



ZERO BEAT

<http://hcra.org>

May 2018

Special points of interest:

Next Meeting:

*Field Day and Elections
June 1st*

- [Visit the HCRA facebook page.](#)
- Don't forget to check out hcra.org
- [Visit Summits on the Air](#)
- [Visit POTA413 facebook page](#)

May's Meeting

**Join us Friday May 4th at 7:30, in the Holyoke Medical Center
Auxiliary Conference Center .**

**Steve Ford WB1MY
Editor of QST Magazine**

Speaking on:

**“Sun and Solar
Activity”**



YOUR CLUB NEEDS YOUR HELP!

**Help make the club better,
there are open slots on the
Board of Directors.**

**See any Officer or Director
for more information!**

For directions to The Holyoke Medical Center Auxiliary Conference Center:

<http://www.hcra.org/meeting-location/>

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HELP NEEDED!

Field Day is moving closer so I wanted to post our current needs as of today (April 27)

- Need some additional help for setup on June 22 and especially for tear-down on June 24
- Need to borrow three quiet generators (the Hondas are what we used in the past)
- Need to borrow 2 more 4-position antenna switches
- Need assistance in moving the trailer back to its storage location a few miles from the FD site ... this would require a vehicle with substantial towing capability though, as the trailer is pretty heavy. The person bringing it initially is unavailable for the return.
- Still could use some help from anyone familiar with the wireless network that we setup to use with the N1MM logging programs. The person who did this last will be out of state during the FD weekend I will also ask for some clarification from the software author to see if that might help.
- Would like to setup a greeting table for visitors with some handout material from the League but need a few volunteers willing to chat with visitors about FD operations and amateur radio in general

That's it for now looks like we will have 3 stations and possibly a GOTA station also (if there could be a few volunteers to man it as needed)

Bob K1YO



It has been a whole year since I began this journey thinking about running for President to fill the huge shoes of Jeff NT1K. What a journey it has been!

We have done a lot, but we have only begun. The first weekend in May we will have the chance to be the hunted and not the hunter as we all be able to join in the New England QSO party. This is a contest that runs from 4PM Sat til 1 AM Sun and continues from 9AM Sunday til 8 PM Sunday Evening. No sleepless night, just a lot of fun and a chance to get all the states or fill in those States or Providences that you are missing.

Today as I was working W1AW at ARRL, I noticed the award book lying on the desk – NE QSO award that they won in 2017 and 2016. Turned the pages back and all I saw was more of the NE QSO awards. Lets see what our members can do! We have many awards that are available to us. Work the country and have some fun.

Speaking of ARRL, how many of you have taken the time to visit the Headquarters at ARRL?

Ever operated the Station W1AW? If you have you know the excitement of calling CQ de W1AW – and getting a pileup from all over the country and world. If you have not, ask someone who has. Today while I was there, with poor band conditions, I quickly made over 40 contacts on 40 Meters. (Then I had to quit to allow the others a chance to make some contacts.

As soon as we finish with NEQP, we have our elections. The slate is just about complete. We plan on presenting it at the May meeting. If any of you are interested in holding an office, contact any member of the Board. This is your club so don't be shy in taking part in it.

Field Day is rapidly approaching. Chairman, Bob, K1YO, has an article in this Zero Beat with more details. We do need YOUR Help! Equipment, strong arms, and gophers, plus OPERATORS. In the past we have operated as a 5 station club. Right now it looks like it may be only a 3A club. Sign up for what you want to do for the club. Field Day is a chance for the entire club to get together and have a fun day at School Street Park in Agawam.

PARANORMAL RADIO SHOW HOST ART BELL (W6OOB) WHO ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT UFOs AND ALIENS DIES.

Art Bell, the original host of the paranormal-themed radio program Coast to Coast AM died on April 13, 2018. Cause of death has been tentatively listed as complications from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary disease. (COPD)

Art Bell was born on June 17, 1945, in North Carolina. Young Bell was interested in radio hosting since his childhood, and at the age of 13, he became a licensed amateur radio operator.

Bell's first call sign was KN3JOX, first listed in the Winter 1959 edition of the Radio Amateur Callbook. He soon upgraded to K3JOX, and he later held W2CKS, first listed in the Spring 1967 Callbook. Bell held an Amateur Extra Class license, which is the highest U.S. Federal Communications Commission amateur license class. His call sign was W6OBB.

Bell passed the Philippines amateur radio exams and became a Philippine Class A amateur radio operator with the call sign of 4F1AB.^[23] While in the Philippines, Bell was active on 40-10 Meters, as well as 144.600 MHz simplex in Manila.

