



# ZERO BEAT

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION  
[HTTP://WWW.HCRA.ORG](http://www.hcra.org)

APRIL 2007

**Next Meeting:**  
**Friday, April 6th at 7:30pm**  
**Satellite Communication**

## Field Day 2007

June 24, & 25<sup>th</sup>  
at Dufresne Park in Granby, MA.

Field Day 2007 is off to a good start. The letters to the area towns and political leader's are being sent out. The problem is that they have to go out one at a time and addressed only to the person or town. This takes time. But take cheer, the Gov. and Lt. Gov. have been invited to Field Day 2007!

Our Kitchen crew has been assembled, Dave (W1FAB) & Mary Cote have agreed to handle the food.

My XYL Kathy will over see the pre-Field Day food purchase and making sure all the plates, knives, and such are on site to be used by all the hungry folks. Dave, Mary and Kathy will be busy setting up the

menu for the weekend and we'll post it as soon as it's framed up. Oh, Kathy has agreed to take care of the food tickets and the selling and collection there of..

There is a lot of interest in the radio, too. Traffic on the Yahoo hcra-fd site has been up from past years for so early in the season. We need to keep that up. It has been planned to get together to discuss the bands, radio's and antenna's. I'll mirror the information on the regular HCRA.org site.

We also have plans when warmer weather arrives to inspect the and mark the antennas and cables.

We have had a few volunteers come for-

ward, but we could use more! EVERYONE is welcome at Field Day! You don't need a FCC licence, we operate under the Club licence. Come and watch if you want.. You don't have to be a member of HCRA. Just come to Dufresne Park, Granby Mass. June 23, & 24<sup>th</sup> to experience Field Day.

If you would like to get involved in Field Day, Go to Yahoo.com, Go to groups, and sign in to the HCRA-FD group. Or you can use the HCRA e-mail to contact me, or you can get me at [KB1JVF@arrl.net](mailto:KB1JVF@arrl.net), or [jldhjr@verizon.net](mailto:jldhjr@verizon.net). See you next month. Jim Harrington Chair Field Day 2007.

More Field Day on Page 10

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### Meeting Location:

Meetings are held at the Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 North Westfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA 01030.

The church is located right next to a Dunkin Donuts and across from a gas station.

Parking is in back of the church. Access is HP accessible.

Talk-in is available on the 146.94 repeater.

# HossTraders, A Look Back...



Last month's Zero Beat ran the announcement about the demise of New England's biggest amateur radio flea market (also known as a hamfest), the semi annual Hosstraders extravaganza. Held during the first weekend of May and October this event drew hams from all over New England, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey as well as Canada. If you never got a chance to visit the Mecca of Hamfests let me try to relate in this article what you missed.

Over the years Hosstraders was held in many locations. When I first became aware of it the location was in Deerfield, New Hampshire. Held in a beautiful fairground just off route 43 it was a pleasant drive from Western Massachusetts. A typical ham my first few trips to Deerfield were by myself. I remember pulling into there for the first time. Through the gate, pay my money to the guys collecting, getting my ticket and parking among a sea of cars—many with LARGE antenna arrays. A hike up the sloping hill and there it was, aisle after aisle of nirvana for a ham! Within walking distance was just about any type of amateur radio or related electronic equipment anyone could ever want. Walk down this path and find tables of decommissioned test equipment at realistic prices. Other aisles held even more surprises. If you were looking for transmitters, receivers, retired military equipment, motorcycles, generators, R/C airplanes, antennas, rotors, parts, cabinets, late model equipment, wire, towers—it was all there, waiting for someone to make a reasonable offer.

What a find for a new ham. At the time my children were young and money to spend on the hobby was limited. Hosstraders was the 'Christmas Tree Shops' of ham radio. "Don't you just love a bargain?" That phrase was as true then as it is today. I came home many times with loads of stuff in the car that if I had to pay the going price I could never afford. Truly the place to go to learn how stuff works. If you didn't pay a lot for something you're much more inclined to do a little experimenting.

