

# Zero Beat



Hampden County Radio Association

November 2013

## Next HCRA Meeting Friday

Tech Corner at 7:00pm, Regular Meeting – 7:30pm

Please join us at the November 1 club meeting, where Dan Vierno, KB1VWQ, and Dave Scarpa, N1MFL, will introduce Parks On The Air, also known as POTA. Dan and Dave will be discussing some of their recent adventures, detailing equipment that they use and giving tips and advice on how to get started on your own. This month's Tech Corner (starts at 7pm) organized by our club's Technical Director Bob, K1YO, will be a brief chat on magnetic loop



antennas. In addition to Tech Corner and the presentation, we will be discussing regular club business and future events, selling raffle tickets for the FT-857D and tickets to the HCRA/MTARA holiday party in December, taking

new membership applications and renewals and accepting deposits for WRTC equipment that the club is selling at a discount to members. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

## Sunday afternoon Fox Hunt!

There will be a 2-meter fox hunt on Sunday afternoon, November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm. See Larry's article on page 7 in this issue.

## What's in this issue:

*Next meeting, Procrastinate?, page 1*

*From the Shack, page 2*

*Local Happenings, Contacts, page 3*

*WRTC equipment sale order form, page 4*

*Crew DX, raffle, NIOLO, page 5*

*Contest, Crew DX, raffle, NIOLO, page 6*

*Fox Hunt, Classes, Turnip Truck, page 7*

*Ham Apps, Indoor Tailgate Party, page 8*



## Something to look forward to?

*Almost exactly 2 years ago, we were hit by the "Halloween Nor'easter". Let this serve as a reminder to get your antenna work done sooner rather than later!*

## Define Procrastinate!

The word of the month is *procrastinate*. According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary: *Procrastinate, v.t. & t. To defer action, be dilatory; postpone (action)*. According to Santa Claus, procrastinators often get bits of coal or reindeer droppings in their stockings --so don't tempt fate, buy your tickets for the second annual H.C.R.A./M.T.A.R.A Holiday Party NOW!!! or suffer the consequences when a beloved, yet apparently vindictive holiday figure, becomes unglued. I'm just saying, why irritate a "not always so jolly" old elf when all you have to do is pony up \$15 per ticket.

Tickets will be sold at the HCRA November meeting; or you can call me at (413) 525-3717, or e-mail Marty.w1mjb@gmail.com to reserve your tickets. Remember do it now or else!!

73 and good DX,  
Marty, W1MJB

# FROM THE SHACK

## November Meeting – Parks on the Air!

*A homegrown presentation by Dan/KB1VWQ and Dave/N1MFL*

**Winter is just around the corner** and portable operations will probably come to an end – but do they have to? The subject of November's meeting, Parks on the Air (POTA) leads me to believe we may have an alternative to trekking up a mountain to be QRV in January. I can see myself operating from the comfort of a picnic table and not too far from the heater in the F150 ☺ Please be sure to arrive early and get a good seat.

**Have you purchased your Holiday Party ticket yet?** Time is running short to get in on this year's party.

**November's HCRA and MTARA meeting** will be the last chance to purchase your party tickets without having to mail in your check. Make it easy on yourself and help us plan the party by purchasing your tickets early – it is really appreciated. I'm hoping for one hundred guests this year, wouldn't that be great? See Marty at this month's HCRA meeting and Diane at the November MTARA meeting and 'git 'er done'!

Once again this year MTARA is assembling a raft of cool door prizes for all attendees. Topping the list will be a Baofeng UV-5R HT with programming cable. There's no extra charge for the door prizes, it is all part of the fun! Hope to see you at the Steaming Tender on December 9th. Bring your appetite and let's have some fun!

