



Our 59th Year

Zero Beat

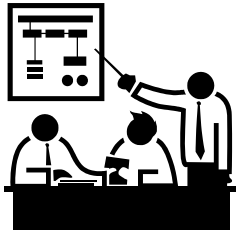
A Publication of the Hampden County Radio Association
<http://www.hcra.org>

Meetings Held at: **Feeding Hills Congregational Church**
21 North Westfield Street
Feeding Hills, MA



March, 2005

THIS MONTH'S MEETING



HCRA's Fourth Annual



Is your project ready ???

Win a \$50 HRO
Gift Certificate for your
"Show & Tell" Project

As always, there will be
Good Times, Good Conversation,
And Good Friends

Show & Tell

This FRIDAY, March 4th, 7:30 PM

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING

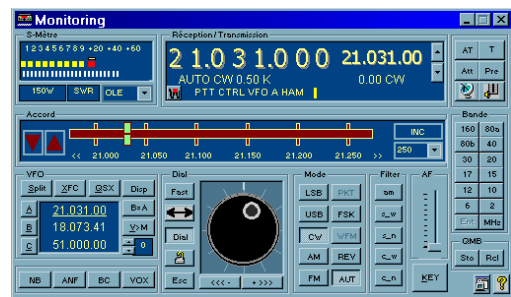
Friday, April 1st (No Kidding)



CTRI
Connecticut & Rhode Island
Contest Group

THIS MONTH'S TECH CORNER

John, N1JIO, will demonstrate some
rig/computer interfaces before our
meeting starts. Doors open at 7:PM.



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President's Corner

March Meeting *It's Show & Tell Time!*

Well, I hope you have just about finished your latest project. Time is short and the stakes are high. This month's meeting is HCRA's annual 'Show & Tell' competition. I'm sure by now you know all about it but just in case, let me fill you in.

Show & Tell is our members chance to show off their latest creations and maybe win a nice prize, all at the same time. Have you built something that is useful around the shack? Maybe a neat station accessory that works well but is inexpensive to build. Or perhaps you've put together a kit (I know at least one of our members has a QRP kit from last month) and want to show off your handiwork. From the simple to the complex, Show & Tell is the place to bring it so we all can appreciate your skill.

Haven't had the soldering hot or the drill press running? That's OK too, maybe you have written some software that will make our hobby more fun. That would also qualify for Show & Tell.

And you don't have to worry about losing to someone that's been doing it a lot longer than you - we have two classes of competition. The Novice class is perfect for beginning builders. More accomplished constructors will be competing in the 'Expert' class. At stake are two \$50 gift certificates to HRO. A perfect prize to buy yet even more stuff for the shack.

Past years entries have really shown off the skill set of our members. Here's a short list of some memorable entries. A Tesla coil, pneumatic antenna launcher, precision rotor control, home-made antenna insulators, home brew 1KW amplifiers, radio control software and GPS locators. And that's just naming a few that come to mind. Our contestants have ranged in age from 9 to somewhat over 60 so I truly believe there is a place for everyone in Show & Tell.

What are you waiting for? The \$50 prize could be yours. Pack up your project, show it off to the crowd and tell us all about it. The members gain more knowledge and you may win the prize. Everyone goes home a winner!

In addition to the Show & Tell contest expect the usual. Coffee, Donuts and exchanging ideas and conversations with the best bunch of hams in the Pioneer Valley.

Are the Bands Dead? *Don't believe everything you hear!*

There I was, chatting away on 10 meters the other evening at about 10 PM with John Kx1x. No solar activity to speak of and a very quiet band. My Icom has one of those band scopes on it and as I was listening to John I noticed some activity just below our frequency. I asked John to hold on a minute, I wanted to spin the dial and see what was there. On about 28.400 were two strong 5-band signals. They were deep in conversation so I didn't interrupt and went back up to where John was listening.

I did open up the band width on the scope and saw there were at least four more strong signals on 10 Meters. Hmmmm. Then, about 10 minutes later, Todd, K141KB gave us a call from South Carolina. He had just set up an old Kenwood TS520 and a dipole and heard John & I talking. We were so loud he thought he would give us a call. We chatted for about 10 minutes. Signals were around S3 to S6, the time was after 10 PM.

The moral of the story. If everyone is listening no one will ever communicate! Even in the doldrums of the solar cycle there is still life on the HF bands! Give out a CQ - you never know what will happen. Have fun and work them all!

