



ZERO BEAT

<http://hcra.org>

December 2015

Special points of interest:

- Next Meeting Friday, Jan 8th
Jeff NM1Y-Navassa Dxpedition
- [Visit the HCRA facebook page.](#)
- Don't forget to check out
hcra.org
- [Visit Summits on the Air](#)
- [Visit POTA413 facebook page](#)

December's Meeting

Come join us for the 4th annual

HCRA-MTARA Holiday Party

**Monday December 7th at 6pm, at the Steaming Tender Restaurant,
28 Depot Street, Palmer, Ma 01069**



Join us for cocktails at 6 pm, dinner at 7 pm..

**Don't Forget the
MTARA HAMFEST**

**March 5, 2016
Moose Hall
Chicopee, Ma**

HCRA's raffle this year is for a Kenwood TS-590SG!

It's that time for the Hampden County Radio Associations (HCRA) annual raffle. This year the board of directors wanted to raffle off a 100w base station transceiver. The Kenwood TS-590SG (\$1700 Retail) was the perfect choice because it's a very excellent radio packed with features that rival radios that cost much more.



HCRA has printed 250 tickets. Due to the price of the item, HCRA has put a limit on the minimum amount of tickets that can be sold before the raffle is allowed to take place. If the minimum amount has been reached, the item will be raffled at the Mount Tom Amateur Repeater Association's Ham Fest in 2016. We're asking \$10 for each ticket.

Tickets will be available at HCRA meetings, VE Sessions at Holyoke Medical Center, Field Day, Selected area Hamfest/Fleamarkets and through the Board of Directors.

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ARRL 10 METER CONTEST DECEMBER 12-13 2015

ARRL 10 Meter Contest December 12-13, 2015
Starts 0000 UTC Saturday; runs through 2359 UTC Sunday

MATT WILHELM W1MSW

December is right around the corner and it's time to get ready for the ARRL 10 Meter contest. Every year HCRA participates in this contest as a club. This means that in addition to entering the contest as individuals, our scores are combined into a total score for HCRA and compared against other competing clubs. For HCRA to get credit for your score, make sure that you have "CLUB: Hampden County Radio Assn" (no quotes) in the header of your Cabrillo formatted log.

The ARRL 10 Meter Contest is great for beginners and although we are out of the peak of the solar cycle, 10 meter openings are still popping up and you just never know what might happen with all those ops watching the band.

Here are 10 reasons why you should plan on operating in the 10m contest this year:

1. It's Fun!
2. Technicians have SSB privileges on a slice of the band
3. A 10 meter antenna is easy to make
4. A 10 meter antenna is easy to get in the air
5. You can operate both CW and SSB in this contest
6. The exchange is easy
7. Anyone can work anyone
8. If propagation remains good, you might be able to add some new countries
9. It's fun to hear other HCRA members working stations
10. It's fun to see if you can beat KK1W in the pileup!

If you have any questions about participating in the contest or submitting your log afterwards, please contact Matt, W1MSW at w1msw@arrl.net. We hope to hear lots of HCRA members in the contest that weekend.

TEST LEAD ACCESSORIES

GENT LAM WA1CQF

Most test leads are provided with .081" diameter pin style ends which are very suitable for point to point measurements. However, it requires both leads to be manually positioned for use. In many instances, this is impractical. They may be equipped with alligator clips which are slipped over the test lead tip ends allowing the test lead to be fastened to a test point, terminal, or component lead. The test lead with attached alligator clip is now at least 6 inches long. This may be too big to fit inside an enclosure or too heavy to attach to a small component lead. I've fabricated alligator clip, hook clip, header, and banana plug attachments using pin jacks. These eliminate changing the test leads to ones that have dedicated alligator clips or hook clips. The banana plugs are suited for use on equipment that is outfitted with 5 way binding posts. The header ends work nicely on my Arduino projects.

Be sure to use plastic body pin jacks. A short piece of stranded wire connects the attachment and pin jack, making a flexible assembly. A short length of heat shrink tubing over the soldered connection makes it fully insulated. The stranded wire allows the clip or plug to attach to the desired point and permits the test lead to be positioned out of the way without placing strain at the attached point.



