



## FEBRUARY 2010

# Zero Beat

<http://www.hcra.org>

### From the Shack...

#### Bylaw Revision Project

Last fall your board decided our bylaws were in need of updating. Since the last revision many things have changed. We have seen changes in licensing and new modes, home computers and the internet were barely in use by the 'common person', many areas needed some freshening up and some of our director positions didn't accurately portray how we have been running the club. Those were some of the reasons the board approved a review of the bylaws.

The board asked for volunteers from the board to form a 'bylaw committee'. This committee would review the present bylaws and submit a draft proposal to the board. If the proposal met with board approval we would then present it to the members for ratification.

The bylaw committee was composed of Irv, W6IS and George, KC1V. Both are experienced amateurs, leaders in the hobby and bring a broad base of knowledge to the task. Irv and George worked on the project and brought at least three draft proposals before the board for consideration. They also asked for and received input from the membership and we thank you for your interest. The final draft proposal was presented to your board at the January board meeting. The new bylaws were reviewed and discussed and the board members present unanimously approved the draft proposal.

The rest is up to you, the HCRA members. We respectfully ask you to review the bylaw proposal enclosed in this month's Zero Beat. It represents a lot of hard work by W6IS and KC1V. Director responsibilities have been realigned to make more sense in today's electronic world. Language has been cleaned up and hopefully the document is completely gender neutral. We will ask for your vote of ratification at the March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Between now and then please take a

serious look at the hard work the committee has accomplished and if you have any additional suggestions please present them to any board member. You

can view the current HCRA bylaws at: [http://www.hcra.org/hcra\\_by-laws.htm](http://www.hcra.org/hcra_by-laws.htm).

In closing I would personally like to thank both Irv and George for the effort they put into this project. Although our bylaws are quite small and well written there was significant work to be done to bring them into a form that will stay with us for another decade. Their work is done and now they can go back to working DX! I'm sure you will be as impressed as I with the revision and ratify their hard work on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### Alternative Energy – are you ready?

Our February meeting is going to be a good one. I know we've all talked about 'getting off the grid' but not many of us have actually accomplished that lofty goal. That's not the case with Ellis Rud, N1MWJ. Ellis is coming to HCRA to give us the low down on how he is close to 75% off the grid, his methods and experiences. There are many advances in this arena and you should leave with some ideas, big or small, that will help you reduce your dependency on the grid. The raffle prize tonight goes right along with the subject, a powerful 12 watt solar panel or a book on Emergency Power. Mark your calendars and we will see you there!

'73... see you at the meeting,  
Jim, KK1W



# BY-LAWS

## HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION, INC.

### Article I Membership

1. Any person of good moral character may become a member of the Corporation by a majority vote of the Directors, providing a candidate for membership shall first present an application to an officer of the Corporation for consideration.
2. Any member of the Corporation who holds a valid amateur radio operators license shall be a Regular Member of the Corporation, entitled to vote at meetings of the Corporation and hold office therein. All others shall be Members with the right to vote, but without the right to hold office.

### Article II Officers

1. At the first and subsequent annual meetings of the Corporation there shall be elected for one (1) year terms by majority vote of members present thereat, a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary who shall also be and have powers of Directors and at the first and subsequent annual meetings there shall likewise be elected five (5) Directors for a one (1) year term. The Directors shall have the following responsibilities.
  - A. Technical Director: Will have the responsibility for all technical aspects of the Corporation to include but not limited to RFI problems.
  - B. Program Director: Will select guest speakers for general Corporation meetings.
  - C. Membership Director: Shall actively recruit new members at times and places of their discretion, and represent the Corporation in a manner to create growth of the organization.
  - D. Newsletter Director: Will have the responsibility to write and publish the Corporation newsletter
  - E. Director at Large: Shall assist any corporate Directors as deemed necessary.
2. The President shall preside at all board and general meetings of the Corporation and at all other corporate functions.
3. The Vice-President shall, during the absence of the President, perform the duties and assume the responsibilities of the President.
4. The Treasurer shall receive all moneys due the Corporation and shall disburse the same according to the will of the Directors. The Treasurer shall keep accurate books and records of all of transactions and shall publish monthly financial reports to the membership. The Treasurer shall perform all other functions normally necessary and required of the position.

5. The Secretary shall keep records of all meetings of the Corporation and of its Directors, shall maintain a directory of the membership, shall be responsible for all notices and correspondence as may be required and necessary and shall do all other things necessary and required of the position.
6. The Directors shall have general charge of all business and activities of the Corporation, shall hold such meetings as may be necessary, shall approve all disbursements of the Corporation, shall determine the form of application for membership in the Corporation and reject or approve applicants for membership, shall fill vacancies occurring in any office of the Corporation and shall do all other things expedient in carrying out the objects and purposes of the Corporation.