HCRA Breaks One Hundred! *Members, not years!*

February 2005 marks an important point in HCRA history. For the first time in quite a few years our regular membership has exceeded the hundred mark. Let me tell you, that is quite an accomplishment for any amateur radio club. And to think it wasn't many years ago HCRA was on the verge of disbanding. To quote an old advertisement, "we've come a long way baby!".

So how did this happen to come about? Is it the quality of the guest speakers at the meetings? Or the location? Or the enthusiasm of the member? The dedication of the board of directors? A great monthly newsletter? A Field Day to die for? Technician Classes?

It is all that and more. The ever ending question of what came first. The chicken or the egg? Do great meetings attract more members or do engaged members enable us to attract better speakers. I don't think there is a clear answer. What I do know is we have a dynamic that is working very well. Without a doubt we have a strong, active membership base that contributes greatly to the makeup of our club. And we have a board of directors that tries very hard to create an atmosphere that both attracts new members and allows all members an opportunity to contribute to the club.

Whatever the reasons the results are clear. HCRA has become one of the larger clubs in the New England and certainly one of the most active. Each and every member should be proud of their contribution, you have made HCRA the great club it is today. Lets keep doing what we are doing and shoot for 150 members by 2010, how's that for a goal?

Don't forget, the June elections are just around the corner. If we are to make the 150 we need new ideas - are you ready for a challenge?

Tech Corner *Rigs & PC's - get them talking!* *Held over from last month.*

Have you wanted combine the fun of radio with the convenience of a personal computer? Wouldn't it be nice to have memory banks of your favorite HF frequencies available with just a mouse click? How about DXCC, logging and printing QSL's or scoring contests? A PC connected to your radio can do that and more, sometimes with just a click of the mouse.



Screenshot of TRX-Manager

But... how do you get them to talk to each other. CAT, CT17, com port, RTS/CTS; what does all this stuff mean? If you're not sure then this month's Tech Corner is for you. N1JIO will be on hand at 7:00 PM to answer these questions and more. John's shack bristles under computer control. From clicking on a DX spot, to rotating the antenna, tuning the beam and logging the contact, N1JIO's PC does all the hard work. All John has to do is talk! Isn't that what it's all about? Every day better and cheaper software shows up on the web. N1JIO has been trying them all and will have some good recommendations for you.

John had to cancel out last month but will be here this month with lots of information on this subject and more.

You bring the questions, John will have the answers.

See you at the meeting!

'73... Jim, KK1W

HCRA CONTACTS

Questions, Comments, and
Suggestions Can Be Directed To:

HCRA OFFICERS

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Larry Krainson

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www.wemakehousecalls.biz

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ANAHEIM, CA • ATLANTA, GA • DENVER, CO • OAKLAND, CA
PHOENIX, AZ • PORTLAND, OR • SALEM, NH • SAN DIEGO, CA

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, KK1W : jmullen@rockys.com or (413) 245-3228

OUR
SUPPORTERS
PLEASE

WE NEED YOUR SUGGESTIONS

We are asking for your suggestions and ideas for future HCRA meetings. The recent success of HCRA has been, in part, because of its interesting and timely key speakers and topics.

If you can help, please contact

Larry, WB1DBY, 567-3505, wb1dby@arrl.net

Have you tried IRLP yet?

IRLP is the Internet Radio Linking Project, connecting radios over the Internet. With your 2m radio, you make contacts all over the world.

HCRA sponsors an IRLP node, in South Hadley, MA.

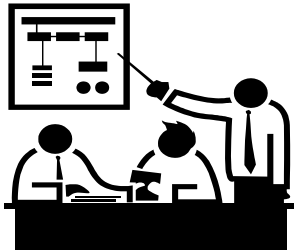
It is there for your use, please give it a try

(at least turn it on and listen)

146.46 simplex, 114.8hz PL

Kx1x, Node #7270,

S.Hadley, MA



HCRA's Fourth Annual

Show & Tell

What's a "show & tell"? It's a chance to show off your latest creation and win some nice prizes to boot. It's the feature part of our March meeting and it's always a lot of fun! You've still got a lot of time to prepare, so read on...

