

Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

April 2011

Show and Tell: And the winners are...

Diane Shippee, KB1KST
First Place, Beginner Class
First Place, Audience Choice



**Jon Rines,
KA1TDQ**

*First Place,
Expert Class*

*AM Power
Amplifier*



*Crystal
Set
(K1ANX)*



George Rancourt, K1ANX
Second Place, Expert Class

*Below is KA1TDQ's exciter/
transmitter that can drive the
amplifier at left.*



Show and Tell photos by KK1W

April meeting: D-STAR



An introduction to D-STAR (**Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio**) will be made by Bob McCormick, W1QA, on Friday, April 1, 2011 at 7:30 PM at the Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 North Westfield Street (Rte

187), Feeding Hills, MA 01030. For further details on the program, see "From the Shack" on page 3.

Support your local club! HCRA benefits from your participation. Want to see your name in the Newsletter? Write an article! Hampden County Radio Association, P.O. Box 563, Agawam, MA 01010

A Trip to ARRL HQ & W1AW

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) is arguably the preeminent ham radio organization in the U.S. We are fortunate most of us within an hour's drive of the "mother ship" and many of us visit there to purchase books and odds and ends from tee shirts to decals to



W1CNI, ARRL tour guide



W1AW (N1BMX photo)

patches that say "When All Else Fails...". One can run into officers and other employees of ARRL, view the bricks in the Diamond Terrace, tour the facilities, but best of all is **operate!**

Licensed guest amateurs may operate one of the top-notch rigs pumping a kilowatt into a fantastic collection of antennas. A pileup usually follows a CQ from W1AW!

My favorite transceiver there is an ICOM IC-7600 but there rigs for Yaesu, Kenwood, and FLEX fans too. I usually operate CW there, but they also welcome



W1MSW (N1BMX photo)

SSB operation. Hours of operation are weekdays from 10-12 a.m. and 1-3:45 p.m. Joe Carcia, NJ1Q is the station operator and is very helpful in getting you up and running.

A couple of weeks ago, Jim, KK1W, Matt, W1MSW, and I went to Newington for a visit. Accompanying us was Rick Thibault, KBIUYI, a relatively new ham who wanted to check out the FLEX 5000. While Jim, Rick, and Matt went for a tour of ARRL HQ, I operated 15 meter CW for a while, using the IC-7600. Conditions were fairly good and I worked quite a few Europeans and then some stateside hams as conditions deteriorated a bit.

After lunch, the four of us went to W1AW and mixed



N1BMX (W1MSW photo)

operating various rigs with schmoozing.

Then we ran into Jeff, N1BMX, from West Springfield, who used the 7600 to make some SSB QSOs. Jeff has a blog at <http://www.n1bmx.com/blog/> from which I

helped myself (with permission, of course!) to some of the pictures he posted on his blog.

de N1FJ



Picture at left shows only a fraction of beams on towers at W1AW. Below: 1) Jim and Matt trying to figure out where all that coax goes. 2) Joe and Rick at the Kenwood TS-2000. 3) Rick and Jim figuring out how much they like the FLEX-5000. Rick apparently liked it quite a bit and one is about to be set up at his QTH. Photos by N1FJ except as noted.



From the Shack...

D-Star – a Rising Star for Amateur Radio

Our guest speaker on **Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio** is Bob McCormick, WIQA. Bob is a long-time ham from the area with many amateur credentials to his credit. In April Bob will fill us in on the benefits of this latest mode to hit the airwaves. What it does how it works and most of all how you can do it too. Don't know what we're talking about? That's OK, and precisely the reason for the presentation. If you want to study up a bit before coming to the meeting take a look at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D-STAR>.

Bob is active on D-Star and is in the process of setting up a local D-Star repeater. Here's a link to the status:

<http://w1kk.com/>.

If you're yearning for something better than traditional FM you definitely want to learn more about this mode. Know someone you think would be interested in the meeting? Bring them along; everyone is always welcome at our meetings.



