

Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

March 2013

Show & Tell Meeting Friday March 1st @ 7pm

Only a few days left to put the finishing touches on your show & tell project for our next meeting. We're looking for members to bring projects to show their fellow members what you've been up to and encourage others to build projects of their own. No need to let us know what you're bringing it, just show up and label it with your call sign on the paper provided. When we call on you, provide a quick description of the project, a little bit about the build process and how well

it worked out for you. If you have a project that didn't go so well, bring that too! As a little incentive for folks to bring projects, we're giving away prizes for the top three audience favorites. 1st place will get first choice of the prizes, 2nd place will get second choice, and third place will get the remaining prize. This year's prizes are as follows:

- Raspberry Pi <http://www.raspberrypi.org/faqs>
- Arduino Uno R3 <http://arduino.cc/en/Main/arduinoBoardUno>
- 2 tickets for the HCRA KX3 Raffle

We hope you come out and join us for this annual event. It's always great to see what other members are up to and to show folks what you've been working on at your bench. Meeting starts at 7pm at the Holyoke Medical Center Auxiliary Conference Center. Refreshments will be provided with donations appreciated.

Upcoming Contest:

ARRL DX Phone March 2 – 3

If you haven't had your fair share of ham radio after the HCRA Show & Tell meeting and the MTARA Hamfest, make sure to check out the ARRL International DX Phone contest. This contest is one of the "Big Four" and is a great opportunity to get your feet wet in contesting, hone your skills, or add a few new entities to your log. In this contest, stations outside the US are looking for US stations to work so you ARE the "DX". US stations give signal report and state, non-US stations give signal report and power level. Conditions for the CW version two weeks earlier were excellent and because all the bands were open, there was plenty of space to find a spot to call CQ. So fire up your radio, put some time in the chair and enjoy working the world. For more information see <http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>.



A few examples from a previous Show and Tell

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FROM THE SHACK

Next Meeting March 1st

Our annual Show & Tell night!

It is March Madness again at HCRA with our annual Show & Tell event. I've heard a lot of members are putting the finishing touches on their projects and expect we will see a grand assortment of ham radio, or not so ham radio, contraptions that will strike fear in your hearts when they reach for the on/off switch!

All kidding aside Show & Tell brings out the best of our member's creative juices. The spectrum of projects is wide and has touched most areas of amateur radio and beyond over the years. Matt/W1MSW and Frandy/N1FJ have conjured up neat prizes for tonight along with refreshments and maybe a few other things too? Only way to find out is to be there!

There's still time for YOU to wrap up your project and get it to this Friday's meeting. But finish reading this month's Zero Beat first, OK?

KX3 Raffle drawing

Time is running short!

The drawing will be held March 2nd at the [MTARA Hamfest](#). Tickets are almost gone, if you haven't purchased yours yet there's only two opportunities left; tonight's HCRA meeting or at the hamfest the following day. Be sure to visit the HCRA table, say hello, join or renew your membership AND get a ticket – how cool is that? The drawing will be held at the hamfest around noon. Who knows, you could go home with a brand spanking new [KX3](#) worth \$1000 and get on the air that afternoon!

Foxhunting Coming Soon?

Are you ready for some warm weather fun?

February's Foxhunting/Build-a-Beam meeting was very successful. Fifteen folks went home with a three element beam and we have a dozen people on a potential fox hunting list. There was a lot of interest in the presentation, including building an Arduino controlled Doppler system. (I wonder if one will show up at Show & Tell) The question remains, "where do we go from here?"

First: We will have the sign-up sheet at tonight's meeting. If you either missed February's meeting or were too busy to sign up here's another opportunity to put your name on the list.

Second: I'm hoping a few people will 'raise their hands' to spearhead the first few foxhunts. A perfect combination would be an experienced hunter and a novice. They could get their heads together, plan an opening hunt or hunts and really get the ball rolling. Once started, and with the enthusiasm shown at the last meeting I'll bet it will roll merrily along gaining momentum every month. Please, see if *YOU* can find an hour or two in a month to help get this started.



