

Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

February 2014

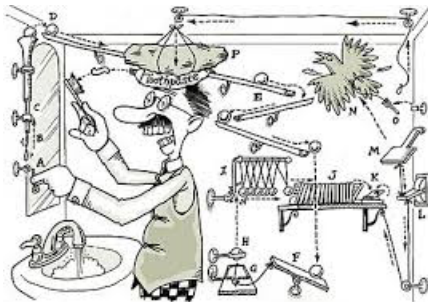
2014 Show & Tell Meeting

There's just one more month left before Hampden County Radio Association's Annual Show & Tell meeting March 7. I hope you've been working on something to show to your fellow club members and tell a little about. No project too large, no project too small, no project too complex and no



project too simple. For those who are new, during this meeting members bring in projects they have either completed or have made progress on over the last year and give a short (5 minutes or less) presentation to

the membership. This is a great opportunity to show others what you've been up to and for fellow club members to get ideas on projects they might want to try. Past projects have ranged from the simple to the complex and from very small to very large. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to share. There is still plenty of time to build that kit you have stashed away or put together photos from the project last summer. We look forward to seeing what you're up to! If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at w1msw@arrl.net.



Matt-W1MSW

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HCRA Meeting Friday, Feb. 7th

Guest Speakers: Fred/AB1OC and Anita/AB1QB

[Matt/W1MSW] As we tromp through winter with our sights set on spring, come to our February HCRA meeting to gain inspiration for projects on your own shack. Fred/



AB1OC and Anita/AB1QB Kemmerer will give a presentation on the design and building of their incredible amateur station in Hollis, NH. Come find out about the considerations, planning and

obstacles they had to overcome while constructing their top-notch station. For a sneak peak at what Fred and Anita have been working on, check out their blog: <http://stationproject.wordpress.com/>.

For this month's Tech Corner Bob K1YO will be discussing some of the basics of Yagi antennas and how they work. Come find out what makes a beam beam!



Along with these presentations, we will be discussing regular club business and future events, selling raffle tickets for the FT-857, taking membership renewals for 2013/2014, and taking deposits for WRTC equipment that the club is selling at a discount to members. Meeting starts at 7:30PM. (Tech Corner at 7:00pm)

*****Our meeting room this month has changed*****

Because of construction at the Auxiliary Conference Center our February 7th meeting will be held in the South 4 Conference Room, located in the MAIN HOSPITAL at HMC. Please park in the lots across the street from the main entrance. Come in the front entrance and go straight until the first corridor on your right. Take that corridor and look for the B&C elevators. Take them up to the fourth floor. Turn right out of the elevator and the conference room will be straight ahead.

The doors to the building close and lock shortly after 8 PM so there can be no late arrivals! (See page 6 for map)

Local happenings

(All times are local time)

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

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

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, Greenfield High School (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/>

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>



Visit our website at
<http://www.hcra.org>

HCRA contact list

President, Jim Mullen KK1W (413) 237-4666

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et-n1qko@juno.com

VE Session Liaison, Dave Cote W1FAB (413) 575-2950

w1fab@arrl.net

FROM THE SHACK

Fred/AB1OC is our featured speaker for February meeting

Station building ideas from an expert

Fred will be showing us the grand shack he and Anita/AB1QB have crafted over the past few years. It truly is a 'station to lust after' and contains lots of ideas we could use in our own shacks. After seeing AB1OC's presentation you may not ever call a ham station a 'shack' again!

Don't forget we will be meeting in the South 4 Conference Room in the Main Hospital this month. Directions and a map can be found [here](#) and in this month's edition of ZB (page 6).



Visit the HCRA table at the MTARA [MTARA Hamfest](#) on March 1st

The FT-857 drawing will be held at noon

Once again we will have a table at this fun event. While you're browsing the aisles for that 'have to have' item please stop by the HCRA table and say hello. While you're there you can pick up a [raffle ticket](#) for a Yaesu FT-857 transceiver. There are only 250 tickets being sold AND the drawing will be held at noon the day of the hamfest. You could leave a real WINNER – how cool is that?