Bell was the founder and original owner of Pahrump-based radio station KNYE 95.1 FM. His broadcast studio and transmitter were located near his home in Pahrump, where he also hosted *Coast to Coast AM*. However, from June to December 2006, he lived in the Philippines. In March 2009, he returned to the Philippines with his family after he experienced significant difficulties in obtaining a U.S. visa for his wife, Airyn.

Bell became a hot figure among radio listeners when he started the show 'Coast to Coast AM' which mainly discussed topics related to paranormal activities and conspiracy theories. The radio show started in 1988, and was carried locally by WHYN 560 & WTIC 1080. Art Bell was the host of the show until he retired completely in 2007. After Art Bell's retirement, George Noory and George Knapp started hosting the show.

The major USP of 'Coast to Coast AM' was Bell's mysterious voice and the eerie mood of the show. Bell's influence can be seen in various paranormal programs including 'Twin Peaks' and 'The X Files'.

The most remembered episode in Art Bell's professional career happened in 1997 when he received a frantic call from a person who claimed that he is an employee in Area 51, the most secret American Air Force base. Interestingly, the call lasted only for two minutes, and mysteriously, it got knocked off the air.

At the time of his death Art was 72 years old.





New England QSO Party

Massachusetts - single operator - **low power**
Hampden County Award is sponsored by HCRA

The NEQP is a great time to check out antenna systems and offers a moderately paced opportunity to work new states and countries. You'll find a wide variety of participants, from newcomers to experienced contesters, all interested in making contacts with New England stations.

We're working to make sure that all of the New England counties are active again this year and would appreciate your help. Get on for at least an hour or two and join in on the fun. Please let me know if you can put in any time at all so we can work on activity from the rarest counties. **Will you be QRV? Let us know which county you'll be on from with a message to info@neqp.org** Oh yes, the NEQP is also **lots** of fun when mobile. Every time you cross a county line the action starts over again. It's amazing what a 100w radio and mobile whip can do.

The QSO Party is 20 hours long overall, in two sections with a civilized break for sleep Saturday night. It goes from 4pm Saturday until 1am Sunday, then 9am Sunday until 8pm Sunday. Operate on CW, SSB and digital modes on 80-40-20-15-10 meters. For each QSO you'll give your callsign, a signal report and your county/state. Top scorers can earn a plaque and everyone who makes 25 QSOs and sends in a log will get a certificate.

Last year we had logs from 177 New England stations and 460 more from around the country and world.

The full NEQP rules are here -> <http://www.neqp.org/rules.html>

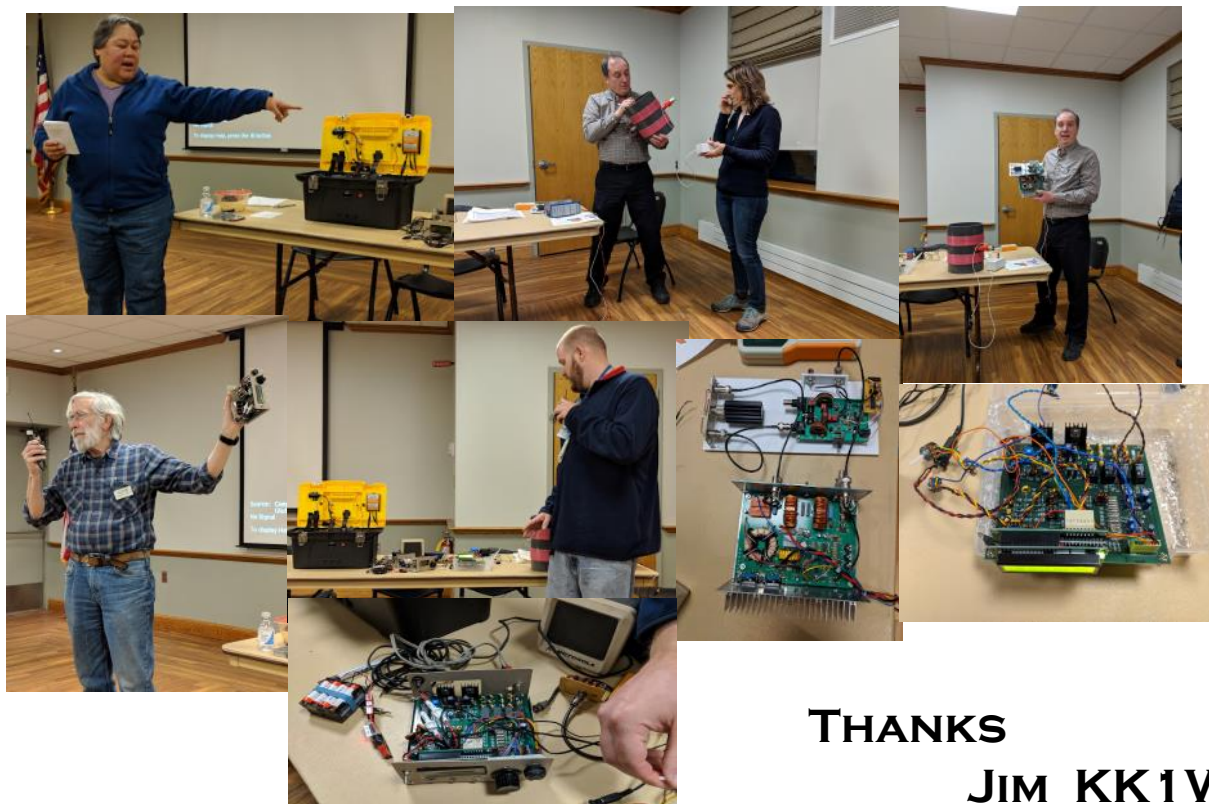
The 2017 results are posted and the results since 2002 are also available -> <http://www.neqp.org/results.html>