Third: HCRA resources such as our Facebook page, Zero Beat, the website and the HCRA mailing list are open and available for use in promoting and coordinating foxhunting. There may be other ways we can help as well, but first we need some folks to step forward, put a little 'sweat equity' into the project and create fun for our entire community.

Let's talk after tonight's meeting and see what we can come up with, OK?

HCRA Zero Beat Archives

W200NY – what was that?

Don't know, check out the [March 1988](#) issue of Zero Beat in the archives. You never know what you'll come across in our long and varied history. We're still looking to 'fill the gaps' in our Zero Beat collection so I'll repeat last month's request.

Special request. Please take a look at the archive list. If you have, or know of someone who has other issues please get in contact Jeff so they can be added to the archive. We can accept them as a .pdf or can scan and return to you. We know there are folks out there with additional issues, here's a chance to get them preserved and easily accessible for everyone's enjoyment.

Spots from the cluster:

Paypal – Jeff is working toward a PayPal interface on our website. Our expectations are soon members wishing to join, renew or donate from the convenience of their couch will be able to click 'send'. The question rose at the February meeting (thanks Norm), "will we still be able to send a check" and the answer is "yes". Nothing is changing except we are adding an additional method of payment; we're not taking anything away with the change.

Meeting Refreshments – It is apparent our members enjoy having coffee and sweets at the meetings. The rub is nobody seems to feel it should be '*their job*' to procure

them! What's up with that? Counting family members our club membership is over one hundred people! As I've mentioned in the past do you really think all club duties should fall on the nine board members? I don't believe it should, that's why I'm tossing out this request once again.

We are looking for one or two folks to pick up coffee & donuts for the meeting. Do you feel you, maybe with a friend, could spend fifteen to thirty minutes and benefits all the folks attending the meeting? If so please see me at the end of the meeting. I'll fill you in on how easy it is to put smiles on the faces of forty or so people.

[New England QSO Party](#)

May 4th and 5th, 2013

Mark your calendars now for a fun weekend of ham radio, New England style. During this weekend YOU become the DX with stations from all over the US looking to work you for fun, glory and the chance to win a lobster dinner.

HCRA sponsors a beautiful plaque for this contest. How do you win it? Easy, it's given to the highest single operator score submitted from Hampden County. Sometimes it doesn't take many QSO's to win, it all depends on who is QRV in Hampden County for the contest. The contest starts at 4:00 PM Saturday afternoon and after taking a break between 1AM and 9AM Sunday morning goes on to end at 8PM Sunday evening. Usually both our club calls (WINY and WB1Z) are active in the contest. If you would like to operate under either one get your request in now!

'73 and don't forget to pick up your winning KX3 ticket at the meeting,

Jim/KK1W

Need Help With Problems In Your Shack?

Do you have plans to put up a new dipole in the spring, but not sure how you're going to get it up in that tree? Having problems with your radio and not sure what's wrong? Are you frustrated with that new logging software you installed? Please let us know so we can get you back on the air. Some of these problems end up being quick fixes and if you've ever been out to Field Day, there's no doubt we know how to put antennas in trees. Please contact me with any ham related technical problems you're having and I'll get you in touch with someone who can help. Don't let being stumped keep you off the air and from having fun!

Matt – W1MSW

w1msw@arrl.net

413-336-4701

MTARA Hamfest Saturday, March 2nd

Visit us at the HCRA club table!

The hamfest/fleamarket season is just getting underway. What better way to break out of the winter blues than to spend a few hours with your local friends, wander aisles of tables full of ham radio bargains, eat food you probably shouldn't and overall have a good time than to go to one? I for one can't think of anything better, that's for sure. Lucky for us there's one right around the corner!

