

Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

March 2014

HCRA's March 7th meeting

is **Show and Tell**—when members bring in projects they



have completed or have made progress on over the past year—and give a short 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 and everywhere in between.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to share and we look forward to seeing what you've been up to! Presentations should be no longer than five minutes and



we will give the audience some time to ask questions. If you have any questions or comments about the meeting, please don't hesitate to contact me.



No Tech Corner at March meeting—Bob/K1YO will be discussing some of the basics of Yagi antennas at the April 4th meeting. Come find out what makes a beam beam!

Along with these presentations,

we will be discussing regular club business and future events, taking membership renewals for 2013/2014, and taking deposits for the WRTC equipment that the club is selling at a discount to members. Meeting starts at 7:30 PM at the Holyoke Medical Center Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech Street, Holyoke. Please see www.hcra.org/meeting-location for more information.



73,

Matt W1MSW
w1msw@arrl.net

HF QSO A Day Challenge

Daniel E. Vierno/KB1VWQ: Since



January, some members of HCRA have been engaged in a QSO A DAY Challenge. Late last year I decided to test myself to see if I could make an HF contact every day of the year. Then, at the last minute, I asked (on New Year's Eve) if others would

like to join me. One HF QSO per day for one point each, on any mode and band within your license. So, a perfect score would be 365. I am thinking of designing a certificate for the stations involved with the challenge. Since it's a participation certificate, anyone can join, at any time. Progress is posted once a week on the HCRA Facebook group page. Even though we are in our third month of the challenge, I still encourage folks to sign up and see what they can do for the remaining portion of the challenge. Remember it's NOT a contest, rather it's a "challenge to yourself to commit to get on the air, at least once a day, meet someone new—either across the state, some rare DX, or a ragchew. Get involved! Contact Dan / KB1VWQ@arrl.net or WD1S / james@saccento.com if you'd like to join the 2014 QADAY Challenge.

Help Wanted: HCRA Board Members

No experience necessary. Talk to any current Board Member! Great potential for advancement.

Remember, without **YOU**, the club **CANNOT** exist

—KB1NWH Carroll "Ed" LaCombe

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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Treasurer, Dave Cain AA1YW (413) 569-6901

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Secretary, (*vacant*)

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Skywarn Liaison, Eric Tuller N1QKO (413) 967-3869

et-n1qko@juno.com

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

w1fab@arrl.net

FROM THE SHACK

Show & Tell promises fun for everyone!

See *what your fellow hams have been cooking up in their workshop*

A perennial favorite, HCRA's annual Show & Tell meeting offers our members an opportunity to *show off their building skills, tell us what it does and how/why they did it*. Show & Tell is one of the best meetings we have all year. It is exciting to see the creativity and skills of our members on display. From past projects built as a teenager to present day creations based on Arduino or 3D printers, Show & Tell has a little bit of everything.



One of ham radio's strongest tenets is, "Hey, why spend \$\$\$ when I can build it myself?" It's not all about saving money either. From the satisfaction of designing and building your own gear to inventing something that hasn't been done or does it better is what this facet of amateur radio is all about!

You'll go home with a new appreciation for your fellow members' abilities and maybe even an idea or two that will surface at Show & Tell 2015.

We're back in our usual meeting spot this month and Bruce will be supplying our coffee & donut fix! See you there!

Note: Due to setting up for Show and Tell at Friday's meeting, KIYO's Tech Corner will be on hiatus until April. Rumor has it April's edition could possibly be about beam antennas.

Volunteers Needed

Your participation will make a difference...

June is fast approaching and HCRA needs a few interested and capable individuals to join our Board of Directors team. There are many positions becoming open, perhaps you're the perfect fit for one of them? It's not hard, we're an easy board to get along with and our goals have always been to do the best for our members and our hobby while having fun at the same time.

What does it require on your part? Can you spare perhaps an hour or two a week of your time? Are you active in amateur radio and do you want to use your knowledge to improve our club and our member's experiences with ham radio? Wouldn't you like the satisfaction of actually making a difference and giving something back to the club you've enjoyed over the years?