It's just about a week until the 2018 NEQP. Please make some QSOs even if you don't want to send in a log.

Thanks!

73 Tom/K1KI

SOME PICTURES FROM "SHOW N' TELL" 2018



THANKS

JIM KK1W

PHONE CONTESTING TIPS FOR DX CONTESTS

ANDY FABER, AE6Y

This article is prompted by the recent WPX SSB contest, in which I worked thousands of guys from Aruba as P49Y, which engendered much reflection (and teeth-gnashing, to be sure) about how U.S. hams can be best understood from the DX end. I'm not addressing this to relatively clear-channel domestic contests but to the situation where you are trying to get through to a DX station that may be hearing a pileup, plus noise, ear-splitting splatter from adjacent stations and all of the other sonic annoyances that make many contesters prefer CW. If there is no pileup and you know the DX station can hear you completely clearly, then you'll get through regardless, but if not, here are some suggestions:

First, be sure you are calling on his exact frequency. In CW contests, it can be helpful to separate yourself from the pack by calling off frequency, but that's not true in SSB. Off-frequency stations sound distorted and are hard to understand. The DX station may well come back to a weaker, but more intelligible station that is on frequency, even if you are louder. In order to work you, he has to figure out which way to adjust the RIT, and then go ahead and do it. A tired operator on the other end may just not bother, until he has worked everyone else.

Second, make sure your audio is clean. It is so much easier to understand clear audio, even if it is weaker than a louder, distorted signal. KH7XS mentioned in his 3830 posting that this year there particularly seemed to be over-processed signals coming from South America, and I noticed the same thing. It used to be that the Italians who were the worst offenders, but they seem to be better now. This weekend, the Cubans were particularly hard to understand. The prize for the easiest audio to understand goes each contest to the hams from the British Isles. The G's, M's and their derivatives invariably have very clean (and usually nicely treble) audio that can be understood even when the signal doesn't budge the S-meter. On several occasions I chose a weak but clear Brit over a loud, but distorted, competitor.

Ok, so you have a clean signal and are calling on frequency, now how do you get the information through, both your callsign and your contact number (for WPX)?

Here are some tips:

If you are loud enough and have an easily recognizable call, you can skip phonetics. So this weekend, when K1AR called, he was easy to pick out, same for K3UA, K3ZO, N6AA, and a few others. But for most guys, and when in doubt, use phonetics. Endless bandwidth has been expended on the subject of phonetics, and people have differing opinions on the topic, but here are my thoughts from being on the DX end:

The first thing to understand is that the standard, "recommended" international alphabet works dismally in marginal conditions. The words are too short, and some don't have unique sounds. Generally speaking, the one-syllable words just get lost, while the two syllable words are better, and the longer ones are even better.

Thus, one-syllable words like "Fox", "Golf" and "Mike" are horrible. Some of the two-syllable ones are OK (e.g., "Hotel" and "Quebec"), but others, such as "Alpha" and "Delta", or "X-ray" and "Echo", "Kilo" and "Tango" sound very similar, so are easily confused. I worked a guy with the suffix XXE, and had to get a number of repeats until he finally said "X-Ray X-ray Ecuador," which did the trick.