## WRTC Equipment Purchase Update

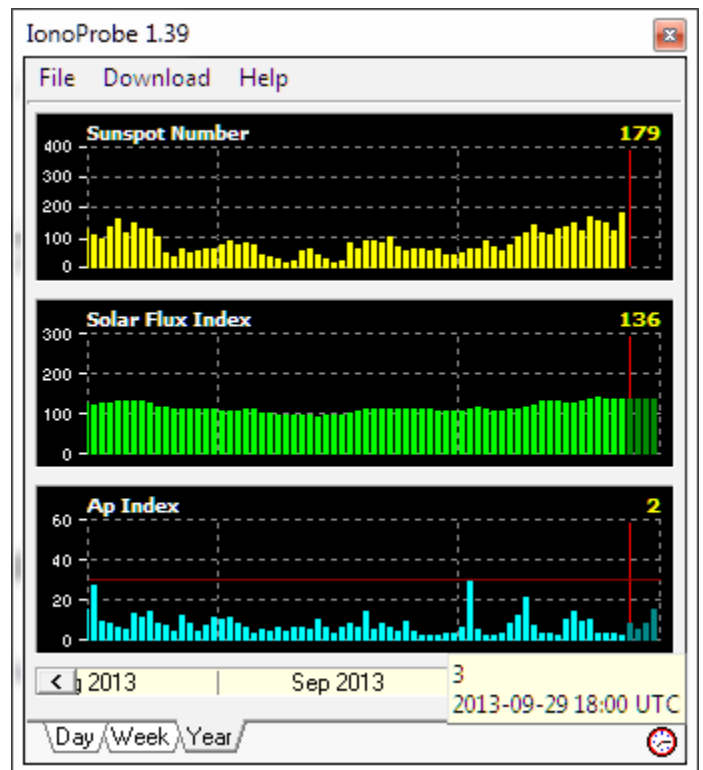
Inventory is dwindling. If you're thinking of purchasing one or more of our WRTC offerings I suggest you fill out the purchase agreement (available at HCRA.org) and get it to Dave/AA1YW or Jim/KK1W soon. The really good stuff is almost gone and we're only two months into the program. As of this writing the Honda generators and tents are sold out as are more than half of many other items. Don't miss out, if there's something on the list get a deposit on it now.

While I have your attention about these items I'd like to point out one of the better bargains still left – the Cycle 24 TX-38 beam antenna. If you're thinking of adding a nice tri-band beam to your shack this is a great antenna. It wasn't picked as the best choice for premier operators in the world without a lot of thought by the program administrators and can be yours for less than half price! You can use the \$500+ dollars saved to purchase a rotor, coax and tower sections too and for about the list price of the antenna alone you can have the whole thing. There's only one left so....

## Cycle 24's 2nd Peak has emerged

Let's hope we see great propagation for the ARRL 10m contest this year!

The predicted 2nd peak of Cycle 24 appears to be happening and wow is it fun! Over the last week the sunspot count has been high and the A index very low. This is just what we want for good DX on 15, 12 and 10 meters. It's not going to last forever, so try and take advantage of it while you can. Rack up DX entities on the high bands now, then concentrate on 160, 80 and 40 this winter. Good luck and, of course. GUD DX OM.



Notes from the cluster...

**Foxhunting! - Larry/WB1DBY is planning a foxhunt** November 3rd at 2PM. If you're interested check into his posting on our Facebook page or drop him an email. I remember we had over a dozen folks interested in foxhunting earlier this year – now's your chance!

**December – Remember there is not a regular meeting in December** to make room for our outstanding Holiday Party at the Steaming Tender in Palmer, MA. Find more info about the party and how to purchase your tickets elsewhere in this issue.

**January 3rd Meeting – The first meeting of the New Year features Fred/K1VR** talking about how to find your way through state and local ordinances while planning your tower and antenna installation. This is great information and perfect timing to start planning your spring and summer antenna projects.