Volunteer(s) are needed to staff our table at the hamfest. If you would like to help out contact [me](#) directly and I'll get you scheduled. I have one free entry to the hamfest going to the first person to volunteer 😊

Our March 7th meeting is the annual Show & Tell extravaganza

Our 'funnest' event of the year

Matt is working hard to craft another fun Show & Tell for 2014. This is the meeting everyone wants to attend. See presentations and demonstrations of what our members have been working on for the past year—Novice rig to Van de Graaff generator, Raspberry Pi to KW amp...HCRA's Show & Tell has it all. Not bringing a project? Then pack your fire extinguisher, safety glasses and rubber boots, sit back and enjoy the fun!

HUGE Tower SALE now going on!

Get the tower you always wanted at a price you can afford

The sale of WRTC equipment is drawing to a close. Our goal is to sell it all prior to June 1st and make sure every HCRA member gets a bargain. There isn't much left

except for tower sections and some odds and ends. A full inventory can be found elsewhere in this month's *Zero Beat*.

What we have on sale at a special price are Rohn 25 tower sections. We have twelve 10' sections on sale now for only \$40! Regular price is \$135 and that doesn't include shipping! You can easily save over \$100/section if you act fast.

Don't miss out, talk to Dave/AA1YW or me at the next meeting. All purchases require a 20% deposit and include delivery to your door around the end of July. [*Within reason. –Ed.*]

[WRTC 2014](#) and the [ARRL Centennial Convention in July](#)

Two events you won't want to miss in 2014

I'm sure you know HCRA has taken a strong supporting position helping out this world class event on July 8th to the 14th. This year we will be erecting, maintaining and removing four WRTC contest stations in Medfield, MA. We need YOUR support to insure WRTC 2014 puts New England on the map for holding the best WRTC Championship to date. Interested in helping? Contact me anytime via [email](#) or at 413-237-4666. Together we can show the world what HCRA members working together can accomplish!

The weekend following the contest will feature the ARRL National Convention. With events starting on July 17th and running through July 20th the convention will be extra special featuring great programs, manufacturers and guests from around the world. This year it will be just down the road in Hartford, CT – how cool is that? Don't miss a once in a lifetime opportunity - get down there and enjoy

Fantastic Solar Conditions continue!

Are you missing the chance of a lifetime?

This excerpt from the ARRL Propagation Bulletin [ARLP005 \(2014\)](#) issued January 31st:

"We are only missing a single day's data for calculating the 3-month moving average of sunspot numbers, but it looks like it will be around the same value as last month's average, which was 123.7. This figure was only higher way back in the 3-month period ending in February 2003, which was 128.9. All subsequent values over the past 11 years have been lower. The actual numbers will appear in next week's bulletin."

This means solar conditions are the best they have been in eleven years—don't miss out, GOTA (Get On The Air)!

73...

Jim/KK1W

Crossroads

*“Down to the crossroads, tried to flag a ride.
Nobody seemed to know me, everybody passed me by.”*

Those words quoted above are from Eric Clapton’s version of Robert Johnson’s popular blues song, Crossroads. Why am I quoting blues lyrics in a ham radio article? Well, HCRA is indeed at a crossroads this year. 2014 will truly be a year to test the mettle of our membership. We are at a crossroad, the paths ahead aren’t clear and it will be up to YOU, the HCRA members to help choose the best path.

I wrote last month that after sixteen years I would be stepping down from my position at the end my term in June. By itself this shouldn’t be cause for alarm, however there are other factors in play. Over the last few years I’ve encouraged board members to hang in there just “one more year”. My hope was to find new board members so they could also, like me, take time off from HCRA. That plan didn’t work too well; we held on to our long time board members and didn’t add a lot of new blood. The result? It appears we will be losing at least three maybe four additional board members this year, potentially leaving HCRA without a quorum. We have a strong, vibrant and active membership now is the time for that strength to show. Are there people out there ready to step forward and keep HCRA heading down the right road?

Over the years we have asked our membership to volunteer their time and lead HCRA down the path we have always followed. Our goals have been to provide our members with a platform to explore this great hobby, expose them to new ideas and technologies, create a fun atmosphere to enjoy each other’s company every month and be a good citizen to our cities and towns by providing help and emergency services when needed. I think we’ve done some of these things pretty well. Others may not agree, but that’s good. That’s why we need you to help carry the HCRA vision forward.

Once again this year we will be looking for interested, involved and motivated people to give a little back to the hobby and club they have grown to love so much. I know things have been going pretty well at our club, so why should you bother to volunteer when things are fine? What is different this year is if no one steps forward there simply won’t be anyone to fill the gaps. You cannot simply sit back and think HCRA will choose the right path and things won’t change. Change is inevitable but we want good change, not bad, right?