To enter, show up with your project, explain it and wait for the judge's decision. There will be Novice and Expert classes. All entries will be judged by an independent panel of electrical engineers from MIT, RPI and Radio Shack (>) Entries will be judged on originality, construction quality, usefulness, etc. Examples: building your home brewed whatizit, your latest software, creation of a new mobile mount, portable PSK31 station, Tesla coil, etc. and "show & tell" everyone about your handiwork.

First prize in each category will be a **\$50** gift certificate to HRO

The judges reserve the right to banish 'dangerous' demonstrations to the parking lot in the name of member safety!

Is your project ready???

RMS Titanic Memorial Special Event Station

Do you enjoy working special event stations? Do you enjoy operating special event stations?

Coming up on April 9 through April 15 there is an opportunity to do either or both. The Titanic Historical Society is again celebrating the anniversary of the voyage of the RMS Titanic. (This year is the 93rd anniversary.) Primary operations will be on 7.260 SSB and 14.260 SSB. Depending upon propagation and volunteers, we will also have operations on CW (7.033, and 14.033), PSK31, and SSB or FM on 6 meters, 2 meters and 440 MHz. Normal hours from the museum will be 1430 Z through 2130 Z. We will also be operating from homes at other hours (mostly evenings). If you want additional information contact me at either 413-596-6605 or kb1mu@charter.net If you are interested in operating, contact me at the above address also.

Thanx, de Dave, KB1MU



BSA Venture Crew 510

NE1C - New England's #1 Crew

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

Visit Crew DX's 100% youth designed website:

<http://www.qsl.net/crewdx>



BSA VENTURE CREW 510 Contacts

Youth President

Luke Dyson, KB1ISP

luke@penguinia.net

Adult Advisor

John Pise, Kx1x (413) 532-7474

kx1x@arrl.net

Adult Advisor

Dave Cain, AA1YW

aa1yw@arrl.net

BSA VENTURE CREW 510 - CALENDAR

HCRA Meeting - March 4th

MTARA Flea - March 6th

CQWW WPX Contest at KITTT, Peru, MA - March 25,26,27

Ham Radio Demo, Webelos Woods, Moses Scout Reservation, June 3, 4, 5

On the Internet
<http://www.hcra.org>
Updated often to bring you timely Amate
news and info

IRLP Node #7270
146.46 Mhz -- PL 114.8
A free service of HCRA
See www.hcra.org

Next Meeting:
Friday, April 1st, 2005
CTRI
Connecticut & Rhode Island
Contest Group

Get Your Zero Beat Electronically each month

HCRA members can receive their monthly club newsletter in any or all of three ways!

- 1) First Class Mail, just like you always have. This costs HCRA approximately 75 cents per copy. This is one of the benefits of your membership with HCRA.
- 2) E-mail. If you would like to get on our e-mail list, just write eZB@hcra.org from the account that you wish to receive your copy from, and request that you join our list. HCRA respects your privacy and will not under any circumstances give your e-mail address to ANYONE.
- 3) WWW.HCRA.ORG. Our new web site carries the latest copies of Zero Beat. Just click and read.

NOTE 1: You will need Adobe Acrobat ® installed on your computer to read electronic copies of Zero Beat. Just click the button on the WWW.HCRA.ORG website, and follow the directions to get your FREE copy of Adobe Acrobat ®.

NOTE 2: There is a cost savings to the HCRA if you receive your Zero Beat electronically only. If you prefer to NOT receive your newsletter by First Class Mail, please contact John, Kx1x, Steve, N1SR, or Jim, KKIW, to be added to the eZB only list.

Get On The Air

(all times local)

Mon., Tues, Thur, Fri	19:00	National Traffic Sys (NTS) Net	146.94 (W1TOM)
Sundays	08:45	Western Mass Emergency Net	146.94 (W1TOM)
Mondays	19:30	HCRA 10m Net	28.375
Wednesdays	19:30	MTARA Info net	146.94 and 147.000 (link) (W1TOM)
	20:00	MTARA Swap net	
(right after SWAP net)		N1RLX Memorial Simplex Net	Starts on 146.94, then moves to a simplex frequency
Thursdays	21:00	Weather Net	2 nd Week of the Month 147.09 (All other weeks 147.000)