'73 and see you at the meeting,

Jim/KK1W

# Local happenings

(All times are local time)

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

**First Monday:** Southwick Regional RACES Drill, 1845, 146.49 Simplex

**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)

Munich House

13 Center Street

Chicopee, MA 01013

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

## Club meetings & VE sessions

**1st Friday of the month** 7:30 PM, HCRA Club Meeting, Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech St. Holyoke MA 01040 (no meetings held in July or August) <http://www.hcra.org/meeting-location/>

**3rd Friday of the month** 7:30 PM, MTARA Club meeting, Red Cross building 506 Cottage St, Springfield, Mass. (no meetings held in July or August)

**4th Friday of the month** 6:00 PM, Technician, General, and Extra Class License Exams, Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center, 575 Beech Street, Holyoke, Mass. Hosted by the Western Mass VE Team (WMVET). Contact: David Cote, w1fab@arrl.net

**Third Monday of the month** 7:00 PM, Franklin County Amateur Radio Club meeting, Greenfield High School (no meetings held in July or August) <http://www.fcarc.org/>

**4th Monday of February, May, August, November** 7:00 PM, FCARC VE Exams, Unitarian Church, Main Street, Northfield <http://www.fcarc.org/>

Join the ARRL or renew your membership!

ARRL members enjoy:

- QST Magazine
- Members-Only Web Services
- Technical Information Service
- Member Discounts
- Outgoing QSL Service
- Continuing Education
- ARRL as an Advocate
- Regulatory Information Branch
- Public Relations for Amateur Radio
- ARRL Field Organization
- ARRL-sponsored contests
- Operating Awards
- Local Clubs
- Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- Hamfests and Conventions
- Volunteer Examiner Coordinator Program

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



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

## HCRA contact list

President, Jim Mullen KK1W (413) 237-4666

kk1w@arrl.net

Vice-President, Ed LaCombe KB1NWH (413) 250-3137

kb1nwh@comcast.net

Treasurer, Dave Cain AA1YW (413) 569-6901

aa1yw@arrl.net

Secretary, Dave Scarpa N1MFL (413) 241-0139

scarpad@comcast.net

At Large, John Pise KX1X (413) 532-7474

kx1x@arrl.net

Newsletter, Frandy Johnson N1FJ (413) 584-9005

n1fj@arrl.net

Programs, Matt Wilhelm W1MSW (413) 336-4701

w1msw@arrl.net

Membership, Rich Wheeler N1KXR (413) 584-3372

n1kxr@arrl.net

Technical, Bob Meneguzzo K1YO (413) 896-4879

k1yo@comcast.net

Skywarn Liaison, Eric Tuller N1QKO (413) 967-3869

et-n1qko@juno.com

VE Session Liaison, Dave Cote W1FAB (413) 575-2950

w1fab@arrl.net





Matt, W1MSW, with help from Jim, KK1W and Frandy, N1FJ got his hex beam up in the air in time for the fantastic propagation conditions we've been enjoying. And it proved itself last weekend in the CQ Worldwide DX (SSB) Contest! *(Note Jim's quadcopter keeping an eye on things, lower left.)*



## John Kalotai, N1OLO, from Hamsource.com visits HCRA

At our October meeting John Kalotai – N1OLO from Hamsource.com stopped by and gave a fun and lively presentation. John started off by giving us some background on himself including his time at West Mountain Radio and how he came to start his new



company. John discussed some of the new products that he has designed for power distribution in the shack and vehicle as well products that allow you to combine a battery and power supply for uninterrupted power during an outage. He also brought along an interesting solution to the age-old ham

problem of hoisting antennas into trees without the use of a hunting implement! John setup a table in the back with merchandise for sale and some of our members went home with some nice items. We would like to thank John for coming up to visit and look forward to stopping by his booth at the next hamfest.

## Crew DX at MassJam13

Every four or five years MassJam (Massachusetts Scout Jamboree) is held over Columbus Day weekend at the Barnstable Fairgrounds in East Falmouth, Massachusetts. At each of the last two MassJam events, BSA Venture Crew 510 (sponsored by HCRA) has been invited to demonstrate Amateur Radio to the more than 8000 scouts in attendance.

The crew arrived about 9:00 PM on Friday night after fighting holiday and foliage traffic on the Mass Pike. The building slated to house the radio demo was completely empty except for a small glass display case-- there were no tables and no chairs. The facilities people were quick to round up three 8' tables for us to put our radios on. The last time we were there, there was a bleacher's style set of benches which was used for visitors to hear the presentations from the Crew youth. This time, there wasn't even a chair. The crew youth found a couple of chairs upstairs in the building, and they were able to get a few plastic yard chairs from other buildings.

