

Zero Beat



Our 55th Year

A Publication of the Hampden County Radio Association

September, 2000

**Join Us on Friday, September 8th, 2000 for
 George Rancourt, K1ANX
 Doors open at 7:PM Meeting Starts at 7:30
 George will be presenting a unique
 Display of keys and will speak on
 Military and "Golden Day" equipment.**

**Win an Icom IC2100 2m mobile radio (\$200 value)!!!
 It is first prize in this month's raffle!!!**

Hope to see you there!!!

HCRA's Big E Day

Be sure to mark your calendar for September 28th. HCRA will be manning the Ham Booth at the Big E that day, and we'll be looking for volunteers to help out working the radios and talking to prospective hams. If you can help, please let us know at the Sept. 8th meeting. It is free admission to the Big E on that day for anyone helping out, but there are limited tickets, so speak up now!!!

in this months edition

President's Corner.....	Page 2
HCRA Contact Sheet	Page 3
DX Clips	Page 4
Skywarn: Twister Terms	Page 5
Emergency Coordinator's Corner	Page 6
WMLFD Field Day Y2K Pictures.....	Page 7
SPECIAL: Annual Dues Up: Here's Why..	Page 8
HCRA Membership Application.....	Page 9

President's Corner



WA1ZUH/W2—Adirondack Mountains, 1996

I'd like to welcome everyone back from a cool summer season! The summer may have been cool, but ham radio is HOT!!! The sunspot cycle is near or at it's peak, DXpeditions abound, testing and upgrading is open to more people, and the manufacturers keep coming out with really neat equipment at great prices. You can talk about the "good ole days" but if you want to be a ham, now is the time to really enjoy it!

Kicking off our 2000/2001 season on September 8th will be a great guest speaker, HCRA's own George Rancourt, K1ANX. George will be presenting a unique display of keys, and as always is a great source on military and "golden day" equipment. Don't miss his informative presentation

Certainly our new year will present a lot of exciting opportunities to enjoy ham radio with the HCRA. The event at the Big-E is happening again, mark your calendar for September 28th. That will be the HCRA day at the Big-E. October will be our 2nd annual special event station at the Basket Ball Hall of Fame. Stay tuned for the dates and details on this one.

To kick off our new season in great style, our monthly raffle for September will feature a Icom IC2100 2M mobile radio. When you bring this one home you really can say to your spouse, "I won it at the HCRA raffle". As always your support of the monthly raffle really goes a long way towards helping the club with it's finances.

Speaking of finances, that represents one of our greatest challenges for the new year. As I write this column, the church has raised our monthly fee almost 100%, from \$40 to \$75/night. This, and the cost of printing and mailing Zero Beat is necessitating our first increase in dues in over five years. The board has looked at every area that we can to cut costs, but even with those cuts the dues this year will have to be raised to \$15. Please take a look at the finance article elsewhere in this issue to see where your dues really go. It's an eye-opener! But, the HCRA has been

around for over 50 years because our members are up to the challenges.

Upcoming events for the rest of 2000 include a return visit by Mike Tracy, KC1SX from the ARRL lab. Mike gave a great presentation last year of new equipment and the review process. He will have even more interesting stuff when he returns in October!

November will be our annual Auction, always a big event. The raffle prize this year will be an ICOM dual band mobile rig. Tickets for this one will be available starting at our September meeting.

Rounding out the year will be our annual Holiday Party in December. All in all, it looks like the next few months will be very busy for anyone wishing to participate.

As always, your support of the HCRA gives amateur radio the needed muscle to keep our bands and our hobby alive. Please support your club by renewing early in September and October and participating in club activities or ham operations whenever you can.

A final note. I just came back from the ARRL NE Convention in Boxboro this afternoon and I have to comment on a few things. First, the new equipment is incredible, including a neat HF thru 432 MHz, all mode, battery powered, portable rig from Yaesu that will be selling in the \$700-\$800 range! Second, I couldn't help but overhear a few hams talking about the "magic" of ham radio. Making that contact to someone you never met, without anything in between except the ether. I guess when you come right down to it, that's what makes this hobby so special, the magic!

I hope everyone had a great summer, full of magic, and look forward to seeing you September 8th.