The good news is our club is solid, has good membership numbers, is well organized and the treasury is in fine shape. The present board is planning for future events to minimize the changeover effects. The outgoing board members aren’t disappearing and will be available to help mentor new members with advice if needed. If you ‘raise your hand’ to help out you won’t be standing in the middle of the crossroad all alone.

“And I’m standing at the crossroads, believe I’m sinking down.”

Some folks have mentioned this year could be the start of a ‘downward spiral’ for HCRA but I’m not of that mind. I think HCRA is being offered a chance to make changes for the better, pulling in people with new ideas, different agendas and the outcome will be a stronger HCRA than we have today. It’s all up to you – are you in or will you leave us standing at the crossroads.

73...

Jim/KK1W

Ham Apps for February 2014

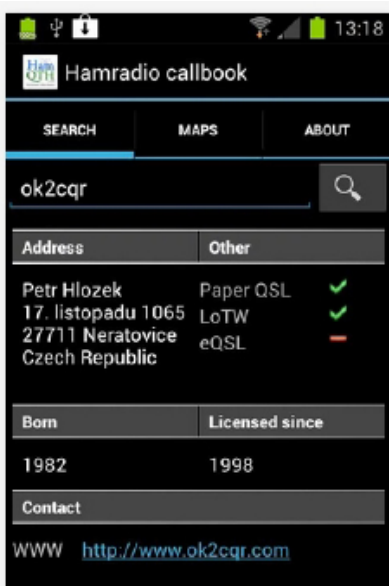
(Larry, W1AST) Happy New Year to all! It's now February, one of the cold months, and more of us are finding time to chase that DX station. While at home, it's easy to turn on the computer and watch the spots come up. But what about when you are mobile?

I ran across an app for mobile called **DxFun Cluster Ham Radio** on the Google Play store. DxFun is a tiny app, taking less than 3 megs of space (2.7 megs installed). Start it up and all bands are shown. Or select which band you want from 6 thru 160 or VHF or UHF.

Very quickly a list appears showing who made the spot, frequency, flag of the country and call of the station plus time posted. (See the picture) It's a very handy utility to have on your phone or tablet.



Have you ever wished you had access to the callbook access in your hand? Sure, you could just go to QRZ.com or you could open the **Hamradio Callbook** app. To use the app, you need to make a free account at www.hamqth.com first.



The first time you run the app, log in with your hamqth login, type in a call and search. Displayed is all the info you could possibly need, plus a map location. Hamradio Callbook covers all hams all over the planet. (see the picture). It is another handy and simple app to use while away from your home station.

QRZ does have a app called **QRZ Droid**, but I find I do not like

it as much as Hamradio Callbook. The information is not displayed anywhere as organized and neatly as Hamradio Callbook. (see the picture). All the info you need is there



plus the availability to View on QRZ too which will open a browser window. You can also display a list of recently found calls too. QRZ Droid also offers the capability to share the results, but I don't know why you'd want to do this. It is another option for looking up calls worldwide on your phone or tablet.

Every time my phone rang, my wife would complain that she did not like the ring tone. (Who doesn't like Train Train by Blackfoot?).

So I decided to change to something else, something a little more fun. Anyone can attach a song to a ringtone, but not everyone can have the caller id play back in Morse code!

I found **MorseRing** by Kgmoney.net and installed it on my Android phone. This is a free app. It replaces your current ringer and has a few settings to customize it even more.

First is to tell it to be the ringtone, then whether tone or vibrate or blink (I chose tone). You can set a default message if no number or memory is selected, I chose not to and it just plays the incoming number. The speed can be set from 20 wpm to 50 wpm and the tone playback in Hz can be set too. Mine is 600 Hz about where I like my cw anyways. You can also set the blink speed (mine is set to 11 wpm), and vibrate speed from 6 to 14 wpm. And that's it.



The next time Jim, KK1W calls (or anyone) it plays his name and call and it works great! It did take me a little while to adapt to hearing it as the ringtone, but now I can tell who is calling immediately without even taking my phone out of my pocket. And it keeps my callers private except if another ham is close to you.

Now my wife doesn't get annoyed by it. She does ask who is calling and finds it interesting that I don't have to pick up the phone and look anymore as I'm copying it in my head. This is a fun and useful app and may also (albeit slowly) help you get your code speed up too.