### Article III Meetings

1. Annual meetings of the Corporation shall be held during the month of June of each year.
2. Regular meetings shall be held monthly at a time and place to be designated by the Directors. The Directors may choose not to hold a monthly meeting by majority vote.
3. Special meetings shall be called by the President on the request of any ten Regular Members in good standing and shall call special meetings of the Directors on the request of any four Directors.
4. Members shall be given not less than four days notice of the time and place of regular meetings to be scheduled for a time and place by the Directors and they shall be given a like notice of all special meetings with a statement as to the purpose thereof.

### Article IV Quorum

1. A quorum at regular, special and annual meetings of the Corporation shall consist of fifteen percent of the Regular Members in good standing and at a meeting of the Directors a quorum shall consist of five Directors.
2. A Regular Member or a Member of the Corporation in good standing shall be entitled to one vote at meetings of the Corporation.

### Article V Dues and Disbursements

1. Dues shall be payable on September one in each year. Any member in arrears shall not be considered in good standing and may be suspended from membership by majority vote of the Directors.
2. The Directors shall determine an annual schedule of dues by majority vote. All members shall be given not less than four days notice of the annual dues schedule prior to September one of each year.

3. The Directors for good cause may, in their discretion, remit the dues of any member otherwise in good standing.
4. The dues schedule must be presented to the applicant upon their application for membership in the Corporation. The Directors shall determine the applicants or members eligibility to the selected dues schedule.
5. All disbursements of the Corporation shall be approved by a majority vote of the Directors. All disbursements in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500) shall also be approved by a majority vote of the membership at a general meeting of the Corporation.

**Article VI  
By-Laws**

1. These by-laws may be amended by a majority vote of the members in good standing and present at a meeting of the Corporation, of which all members shall have had four days notice of the time and place of said meeting and of the subject matter of the amendments proposed.

**Article VII  
Miscellaneous**

1. None of the officers or members of the Corporation shall subject the Corporation to obligations or liabilities beyond its ability to pay therefore from its funds and properties.
2. There shall be no assessments levied against any members of the Corporation unless and until a majority of the members at a meeting of the Corporation shall vote said levy, and unless all members shall have had four day notice of the time and place of said meeting and of the subject matter of the assessment proposed.
3. Any club call sign trustee shall serve at the pleasure of the Corporation Directors and under the direction of the President of the Corporation.

## Zero Beat Contributions:

Anything of interest is welcome. This is YOUR Newsletter. It's not interesting without YOUR ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS.

Please submit your ideas, articles and more to [wb1dby@comcast.net](mailto:wb1dby@comcast.net). Thank you,  
Larry, WB1DBY, Zero Beat Editor

## March Meeting: Show and Tell

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## The Return of the Rockmites!

The March meeting will be the annual Show and Tell meeting. Here is a great opportunity for members to show off something that you are proud of; explain how it works: what it took to build it; or any other interesting comments that you might have.

Now at this meeting I am going to show my favorite QRP dipole that I use most of the time. It has been set up in each of the New England States, New York, Indiana, and Virginia. Although I rarely am able to raise this antenna higher than 20 feet +/-, it has proven to be highly reliable, efficient, and strong. It has the flexibility of being mounted as a dipole, sloper, half sloper, "L", inverted V, or long wire. OK folks, it is a piece of wire, cut in the middle with an insulator, and I am sure that you can beat my creativity! And I know that you want to! So put on your thinking caps, look around your shack for your special something that you have built, and bring it to the March meeting.

Besides my piece of wire (which I really do like), I am expecting some rockmites, maybe a QRPME kit from last year, I'd personally would like to see a good field strength meter or other test equipment, a power supply, antenna, and maybe a tuner of some type. The only requirements are that you put it together, and it is radio related.

So how about it? Will you bring something?

Hampden County Radio Association  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, December 8th, 2009

Attendees : Irv Slitzky W6IS, George Collins KC1V, Michael Lavery KB1PKJ, Jim Mullen KK1W, Jim Whitehouse K1JAW, Ed LaCombe KB1NWH

Not Attending : Larry Krainson WB1DBY, John Pise KX1X, Dave Cain AA1YW

Jim called the meeting to order at 7:19 pm, at Hampden Bank in Longmeadow, MA.

