



ZERO BEAT

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



MAY 2008

Next Meeting:

Friday, May 2nd, 2008:

DX Labs Software Suite at 7:30pm

The Presidents Message from Jim KB1JVF

I was thinking that if I was the President of a third world country, having 7 of 9 Board members either have left or are leaving the Board of Directors., would be a vote of no confidence in the administration of the country. I've said on many occasions that it's your club, you make it what it is. You can direct it. We are faced with a weird dichotomy that we have more members and less attendance at the meetings. Right at the moment, it's like pulling a 20 foot sleeping python. I say sleeping in that we have a great potential for movement, and an equal potential to bite ya. We had a great Auction, the Holiday Party was by all acclaimed a success. Even the Show & Tell was a "Up" year.

Now we have a Titanic job. The Vice President is leaving. The Secretary is leaving. The head of Programming is calling it quits. We already are **At -Largeless** ! We weathered Greg's leaving and George KC1V has said he will carry on the job of Treasurer. Ed KB1NWH has started being the Membership Director. Larry WB1DBY has done a great job with Zero Beat and has said he will continue.

I guess the first thing I have to ask is that the present Directors reconsider their choices. If not then I would add that the Vice president's job, and the At-large member are "what you make of it" jobs. Nothing in the charter says it's the Vice Pres. Job to buy the raffle prizes. The Secretary is an important part of the Board, it takes work to do the job right. It takes board members to work together to iron out problems. Programming is very important, and can not be done by just anyone. Finding speakers, and activities for the meetings requires that the person have some contacts in the Ham community or at least a lot of friends with suggestions they can follow up on.

I am the Chairman of Field Day 2008. Last year was so much easier than this year, I asked who's coming to Field Day and I was told. This year I asked and got about 7 replies. Remember it's your Club, your Field Day. With the BOD problem I'm not going to have time this year to call 108 members to see if and what they'd like to do for Field Day. I need your help. We have a "information & communication" revolution. So there's no reason you can't let me know where you're heads at as far as Field Day. We need CW ops. We need captains for HF and GOTA. Now I'll see if any body reads this. Jim Mullen KK1W used to complain he thought he wrote but no one read this column.

Here it is now the future of your club is your's as it always was.

Jim Harrington KB1JVF President Hampden County Radio Association 2008.

The May meeting will be on MAY 2nd! Jose Castillio N1BAA, a ham that has recently moved into the valley, will be speaking on **DXLab Software Suite** . A program that even I was looking at! Seems to do everything you want as far as logging, will control rigs that are compatible, Watch your awards, has digital included. Now if they could connect it to a coffee maker and it could fry eggs it would be perfect! Oh, another thing that made it interesting it's FREE, FREE! **Come on down.** We'll have the door open and the same friendly hams waiting for you. Tell you what I'll pay for the Coffee, and you pay for the Donuts.. See you there.

HCRA Board Meeting

President- Jim Harrington KB1JVF

Jim has revised the membership application. Among the changes will be a note to "Print Legibly" Illegible entries cause many members to not receive their issue of ZeroBeat.

Vice President- Dave Cain, AA1YW

The board is looking for suggestions for economical raffle prizes. The original intent of the monthly raffles was to contribute to the hall rent. Recently the cost of prizes has been such that there is little left towards hall rental. Please send any suggestions to Larry WB1DBY.

Treasurer- George Collins, KC1V

Balance as of April 4	\$4414
Spent	\$654
Received \$186	

Secretary- Dave KB1MU

Membership report

Courtesy	7
Family	27
Life	2
Prospect	7
Regular	107
Venture	2

Total 152

Dave also informed the board of the new IRS requirement for the club to file form 990-N (Also known as the e-postcard.) This form must be filed by all 501c organizations with annual gross receipts of less than \$25,000, and filed within five months after the organizations end of fiscal year. Since the HCRA currently does not have an "end of fiscal year" the board voted to make Aug 31 the "end of fiscal year". This means the first form 990-N filing for HCRA will be after Sept 1 2008.

At Large-

Vacant Position. (You can apply at www.hcra.org)

Program-Johnny Lenville KI1A

May speaker DXLab Software Suite Presented by Jose Castillo, [N1BAA](#)

September speaker will be Christopher E Burns of West Haven CT with a presentation on his EMCOMM's trailer.

Technical- John Stark, N1JIO

Not present

Membership- Ed LaCombe KB1NWH

Ed was able to obtain four new members, and one renewal. Ed is also working to setup the "Get On The Air" classes.

ZB Editor- Larry Krainson, WB1DBY

As always, Larry is looking for content for ZeroBeat. Remember, the more interesting info you give to Larry, the more informative the ZeroBeat issues will be.

