



ZERO BEAT

SEPTEMBER 2007

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

Next Meeting: Friday, Sept. 7, 2007
Steve Ford; WB8IMY the QST Editor
7:30pm

***Special Raffle Prize!**

***(You must be present to win)**

Summary of Field Day 2007

Who starts worrying about Field Day in December of the year before? A few members of the HCRA. Right before the New Year we started to plan. Right away Ed KB1NWH, George KC1V, Steve N1SR, Dave KB1MU, Tom N1MUV, Tuc N1QFT and of course Jim KK1W, stepped forward to make me feel warm and fuzzy. Shortly there after my wife Kathy volunteered to oversee food. Then at a VEC session I got the break I was looking for! Dave W1FAB and his wife Mary stepped up and dropped many varied menu's on me. Getting Kathy, Dave and Mary to meet was a trip once they did, WOW. What a team. It was funny Dave would say this is the menu, Mary saying No we don't do breakfast at 5:30 A.M. But

add in Sue Ed's wife and we were treated to a great menu on time. Next year we'll have a new system to announce the meals..

This being my first Field Day, I was green in a few things.. But KK1W, AA1YW, and a few others kept me on the straight and narrow.. And I thought they were picking on me... By March we were moving and the general interest was gaining by the week. More people joined, some from years gone that had left for other interests. Larry WB1DBY, Frandy N1FJ, and Peter KI1I were welcomed back. A surprise was Mike DeChristopher K1KAA a "Contester" got very involved and was another asset. By the beginning of June we were assembling a army. I would take up

most of ZB just to list all of the people that put up, took down, gophered, operated, or just plain helped out.

What did I learn? The the H.C.R.A. and Ham's are a great bunch of people! Ready to help, ready to teach, and in general ready to learn.. I learned that I have to read the rules better. I asked that the ARRL print a supplement that is only on the GOTA station! I was told to find a "GOTA" coach someone that never used the radio. So Chris K1CPS came right to mind.. She accepted and as I was getting more into the parts of GOTA, I realized that I needed more that someone to keep the books! (I was told and at first thought the "Coach" kept the logging correct). I noticed and was



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.

BSA VENTURE CREW DX NEWS

Venture Crew 510 is hosting a:

Technician License Class

Tuesdays starting September 25th, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

Moose Family Center #1849
244 Fuller Rd.
Chicopee, MA 01075

Class will be scheduled to run for 5 or 6 weeks.

We can go longer if we need to.

Exam Team will be present on last week to do license testing.
This condensed class will be tailored for YOUTH but open to all.
Cost \$0.00.

The course will be designed around the
ARRL's Technician License Manual (which is strongly
suggested.) Those that need a book can contact me at: kx1x@arrl.net
Cost of the book is \$25.00 (in advance of the class).
Books ordered prior to the class will be available the first day.

BSA Venture Crew DX will return this year!

BSA Venture Crew 510 is looking for any YOUTH interested in meeting other youth that are radio hobbyists. We will be doing ham radio related events throughout the year including contests, demonstrations, fox hunts, and much more.

Ham License is not required. Ages to 20 years.
Contact John Pise, Kx1x at kx1x@arrl.net

Editors Note:

My apologies to all for the typos in this issue. I am sure there are many. But I am creating this from the Danforth Bay Campground (www.danforthbay.com) in Freedom, NH. I am sitting at the picnic table (very hard seats), under a screen house lit by a red laptop light. Otherwise it is pitch black out here and, I am listening to the RedSox-Yankee baseball game. Anyways, I have no printer to print a proof. I also have many field day pictures from Mark; W1MRB and others that will appear in next months issue. Also, this is the first chance I have had in 12 days (so far) of camping to assemble this issue.

See you at the September meeting. Enjoy the rest of summer! Larry; WB1DBY wb1dby@comcast.net

Wear it Proudly!
HCRA Name Badges



Only \$6.00. Available for order at any club meeting, or call or drop an email for immediate service!
Show the world you belong to the oldest club in the Pioneer Valley.

Jim, WA1ZUH: jmullen@rockys.com or (413) 245-3228

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 Jim, KK1W at (413) 245-3228

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

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Can Be Directed To:

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HCRA Board Meeting Minutes – August 7, 2007

Held at the home of Larry, WB1DBY, Longmeadow, MA.

Members present: Jim KB1JVF, Dave AA1YW, George KC1V, Greg N1AEH, Jim KK1W, John N1JIO, Larry, WB1DBY, Eric KB1JVI and Ed, KB1NWH.

Jim, KB1JVF, President: The Peach Festival in Wilbraham, August 18 and 19, will be a joint event with MTARA. HCRC will supply display boards. Jim suggested we have multiple PIOs, each responsible for their local publicity outlets. After discussion, no action was taken. The question of rides to the meetings for some members was discussed and it was decided that there will be plenty of volunteer drivers. A club handbook was discussed, but no action was taken at this time.

