



PCARA Update



Volume 27, Issue 10 Peekskill/Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association Inc. October 2026

Raising the profile

Our opening meeting after summer break took place on Saturday September 5 at Putnam Valley Free Library in Putnam Valley, NY. Discussion topics included upcoming Fall activities, the 2 meter repeater being on-air 27 years and a proposal from Rob AD2CT for Challenge Coins (see page 2).

The September meeting was followed by a VE Test Session where one candidate qualified for General. Kevin KE2JEN joined the club and — as Lou KD2ITZ points out — he has probably set a record for the shortest amount of time between joining PCARA and submitting an article for the newsletter.

Bob N2CBH and Lou KD2ITZ visited the 146.67 repeater site on September 10 to remove the problematic



440 antenna (left) and Sinclair exposed dipoles for 2 meters (right) after work by Bob N2CBH and Lou KD2ITZ. [KD2ITZ pic.]

Super Stationmaster collinear antenna that was transferred to the current site in December 2012. The Sinclair 2-bay exposed dipole antenna installed in August 2025 was then raised a little higher. This may have improved performance — if you find a change, please report your experience.

The club has now received its plaque for “First Place – Small Clubs” in ARRL’s 2026 Year of the Club Newsletter Contest.

Here is a reminder that two Director positions are set to expire at the end of this year. These positions are currently held by David KD2EVI and Bob N2CBH. Elections are scheduled for the November 2026 meeting.

Please mark your calendar with these upcoming events:

- Saturday October 3, 2026 at 10:15 a.m., **PCARA Membership Meeting** at Putnam Valley Free Library in Putnam Valley, NY.

- Saturday October 2026 at 11:30 a.m., **PCARA ARRL VE Test Session** at the Putnam Valley Free Library. Candidates should contact Lou KD2ITZ using radiocassette ‘at’ gmail.com.

- Saturday October 10, at 8:00 a.m., **BARA Fall Hamfest**, Westwood Regional High School, 701 Ridgewood Rd., Township of Washington, NJ.

- Saturday October 17, **PCARA Breakfast**, 9:00 a.m., Uncle Giuseppe’s Marketplace, Yorktown Hgts NY.
- Saturday October 17, 10:00 a.m. EDT, **New York QSO Party**, club entry from Joe, WA2MCR’s location. Individual entries are also encouraged.
- Saturday October 17, Mt. Beacon ARC Hamfest, 8:00 a.m. Knights of Columbus, NY Rt 9G, Hyde Park, NY. (Rescheduled from 9/20/2026.)

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PCARA Update editor with plaque for first place in ARRL’s 2026 Year of the Club Newsletter Contest, Small Clubs section. [Pic by Lou KD2ITZ, Sept 19 Breakfast.]

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- Sunday October 18, **Harry Chapin Memorial Run/Walk Against Hunger**, starting from Croton-Harmon High School, Croton-on-Hudson, NY. (See page 12.)
- **Saturday October 24**, PCARA Foxhunt at FDR State Park, Yorktown Heights NY. (9:00 a.m. start from Parking Lot 4. See page 13.)

Remember, our next scheduled **PCARA Membership Meeting** is at Putnam Valley Library on Saturday October 3, at 10:15 a.m. Please join us.

PCARA Board

President:

Greg Appleyard, KB2CQE; kb2cqe 'at' arrl.net

Vice President:

Bob Tarsio, N2CBH; bob 'at' broadcast-devices.com

Secretary:

Lou Cassetta, KD2ITZ; radiocassetta 'at' gmail.com

Treasurer:

David Fredsall, KD2EVI; joann davidss88 'at' verizon.net

Director:

Robert Gill, AD2CT; AD2CT 'at' arrl.net

Vice President Emeritus: Joe Calabrese, WA2MCR.

Net night

Peekskill/Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association holds a roundtable net on Tuesday evenings at 8:00 p.m. and a directed 'Old Goats' net on Thursday evenings at 8:00 p.m. Both events take place on the 146.67 MHz W2NYW repeater, offset -0.600, PL 156.7 Hz.