The generous folks at MTARA have again made tables available for local clubs and HCRA will be there in full force. Please stop and say hello while you're browsing the aisles for that 'special bargain'. Want to join or renew your membership, you can do that. How about chatting with club members, yep, you can do that too. Buy a raffle ticket or three for a KX3 – most certainly. Pick up a bargain item donated from our members – yes sir. We'll even have a few projects from the previous nights Show & Tell on display, maybe they will inspire your creative juices and give you ideas of what 'stuff' you can pick up to build something yourself?

KX3 Raffle. The winning ticket for an Elecraft KX3 will be drawn around noontime at the hamfest. Tickets are selling fast (there's only 250 being sold) so stop by the table early to get yours. Think about how you will feel taking home a \$1000 radio for the price of a winning ticket!

Do you have something you would like to donate to HCRA to sell at our table? If you do please either bring them to Friday's HCRA meeting or contact [Jim/KK1W](#) for pickup. *We're not accepting items for sale, just donations.* If you have items to sell yourself contact MTARA (see link below) and see if they have any table space left. And please, no computer monitors, printers or anything else you would have to pay for disposal ☺

The MTARA Hamfest will be held at the Turnverein Club in Feeding Hills, MA. Doors open to the public at 8:30 AM. For more details and directions please click [here](#).

See you at the hamfest!

Jim/KK1W

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/>

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

We are
also on Facebook Groups:
*Hampden County Radio
Association and SOTAJerks.*
Join us!

Flea markets coming up

**2 Mar Feeding Hills MA MTARA @TurnverneinClub
Mary KB1ME 413 222 1990 (HCRA's KX3 drawing!)**

7 April Southington CT SARA @HS \$5@8 \$20/T@6:15
Norm W3IZ [860 584 1403](tel:8605841403)

7 April Framingham MA FARA@KeefeTech
\$5@9\$25/T@7:30 SteveKB1NIV [508 872 9336](tel:5088729336)

20 April Gales Ferry CT RASON Auction@ FireHS
Gary WT1SND [860 884 4218 A](tel:8608844218)

HCRA contact list

President, Jim Mullen KK1W (413) 237-4666
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Membership, Rich Wheeler N1KXR (413) 584-3372
n1kxr@arrl.net

Technical, Matt Wilhelm W1MSW (413) 336-4701
w1msw@arrl.net

Skywarn Liaison, Eric Tuller N1QKO (413) 967-3869
et-n1qko@juno.com

Fox Hunting Memories

From Larry, WB1DBY: Back in 1979, when I was a sophomore in high school and had just gotten my general ticket, I had been reading about direction finding a/k/a fox hunting. I was reading everything I could get my hands on, including magazines and books. Requests for information were done by phone, mail or in person as there was no internet.

I bought a new Tempo S1, synthesized HT. It was the first smaller HT that didn't require crystals. By today's standards it was not much. But to this ham, it was a perfect way to get on VHF and on the 94 repeater.



After making friends and finding out more, I heard plans for the next Fox Hunt. I

found a ham that was willing to take this anxious, young ham along while hunting. Peter, N1AGV offered me a ride.

I think we started at the WMECO parking lot in West Springfield on Brush Hill. What I do remember of the hunt is driving down a dirt road, the sun roof open and the antenna sticking out (a ZL Special that we'd run both vertical and then switch to horizontal, an H-shaped antenna made from twin lead) stopping and taking headings. I remember driving down East Mountain Road, stopping along the side when the signal was super strong. Peter asked me to look thru the bushes to see if they were on the other side. What I saw was a field of sheep or alpaca. But no hidden foxes. We mentioned our stop in between the fox's transmissions to some hysterical laughs from all those listening, especially the foxes.

After some more driving and hunting, we found the fox. They were at Dick, WB1DMF's house off Papermill Road in Westfield. One hunt and I was hooked! I couldn't wait for the next one.



