

## December Meeting

### Special points of interest:

- HCRA-MTARA Holiday Party  
December 8th
- Visit the HCRA [facebook page](#).
- Don't forget to check out  
[hcra.org](http://hcra.org)
- Visit Summits on the Air  
<http://www.sota.org.uk>

Don't forget this  
year's raffle!

See Page 4 for details.



### Inside this issue:

Field Day Results HCRA Amateur Class	2
massradio 2 mtr Sprint Results	3
From The Shack	4
Local Happenings, Club & VE Sessions	5
Dots & Dashes	6
Classifieds	7
Crossword Puzzle Famous Hams	9

## Come join us for the 3rd annual HCRA-MTARA Holiday Party

**Monday December 8th at 6pm, at the Steaming Tender Restaurant,  
28 Depot Street, Palmer, Ma 01069**



Join us for cocktails at 6 pm, dinner at 7 pm.

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa , or any other holiday  
this December, the Board of Directors of the Hampden County Radio  
Association, wishes all it's members and their families....

*Happy Holiday's  
And a  
Joyous New Year!*

DAVE  
AAZYW  
JEFF  
NT1K

ERIC  
W1MOR  
GARY  
WAXMAN  
LARRY  
W1AST

RICH  
N1KXR

DAVE  
W1MB  
ED  
K1BWW



**The results are in! And once again, the HCRA proves why it is one of the best Amateur Radio Clubs in the country!**

The club operated in the 6A class. (6 transmitters, Club station, no commercial power, 150 watts or less) We finished 2nd out of 29 entrants. We also finished 1st in Western Mass, 2nd in New England, and MOST impressive we finished 21st out of 2686 worldwide! We had 3789 QSO's, under 150 watts, 60 operators, 12,558 total points.

For an explanation of how we earned these points review page #8 of September 2014 issue of Zero Beat.  
(<http://www.hcra.org/zb/sep14.pdf>)

Many thanks to all that made this such a huge success. No event such as this is possible without the help of many people. From the Field Day Planning committee, setup and take down crews, and all the operators. We also must not forget all the others that help, including our families, who put up with it all!

## HCRA'S NOVEMBER AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE CLASSES

HCRA sponsored it's annual Amateur Radio License Class. Class coordinator Jeffery Bail NT1K, with help from a great group of instructors and examiners, help introduce 12 new Technicians, and upgraded 3 new Generals!

There was a total of 10 students, 7 walk-ins for a total of 17 test takers.

We would like to thank Jeffery Bail NT1K, Rich Wheeler N1KXR, John Pise KX1X, David Fant WM1B, John Malek AB1VC, Charles Dunlap K1II, Steven Rodowicz N1SR, Al Woodhull N1AW, Jim Mullen KK1W, Ed LaCombe KB1NWH, and Kurt Dahdah KU1RT for all your hard work.



Taking the test.



Anne KC1CRS, Ed KB1NWH, Brian KC1BDF  
2 new Generals and their Instructor



VE's waiting for their students to finish.



Rich N1KXR teaching.

# MASSRADIO 2 METER FM CHALLENGE RESULTS

massRadio sponsored a 2 meter FM sprint on Sunday November 9th. For some of us, this was a great opportunity to try contesting for the first time, and to work old friends who you haven't talked to in a while. All you needed was a 2 meter capable HT. That's it! There were separate categories for single operators at different power levels, multi-operator and rover operations. The exchange is your call sign, name and the city and state where you are operating from.

I had this idea of working it from the headquarters of Suffield EMS, on Bridge Street, in Suffield. I thought that the 50 watt base, plus the 5db antenna, on top of a 85' tower would be just the ticket. Through a comedy of errors, I ended up connecting my HT at the base of the tower using a 3ft piece coax, in place of the base station. I was able to make 4 contacts: 1) AB1WT, Jeff, Longmeadow 2) NT1K, Jeff, West Springfield 3) KB1VWQ, Dan, Southwick, and 4) W1PML, Phil, Holyoke. I was able to hear a few more stations, but was unable to make contact. Sitting outside in the cold on a folding chair made it interesting. I did not send in my report thinking that my 4 QSO's would not have had a chance, after looking at the results I should have.