There are two basic cures for these problems. The first is only to use these crummy phonetics the first time as a trial. If the DX station asks for a repeat, say your call twice, once with the standard phonetics and once with different ones. Don't just keep repeating your call the same way. Something in either the way you say it or the way the DX hears it is creating ambiguity. If you keep repeating the call the same way it may well be that part of it is just hard to decipher, and it may not get any easier.

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If the DX station is a good English speaker then custom phonetics may work, such as “King George Six...” In fact when I thought a KK4 station was a K4, he used a very effective phonetic, “King Kong Four...” WA2JQK uses “Jack Queen King” in domestic contests, but that won’t work well for non-native speakers. The Wyoming station N7MZW uses “Many Zebras Walking” sometimes domestically, but I noticed he was using normal phonetics in WPX.

The second approach is to switch to the geographical phonetic alphabet. This features longer and more distinctive-sounding words, which are much easier to understand. For example if your suffix is, say, HLF, then you can say “Hotel Lima Fox,” then try “Honolulu London Florida.” When I give my call with last letter “Yankee” and get asked for a repeat it works much better to say “Last letter Yankee, last letter Yokohama.” Many of the geographic phonetics work particularly well for speakers of Romance languages like Spanish and Italian (e.g., terms like “Guatemala”, “Nicaragua”, and “Santiago”). There are a few letters for which there are not good geographic equivalents. Obviously, “X-ray” is one of them. For “Echo”, “England” is sometimes used, but “Ecuador” is better. Although “London” and “Lima” are both geographic terms, “London” is much better. And “Denmark Mexico” is many times superior to “Delta Mike.”

Numbers in the callsign can also cause trouble. What if the station comes back to “K3” instead of “K6”? In general, just try to repeat the number, but if he still doesn’t get it, you can try counting, e.g. “Kilo Six, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.” Or for us West Coasters, “Kilo Six in California, West Coast” can be useful.

Which brings me to the subject of numbers in exchanges like WPX. I commented in a 3830 post a few years ago that the English numbers that everyone uses are just too ambiguous, most of them being plain too short. I recommended using some Spanish numbers, like “cuatro” and “ocho”, but that suggestion went nowhere, so I hereby drop it, unless you are trying to get through to a native Spanish or Italian speaker. In fact, In WPX, I just couldn’t understand a number from a CO8 station with terrible audio. I kept asking, “your number 424?”, “your number 242?”, “your number 224”, etc. Normally, one doesn’t confuse “two” and “four,” but this guy’s audio was driving me crazy and I wasn’t sure how well he was understanding me either. Finally I had the presence of mind to ask in Spanish, and when he said “dos cuatro cuatro,” he was in the log. If he had said that in the beginning I would have understood him in spite of his maladjusted audio.

One source of confusion for the DX station is not knowing how many digits there are, particularly later in the contest when a number can have 1, 2, 3, or 4 digits. There are a couple of ways to help. For example: suppose the DX station thinks he hears “[garble] six six” and he asks: “your number six six?” If your number is just 6, you can say to be helpful “Negative. My number zero zero six, number six.” Adding the word “number” in front of the digit indicates there are no missing digits. If your number is 66, just say “Roger, roger.” If it’s 56, say “Negative, number five six, fifty-six.” If it’s 256, say, “Negative. Number two five six, two fifty-six (or even “two hundred and fifty-six”). I know we were taught that it is incorrect to say “two hundred and fifty-six,” and we should just say “two hundred fifty-six,” but using the “and” makes it more intelligible.

In general, it’s usually best to say your number twice, in two different ways. For example it’s often hard to discern, “two three” from “three three”. So you can say: “five nine, two three, twenty-three,” since “twenty” and “thirty” sound very different. Similarly if your number is 15 and you say “one five”, that might be confused with “one nine”, so say “one five, fifteen.” If it’s late in the contest and you might be expected to have a three-digit number you can say “zero two three, only twenty-three”. And if you have a one digit number late in the contest, it’s best to add zeros, saying, e.g., “zero zero nine, number nine”, not just “nine.”

I hope these tips from the DX end are helpful. They should be even more useful in the next few years, as declining sunspots forcing us increasingly into the QRM alleys of 20 and 40 meters.

ALEXA CAN HELP YOU LEARN MORSE CODE

DAN M. ROMANCHIK, KB6NU
www.kb6nu.com

I've written before about how I'd like to develop an Alexa skill to control my IC-7300. I haven't gotten around to that yet, but, Joe, N3HEE, has developed an Alexa skill called Continuous Wave. It's designed to help you learn Morse Code. To use this skill, you have to first enable it. Once enabled, say,

"Alexa, open Continuous Wave" (Opens the skill at the main menu)

You can then say any of the following at any voice prompt...