Larry, W1AST

February 7th Meeting Moved to Temporary Location

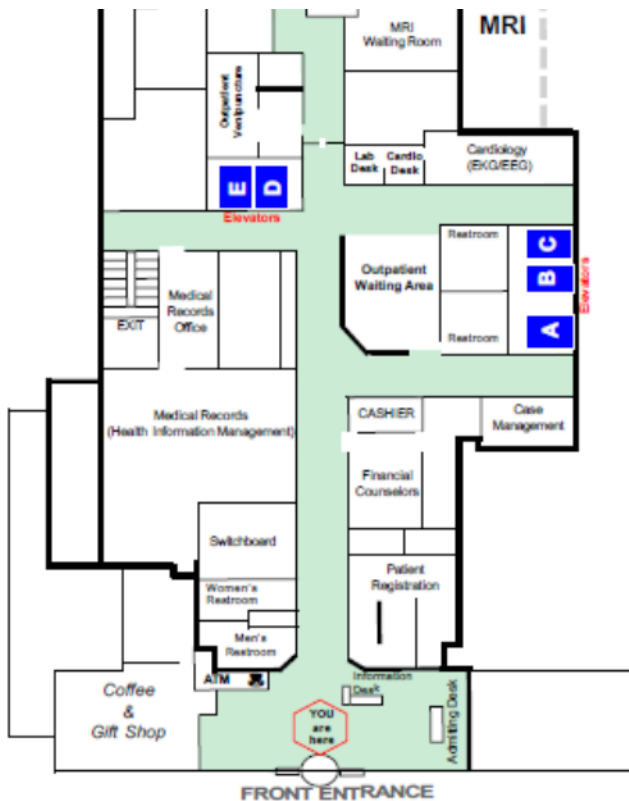
Folks,

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Our February 7th meeting will feature Fred, ABIOC with a great presentation of his magnificent station in NH. Remember – don't be late or you may not get in!

Because of the location change we will not be serving coffee or snacks at this meeting – please plan accordingly.

*See you there!
Jim/KK1W*

It's your Zero Beat!

I couldn't publish *Zero Beat* without the help of members providing articles and pictures. Send ideas, comments, pictures, articles to N1FJ@arrl.net!

It seems that there will be a big shake-up on the HCRA Board in June. Who wants to step up and help run the club?

73,
Frandy-N1FJ

Upcoming Contests

Band conditions have been great and the second half of the 2013/2014 contest season is upon us. Jump on the air and make some contacts!

CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest 0000Z, Feb 8 to 2359Z, Feb 9 www.cqwxrtty.com/rules.htm

ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW 0000Z, Feb 15 to 2400Z, Feb 16 <http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>

CQ 160-Meter Contest, SSB 2200Z, Feb 21 to 2200Z, Feb 23 <http://www.cq160.com/rules.htm>

North American QSO Party, RTTY 1800Z, Feb 22 to 0559Z, Feb 23 <http://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf>

ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Mar 1 to 2400Z, Mar 2 <http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>

HELP WANTED!

[Ed/KB1NWH]

Are you eager to help fellow HAMS?

Are you energetic?

Would you like to help the HCRA continue well into the 21st century?

Do you have an extra hour of time on your hands?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, then listen up.

As you may all be aware of Jim KK1W is resigning after his term in June as **President**. (Thank you Jim for many years of service!) Jim and Ed (KB1NWH) have been splitting up the **Secretary** duties. Matt (W1MSW) will be releasing the **Program** position to spend more family time. John (KX1X) is stepping down from the **At-Large** position.

As you can see, that is 4/9 of your Board of Directors. We appreciate all the time and effort all have put into their positions. If you are interested in one of the above positions please contact any board member. Don't think you will be flying blind we will show you the ropes.

Remember, we need your help to be a successful club!

HAM Radio License Class and Study Groups Results

Another Successful HCRA License Class

Once again this year, under the guidance of John/Kx1x and with a little help from his friends we've put another successful license class in the books. Classes were held on two Monday evenings and an all day Saturday session on January 25th at the Holyoke Medical Center Auditorium. A VE exam was held immediately following the last class.

