

# Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

May 2011



## N.E. MARS Director to Speak

**B**ob Veth, K1RJV, Navy Marine Corp MARS director for New England will speak at our May meeting on the Navy-Marine Corps Military Affiliated Radio System, its history and current role as an emergency communication provider for Department of Defense/Department of Homeland Security disaster assistance operations. At the completion of his talk, Bob will field questions pertaining to all facets of the Navy Marine Corps MARS organization and offer advice to potential candidates seeking membership in Navy-Marine Corps MARS.

**Motto: "Proud, Professional, and Ready"**

**Formation: November, 1948**

**Purpose/focus: Emergency and auxiliary communications support for the United States Armed Forces**

**Region: Worldwide**

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## SOTA Jerks, Annual Tailgate Party, and 2010/2011 Elections —all at June 3 meeting

The June 3 HCRA meeting will be chock full of don't miss programs. First, we'll have our annual tailgate party, hopefully in the parking lot behind the Feeding Hills Congregational Church. This is a great time to try to get rid of some of the stuff that's been cluttering up your ham shack, and at the same time, accumulate more. Then the fabulous local group you're getting sick of hearing about—the SOTA Jerks will make a brief presentation on all the fun they're having while avoiding serious work—getting out on a mountain top, experimenting with rigs and antennas, and making QSOs. They hope that you'll join them in an activation this Spring and Summer! Next, we'll elect our new Board of Directors and present a (metaphorical) gold watch to Larry WB1DBY for his years of service to the club.



## 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>



# Local happenings

(All times are local time)

## Sundays:

0845: Western Mass Emergency Net 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R

## 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)  
Common Ground Restaurant  
25 Park Avenue  
West Springfield, MA 01089

<http://thecupinc.com/home.html> for more details and directions. Expect between 6 and 12 every Friday. Good food, great company!



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

## Club Meetings & VE Sessions

1st Friday of the month 1930 HCRA Club Meeting Feeding Hills Congregational Church 21 N. Westfield St., Feeding Hills (no meetings held in July or August)

3rd Friday of the month 1930 MTARA Club meeting Red Cross building 506 Cottage St, SPFLD, MA (no meetings held in July or August)

4th Friday of the month 1800 License Exams Holyoke Hospital Auditorium Beech Street, Holyoke, MA. Hosted by the Western Mass VE Team (WMVET)

4th Sunday of the month 1900 NOBARC club meeting Pittsfield MA (146.91 for talk-in)

# Upcoming Hamfests & Flea Markets

4/29/2011 and 4/30/2011

0900 Friday through 1500 Saturday

## NEAR-Fest IX

Deerfield Fairgrounds - Deerfield NH, USA

5/20-22/2011

## Dayton Hamvention® 2011

Location: Dayton, OH

Sponsor: Dayton Amateur Radio Association

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

5/28/2011

## The Hartford Hamfest

Location: Vernon, CT

Sponsor: Natchaug Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://www.na1rc.org>

3rd Sunday, through October

## Flea at MIT

Location: Cambridge, MA

Sponsor: MIT Radio Society

Website: <http://www.mitflea.com/index.html>

**Buy a raffle ticket for the Honda generator yet? The drawing is June 3! [w1msw@arri.net](mailto:w1msw@arri.net)**

## HCRA Contact List

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ARES Coordinator, Robert Macedo KD1CY (508) 354-3142, (508) 994-1875 - After 6 PM, (508)997-4503 - After 6 PM, (800)445-2588 Ext:72929  
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Skywarn Liaison, Eric Tuller N1QKO (413) 967-3869  
[et-n1qko@juno.com](mailto:et-n1qko@juno.com)

# From the Shack

## Field Day - 2011

We're less than two months away from the start of FD 2011. Planning has been underway since December but the 'serious' planning will start in the early part of May. We have the park reserved and equipment ready to go, next to be determined is who the players will be AND what bands the sun god may make available for us this year. As we move deeper into Cycle 24 activity on 10 and 15 meters becomes a very real possibility. How exciting is that?

The best place to keep abreast of Field Day preparations is on our web site at <http://www.hcra.org/fd2011.htm>, our facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=13909010799> and of course the HCRA mailing list. The web site will have the latest list of bands, band captains, erection crew, cooks, and everything else that goes into making Field Day at HCRA a fantastic event. Facebook and the mailing list will be the place to interact about the preparations and read about the latest happenings.

Our Field Day team made a short presentation at the April MTARA meeting. The focus was all about Field Day and we closed the presentation with an open invitation to everyone to join us for fun in the sun this coming June. AI/KB1XG & Sue/WA1SJK volunteered to captain a 6 meter station and Jeff/N1BMX raised his hand to pilot the digital station this year. A few more attendees showed interest and we're hoping for a LOT more participation this year.