Learn, Practice, Alphabet, Common words, Random words,
Words, Sentences, Call signs
Contest, Quick Brown Fox, QSO, Help
Stop – To end your session.

I've just played around with it for a bit, and found it to be quite entertaining. One big drawback is that you can't set the speed. It's currently limited to sending at 20 words per minute only.

Also, the learn function could use a little refining. When you give the command "learn," it asks you for a character, sends that character three times, and then asks you for another. If you could set the speed at which the skill sends characters, it could teach a character like the K7QO Code Course, first sending the character slowly, then ramping up the speed.

Overall, though, I think this is a great first shot at a usable Alexa skill for teaching Morse Code. I hope this is the first of many versions of this skill.

Other ham radio skills

While I was poking around on Amazon, I decided to see what other amateur radio skills might be available. Here are some that I found:

- Ham Exam. Ask Alexa to ask you questions from the Technician Class question pool.
- Ham Lookup. Allows you to look up amateurs by call sign. Information is provided from the call-book.info database.
- Ham Radio Propagation Forecast. Reports the latest forecasts directly from HamQSL (run by N0NBH).
- ARRL Audio News. Adds ARRL Audio News to your Alexa flash briefing.

Have you found any other Alexa skills useful for amateur radio work? If so, please tell us about them.



THE TOOLS AND INFORMATION PREPPERS NEED FOR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

DAISY LUTHER

[THE ORGANIC PREPPER](#)

Editors Note: While this article was not written by an Amateur, I felt it contained a lot of useful information that would be valuable in an emergency.

In the role of Information Specialist of a prepper group you may or may not also be the Communications Specialist (radio operator) of the group. Either way, you will likely have input as to the tools and information should be gathered for emergency communications means.

During a disaster, you need to stay abreast of the events going on around you. In a weather emergency, such as a hurricane, tornado watch or warning, or winter storm, you need an [NOAA weather radio](#) or a radio capable of receiving NOAA weather broadcasts.

In addition, you should have an AM and FM radio to pick up local stations for news and additional weather reports. You may also need a radio to communicate your need for help. In an SHTF situation, you could need two-way radios for self-protection against possible bands of looters in your area. In this scenario, you would use two-way radios for tactical communications to protect yourself, your family, and your neighbors. In addition, you will need to know what is going on in the rest of the country and world. You need to know if and/or when help is coming.

Your local radio and TV stations may or may not be operating. Your satellite receiver may not be working or the satellite itself may not be working, but you need to be prepared in case they are working. If your power is out, which it likely will be in a SHTF situation, you will need [batteries charged by solar power](#).

Many amateur radios and all short wave radios can listen to short wave broadcasts from both the U. S. and the world. Here is a List of [Short Wave Radio Broadcasters](#).

Why listen for news?

You need to know exactly what disaster has happened, just how bad is it, how extensive the damage is, and whether danger coming toward you or not. Will there be additional disasters and if so what kind and when? Do you need to evacuate, when and why and what will you need most?

Once you buy a radio you need to set it up with the correct type of antenna and use it. You need to learn what all the buttons, switches and dials are for. Operating your radio is a skill just like all other disaster preparedness skills, and you need to practice.

You need to know what stations on what frequencies and what time of day (in your time zone) the stations will be operating and when news broadcasts will be. This includes AM stations, FM stations, and shortwave stations. As enjoyable as music is you really can't afford to use up your battery power listening to music.

You need the news. You should also learn to discern the difference between honest news and fake news i.e. political propaganda. Propaganda may help your morale but it won't tell you when you personally are in physical danger and that is what you most need to know. If you are part of a group you have a responsibility to provide honest news to the group leaders and members.

Your communications for information options include the AM and FM broadcast radio stations, TV local broadcast and satellite channels, shortwave radio listening, amateur radio, and print media such as newspapers, if any and satellite internet.

Your scouting patrols may choose to question refugees about what they have seen regarding damage, roadblocks, forces (military, police, mobs, warlords/brigands, etc.) It's a good idea to mark those locations on an erasable map.

Radios come in two types. We'll discuss them below.

Receivers for Emergency Communications

These radios only receive information, like the radio in your car.

AM and FM Radios

These radios are typically battery powered and the best option is [solar charged batteries](#). While I don't have any specific recommendations, [radios by Grundig](#) are well made and have a good track record.

