

Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

March 2012

Nine projects make Show & Tell a success!

The ham radio homebrew ethic is alive and well in HCRA—this was shown again at our 13th Annual Show & Tell meeting in February. Pictured below are the winners. Also showing their efforts were KK1W, KB1NWH, and N1FJ.



Best in Show, Expert:
Gent, WA1CQF, 1KW
HF Amplifier



Most Unique: Al,
N1AW, Recreated his
1950s vintage Novice
Transmitter



*Most Useful in the
Shack:* Juergen/
DK1TM - Sound Card
Interface



Most Creative, Jon,
KA1TDQ showed
several items, won
with AM Transmitter



*Best in Show,
Beginner:* Andrew,
KB1WPJ, showed
his science project
demonstrating an
electric telegraph.

Mild winter makes outdoor projects possible!



From left to right:
KK1W attaching Gin
Pole, securing foldover section; two views of 80 meter Double L antenna
supported by tower; W1MJB looking on in awe. (All Photos by N1FJ)

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

4 Mar Hicksville NY LIMARC @LevitHall

10 Mar Feeding Hills MA MtTARA @ Turnvernein Club (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
08/12/12: NoBarc Hamfest 2012, sponsored by the Northern Berkshire Amateur Radio Club

08/24/12: New England Division Convention, sponsored by the New England Division of the ARRL

HCRA Contact List

President, Jim Mullen KK1W (413) 245-3228
kk1w@arrl.net

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et-n1qko@juno.com

FROM THE SHACK

March Meeting - The Art of QSLing in the 21st Century

It has been years since the HF frequencies have been active. Now, thanks to an uptick in sunspots from Cycle 24 once again the bands are hopping with tons of DX, DXpeditions and just plain worldwide ragchews. After the QSO ends comes the time for the QSL. Some folks collect them for awards, others to wallpaper the shack or to provide our QSO 'partner' with a card so they can do the same. No matter what the reason there's many ways to do it and you can learn about it Friday night.

In the five to eight years we've been in the propagation doldurms many things have changed. New hams have come on board, QSL methods have changed and services like ARRL's Logbook of the World (LotW) and eQSL have become very popular. If you're just starting to work DX (or are getting back into it after a long vacation) wouldn't you like to know what would be the best method for you? That's what our March meeting is all about, how to QSL in the 21st Century.

Ed/KB1NWH, Jeff/NT1K, John/Kx1x and Matt/W1MSW will treat us to an overview of QSLing from using the 'BURO' right up to LotW. The presentation will cover each of the more popular methods, their plusses and minuses and take you all the way to Logbook of the World. They will be 'on-line live' with the presentation so you will actually what's being discussed in real time – how cool is that?

Regardless of what your goals are in ham radio you will eventually be in a position to send someone a QSL. After the presentation you'll have the tools to know exactly how to do it.



Board Members Needed

Elections are just around the corner and we are looking for a 'few good hams' that would like to raise their hand and be part of guiding HCRA forward. Yes, we have a great board now but it could be made better with your participation. New people, new ideas, new events – this process is greatly enhanced by introducing change into the makeup of our board of directors.

Maybe you're new to the club and don't think you have anything to add – you're wrong! We need your perspective so we can attract more folks like you to HCRA. Maybe you've been on the board in the past? You're important too, helping us remain relevant to our present members. Diversity is important, it's what makes us and keeps us strong.

We've reduced the amount of board meetings to approximately every other month. If you're at all active in



HCRA then you're already going to most of the meetings. Joining the board would only take a few additional hours of your time but the effects could be many and lasting! So think it over and if you feel you can help contact me or any other board member and we can discuss it further. Thanks!

April Meeting - Intro to Arduino

Responding to the challenge issued at February's Show & Tell Bob/NQ1C has volunteered to help bring HCRA up a notch in current electronics building ideas. Bob will review the popular Arduino microprocessors and building blocks, then demonstrate some amateur radio applications

using those tools. Don't despair, Arduino is easily understood, no need to be an engineer or programmer. You can buy off the shelf parts and create your own projects. Nothing esoteric here, your local Radio Shack even stocks them! So lets not be caught saying, "Nobody builds anything in ham radio any longer". Get brought up to speed on how today's amateurs are leveraging technology to make our hobby fun and interesting.