Officer Reports

Treasurer - George Collins KC1V  
Current member count - 80  
Club Balance - \$4,117.36

Secretary - Michael Lavery KB1PKJ  
Action item completed - Special Service  
Club status was submitted and approved.  
Board reviewed November minutes as submitted and one correction was made.  
Board voted to accept amended minutes. Vote was unanimously accepted. Minutes will be sent to Larry and entered into ZB for December Issue.

Action Item - request EQSL club account access to be reset to club email address [W1NY@arrl.net](mailto:W1NY@arrl.net) .

Zero Beat Editor - Larry Krainson WB1DBY (in absentia)  
Submit articles to Larry by Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>

Membership - Ed LaCombe KB1NWH

Let the record show there were two new members submitted for board approval. Member call signs - N1DZH and KB1TCL. Board voted unanimously to accept the new members.

At Large - Irv Slitzky W6IS

Nothing of note to report.

Program - Jim Whitehouse K1JAW

Kits were ordered from Small Wonder Labs - 13 kits

Old Business

Holiday Party Recap - Date & Location were good. Food was acceptable for buffet style. Cost was higher, but the club didn't subsidize this year.

By-law revisions will be covered next meeting

New Business

Boxboro Van trip will be done again

Respectfully submitted on this date - January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010 - Michael S. Lavery

## Where are the Ham Radio Hackers?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

On the Ten-Tec Omni VII Yahoo Group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Ten-Tec-Omni-VII/>), one ham wrote:

"If I was 17 years-old I would be hacking I-phones and other items like George Hotz, the 17 year-old from New Jersey who was able to unlock the Apple I-phone so that it could be used on other cell service networks.

"When I was his age, I was hacking dial telephones. Then one day the phone company showed up at my house. My parents were not impressed with my technical abilities.

"This morning there is a story that George has just hacked the 'un-hackable' Sony 3 Play Station. He says the hack was 95% software and 5% hardware.

"A quick check of the modifications site run by that guy over in Denmark, shows that there are NO MODS for the O7...interesting. I just wonder how many strange and wonderful things can be done with those 36 buttons/switches on the front panel. Can the O7 be made even better?"

In my reply, I asked, "Why stop at pressing some buttons on the front panel? Why doesn't someone really hack the Omni VII and develop a completely new software package for it?" Rigs like the Omni VII and the Elecraft K3 would seem to be perfect candidates for this kind of hacking.

Sure, there is an order of magnitude differ-

ence between a \$300 iPod and a \$3,000 radio, but we're big boys, aren't we? Besides, aside from overdriving the finals, what real damage can you do to the radio? It seems to me that even if you manage to screw up the software in the rig, you can get back to square one by simply re-loading the manufacturer's software.

Ham radio operators have a long history of modifying their radios. Page through any stack of QSTs or CQ Magazines from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and you'll find many articles describing modifications to the popular radios of the day. About the only thing hams do to their rigs today is to clip a diode to allow it to operate out-of-band.

What does it say about the technical capabilities of today's hams that we haven't yet done with our gear what some 17-year-old kid has done with the iPhone and the PlayStation? Why don't we have any third-party software for Omni VII or the K3? I think if a manufacturer actually encouraged third-party software development, they'd quickly gain a following and make their brand even stronger, don't you?

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Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, blogs about ham radio at [www.kb6nu.com](http://www.kb6nu.com), teaches the infamous One-Day Tech Class, and operates a lot of 40m CW. E-mail him your comments and questions at [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).

# Brimfield Nerd Fest – 2010



*Who ate all the Altoids?*

How did this all come about? It started innocently enough. A few of K1JAW's Rock-Mite builders took advantage of an offer to use Muppet Labs, East (the KK1W skunkworks) to build and test their kits. Part one of conditions favorable for a NerdFest.

Next up Tom, N1MUV. Tom was campaigning for activity in the ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes. Western Massachusetts used to be a hot bed for this contest but lately activity has dropped and Tom was hoping to get it 'pumped up' a bit. So I figured I would open up the KK1W shack to anyone that wanted to stop by and try a little bit of VHF contesting. Part two of NerdFest favorable conditions.

The contest was January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Matt, KB1TCL and Mary, N1TOY decided Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> was a convenient time to work on their Rock-Mites. The stage was set for our first NerdFest!

I would like to say I got underway early in the week readying the station and shop for Saturday and Sunday visitors - but I didn't. I thought about it, does that count?

Monday came, the shop is a mess, the room for the shack is ripped down and I'm doing drywall work. My plan is a multi operator effort for the VHF contest but the coax for the 2 meter beam is still out on the tower. There's only one VHF capable rig in the shack and that one can only do 6 meters. My plan was to set up a second station using the FT100 from my car, add more cable to the 2 meter beam and bring it inside, setup a second operating position and provide N1MM networked to both stations. It seemed like a good plan but in order for it to work I would have to actually do something!