Solar Power Radios and Hand Crank Radios

Emergency radios are available that operate [on solar power and by a hand crank](#). Solar power radios work by charging the radios internal batteries. Hand crank radios store the hand crank energy in an internal flywheel, which powers an internal generator. These hand cranked radios only operate a few minutes between cranking.

Short Wave Radio Receivers

[Short wave receivers](#) are available that receive practically all of the useful *radio spectrum*. These radios receive from 100 kHz, well below the AM broadcast band, to 30 MHz, 60 MHz, 1000 MHz (1 GHz), and up to 2.5GHz. These radios usually do NOT receive trunked systems (police and other agency response radios) so you would need a police scanner for these types of communications.

These broad band radio receivers are fairly expensive and price varies by the highest frequency they receive. These receivers cover the [short-wave frequencies](#), HF, VHF, UHF frequencies, some or all of the useful amateur radio frequencies. These radios are

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frequently used to listen to [distant radio stations from around the world](#) such as the [BBC](#). Cell phone frequencies are blocked on radios sold in the United States except for some government agencies.

Police Scanners

Police and many other government agencies and private companies such as utility companies (power, natural gas, telephone, etc.) use two-way radio communications. Many older radio systems used by these agencies operate in the AM mode. These radio communications can be received by many short-wave radios. There are many frequency ranges used and a HF radio (high frequency), VHF radio (very high frequency), or UHF radio (ultra high frequency) radio receiver may be required.

In addition, newer radio systems use special modes called trunking. To listen to these radio transmissions you will need a scanner capable of receiving trunking systems and these radios are usually called [police scanners](#). Books listing the frequencies for most agencies and companies using these radio systems are no longer being published, however, this [website](#) may be helpful.

Transceivers for Emergency Communications

Next, we have [two-way radios](#), with which you can both transmit and receive communications.

Amateur Radio (Ham Radio)

Amateur radio, also known as ham radio, has been around since radio was invented. Amateur radios are owned by private individuals for their personal conversations and cannot be used for commercial use or for broadcasting. These two-way radios cover many different bands or portions of the radio spectrum. Here's a [list of frequencies used by Amateur Radio Operators](#)

Amateur radios come in all sizes from desktop models to portables that can be installed in your car and to hand held (called handy talkies or HTs) some of which are smaller than your cell phone. If you had to walk for many miles or many days an HT could possibly get you in touch with other hams that could help you along your way.

With the proper equipment and software, email may be sent and received via amateur radio. There are many add-on devices and other digital modes available. There are numerous [amateur radio clubs](#) and [conventions, called hamfests](#), available. There is a tradition among ham radio operators to help those new to the hobby, just ask at the club meetings.

Amateur radio operators are required to be licensed to transmit and you will be asked for your FCC assigned call sign when you purchase a ham radio transmitter or transceiver. In the U.S., Morse code is no longer required for any amateur radio license. Amateur radio licenses are available in three different levels, in the U.S.

- The first level is the *Technician class license*.
- The second level is the *General class license*.
- The top level is *Amateur Extra class license*.

For each of these licenses, a test is required and tests are administered by authorized local ham radio operators. For the General class license, you must first pass the Technician class test in addition to the General class license test. Likewise, for the Amateur Extra class license, you must first pass the Technician class test and the General class test in addition to the Amateur Extra class license test. [Study guides](#) are available for all these tests including the complete multiple choice question pool for each test.

The [Amateur Radio Relay League \(ARRL\)](#) is the national association in the United States for ham radio. The ARRL in conjunction with federal, state, and local government agencies, the U.S. military, and organizations like the [American Red Cross](#) and the [Salvation Army](#) have organized several groups to provide emergency communications in the United States. These different groups are organized into radio nets using assigned frequencies. Books are available containing these assigned frequencies and the techniques used by these groups.

The radio knowledge gained by studying for and passing an [Amateur Radio license](#) will serve you well in any disaster situation. The *Morse code* test is no longer required. I strongly recommend you get an [Amateur Radio license](#). I did.

[\(Here's another article about ham radio.\)](#)

FRS, GMRS, and MURS Radios

[Family Radio Service \(FRS\)](#) are the small hand held radios that are readily available in most electronics stores and some drug stores today. These [FRS radios](#) are two-way radios that you can use to communicate from house to house or up the block. These are low power (1/2 watt) radios that operate on batteries and are for short range use. FRS radios do not require a license to operate. [General Mobile Radio Service \(GMRS\)](#) and [Multi-Use Radio Service \(MURS\)](#) radios are higher powered (5 watts) than FRS radios and are primarily for business use. GMRS requires an FCC license to operate, but MURS does not. There is no test required for the license, just an application. [GMRS](#) radios are limited to a few miles range.

