

# Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

February 2012

## HCRA Tech, General, Extra Classes—A Perfect Storm!

(Frandy Johnson, N1FJ) January, 2012 was the month for HCRA class and VE exam success. At Saturday's post-class VE session we had 6 pass Technician, 11 upgrade to General, and 3 make Extra, with two more Extras qualifying at the regular monthly VE session at Holyoke Hospital!

When John, KX1X, announced a new Technician course, Mike DeChristopher, N1TA, said he would like to add a General Class class, and I piped up that I would take on an Extra class. Instructors were Technician: Jeff Bail, NT1K, John Pise, KX1X, Rich, N1KXR and Nick K1MAZ; General: Jim Mullen, KK1W; and Extra: Frandy Johnson, N1FJ. Over 30 hams and ham wannabes attended the classes held at the Moose Family Center in Chicopee.



*A dozen prospective General Class hams listen raptly to HCRA President Jim Mullen, KK1W, at the Moose Family Center.*

Proud new licensees and hams who upgraded are **Technician:** Scott Small, Scott Davidson, Kevin Brogle, Paul Nicosia, Nicholas Hansmann, Laurie Pray; **Tech and General:** Ricardo Bellavita, Roger Latvis, David Meunier; **General:** David Scarpa, N1MFL; Charles Darling, KA1HKJ; Tuc Gemme, N1QFT; Richard Thibault, KB1YUI; Harriet Dyer, KB1NOG; Milo Thompson, KB1NQK; Eric Carrol, N1HVM; Jerry Pelkey, N1UFG; **Extra:** Mary Elkins, N1TOY; Robert Zielfelder, Jr, N1NUG; Rory Bacon, N1RNR; Ed LaCombe, KB1NWH; and Ken Labonte, KB1RBX. (Unfortunately, complete results on Friday's VE session were not immediately available at presstime.)



*Jeff Bail, NT1K, uses a PowerPoint presentation to review test questions for the Technician class.*

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- ARRL-sponsored contests
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- Local Clubs
- Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- Hamfests and Conventions
- Volunteer Examiner Coordinator Program

<http://www.arrl.org/membership>



# Local happenings

## (All times are local time)

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

**First Monday:** RACES Drill, 1900, 146.91; 1930, 146.94; 1945, 146.985

**Mondays:** 1930: HCRA 10m Net 28.375

**Tuesdays:** 1930-2000: 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R - Hampshire County Emergency Net

**Wednesdays:** 1930: MTARA Info net 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R - includes NTS Net

2000: MTARA Swap net: 146.94, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R

2000: MTARA Simplex Net - starts on 146.94 - PL 127.3, then goes to 146.42 direct (simplex) Usually starts immediately following the swap net.

**Thursdays:** 2100: Weather Net (Roger, K1PAI Net Control), 1st Thursday of every month: 147.090 MHz, All other Thursdays: 147.000, PL 127.3 - W1TOM/R

**Fridays:** 1200: BB's (Brown Baggers Luncheon)

Common Ground Restaurant

25 Park Avenue

West Springfield, MA 01089

Expect between 6 and 12 every Friday. Good food, great company!

## Club Meetings & VE Sessions

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

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

**4th Friday of the month** 1800 License Exams, Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech Street, Holyoke, MA. Hosted by the Western Mass VE Team (WMVET)

**Third Monday of the month** 1900 Franklin County Amateur Radio Club meeting, Greenfield High School (no meetings held in July or August) (Meeting Jan 23, 2012, 4th Monday; meeting Apr 23, 2012, to avoid holidays)

**4th Monday of February, May, August, November** 1900 FCARC VE Exams, Unitarian Church, Main Street, Northfield

## New England Flea Markets

25 Feb S Burlington VT HAM-CON @HI

4 Mar Hicksville NY LIMARC @LevitHall

10 Mar Feeding Hills MA MtTARA @TurnverneinClb (**Note new date!**)

18 Mar Southington CT SARA @HS

25 Mar Framingham MA FARA @KeefeTech

15 April Cambridge MA FLEA at MIT (Third Sunday April thru October)

28 Apr Gales Ferry CT RASON Auction @FireCo

4,5 May Deerfield NH Nearfest XI @FG



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

## HCRA Contact List

President, Jim Mullen KK1W (413) 245-3228  
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# FROM THE SHACK

## Show & Tell—the rush to the finish is on!

Time is running short; hopefully you're putting the finishing touches on this year's project? I have a mental picture, probably because I've seen so many of the 'improvement' shows on HGTV, of folks jumping in their car and speeding out to You Do It Electronics for a few last minute parts, then soldering things together in the back of the van while rushing to get to Feeding Hills in time for the presentation. Will this be you?