Old Business

Plans for the Catfish Derby special event Station are moving forward. The station will be located in Holyoke near the Conn. River at derby headquarters. The event will last for three days, July 18th, 19th and 20th. The club will be looking for operators during the event.

The Vintage Radio and Communications Museum will be having a special event station in Sept of this year. The HCRA will be providing assistance for this event.

Plans are proceeding for Field Day. If you wish to participate this year, let Jim KB1JVF know how you wish to help. Help is needed in all areas.

New Business

Coming on May 3 and 4 is the 2008 New England QSO Party. As in past years the HCRA will sponsor an award for the contest participant in Hampden County with highest score in the contest. Again this year the HCRA is assisting with the Titanic Historical Society Special Event Station. The club will provide antennas, tower, and other miscellaneous equipment. Some club member will also assist as operators.

Unfortunately four members of the Board of Directors will not seek re-election this year. This presents an excellent opportunity for an HCRA member to get involved with the direction of this club. Remember, it is your club. You can sit back and watch it collapse, or step forward and help it move forward. If you want to help, just let any member of the board know.

HCRA 10m Net

Join NCS, Tom Doyle (n1muv),
each Monday night at 7:30 PM (local) on

28.375 MHz

Get the latest local word, join good friends,
take part in good conversation each week!!!
Anyone can join in, don't be shy!!!

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, South Hadley, MA.

For a list of IRLP nodes and other IRLP information, go to:
<http://www.irlp.net/>

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 Johnny, Ki1A at
Ki1A@comcast.net or (413) 543-9367

Zero Beat Contributions: Anything of interest is welcome.
Please submit your ideas, articles and more to
wb1dby@comcast.net. Thank you,
Larry, WB1DBY, Zero Beat Editor

Questions, Comments, and Suggestions
Can Be Directed To:

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Open
Your Name & Call Here

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SOME INFO ON JOSE-N1BAA OUR MAY GUEST SPEAKER

José A. Castillo - N1BAA
(ex N4BAA, KG4SB, YI9BAA VP5BAX)

Born in Spain, grew up in Florida. Licensed in 1977 at age 13. Obtained Extra Class License in 1978. Four of five family members licensed. VERY contest and DX oriented.

Confirmed DXCC after one year (ALL CW <smiling) His father, WD4MDW, mandated 1000 STRAIGHT KEY CW "Rag Chew" QSOs prior to being allowed on a microphone,....and before the NEW VIBROPLEX Keyer could be used! Thus, his love for high speed CW. Currently proficient at 50 words per minute. Has always operated all modes between 2M and 160M!

Joined the US Navy in 1984 and retired in 2007 after 23 years of service which included five trips to Iraq. (11,000 QSOs made as YI9BAA ALL on low bands!

While in the Navy, was Captain of the Navy's Clay Target Shooting Team. Won 6 individual world champion titles, 15 team world championships and currently holds 4 world records.

Currently employed with KOLLMORGEN in Northampton as a program manager.

Some noted ham radio accomplishments:

- DXCC as a novice.
- Past President of Virginia DX and Contesting Club.
- Past President of Virginia DX Century Club.
- Current President of the Western Mass Contest Club - KS1Y.
- Obtained 15 separate CQ WAZ awards including 160M and 5BWAZ from two different QTHs.
- DXCC on 9 Bands (10 more needed for 6M).
- DXCC on CW, SSB, RTTY, PSK, and SSTV.

From 2006 and 2007 worked and confirmed 90 countries on 6M! (Bottom of the sunspot cycle no less). This included what is believed to be the first ever 6M QSO between Virginia and Japan on Sporadic Es!

Currently lives in Amherst, MA and has a world class two tower contest station.

Even as an operating "Purist" truly believes in embracing technology to better the operating enjoyment experience. "You can NOT run from technology!"

With regards to DXLAB suite - Has been a dedicated user since 2003 and has assisted in its maturing process. Travels around the country introducing amateur radio enthusiasts about better Contesting AND better DXing through Software....

NEW ENGLAND AREA HAM RADIO & ELECTRONIC FLEA MARKETS

2008	Contact	Source
2-3 May Deerfield NH NearFest @FG		Mike K1TWF 978 250 1235 W
3-4 May Wakefield MA Photographica @AmericalCtr ~photo~		John 781 592 2553 W
10 May Rensselaer NY EGARA @FireCo \$5@8 \$5/sp@6		Thomas KC2FCP 518 272 1494 W
18 May Cambridge MA FLEA at MIT		Nick 617 253 3776
24 May Vernon CT NARC @Tolland AgCtr \$5@8	TG Free	Wayne N1GUS 860 487 1921 F+
25 May Sorel-Tracy PQ @CurlingClb \$5@9 \$15/T@6		Luc VE2DWE 450 743 8676 R+
30-31 May Rochester NY RARA		Harold K2HC 585 424 7184 W
1 June Bethpage NY LIMARC @Briarcliff \$6@9	\$10/Sp	Richie K2KNB 516 694 4937 F+
7 June Hermon ME PSARC @HS @8		Roger KA1TKS 207 848 3846 W
7 June Goshen CT SBARC @FG Rt 63 \$3@8 \$10/T@6	\$5TG	Lee K1LEE 860 435 0051 W+
8 June Queens NY HOSARC @9		Stephen WB2KDG 718 898 5599 W+
14 June Windsor CT VR+C Mus 115 Pierson LN @6AM Tailgate		John 860 673 0518



