

DIRECT CURRENTS - QRP

The Official Publication of the Housatonic Amateur Radio Club, Volume XXXI Issue IV

NEQP, DIGI, FIELD DAY SUMMER CONTESTS

April 2026

ARRL DX Phone Contest

The Spring and Summer contest season is upon us. The first was the ARRL DX Phone Contest last March 7-8. Members of the Westport Astronomical Society ARC, Greater Fairfield Amateur Radio Assn., the Greater Norwalk ARC and the Housatonic ARC operated as K1WAS in the contest. But first we had to move our equipment etc. to make way for a new heating unit in the class room where we operate. The heating units were installed on Thursday before the contest, one in the class room and the other in the warm room. Once the installation was completed, then we had to rearrange and clean up the classroom. Only then could we set up our stations and operate. Talk about pre-contest preparations! But it was a pleasure to operate with a brand new heating unit to keep us all toasty warm - especially this Winter!

We operated Multi Op, one transmitter, low power (100 watts). Assisting our effort were

NOTICE

Several articles within this issue were written with the assistance of ChatGPT & DuckAI Artificial Intelligence. - Editor

Larry AB1JC, Sam W1SMF, Mike KA1EOU, David KB1LTW, Dan N3DAW, Jason KI6JXJ and Jeff KB1LZ. This was the first time we used our new (used) Flex 6400M radio, which we had just purchased. We made 175 contacts for a claimed score of 45,672 points.

MEETING INFORMATION

Our next Formal meeting is currently scheduled for Saturday June 27, 2026 during Summer Field Day. We will have a State of the Union (club) presentation before FD commences. All members are urged to attend. Monthly Zoom video meetings are held the first Monday of every month.

- **April Meeting** - April 06 at 7:30 pm on Zoom.
- **May Meeting** - Canceled due to proximity to NEQP.
- **June Meeting** - June 01, 2026 at 7:30 pm

K1WAS-10 APRS DIGIPi I-Gate Now Operational

We are pleased to announce that a new APRS I-Gate is now operational in the WAS classroom. David, KB1LTW, recently set up a transmit and receive I-Gate using the club's FT-8800 mobile radio and a new Digipi. The FT-8800 had previously not been in use.

The station identifies as K1WAS-10 and is configured as both a receive and transmit I-Gate, expanding the club's APRS capabilities in the local area.

The antenna for the station is mounted on the classroom roof, providing good coverage and allowing the gateway to both feed local APRS traffic to the internet and transmit internet-originated APRS messages back to RF. This addition helps improve APRS coverage in the area and provides another useful piece of infrastructure for the amateur radio community.

Many thanks to David, KB1LTW, for taking the initiative to put the FT-8800 back into service and get the K1WAS-10 I-Gate up and running.

HEAR YE, HEAR YE

We herald joyous news! There will be a State of the Union (club) presentation prior to the commencement of Field Day operations on Saturday June 27. The presentation will begin at approximately 11 am. The honour of your presence is requested.

MARCH ZOO(M) MEETING

The meeting began at 7:30 pm on Zoom

In attendance were:

Sam W1SMF, Gary WE1M, Jeff KB1LZ, Larry AB1JC, Jim KA1PUG, David KB1LTW, Jon AI1V, Jonah KC1RXB and Dan N3DAW.

- Upcoming events, ARRL DX SSB Contest March 7-8
- Due to scheduling conflict, we will not operate in the CQ WW WPX SSB contest
- APRS station status K1WAS-10
- Rotator health
- Antennas/equipment from museum
- Flex 6600M
- VHF/UHF on tower
- Work on determining status of hardline
- Station maintenance
- No updates on the Ham class and involvement.
- Fairfield EM (CERT) class has 22 students, there might be interest in ham radio
- Talk/event ideas (running list)
- Operating the new All-sky camera
- Digipi workshop
- Meshtastic / Meshcore Stuff
- APRS digipeater
- Satellite Communications
- Digital Modes, FLdigi, Winlink, FT8, JS8Call, GridTracker
- Microcontrollers, C coding, and the Arduino Development Environment
- CW operations software for contesting,
- Learning Morse Code, and having QSOs with CW Hotline units
- Radio programming workshop (standard statewide memories)
- Open Hamclock
- VHF rover activation
- POTA activation Memorial day weekend at a park, cook out
- Due to scheduling conflict, we will not operate in the CQ WW WPX SSB contest
- Dan N3DAW update Re: ARRL Station Manager visit
- Hob Nob Mesh Network

- Pre NEQP Hob Nob to update shack
- New England QSO Party May 2-3
- ARRL Digital Contest June 6-7
- ARRL VHF Contest June 13-14
- Summer Field Day June 27-28

The meeting ended at 9:25 pm

Detailed meeting minutes can be found on our Members Only web page.