During the years I went to Hosstraders here's some highlights of my shopping. Receivers, transmitters, parts, wire (lots of wire), more receivers, pre-amps, amps, more parts, antennas, tubes, even more parts; I think you get the picture! And never a bad deal was had. It says a lot for our hobby that we can trade and/or sell equipment and hardly ever get burned in the deal. There is a lot to the saying that, "one ham's junk is another ham's treasure". A stroll along the aisles of equipment was like walking through a living history of our hobby. At Hosstraders you got a chance to see, even touch, equipment that filled the advertisements of the old magazines. And for a price, usually more than fair, you could even take it home. Although in recent years I have downsized and modernized the shack I'm sure there is still some booty from past Hosstraders rounding out my collection.

Not into bargains? The camaraderie was also something to be treasured. After a few years of going it alone I used to meet up with other local hams and caravan up route 202 together. Most of them usually stopped for breakfast (usually too early for me, the don't call me 'late boy' for nothing) on the way. Schley,

KA1TDL used to have the MTARA 'hospitality trailer' along with Mike, KB1TH, serving hot coffee to all club members that stopped by. Many times after the hamfest we would stop at a local restaurant and compare notes about all the bargains we bought. After a while I realized there was good reason to get up there Friday afternoon because that was when all the good deals were made. I don't think I ever made any good deals but if you stayed the night you got to sample a whole new selection of sights, sounds and friendship. Walking the rows during the night with a flashlight, chatting with the vendors and then settling down for few hours discussion around a firepit with a couple of 807's (beer for you noobs) was worth the whole trip, even if you returned empty handed.

If you stayed the night then you got yourself a new experience come morning. Have you ever seen how scary your fellow ham can be at 5:30 AM?? Do I need to elaborate? I didn't think so. Anyway, after cleaning up a bit, grabbing a hot bun and a coffee it was back to watching the never ending stream of cars file in and set up for the morning. If the weather was good hundreds more came in, set up a small table and hoped to leave with either money or another (but different) treasure. Walking along the paths of the equipment, enjoying the sights of our hobby, taking in the smells of old musty magazines, burnt resistors and sausage grinders and listening to the sounds of AM radio and the accents of all the different sellers, this was the place to be.

I suppose I could ramble on (or maybe that's what I've been doing) and bore you with some highlights so you know what, I will! In no particular order I remember: exploding pot roast, flying tents, campfires and BS (lots of BS), bringing stuff back to the trailer to compare bargains with your friends, trips into town for more food (and beverage), rain (never!!!), kids having fun, my daughter selling stuff for twice what I had it marked (a born salesperson), but most of all happy, smiling faces of hams of all ages. As Kx1x would say, "fun is...".

So if this was the end of Hosstraders it would be a sad but meaningful remembrance but wait, there's more! Out of the ashes (mud probably, especially if you remember the days in Rochester, NH) floats a new hamfest. NEAR-Fest will pick up exactly where Hosstraders started, in Deerfield, NH this May 4th and 5th. So here's your chance to become part of a new history, a member of a new cast that will hopefully carry forward the New England hamfest tradition. For more information about NEAR-Fest look elsewhere in this issue or point your browser at: <http://www.near-fest.com>. Although eBay has crimped the style of many hamfests there still is need for a place where you can go to get bargains, come home happy but most of all make the ever important connection between hams across the world. We dress, speak and act differently but at NEAR-Fest we are all equals, sharing a common bond that makes ham radio the fun hobby it is today and will always remain. Look for me in Deerfield this May, I'll be the guy with the KK1W badge on and a smile on my face.

'73 and good bargain hunting,

Jim, KK1W

## SKYWARN Class

- 6 flags amusement park
- May 7, 2007 from 6:30 til 9:30 pm
- Free to the public
- [www.wx1box.org](http://www.wx1box.org) and look for SKYWARN training 2007

## Sunspots Can Affect GPS Accuracy

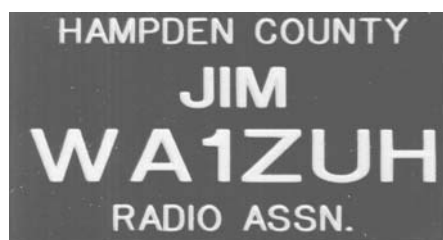
Solar Flares can significantly affect the accuracy of your GPS. Even at the depth of the Sunspot Cycle, a Cornell University graduate student noticed up to 50% drop in signals on September 7, 2005. According to Science Daily News (September 27, 2006), an Internet newsletter, as much as a 90% drop in signal level could occur for several hours at the peak of the cycle in 2011. You will probably be okay using your GPS in your car, but be extra careful landing your Learjet during daylight hours.