Join the roundtable to find out what members have been doing or join the Old Goats with net control Karl N2KZ for news and neighborly information.

VE Test Session September

PCARA's September VE Test Session took place on Saturday September 5th, following the monthly meeting at Putnam Valley Library. Kevin DeYoe of Cortlandt Manor passed Element 2 and Element 3, qualifying for General. His license application was acted on by FCC on September 11, 2026, when they issued the new call sign **KE2JEN**.

Volunteer Examiners for this ARRL VEC Test Session included Lou KD2ITZ, Rob AD2CT, Ken W1YJ, Verle W2VJ and NM9J. This session made use of the ExamTools system, with the test conducted and supervised on notebooks and tablets.



VE Test Session on September 5 was held in the refurbished Community Room at Putnam Valley Library.

PCARA's next VE Test Session is scheduled for Saturday October 3, 2026 following the monthly meeting at Putnam Valley Library. Candidates should contact **Lou KD2ITZ** or register using the link on the PCARA home page, <http://pcara.org>.

Challenge Coin

At the September meeting, Rob AD2CT proposed that PCARA should have a set of Challenge Coins to act as both introduction and as publicity material, directed toward other radio amateurs and members of the public.

A challenge coin — sometimes known as a military coin — is a metal coin that symbolizes membership, recognition, or achievement within a group or organization. The coin bears the organization's logo and might be used to prove membership or as a commemorative award. The military aspect comes from the tradition of troop commanders presenting similar coins to their unit members in recognition of a special achievement.

Rob worked with David KD2EVI on the cost then ordered a first batch of coins from GS-JJ. Rob will bring these coins to the October meeting, see picture below.



PCARA Challenge Coin, 1 3/4" diameter with plain edge, soft enamel, UV printed. [AD2CT pic.]

Adventures in DXing

- N2KZ

25 Years

It was just another day. I had a very early dental appointment in Scarsdale and walked out by about 7:30 a.m. I walked to the Metro-North station and boarded a packed commuter train for the rest of my trip down to Grand Central Terminal. My job? Manager of graphics for CBS. Every day I would walk from Grand Central Terminal across town to the CBS Broadcast Center on 57th Street off Tenth Avenue. Little did I know what was happening downtown *this morning*.

I entered my office suite and my buddy Brion calls out to me: "Some plane crashed into the World Trade Center!" I stuck my head in his office and saw the live pictures of the North Tower. I couldn't believe my eyes. "I guess we are staying live with *The Early Show*", I replied. Little did I know how very long we would be on-the-air live.

We were just coming up to the top of the nine o'clock hour. Anchor Bryant Gumbel was doing live commentary and the news filled the air. Brion and I were in full panic mode. We contacted The Early Show studio across town and started pleading with every crew member. "How late can you stay? How late can you stay?"

The world cried again in the next fleeting minutes. Just after straight up at nine o'clock, we saw a second jet this time flying into the South Tower. There was no room for emotions. We scrambled to find additional studio crew within reach to head for the Broadcast Center. Many, many phone calls were made and we plotted how the crews could handle a day-long marathon broadcast. "What about food? What about hotel rooms?" We plotted and schemed as best we could. Complete chaos surrounded us.

Just after 9:30 a.m., the Pentagon also was hit by a hijacked jet — and half an hour later, a fourth plane plummeted into the outskirts of Shanksville, Pennsylvania just after 10:00 a.m. Two things crossed our minds: We were most certainly under attack.

The CBS Broadcast Center is highly identifiable from the air with its obvious architectural look. Would we become another target? By 9:30 a.m. News Anchor Dan Rather was now in the newsroom and on-the-air where he would lead our coverage until late night. CBS News coverage continued for 93 hours before returning back to regular programming.



Around the same time, we learned from several reports that all air traffic was commanded to land as quickly as possible to the closest available airport to clear the skies all across North America. We were praying no further hijacked craft were airborne.