NEW ENGLAND QSO PARTY - May 2-3

We will operate K1WAS in the New England QSO Party on May 2-3, 2026. We will setup and operate Saturday May 2 and Sunday May 3. Contest Period is 2000Z Saturday until 0500Z Sunday (4pm EDT Saturday until 1am EDT Sunday) and 1300Z Sunday until 2400Z Sunday (9am EDT Sunday until 8pm EDT Sunday). The rules require us to take 8 hours off in the night to sleep. Also, remember this is the contest where we can operate Single Transmitter, multi operator or a Multi Transmitter, multi-op. We will decide our category based upon how many stations are available that morning. We will also run an FT8 play station not in the contest. Remember now, we use this contest to make sure our stations, antennas and setup work well for the upcoming Summer Field Day, so if you plan on bringing equipment to Field Day, please bring it to this contest. Setup begins Friday at 10 am after work traffic diminishes. We will set up tables, chairs and antennas. QSO party info can be found at <https://neqp.org/>.

ARRL International Digital Contest – June 6–7

The K1WAS station will be on the air for the ARRL International Digital Contest, taking place June 6–7. This event, sponsored by the ARRL, is a digital-only contest (excluding RTTY) that highlights modern weak-signal and keyboard digital modes.

The contest has a few key operating constraints that make it unique and appealing: stations are limited to a single transmitter and a maximum power output of 100 watts. While multi-operator entries are permitted, the structure of the event tends to favor the individual operator, emphasizing operating skill, efficiency, and strategy over sheer station complexity.

Last year, Gary, WE1M, represented N1KT as a single operator in the Single Operator, Low Power category, operating for 8 hours. His effort resulted in an impressive 3rd place finish in Connecticut and 9th place in the New England Division for his category.

For 2026, Gary WE1M is looking to expand the effort and welcomes additional operators. The plan is to enter as a Multi-Operator, Single Transmitter, Low Power station. This will be a great opportunity for members to gain experience with digital contesting, learn operating techniques, and contribute to a competitive club effort.

Operators of all experience levels are encouraged to participate. Whether you're a seasoned contester or new to digital modes, this is an excellent chance to get on the air and be part of the action.

Full contest rules and details can be found at: <http://www.arrl.org/arrl-digital-contest>.

Let's make a strong showing for K1WAS this year!

Join Us for Saturday Morning Hams & Eggs Breakfasts & Occasional Lunch at Mission BBQ

Our Saturday morning Hams & Eggs breakfasts continue to be a wonderful tradition, thriving with camaraderie and lively conversations! For over 13 years, we've gathered each week at a different diner, averaging about 6-10 attendees. Here, amidst sizzling bacon and fluffy eggs, we discuss everything from ham radio topics to personal stories, all while enjoying a steaming cup of coffee.

This is a pay-your-own-check affair, meaning you can order whatever you like without feeling obligated to return. There's no pressure - just good food and great company.

Our breakfasts are all about sharing ideas and making decisions in a relaxed environment. Whether you're a seasoned ham operator or just curious about the hobby, your voice and presence are welcome!

If you've never attended, or if it's been a while since your last visit, we encourage you to join us! Come prepared for a good time,

engaging discussions, and the infectious enthusiasm that makes our gatherings special. Recently, due to our Technician Class held on Saturday mornings, we enjoyed breakfasts at home over Zoom. However, now that the class has concluded, we're excited to return to in-person dining! We'll reserve Zoom for any inclement weather, but we look forward to enjoying those face-to-face interactions once more.

Sharing a meal is one of the best ways to connect with others. So why not spend your Saturday morning with us? Whether you're a longtime member of the ham radio community or a newcomer, everyone is welcome!

If you're ready for a hearty breakfast filled with conversation, laughter, and a passionate discussion about ham radio, let's meet up this Saturday! We can't wait to see you there!

ARRL Field Day

ARRL Field Day is only **three months away**—and that means we need to continue planning! Field Day remains one of amateur radio's most anticipated on-air events, combining emergency preparedness, operating skill, teamwork, and plenty of fun. To make this year's operation a success, we need to begin organizing now.

Who Will Attend?

We'd like to get an early idea of **who plans to participate**, whether operating, logging, helping with setup, staffing the welcome table, or simply stopping by to socialize. Let us know your interest and availability.

Proposed Planning Questions

Here are the key decisions we will discuss during our pre-Summer Field Day Zoom meeting.

Setup Hours: We will begin setup on Friday morning about 10 am, after work traffic.

WAS Opening: We will open WAS on Saturday early. Breakfast will be provided by Ned KA1CVv.

Overnight: Anyone staying overnight?

Number of Stations: We will have 4 stations operating HF. One CW, two digital and one SSB. Last year, this enabled us to make good use of our hex beam and tri-plexer, while still utilizing the OCF dipole, the 40 meter dipole and the 160 meter folded dipole over the parking lot.

Antennas: Hex beam (and tri-plexer), OCF dipole, the 40 meter dipole and the 160 meter folded dipole over the parking lot. We still need 6 meter antenna.

