


**Hampden
County
Radio
Association**



JANUARY 2009

ZERO BEAT

<http://www.hcra.org>



January 2nd 2009

7:30 PM

Sean Kutzko, KX9X

Contest Branch Manager
for the ARRL

Did you ever wonder how many Hams there are in Massachusetts?

Well as of November 16, 2008, the breakdown is as follows:

Total number of Hams in Massachusetts: 14159.

Percentage of Hams to the general population: 1.96.

Rank out of 50 states: 18th.

Number of Technician Class Operators: 5251.

Number of Technician Plus Class Operators: 465 (No more being issued).

Number of Novice Class Operators: 607 (No more being issued).

Number of General Class Operators: 3292.

Number of Advanced Class Operators: 1491 (No more being issued).

Number of Extra Class Operators: 2796.

Number of (registered) Amateur Radio Clubs in Massachusetts: 257.

From the Shack...

Start the New Year with Sean Kutzko - KX9X

Our first meeting of the New Year features Sean Kutzko, KX9X. Sean is the Contest Branch Manager for ARRL and an extremely active ham. Obviously Sean is into contesting but a quick glance at his web-site will convince you that if it has something to do with ham radio and operating Sean will give it a try. The new buzz word for contesting is 'Radiosport' and that pretty much says it all. The whole idea is to participate and have fun. What did our parents used to tell us, "winning isn't everything" was it? With winter closed in around us now is a perfect time to spend a few hours 'hamming it up' on the radio instead of staring at all those LCD pixels on the television. Even if you don't end up turning in a log think of all the folks you made happier just by giving them a contact. There are quite a few events in the next few months and I'm sure Sean will give us some tips on how to have fun in each and every one of them. January 2nd is the date - See you there!

HCRA 10 Meter show up big in t he ARRL 10 Meter Contest!

So, were there more HCRA members than sunspots in this year's event? If we only had one we would be ahead and we had way more than that! Yes sir, zero sunspots didn't make this contest one for the record books but it still provided a break from the holiday rush and a chance to have fun playing radio. Scores are still rolling in but I think we probably had around 10 - 12 members on the air for the 2008 10 meter contest. I have to say the high point for me was working Pat, KB1OAP, on CW. Pat is a perfect example of how to use the excuse of a 'contest' to advance our operating skills. Watch the HCRA web page to see the latest in contest entries.

A new feature this year, HCRA Awards, is the brain child of Jim, K1JAW. A beautiful certificate will be given to any HCRA member making as few as five contacts in the contest. Don't forget you must submit your log to qualify. I see seven folks who will be



getting some new wallpaper, will there be more? Don't forget to send us your scores so you too can get some new wallpaper to cover the shack walls.

Most of all, to all those who participated this year - a big 'Thanks' from HCRA!

Have you even started on your project yet?

March isn't only a time for basketball. March 6th (our regular club meeting) will once again be the ever popular "Show & Tell". A time when our members get to show off their unique construction projects from the last 12 months. New this year will be a 'kit builders' class. This new class replaces the Novice class of year's past and is open to anyone who has built a ham radio 'kit'. Many of the entries will come from our 'kit builder raffles' of previous months but you needn't be one of those winners to participate in the new class.

This is such a neat event. Entries of years past have ranged from the simple to complex, useful to useless and just about everything in between. The creativity of our members is amazing and is aptly demonstrated every year at Show & Tell. Whether it is replica old time transmitters or foam paddles (I still can't figure out how Frandy hooks those up), antennas or antenna launchers you might find it at Show & Tell. There's still time so what are you waiting for? Dust off the workbench, fire up the soldering iron and get to work. You could be the one going home with a \$50 HRO Gift Certificate for your effort.

Jim, KK1W

10m contest



Ed working hard at KC1V's station during the 10m contest



All I Want for Christmas Is....

By Dan, KB6NU

When I was a kid, we had an album (remember records on vinyl?) that had a bunch of Christmas songs for kids. The song I remember most goes: All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth, My two front teeth, my two front teeth.

Gee, if I could only have my two front teeth, Then I could wish you Merry Chrith-math (sang with a lisp).

Seeing as how I've had my two front teeth for nearly 50 years now, and I pretty much have everything I want, I got to thinking about what I want for ham radio for Christmas this year. Here's what I've come up with so far. In no particular order, I want:

- MORE SUNSPOTS!

- The median age for ham radio operators to actually decrease this year. This means not only recruiting kids, but also younger adults.

- The pessimists who are continually talking down ham radio to find new joy in the hobby and begin working to make it great.

- The FCC to appoint someone as effective as Riley Hollingsworth to take over as the enforcer of the amateur radio service regulations.

- The FCC to pay a little more attention to amateur radio regulations and not treat them as an afterthought.