At 9:58 a.m., the inevitable happened. The South Tower crashed and crumbled to the ground. Tons of powerful debris combined with a never-ending blast of white dust and smoke filled the air for miles. Crowds ran with nearly no visibility. Almost exactly half an hour later, the North Tower collapsed complete with New York City's central broadcasting tower.

My friend, Elliot, was at the helm in CBS Master Control. He received several calls from our WCBS transmitter crew atop the North Tower desperately pleading for help. "Can you get a helicopter to rescue us? Is there anything you can do?" We were all mortified. There was nothing we could do. We watched in terror as their iconic 300-foot broadcast antenna on the North Tower plummeted to the ground. Six of our friends perished instantly. It was 10:28 a.m.

WCBS had one unique advantage above all the other TV stations in New York City. Channel 2 was the only station that still had a backup transmitter on the Empire State Building. We were only off-the-air briefly when the World Trade Towers fell. All of the other stations had to jury rig solutions to get themselves back on the air from wherever they could. Many radio and TV signals ceased when the towers fell.

In my office, I always had several televisions up and running so I could immediately view live broadcasts from CBS studios and NBC and ABC. Quickly after 10:00 a.m., several rumors began circulating claiming additional unidentified aircraft flying erratically. NBC's Katie Couric ran with a rumor about a fifth hijacked plane destined for Washington, D.C. It proved to be speculation.

At the same time, a Korean Air flight cruising over Alaska mistakenly transmitted a hijack code — and — a missing-from-radar TWA flight was also found to be safe. Other on-the-scene reports came in from Gander, Newfoundland which had become a central landing oasis for westbound Transatlantic aircraft. Will the chaos ever stop?

Everyone around me was already exhausted and overwhelmed. Our in-house strategy was hard to manage and plan. We reverted by trying to clear every problem as it came in instead of prioritizing. This proved to be the only way to operate. The future was mysterious and unpredictable. What's next?

As time slowly passed, we all decided to take quick breaks to get some air and grab some takeout food. I ventured out with my IT expert, Kevin, around 3:30 p.m. Upon reaching the outside, we immediately noticed a strong pungent smell of wet concrete, as you might experience at a construction site. Realize that we

were about four miles from the disaster. There were very few people outside but, thankfully, our nearby deli was open for business. After we scarfed down our lunches, we took a quick visit to a familiar Broadcast Center rooftop about 15 stories high. Looking south-bound, we were stunned and amazed. We found visual proof. The towers were now gone.

Late afternoon, my dear friend Michelle appeared in the Broadcast Center, her black outfit and jacket still covered in white powder and debris. Michelle was a camera woman for CBS Sunday Morning this day and was headed downtown for an interview. Her station wagon was caught in the first blast of powder and smoke from the collapse of the South Tower.

As she ran for safety, she grabbed her video camera and put it into record. Like many others, she was overwhelmed by zero visibility as the white cloud blasted through the streets. People who had already reached door frames and passages into buildings were screaming as an aural cue for those imprisoned in the drowning sea of white to help them escape.

Thankfully, she made it into a building's lobby and held tight until the scene cleared long after. Hundreds of people were covered in white powder, some injured by falling debris, some by falling over debris or running into obstacles they could not see. It was true terror.

Michelle was greeted with many hugs and smiles when she finally made it home to the Broadcast Center. Later on, we viewed her videotape and were mesmerized by the desperate drama she captured. You could hear her calling for help as she depended solely on her sense of hearing for navigation. We were just so glad that we finally saw her arrive alive. She looked remarkably better after she had a shower and changed.

A final blow came at about 5:20 p.m. The remaining World Trade Center #7 building teetered and collapsed after being pummeled by debris from the fallen two main towers. A pivotal Verizon Central Office, very close to the Trade Center site, went completely down. Many, many of our signal interconnects were lost and creative routing needed to be done. Thankfully, we had just a handful of lines on divergent paths that kept us barely on the air.