Equipment Commitments: Radios, tuners, power supplies, generators, laptops, tables, cables—if you can bring gear, please let us know.

Operating Schedule: We hope to operate a full 24 hours. Limited hours overnight depending upon staffing.

Operating Modes: SSB, CW, digital modes (FT8/FT4). Perhaps we can make a satellite contact?

Food: What food this year? Do we wish to purchase food? Do we wish to cook?

Bonus Points: Which bonus points do we wish to achieve, and who is assigned what bonus points?

UPCOMING CONTESTS

- April 19 Rookie Round Up Phone
- May 2-3 New England QSO Party
- May 30-31 CQ WPX CW Contest
- June 6-7 ARRL Digital Contest
- June 13-14 ARRL VHF Contest
- June 27-28 Summer Field Day
- July 11-12 IARU HF Championship
- Aug 29-30 WW Digi Contest
- Aug 15-16 International Lighthouse Lightship Weekend
- Sept 12-13 ARRL September VHF Contest
- Sept 26-27 CQ WW RTTY Contest
- Oct 24-25 CQ DX SSB Contest
- Nov 7-8 ARRL Sweepstakes CW Contest
- Nov 21-22 ARRL Sweepstakes Phone
- Nov 28-29 CQ DX CW Contest
- Dec 5-6 ARRL 160 meter Contest
- Dec 12-13 ARRL 10 meter Contest
- January 30-31, 2027 Winter Field Day

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UPCOMING CW CONTESTS

- Nov 7-8 ARRL Sweepstakes CW Contest
- Nov 28-29 CQ DX CW Contest

OUR SKED

- April 15 – Possum Day
- April 15 – Render Unto Caesar Day
- April 3 – Good Friday
- April 5 – Easter Sunday
- May 02 – KY Derby
- May 10 – Mother's Day
- May 15 - 17 Dayton Hamvention
- May 16 – Preakness Stakes
- May 25 – Memorial Day
- June 06 – Belmont Stakes
- July 04 – Independence Day
- Sept 07 – Labor Day
- Sept 19 – Talk Like a Pirate Day
- Oct 12 – Columbus Day
- Oct 14 - Charlie Kirk Day
- Oct 31 – Halloween
- Nov 01 – Eastern Standard Time
- Nov 11 – Veteran's Day
- Nov 13 – Sadie Hawkins Day
- Nov 23 - Fibonacci Day
- Nov 26 – Thanksgiving
- Dec 07 – Pearl Harbor Day
- Dec 25 – Christmas
- Dec 31 – New Years
- Jan 01, 2027 - New Year's Day

UPCOMING HAMFESTS

- SECARS Flea Market - April 18
St Paul's Church, 170 Rope Ferry Rd
Waterford, CT
- Eastern VHF/UHF/Microwave Conference - April 24-26
- Eastern CT ARA - April 26
- North East Ham Expo 8/13/2026

BAND CONDITIONS - (from NOAA)

The info below was obtained from the Space Weather Prediction Center. It can be found here: <https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/products/27-day-outlook-107-cm-radio-flux-and-geomagnetic-indices>

#	Date	10.7 cm	A Index	Kp Index
2026	Apr 01	130	5	2
2026	Apr 02	135	5	2
2026	Apr 03	140	18	5
2026	Apr 04	135	20	5
2026	Apr 05	135	8	3
2026	Apr 06	130	15	4
2026	Apr 07	135	8	3
2026	Apr 08	130	5	2
2026	Apr 09	125	25	5
2026	Apr 10	120	40	6
2026	Apr 11	115	20	5

Housatonic Amateur Radio Club Info

The Housatonic Amateur Radio Club was formed in 1995 to foster the development of Amateur Radio and advanced Ham Radio operating techniques, both through theory and on the air practice. To provide a suitable environment of camaraderie and support within which members, spouses and their children can obtain a better understanding of amateur radio, gain a proficiency in the art of amateur radio, and to have some fun. Our club gets its name from the Housatonic River, which flows through the Western sections of Massachusetts and Connecticut and empties into Long Island Sound at Stratford, CT.

Club Officers for 2025 - 2026

President: Lawrence Reed, AB1JC
Secretary/Treasurer: Thomas Moyher ESQ, N1UNT
Technical Officer: Sam Fox IV, W1SMF
Youth Coordinator: Marilyn Rice, NU7T
Director1: Dan Wright, N3DAW
Director2: David Schadlich, KB1LTW
Webmaster: David H. Schadlich, KB1LTW
Trustee: Gary T. Moyher, WE1M

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The Housatonic Amateur Radio Club is an ARRL affiliated club.
The club call sign is N1KT. QSL N1KT via WE1M, NE1CU or Bureau.
Send a QSL card and we will send our QSL card in return. We prefer an SASE, but it is not necessary. We QSL 100% returned. We also QSL via eQSL.cc & LoTW.

“Direct Currents” is the official newsletter of the Housatonic Amateur Radio Club. It is published monthly.

Gary T. Moyher, WE1M Editor
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