available, please contact Marcel at marcelrlapierre@hotmail.com.

Starting in October, we will once again be hosting the New Ham and HCRA Members net on 2m. This too is a casual net like the 10m net. But it is open to new hams that have earned their licenses in the past 5 years. They do not have to be club members. Plus regular club members are more than welcome to participate. Each week we try to have a subject for everyone to comment on. The most popular subject from the past few months has been food.

The goal of the 2m net is to get new hams on the air in a safe and friendly environment, where they can get on and not worry about being criticized about their operations. We urge new hams to join in even if they do not want to chat. The 2m net has taken a summer hiatus and will start again on the first Thursday in October on the 146.715 W1BR repeater. The net time is 7:30 pm. Please pass the word

around, especially to inactive new hams with 2m HT's. Let's get them on the air, and over their mic shyness. For more information, they can contact net control, Larry, W1AST at W1AST@arrl.net.

Please do not forget to pay your dues and have a project ready for the September meeting.

I hope to see and hear you on the September 11th Zoom Meeting at 7:30 pm on Zoom.

73 ,

Larry, W1AST
HCRA President
W1AST@arrl.net