Club Meetings & Testing Sessions

1 st Friday of the month	19:30	HCRA Club Meeting	Feeding Hills Congregational Church 21 N. Westfield St., Feeding Hills
3 rd Monday of January, April, July, and October		KD1XP License Exams	Amherst Machine Amherst, MA
		Contact Richard, KD1XP, 413-665-2211 or 145.130 Repeater	
		http://www.kd1xp.org	
3 rd Friday of the month	19:30	MTARA Club meeting	Red Cross building 506 Cottage St, SPFLD, MA
		http://www.mtara.org	
4 th Friday of the month	18:00	WMVET License Exams	Holyoke Hospital Auditorium Beech St., Holyoke
		Contact Dave, W1FAB, W1FAB@arrl.net	
4 th Sunday of the month	19:00	NOBARC club meeting	Pittsfield MA (146.91 for talk-in)

W1NY ON THE AIR

Join us each week on the HCRA 10m Net!

Join NCS, Tom Doyle (n1muv), each Monday night at 7:30 PM (local) on 28.375 Mhz (+/- QRM)

Get the latest local word, join good friends, take part in good conversation each week!!!

Anyone (with HF privs) can join in, don't be shy!!!

KD1XP Repeater Group News

53.350 (-) PL 71.9 Amherst, MA
 145.130 (-) PL 173.8 Amherst, MA
 442.200 (+) PL 162.2 Deerfield, MA (near Greenfield)
 443.450 (+) PL 173.8 Leyden, MA (near Greenfield)
 443.700 (+) PL 71.9 Belchertown, MA

*The next ham radio testing session will be on Monday, April 18th at Amherst Machine on Cowls Road in Amherst, MA.
 ALL test elements given. Contact Richard, KD1XP at 665-2211 for details*

*Breakfast meetings every first Saturday of the month at Bickfords in Northampton.
 Talk in on the 145.130 repeater.*

www.kd1xp.org

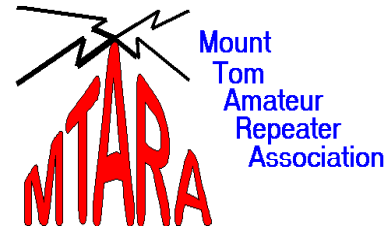
KD1XP
repeater group

Mt. Tom Amateur Repeater Assn. News

www.mtara.org

Info Net, Wednesdays at 7:30 PM local
 146.94 (-) or 147.000 (+) with Joe, NA1X, net control

Meetings on the
 3rd Friday of the Month, 7:30
 Red Cross Building, Cottage St., Spfld
Next Meeting, Friday March 18th
At the Red Cross Building



M.T.A.R.A. 18th Annual

Amateur Radio & Electronics

Hamfest

Sunday March 6, 2005

LOCATED AT:

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School
 80 Locust Street Northampton, MA 01060

SNACK BAR
 RAFFLE PRIZES
 TAILGATING
 AMATEUR EXAMS

DOOR PRIZES
 120 VAC AVAILABLE
 HANDICAPPED PARKING
 HELP LOADING/UNLOADING

The Details

Doors Open:
 7:00 AM for Vendors
 9:00 AM for Bargain Hunters

Admission:
 Adults: \$5.00
 Children under 12 FREE!
 Tailgating: \$5.00
 Tables: \$15.00
 (Early Bird Special - \$12 if reserved before Feb 6)

Talk-in on the 146.94 (127.3 PL)
 Mount Tom Repeater
 and KD1XP 145.130(-)(173.8)

For more info or Table Registrations contact:

Gary Thomas - AA1UE
 117 Florida St.
 Springfield, MA 01109
 (413) 739-3511
 aalue@arrl.net

10:00 AM VE Exam Info:

Space is limited, so pre-registration is strongly recommended. To register, contact Dave Cote, W1FAB at (413) 575-2950 or W1FAB@ARRL.NET Be sure to bring **two** forms of positive ID, and originals and photocopies of any CSCE's you hold and, if licensed, your original license and a photocopy. Walk-ins will be accepted, but only as seating permits!!

Commercial License Testing

GRQ, GMDSS-O/M, Ship Radar, etc.
 Contact Steve - N1SR at (413) 593-6554
 Leave name, Phone #, and desired license



From Mass Pike Exit 4: Take Route 91 North to Exit 19 (Route 9). At bottom of ramp, turn left onto Route 9 West for 3.1 miles. Smith Vocational School is on the left.
 From VT, And all points North: Take I-91 South to exit 20. Take Route 9 South for 1.4 miles to Main Street (Route 9). Turn right (Route 9 West). Go 1.9 miles South. Vocational School will be on left.