The next morning was all about setting up the AB-577 military tower borrowed from HCRA. As the crew youth and Ed, KB1NWH, worked on the tower and antennas, John, Kx1x, prepared posters and visual cues for the youth to use when presenting. When the midway opened at 11:30 AM, we were ready for 10, 15, 20, 40, and 80 meters on HF, and 2 meters VHF.

Crew youth began to polish their presentations, giving groups of visitors a talk about ham radio--SOTAs (Summits on the Air), JOTAs (Jamboree on Day), and GOTAs (Field radio facts such as how to was a constant flow of visitors for scout patrols to get four Scandanavian and Pennsylvania contacted over the weekend. At as visitors at our site spoke with them on-the-air.



the Air), JOTAs (Jamboree on Day), amongst other fun ham earn a Technician license. There to our site, aided by the need midway signatures during the day. Contacts made on the QSO parties made for interesting facts about whom we had times, the crew youth would walk the grounds with their HT,



Four VEs were on hand for the weekend, and three candidates passed their Technician exams.

*John, Kx1x*

*Above: Brandon, KCIAHC setting up beam and making presentation. Right, Eli, N1ELI demonstrating ham radio.)*

## A Yaesu FT-857D for only \$10?



That's right! This year, the HCRA's \*250\* raffle prize is a brand-new Yaesu FT-857D HF/VHF/UHF transceiver.

The \*250\* means only 250 tickets will be sold, with the drawing scheduled for March 7, 2014 (or earlier, if all the tickets are sold before then).

Tickets are available at any HCRA meeting, or contact [n1kxr@arrl.net](mailto:n1kxr@arrl.net).



# ARRL 10 Meter Contest December 14-15, 2013

## Starts 0000 UTC Saturday and runs through 2359 UTC Sunday

Have you heard all this talk about 10 meters being open? Well, it sure is. Over the last week, you could work stations all over Europe, South America and the South Pacific using a wet noodle for an antenna! December is right around the corner and that means it's time for the ARRL 10 Meter Contest. Every year HCRA participates in this contest as a club. What does that mean? It means when individuals submit their score, they write "Hampden County Radio Association" into the club field of their Cabrillo file and the combined scores of members are tallied and compared against other clubs competing in the category. Here are 10 reasons why you should plan on operating in the 10m contest this year.

1. Technicians have SSB privileges on a slice of the band
2. A 10 meter antenna is easy to make
3. A 10 meter antenna is short and easy to hang up
4. Propagation on 10 meters has been great over the last couple weeks
5. You can operate both CW and SSB in this contest
6. The exchange is easy
7. If propagation remains good, you could add some new countries
8. It's fun!
9. It's more fun to hear other HCRA members working stations
10. It's even more fun to see if you can beat KB1NWH in the pileup!

As incentive again this year, we'll be giving out Dunkin Donuts gift cards to any club members who make over 100K in points during the contest. So if you've been thinking about trying out contesting, put aside some time that weekend and work a few for yourself and for the club. I hope to hear many of you in the contest. As always, if you have any questions or need help setting up your contest logging software, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Matt – W1MSW



*Panoramic picture is a view from Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire by Nick, K1MAZ, from a recent SOTA activation.*

## November and December Contests

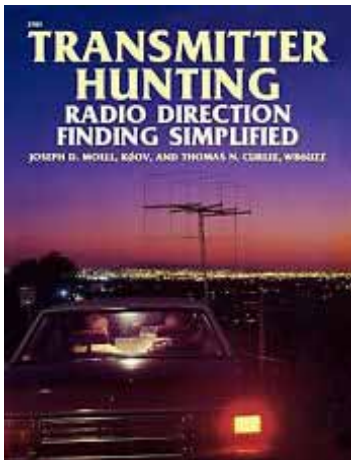
ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW	2100Z, Nov 2 to 0300Z, Nov 4
ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB	2100Z, Nov 16 to 0300Z, Nov 18
CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Nov 23 to 2400Z, Nov 24
ARRL 160-Meter Contest	2200Z, Dec 6 to 1600Z, Dec 8
ARRL 10-Meter Contest	0000Z, Dec 14 to 2400Z, Dec 15
ARRL Rookie Roundup, CW	1800Z-2359Z, Dec 22
ARRL RTTY Roundup	1800Z, Jan 4 to 2400Z, Jan 5

