

Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

March 2011

March meeting features Show and Tell projects

Now is the time to put the finishing touches on your latest creation—it can be almost anything related to ham radio. Our annual Show and Tell meeting begins at 7:30 Friday, February 4, 2011 at 7:30 PM at the Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 North Westfield Street (Rte 187), Feeding Hills, MA 01030.



Mary, NIT0Y displays her Rockmite transceiver at last year's Show and Tell.

Last year had many entries--antennas, transceivers, spud launchers, SDR receivers, dummy loads, and more. There are two classes, beginner & expert, and the first place winner in each goes home with a beautiful certificate and maybe more. We're working right now to come up with other prizes that will be announced at the meeting. Bring your project and see how you do. While there is probably no time to build that 5-band transceiver you've been planning, you may have some project that you have sitting around--even if it is not completely finished--that you could show (off). There isn't anything ham radio you are working on that wouldn't make a good S&T project. It will be fun and isn't that what it's all about?



Various projects from 2010 Show and Tell, CW from upper left: K1V0I, W1SQ; KC1V, W1MSW; KB1NWH; N1AW

“Somebody Oughta do something about that!”

Are you an idea person? Great! We are always on the lookout for new ideas—club activities, operating events, meeting programs, field trips, articles for Zero Beat, and so on. However, important as the idea may seem, it's not much without any follow-up, planning, and action. So the next time you come up with a bright idea that “somebody oughta” do, try to think about how you yourself could help accomplish it!

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

WB1Z Operation in ARRL DX CW Contest: A Learning Experience!

On February 18th-20th, Jim - KK1W, Frandy - N1FJ and I, Matt - W1MSW, participated in the ARRL DX CW contest under the call WB1Z in the multi-operator/single station (multi-single) category at Jim's QTH in Brimfield, MA. After approximately 50 emails back and forth, all of the food, drink, sleeping and operating plans and decisions had been settled. Finally, the Friday to operate was here.

Jim setup his Icom Pro II with a SB-220 amp and microKEYER II, setup and tested N1MM for the contest and pushed the mic boom well out of the way as it would only be a nuisance in this contest. Starting time was 7pm EST so Frandy and I attended the MTARA meeting on the way to Jim's house to hear Gary – AA1UE's talk and Jim stayed back so our station would be on the air right at the starting time. We arrived in Brimfield around 10:30pm and the operator rotation began.

Over the weekend we rotated shifts on the radio, doing our best to pick out signals. Our antenna situation was not strong on 80m using a trapped dipole, much better on 40m using an R7 Vertical, and excellent on 20m – 10m using Jim's 3 Element SteppIR at 45ft. The amp helped us break through the pileups and we know this because on Sunday the amp decided to stop working and busting the pileups definitely took a bit longer. The last multi/single contest we participated in was mostly a search and pounce effort (answering stations calling CQ), but in this contest we added quite a few more runs (calling CQ) and did well holding a frequency on 20m – 10m when we had the amp. It's quite a challenge to copy stations sending their call sign at over 30 wpm, but amazing how much better you are at copying by the end of the contest!

With each contest we participate in we learn a lot about what we should do to improve our performance the next time. This contest was no different and there was a long post-mortem list of ways to improve our operating, schedules, equipment, etc. Some of them will get changed, some we will intend to change and won't, and others that seem to take the fun out of it we'll just ignore. In the end, our score compared to other multi-single (and even some single op) entries

that were posted on the YCCC reflector was pretty low, but we were happy with our results, had a blast and enjoyed the great camaraderie that comes with hanging out with friends and getting to play radio for an entire weekend. That's truly what it's all about. For those of you interested, here is our claimed score summary:

Band	QSOs	Multipliers
80	133	60
40	374	86
20	544	93
15	174	79
10	54	36
Total	1279	354

Total Score 1,357,236

Total Time On 37:19 out of 48:00 hours

I hope some of you CW operators out there were also able to participate in the contest and remember that the SSB version of the contest is coming up the first full weekend in March. It's a great opportunity to add lots of new countries to your log and while it doesn't hurt, you don't need an amp and expensive antenna to work lots of stations.

73,

Matt – W1MSW

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.



From the Shack...

Show & Tell is almost here – will you?

Let's see, have you even started your project yet? If you're like me probably not! After all, you've got what, five days or so from when this Zero Beat was published. Anyone that can't conceive, construct and bring it to the meeting this Friday in that amount of time has a 'way' to complicated project! Right?

Seriously, time is getting short and we would love to see your creation at this year's Show & Tell. So get it together (in more ways than one) and bring it in this Friday. It's fun and maybe, just maybe, your project will excite someone to try their hand at building. See you there!