Field Day is the type of event that serves to pull everyone together and get them working toward a common goal. Our Field Day is reasonably well organized and we can provide a training ground for everyone, regardless of club affiliation or amateur radio experience, to hone their skills as communicators in times of emergency. Please take a moment to review the preparations, pick an activity or two you would like to try come out to Dufresne Park and have fun!

## Interclub cooperation

It is really great to see a huge increase in sharing of information and cooperation between the local amateur radio clubs. Over the last few months there have been information exchanges and presentations between HCRA, MTARA, SOTA Jerks and FCARA. We're also regularly in touch with the BEARS and NoBARC.

Everyone comes away a winner when we're all working together to make ham radio fun for all. A few of the things

we're working on together this year is MTARA's participation in our Field Day and a joint picnic for both clubs in September (thanks to MTARA for making that offer).



Most importantly what can YOU do to make ham radio more fun and exciting this year? What kind of ideas for operation, activities and contests would you like to see. How can we amplify those ideas with the resources of many clubs instead of just one? Through cooperation the possibilities are endless.

## Proposed slate for the upcoming election

We're still beating the bushes for folks to join our leadership team. The pay is quite low but with the economy the way it is these days it's actually competitive! The rewards are high and it's fun too! Here's where we stand as of April 26<sup>th</sup> for the 2011/2012 slate:



President – Jim/KK1W  
Vice President – John/KX1X  
Treasurer – Dave/AA1YW  
Secretary – Marty/W1MJJB  
Zero Beat Editor – Frandy/N1FJ  
Membership Director – Matt/W1MSW  
Technical Director – Ed/KB1NWH  
At Large – Rich/N1KXR  
Program Director – Jim/NN1Y

Larry/WB1DBY is stepping down from a board position after many years but will still be involved in HCRA activities and of course making suggestions. We appreciate his efforts and his presence will be missed. Over the years Larry has been the Zero Beat Editor, Program Director and most recently held the At Large position. Thanks, Larry, for all you've done for HCRA!

If you would like to be part of the action don't let the fact all positions are filled keep you from raising your hand. You won't be upsetting anyone by volunteering so don't let that stop you. We're always looking to bring some new folks on board—it's what helps our club and our hobby grow.

73 and see you at the May meeting,

*Jim, KK1W*

**BEARS:** <http://www.w1brs.com/>  
**FCARA:** <http://www.fcara.org/>  
**MTARA:** <http://www.mtara.org/>  
**NOBARC:** <http://www.nobarc.org/>  
**SOTA Jerks:** <http://www.w1msw.com/sotajerks/>

# SOTA Jerks Conquer Pocumtuck

*[Editor's Note: This article appeared in FCARC's May 2011 Communicator. Reprinted with permission.]*

On Monday, April 18, the SOTA Jerks (SOTA: Summit-On-The-Air, which is a program that promotes making contacts from the tops of mountains), Frandy Johnson N1FJ, Matt Wilhelm W1MSW, Al Woodhull N1AW and Chris Myers KB1NEK, scaled Mt. Pocumtuck in Deerfield (actually, they just walked up a dirt road to Pocumtuck Rock) to operate in comfort using the call sign NE1SJ. They made a number of QSOs running low or QRP power, including at least 6 QSOs with stations in Europe. Photos: the group on top of Pocumtuck, Matt working 20M using a Yaesu FT-857, Chris and Frandy deciphering Buddipole antenna manual (a thick book), Frandy working 20M using an Elecraft K3, Al working 40M using an Elecraft K1, and Chris is doing something important.



# Rookie Roundup Report - SSB

Can you believe it has already been a year since ARRL's first Rookie Roundup? Although there have been a few hiccups along the way, there's no doubt that this contest for newly licensed amateurs has been a big success. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, "rookies" (a/k/a amateurs licensed within the last three years) again got on the air with the help of non-rookies to make as many SSB QSOs as possible during the 6 hour contest. Contacts with non-rookies were worth 1 point, rookie contacts were worth 2 points, and each state was a multiplier. The exchange is a little windy—Call sign of station worked, your call sign, your first name, two-digit number of the year first licensed ("check") and State, Canadian province, Mexican call area, or "DX".

Although the station at my QTH has been developing over the last year, I decided to head to Jim KK1W's shack in Brimfield where I'd had good success in the past. Frandy N1FJ and Jim both provided moral support as they went through a couple of Frandy's infamous unfinished Elecraft kits during the contest to see if any parts were missing after all these years. [*And had a few 807s--Ed.*]



I started out on 15 meters and although there were contacts, the rate was not as high as I would have liked. I moved down to 20 meters, where I would stay for most of the contest, and that seemed to be where the best action was. In fact, at one point during the contest DX to Europe and Africa opened up and it became difficult to hold a frequency.