Mail in Registration Form

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 # of Tables _____ x 15.00 = _____
 Is 120 VAC Needed? _____
 Check payable to:
 MTARA, PO Box 3494 Springfield, MA 01101-3494

HCRA Field Day,
The WINY way

June 25, 26, 27, 2005

Dufresne Park,
Granby, MA

Its coming....

*Think
 Only Warm
 Thoughts, like
 Field Day!!!*

N1RLX Memorial Simplex Net

On January 18 2005, the local emergency simplex net was re-started. This net was started and had been run by Ray N1RLX several years ago. With the passing of Ray in November, Tom, N1MUV, and myself kicked the idea around. It was decided to start the net in January. The net begins on the 146.94 repeater, then moves to 146.42 (or another) simplex frequency.

Our first night, 15 stations checked in. Tom, N1MUV, and Tom, KA1MDA, acted in the capacity of net relay stations. On January 25 there were 9 stations, Tom, N1MUV, was the Relay station.

It was decided to move the Net to Wednesday nights, after the swap net. Our first Wednesday night, 14 stations checked in with Tom, N1MUV and John, Kx1x, operating as relay stations.

With the current world situation, remembering 9/11, the tsunami, and the recent blizzard that effected southern New England, it becomes apparent that emergency communications exercises and practice is warranted. I thank those that have checked in, and encourage all to give this new net a try. If you have any questions about the use of 2m simplex and the use of relay stations to pass traffic, join the net. Or at least give a listen!!

'73 de Eric, N1QKO



Tis the Season! For Public Service that is

The early spring events are upon us. Amateur Radio in Western Mass supports many non profit activities throughout the year.

The Scantic Splash canoe & kayak race

Sunday March 26,2005 Enfield Ct.

Amateur radio provides communications on the course for safety & race results

The Westfield Boys Club 1/2 Marathon

Sunday April 3 2005

12 mile plus road race through areas of Westfields & Southwick

Amateur Radio provides Monitoring of race progress & assisting runners

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!!! WILL TRAIN!!!

Both events are what you could call "labor intensive". There is a need for a number of amateur ops to cover many positions. A 2m mobile or HT in the hands of a good operator will do the job.

So what do you accomplish? Why would you spend Sunday morning away from the family?

- You support a worthwhile event in the area.
- You enhance the reputation of Amateur Radio in the community.
- You sharpen your operator skills
- You have a very good time.

Eric, N1QKO (n1qko@arrl.net), is the MTARA's Emergency Coordinator and he is looking for volunteers to assist at these events. Hope we see you there.

73/Tom N1MUV

This month:

*The Hampden County Radio Assn
Presents*

SHOW & TELL

on Friday

March 4th, 2005

Doors open at 7 p.m.

Meeting begins at 7:30

Feeding Hills Congregational Church

Hope to see you there!

In case of inclement weather,
check: www.hcra.org

or the 146.94 repeater.

*Meeting cancellation information will be
given out by 6:00 PM.*

Remember When?

By Gent Lam, WA1CQF

- Your tube rig also heated your cellar/attic shack.
- Waiting all year for the new Allied Radio catalog.
- Wishing you could afford the things in the new Allied Radio catalog.
- The novice roundup was an operating event---not a movie called "City Slickers".
- Radio Shack wasn't the only place in town to buy a PL259.
- Your neighbor coming over to tell you that you were interfering with channel 3.
- Your father telling you that you were interfering with channel 3.
- The horizontal output tube of your home television was also the final in your rig.
- Heathkit knobs weighed almost a pound each.
- Buying 572B's for \$13.95 at Soundco in Springfield.
- Using the finger stop on a rotary dial telephone as a receiving antenna.
- Anything west of the Mississippi was "DX".
- Single Side Band was something you read about.
- Dreaming of owning a transmitter and receiver made by the same manufacturer.
- South Dakota and Montana didn't seem to have any hams.
- Collins was something other than a mixed drink.

HCRA

P.O. Box 562

Agawam, Massachusetts

01001

PLEASE HAND CANCEL

Hampden County Radio Assoc.

SHOW AND TELL

**Here's your chance to tell
about your favorite
project and win a nice
prize**

**Friday,
Mar 4,
2005**

Doors open at
7:PM for
Tech Corner