Fig. 1

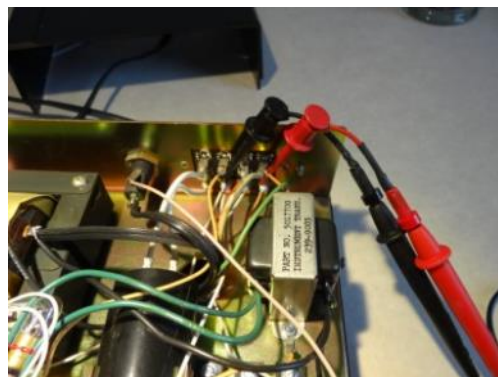


Fig. 2

Fig. 1 shows pairs of hook clips, banana plugs, male & female header, and alligator clips terminated to pin jacks. Fig. 2 shows the hooks clips attached to hard to reach areas.



Weather Safety

National Weather Service • Boston, MA



Winter Weather Safety Tips

Before the storm strikes...

- **In case of heat and power loss, have:**
 - A flashlight and extra batteries
 - Battery-powered NOAA weather radio
 - Extra food and water
 - Extra medicine and baby items
 - First aid supplies
 - Plenty of heating fuel
 - Emergency heat source
 - Fire extinguisher and smoke alarm
- **In vehicles:**
 - Fully check/winterize before winter.
 - **Carry a Winter Storm Survival Kit:**
 - Mobile phone, charger, batteries
 - Blankets/sleeping bags
 - Flashlight with extra batteries
 - First-aid kit
 - High-calorie, non-perishable food
 - Extra clothing to keep dry
 - Small can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking water
 - Shovel
 - Windshield scraper and brush
 - Tool kit
 - Battery booster cables
 - Water container
 - Keep your gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
 - Avoid traveling alone.
 - Let someone know your travel plan.



If caught in a winter storm...

- **If outside, find shelter**
 - Try to stay dry, cover exposed skin.
 - If no shelter is available
 - Build a lean-to, windbreak, or snow cave for wind protection.
 - Build a fire for heat and to attract attention.
 - Melt snow for drinking water
 - Don't eat snow—it will lower your body temperature.
- **If in a vehicle, stay there**
 - Run the motor for about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
 - Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked, and open the window slightly to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
 - Turn on dome light when running the engine at night to be visible.
- **If inside with no heat**
 - Be sure to properly ventilate if using heat from a fireplace or wood stove.
 - Close off unneeded rooms
 - Stuff towels in cracks under doors.
 - Cover windows at night.
 - Wear layers of loose-fitting clothing.



NOAA

www.weather.gov/boston

7/2013

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FROM THE SHACK

JEFFERY BAIL NT1K

Hello all. I hope you had a great Thanksgiving. The holiday season is now upon us. HCRA will be having its Holiday party on Monday December 7th at the Steaming Tender in Palmer MA. It will be an excellent time with great food and great people. Thank you to those who purchased tickets. I hope you enjoy your holidays!

Contest season is in full swing and a lot of HCRA members are participating. HCRA has entered as club for the ARRL Sweepstakes and for the upcoming ARRL 10 meter contest. Contesting is an excellent way to make DXCC contacts and it's a great way to sharpen your skills as an operator. It also shows area clubs and beyond that we're serious. Plus it's fun! So I hope you get on the air for the 10m contest on the weekend of December 12th.

A New Year is just around the corner and HCRA will start it off with a Bang. Larry (W1AST) has managed to get Jeff Jolie (NM1Y) to be our guest speaker on January 8th 2016. Jeff was part of the K1N DXpedition team that went to Navassa Island in February 2015. Navassa was considered to be one of the most wanted DX entities due to its strict access to the Island. It was considered by some to be the DXpedition of 2015 and due to its proximity to the US, it made it easy for most of us to make contact. Who knows when (or if) they will be on the air again. Jeff will be speaking about his trip and operating as K1N. This is a meeting you don't want to miss!!

We will also be having a Show And Tell in April. We will be giving out prizes for the top entries. So if you don't have a project, I would start on one now. It's great to see what other members come up with.

We will also be having License Classes and other types of classes covering such things as software logging, contesting, digital communication modes and much more. We are also trying to promote amateur radio in the county by making appearances at local maker/hacker groups. Then there will be Field Day in June. In between we have great speakers coming in to talk. Lots of stuff going on.