Have you joined the HCRA facebook page yet?

We're close to breaking sixty members as I write this evening. Have you joined up yet? The more club members on our facebook page the easier it will be for everyone to keep tabs on HCRA (and other area clubs) meetings, events and gatherings.

You can find our group at: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=13909010799>. No need to join facebook to view it but if you want to post what's exciting you about ham radio in the Pioneer Valley you'll need to become a facebook member. Will we have 75 members by April? Only you can make that happen!

MTARA Hamfest – March 5th!

I'm positive Show & Tell will get you excited about building things so the timing couldn't be better. While your ideas are still fresh in your mind head over to the MTARA Hamfest the following day, Saturday March 5th. There you will find all kinds of stuff for sale (cheap) for your next masterpiece. HCRA will have a table there too so stop by and say, "hello". Have an item or two you would like to donate for sale at the hamfest? Drop it off at the table and get a nice 'thank you' for your contribution. We will also be taking applications, selling tickets to the Honda generator raffle and overall just having a grand old time. See you there!

D-Star is the star of our April meeting.

(Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio)

February's meeting was focused on the past when K1ANX showed us some outstanding examples of radio equipment used in the WW II era and beyond. April's

meeting starts from the other side of the time line – an educational presentation of the latest method of amateur communication on VHF/UHF called D-Star.

Our guest speaker 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 setting up local repeater setup for using this new mode. 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.

'73 and see you at the March meeting – now put down ZB and get to work on your project!

Jim, KK1W



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>

Upcoming Hamfests & Flea Markets

3/05/2011

MTARA 23rd Annual Hamfest

Location: Feeding Hills, MA

Sponsor: Mount Tom Amateur Repeater Association

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

03/19/2011

Eastern Connecticut ARA Ham Flea Market

Location: Dayville, CT

Sponsor: Eastern Connecticut ARA

Website: <http://www.qsl.net/k1muj/>

03/20/2011

Southington ARA Flea Market

Location: Southington, CT

Sponsor: Southington Amateur Radio Association

Website: <http://www.chetbacon.com/sara.htm>

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.nalrc.org>

Item for Sale: The Vibroplex® Iambic is the modern descendent of the Original. It incorporates the traditional Vibroplex® look for use with modern electronic keyers. The code speed with the Iambic depends on the particular electronic keyer with which it is operated. And, you get the same crisp operation at 5 words per minute as you do at 50+ wpm. Weight 5 lbs.

In excellent condition: \$199 from Vibroplex, price \$150 or best offer. WB1DBY@arrl.net.



Rumor has it that there's a Venture Crew associated with HCRA...here's proof! Here are some of Venture Crew 510 operating at K1TTT's super station in Peru, MA for WPX contest in 2010.

Bought a raffle ticket yet?



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

FranklinCounty VEC exams notice

The Franklin County Amateur Radio Club VE (Volunteer Examiner) team will hold an Amateur Radio License exam session on Monday February 28, 2011.

The session begins at 7:00 p.m., downstairs at the Unitarian Church on Main Street in Northfield MA (Routes 10 & 63). The contact person is Al Woodhull, N1AW, phone 413-773-3522, e-mail n1aw@arrl.net.

For more information, including the schedule of future FCARC VE Sessions, please see the Amateur Radio License Exams page on the FCARC website, <http://www.fcarc.org/venews.htm>.

FYBO is not the same as BYO!

When N1FJ mentioned getting together for FYBO I expected to head to Town & Country to pick up a little something for the party. Well I was right about the party (sort of) but totally wrong about the FYBO part. It seems FYBO should be put in front of the words *Field Day* as in *FYBO Field Day* – a completely different meaning.

FYBO stands for Freeze Your Butt Off and is held in February. Most of the rules are the same as the traditional Field Day we're all used to (you know, the one held when it is WARM out) with a few twists. First off, it's QRP only. Second you get multipliers for how cold it is at the operating location. Additional multipliers for a field location and using alternative power are also available.

Frandy knows if he mentions this stuff to me I'm very likely to say, "hey – that sounds like fun, lets do it!" Once the hook is set there's nothing left than to figure out the how and where and away we go. We decided early on, since this is QRP only, we would run the rig with solar charged SLABs (Sealed Lead Acid Battery) and use N1FJ's K3. Hey, if we're gonna FYBO we want the best rig going right? Since we wouldn't be hauling any of the stuff to the top of a mountain on our backs battery weight wasn't much of an issue. The decision was made to use HCRA's R7 vertical – it goes together quickly and doesn't require any ground radials. About the only thing left was to pick a location – hmmm.....