Frandy Johnson, N1FJ

*For more information, see*

<http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/Sept06/solar.flares.gps.TO.html>

**Wear it Proudly!**  
HCRA Name Badges



Only \$6.00. Available for order at any club meeting, or call or drop an email for immediate service!  
Show the world you belong to the oldest club in the Pioneer Valley.

Jim, WA1ZUH: [jmullen@rockys.com](mailto:jmullen@rockys.com) or (413) 245-3228

Questions, Comments, and Suggestions  
Can Be Directed To:

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#### WB1Z Trustee

Jim Mullen, KK1W  
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#### IRLP Trustee

John Pise, Kx1x  
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# Winning Show & Tell Projects

(only projects)



## N1FJ No-Code Paddle

Easy on the fingers this hand-crafted paddle should take the anxiety out of getting on the air for the first time. Also great for the returning but rusty old-timer.

ARRL test lab rated it as "a little soft" but otherwise marveled at its simplicity and general user friendliness. "Easy to squeeze," they added.

Please also note that it is completely wireless





# March Meeting Photos

By Mark—W1MRB

*"Official Zero Beat Meeting Photographer"*



# General Class



## NEW ENGLAND AMATEUR RADIO FESTIVAL (NEAR-Fest)

The NEW ENGLAND AMATEUR RADIO FESTIVAL (NEAR-Fest) will hold its' Spring 2007 get-together and flea market on Friday May 4th and Saturday May 5th at the Deerfield Fairgrounds located on Highway 43 in the Town of Deerfield, New Hampshire USA.

The Festival is not to be confused with the "Hosstraders" Flea Market that was formerly held at the New Hampshire State Fairgrounds at Hopkinton NH (and several other NH locations) the first weekend in May and October. Thirty-three years ago Joe, Norm and Bob the three "Hosstraders", started what has become a highly popular and much beloved New England amateur radio institution. The NEAR-Fest was instituted to retain this wonderful tradition.

Convening in May and October, the NEAR-Fest celebrates the wonderful art and science of Amateur Radio. Licensed or not, ALL are welcome to participate in the fine art of buying and selling equipment, scrounging, wheeling and dealing while enjoying the fellowship and company of like-minded individuals of all ages. Vintage Amateur AM and military radio stations will be on-the-air from the grounds as a tribute to the "Golden Age" of amateur radio. The legendary flea market will offer all forms of radio and electronic treasures both current and vintage, common and the ultra rare. You never know what great deals and wonderful goodies you will find at Deerfield!

In addition to the flea market a number of commercial vendors will be present to tempt you with the latest and greatest radio equipment and accessories available today. In addition there will be VE exams to get your license or upgrade. There will be door prizes too and some of these are not minor! There's something for everyone at the NEAR-Fest!!!

Admission is \$10.00 from Friday 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM; \$5.00 thereafter. Vehicular admission to the grounds is \$10.00. There are no additional seller fees and no limit on selling spaces. Students (under 21) admitted free as our guests after 9 on Saturday. There is ample free parking immediately outside the fairgrounds. Overnight campers and tents are welcome. RV hookups are available for \$30.00.

Most Hamfests provide for earlier entry for sellers than buyers. This gives them an unfair advantage in getting the "Good Deals" before the buyers are admitted. We offer buyers and sellers alike the opportunity to enter at the same time provided they purchase their tickets in advance by mail or online before May 1st. There will be a special entrance for the Prepaid ticket holders and it will be opened first. Once the Pre-paid line has entered the General Admission gate will be opened and those who have purchased their tickets at the gate will be admitted. We have adopted this policy because prepaying will help finance this enormous undertaking without charging additional fees, while offering everyone the same opportunity for early admission."

Fairground rules state: No alcohol or open fires are permitted. A "Zero Tolerance" policy will be strictly enforced!!! CRT computer monitors are strongly discouraged and those who bring them will be assessed a \$20.00 deposit to ensure their removal. Leave 'em home!