For more information on these and other October contests and QSO parties: [www.hornucopia.com/contestcal](http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal)

# You're Invited to the first Fall Fox Hunt of 2013

Starting Point: The parking lot at Picknelly Field, next to the entrance of Forest Park – right near the entrance to Longmeadow from the Exit 1 ramp. The fox hunt will take place on the 146.715 K1ZJH repeater. Hunting on the 146.105 input. PL = 100.0

**Sunday afternoon, November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2-4 pm. Fox: Larry, WB1DBY**



This will be an easy, starter hunt with hints given out during the hunt by the fox. The hunt will go on as long as a minimum of 5 mobile hunters are participating. Base stations are also able to participate and share their beam headings with the mobile hunters and the public.

The fox will transmit one minute out of every 5 and announce a one minute

warning before every transmission. The fox will also transmit 5 minutes before the start of the hunt at 2pm. Everyone is welcome to participate. You do not have to be a member of any club to participate. Sharing of headings and comments are suggested by the mobile hunters and base stations. The location of the fox will be given out once all the mobile hunters have come in or have quit. Check [HCRA.org](http://HCRA.org) for an article on the basics of Fox Hunting.

This is a FUN activity and all are welcome and urged to participate! Come find me!

73, Larry, WB1DBY

# HAM Radio License Class and Study Groups

The Hampden County Radio Association will be holding an Amateur Radio Technician Class along with General and Extra Study Groups at the Holyoke Hospital Auxiliary Conference Center (auditorium), 575 Beech Street, Holyoke, Mass. This classes and study groups are open to everyone of all ages and affiliations.

There will be three different meeting dates:

Class #1 - Monday, January 13, 2014 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Class #2 - Monday, January 20, 2014 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Class #3 - Saturday, January 25, 2014 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

VE Exam - Saturday, January 25, 2014 at approximately 3:00 PM

Attendance is NOT taken. If you can't make the Monday evening dates, just come on Saturday.

These condensed meetings are presented with the assumption that individuals will study and take practice tests on their own outside of class time. Our goal is to provide experienced ham radio operators (elmers) to be used as resources when going over the questions and answers that may be on the test.

There is no charge for the class/study group, but the purchase of the ARRL License Manual (\$29) is strongly suggested. Internet links to other resources will be provided. ARRL License Manuals can be ordered for delivery at the first class by contacting John, [kx1x@arrl.net](mailto:kx1x@arrl.net).

The cost to take the test is \$15 per attempt. The license, after passing the test, costs \$0 and can be renewed for \$0 every 10 years. Two forms of ID are required, including one picture identification.

Questions? Email John/Kx1x, [kx1x@arrl.net](mailto:kx1x@arrl.net)

# Turnip Truck Fallout



For those of you that just fell of the turnip truck, the second annual H.C.R.A./ M.T.A.R.A. Holiday Party extravaganza will be held Monday, December 9, 2013, at the Steaming Tender Restaurant in Palmer, Massachusetts. A fine evening of New England holiday fare and potables will be served as you take the opportunity to dine and socialize with your many friends and fellow club members amidst the ambiance of a quaint restored train station, now the home of a celebrated New England restaurant festooned in holiday decor. The evening begins at 6:00

PM when cocktails become available from the bar. At 7:00, dinner will be served, followed by a raffle with a Baofeng UV-5R Ht as the grand prize and door prizes galore. Tickets will be sold at the HCRA November meeting ( a check or the correct amount in currency is greatly appreciated ) or you can contact me at (413) 525-3717 or e-mail [Marty.w1mjb@gmail.com](mailto:Marty.w1mjb@gmail.com) to reserve your tickets.