Most of the major roads in Manhattan were being re-allocated into one-way corridors to serve emergency disaster traffic. Many modes of transportation were completely halted. Crowds were escaping by foot across all three East River bridges anxious to get far away from the disaster. I clearly remember televised scenes of masses heading over the Brooklyn Bridge. One of my graphics operators was caught for hours in her car on the West Side Highway. This route was in a full parking halt until the situation calmed. A complete lockdown ensued. Nobody was going anywhere.

Everyone in the Broadcast Center was still scurrying around focused on immediate necessities. The CBS

Evening News usually first broadcasts live at 6:30 p.m. but we were still in continual coverage. We were receiving live reports from all over the country and all over the world. Lots of speculation filled the air but no one was sure what exactly went on.

The long day and night really went forever. Prime time TV for the West Coast ends at 2:00 a.m. Eastern Time. By then, we were already preparing for the next day's Early Show that hit the air at 7:00 a.m. Local WCBS-TV news began at 5:00 a.m. We had no time to lose. Many crew members were napping on-site. We were trying to arrange passage for anyone else who could make it back to work.

My wife called me to see how I was doing at around 8:00 a.m. the next morning. She always has the best ideas. 'Karl, you should call the school and ask to speak to your daughters. They need to know you are OK. You weren't home last night.' One was in second grade and one was in kindergarten. When I heard their voices on the phone, there was great relief at both ends. 'I am glad you are safe.' 'Me, too! I'll see you after school.' As I hung up, I thought 'Some parents might not be coming home.' We heard in the coming days that this was true.

Back to work, I plodded on trying to help everyone I could. Both 48 Hours and 60 Minutes were already looking for production people and studio crews. By the time it reached noon, most everyone who had been there since yesterday morning was exhausted and 'toasted.' I excused myself at about 1:00 p.m. and trudged across Manhattan back to Grand Central Terminal and Metro-North on the way home.

Every available train was now running as a 'local' stopping at every station along the route. My north-bound ride produced haunting visions I will never forget. Inside my train car was silent. No one was talking. Many riders were wearing sunglasses to hide their tears. Standing along almost every station's loading platform were women, sometimes with children, waiting in vain to see if their missing husbands, partners or friends would be on *this train*. I don't think I ever saw a reunion. I felt like I was still a part of a living horror movie.

Needless to say, upon arrival back home I took a nap until dinnertime. We had a lot to discuss. I was so glad to be home and with my family. Early next morning, I was back in the saddle and heading back to Manhattan for work. I honestly don't remember when our coverage officially ended. In some respects, 25 years later, it is still going on.

More memorable visions continued in the weeks that followed. Almost immediately, people were posting signs on building facades and light poles all over the city each with a picture of a missing person and details to reach their next of kin. Every wall was covered. Everyone had hope.

In midtown Manhattan, every corner had policemen, guardsmen and other volunteers stationed in place to insure calm and peace. The long north-south roads continued to be cordoned off for emergency and recovery vehicles. We also saw the remarkable positioning of armed troops on Metro-North trains, sometimes walking the length of our trains in-motion, holding firearms.

These were serious times. I honestly don't remember when our coverage officially ended. We have continued to honor all the lost victims every September 11th since. Reading long lists of the departed keeps our memories fresh. On September 11, 2026, our grief and lament still remain. We will never forget.



– Karl N2KZ

NY QSO Party 2026

The New York QSO Party is scheduled for Saturday October 17, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, or 1400z October 19 to 0200z on October 20.

David KD2EVI has been in touch with the New York QSO Party regarding plaques. PCARA should be sponsoring the same two plaques as in 2025.

Rules for the New York QSO Party 2026 are available in PDF format from <https://nyqp.org/wordpress/nyqp-rules/>. There have been minor updates and clarifications to the overlay and category rules. Cross-references have been added between sections to help participants with the rules for their own category.

Club entry

In 2026, Joe WA2MCR is once again volunteering to host a multi-member entry for the New York QSO Party from his sunroom using club call sign W2NYW. Please contact Joe (wa2mcr@arrl.net) if you intend to join the club's combined entry at Joe's location, with entry from the back yard.