Club participation is very important. Your dues helps us out with events and that's great and we thank you but participation is more important. Coming to meetings and events and raising your hand to help out would make this club even better for us all. It is your club after all. Let's all work together as a group to help make it grow and show others what we're about. If you know someone who is interested in amateur radio, bring them along to meetings. Even if they have a license, invite them along. Spread the word whenever you can. Don't rely on someone else to promote the club, we all should be doing our part.

HELP WANTED: THE MTARA HAMFEST NEEDS OUR HELP!

Once again the MTARA will be holding it's Annual Hamfest on March 5, 2016 at the Moose Lodge in Chicopee, MA. The committee is in its initial stages of putting on another great event. We are looking for crews for all aspects of the show. If you have worked the show in the past or maybe a newbie just wanting to get started, then by all means contact us and get involved. We love to have you. This year we will have something for everybody, new equipment, used stuff, computers, tubes, parts, VE Exams and great food. If you're a bargain hunter this is the place to be. We will update you as news becomes available. If you were a vendor in the past, register early, first come first serve. Looking forward to seeing all!

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer. **Please contact Brian Mullarney kc1bdf@aol.com**

THE AMATEUR RADIO PARITY ACT OF 2015:

Amateur Radio Parity Act Passes Senate Committee, Gains Cosponsors

There is some news on the progress of the Senate Bill S-1685. It has passed the US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with only 2 Senators voting no, Both from states with a high number of HOA, and CCR's.

[Read the ARRL article for more information.](#)



Homeowners Associations across the country have been mobilizing against both bills. They have been using scare tactics to get their members to write opposing letters to members of Congress.

To separate fact from fiction, the ARRL produced a video. [Click here to watch.](#) (Look for a familiar face.)

Local happenings

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

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>

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, [150 Brookdale Dr. 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/>

HCRA contact list

President, Jeff Bail NT1K
nt1k@nt1k.com
Vice-President, Harold Woering N1FTP
n1ftp@yahoo.com
Treasurer, Juergen Malner NV1Q
nv1q@arrl.net
Secretary, Dave Fant WM1B
wm1b@arrl.net
At Large, Eric LaCombe W1MOR
w1mor@comcast.net
Newsletter, Gary Fields WA1MOW
wa1mow@arrl.net
Programs, Larry Krainson W1AST
wb1dby@comcast.net
Membership, John Plaster K1VOI
k1voi_jp@charter.net
Technical, Bob Meneguzzo K1YO
k1yo@comcast.net
Skywarn Liaison, Eric Tuller N1QKO
et-n1qko@juno.com
VE Session Liaison, Dave Cote W1FAB
w1fab@arrl.net

DOTS & DASHES:

Things I can't think where to put, but are interesting.

WANT TO BUILD YOUR OWN AB-577 ANTENNA MAST SYSTEM

Ever wanted to own an AB-577, portable military antenna mast system. But couldn't find one, or they're just too expensive. Here is an interesting article on eham.com, on how to build your own scaled down version of an AB-577. It is certainly not the same in quality and strength of the original, but never the less, with in the budget of the average Ham.

[Read it here.](#)

SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE

Do to the busy holiday season, we are going to put off scheduling our first "Share The Knowledge" session til the beginning of January. The topic will be setting up and using the DX Labs logging and rig control programs. If you're like me, I have always used a paper log, or a simple xcel spread sheet, this is a chance to learn how to set up and use this popular logging program.

If you are interested in getting into this session, please RSVP to: walmow@arrl.net

Some of the future sessions we hope to offer are: An Introduction to Digital Modes, Basic Antenna Design, and Basic Tower Installation Tips. If you have suggestions, or would like to volunteer to "share your knowledge", for future session, please let us know.

SUPPORT THE ARRL ON AMAZON

It's that time of year, when we all are thinking about buying Christmas presents. A lot of us will be purchasing on line. If you like me, a lot will be done on Amazon.com. Did you know that you can help to support the ARRL by purchasing on Amazon? You can, just by following this [link](#).

INTERESTING HAM RADIO WEB SITES:

Have you ever looked at the propagation prediction graphics and wondered what a "Solar Flux" or the "A/K Index" meant? Here is a great website from Radio Netherlands that can explain.