CB Radio

[Citizen Band radios](#) are available in mobile radios for your car or truck, base stations for your house and in hand held or *walkie-talkie* models. [CB radios](#) are limited to a maximum of 5 watts power output and therefore have a limited range of a few miles. CB radios operate in two modes, AM and *Single Side Band (SSB)*. Single side band is a mode where only one half of the radio wave is used; therefore, there is an upper single sideband and a lower single side band. If you purchase a CB radio for emergency use you should get one that operates on both AM and single sideband.

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In some parts of the country, there are organized groups that monitor CB channels 9 and 11 for emergency traffic. One such group is called *REACT*. In some areas, local police and sheriff's offices may monitor these CB channels.

These organizations could be a good source of information

Another good thing to do is to look for [Emergency Communications Organizations](#). If you are already connected to these organizations, it will aid you in getting information during an emergency.

- [Amateur Radio Emergency Service \(ARES\)](#) *ARES* is a group of ham radio operators sponsored by the ARRL to work with *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)*, state and local government agencies, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the National Weather Service (NWS) in *emergency communications*.
- [Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service \(RACES\)](#) *RACES* is a group of ham radio operators that work with state and local agencies in emergency communications. Originally RACES was to operate as an integral part of the *Civil Defense* organization, but that has changed over the years.
- [Military Affiliate Radio Service \(MARS\)](#) *MARS* is a Department of Defense-sponsored auxiliary communication program. MARS typically provides communication of personal messages to and from military personnel and their families.
- [Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network \(SATERN\)](#) *SATERN* is a group of ham radio operators that work with the Salvation Army in emergency communications.
- [National Traffic System \(NTS\)](#) The *NTS* is an organized system consisting of local, regional, and national radio nets operating on a regular basis to pass messages (traffic). In time of emergency when regular communication systems may be unavailable, NTS will pass emergency messages via amateur radio. Contact a local ham radio operator to send an emergency message.
- [Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams \(REACT\)](#) *REACT* is a national emergency communications group whose members include CB radio operators, hams and others including GMRS, FRS, and MURS operators. Organized similar to ARES, REACT offers a broader range of services.

Emergency Warning Systems

- [Emergency Alert System – EAS – \(Broadcast Radio & TV\)](#) The EAS relies on local broadcast radio and TV stations to relay *emergency alert* messages from federal, state, and local authorities to the general public. These messages can pertain to immediate public threat to public safety including: enemy attack, storm warnings, earthquake alerts, and wildfires.
- [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#) sends emergency information direct to smartphones. In some cases this information may be identical to information transmitted by the EAS system.
- [All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio \(NWR\)](#) This is the system that sends messages to your weather radio.

Other articles in the Information Specialist series

- Part 1: [Why Every Prepper Group Needs an Information Specialist \(and How to Start Collecting Information\)](#)
- Part 2: [How & Where Can Preppers Store All That Information?](#)
- Part 3: [The Essential Maps That Preppers Need \(Many of them are FREE!\)](#)
- Part 4: [How to Find Essential Resources in Your Area \(Before You Ever Need to Scavenge\)](#)

NEW ASSEMBLED “YOUKITS” EK1C 3 BAND QRP CW TRANSCEIVER FOR 20, 30, 40 METERS

EK1C 3 band QRP CW transceiver for 20, 30, 40 meters. 5 watts power output from 12 VDC. Internal keyer, extended receive coverage, sold as an assembled item only.

- Measures just 1.5" x 3.5" x 5"
- Weight: 9.8 oz
- DC input: 9-15 VDC
- Power consumption: RX 70 mA, TX 900 mA @ 12 VDC
- TX: 7.0-7.3, 10.1-10.15, 14.0-14.35 MHz
- RX: 5.9-16 MHz
- IF: 50 MHz DDS
- Output power: 5W at 12 VDC
- CW sidetone: 700 Hz
- Internal keyer: 5-40 WPM adjustable
- Antenna connector: male BNC
- #18650 internal battery pack and charging cable is sold as an optional accessory.
- This item is supplied by YouKits without a DC power cable. Vibroplex is making an inexpensive DC power pigtail available for them.
- [Read the operation manual by clicking this link](#)

\$219.00



DOTS & DASHES:

Things I can't think where to put, but are interesting.

REVISED CANADIAN TABLE OF FREQUENCY ALLOCATIONS NOW INCLUDES ADDITIONAL 15 KHZ FOR 60 METRE BAND WITH THE SAME POWER LIMITS AS EARLIER ALLOCATED SPOT FREQUENCIES....