Public Service

Public Service events are a good way for HAMS to practice our operating skills and use our radios under unusual conditions

Mark you calender for July 4th and the East Longmeadow "4th of July parade".

Other events that have NOT been confirmed for 2008:

May: Hadley Road race sponsored by KD1XP
August: Jumbo Tanzania road race in Longmeadow
September: MDA walk in Springfield
October: Monroe Trail race sponsored by KD1XP

I should be receiving the date and location for this years SKYWARN training class in the next couple of weeks.

If you're interested in helping with an event,
contact me on the 146.94 repeater
or e-mail at N1QKO@ARRL.net

IT'S ANTENNA TIME

BY DAN ROMANCHIK, KB6NU

Here in Michigan, the daffodils are blooming and the birds are singing. That means only one thing--it's antenna time! Since my lot is a city lot and not really suited to towers, I mostly play around with wire antennas. Currently, I have a random wire for 80m, a wire ground plane for 20m, and a 40m/30m "fan dipole" that also loads up on 15m and 10m. This year, I want to experiment with two new wire antennas--a horizontal loop and Windom antenna.

The "Loop Skywire"

The concepts behind the full-wave loop antenna have been known for many years, but the antenna has become more popular after the publication of the article, "The Loop Skywire" in the November 1985 issue of QST. This article is available as a PDF from the ARRL website, if you are a member (<http://www.arrl.org/members-only/tis/info/pdf/8511020.pdf>). A lot more information is available on Internet. Just Google "loop skywire," and you'll find hundreds of references.

Basically, the antenna is a full-wave loop of wire for the lowest band that you wish to operate. For 80m, that would be about 272 feet. For 40m, the length will be 136 feet.

Ideally, you'd like to set up the loop so that the area inside the loop is at its maximum. This occurs when the loop is a circle. Unfortunately, that's usually impractical. From a practical point of view, most guys shoot for a square configuration using four supports.

Another consideration is how to feed the antenna. The Loop Skywire article calls for a coax feedline, but the practice these days seems to favor ladder line. The reason for this is that the SWR on bands higher in frequency than the band for which the antenna was cut can be quite high. Coax is quite lossy when the SWR is high, but that's not the case with ladder line.

How does it perform? Well, it's been my experience that guys with loop antennas often have the strongest signals here at KB6NU. And they seem to

get through even when band conditions are poor. Guys who use them also report that they are great DX antennas as well. So, all things considered, it sounds like it's worth a shot.

The Windom Antenna

The Windom antenna is an antenna that I've just become familiar with. It's intriguing because, like the loop antenna, it is also a multi-band antenna. The Windom is a half-wavelength antenna, but instead of feeding the antenna in the middle as you would a dipole antenna, you feed it about 1/3 of the way from one of the ends. At this point, the feedpoint impedance is about 200 ohms. With a 4:1 balun, you can feed it with 50-ohm coax.

The interesting thing about this antenna is that the feedpoint impedance is 200 ohms not only on the fundamental frequency, but it's close to 200 ohms on all harmonics of that frequency. So an antenna cut for 40m, will also have a feedpoint impedance close to 200 ohms on 20m, 15m, and 10m.

You do need a 4:1 balun for this antenna to operate properly. Fortunately, these are not difficult to make. I made one a couple of years ago, just for fun (<http://kb6nu.com/even-more-fun-with-baluns/>). Now, I have an application for it!

There's all kinds of information on the Net about the Windom antenna as well. One of the Web pages I found most useful was written by W8JI (http://www.w8ji.com/windom_off_center_fed.htm).

I certainly have my hands full this antenna season. Whatever you decide to put up, remember to be safe.

When Dan isn't thinking about antennas, he's operating CW on the HF bands or teaching ham radio classes. He's just published a printed version of his No-Nonsense Tech Class Study Guide. See his blog, www.kb6nu.com, for more details

Meeting Location:

Meetings are held at the Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 North Westfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA 01030.

The church is located across from a Pride gas station.

Parking is in back of the church.
Access is HP accessible.

Talk-in is available on the 146.94 repeater.

Next Meeting:

Friday Night

May 2nd, 2008

7:30pm



The Hampden County Radio Association
P.O Box 562
Agawam, MA 01001



PLEASE HAND CANCEL