I had a chance to talk to Matt Wilhelm W1MSW the other day. I told him how much fun it was. He and Sean Kutzko KX9X, are planning a few changes for the next one. They hope to have another sometime in January 2015.

## 2014 – November FM Challenge Line Scores

Call	Class	QSO	MULTs	Total
KC1CRS	A	1	1	1
N1FJ	A	1	1	1
W1PML	C	20	17	340
N1AW	C	16	15	240
N1FTP	C	13	10	130
KC1BTA	C	11	10	110
KB1HX0	C	10	10	100
AA1KN	C	9	8	72
KB1VWQ	D	19	17	323
AB1WT	D	17	15	255
NT1K	D	17	13	221
KK1W	D	13	13	160
KX1X	D	9	9	81
KC1BIY	D	2	2	4
KB1NEK	D	1	1	1
WW1DX	E	10	9	90
W1BXY	E	7	6	42
KA1V	R	31	18	558

## Entry Categories:

*Single Operator:* One person performs all transmitting, receiving, spotting, and logging functions as well as equipment and antenna adjustments. You may not receive assistance from any other person for anything related to the contest.

*Multi-operator:* More than one person performs the transmitting, receiving, spotting, logging functions and antennas adjustments during the contest. This allows team entries. Example: One person operates the radio while another person logs the contacts. **Multi-operator efforts may only be conducted from fixed locations.**

- a) Single operator, fixed location, 5 watts or less.
- b) Single operator, fixed location, greater than 5 watts but less than 20 watts.
- c) Single operator, fixed location, greater than 20 watts but not greater than 50 watts.
- d) Single operator, fixed location, more than 50 watts.
- e) Multi-operator, fixed location. No power limit.
- f) Rover: Participant operates from a vehicle, with the option of activating more than one multiplier during the duration of the contest. No power limit.

**Object:** Make as many two-way QSO's with as many different hams as possible in as many different towns as possible in a 1-hour time period.

"Fixed Location" means the participant must operate the entire duration of the contest from one specific location. This category would also include setting up a temporary, portable station at a remote location, "Field-Day" style.

## NEW AMATEUR RADIO VIDEO PODCAST

The guys behind "AmateurLogic" podcast, are producing a new show called "Ham College". The new show is a "show for those new to the hobby and those wishing to get into Amateur Radio. But us old guys should find it a good review and probably learn some things we missed (or forgot) the first time around. We'll help you study for your Amateur license exam and cover topics to get you up to speed and having fun." For more information: [www.amateurlogic.com](http://www.amateurlogic.com)



# FROM THE SHACK



Well hopefully everyone did not stuff themselves too bad over Thanksgiving. Why? December is a busy month for HCRA and MTARA.

First is SKYWARN Recognition Day. (SRD) SKYWARN Recognition Day was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League. It celebrates the contributions that volunteer SKYWARN radio operators make to the National Weather Service. During the day SKYWARN operators visit NWS offices and contact other radio operators across the world.

The object is for all amateur stations to exchange QSO information with as many National Weather Service Stations as possible on 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meter bands plus the 70 centimeter band. Contacts via repeaters are permitted. SKYWARN Recognition Day serves to celebrate the contributions to public safety made by amateur radio operators during threatening weather.

NWS stations will operate Dec. 6, from 0000 - 2400 UTC. NWS stations will work various modes including SSB, FM, AM, RTTY, CW, and PSK31. While working digital modes, special event stations will append "NWS" to their call sign (e.g., N0AA/NWS)

We also have the 160 meter contest. The object is for Amateurs worldwide to exchange information with W/VE amateurs on the 160-meter band CW only. DX-to-DX QSOs do not count for contest credit. The contest starts at 2200 UTC Friday Dec. 5th, and ends at 1600 UTC Sunday Dec. 7th. This is a forty-two hour period with no time limitation.