'73... Jim, WA1ZUH

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Emergency Coordinator	Dave Isham, KB1MU	kblmu@mindspring.com
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Please remember to join our Monday evening 10m Net

Join NCS Tom, N1MUV, On Monday nights, 7:30PM local
for the *HCRA/W1NY 10m Net*
28.375 +/- QRM

Maybe we'll get some interesting DX as the solar cycle reaches its peak... DX or not, you'll still be treated to information and good conversation.

More and more people are joining into our Monday night chat sessions.

Come in and discuss whatever is on your mind!!!



DX Clips

de
Jordy, W1JK

I trust that everyone had a relaxing, enjoyable Summer (what there was of it) and that you are anxious to sample the "peak" of the present Solar cycle. This Fall should bring steadier and more reliable openings on 10M & 12M. Saturday, August 19, displayed significantly improved propagation from many parts of the world on 12M. Also, there are several DXpeditions scheduled in September & October to rare DX locations - more about that later.

Well, it is time for me to get on my "soapbox" again: As some of you know - my pet peeve is the hassle involved in receiving "rarer DX" QSL's. I have offered my opinion to ARRL in the past and I am happy to report that they seem to be moving ever so slowly toward "Electronic" QSLing. One million plus dollars has been approved by the ARRL Board of Directors to fund more modern software & hardware to update their overall computer system - including DXCC. The ultimate goal for DXCC is to install a protected, encrypted system to handle DX QSL's on a "real time" basis. This would facilitate the rapid transmission to ARRL from all over the world & increase the efficiency and capabilities of the DXCC record keeping system. You could actually check your status "on line" via their website. I do not believe that these changes are imminent, partly due to the "politics" involved in the issue; but, at least they are seriously addressing the problem. I believe that this modern state-of-the-art approach would significantly enhance interest in DX - particularly for the younger Hams who are devoted to Internet use and are turned-off by the archaic QSL system. Keep your eyes on QST for updates on their progress and let your views be heard. There are a few websites devoted to "E" QSLing and they are looking for members with an interest in modernizing & simplifying this aspect of our great Hobby.

I am sure that some of you worked the French DXpedition to Tromelin Is. which recently terminated. That is a difficult one to get in the log. Now go get that QSL card via "snail" mail!!

LOOK FOR:

Mozambique, C9 - Bernardo, C91AH is usually QRV on 21310 at around 1530-1630Z.

Djibouti, J2 - Houssein, J28FH is a new ham here. He is QRV on 10M & best of all - has a Stateside QSL mgr....WA2VUY

Ogasawara, JD1-JA1OZK/JD1 is QRV on 17M CW & SSB. Also, JA1HXE/JD1 is active on 20, 17 & 15M. QSL home calls.

Christmas Is., VK9XY-Stefan, DH1SGS & Tobias, DH1TW are active on 40-10M CW & SSB & RTTY. Most SSB activity has been on 15M. They will be gone by the time you read this, but another DXpedition here is scheduled - see below.

Iraq, YI - ever elusive Iraqi's are a bit more active now. Look for YI90M on 17M around 1530Z. QSL via OM6TX.

Vanuatu, YK - Masa, YJ0AXC is QRV near 21040. QSL JE1DXC.

So Cook Is., ZK1-ZK1NNP is QRV there. QSL via DK6NP.

Christmas Is., VK9XV-Burt, PA3GIO will be there Sept 2-13. I spoke with him recently & the time is firm. He is a great operator & a very nice fellow ... QSL assured. Get this one now!

Good luck & think DX. See you next month....

de Jordy Koltz W1JK W1JK@earthlink.net



Twister Terms

de *Eric Tuller* N1QKO

Due to the current hurricane activity, here are some terms used by the weather service.