# Ham Apps for November 2013

If you are a member of the ARRL, you got an email October 23<sup>rd</sup> from the ARRL announcing the Android



Edition of QST to go along with the web and Apple iOS versions. For the Android version, go to the Play store on your Android phone or go to play.google.com and sign in if needed. Then do a search on QST and select install and it will automatically install to your Android phone or tablet. You can install apps like this, viewing them on your computer to make learning about the app easier and on a larger screen. When you click

install, it installs to your device(s) when they are online.

Once the app is installed, you need to sign in to your ARRL account. Then open the app and select the issue you want to download and read. I HIGHLY suggest you be connected to wifi as the download takes a few minutes and is large. Even on my fast Comcast wifi at home it took nearly 10 minutes. Once it's downloaded, you can select that issue to read and it comes up on the screen. It does rotate automatically, if your device is set to do that. And you can pinch to zoom in and out.

QST is readable on a phone (mine has a 4.3 inch screen), but just barely. It's best used for reading select small articles or looking at the ads on a small phone screen. A tablet of any size would be much better.

The QST app also allows multiple issues to be stored on the device and individual issues can be deleted once they are no longer needed. You can also join the ARRL from the menu on the QST app.

Another app from the league that is free (beta version) until February 28, 2014 is the Repeater Directory. Once open, the RD shows nearby local repeaters, how far they are from you, the offset, QTH of the repeater, PL, the owner and a features code. Tapping on the repeater Brings up the same info in a window. There also is the option to select map, which highlights in red the location of the repeater and all the other repeaters that can fit on that level of zoom of the map. Tapping on one of the towers on the map brings up the info for that repeater.

There is also the search feature to look for repeaters in certain cities and states from a drop down menu or typing



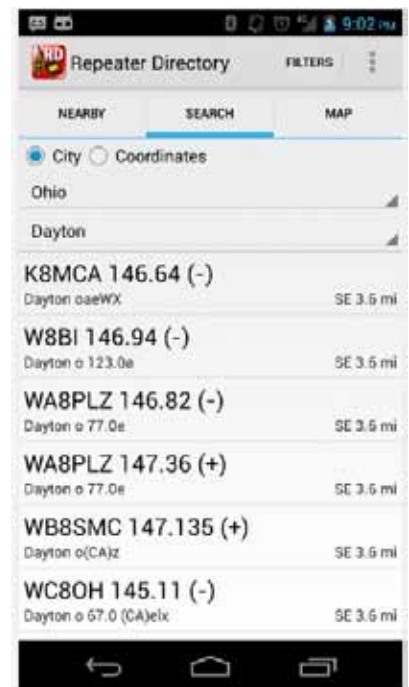
in a latitude and longitude. You can also filter what bands and features you are looking for.

The repeater Directory app is pretty simple to use and find repeaters either using the gps in your phone, local cell towers or by your selection. But it still uses those annoying codes that the paper version of the Repeater Directory has used for so many years in the Notes area. If you do not remember what those stand

for, then you have to go back and look up the key. This I think is one major drawback that should be eliminated in the app. They shouldn't make us go back and look it up. This is the only drawback to an otherwise excellent and simple to use program.

What the charges will be come February 28<sup>th</sup> I do not know. But if it's reasonable, it could be a huge hit. Other wise the Repeater Book app that is free is a great alternative (reviewed last month).

73 for now,



Larry, WB1DBY  
wb1dby@comcast.net

## Indoor Tailgate Party

We will have space again for you to bring a few items for sale--we will allot about 12 square feet of table space to each club member that wants to put out some things for sale -- a rig, a reel of wire, books -- anything that fits, is ham radio related, and is not totally junk, but NO computers, NO monitors, NO printers, NO TVs! Table space is free--10% (or more) commission on sales for the club's treasury. I will be bringing a couple of paddles, a reel of RG-174 coax at 15 cents/foot, and various other goodies. To reserve a space email Frandy at [n1fj@arrl.net](mailto:n1fj@arrl.net).