Then we have the HCRA/MTARA Holiday party at the Steaming Tender in Palmer. That is always a great time for camaraderie. This is where if you did not eat enough at Thanksgiving you can eat a ton more.

Rounding out we have the ever popular 10 meter contest. This is a great contest because you actually get to sleep, and it is open to all license classes. The object is for Amateurs worldwide to exchange QSO information with as many stations as possible on the 10 meter band. The contest starts on Dec 13th at 0000 UTC and runs to 2359 UTC on Dec. 14th.

Stations can not operate more than 36 hours out of the 48-hour period. All off-times must be a minimum of 30 consecutive minutes, and listening time counts as operating time.

Happy Holidays to all,  
And to all, A good night!

Ed KB1NWH



## HCRA's raffle this year is for a Elecraft KX3!

For a mere \$10 donation to the HCRA, you get a chance to win an assembled KX3 by Elecraft valued at around \$1000.

This is an very popular and excellent HF portable radio that has an excellent receiver, low power consumption, can run on external power or 8AA batteries internally, it can transmit up to 12W and has plenty of options like an 100W amplifier, 2M module, pan adapter, ATU, Roofing filters, internal battery charger, custom CW paddle and others that can be added later.

HCRA has printed only 250 tickets and we will start selling them during field day 2014. Tickets will also be sold at meetings and other events throughout 2014 and part of 2015. The drawing will happen when all 250 tickets have been sold or during MTARA's Hamfest in March of 2015. Plenty of time to obtain your chance.

Raffle is just for the Elecraft KX3 Transceiver only. Microphone and paddles not included. Drawing Date Subject To Change.



# Local happenings

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

**First Monday:** Southwick Regional RACES Drill, 1845, 146.49 Simplex

**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)  
Munich House  
13 Center Street  
Chicopee, MA 01013

## Join the ARRL or renew your 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>

## Club meetings & VE sessions

**1st Friday of the month** 7:30 PM, HCRA Club Meeting, Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech St. Holyoke MA 01040 (no meetings held in July or August.)  
<http://www.hcra.org/meeting-location/>

**3rd Friday of the month** 7:30 PM, MTARA Club meeting, Red Cross building 506 Cottage St, Springfield, Mass. (no meetings held in July or August)

**4th Friday of the month** 6:00 PM, Technician, General, and Extra Class License Exams, Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech Street, Holyoke, Mass. Hosted by the Western Mass VE Team (WMVET). Contact: David Cote, w1fab@arrl.net

**Third Monday of the month** 7:00 PM, Franklin County Amateur Radio Club meeting, Room S301, Greenfield Community College (no meetings held in July or August)  
<http://www.fcarc.org/>

**4th Monday of February, May, August, November** 7:00 PM, FCARC VE Exams, Unitarian Church, Main Street, Northfield <http://www.fcarc.org/>

## HCRA contact list

President, Ed LaCombe KB1NWH  
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et-n1qko@juno.com  
VE Session Liaison, Dave Cote W1FAB  
w1fab@arrl.net

# DOTS & DASHES:

Things I can't think where to put, but are interesting.

## SPECIAL EVENTS:

### SKYWARN RECOGNITION DAY

The annual SKYWARN Recognition day will be held on Saturday December 6, 2014. (0000-2400Z) This is the day when amateur radio operators visit the National Weather Service offices and contact other operators around the world. It helps strengthen the bond between the NWS and amateur radio operators. Ham radio operators play an important part during severe weather situations. Trained radio operators are the eyes and ears of the local NWS offices providing up to the minute information on current weather conditions. This enables the Weather Service to issue warnings and advisories that save lives, and property.

Please remember that this is NOT a contest!

The object of this event is to contact as many National Weather Service Offices as possible on 80 to 10 Meters as well as VHF & UHF, including repeaters. All modes including SSB, FM, AM, RTTY, CW, and PSK31. On digital modes the NWS stations will ID with "/NWS" after their callsign. They would also like you to provide a 1 or 2 word description of your current weather.