- Tropical depression...**a tropical system in which the maximum sustained surface wind is 33 knots (38 mph) or less.
- Tropical storm...**a tropical system in which the maximum sustained surface wind ranges from 34 to 63 knots (39 to 73 mph).
- Hurricane...**a tropical system in which the maximum sustained surface wind is 64 knots (74 mph) or greater.
- Hurricane eye...**the relatively calm area in the center of the storm. In this area...winds are light and the sky often is only partly covered by clouds.
- Storm surge...**an abnormal rise in sea level accompanying a hurricane or other intense storm. The height of the storm surge is the difference between the observed level of the sea surface and the astronomical tide that would have occurred in the absence of the storm.
- Tropical storm watch...**an announcement that a tropical storm or tropical storm conditions pose a threat to coastal areas generally within 36 hours.
- Tropical storm warning...**a warning that a tropical storm or tropical storm conditions...including sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph...will affect a specified coastal area within 24 hours or less.
- Saffir/simpson hurricane scale...**a scale ranging from one to five based on intensity of the hurricane. This can be used to give an estimate of the potential property damage and flooding expected along the coast from a hurricane.
- Hurricane watch...**an announcement for specific areas that a hurricane or hurricane conditions pose a possible threat to coastal areas generally within 36 hours.
- Hurricane warning...**a warning that hurricane conditions ...including sustained winds of 74 mph or greater associated with A hurricane are expected in a specified coastal area within 24 Hours or less.
- Inland high wind watch for hurricane force winds...**this type of Watch will be issued for inland communities when the potential Exists for hurricane force winds to occur within the next 24 hours Associated with the passage of a hurricane.
- Inland high wind warning for hurricane force winds...**this warning Will be issued for inland communities when hurricane force winds Associated with the passage of a hurricane are expected during the Next 12 hours.
- Hurricane local statement...**a public release prepared by your Local national weather service office in or near the threatened Area giving specific details on weather conditions...evacuation Decisions made by local officials...and other precautions Necessary to protect life and property.

Hurricane season runs from June 1st through November 30th. For Southern New England...August through September is our most active period. Since 1900...30 of the 39 tropical storms and hurricanes have struck in August and September. Of the 9 hurricanes which made landfall in southern New England...all but one did so in August or September. The exception was the New England hurricane of 1916 which made landfall on July 21st. Now is the time to review what you need to do to protect yourself and your family...should a hurricane threaten the area later this summer.

the evacuation question...to stay or leave

Coastal residents may need to decide whether or not to evacuate. If local officials recommend that you evacuate...do so immediately.

- ...know the elevation of your property above mean sea level.
- ...know the quickest route to the nearest storm shelter.
- ...if possible you may wish to make prior arrangements with family or friends.
- ...if you live in a mobile or modular home...plan to leave.
- ...realize that you will not be the only one heading inland. Be ready to leave on short notice.
- ...be sure to have pictures or at the very least...serial numbers and a description of items in your house for insurance purposes. Take your copy of the policy with you.

Boat owner and marina operators...

The boating community almost always suffers large losses when a hurricane comes ashore. The boat owner in particular must stay up to date on the latest forecasts and positions of tropical storms and hurricanes...and be ready to act long before the storm makes its final approach.

- ...boat owners should have all the necessary gear on board for properly tying down the vessel at the start of the boating season. Precious time will be lost if you are rushing around searching for gear when the storm is approaching.
- ...realize that you may not be able to pull your boat out of the water. Your only alternative will be to properly tie your boat down. Practice these procedures at the start of the season.
- ...have a plan worked out with the marina operator so there are no questions or any confusion when the time comes to tie up or pull the boat out of the water.
- ...be sure to remove any non-essential items and have pictures and a written description of the vessel for insurance purposes.

the inland wind threat

Inland residents may not need to evacuate...but must properly prepare their property for high winds and disrupted utility power.

- ...boarding up windows is a necessity for homes exposed to high winds. Have nails and boards on hand for this purpose.
- ...know where you will store outdoor furniture.
- ...be ready to obtain bottled water. Local water supplies often become contaminated after hurricanes.
- ...have plenty of batteries on hand for flash lights...AM/FM Radios...and your NOAA weather radio.
- ...do not use candles. Many people have been injured or killed during and after hurricanes from fires set off by candles.
- ...Have canned food and other items that do not need refrigeration on hand. It is almost a certainty that electrical and phone power will be disrupted.



Emergency Coordinator's Corner

ARES Registration Form Why should I fill one out???

de KB1MU, Dave Isham



Simulated Emergency Test (SET)

Coming up shortly is the annual ARRL SET. This exercise is held usually on the first or second weekend in October. The ARRL Simulated Emergency Test is a nationwide exercise in emergency communications. Both ARES and NTS are involved. The SET weekend gives us, individually, the opportunity to test our emergency communications capabilities. Additionally, it gives us a chance to practice our communications capabilities while interacting with NTS.

The purpose of the SET weekend is to find out the strengths and weaknesses of ARES and NTS. It also provides a public demonstration of the value to the public that Amateur Radio provides, particularly in time of need. SET also helps radio amateurs gain experience in communications using standard procedures and a variety of modes.