We're rolling out a new twist to Show & Tell this year. Instead of 'judges of questionable ability' we're going to replace them with... **YOU!** That's right; all judging will be done by audience voting this year. If you want to participate in the judging just pick up a ballot, make your choices and drop it in the box. We'll tally the votes and announce the winner at the end of the meeting. Along with the usual choices like 'best overall', 'most useful' and others expect some unique choices too – just to make it fun. Prizes this year will include ARRL books and beautiful certificate. Don't miss the fun, either build something or come on out and help judge. HCRA's Show & Tell is always one of our best meetings!

## HCRA members to vote on storage trailer purchase

Ed/KB1NWH and Marty/W1MJB have been investigating the purchase of a storage trailer. This trailer would be used to store all our Field Day gear and transport it to Field Day and other events as necessary. Presently all this equipment, and there is a lot of it, is being stored at Ed's house. Pursuant to HCRA bylaws any expenditure over \$500 requires approval of the members so be prepared to actually have to work at the February meeting. Ed and Marty will present to you the details of the intended purchase, cost, registration, and storage and how it will be put to use. The decision is then up to you.



## ARRL to start ePublishing QST

ARRL has announced they will be publishing QST electronically starting with the June 2012 issue. Unlike some other ham magazines there is no additional charge – members will still get their paper QST in the mail AND an ezine in their computer's inbox. Electronic publishing offers great opportunities to link to additional info, pictures and videos that enhance the reader's experience. If you haven't seen any you will be pleasantly surprised. Yes, it is difficult to keep a stack of them in your favorite 'reading room' but they really are pretty slick.

Another benefit is starting with the June issue all ARRL members will have access to the entire QST archive on the league website. No more three year 'blackout' as in the past.



This is a good time to ask the question, "Are you a member of ARRL?" If you answered no I would encourage you to re-think your decision. ARRL is our strongest voice with the FCC and Washington bureaucrats, fighting to keep and expand amateur radios access to frequencies and modes. Your membership helps continue the good fight. The League also provides services like the Outgoing QSL Bureau, Logbook of the World (LotW), DXCC, contests, magazine archives – the list goes on and on. Please consider joining if you're not a member, your hobby will thank you for it.

## March brings us John Ellsworth from the Vintage Radio Museum

Interested in radio history? Have a yearning to learn more about radio's past and its effect on our life and hobby? Did you know there is a fantastic museum with all this and more just south of the border in Connecticut? No, then you really should attend our March 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation. John will be visiting us once again with some excellent radio memorabilia from the museum's collection. You can

learn more about the museum at: <http://vrcmet.org/>. This is another HCRA presentation you won't want to miss – see you there!

## Loose Connections:

Indoor Swap Meet at the Vintage Wireless & Radio Museum, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 8 – noon.

AARC Hamfest, Marlboro, MA – February 18<sup>th</sup>, 9 – 1 PM.

The MTARA Hamfest is March 10<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendars now and be sure to attend. Don't forget to stop by the HCRA table and say hello while you're there (and maybe pickup another ticket or two for the KX3 raffle).

There's lots of great DXpeditions out there taking advantage of an active sun. If you're at all interested in DX take advantage of them while you have the chance!

'73... See you at Show & Tell!