You can find more information at: [www.wr.noaa.gov/mtr/hamradio](http://www.wr.noaa.gov/mtr/hamradio)

Our local office in Taunton, Ma will start monitoring on Friday night December 5th, at 7 pm. You can get more information at: <http://www.wx1box.org/node/3555>

## INTERESTING HAM RADIO WEB SITES:

### Heavens Above

If your into satellites or tracking the International Space Station, this is the web site for you! They even have an Android App!

<http://www.heavens-above.com/>

## CONTESTING:

### DECEMBER CONTESTS

- Dec 5 ARRL 160Meter Contest [arrl.org/160-meter](http://arrl.org/160-meter)  
ARRL EME Contest [Arrl.org/eme-contest](http://Arrl.org/eme-contest)  
Dec 7 Ten Meter RTTY Contest [rttycontesting.com](http://rttycontesting.com)  
Dec 10 Meteor Scatter Contest [meteorscatter.org](http://meteorscatter.org)  
Dec 13 ARRL 10 Meter Contest [arrl.org/10-meter](http://arrl.org/10-meter)  
Dec 20 Light House Xmas lights [nllw.net](http://nllw.net)  
Dec 21 CW Rookie Roundup  
[arrl.org/rookie-roundup](http://arrl.org/rookie-roundup)  
Dec 27 Iron Ham Contest [araucariadx.com](http://araucariadx.com)  
Original QRP Contest [qrpc.de](http://qrpc.de)

### DECEMBER W1AW PORTABLE CENTENNIAL QSO PARTY

- December 3 - 9 W1AW/1 Maine  
W1AW/9 Illinois  
December 10-16 W1AW/7 Montana  
W1AW/9 Indiana  
December 17-23 W1AW/3 Maryland  
W1AW/4 Georgia  
W1AW/KH6 Hawaii  
December 24-31 W1AW/4 Florida  
W1AW/5 Arkansas  
Nov 26-Dec 2 W1AW/3 Pennsylvania  
W1AW/0 Iowa  
December 31 Red Badges on the Air



## FOR SALE:

If you have a piece of Ham Radio equipment to sell, send photo and details by the 20th of the month, to [wa1mow@arrl.net](mailto:wa1mow@arrl.net). All submissions will be screened for appropriateness, and content. The decision to publish is at the discretion of the ZB Editor



For sale are a set of paddles by GHD Key and sell for \$229.95 new. I'm looking for \$100 Firm. These are smooth paddles and will make your cw sending very easy. Chrome paddles with red finger grips on a marble base. In excellent conditions as can be seen from the pictures.

Also for sale is a Kenwood external speaker. Matches the size of the TS-590 and TS-570 but matches the color of the TS-570. Still looks good next to the 590 or other rigs. In excellent condition, works great, original box & manual. New is \$84.95. I am asking \$60.

Contact Larry, W1AST at 413-348-3289 or [wb1dby@comcast.net](mailto:wb1dby@comcast.net)

**Missed out on the last time we had badges available for order? Well have no worries because they're back! Break the ice and let others know who you are with a stylish new badge. Sorry, the old style badges are no longer available.**