ARRL Field Day – June 24th – 26th

Planning is well underway for yet another public service and amateur radio extravaganza – **Field Day!** The FD committee is considering a lot of new ideas and we think you will be surprised with the recommendations.

We're returning to Dufresne Park in Granby, MA once again this year but unlike the last few we will once again start setup Friday afternoon. Camping will be available both evenings for those that wish to pitch camp early. Adding Friday back into the schedule we ease the construction effort and insure we get on the air by 2:00 PM Saturday afternoon.

Sunspots have returned and 10 and 15 meters will have some good openings. We're looking at how we can take advantage of this solar activity, perhaps even share the same antenna between stations.

We've invited MTARA to participate and are hoping they will be able to field a great UHF/VHF station and show us how it's done. In an effort to excite a few HCRA folks are doing a FD presentation at the April MTARA meeting.

Plans are forming for a full blown digital station running

PSK-31. That should be fun don't you think?

Other things remaining the same: great food by Jim/NNIY, networked stations so everyone can see how we're doing, lots of towers and antennas, a Field Day raffle and a few surprises too. All we need is YOU, the participant, to make it another memorable event. What would you like to do to add to the fun?



Elections are just around the corner!

HCRA's annual elections will be held at the June 3rd meeting. Wouldn't you like to be part of the team moving our club in the right direction? We need new, active amateurs to help us get there. Think you've got what it takes? Give me a call or an email, I'd be happy to discuss it with you and hopefully convince you the fun and feeling of accomplishment far outweigh the effort required!

'73 and see you at the April meeting – no foolin!

Jim, KK1W

[Join the ARRL or renew your membership!](http://www.arrl.org/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>

Local happenings

(All times are local time)

Sundays:

0845: Western Mass Emergency Net 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R

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)

Common Ground Restaurant

25 Park Avenue

West Springfield, MA 01089

<http://thecupinc.com/home.html> for more details and directions.

Expect between 6 and 12 every Friday. Good food, great company!



Dust off that old key
or paddle and get
on the air!

Club Meetings & Testing Sessions

1st Friday of the month 1930 HCRA Club Meeting Feeding Hills Congregational Church 21 N. Westfield St., Feeding Hills (no meetings held in July or August)

3rd Friday of the month 1930 MTARA Club meeting Red Cross building 506 Cottage St, SPFLD, MA (no meetings held in July or August)

4th Friday of the month 1800 License Exams Holyoke Hospital Auditorium Beech Street, Holyoke, MA. Hosted by the Western Mass VE Team (WMVET)

4th Sunday of the month 1900 NOBARC club meeting Pittsfield MA (146.91 for talk-in)

Upcoming Hamfests & Flea Markets

04/03/2011

Framingham ARA Flea Market

Location: Framingham, MA

Sponsor: Framingham Amateur Radio Association

Website: <http://fara.org/flea>

4/29/2011 and 4/30/2011

0900 Friday through 1500 Saturday

NEAR-Fest IX

Deerfield Fairgrounds - Deerfield NH, USA

5/28/2011

The Hartford Hamfest

Location: Vernon, CT

Sponsor: Natchaug Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://www.na1rc.org>

May 20-22 2011

Dayton Hamvention® 2011

Location: Dayton, OH

Sponsor: Dayton Amateur Radio Association

Website: <http://www.hamvention.org/>

Third Sunday, April through October

Flea at MIT

Location: Cambridge, MA

Sponsor: MIT Radio Society

Website: <http://www.mitflea.com/index.html>

HCRA Power UP Raffle

Honda EU2000i 2 KW generator

- 2000 Watts (16.7 A) of Honda Inverter 120 VAC Power
- Super Quiet
- Weighs less than 47 lbs!
- Fuel Efficient
- Inverter - Stable power for computers, ham rigs, etc.

\$10/ticket. Only 200 tickets will be sold. Drawing will be by June 3, 2011.

Contact Matt, W1MSW@arrl.net or purchase tickets at meeting.



Buy a raffle ticket yet?