PCARA members who prefer to operate from their own portable, mobile or home stations are invited to submit **individual** entries and have their scores accumulated for the "highest scoring New York Club." When submitting your own entry, please indicate "Club name" as "Peekskill/Cortlandt ARA". Various categories are available for individual stations including: Single operator, Mobile, Portable — with overlays for school, rookie, youth and YL. Power can be High/Low/QRP. Mode options are: CW only, Phone only or Mixed mode (any combination of Phone, CW, and RTTY/digital modes that support the NYQP exchange requirements).

The contest starts at 10:00 a.m. Eastern on Saturday October 17 and runs for 12 hours until 10:00 p.m.



New York Counties for use in the New York QSO Party.

that same evening. For the contest exchange, New York State stations send signal report plus county, using a three-letter abbreviation for the county name. Westchester County is WES and Putnam County is PUT. Stations outside New York send their Signal Report plus State, Canadian Province or "DX". Detailed rules, including the full list of three-letter county codes, can be found at the New York QSO Party web site: <https://nyqp.org/wordpress/>.

Logging software

When operating from your own station, if you would like to employ the same computer logging software that is used at other PCARA events, N3FJP's State QSO Party logging programs are available from the following page: <https://n3fjp.com/stateqsoparty.html>. Registration for the NY State program is \$8.99, or you can register *all* of N3FJP's logging programs for \$59.99. The current version for New York is 2.2.8, so if you purchased an earlier version, you may need to download a free update.

The N1MM Logger, <https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/> can also be used. Set-up instructions are available from the heading on the NYQP web pages. Instructions for various software choices are available at the NYQP web site under "Info you can use", see: <https://nyqp.org/wordpress/logging-software/>.

If you will be operating your own station, with score accumulated into PCARA's High Club Score, please submit your own results to NYQP and also send a copy of your results to the *PCARA Update* editor for inclusion in a future report.

Remember to check the New York QSO Party web site, <https://nyqp.org/wordpress/> for any late changes to the rules for 2026.

- NM9J

Two-tone detect on Raspberry Pi - KE2JEN

Emergency calls

As a volunteer firefighter in a department that is largely made up of career members, I spend very little time waiting around at the firehouse, and when I do get a call, I respond from my house, in my personal car, directly to the scene. So, getting notified of calls quickly is extremely important. But unfortunately, when I sleep, I sleep very deeply and it can be extremely hard to wake me up. I do have a department-issued radio and can listen on another radio that I own, but the trouble is that our department runs a huge number of EMS (Emergency Medical Services) calls, which I don't respond to since I'm not an EMT. Listening to the radio all the time would mean that I'd hear all of the tones and chatter about calls that don't pertain to me.



Typical APX 8000 portable radio as used by Fire Departments.

I could get a pager, but then, again, it's a good amount of noise when a call does go off, and I have to be respectful to my already extremely patient and forgiving wife and do my best not to wake her. Not to mention the fact that getting a pager and getting it programmed to a public safety frequency is not a cheap thing, which the department wouldn't pay for since they already gave me the radio and the mobile app (which definitely doesn't wake me up). So, I set off looking for a way to notify me of calls while I was asleep, without waking her up.

Two tone system

The way that calls go out in the fire service is through a set of audible tones transmitted over radio frequencies,

usually one steady frequency tone for 1-3 seconds and then another tone for 1-3 seconds. These are defined by the

Two-Tone Paging

Public safety pagers and control systems use audio tones to alert emergency responders. The most common types employ two separate tones sent in sequence on an analog radio carrier.

A valid two-tone page has a first "A Tone" between 300 Hz and 3000 Hz for a specified time (usually 1 to 3 seconds) followed by a second "B tone" for another specified time. If both of the tone frequencies and times are correct, the decoder processes the signal then takes a suitable action such as beeping, engaging a relay etc.

dispatching agency, and are usually separated into a different set of tones for each department, and often a separate set of tones for different types of calls. My department has its own dispatch frequency and then two different sets of tones, one for EMS calls and one for fire calls.