If you answered yes to any of these questions we should talk. The health of not only HCRA but amateur radio in general is at stake here. Now is not the time to say, "Ah, let

someone else do it?" What if there isn't *someone else*?

It isn't hard and is immensely rewarding – have we convinced you yet? Interested? Talk with Ed or me at the next meeting.

WRTC equipment sale now going on!

See *something you want? Act fast, because it is going even faster*

As you can see by the latest WRTC Purchase Agreement elsewhere in this issue and the lack of inventory on it we are almost sold out. If there's anything left you would like to purchase filling out the agreement and bringing it to this month's meeting would be a good idea.

Don't miss out, talk to Dave/AA1YW or myself at the next meeting. All purchases require a 20% deposit including delivery to your door around the end of July.

Your support of our WRTC purchase endeavor has been outstanding. It was a little scary committing to purchase four stations but your actions have validated the decision. Your club will get to keep some valuable Field Day equipment and everyone purchasing equipment is receiving a nice bargain. That's what being a member of HCRA is all about, doing things that benefit our members and having fun at the same time!

[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!

I know, this is the same pitch as last month, but get used to it! We really need your help to pull off one of the biggest amateur radio events in New England – now and for years to come! The eyes of the amateur radio community around the world are focused on New England, let's show them how us Yanks do things!

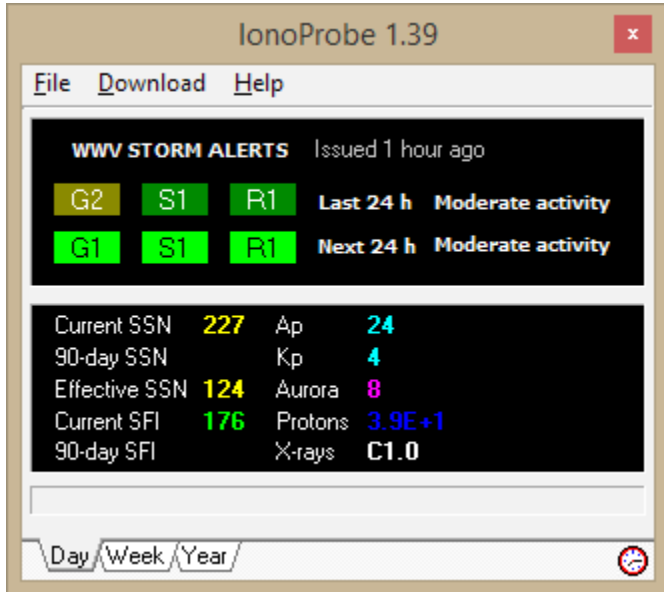
The weekend following the contest will feature the ARRL National Convention. With events starting on July 17th and running through July 20th the convention will be extra special, featuring great programs, manufacturers, and guests from around the world. This year it will be just down the road in Hartford,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

(From the Shack continued from previous page)

Fantastic solar conditions continue to get even better!

Yep, that sunspot really is 227!

Take a look at conditions on February 27! How cool is THAT?



Ten and twelve meters (28 MHz and 24 MHz) have been open to Europe at 7:00 AM EST and are remaining open well into the nighttime hours. There's a new DXpedition going QRV on Mellish Reef in a few weeks. What a wonderful time to be active on the HF bands. Whether you're a DX'er chasing new entities (countries), a contestor relishing all that 'open' space on 10 meters or a rag chewer looking to talk around the world now is your time. Don't fall into the trap of "I'll get on the air tomorrow, or this coming weekend". Do it now, while you have the chance!

Chasing states in the [ARRL Centennial QSO Party](#)? Each week two different states are on most every band. The present solar conditions actually make it easy. Click the link above to see what it's all about. Not an ARRL member? That's OK (but you really should think about joining) you can still participate but you won't count for points in the other person's log. Being a member of [Logbook of the World](#) (LOTW) is nice too. It's free and a great way to get your QSOs/QSLs into the other person's log.