However, one thing I'd learned

from past roundups was to stay strong and don't make rash decisions. I stuck to 20 meters and it paid off. After 6 hours straight in the chair and 262 contacts, I was left with a score that would result in my 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive 1<sup>st</sup> place award in the W1 region and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the nation (although not officially recognized). Nationally, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place were awarded to two stations operating out of W6YX, the Stanford Amateur Radio Club in California. And with this contest I hang up my rookie hat for SSB with only the RTTY Rookie Roundup in August and CW Rookie Roundup in December remaining for my third year being licensed.

For those of you rookies out there who are contemplating this contest, first of all I say GO FOR IT! Also, here are a few things that might sound obvious to "old-timers", but are worth mentioning.

1. Treat it like a real contest. If you want to place,



you've got to work the radio like it's a contest. Since the Rookie Roundup caters towards rookies, some stations will want to ragchew. If that's what you want, then go for it, but if you want to make points and keep your rate up, make the exchange, say, "thank you" to let the station know you got the info, and QRZ with your callsign and get the next station. If you don't hear anything, start calling CQ again. You don't have to be rude, but if you really treat it like a contest, other stations will hear that in your voice and respect it.

2. If you can hold a frequency, call CQ. The exchange in this contest is long and if you try to search and pounce for points, you'll find yourself waiting around for other stations to finish. Calling CQ lets you control the exchange and move on to the next station.
3. Don't jump around. If you hear a band is open, don't jump around just because you don't make a contact in the first two minutes. It takes stations time to find you and hopefully someone will spot you on one of the networks. Then the fun really begins.
4. Work the lower bands. If they're open, make sure to work 40 and 80 meters to increase your multipliers. I did this for a few minutes at end of the contest and the result was the difference between placing 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place nationally.
5. HAVE FUN. This is about having fun and believe me, it is. If you like getting QSL cards, they will be rolling in over the next couple of days.

I hope rookies out there will try this contest and if anyone has any questions, don't hesitate to contact me. Also, I'm looking forward to hearing everyone during the upcoming New England QSO party, another great event for rookies and non-rookies alike.

Matt Wilhelm

W1MSW@arrl.net

Bob, W1SRB, (photo at right) lives in the white house seen in the picture below, taken from the summit of Pocumtuck Rock in Deerfield. Bob is the editor



of FCARC's *Communicator* and took the photos and wrote the article reprinted from the *Communicator* on page 4.

Jim KK1W stops briefly on the way up to Peaked Mountain to take a phone call. (Actually, he might have been trying to find out where Chuck was. Chuck KB1JFQ did manage to make



it up the mountain. Here he and Jim operate their 817s—Jim on HF and Chuck on VHF. The view to the east and north-east was right up to SOTA standards!



Here's Chuck, KB1JFQ, operating from Quabbin Hill on a SOTA activation on April 3. There were slim pickings on 2 meter FM. W1MSW and N1FJ did a lot better on 15 and 20 meter cw! (see log below)

**SOTA Jerks**  
Official Activation Log

Date:	3-Apr-11
Peak #	W1-CR/CR-013
Call	NE1SJ



#	UTC	Callign	Band	Mode	RS(T) SR	Name	QTH	Notes	SOTA Jerk
1	1408	N4BP	14	CW	5991599		FI	3412	FAJ
2	1412	N4EX			5991939			49	
3	1418	DL6KUA			5991349				
4	20	DL35PN			5991539				
5	21	G4ELZ			5991559				
6	22	HB9BIN			5991839				
7	24	5TXX			5991349		IM		
8	25	5N7HVR			5991559				
9	27	OEGGND			5991559				
10	28	HB9BHW			5991919				
11	31	9A7W			5991559				
12	34	G0PBU			5991339				
13	40	KD4ORO			5991499		(Callin)		Matt
14	43	DS4AV			5991549	MIKE			
15	46	K0NWT			5991599	NWT GA			
16	51	WB8FL			5991599	MAX VA	13622		JA ✓
17	50	G8WTF			5991539				W
18	58	K7JD			5991599	AZ AZ			
19	00	A4NDT			5991539	JM GA			
20	02	W4COP			5991539				
21	04	HA7UG			5991559				
22	04	5HMTF			5991539				
23	41	EA3EGB	21	CW	5991559		5W		FAJ
24		F55QA			5991559		5W		
25		53DISA			5991529		5W		