Two-tone software

Now, there's a well-known software within the fire service called **TwoToneDetect** (link below) for Windows and Raspberry Pi OS. It listens to radio audio and whenever it detects the defined tones, it performs some set of chosen actions.



TwoToneDetect Tone Editor for entry of A Tone and B Tone frequencies and length settings. [KE2JEN pic.]

In many fire stations, this is how the alerts are given to the firefighters. Often there's a radio, with its audio output going into a computer running the TwoToneDetect software — when it detects the tones, it will flash lights, play a siren sound, trigger a large area siren, enable sound output to station speakers, start a recording, and/or send email notifications. One of the options is to run a custom command line script, which was the perfect way-in since that can include Python scripts.

I found an extremely helpful guide on Radio Reference (link below) that described most of what I was looking for. It uses a software-defined radio in a small USB dongle (RTL-SDR) attached to a Raspberry Pi, which then uses RTL-Airband software to tune the radio to the right dispatch frequency and pipes the audio over to the TwoToneDetect software.



RTL-SDR dongle plugged into USB port of a Raspberry Pi 5 single board computer. [KE2JEN pic.]

So, after some purchases and some tinkering, this is how it works:

- The SDR dongle goes into a Raspberry Pi USB port. RTL-Airband tunes it to the dispatch frequency I need, and pipes that audio over to an instance of the TwoToneDetect software.
- TwoToneDetect is programmed with both the EMS tones and the Fire tones for my agency. This was necessary because the two tone-sets are similar enough that I kept getting false positives when an EMS tone happened.
- If an EMS tone is detected, it does nothing.
- If a Fire tone is detected, it runs a Python script.

During the day, the script uses a Python utility for controlling Philips Hue lights (linked below), checks the current brightness and color of several of the lights in my house (one in each room), and flashes them **red** and **white** back and forth three times before returning to their existing color and brightness.

During the evening, it uses the GPIO outputs of the Raspberry Pi to act as a relay, triggering on and off a Midland “Pillow Shaker”, a battery-powered vibrating pad that goes into my pillow. These devices are often used by people who are hard of hearing but live in areas with frequent natural disasters, and are intended to be plugged into radios that receive NOAA alerts. I just snipped off the connector and soldered it to the GPIO pins.



Midland weather and emergency radio pillow shaker. [KE2JEN pic.]



Philips Hue light flashes red and white under computer control. [KE2JEN pic.]



Raspberry Pi with case open to show the Power Relay Featherwing. [KE2JEN pic.]

So now, while I can't say I wake up 100% of the time, and I can't say that I always find myself willing to get out of bed for a call that's obviously not an emergency (e.g. a car accident with no injuries and everyone already out of the vehicle, or a flooded basement from a storm in an empty residence), I do now most of the time wake up, check my phone for more details, and make a decision about whether to go — an opportunity that I did not have before.

This could of course be modified a million ways to trigger other devices or do other things. Basically, as long as the Raspberry Pi has a way to control it, this could be connected to it.

Links:

TwoToneDetect application: <https://support.iamresponding.com/hc/en-us/articles/27303494600596-TwoToneDetect-TTD-a-z-Raspberry-Pi-OS>

TwoToneDetect with RTL-SDR: <https://forums.radioreference.com/threads/guide-twotonedetect-with-rtl-sdr-and-local-audio.437788/>

Python library to control Philips Hue smart lamps: <https://pypi.org/project/python-hue-v2/>