Jim, KK1W





&



*HCRA's Thirteenth Annual*

# Show & Tell



What's a "show & tell"? It's a chance to show off your latest creation and win something for your efforts. It's usually the feature part of our March meeting but this year it comes early, February 3rd to be exact. You've still got a *some* of time to finish but you better work fast! To enter, show up with your project, explain it and wait for the audience's decision. There will be both Beginner and Expert classes again this year. All entries will be judged by you, the audience. You'll be the ones who get to choose 'Best in Show', 'Most Useful' and other fun categories. We'll make the determination of 'Beginner or Expert' and you do the rest. Sounds like fun, doesn't it?

**First prize in each category will be a beautiful certificate and an ARRL book!**



*The judges may banish 'dangerous' demonstrations to the parking lot in the name of member safety!*

# HCRA Board of Directors Minutes

January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## OFFICER REPORTS

Vice President, Kx1x

Tech Class Update – 15 Tech, 8 General, 7 Extra + 1 more next week. Excellent job!

Treasurer, AA1YW.

Current financial report - \$8977.87

Long Term Raffle report - 82 tickets sold so far (\$820)

Holiday Party report - \$1774.11 (restaurant) - \$1080 (tickets) = \$694.11 plus raffle prizes.

Secretary W1MJB –

Holiday Party – Report – Went well, food was good and everyone seemed pleased

Submit November minutes for approval - approved

## DIRECTOR REPORTS

Technical, KB1NWH

Report – Removed tower KB1FQQ, N1TOY put up new dipole, KB1VHS put up antennas,

Zero Beat, N1FJ

Publication date for February ZB – Content by the 27<sup>th</sup>, publish on the 30<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup>.

Membership, W1MSW

Current member count (broken down by member type) 85 Regular, 16 Family, 3 Life, 11 Prospect

10 Meter Contest Report – Worked out well, best ever for HCRA.

HCRA web page proposal – Motion to allow Matt to explore a new web host/design for the next 6 months and not to exceed \$100. – passed.

At Large, N1KXR.

ARRL Cabinet meeting report – reported on the details of the ARRL cabinet meeting. Also did Facebook/Craig's list work for the license classes.

Program, NN1Y

February -Show & Tell

March – John Eldridge/Antique Radio Museum

April – Logging software presentation: W1MSW, Kx1x, KB1NWH, KK1W

May – QSL Bureau presentation, outgoing and incoming

June – Tailgate Party

## Crew DX President, N1ELI

Report – W1AW tour in Dec, NAQP in Jan, WPX in March, NEQP in Essex, VT - Long range goal, hamcation at PJ2T.

Have crew email addresses been sent to W1MSW? – on the way soon.

## OLD BUSINESS

Status of exploratory work on purchasing a storage trailer – W1MJB and KB1NWH (also AA1YW).- in process, report at next meeting..

Has the DX Crew supplied email addresses to Matt for the database? – N1ELI or Kx1x – in process.

Payment to Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts from the N1IKD donation – Dave cut a check for \$1500 to CFofWMA.

Presentation for May? – QSL bureau presentation?

Possible alternate meeting location down the road – KK1W – location is a bit out of the way and consensus was to hold off for now as there wasn't a lot of savings involved.

Change Trustee for W1NY? (tabled from November) dropped for now, will revisit at a later date.

1 day kitchen rental for Dufresne? – KK1W – yes, for Saturday June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Should we roll tailgate party into fFD? (tabled from November) – discussed, not in favor or changing.

## NEW BUSINESS

Web page proposal – W1MSW – see above.

Table at MTARA Hamfest, March 10<sup>th</sup> – need a few volunteers – KK1W, AA1YW, N1KXR

Push for more \*200\* raffle sales – the board will help Frank push tickets at the meetings, Rich will get some tickets from Frank for sales at other venues.

Field Day Planning and committee – KK1W – the board authorized \$250 to purchase a triplexer for testing.

Elections – who's in for next year? Does anyone want to try a different position? – everyone is still in for next year in the same positions. We are interested in new board members as some present ones would like a vacation.

MTARA/HCRA holiday party next year? – Should this be done? Voted to explore the idea. Initially a swap of membership lists and discuss next month. Ed will follow up with MTARA.

Prizes for Show & Tell will be recognition, Facebook posting and Zero Beat articles.