The Fall NEAR-Fest is scheduled for Friday October 12th and Saturday October 13th 2007.

Here is a link to the site: <http://www.near-fest.com/>





# BSA Venture Crew 510

NE1C - New England's #1 Crew

*BSA Venture Crew 510 is chartered by the Hampden County Radio Association*



## **BSA VENTURE CREW 510 Contacts**

*Youth President*

*Michael DeChristopher, K1KAA*

*k1kaa@arrl.net*

*Adult Advisor*

*John Pise, Kx1x (413) 262-5249*

*kx1x@arrl.net*

It has been about two years since there has been a Venture Crew DX article in ZeroBeat. Hopefully, this is the first of many more articles written to document the events that Crew DX participate in as we begin to get active again.

Crew 510 was chartered in October 2001 by the HCRA when a group of licensed ham teenagers were looking for a way to band together to play radio. Many of the original crew members are still active hams, but the exception of one, the original group is now all over 18 years old, and have other responsibilities and commitments. One by one crew members became less active with the crew, and eventually we became inactive.

Right now, we are in the beginning stages of Crew "The Next Generation". We are looking for youth who are hams, or interested in becoming hams, to join together with us and plan some fun radio events. If you know of a boy or girl aged 11 to 21 who is interested in joining Venture Crew 510, please contact me or Mike, K1KAA (see above) as soon as possible!

### **The "New" Crew Works WPX**

Over the weekend of March 23, 24 and 25, three of the new crew participated in the first event that we have held as a group since the old group dissolved. Jake (KB1NSN, 11), Mike (son of KiLi, 11), and Joe (KB1ODC, 12), Ray (KB1KQN, 17) came up with Mike (K1KAA, 17) and myself to participate in the CQ WW WPX contest at K1TTT's place in Peru, MA. Also in attendance over the weekend were KiLi, WB1DBY, W2NAF, N1SR, K1SFA, and KB1NWH. As a group we worked over 3,200 QSOs and earned over 5,000,000 points in the contest.

After just a while of listening to K1KAA on 20m, and with a just a little help from the adults, Jake, Mike and Joe were able to take over the radios and computers. After the first hour, they had all learned enough of the mechanics to work the radios without any adult help. By the end of the weekend, they were working DX like old pros.

### **More Crew Activities Soon!**

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, Crew 510 will provide communication and practice emergency protocols while hosting a hike for scouting for packs and troops in Chicopee. Planning is underway for a trip to operate at W1AW in April while the youth are out of school. June 1<sup>st</sup>, Crew 510 will provide a ham radio demo for Webelos Woods at the Moses Scout Reservation. In July the Crew will help with the radio merit badge during summercamp.

As you can see, the activities are under way. We need more members. Again, if you know of any youth that are interested in ham radio, and would like to join, please contact either myself or K1KAA. Ham license is NOT a requirement. We will help any non-licensed member toward their Technician License and beyond.

'73 de Kx1x, Proud Advisor of BSA Venture Crew 510

## HCRA Ham Shacks—John—N1JIO Station



Each month we showcase ham shacks from HCRA members. If you would like to submit your shack, please do the following: take a digital picture so you or someone you know can email it, write a description of the shack with equipment, model numbers, etc. Plus a comment on the type of operating that you prefer. Don't forget your name and call. Please send it all to: [wb1dby@comcast.net](mailto:wb1dby@comcast.net)



# HCRA Board Meeting – February 8, 2007

Held at corporate boardroom of Rocky's ACE Hardware, Springfield, MA.

Members present: John KI1A, Dave AA1YW, Greg N1AEH, George KC1V, Jim KB1JVF, Jim KK1W, Eric KB1JVI, Larry WB1DBY, John N1JIO.

**President John, KI1A:**

KI1A was contacted by the Springfield Republican newspaper about "no code"; referred them to Greg, N1AEH as a long-time cw operator.

**Vice President Dave, AA1YW:**

February meeting was well attended with a good number of new faces.

**Treasurer Greg, N1AEH:**

Current club balance is \$4014. A deposit of \$204 was made for February and this month's raffle brought in \$125.