The main function of NTS in an emergency situation is to tie together all of the various local activities and to provide a means by which all traffic destined outside of a local area can be relayed to the addressee. So how does all of this affect the HCRA? First and most obvious, it gives an incentive to real check out the capabilities of our equipment. It also gives us a chance to practice our emergency procedures.

There will be a local SET exercise held in Western Mass. Details are not complete at this time, but lets start to check out our emergency capabilities. As many modes as practical will be involved. This includes Two Meter FM operations, HF nets, packet operation, etc.

'73, Get involved, and keep those batteries charged de KB1MU

Twister Terms by N1QKO (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

...The "often forgotten" river flood threat...

While most southern New Englanders relate hurricanes to severe coastal flooding...and rightfully so...history shows us that 15 tropical storms and hurricanes since 1900 have caused significant inland small stream and river flooding.

- ...know where the closest storm shelter is located...and the quickest route to it.
- ...be ready to evacuate immediately if flooding occurs or is expected to occur.
- ...if the inland river flood threat is high...you may wish to evacuate before the hurricane hits.
- ...like coastal residents and boat owners...have pictures and descriptions of items in your home for insurance purposes.

Of all the many weather hazards that affect southern New England...the hurricane is by far the most destructive. Unlike most other weather hazards...a hurricane can impact every area of Southern New England producing the deadly combination of coastal inundation...severe wind damage both along the coast as well as inland...and torrential rainfall resulting in widespread small stream and river flooding. Respect the power of the hurricane and be ready to act should one pose a threat to our area.

Thanks for all the help this summer. Eric N1QKO

WM1FD Field Day 2000



← HCRA presidents past and present (Irv, W6IS and Jim, WA1ZUH) operate 20m phone at the first joint HCRA/MTARA Field Day at Chicopee State Park in Chicopee.

→ Earl, KD1UU, and Jeremy, N1ZZZ operate 40m phone on their way to 300 QSOs during the 24 hour event.



← Paul, N1FI, and Walt, WA1HHN, working a variety of bands including 160m phone, 75m phone, 10m phone, and 10m CW.



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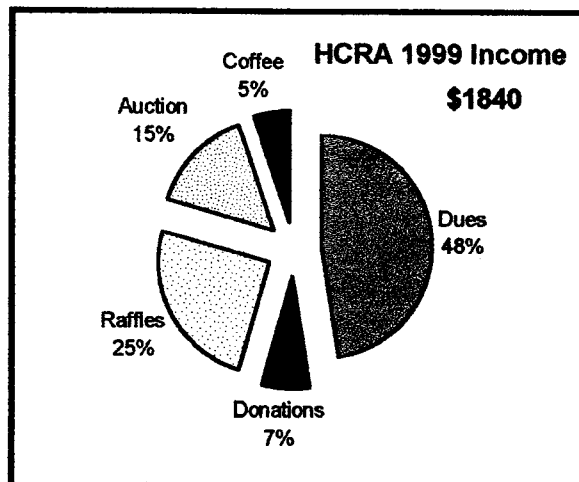
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The buck stops here!

I'd like to take a few moments of your time to illustrate where your member dues go. Believe me, I would like nothing better than to announce we can survive on our measly \$10 year dues until 2010, but reality sometimes slaps us hard in the face!

Last year the HCRA just about broke even. What does that mean? It means we spent every dollar we collected, from dues, donations, raffles and auctions. Check out the pie charts to see the exact breakdown of both income and expenses. It's a real eye-opener! Your \$10/year dues didn't quite cover the cost of printing and mailing Zero Beat! Good thing we did well with the raffles and auction!

Unfortunately, this year we are faced with an almost 100% increase in the cost of our meeting room. This increase alone, if we made no adjustments to our dues structure, would bankrupt the HCRA in just a few years. And that would be making a BIG assumption that our donations, raffles and auction will continue to