Dave, AA1YW, VP: Raffle prizes are on hand for September meeting. It was suggested that something relating to the "Digital" program be obtained; it should be \$100 or less. A GPS was suggested as the renewal raffle prize at the October meeting.

Greg, N1AEH, Treasurer: The current account balance is \$3135.95. The church has been paid through June. The annual P&L statement has been completed and was circulated for examination by the Board.

George, KC1V, Secretary: Suggested, because the board had received the minutes from the last meeting by e-mail, that the reading of the minutes be dispensed with. It was so moved and seconded and the motion was passed. There had been no club correspondence since the last meeting.

Jim, KK1W, Program Director: Steve Ford from ARRL HQ will speak on Digital Communication at the September meeting. KB1JVF and N1JIO will have dinner with Steve before the meeting. A possible speaker for October is Bob, W1SQ, on the subject of VMware software.

John, N1JIO, Technical Director: A Tech class is being planned for September, primarily in response to people from CERT that wanted a one-weekend course. The planned course will be two weekends. The HCRC will have a table available at the MTARA flea market.

Eric, KB1JVI, Membership Director: Had one inquiry from a prospective member. It was strongly suggested that more HCRA handout material be made available at VE sessions.

Larry, WB1DBY, Zero Beat Editor: The deadline for September ZB will be August 20. More material is needed. The September issue will be mailed to all of last year's members and will contain the membership form, as has been done in past years. Eric, KB1JVI, will supply the form to Larry.

Ed, KB1NWH, Director at Large: Nothing to report at this time.

Venture Crew: Not present.

Old Business: None.

New Business: The next board of directors meeting will be held on September 13, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,
George, KC1V
HCRA Secretary.

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, S.Hadley, MA

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

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!!!

Presidents Corner

Welcome to the New Year! We had a very good Field Day, and I hope your summer went well. The first meeting will be on Friday September 7. **Steve Ford WB8IMY** is the author of the HF Digital Handbook and is extremely active in these modes. Be sure to make this meeting if you are at all interested in new things to try on HF.

So much for the niceties, I'm Jim Harrington the new president of HCRA. Seems a few people were worried that I was a my dog is better than your dog type. I'm writing this before the Peach Festival in Wilbraham, and you'll read it after the fact. HCRA is working with MTARA on a joint venture to get Ham's in the public eye. I find it hard to do the dog thing when 60% of the clubs members are shared. Heck, I'm a member of the "other club" too. The important part is that by getting out the word at public gatherings, we may have a few new Ham's join the family. Chances are that they will eventually join both clubs. Why become the President of HCRA? I think we have a great club and I think we can make it better. I see at every meeting a meeting of friends. Who ever is the president is going to have a problem quieting a group of friends that are also Hams..

Well, it's Monday August 20th, the Peach Fest is over. We met some nice people and possibly some new hams. We were interviewed by the Wilbraham Public Channel, and Channel 22. We accomplished getting Ham in the public eye. I found I need to give voice to the setup cycle for the tent and board.

I think you'll see a few changes but for the most part most things will remain the same. Thank you for your support, I hope it will continue for the next year.

Jim Harrington KB1JVF

Summary of Field Day 2007

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later told that we needed a person to "coach" by helping to make sure users didn't go off the bands, or needed help to switching bands. I was going to ask John K1VOI to help when Chris said she had a family conflict and couldn't do it. John volunteered. I was remiss on not following up with 2 band captains GOTA, and VHF both of which I'll remember to watch more closely. Here I have to ask for your help with GOTA. I've had press releases on the days before Field Day, offered to supply a Hot Dog, chips, and soda to any Scout that showed up. Still drew a blank! I need some input! Kidnapping is illegal. I found out at the N.E conference that other clubs suddenly had a number of Ham's that had not been on in years, suddenly appear to fill the ranks of GOTA. Our news coverage hit a high this year with 2 TV stations, and 2 articles on Field Day. I hope to do better this year.

Yes, Friends I volunteered to be Chairman of Field Day 2008! So get ready, planning has already started! Seriously thanks to all who came, worked, cooked, operated, because as much as we can assemble, equip, feed, and advertise, it's you that make Field Day special! The people of Field Day make the day, don't forget that.

I think Mike K1KAA a contester who doesn't do Field Day wrote:

Field Day 2007

Propagation was terrible on every band, just about every Q came from 4-land, and I was forced to wear a sweatshirt most of the time. Having said that:

- We braved the poor conditions, making almost 500Q's on at least 2 separate bands
- Our very own Kx1x was in the paper
- We created some interest in contesting from non-contesters
- We made some contesters better operators
- We ate well and often (always an important point)

Anyone else have any comments or suggestions? Antennas, stations, conditions, etc. etc.?

Mike DeChristopher K1KAA (OH, Mike said he'd be back next year..)



Just Talking...

Hilltopping Antennas

Hilltopping (one word) is getting away from it all and doing what you like to do without creating work, which should always be avoided in any hobby. I believe that it should be like fishing with an antenna instead of a fishing pole, and relaxing in the shade. It should relieve stress and when I do it, I relax.