**They are just \$12**

**To order go to [hcra.org](http://hcra.org) or see Larry W1AST**



**If you have any Amateur Radio related equipment to buy, sell, or trade.**

**Or**

**If you need a piece of equipment.**

**Email [wa1mow@arrl.net](mailto:wa1mow@arrl.net) to list in Zero Beat.**

## AREA SWAPFESTS:

2015

Feb 14	Marlborough, Ma	<a href="http://www.nlem.org">www.nlem.org</a>	<a href="mailto:fleamarket@nlem.org">fleamarket@nlem.org</a>
Feb 14	Springfield, Vt	<a href="http://www.cvfma.org">www.cvfma.org</a>	
Feb 15	Westford, Ma	<a href="http://www.nearc.net/swapmeetinfo.htm">www.nearc.net/swapmeetinfo.htm</a>	Bruce 603-7727516
Feb 28	So. Burlington, Vt	<a href="http://www.ranv.org/hamcom.html">www.ranv.org/hamcom.html</a>	Mitch 802-879-6589
Mar 7	Chicopee, Ma	<a href="http://www.mtara.org">www.mtara.org</a>	Mary 413-222-1990
Mar 14	Dayville, Ct	<a href="http://www.qsl.net/k1muj/hamfest/hamflea3.pdf">www.qsl.net/k1muj/hamfest/hamflea3.pdf</a>	Peter 401-603-1485
Mar 15	Southington, Ct	<a href="http://www.chetbacon.com/flea2015.pdf">www.chetbacon.com/flea2015.pdf</a>	John 860-621-8791

# A Ham's Night Before Christmas

Yet another corruption of Clement Clarke Moore's classic Christmas tale,  
this time distorted by Gary Pearce KN4AQ  
December 2, 1996

Twas the night before Christmas,  
And all through two-meters,  
Not a signal was keying up  
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up  
From the tower, quite high,  
To catch the weak signals  
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Technicians,  
Took their HT's to bed,  
And dreamed of the day  
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,  
I plugged in the key,  
And we tuned 40 meters  
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged  
By a signal with power.  
It smoked a small diode,  
And, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,  
And with all she could muster  
Logged a spot of the signal  
On the DX PacketCluster,

While I ran to the window  
And peered up at the sky,  
To see what could generate  
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,  
But the moon made it gleam -  
A flying sleigh,  
With an eight element beam,

And a little old driver  
Who looked slightly mean,  
So I thought for a moment  
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa,  
The Santa of Hams,  
On a mission this Christmas  
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,  
Then stopped in his track,  
And he slid down the coax  
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid  
Behind stacks of *CQ*,  
This Santa of hamming  
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk  
Of paper and parts,  
And filled out all my late  
QSLs, for a start.

He ran copper braid,  
Took a steel rod and pounded  
It into the earth  
Till the station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,  
Resoldered connections,  
Cranked down modulation,  
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes  
In my linear amp...  
(Never worked right before -  
Now it works like a champ).

A new low-pass filter  
Cleaned up the TV.  
He corrected the settings  
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer  
That wouldn't compute,  
And he backed up the hard drive  
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep  
In the bag that he brought,  
And he pulled out a big box.  
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?  
A Yaesu, for me?  
An Elecraft, TEN-TEC  
Or Flex, could it be!"  
(If he thought I'd been bad  
It might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate station!  
How could I deserve this?  
Could it be all those weekends  
I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up  
And in record time, quickly  
Worked 100 countries,  
All down on 160.

I should have been happy.  
It was *my* call he sent.  
But the cards and the postage  
Will cost a month's rent!

He made final adjustments,  
And left a card by the key:  
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.  
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,  
Looked me straight in the eye,  
Punched a code on the pad,  
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,  
And the pile up was big.  
But a card from St. Nick  
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final  
Came over the air.  
It was copied all over.  
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed  
What an old ham expects:  
"Merry Christmas to all,  
And to all, good DX."

© 1996, 2010 Gary Pearce [KN4AQ](#)  
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or electronic reproduction,  
no advance approval required.

[audio version \(mp3 download\)](#)

[Audio version with no music to play on  
the air](#)

[YouTube Video Version](#)



## Famous Hams

## Across

1. VU metro (not meter)  
 6. Call to Bo-peep  
 9. T.O.M.  
 14. TN made rig  
 15. Rear panel label  
 16. 7X neighbor  
 17. Used before flip tops  
 19. More unwet  
 20. Infrequent frame rate mode  
 21. Major Armstrong, familiarly  
 23. Wiring harness parts  
 24. IT9 peak  
 26. Prefix with -tuner  
 28. Kind of drum  
 31. Contact plating solution?  
 36. Boatanchor unit  
 37. Part of ARRL: Abbr.  
 39. Enter  
 40. Suffix with reson-  
 42. In reserve  
 44. Produces radiator supports  
 45. Giving up  
 47. GM monster place  
 49. Viking partner  
 50. Callsign of 31 across  
 52. Overcome utterly  
 54. First QTH?  
 55. Hand (out)  
 57. Small fight  
 60. Field unit?  
 62. Competent  
 66. Loafed around  
 68. Nonphysical, say  
 70. Met show  
 71. Feed lines to  
 72. Partner of 9-across  
 73. Rocking ham