We are happy to report that in their release of the **Revised Table of Frequency allocations** (<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/smt-gst.nsf/eng/sf10759.html>) issued on April 13, 2018, ISED has addressed the concerns of the Canadian Amateur Radio community. The Revised Table now allocates the band 5351. kHz5 – 5366.5 kHz (which overlaps one of the previous 60m spot frequencies) and the four previously allocated spot frequencies (5332, 5348, 5373 and 5405 kHz). The conditions for the use of the band and spot frequencies remain the same as those governing the spot frequencies previously: maximum effective radiated power of 100 watts PEP, 2.8 kHz emission bandwidth and permitted modes telephony, data, RTTY and CW. The Table notes that the Amateur 60m allocations are not in accordance with international frequency allocations and that Canadian Amateur operations shall not cause interference to fixed or mobile operations in Canada or other countries. As in the previous allocation of the spot frequencies, the Table notes that if interference occurs the Amateur Service may be required to cease operations.

ANNUAL ARMED FORCES DAY CROSSBAND COMMUNICATION TEST SET FOR SATURDAY, MAY 12

The Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) will sponsor the traditional military/amateur radio communication tests to mark the 67th annual Armed Forces Day (AFD) on Saturday, May 12. Armed Forces Day is May 19, but the AFD Crossband Military-Amateur Radio event traditionally takes place 1 week earlier in order to avoid conflicting with Hamvention. Complete information, including military stations, modes, and frequencies, is available on the [US Army MARS website](#).

LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD HAS ONLINE STATUS MONITOR

Logbook of The World ([LoTW](#)) now has a full-time [status monitor](#). The system's status is displayed in real time and is available offsite, offering a single spot for all users — web, Facebook, Twitter, etc. — to quickly check what's happening with the online repository of contacts and confirmations.

At a glance, the LoTW status monitor shows if the system is up, paused, or down; overall uptime statistics, and quick stats. A green status means all systems are go, a red status means the system is down, and a black status means the system has been paused. The monitor indicates overall uptime for the past 24 hours, the past 7 days, and the past 30 days, as well as the most-recent downtime occurrence.

INTERESTING HAM RADIO WEB SITE/VIDEO/PODCAST:

Setting the mic gain and compression can be a bit tricky. Too much compression and too much mic gain results in a distorted signal. Jim Heath W6LG describes how he determines where to put the mic gain and where to put the compression level.

<https://youtu.be/k8erluMdiBU>

May 4/5 NearFest	Deerfield, NH	http://www.near-fest.com/
May 12 East Greenbush ARA HamFest	East Greenbush, NY	http://www.w2egb.org/
May 19 So Berkshire ARC HamFest	Goshen ,Ct	http://www.sberk.org
May 20 Flea at M.I.T.	Cambridge, Ma	http://w1mx.mit.edu/flea-at-mit/
Jun 3 Mt Beacon A.R.C. HamFest	Fishkill, NY	http://www.wr2abb.org/
Jun 17 Flea at M.I.T.	Cambridge, Ma	http://w1mx.mit.edu/flea-at-mit/
July 15 Flea at M.I.T.	Cambridge, Ma	http://w1mx.mit.edu/flea-at-mit/
Aug 11 STARC Annual HamFest	St. Albans, Vt	http://www.starc.org

MARCH'S CONTESTS

May 5 10-10 International Spring CW Contest	http://www.ten-ten.org	CW
7th CallArea QSO Party	http://www.ws7n.net/7qp	CW, Ph, Dig
Indiana QSO Party	http://www.hdxcc.org/inqp	CW, Ph
Delaware QSO Party	http://www.fsarc.org	CW, Ph
New England QSO Party	http://www.neqp.org	CW, Ph, Dig
12 Arkansas QSO Party	http://www.arkqp.com	CW, Ph, Dig
13 Work All Britain 7MHz Phone	http://www.wab.intermip.net	Ph
14 4 States QRP Grp 2nd Sunday Sprint	http://www.4sqr.com	CW, Ph
19 UN DX Contest	http://www.undxc.kz/bez-rubriki/2015-2	CW, Ph
Aegean RTTYContest	http://www.aegeandxgroup.gr	Dig
21 Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	http://www.qrpcontest.com/pigrun	CW
26 CQ WWWPX CW Contest	http://www.cqwpwpx.com	CW

Local happenings

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, [150 Brookdale Dr. 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 Community College. (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>

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**Here is your exciting copy
of Zero Beat!**

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