From the Summit: A day on Bare Mountain

by Frandy Johnson, N1FJ

Cabin fever got the best of me Sunday (March 13th)—I did a solo SOTA Jerks activation as NE1SJ (no fellow Jerks available)—I lugged my K3 transceiver, LiPo batteries and some wire up to Bare Mountain in Amherst. The first half



of the trail up was slippery, packed snow with occasional bare basalt sticking up. And ice. Lots of ice. The second half was mostly snow and ice free, and not too much mud. It took me about

40 minutes to get up the 500 foot rise to the summit, with several "out-of-shape" catch-my-breath stops.

At the top I set up my K3 and batteries and threw a wire (attached to a rock) over the side of the peak onto a tree top. Oops, I let go of the wire. And it was a long way down! Fortunately, I had more wire (Jim will understand) so I got another random length up with another hunk of wire for a counterpoise. 1.4:1 VSWR on 20 meters. I called Jim and asked him to spot me on the SOTA website. I made about 20 quick dx QSOs plus a couple of US hams. There was lot of QRM from contests like WES, WQP, EQP, etc. One of my plans was to try to work another SOTA summit activator, Chuck in Virginia. But after I worked through my EU pileup I was late and couldn't find him. And he was a 6 pointer! I did work W1MSW, a fellow Jerk in Northampton... It was getting cold (40 F) and windy (20



mph gusts) but I decided to try 40 meters. VSWR: 14:1! Oh, well, it was cold and windy anyway, so rather than fiddle with the wire length(s) I decided to bag it.

On the way back the 30# pack was a handicap because it kept throwing me off balance. I ended up sliding on my butt down a lot of the trail. Kind of fun!



In previous activations, we SOTA Jerks have mostly used a Buddipole antenna setup and it has done a good job but is hard to keep pointing the right direction (it is pretty directional on 20 and 15) in a wind.

And it is bulky and kind of heavy, at least compared to some pieces of wire.. There was no way I was going to lug it (along with rig and bateries) up a mountain by myself.

Things learned:

- I can do an activation by myself.
- There is life without a Buddipole.
- One rig is enough.
- Those knit gloves with rubber bumps on them are great for using the paddle when it's cold and windy, but they have an amazing affinity for Velcro closures when trying to get out my camera or answer the phone in a hurry.

Here's my log:

Activation log, Bare Mtn SOTA #W1/CR014, 3/13/11, NE1SJ (op N1FJ), K3, random wire with counterpoise.

16:30z	DJ5RE	14MHz	CW
16:34z	G3VHJ	14MHz	CW
16:36z	G4UDU	14MHz	CW
16:40z	HA7UG	14MHz	CW
16:43z	9A7W	14MHz	CW
16:45z	G4ELZ	14MHz	CW
16:47z	S51ZG	14MHz	CW
16:48z	G3WPF	14MHz	CW
16:50z	RL3A	14MHz	CW
16:51z	Z35F	14MHz	CW
16:54z	OE6WIG	14MHz	CW
16:56z	W1MSW	14MHz	CW
16:58z	DJ5AV	14MHz	CW
17:00z	9A4MF	14MHz	CW
17:01z	EA1DFP	14MHz	CW
17:03z	G4OBK	14MHz	CW
17:05z	OK1CZ	14MHz	CW
17:06z	DK5WL	14MHz	CW
17:33z	ON4CAP	14MHz	CW
17:36z	DL6KVA	14MHz	CW
17:40z	F6EPO	14MHz	CW
18:08z	W8KJ	14MHz	CW

Last year, the SOTA Jerks activated eleven peaks in WMA & CT. I think we are good for at least a dozen this season.

Where to next? We can reactivate all the mountains we did last year, and then will try southern Vermont and New Hampshire. But first, how about Mt. Norwottuck, across the Notch from Bare Mountain? You can come too!