After some excited chatter on the local repeaters in the following days, I hooked up with Bert, N1AUR for a mid-week foxhunt at night. I was to ride co-pilot. Bert had a 79 Dodge Aspen with T-Tops, which were removed. His rig was a new Heathkit HW-2036 with a analog S-meter which was perfect for fox hunting.

We were also using a ZL Special as the antenna and would stick the antenna up thru the T-top when we needed to. Thankfully that car had excellent heat as it was a cold night.

We tracked the fox to Route 141 in Holyoke near the Log Cabin and Harvest Valley restaurants as well as the entrance to Mt. Tom. Bert and I found a car along the side of the road with its windows all fogged up. The signal was super strong and we thought the fox was inside. So we tapped on the windows until someone inside responded. Needless to say, it wasn't the fox and we disturbed a romantic couple. They were especially perturbed when we insisted on peering inside to see if the fox was in there. Because, notoriously the fox lies, so we had to be sure. And just found a half dressed couple looking for their privacy back.

We finally found the fox. But even more so it was the start of a new friendship as Bert and I made for a good fox hunting pair as we started winning. Somehow we fitted a few hunts per week for a few years into our schedules.

Being a hunter was definitely much more fun than being the fox. But being the fox had its moments too. On one occasion, we drove down and parked in the woods where

Pynchon Park is now. We were along the river, transmitting into a beam aimed across the river towards Longhill street/ Forest Park. We, the fox, would transmit one minute out of every five. At first listening to the base stations give their headings and then the starting hunters give their headings we figured that



we'd be found within 20 minutes.

But that wasn't the story. After an hour of so, the hunters kept racing across the south end bridge to Agawam and Springfield. The hunters were getting aggravated as the signal was SO strong in Springfield but yet SO strong also in Agawam. We foxes were laughing pretty hard as the hunters crossed the bridge yet again.

Because we had not been found by a majority of the hunters, we extended the hunt to 3 hours. We swapped the beam for a vertical and gave out more clues. Finally everyone came in and the general consensus was that everyone had gone across the bridge five to 10 times. It was a very memorable hunt for all and a lot of fun too.

More next month. 73

Larry, WB1DBY

BAOFENG UV5RA REVIEW

From Doug/KB1ZGL: I want to share with you a review of the BAOFENG UV5RA dual band transceiver. If you are new to amateur radio, as I am, you are probably looking for an inexpensive transceiver to start with. I searched the Internet to find something my wallet could stand and that would give me the options that I wanted. I found a happy medium with this unit.



Let's start with the specifications:

- Freq Range: VHF 136-174Mhz / UHF 400-480Mhz (Be careful, stay in the ham band!)
- Dual Band Display – (Great for monitoring different bands)
- A/B Band independent operation
- 1watt / 4watt selectable power output (Similar to more expensive units)
- 128 Channel capacity (Enough room for your favorite frequencies)
- VFO Direct entry programming / PC Programmable
- Selectable Wide / Narrow Band (2.5/5/6.25/10/12.5/25KHz Channel Steps)
- 1750Hz Burst Tone
- Time out timer (So you don't get cutoff by the repeater you are talking through)
- Audio Deviation (5KHz Wide Band / 2.5KHz Narrow Band)
- VOX Operation (Voice activated transmitting)
- Emergency alarm button (Can sound a tone locally or over selected frequency)
- Busy Channel Lockout (Prevents double keying with another party)
- Multicolor display (You can one color for transmit, one for receive and one for standby)
- FM Radio (65MHZ – 108 MHZ Receive only) (Play music while you take that hike in the woods. It will revert to the selected frequency when there is activity.)
- Low battery alert
- Built in flashlight (on / flashing / off)
- Comes with Wide band – SMA antenna)

As you can see a lot of features for a unit that costs \$40 - \$60 bucks!