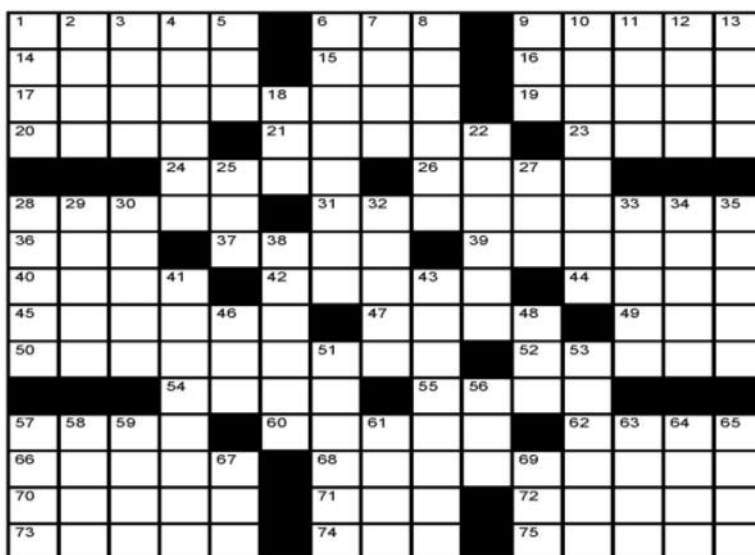
74. Hockey's Bobby  
 75. DXpeditioner's instruction

## Down

1. Manuals, slangily  
 2. Times past  
 3. Fuzz  
 4. ARRL president, and president's grandson  
 5. Rev. of out.  
 6. Wound covers  
 7. All over again  
 8. Of a heart chamber  
 9. Cap. unit  
 10. Missile type  
 11. Ancient WARC band?  
 12. Prof. org. with many ham members

13. Elser-Mathes Cup objective  
 18. Poetic dusk  
 22. Pushes, gently  
 25. Leaves in a bag  
 27. The one above six?  
 28. Two or more yagis, say  
 29. Do and so  
 30. Tube terminal  
 32. Gasket  
 33. Possible Congo prefix  
 34. \_\_\_ alcohol  
 35. Malyj Vysotskij prefix  
 38. Suffix with electro-  
 41. Force-12 element fasteners, say  
 43. More lethal  
 46. Homer's neighbor  
 48. Pre-ham?

51. Int'l org. promoting learning  
 53. What the shack might do with the amplifier on  
 56. Crew tool  
 57. QRS  
 58. Between Oscar and Quebec  
 59. Kind of antenna aimer  
 61. A receiver annoyance, briefly  
 63. Arrest  
 64. 47-across is one  
 65. Exuberance  
 67. CW word  
 69. Zone type



## ARE YOU READY?

As I put together this month's Zero Beat, parts of Buffalo, NY are digging out from under 10' (Yes 10 FEET) of snow! If you got stuck in your car while traveling, could you and your family survive?



Here is a list of items suggested by the AAA and the National Weather Service, to keep in your vehicle:

- \* Container of kitty litter
- \* Flashlight & extra batteries
- \* Blanket or sleeping bag
- \* Small folding shovel
- \* Road flares
- \* Small candle & matches
- \* Windshield scraper/snow brush
- \* First Aid Kit
- \* Candy or energy bars & water
- \* Jumper cables
- \* Critical medications

## November's Puzzle





**Here is your exciting copy  
of December's  
Zero Beat!**

**Hope to see you all at the  
HCRA - MTARA  
Holiday Party!**

---

**Hampden County Radio Association  
P.O. Box 562  
Agawam, MA 01030-0562**