HCRA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 7th, 2011

Meeting at Hampden Bank West Springfield commenced at 7:07PM

OFFICER REPORTS

Vice President, Kx1x-Not present

New general class at the Moose Club in Chicopee. 3/7, 3/14 (evenings) and 3/19 (9-5). No comments on Crew DX activity

Treasurer AA1YW.

Current balance-\$4445.43

Secretary W1MJB

Send thank you letters to Dave Benson (Small Wonder Labs) and John Bee (Quicksilver) for donations.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Technical, KB1NWH-Not present

Brake shoes for AB-577?

Zero Beat, N1FJ

Cutoff date for April ZB – March 21st

Membership, W1MSW

MTARA hamfest results-20 generator tickets sold, two new members. Generator Raffle progress – 79 confirmed sales, six tickets out to WB1DBY, status unknown. Current member count (regular, life) 80. Letter designed to be sent to new hams pulled from the ARRL database is ready.

At Large, WB1DBY-Not present

Program, NN1Y-not present

April-Bob McCormick/W1QA D-Star presentation.

May-Navy/MARS

June-Tailgate party & elections

Crew DX President, KB1RIE-not present. Report on coffee/donuts & raffle results from the March meeting. The board feels the Crew's efforts could be improved. Jim KK1W will discuss with John and Eli.

OLD BUSINESS

Waiting to hear back from Dufresne about FD price reduction-KK1W. Rates have not gone up, Jim will inquire about a reduction based on number of people attending. Need more info for May presentation-W1MJB. Marty will send Jim info for the web page. Board meeting schedule for the remainder of the season: May 9, Jun 6. Any movement on a possible special event station? Suggestions were Springfield Science Museum, Dr. Seuss, WNEC for a club station, astronomy club has meetings at the museum. – no movement.

NEW BUSINESS

Field Day Planning – KK1W, W1MSW – Proposal is for a 4A or 5A effort mainly because of lack of operators.

Club History-KK1W. Jim will contact Dave, thank him for his work to date and collect the material for future scanning.

Who will follow up with W1QA for April presentation? – Marty will work with Bob W1SQ and keep NN1Y in the loop.

HCRA/MTARA Joint Picnic – planning suggestions? – KK1W – Tentatively scheduled for Sept 10 or 11. We will follow MTARA's lead on this. KK1W will coordinate and keep HCRA informed. A suggestion to set up an HF station was proposed. Create an action item list for this and subsequent BOD meetings-KK1W. Done. Election Slate planning for 2012 – Who's not in for next year, we need to know. Planning for September/October presentations: No ideas presented so far.

ACTION ITEMS

Cut check to Marsh for liability insurance – AA1YW

Dufresne response about FD price reduction – KK1W

Need more info for May presentation – W1MJB

Print certificates for Show & Tell winners – N1FJ

Lentini Communications, In Berlin, CT (just south of Newington) is a sponsor of HCRA. Please tell them you saw their ad in *Zero Beat!*

TYT TH-F4 (below)

Features:

- 1/2/4 watts
- 128 Memories
- VOX
- PC Programmable
- Power on password
- Channel Naming
- FM radio
- Drop in charger
- Heavy Duty Belt Clip

\$84.95



The Wouxun KG-UVD1 (below) has all the features any ham can use:

- 144/440 MHz
- SOS Function/FM Radio
- Bright Flashlight LED
- Dual Band/Dual Display
- Voice Prompts
- Drop in charger/LiON Battery
- 5 watts high/1 watt low power
- VOX
- PC Programmable
- Low voltage voice prompt
- Stop watch function
- Keypad lock
- Programmable scan modes
- Heavy Duty Belt Clip
- USB programming cable and software CD included with radio at no extra cost.

\$129.95

TYT TH-UVF1 (above)

Features:

- Emergency Alert
- Dual Band/Dual Display
- Multi and Priority Scan
- Channel Naming
- VOX
- PC Programmable
- 128 Memories
- 5 watts high/ .5 wat low power
- Heavy Duty Belt Clip
- Long life 1500 MAh Battery
- USB Programming Cable
- Programming Software on CD

\$129.95