<http://www.stroobandt.com/propagation.tutorials/doc/radionetherlands/explanation1.html>

AREA SWAPFESTS:

Dec 5	Vintage Radio Museum Swap Meet	www.vrcmct.org	Windsor, Ct
Feb 6	Connecticut Valley FM SwapFest	www.cvfma.org/	Springfield, Vt
Mar 5	MTARA HamFest	www.mtara.org	Chicopee, Ma
Mar 6	NEARC Swapmeet	www.nearc.net/swapmeetinfo.htm	Westford, Ma
Mar 12	ECARA HamFest	www.ecara.net/	Dayville, Ct
Apr 29/30	NEAR Fest XIX	www.near-fest.org	Deerfield, NH

CONTESTING:

DECEMBER'S CONTESTS:

Dec 3	NRAU 10 meter Activity Contest	www.nrau.net/activity-contests	CW, Ph, Dig
4	ARRL 160 Meter Contest	www.arrl.org/160-meter	CW, Ph, Dig
5	AWA Bruce Kelly 1929 QSO Party	www.antiquewireless.org/	CW
12	ARRL 10 Meter Contest	www.arrl.org/10-meter	CW, Ph
13	QRP ARCI Homebrew Sprint	www.qrparci.org	CW,
19	OK RTTY Contest	www.okrtty.crk.cz	Dig
20	ARRL CW Rookie Roundup	www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup	CW
26	DARC Christmas Contest	www.darc.de/referate/dx/contest/xmas/en	CW, Ph,
	World Wide Iron Ham Contest	www.ironham.com.br/?page_id=22	CW, Ph, Dig

The advertisement features a teal background with two main sections. On the left, a red circle with the number '1' contains a red smartphone icon, with the text 'Hands-Only™ CPR' and 'Call 911' below it. On the right, a red circle with the number '2' contains a red hand icon, with the text 'Push hard and fast in the center of the chest.' and 'Learn more at handsonlycpr.org' below it. The American Heart Association logo is in the bottom right corner, with the tagline 'Learn and Live'.

FOR SALE:

If you have a piece of Ham Radio equipment to sell, send photo and details by the 20th of the month, to w1mow@arrl.net. All submissions will be screened for appropriateness, and content. The decision to publish is at the discretion of the ZB Editor



TS-120, SP-120, VFO-120, PS-30, AT-120, MC-50, (2) MC35S all is good condition TS-120 works great on 80,40, and 20. On 10 & 15 its like its in AM mode with a 100watt carrier. Don't know what's up with that. Not enough know-how at this end. \$320.00 for the entire line. Nothing will be sold separately.



TrippLite 25A regulated Power Supply.
Works great. \$75.00



LDG-817 antenna tuner for FT-817 and other QRP types. Comes with manual at CAT cable. \$75.00

To purchase any of these items please email Harold Woering: n1ftp@arrl.net



GHD 307WS paddles. Chrome with red finger grips mounted on a marble base. Beautiful to look at and operate. Price: \$100 (New \$229)



Vibroplex Code Warrior with chrome base, Chrome movements, clear paddle grips, perfect for portable operation as it's small and easily transported. Price: \$95 (new \$149)(great for the new cw op or experienced user)



Vibroplex Code Warrior with black base, brass movements, clear paddle grips, perfect for portable operation as it's small and easily transported. Price:\$65 (new \$119) Great for the new cw op or experienced user)

For Sale by Larry, W1AST – w1dby@gmail.com, (413) 348-3289 (9 am to 9 pm)

HCRA MEMBER'S PROFILE

Every month we hi-light a different member of the HCRA. It is a great opportunity to learn how other members got their start, and why they are "Hams"

This month's selection for our member profile is Larry Krainson. Larry has been an important member of the HCRA family for many years. If you have attended any of our meetings in the past couple of years, you have experienced his contributions first hand. Larry is our Programs Director. I would also have a hard time putting together this newsletter without his many contributions.....Thank you Larry, for all you do!