**SOTA Jerks**  
Official Activation Log

Date:	3-Apr-11
Peak #	W1-CR/CR-013
Call	NE1SJ



#	UTC	Callign	Band	Mode	RS(T) SR	Name	QTH	Notes	SOTA Jerk
1	1545	DF5WA	21	CW	5991449			5W	FAJ
2	46	HB9AEI			5991539				
3	49	TJ8WD			5991439				
4	1600	HA7UG/ESP			5991539				
5	1609	DJ5RE			5991539	TOM	30W		Matt
6	15	LX1NO			5991419		30W	OKSOTA	
7	17	OXICZ			5991549	L	30W		

# 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 June 3, 2011.**

Contact Matt, W1MSW@arri.net or purchase tickets at meeting.

**Buy a raffle ticket yet?  
Drawing is Jun 3!**

## Jake, KB1NSN Wins Scantic Splash in “Shorty kayak under 10 feet made of plastic”

Many HCRA members have helped with ham radio communications at the Scantic Spring Splash—a kayak and canoe race down the Scantic River each Spring. The race goes 2.5 miles for novices and 5 miles for everyone else. It starts just below the Somersville Dam in Somers and finishes at the Red Barn at the new bridge on Route 192. This year was different for me, as my fifteen-year-old son Jacob KB1NSN was competing in the 5 mile race (although this was his first kayak race).

Race day came and we arrived at the barn. I checked in with net control and Jake got bib number 168. Then I took Jake to the starting point. It was early but he had a chance to check everything out, talk to people and just sit around in the cool morning air. His race didn't start until around noon, but since I had to be at my location by 9:30, he had to be at the start early.

I've been stationed at a number of places thru the years, but my favorite is where I've spent the past few years, at the Stokers Rapids. It's here that I link up with the EMT's and firemen and rescue guys establishing a link to the barn and along the route. This year I also was the link between a few of my fellow hams just up river from me and net control at the Red Barn.

The novices had their race and soon there after the 5 milers were starting. For a long time we just had the firemen and the “watchers” and me at the location. But that soon changed when we saw the first canoes arriving. These first canoes were definitely pros and have done this before as they went over the rapids with nary a splash and very little excitement.

But that all changed quickly. I was mentioning to Bob W1SQ how all the canoes were making it over this year when the next one tipped over, spilling its occupants into the 39 degree water! The rescue firemen in their dry suits helped the participants recover their canoe and off they went. From that point, nearly every canoe either filled up with water or tipped over. The water wasn't deep (between knee and mid thigh) but the force of the water was strong and it was cold.

As for communications from my location up on the river bank, nothing major happened. Just a few relays, an inquiry or few but thankfully no emergencies. I had mentioned to

the other hams along the race that my son Jake with bib number 168 was competing and he was in the last category which was short boat under 10 feet made of plastic. But to watch out for him and relay his status to me. Eventually, Mike KY1T said Jake made it thru the portage and was headed my way. He was paddling along with determination as he wanted to win.

I saw him coming and got my camera ready and video taped his run thru Stokers Rapids with my digital camera. He made it thru the main rapid with ease. At the 2nd part his spray skirt popped off and by the 3rd part his boat had filled with water and he went for a swim! He came so close to making it thru the rapids unscathed...

Luckily he had on a wetsuit under his jacket and that helped him a bit. Jake recovered quickly, emptying the water and getting back in and continuing down stream out of my sight towards the finish line. Shortly after Jake went by, the sweep racer (the last boat in the race) went by. Net control dismissed us and we closed up shop and headed to the barn.

Jake was cold, damp and excited. He and I went over and checked the results for his race and he came in first out of 11 racers in his category. He beat 2nd place by less than 90 seconds. He beat third place by almost 20 minutes! We stayed for the results and Jake got a trophy. Now both of us are anticipating next year's race. I have already told Ed

KB1BWH that I want to return to Stokers Rapids for ham communications. Jake will race again. Maybe you want to come and watch or participate in the ham radio end? It is a lot of fun and interesting to watch the paddlers go on by no matter where you are stationed!

You can learn more about the Splash at [www.scanticspringsplash.org](http://www.scanticspringsplash.org) and to see more pictures and my video or Jake going over the Stokers Rapids, come to my Facebook site and watch them.

73,

Larry WB1DBY

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## NEQP - It's a blast!

It's May again and time for the New England QSO Party—one of the most fun operating events around. Hams around the country will be looking for us! Whether you set up a portable operation, drive to as many counties in New England as you can and make QSOs, or operate from your home shack, try to get on the air for at least a little while. May 7&8th. Details at <http://www.neqp.org/>

**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**