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday... nada! Hey, I've still got time, Kx1x taught me that! Thursday came and I finally repaired some coax and connected it to the 2M beam. Late

It takes a certain set of weather events to create a 'perfect storm' and likewise it takes a confluence of various amateur activities to form a true 'nerdfest'! We had the confluence and Brimfield Nerd Fest was born on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Thursday evening I thought I'd look into networking N1MM for multi-operator. Thankfully that was well documented and worked with little effort. Friday came around but I had to go to BB's. Couldn't miss a nice meal with some ham buddies, could I? And of course the VE session Friday night but hey, I've got time! The contest doesn't start until 2:00 PM on Saturday, that's like what, almost 24 hours yet? Lots of time. I did manage to get the rig out of the car and installed on a folding table before I left for the test session Friday evening.

Saturday dawned nicely but I was sleeping! I eventually got things underway, cleaned the shop and had it ready for Rock-Mite building and testing, checked out the stations and waited for visitors. See, plenty of time - actually time left over!

Matt arrived around 12:30 or so with his really cool, double-decker Rock-Mite. We looked over the build and decided there was only one thing to do - put some power on it and watch for smoke! Success!!! - (no, no smoke). The little 'mite' came up and worked just like it should. KB1TCL was obviously very happy. He hooked up the new transceiver to the 40M dipole and took a stab at making a contact. No luck but Matt is doing really well with his CW, more about that later.



*It works!*

Mary, N1TOY arrived about 1:30 with her Rock-Mite kit, worried about making a mistake building it. With Matt's help and a little soldering practice on some universal circuit boards with some surplus components she felt ready to go. And she certainly was, with just a little help from Matt that pesky SMD was soldered on the board. It looked like a pro did it (she did). With the worst of the build behind her Mary settled in to mounting and soldering the rest of the components to the board. Talk about dedication! N1TOY dove right in and plugged away until the board was complete. She did a great job and somehow managed not to be too distracted by the contesting and conversation circulating around her.



NQ1C on 2M

Come around 2:00PM Bob, NQ1C showed up with his son Andrew and his dad Henry. Bob, a past president of HCRA has not had the opportunity to be active lately and was looking forward to some VHF contesting fun. Too bad we only could field a mediocre station but who cares - contesting is contesting. He jumped in on both 6 and 2, Andrew was helping to log and Henry was chatting with everyone and having a good time. After an hour or so we managed to convince Andrew to take a shot at calling CQ on 2 meter SSB. Let me tell you when he made his first contact he just about jumped out of the chair and was smiling from ear to ear. He made a few more contacts after that - hopefully we put the seed in place for another new ham down the road.

Chris, WB1ACE swung by around 3:00 or so to say hello and take some pictures. He's got this new 3D camera (watch out Avatar) that not only takes the 3D pictures but you can view them in 3D right on the viewscreen. That was really slick! Thanks for stopping by Chris and maybe next time we can get you behind the mic!



Andrew making his 1st

Bob and his family left around 5:00 PM leaving the three diehards; KB1TCL, N1TOY and myself to see what we could break unaided. We tried but didn't manage to destroy anything the entire evening. After some pizza and adult beverages for supper Mary went back to building and Matt and I played around on 6 and 2 meters. Matt has been practicing his CW and is doing very well. He was calling CQ on 2 meters and I was working 6. If he made a contact I would help him through parts of it and he would go back to CQ'ing. His sending is excellent and he is copying at least 13 WPM - very impressive Matt.

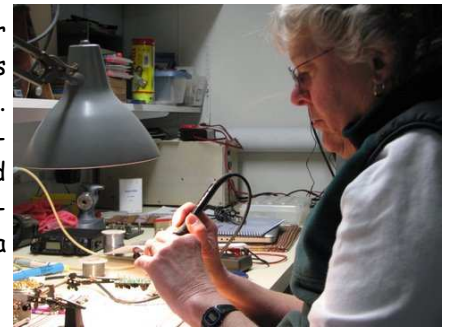
Something else happened Saturday evening as well, apparently KB1TCL caught a dose of contest fever. He kept wanting to leave the rig but would say - only a few more contacts and we will make 500 points, only a new mult or two and we could make 600 - you get the picture. We may have created a monster here, watch out Field Day.



KB1TCL on 2M

Saturday ended for Mary and Matt around 10. Mary completed the circuit board and Matt cranked up the score pretty good. I hung

around for another hour or so but it was time to call it a night. Same stations on calling CQ that we had already worked, tomorrow would be a better day.