**Secretary George, KC1V:**

Nothing to report this month.

**At Large Jim, KB1JVF:**

See "Old Business".

**Program Jim, KK1W:**

Programs set for the remainder of the year

**Technical John, N1JIO:**

General Class license course will begin on March 6 at Noble Hospital.

**Membership Eric, KB1JVI:**

Nothing to report this month.

**ZeroBeat Editor Larry, WB1DBY:**

The deadline for the next ZB is the February 20. Material still needed.

**Old Business:**

Field Day: Field Day Chairman Jim, KB1JVF, reported that FD planning is continuing and on-track at this time.

**New Business:**

General Discussion of: The Titanic Special Event operation and who might take the lead; HCRA 10 Meter Contest (WB1DBY) and the upcoming elections. No motions were offered at this time.

Board of Directors Meeting: The next board meeting will be held on March 8 at Rocky's.

Respectfully submitted,  
George Collins, KC1V, Secretary.

1981 HCRA Field Day  
Middlefield Fair Grounds



WA1CQF, Gent



W1TM, Bill



Plaque At Base  
Of Flagpole

# HCRA Board Meeting – March 8, 2007

Held at corporate boardroom of Rocky's ACE Hardware, Springfield, MA.

Members present: Dave AA1YW, Greg N1AEH, George KC1V, Jim KB1JVF, Jim KK1W, Eric KB1JVI, Larry WB1DBY and John N1JIO.

**Vice President Dave, AA1YW:** Dave conducted the meeting in K11A's absences. Dave asked about the coffee mug colors and style. The consensus was that the board expected mugs with handles and better colors.

**President John, K11A:** John was unable to attend in person, as he is recovering from a recent surgery. He did join the meeting by phone and confirmed that the coffee mug style and colors are what was ordered.

**Treasurer Greg, N1AEH:** Greg reports that there is enough money in the bank for the club, but not enough to run off with, so he will be here next month. Current club balance is \$3906. A deposit of \$376 was made for March. All debits have been paid for the month and there were 5 new/renewal memberships received.

**Secretary George, KC1V:** Addition - The current paid Regular and Life membership is current 113.

**At Large Jim, KB1JVF:** Nothing to report this month as Director at Large (see Field Day under Old Business).

**Program Jim, KK1W:** The April meeting speaker is confirmed.

**Technical John, N1JIO:** General Class license course has begun with 15 students enrolled. Six people have signed up as instructors and the Noble Hospital facilities have proven to be very good for the class.

**Membership Eric, KB1JVI:** Nothing to report this month.

**ZeroBeat Editor Larry, WB1DBY:** The deadline for the next ZB is March 20. Material still needed.

## Old Business:

Field Day: Jim, KB1JVF, reported that he has a tentative cooking team, Dave, W1FAB and Mary, lined up for the cooking duties. Kathy is still lined up to supervise. Larry, WB1DBY, said that Faye will also be available to help. KK1W posed a question as to whether or not the FD e-mail group should be moved to the general HCRA reflector. There was no clear agreement among the board and no action was taken.

## New Business:

Question of Donation to MTARA: K11A asked that a motion be made on his behalf that "a donation of not less than \$400 dollars be made to MTARA" to assist with funding of repeater work. The unanimous opinion of the Board was that there are other, better means to support MTARA's repeater efforts. The motion was made and seconded and the vote was none in favor and 8 opposed.

Tailgate Party: A free club table for MTARA was approved. KK1W will obtain a popcorn machine for free popcorn and it was agreed the club would salt the popcorn heavily and sell soda.

Board of Directors Meeting: The next board meeting will be held on April 12 at Rocky's.

Respectfully submitted,  
George Collins, KC1V, Secretary.



Recent Trip to ARRL & W1AW by KB1NPA,  
K1EJB, N1FJ & WB1DBY on February 12th.



Dick, KB1NPA & Ernie, K1EJB work the  
pileup created by W1AW



Frandy, N1FJ works some CW



W1AW station  
radios on the  
left.

Another sta-  
tion on display  
on the right.



*Hampden County Radio Association  
P.O. Box 562  
Agawam, Massachusetts 01001*

**PLEASE HAND CANCEL**