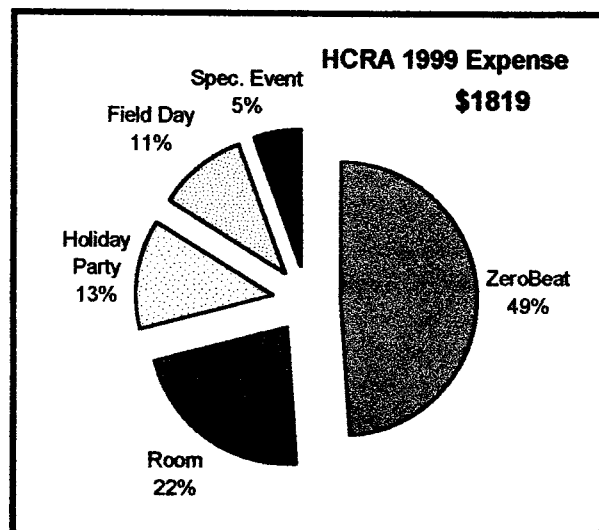
be as profitable as the last few years. Although we make every effort to make these profitable, it would be unwise to base the HCRA's financial well being on income other than member dues.

So, what can be done? Cut expenses? Cut services (Holiday Party, Field Day, etc.)? Raise dues? This was focus of much discussion at the August board meeting. Your board came to a few conclusions:

1. Negotiate with the church to reduce the rent increase. So far this has not been effective.
2. Find a new meeting site. I guess we need your input on this. Are you pleased with our present facilities? Does anyone have suggestions for a less costly but convenient meeting place? This is

under consideration but the board felt no changes should be made through the end of 2000.

3. Cut costs, especially Zero Beat costs. Zero Beat is our largest expense. We are looking into savings on printing costs and considering electronic distribution to those members who would prefer that method.
4. Reduce activities. Probably not a good idea, the activities HCRA participates in are very few, and important to the club and the hobby in general. I might be wrong, but I don't think eliminating Field Day or the Holiday Party are something the members really want.



5. Raise Dues. Never a popular alternative, but just about un-avoidable. The board voted to raise dues to \$15/year, the first increase HCRA has had in over five years.

So that's what is on the table right now. We are endeavoring to cut Zero Beat costs, both printing and distribution. We are actively looking for an alternate meeting place. We are still trying to get the church to reconsider the increase. And we have raised the dues. Any comments are certainly welcome. If you have any questions concerning the HCRA's finances, the board will be happy to answer them at the next meeting.

Like I mentioned elsewhere, the HCRA and it's members have shown the ability to face challenges such as these and survive. Even at \$15/year, your membership gets you a lot for your money. You get ten excellent meetings, in a comfortable surrounding; fun activities including Field Day, Special Event Stations, auctions and parties; but most of all, you continue over fifty years of support for the amateur radio hobby. Thank you very much for that support. Future hams will appreciate it.

Jim, WA1ZUH



HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 562
Agawam, MA 01001



Application for new or renewal membership

Personal Information:

NAME: _____ CALLSIGN: _____
 ADDRESS: _____ LICENSE CLASS: _____
 CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
 TELEPHONE: Home (____) _____-_____
 Work (____) _____-_____-____ext
 E-mail: _____@_____ BIRTHDATE: __/__/__

Membership Information:

Type of application: New Renewal
 Class of application: Regular Family

*Donations are tax deductible!
Thanks!*

Dues are \$15.00/year for regular membership.
Additional family members are free.

Annual Dues:	\$ 15.00
Donation:	\$ ____ .00
Total:	\$ ____ .00

Would you like to receive "ZeroBeat" via e-mail?
 Yes No

Amateur Radio Interests:

Are you an ARRL member? Yes No
 Are you a Volunteer Examiner Yes No

Please check any and all interests that apply:

HF VHF UHF Repeaters Satellite Digital Modes DX
 Contests Field Day Technical/Construction
 Emergency Communication Training Assist with club functions

The next meeting of the
Hampden County Radio Association
Will be on Friday

September 8th, 2000

At 7:30 p.m. at the
Feeding Hills Congregational Church

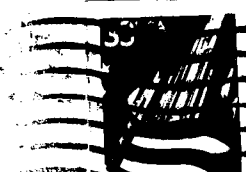
Doors open at 7:00 PM

Hope to see you there!

*In case of inclement weather, tune to TV Channels 22 or 40, or on the
146.94 and 147.105 repeaters.*

Meeting cancellation information will be given out by 6:00 PM.

HCRA
P.O. Box 562
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HCRA's 55th Season Begins

Friday, September 8th, 2000

Featuring: *George Rancourt, K1ANX*
and an *ICOM IC2100* raffle prize

HCRA's Big **E** Day, September 28, 2000
Can You Help??? We are looking for Volunteers.