- The silliness on 75m phone and 14.275 MHz to go QRT.

- The ARRL to work harder on making itself

truly the "national association for amateur radio" and on increasing the percentage of licensed hams that are ARRL members.

- To be able to brag about all of ham radio's "purposes," not only providing emergency and public service communications. According to Part 97, these are:

- * advancing the state of the radio art;
- * improving our technical and operating skills;
- * expanding the number of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts; and
- * enhancing international goodwill.

- Ham radio clubs to grow and thrive even in these tough economic times.

When I asked this question on Twitter, I got a couple of answers that were versions of a couple of wishes above, but I also got a few more:

- WORMT wants "all of us to get on the air more and act as good ambassadors for the hobby," and

- NT7S wants the hearts of ham grinchies to grow a couple of sizes.

- N!WBV wants redesigns for most ham radio websites.

I pretty much agree with all three. Happy New Year!

When not waiting for Santa to decide if he's been naughty or nice, Dan, KB6NU, teaches ham classes and blogs about ham radio (www.kb6nu.com)

Will a CB SWR meter work on a 2 meter ham radio??

By Dan KB6NU

Mark, K5LXP, replied: "Yes and no. I use a CB SWR meter to check 2M antennas all the time. There is a trick to it however." "If all you want to do is check SWR on your 2M antenna, you don't necessarily have to buy a dedicated VHF/UHF SWR meter. What I keep in my tool bag for that is a cheapie \$5 hamfest special CB SWR meter. They really don't work well on 2M but there's a trick you can do that will net a reasonably accurate SWR reading on 2M with one of these meters.

What you do is connect up the meter as usual, key the rig with the switch in the forward power position, set the adjustment for full scale. Now, without touching anything, swap the coax connections so that the rig is connected to the ANT' side of the meter, and the antenna is connected to the 'XCVR' side. The reading you see on the meter will be very close to your real SWR. The closer to 1:1 your SWR is, the more accurate it will be. It would be more convenient to have a real SWR meter or antenna analyzer if you do a lot of testing, but for a quick antenna check after a mobile install or whatever, the \$5 CB meters work OK."

"The theory is relatively simple."

"A basic SWR bridge is comprised of two couplers, each of which consist of a stripline or a pickup loop,

and a detector diode. One coupler is used to detect forward power, the other reflected." "At 27 MHz, the precision of the components required isn't too stringent. Just about any diode will work, and minor imperfections in the stripline or pickup coils won't impact the accuracy that much." "But at 2M suddenly minor differences between the striplines, stray capacitance, and type of diode starts to matter. By using just one of the couplers for both the forward and reverse readings any error that exists in that coupler is the same for both readings and thus cancels out. It's unlikely it'll work at 440 however, it's just too much to ask to expect a true 50 ohm network and zero bias or hot carrier diode in a cheap CB meter"

"The absolute reading on 2M may still be somewhat inaccurate, especially at high SWR but odds are you don't care about that. All you're interested in is 1:1 or as close to it as you can get, and for that the \$5 meters will be good enough." When I asked his permission to use this, Mark said, "I don't get the credit, I picked it up from an old-timer years ago." Well, Mark, you might not get the credit for thinking this up, but you certainly get the credit for passing it on. Thanks!

When not reading his e-mail, Dan likes to work CW on the HF bands. You can catch him around 7030 kHz or 3530 kHz. He blogs about ham radio at www.kb6nu.com.

Visit W1AW

One of the habits that Frandy, N1FJ and I have gotten into is visiting W1AW a few times each year. We started doing this a few years ago a few months before Field Day.

There's nothing like working great radios and fantastic antennas and create a reverse pileup to get your cw (or phone) in shape for a contest. You ought to try it.

It's easy to do. Just email or call Joe, NJ1Q at W1AW a few days or a week before you'd like to

go down. He'll tell you if that is a good day and time or whether you should pick another as some days are already booked up.

Frandy and I went down on Tuesday, December 23rd. Frandy worked CW on the Yaesu FT-2000 and the Flex Radio. I worked phone on 20m on the stack and used the Icom IC-7700 (what a fantastic radio!).

We had a great time. You can too.



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

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!!!

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, South Hadley, MA.

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

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
kk1w@arrl.net or (413) 245-3228.

*Questions, Comments, and Suggestions
Can Be Directed To:*

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Open—your name here!

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Meeting Location:

Meetings are held at the
Feeding Hills
Congregational Church

21 North Westfield Street
Feeding Hills, MA 01030.

*Parking is in back of the
church.*

Access is HP accessible.

**Next Meeting:
Friday Night**

January 2nd, 2009 — 7:30 PM

**Sean Kutzko
KX9X**

**ARRL Branch
Contest Manager**



The Hampden County Radio Association
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PLEASE HAND CANCEL