Coming to our rescue was AA1YW. Dave has a beautiful vacation home in southern Vermont and he graciously invited us to use it for FYBO 2011. We would head up there after the February HCRA meeting, set up in the morning and be on the air in time for the contest to start at 9:00 EST. And so we did, kind of! Originally the plan was for N1FJ, W1MSW, W1MJB, AA1YW and I. Unfortunately Marty had to cancel because of illness so the remaining four headed to Stop & Shop after the meeting to get some final calories and drive our two heavily loaded vehicles north. I say heavily loaded because, if you've ever seen N1FJ take along a 'few' things you'll know what I mean! We got to Dave's house just before midnight, unpacked all the gear, fired up the pellet stove and enjoyed a few hours

conversation before hitting the sack.

You know, going to bed at 3:00 AM doesn't usually mean an early start and Saturday morning was no exception. That being said we did manage to get the R7 strapped to a 4 x 4 support pole and had the K3 up and running just before 10 AM. The temperature started out at 20 degrees – we were in the next to maximum multiplier range (x5) – how cool is that (pun intended)? We ended up working fifteen to twenty minute shifts and managed ten contacts before calling it quits in the afternoon. Matt, Frandy and I took turns operating from the field location – my most memorable contact was with a fellow that was signing N0P/PM from Colorado. I had no idea what the /PM stood for but it turns out he was *pedestrian mobile!* Not bad for a 5W station from VT, eh?

This weekend was also the Vermont QSO party so we went for that too. Dave has a 40' tower with a tri-bander so we ran the cables into the house (much warmer in there) and Matt and Dave worked the QSO party in between stints of FYBO in the field.



Of course there's always a dark cloud on Field Day and FYBO Field Day was no exception. The day dawned sunny and cold, but became cloudy, a bit warmer and the snow started around 1:00 PM. By the time we broke down everything, packed up and headed south light snow turned into a pretty good ice storm. The roads were passable but not great making the trip home more exciting.

We were planning on stopping for supper but arriving in Northampton all the side streets were like skating rinks. We made the decision to scratch supper and head for our respective homes.

All in all we couldn't have had a better Saturday. Playing ham radio from dawn to dusk, setting up radios and antennas, working two different events – what else could anyone ask? We ended up with ten FYBO contacts which combined with our multipliers may actually count for something. We also logged 97 stations in the VT QSO party. Not bad for a short Saturday in Vermont, if you ask me. Everyone made it home safe, sound, not very well rested but satisfied we had a nice adventure to start our 2011 ham radio activities. Is it too early to start planning for FYBO 2012?

More about FYBO at: <http://www.azscqrptions.com/fybo2009rules.html>.

'73 and have fun, everyone!
Jim/KK1W



23rd Annual



Amateur Radio & Electronics Hamfest

Saturday March 5, 2011

Located at:

SPRINGFIELD TURNVEREIN CLUB
176 Garden Street, Feeding Hills, MA

SNACK BAR
RAFFLE PRIZES
TAILGATING
AMATEUR EXAMS

DOOR PRIZES
120 VAC AVAILABLE
HANDICAPPED PARKING
HELP LOADING/UNLOADING



From North or South: Take Rte 91 to Rte 57 West. Follow Rte 57 West to the Garden Street Exit. At the end of the ramp, turn left over 57 and look for signs immediately on right

From East or West: Take Rte 90 (Mass Pike) to Exit 4 Rte 91. Take Rte 91 South to Rte 57 Exit. Take Rte 57 West to the Garden Street Exit. At the end of the ramp, turn left over 57 and look for signs immediately on right.

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Mail- in Registration Form

Name _____
Callsign _____
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-N1TOY, 24 Shoreline Dr., Ware, MA 01082

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*** The Details ***

Doors Open:

7:00 AM Vendors only
9:00 AM General Admission

Admission:

Adults: \$5.00
Children: under age 12 are *FREE!*
Tailgating: \$10.00 per parking space
Tables: \$15.00 each

VE Exam Information-10 AM

Space is limited, so pre-registration is strongly recommended. To register, contact Richard, KD1XP at (413) 665-2211 or kd1xp@kd1xp.org Bring **two** forms of positive ID, and originals and photocopies of any CSCE's you hold and, if licensed, the original of your current license and a photocopy. *Walk-ins will be accepted, but only as seating permits!!*

Additional Information:

<http://www.mtara.org>

TALK-IN on the 146.94 (127.3 PL)
Mount Tom Repeater

For Table Registrations & Tailgating contact:

Mary Elkins – N1TOY
24 Shoreline Drive
Ware, MA 01082
Tel.: (413) 222-1990
n1toy@arrl.net

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