Loose Connections

Don't forget to stop by the HCRA table at the MTARA Hamfest on March 10th and say hello (and maybe pick up another ticket or two for the KX3 raffle).

The purchase of the storage trailer was approved at the February meeting. We will be looking for a few volunteers to help outfit it. Would you like to help? Please contact either Ed/KB1NWH or Jim/KK1W.

Field Day is coming fast. We need to know what part you would like to play in the event this year. Right now we're in the planning stages—hearing from you early will really help the process. Please contact either Matt/W1MSW, Ed/KB1NWH or Jim/KK1W. Thanks!

'73... See you at the meeting!

Jim, KK1W

HCRA DX Challenge

If you like to chase DX and are looking to boost your numbers on more bands, then have we got a challenge for you. Last month, a chance posting on the HCRA Facebook page started a new, fun, ham related game. (NOTE: This challenge does NOT require that you become a Facebook member. What happened is, a couple of HCRA members found that a DXpedition on Bonaire Island (PJ4C) was posting its log almost in real time using [www.ClubLog.org](http://www.clublog.org) . A fun grudge match soon ensued to see who could log the most contacts on different bands/modes. Claims of contacts were almost instantly verified through the online log. By entering a call sign at <http://www.clublog.org/charts/?c=PJ4C#r> , one could find how many contacts had been recorded with PJ4C. Later, as PJ4C was winding down, we discovered that two other DXpeditions, namely TN2T (Congo) and VP6T (Pitcairn Island) were also posting to online logs, except that they only posted complete logs once per day. You can check those logs simply by replacing the “PJ4C” in the URL above with the call of the DXpedition. Our group of “DXers” also dug in to work these calls, and share their triumphs online. Similarly, HK0NA (Malepo Island) and HU2DX (El Salvador) DXpeditions became part of the challenge as they also offered online logs. We invite all our HCRA friends to join us in our challenge. It is a fun way to “find the time” to work DX stations. Some of the locations above are not even that rare, but it was fun chasing them for the challenge and to help with DXCC credits. Typically, these DXpeditions use LoTW, though sometimes they defer posting their logs. Direct QSL and e-QSLing help the DXpeditions with recouping some costs.

'73 de Kx1x

Ham Contest Season—The Majors

ARRL International DX Contest, CW February 18th and 19th

ARRL International DX Contest, SSB March 3rd and 4th

CQWW WPX Contest, SSB March 24th and 25th

CQWW WPX Contest, CW May 26th and 27th

NEQP May 5th and 6th





24th Annual



Amateur Radio & Electronics Hamfest

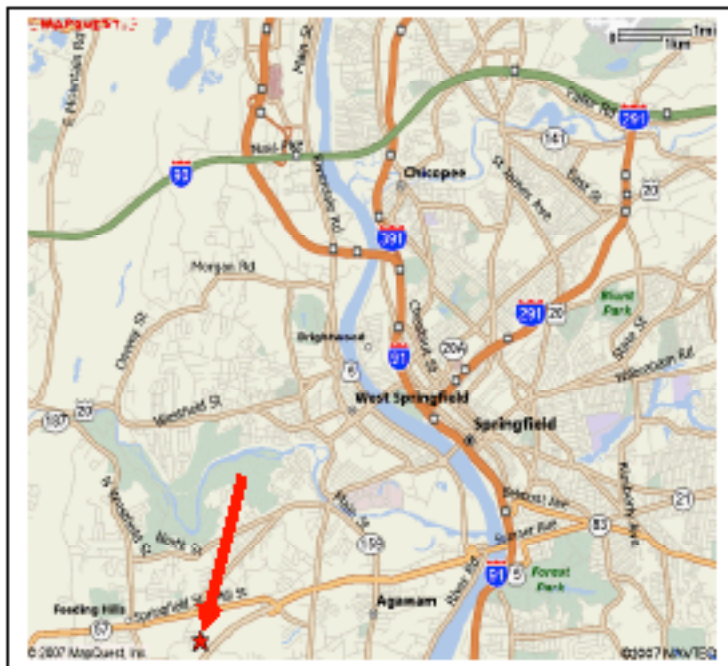
Saturday March 10, 2012

Located at:

**SPRINGFIELD TURNVEREIN CLUB
176 Garden Street, Feeding Hills, MA**

**SNACK BAR
RAFFLE PRIZES
TAILGATING
AMATEUR EXAMS**

**DOOR PRIZES
120 VAC AVAILABLE
HANDICAPPED PARKING
HELP LOADING/UNLOADING**



From North or South: Take Rte 91 to Rte 57 West. Follow Rte 57 West to the Garden Street Exit. At the end of the ramp, turn left over 57 and look for signs immediately on right

From East or West: Take Rte 90 (Mass Pike) to Exit 4 Rte 91. Take Rte 91 South to Rte 57 Exit. Take Rte 57 West to the Garden Street Exit. At the end of the ramp, turn left over 57 and look for signs immediately on right.

Mail- in Registration Form

Name _____
Callsign _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (cell preferred) _____
Email Address: _____
of Tables _____ x \$15.00 = _____
Is 120 VAC Needed? _____

Checks payable to: MTARA
Mail to: Mary Elkins-N1TOY, 24 Shoreline Dr., Ware, MA 01082

*** The Details ***

Doors Open:

6:30 AM Vendors only
8:30 AM General Admission

Admission:

Adults: \$5.00
Children: under age 12 are *FREE!*
Tailgating: \$10.00 per parking space
Tables: \$15.00 each

VE Exam Information-10:30 AM

Space is limited, so pre-registration is strongly recommended. To register, contact Richard, AB1RS at Richard@walterspropane.com Bring two forms of positive ID, and originals and photocopies of any CSCE's you hold and, if licensed, the original of your current license and a photocopy. *Walk-ins will be accepted, but only as seating permits!!*

Additional Information:

<http://www.mtara.org>

TALK-IN on the 146.94 (127.3 PL)
Mount Tom Repeater

For Table Registrations & Tailgating contact:

Mary Elkins - N1TOY
24 Shoreline Drive
Ware, MA 01082
Tel.: (413) 222-1990
n1tov@arrl.net

New DXCC Country, South Sudan, Z8




After a wait of more than seven months after being accepted as a member of the United Nations, the Republic of South Sudan received its prefix block from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU): Z8. On July 14, 2011 -- after South Sudan's admittance to the UN -- the new country became a DXCC entity by way of Section II, 1(a) of the DXCC rules. -- Thanks to The Daily DX for the information.

Membership Corner

Howdy, HCRA members. Just an announcement that in next month's Zero Beat we're trying something new and adding a section called Membership Corner. Along with import news regarding membership, it will be a place to profile our members and highlight some of the fun things they're doing in the hobby. I will also be publishing any radio related news and accomplishments that members send me about themselves or other members. I will be watching Facebook and the HCRA mailing list to cull information, but I can only publish items if I know about them. Please send radio related news about you or other members to w1msw@arrl.net - Matt, W1MSW

Raffle Tickets

Have you bought your tickets for the HCRA Special *200* Raffle yet? At the last meeting, I heard that we only have 70 tickets left. That means we have sold many more tickets than we had by this time in last year's raffle. Make sure you don't miss out on a great opportunity to help support the club and the chance to win a brand new Elecraft KX3 transceiver. Tickets are \$10 each and only 200 will be sold. To buy your tickets, see Frank - KB1LFD at the March meeting. - Matt, W1MSW

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

Field Day

The weather is warming up (did it ever get cold?) and that means that it's time to start thinking about field day again. The first step to take to ensure you will enjoy Field Day is to **mark it on your calendar!** You may think that sounds easy enough, but if you don't do it now something else will get scheduled on the same weekend and throw a wrench into your plans to participate as much as you were hoping. If you work on the weekends, put your vacation in now or make sure you have enough sicktime saved up to catch a cold that weekend. Field Day is great fun and is the culmination of all the great aspects of amateur radio. Field Day is June 23-24th this year. **Mark it down now** and join your club for some great operating, great food, and camaraderie with old and new friends. - Matt, W1MSW

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 free)

For complete information see <http://www.mtara.org/>

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 . 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.