In addition to an in-depth Technician Class presentation there were General and Extra Class study groups led by Jim/KK1W and Ed/KB1NWH respectively. Once the dust settled here are the results:

Technician: (*new call)

*Halimah Fennell KC1BDM**

*Tony Pettaway KC1BDK**

*Chris Elder KC1BDL**

*Brian Mullarney (Friday night) KC1BDF**

General:

Richard Laviolette KC1AEO (Friday night)

Ronald Ford KC1ANE (Friday night)

Extra:

Miner Thompson KB1NQK

And thanks to Al/N1AW, Jeff/NT1K, Nick/K1MAZ, Rich/N1KXR and Steve/N1SR.

Please make a special effort to listen for these folks on the air and welcome them to their new hobby!

HCRA Raffle ending March 7!



HCRA's *250* raffle prize is a brand-new Yaesu FT-857D HF/VHF/UHF transceiver. The drawing is scheduled for March 7, 2014. Tickets are available at an HCRA meeting, or contact n1kxr@arrl.net.



26th Annual



Amateur Radio & Electronics Hamfest



Saturday March 1, 2014

Located at:

Moose Family Center/Chicopee Falls Moose Lodge 1849
244 Fuller Road, Chicopee, MA 01020

Directions

From North or South on I-91:

- *Take the Interstate 291 E/US. 20 ramp to Mass Pike/Boston
- *Merge onto I-291 E/US-20 E and continue to follow I-291 E
- *Take exit 6 toward Ludlow/Chicopee Falls
- *Turn right onto Fuller Rd.
- *Turn right onto Virginia Ave. *Moose Family Center* parking lot will be on the right.

From East or West on I-90:

- *Take exit 6 toward Springfield.
- *Turn onto I-291 W.
- *Take exit 6 for Fuller Rd toward Ludlow/Chicopee Falls.
- *Turn right onto Fuller Rd.
- *Moose Family Center will be on the right.
- *Turn right onto Virginia Ave. *Moose Family Center* parking lot will be on the right.

*** The Details ***

Doors Open:

- 6:30 AM Vendors *only*, help available for loading and unloading
- 8:30 AM General Admission

Admission:

- Adults: \$5.00
- Children: under age 12 are *FREE!*

Vendor Tables: \$15.00 each (No tailgating available at this location.)

Handicapped Parking Available

Snack Bar – hot and cold beverages, breakfast sandwiches, hot dogs, burgers

Raffle Prizes – six (6) tickets for \$5.00

VE Exam -10:30 AM

Bring: two forms of positive ID; originals and photocopies of any CSCE's you hold; and if licensed, the original of your current license plus a photocopy. Contact Richard- AB1RS at ab1rs@hotmail.com for information.

Additional Information:

<http://www.mtara.org>

Talk-In on 146.94 (127.3 PL)

Table Registrations contact:

Mary Elkins – KB1ME
24 Shoreline Drive
Ware, MA 01082
Tel.: (413) 222-1990
kb1me@arri.net

Mail-in Registration Form

Name _____

Call sign _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (cell preferred) _____

Email Address: _____

of Tables _____ x \$15.00 = _____

Is 120 VAC Needed? _____

Checks payable to: MTARA

Mail to: Mary Elkins-KB1ME, 24 Shoreline Dr.,
Ware, MA 01082

HCRA/WRTC Equipment Purchase Agreement

(inventory as of 2/3/2014)

Date: ____/____/____

Name: _____, Call: _____
 Street: _____, City: _____, State: ____ ZIP: _____
 Phone: (____) - ____ - _____ email: _____@_____

Purchaser agrees to the following:

1. A 20% non-refundable deposit at date of purchase.
2. Payment made in full by June 1, 2014
3. Purchased items will be available for delivery/pickup after July 13, 2014
4. Purchaser understands the goods are used and without warranty

HUGE TOWER SALE!

Available	Item	Model	Retail	HCRA	Qty	20% Deposit	Balance Due
12	25G, 10' section	Rohn, 25G	\$ 135	\$ 40			
3	25G, 8' rocket top w/4' mast and rotor bracket	Rohn, 25G	\$ 309	\$ 150			
4	Rotator w/125' cable	Yaesu, G-450A	\$ 404	\$ 225			
1	150' Coax w/PL259	Times, LMR-240	\$ 120	\$ 50			
1	40M dipole	Radio Oasis	\$ 40	\$ 20			
4	36" x 36" Folding Table	?	\$ 70	\$ 25			
6	Folding Chairs	?	\$ 15	\$ 10			
2	Lamp	?	\$ 10	\$ 5			
2	Fan	?	\$ 15	\$ 5			
3	Camp Toilet	?	\$ 40	\$ 10			
				Totals:			