Whatever you choose, chose an activity and you won't be disappointed J

73...

Jim/KK1W

FCARC March Meeting: Antique Radios

Several *Franklin County Amateur Radio Club* members enjoy collecting and restoring old radios. We are planning a show-and-tell program on antique radios for the March 17 meeting, 7:15 at Greenfield High School. Please contact Al N1AW, email n1aw@arrl.net if you would like to participate.

Albert S. Woodhull/ N1AW
Leyden, Massachusetts
[413-773-3522](tel:413-773-3522) (h)
[413-348-1932](tel:413-348-1932) (c)
Vice-President, FCARC

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?

And while I am at it, I will not be running for a Board position and will no longer be doing *Zero Beat* after the June issue. I have really enjoyed doing the newsletter and taking part in planning the club's activities. I will continue to be involved in HCRA as a volunteer.

As far as *Zero Beat* goes, it's been fun creating it, but it's time for a new person to take it over. I think *ZB* is important, even if it only serves as a reminder about the meeting. BUT there is no reason it has to be as formal (or fancy) as I have made it. I hope someone will enjoy doing it as much as I have.



73,

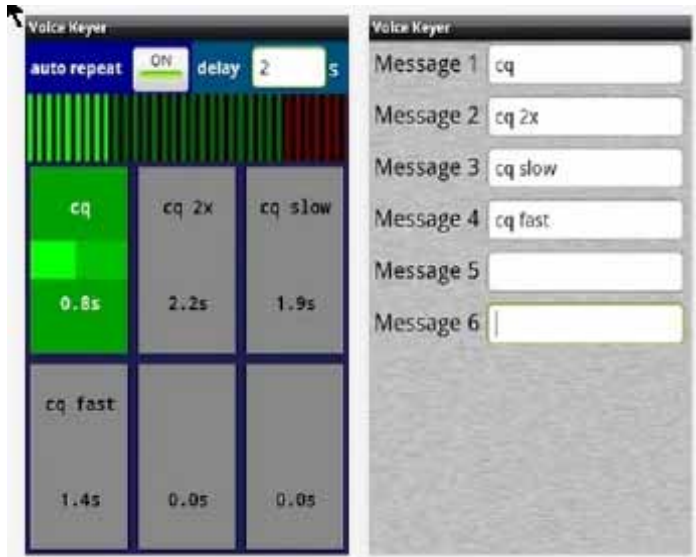
Frandy-N1FJ

Ham Apps – March 2014

(Larry, W1AST)

Ham Radio Voice Keyer: If you contest occasionally, everyone knows your voice doesn't last long. Drinking liquids frequently or sucking on candy helps temporarily, but not for long. You really need a voice keyer!

Pretty much every radio going back 10+ years has a built in cw memory keyer. But voice keyers are more rare. Some of the high end rigs have them built in or available as options internally or you can add a external box that does voice memory keying. Or you can use this app.



The creator is wolphi.com who also makes other ham apps such as one that decodes Morse code, trains you in cw, does SSTV, PSK, RTTY and others. All are well written and the author responds to questions and comments directly.

As you can see from the pics included, it's very easy to set up and operate. There's a setting so the phone or tablet does not close the screen after a predetermined time. The app costs \$1.49 and is a simple, easy, and inexpensive solution to saving your voice during a ssb contest. Learn more here: <http://www.wolphi.com/ham-radio-apps/voice-keyer/>

MBU Cluster: Here's another spot lister for your phone or tablet. The author is Marian Anghel; YO2MBU hence where the app's name comes from. It's a simple list that refreshes every 60 seconds. Displayed is the callsign, frequency, date and time, spotter call and any comments.



Click on a call sign and their QRZ.com info page comes up. Hit the back button and you're back to the listing. On the bottom of the screen is a list of band, all and VHF,

HF buttons. Select a band and the info is displayed very quickly. This app is free.

W100AW: If you've ever tried working a dx station in a pileup, you know it can be a formidable task. But have you ever wondered what it's like being on the receiving end of those pileups?