Let's look at the operation now:

As you can see here it's not a bad looking unit! It comes with a standard 1800 mAh battery. A 3600 MaH battery is available. There are many different replacement antennas available on the Internet as well, and in different frequency ranges. Direct entry programming is available through the front keypad. The menu key lets you access all of the functions of the unit including DTS and CTCSS settings as well as narrow or wide band and channel spacing. The A/B tuners are independently programmable for most of these functions. If you want to program the unit easily then you can plug it into a PC, and with a simple cable and software, available on the Internet, you can program in all the frequencies you want! The cable and software are sometimes included for free. If they are not you can purchase them for \$10 - \$15 dollars.

So, in conclusion, if you want economy, features and portability you can not beat the BAOFENG UV5RA transceiver. Check it out! IF you have any questions you can direct them to:

KB1ZGL@ghostspine.com

Have a great day and happy transmitting!

73, Doug

(Q) WHO NEEDS BADGES?

(A) WE DO !

From Dan Vierno, KB1VWQ: The one thing I notice at our meetings, and I speak from my own experience, it's hard to interact with other hams at our meetings, just because I might not know who they are. I've talked to many of you on the air but I may have never met you in person. It is often hard for someone to start a conversation with a stranger--but wait! Add a Name ID Badge with your callsign--you might just say, "Wait, I know that call--I had a QSO with them just the other day..." And that might be all that is needed for an introduction and to start a new conversation and friendship.

I will be taking orders for our standard 2" x 3" badge, with blue faced, yellow font letters at future HCRA meetings.

Get a name badge, and get to know your clubmates!

73,

Dan, KB1VWQ



25th Annual



Amateur Radio & Electronics Hamfest

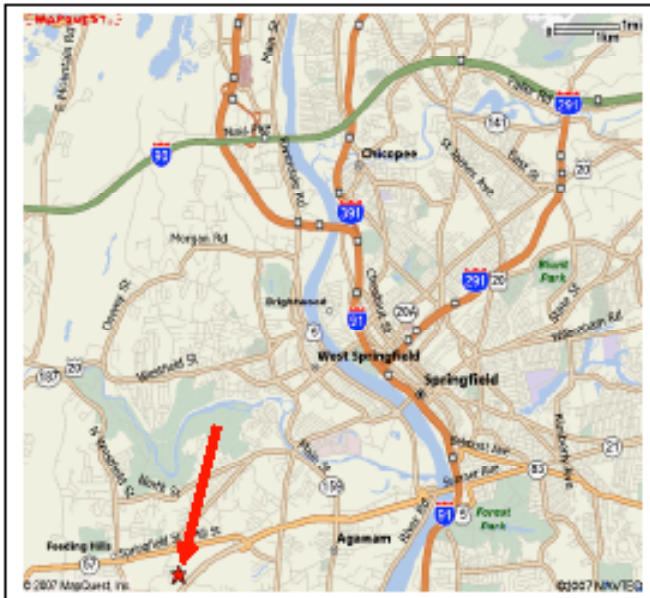
Saturday March 2, 2013

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.

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-KB1ME, 24 Shoreline Dr., Ware, MA 01082

*** The Details ***

Doors Open:

6:30 AM Vendors only
8:30 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-10:30 AM

Space is limited, so pre-registration is strongly recommended. To register, contact Richard, AB1RS, at ab1rs@hotmail.com. 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:

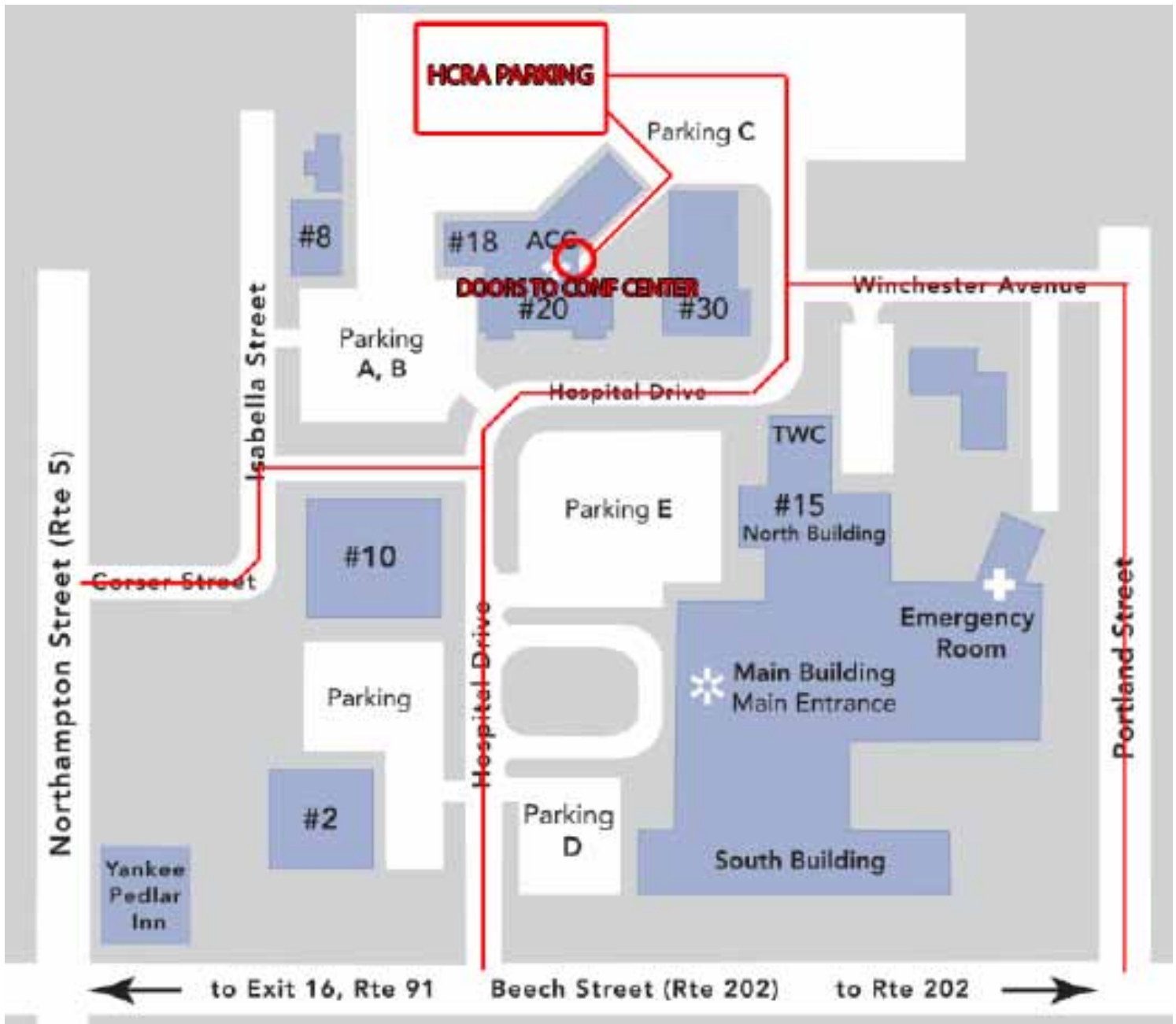
<http://www.mtara.org>

TALK-IN on the 146.94 (127.3 PL)

Mount Tom Repeater

For Table Registrations & Tailgating contact:

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



Meeting Location

Our meetings are being held at the Auxiliary Conference Center at the Holyoke Medical Center. Many of you have been here before, it's where the Western Mass VE Team has given examinations for close to a decade. We have all the details of the hall and how to get there on our website. <http://www.hcra.org/meeting-location/>

Our new location is newly renovated with state of the art heating and cooling, comfortable chairs, a complete A/V setup including screen, projector, sound system and wi-fi. Handicap access, convenient rest room, vending machines and 24/7 security round out the list. Join us!