- 1) **Name:** Larry Krainson
- 2) **Town:** Longmeadow, MA
- 3) **Callsign:** W1AST
- 4) **Previous Callsigns:** WB1DBY
- 5) **License Class:** Advance
- 6) **Main station equipment:** Kenwood TS-590s, Elecraft KPA500 amp & KAT500 tuner, Mosley TA-33 beam up about 35 feet plus a Elecraft KX3 QRP (that gets lots of use while camping) also Yaesu FT-100D mobile with matching ATAS-100 antenna (phone only while mobile!)
- 7) **Favorite Band(s):** 15m - it started in high school, coming home and operating before dinner and homework and soon became my favorite band, even now!.
- 8) **Favorite Mode(s):** SSB or CW - I tend to do a lot of SSB since getting the 590 4 years ago, but also do CW too. Mainly CW on the KX3, Only SSB while mobile. I rarely do digital, it just doesn't do anything for me.
- 9) **Year you were first licensed and license class:** 1977 Novice and in 8th grade - the door to the world opened to me.
- 10) **How did you become interested in amateur radio?** A friend came to me and asked if I wanted to talk around the world. I said sure and started taking Novice classes with him at the Provin Mtn Radio Assoc. (now defunct). Then I used to go over his house and operate his FT-101e his dad bought him vs operating my basic 2 crystal frequencies.
- 11) **What are some of your favorite aspects of the hobby?** I love talking to people and learning about them. I tend to ragchew a lot, especially in cw. A 40 minute qso is not unusual for me. But the thrill of making the contact has not gone away, even for short DX contacts or long ragchew contacts, I enjoy them all. Even after all these years (38 of them in the hobby)
- 12) **What is your most memorable experience in the hobby?** Helping with comms at a Boston Marathon some 10-12 years ago. It was a HOT day and people were dropping like flies. I was shadowing the triage doctor at a rest stop and we were beyond busy. Ham radio did all the comms, we had a ton of people at our rest stop and somehow all the medical info was passed to net control, ambulances were requested, patients picked up and transported and ham radio made it all happen very easily!
- 13) **If different from the above question, what was your most memorable contact on the radio?** My first non-scheduled qso. It was on cw, while a novice to a station in Southwick. Some 30 years later I bumped into him at Radio Shack in West Springfield as he was the manager and then on the repeater. But he was really my first QSO with my own call on my own equipment.
- 14) **What do you feel ham radio operators must do to help ensure the future of the hobby?** Helping people get their licenses is all fine and good. But they need to Elmer them in getting on the air especially on HF. I do this as often as possible. Once that flame is lit, then helping them acquire their first gear and get on the air and then texting them when the bands are open so they get on the air. I've been doing this for a few years to a small group and it works great. Others need to go beyond helping them get licensed. This will help the new hams stay interested and active in the hobby, especially since 2m just doesn't do it any more (like it did in the 80's).



A Ham's Night Before Christmas

Yet another corruption of Clement Clarke Moore's classic Christmas tale,
this time distorted by Gary Pearce KN4AQ
December 2, 1996

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through two-meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up
From the tower, quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Technicians,
Took their HT's to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
By a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,
And, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX PacketCluster,

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam -
A flying sleigh,
With an eight element beam,

And a little old driver
Who looked slightly mean,
So I thought for a moment
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa,
The Santa of Hams,
On a mission this Christmas
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,
And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of *CQ*,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late
QSLs, for a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded
It into the earth
Till the station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Resoldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp...
(Never worked right before -
Now it works like a champ).

A new low-pass filter
Cleaned up the TV.
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That wouldn't compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep
In the bag that he brought,
And he pulled out a big box.
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?
A Yaesu, for me?
An Elecraft, TEN-TEC
Or Flex, could it be!"
(If he thought I'd been bad
It might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those weekends
I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy.
It was *my* call he sent.
But the cards and the postage
Will cost a month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,
And the pile up was big.
But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final
Came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What an old ham expects:
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX."

© 1996, 2010 Gary Pearce [KN4AQ](#)
Permission granted for any print
or electronic reproduction,
no advance approval required.
[audio version \(mp3 download\)](#)

[Audio version with no music to play on
the air](#)

[YouTube Video Version](#)



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

And A

Joyous New Years

From the B.O.D. of the HCRA

**Get your Holiday Party
Tickets NOW!**

**Hampden County Radio Association
P.O. Box 562
Agawam, MA 01030-0562**