N1TOY hard at work

It turns out Sunday didn't turn out the way I had planned. I had an offer from a friend for breakfast, then he would give me a hand running a few circuits in the garage. I couldn't turn down the help so put the contest on the back burner and spent the better part of the day wiring the garage.

Eric, KB1JVI let me know he would be around about 4:00 PM to contest and he was right on time. I still had some cleanup work to do in the garage so I gave him the rundown on the station setup and let him loose on the airwaves. When I came back in an hour or so later he had racked up a bunch of new QSO's and a few new grids. Great job Eric! Things got pretty quiet around 7:00 PM so Eric headed home to get ready for work the next day. Gee, I think I remember what that was like - maybe not!

I figured I was done for the day but by now you know how that goes. I ended up in front of the rigs once more and played contesting until the bell at 11:00 PM. Nothing exciting for grids or score but it was fun nonetheless. A little post contest homework, got the Cabrillo done and submitted and after a some effort got that darn 'robot' to accept our log my day was done.

We ended up with 91 contacts and a little over 1600 point for our hard work. Not bad for a bunch of amateurs at a NerdFest. But the contest was only part of the weekend. The milestones of a working Rock-Mite, a completed Rock-Mite board, CW operation, picture taking, Andrew's first contact, Bob getting on the air, great conversation - I think you get the picture.

My thanks go out to everyone who stopped by and had fun, for a minute, an hour or a day. I'm glad we had this opportunity to spend our time together and enjoy the hobby we love so much.

Jim, KK1W

## February Meeting: Alternative Power



Solar panels, hydro electric, batteries, chargers, regulators, tax relief, and the list goes on. This is the topic of the February meeting with guest speaker Ellis Rudd, N1MWJ, President of the NPBARC radio club (our friends on MT Greylock) and over 75% *off the grid*, will be discussing at the next meeting. Whether your interest lie with QRP, Field Day, or maybe helping to save the planet, this is the

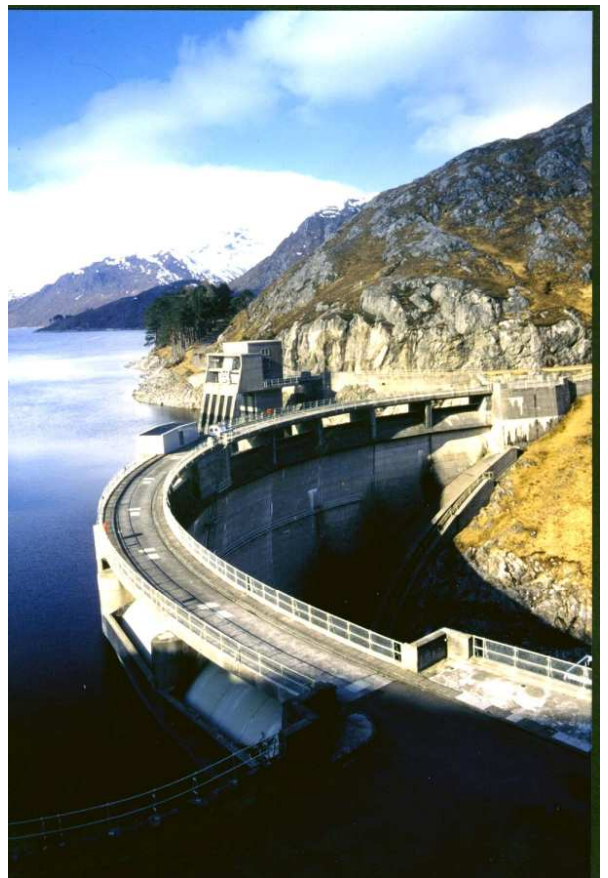


meeting to list to someone was has learned by doing in a big way.

Raffle prizes are topic related: A brand new 12 watt **monocrystalline** solar panel and a ARRL book " Emergency Power for Radio Communications". As always, coffee and donuts, good friends and a good time is promised.

So, hope to see you there on February 5th. Check out Ellis's panel installation at [www.hcra.org](http://www.hcra.org) half way down the page.

Jim, K1JAW





## Meeting Location:

*Feeding Hills  
Congregational Church  
21 North Westfield St.  
Feeding Hills, MA 01030*



## Next Meeting:

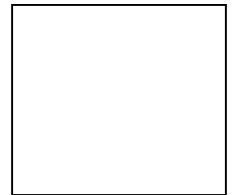
**Ellis Rudd, N1MWJ**

**“Alternative Power”**

**Feb 5<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30pm**



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



PLEASE HAND CANCEL