You probably know that the ARRL and W1AW are literally "just down the street" or about 30 miles south of Springfield. At any time, you can contact Joe, NJ1Q and schedule a visit to operate W1AW. It's a fun thing to do too.

This year, the Centennial year of the ARRL has W1AW operating with the special call sign W100AW instead of W1AW, from Newington. And of course, everyone wants to get W100AW in their log. The special call sign is in use all year until December 31st, 2014.



W1AW is broken into three studios with at least 2 (or more) radios per studio, plus another VHF and digital operating station outside the studios and of course the ARRL bulletin/Code Practice radios. You can pretty much pick what rig you want to operate excluding the code practice radios. Should it be the Yaesu Ftdx9000 or maybe the Icom IC-7700 or maybe the Yaesu FTdx5000 or maybe something easier like the Kenwood TS-590s or something else, you have your choice of radio?

So far this year, I have operated W100AW twice. The first time, back in early January, I was caught totally off guard. Joe put me on 17m and it was instant pileup. Suddenly I was the one in demand and it was an insane pileup. Even operating by call areas was difficult and I'm not usually a 59 goodbye type of person. I made it more interesting by asking for name, QTH and wx since it was so cold when I was there. Even holding a mini QSO with those parameters, in a little less than 3 hours I worked nearly 300 stations. Of course if I had just done the 59 QRZ, it probably would have been more than double that *if* my voice held out.

The second time was just a few days ago and my friend and new ham Chris; KC1BDL came with me. Thankfully 20m was slow and I got Chris on the air for his first time. Finally in early afternoon after the snowstorm blew by, 20m opened wide and that pileup started. It was all great fun. I do plan on returning again.

If you too would like to operate, contact Joe; NJ1Q at NJ1Q@arrl.org to schedule your time.

Have fun with ham radio and 73 from Larry, W1AST

Mount Tom's Hamfest was great!



Here's a typical scene from Saturday's MTARA Hamfest. The flea market was crowded and fun, with everything from a few hundred plastic knobs to a WWII vintage mint antenna tuner to a 1KW linear. Kudos to Mary Elkins, KB1ME and the many volunteers who made it a success.



I don't know if anyone bought any knobs, but they made a nice abstract art display!



You were greeted by Diane, KB1KST, and Norm, W1BMK. Looks like they loved taking your entry fee!



Bob Dickerman, WA1QKT, and Al, N1AW came down from the frozen north. He wants **how much** for **that**?



Steve, N1SR, was there, adding to the incredible number of times he has been a VE.



Jeff, NT1K, manning the HCRA table. Here he is counting lottery ticket cash.



Bob, K1YO, HCRA Technical Director, was there. He knows a lot.



Ray Lajoie, KB1LRL, still has his day job, but has started selling wire, cable, and radio accessories. He is president of the Montachusett Amateur Radio Association (Fitchburg area).



Here's vendor and HCRA member Larry, KD1RV. Did you sell anything?



George, KC1V, and Laurie, KB1WQK, at the HCRA table.



Owner of [Hamsource](http://Hamsource.com), a "teenie weenie business", John Kalotai, N1OLO, was there. He sells hams "affordable DC power products" and will return to HCRA in the fall.

HCRA/WRTC Equipment Purchase Agreement

(inventory as of 3/1//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

Available	Item	Model	Retail	HCRA	Qty	20% Deposit	Balance Due
1	25G, 8' rocket top w/4' mast and rotor bracket	Rohn, 25G	\$ 309	\$ 150			
3	Rotator w/125' cable	Yaesu, G-450A	\$ 404	\$ 225			
4	36" x 36" Folding Table	?	\$ 70	\$ 25			
6	Folding Chairs	?	\$ 15	\$ 10			
2	Lamp	?	\$ 10	\$ 5			
1	Fan	?	\$ 15	\$ 5			
				Totals:			

SELLER

HCRA Inc.

By _____

Name, Title

Date

BUYER

_____ (printed)

By (signature)

Name, Title

Date