## NEWS FROM...

### OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE NORTH

On January 12, four members of the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club (FCARC) started a six week training course for prospective Technician licensees. The class started with thirteen people, ranging from a sixth grade student in Greenfield to a retired doctor living in Erving. Many members of the class have participated in the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). One woman is also a fire fighter and member of the Civil Air Patrol. Two students are select board members in their respective towns.

With so many students connected to emergency response groups, the first class focused on using repeaters. Other classes have covered basic understanding of antennas and electronic circuits. Upcoming classes will cover operating procedures, modulation, equipment, and regulations. The last class in the series will be a review, followed by an actual exam.

Recently we received word that a neighboring amateur radio club in Vermont has scheduled a course for holders of a technicians license who want to upgrade to General Class license. The classes will be held in Brattleboro starting the first week of February.

Information about that course, including contact information, is posted on the FCARC web page <http://www.fcarc.org>. This is an unusual opportunity for people who want to upgrade but find their lives too busy or distracting to study the material on their own.

## Don't Forget the "200" Raffle!

Frank, KB1LFD, is handling raffle ticket sales at our club meetings and club events for 2011/2012. If you would like to take home a new KX3 make sure you find Frank to get a ticket (or two or three). Tickets are selling well, so don't miss out on the chance to win Elecraft's latest innovative design. Drawing will be held June 1, or earlier if all 200 tickets are sold earlier.

<b>HCRA KX3 RAFFLE</b>		
Name _____		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 160 - 6 meters</li><li>• SSB/CW/DATA/AM/FM</li><li>• Only 1.5 pounds</li><li>• Advanced DSP</li><li>• 10W PEP, low current drain</li><li>• Be the 1st on your block!</li><li>• MSRP \$899.99 (estimated)</li></ul>
Call sign _____		
Phone _____	<b>Elecraft KX3</b>	
	<b>«F5»</b>	<b>DRAWING BY JUNE 1ST, 2012</b>
	<b>\$10/ticket - Only 200 tickets will be sold !</b>	

## Classes for General Class License

The West River Radio Club is sponsoring a General Class Course to be held at: Vermont Yankee-Entergy Offices, 185 Old Ferry Rd., Brattleboro, VT 05301 Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Classes begin on January 31, 2012 with a Technician-level review. The General-level course will begin on February 7 and end on April 3 with a review and Volunteer Examiner Test Session. The cost for the course is \$ 50.00, which includes the text, CD-ROM, and VE Exam fee.

To enroll or for more information, please contact: Bro. Frank Hagerty, S.S.E. WK1L; call (802) 387-5639; or email [hagertysse@myfairpoint.net](mailto:hagertysse@myfairpoint.net).

## Planning to Attend the 24th Annual MTARA Hamfest March 10, 2012?

The Mount Tom Amateur Repeater Association is again holding a hamfest/flea market this year at Springfield, Turnverein Club, 176 Garden St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030. There will be a VE session, vendors for new and used gear, and a great time to run into old friends, and make new ones.

6:30 AM - Vendor setup (MTARA does not have an "Early Buyer" option. Please, vendors only at 6:30 AM)

8:30 AM - Doors open for general admission

Cost: \$5 General Admission (children 12 and under are free)

For complete information see <http://www.mtara.org/> and click on **Hamfest - March 10, 2012**.

Visit our website at <http://www.hcra.org>.

We are also on Facebook Groups: *Hampden County Radio Association* and *SOTAJerks*.

## Skywarn Class scheduled

Thursday May 31st, 2012: 7-10 PM:

22News WWLP-TV

1 Broadcast Center

Chicopee, Mass.

Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecaster

Registration: None Required.

For further information on this and other possible Skywarn classes, contact Eric, N1QKO, [et-n1qko@juno.com](mailto:et-n1qko@juno.com). NWS encourages anyone with an interest in public service and access to communication, such as HAM radio, to join the SKYWARN® program. Volunteers include police and fire personnel, dispatchers, EMS workers, public utility workers and other concerned private citizens. Individuals affiliated with hospitals, schools, churches, nursing homes or who have a responsibility for protecting others are also encouraged to become a spotter.