My family calls me a minimalist and I try to live up to the label. My complete station fits into a backpack and weighs about 7 pounds. My two antennas can be compared to a bamboo fishing pole; not very pretty but definitely catches lots of RF.

As I commented, I carry two antennas. My first antenna is a 65 foot long, #20 ga, insulated wire made with a BNC connector on one end which connects to the radio (radio has a built-in transmatch). At the other end of this wire I tie to a string which is used as a cheap insulator, and support for the wire. I try to get this string high into a tree or other structure including telephone poles, rock hills, etc. (*Something that I would like to try sometime is attaching this end of the wire to a helium balloon - - uhmmm!*) A second 65 foot long insulated wire with an alligator clip on the end connects to the casing of the BNC connector and is used as a counterpoise (without touching the ground) and dispersed in a safe direction (trip hazard). I do not attempt to get a good earth ground as realistically, that could be misconstrued as WORK! For you purist, I have no lightning protection as I would never consider hilltopping in a storm. *Some people call me crazy but I ain't not stupid!* For those that do not have a built-in transmatch, simple homebrew circuits and parts are readily available for low power - a fun project! Maybe even another article!

My other antenna is a 40 meter dipole (which does double duty on 15 when the band opens) and

is made from #20 ga insulated hookup wire 33' feet long X 2. To make this, I began by finding two empty containers of first aid tape (white stuff). In the center hub, I drilled two small holes just large enough for the wire to pass, and an additional two holes opposite the first. For example, I placed two holes at 12, and two at the 6 o'clock positions. Next, I wrap 33' of hook-up wire on each spool, fit the covers, and throw them into the bag. To make the dipole, I take the wire off each spool, select one spool and put one end of each wire through two of the holes with about 4" sticking through. This becomes the center insulator. These 4" ends will connect to the coax and I use small (grey) wire-nuts when hilltopping for strength, not weather protection. Tie some string to the other ends of the wire and hang it up somewhere.—nowhere to hang it from? I also have a "painter's pole" which is 12 feet when extended and becomes a 4 foot walking stick when collapsed (cost \$14). This makes a great center support for an inverted V when on an open hill with no other support is available. If I cannot lash this painter's pole to anything, I also carry spare string to make one or two guy wires to support the pole. Four bright orange tent pegs (cheap round ones) are in my kit and are great for the ends of the V antenna and the guy wires - Bright orange is easiest to find at dusk. You'll notice that I do not care much about height, radiation angle, or much of anything else. My QSO's average about 20 minutes with decent signal reports 3-5-9 or better and rarely do I get a 5-9-9. I typically do not identify as portable /P, or QRP until we are exchanging station information. I find that when I do identify /P or QRP, the QSO is strictly a technical exchange and last only a few minutes. This is more like contesting, and to me, is not relaxing.

Hilltopping is not just an HF activity. A good friend of mine does GHz hilltopping (*he is a little crazy*) and I have heard others doing VHF hilltopping on a regular basis. So, pack a snack, or lunch and go visit nature, have fun, and relax. (And be aware of other's, and your safety) 73's,

Joe's Field Operating Techniques

HCRA Ham Shacks Presents:

W1BMK (Norm) & KB1CPZ (Betty's) Shack



HCRA Ham Shacks note: For the coming year. The HCRA is entering every shack that gets printed in Zero Beat for the prior September thru June year an entry for a raffle to HRO.

So Norm and Betty are the first entry. Are you next? Send your pictures and information to: Larry—wb1dby at wb1dby@comcast.net before the 20th of the month.

Top Shelf Left to Right: Ameriton Remote Control Coax Switch, Below, a 6 position LDG Antenna Switch (used to select the various transceivers), Next Yaesu G8000XA Rotor Controller, Below an LDG AT200 Pro Auto Tuner, Next the Yaesu FT1000, MK V Transceiver, Next the Kenwood VT7 transceiver for 2 Meters and 70 Centimeter, with assorted handheld at the right hand of the shelf. Bottom shelf, Left to Right, a Kenwood 440S Transceiver with a Rigblaster affix on top of it for PSK, Next the Yaesu FP29 Power Supply for the Mark V above, Next the Yaesu FT 650 (6, 10, and 12 Meters Transceiver), and finally the Astron RS35M Power Supply.

Antenna System, Top Diamond Vertical for 6 & 2 Meters and 70 centimeters, Below the vertical, a 4 element 6 Meter Yagi, below the Yagi is a Mosley TA33 Jr. for 20, 15, and 10 Meters, next is a Alpha Delta Sloper for 160, 80, 40 and 30 Meters, and finally a Discone used for scanning purposes, all attached to a 30 foot Rohn 25 Tower.



Next Meeting:
Friday, Sept 7, 2007
Steve Ford; WB8IMY
QST Editor

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



PLEASE HAND CANCEL