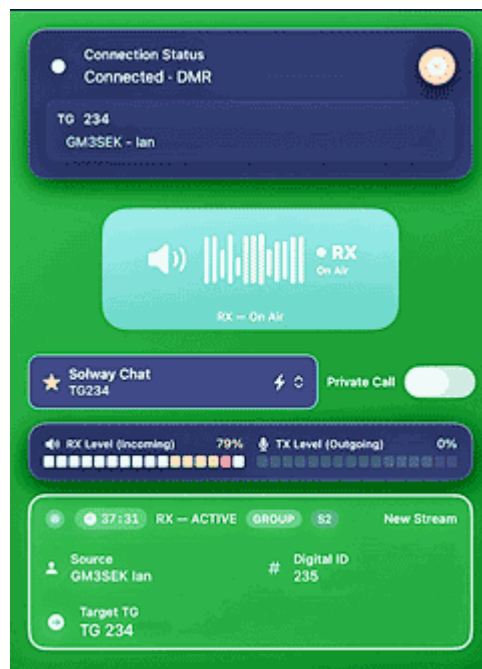
Midland SHKR100 Weather and Emergency Radio Pillow Shaker: <https://midlandusa.com/products/shkr100-weather-and-emergency-radios-pillow-shaker>

- Kevin, KE2JEN

Digi Voice Radio - N2KZ

Have you ever tried digital voice amateur radio? You can connect to a server by using a digital voice transceiver or handheld portable reaching a local Internet hotspot — or — you can connect via a nearby digital RF repeater... and you are on-the-air. You'll enjoy worldwide coverage, near perfect copy and not the slightest bit of QRM or QRN.

What do you do if you travel away from your home QTH



Digi Voice app contact from an iPhone to Ian GM3SEK in Scotland via the DMR Solway Chat talk group TG 234. [N2KZ pic.]

and lose your essential connectivity? Do you have to bring all sorts of equipment to operate locally in any remote location? Not anymore!

It is much easier now. Find any Internet connectivity (Wired, WiFi or cellular), click on the **Digi Voice** app and you are ready to go! Your computer device or phone becomes your self-contained transceiver. No need for anything else! After you are configured, all you have to do is tap on the GUI's large green PTT button and you are on the air. You'll see the button turn red when you are transmitting. Tap again and you are receiving. It's that simple. No need for bulky equipment, chargers, antennas and cabling. Just use the **Digi Voice** app!

This brilliant app was designed by Fatih Onder, TB1TFO, in Çekmeköy, Istanbul, Turkey and marketed by his company ALGSoft Technology at: <https://digivoice.algsoft.net.tr>.

Digi Voice is heralded as:



Fatih [pic. TB1TFO]

“A Digital Repeater Network in Your Pocket! With Digi Voice, connect to BrandMeister, TGIF and FreeDMR networks directly over the Internet. No hotspot, no extra hardware — just your callsign, your DMR ID and the PTT button.”

The **Digi Voice** app covers many popular protocols: DVPX, DMR, M17, NXDN, P25, Yaesu System Fusion YSF/FCS, D-Star/DCS and IAX (AllStar) — and — is available for use with Android/Android Auto, POC, iPhone/iPad/Apple Watch/CarPlay, macOS/Apple TV, Windows and Linux. It truly covers all bases.

If you are brand-new to digital radio, you need two forms of ID to indoctrinate yourself. I am a BrandMeister DMR user which required a two-step registration to reach their servers as a confirmed amateur radio operator.

- **Step 1:** To register for a DMR ID number (through RadioID) go to: <https://radioid.net/account/register> and follow along the easy steps. Be patient and wait for your ID to be later posted.
- **Step 2:** To register for a BrandMeister ID go to: <https://brandmeister.network/#/register>. Again, follow along the steps and be patient for a reply issuing you your numeric ID.

When you receive your DMR ID — and BrandMeister ID — go to either your Android or Apple app store, look for **Digi Voice** and download the app. Digi Voice's instructions will guide you through the initiation process. To see if you entered your information correctly, go to **SETTINGS** and then **IDENTIFICATION**. Your callsign and DMR ID should appear on the Digi Voice

GUI.

Your next stop on the Digi Voice app is to tap on the **FAVOURITE TALK GROUPS** tab in Settings. To reach the DMR talk group you would like to use and chat on, enter the talk group number to the list.

Choose up to nine favorites for instant call-up and use. Now when you go back to the voice screen, that talk group will appear on the list for you to quickly select and then operate on.

Another approach is to use the voice tab directly. While in the disconnected mode, you can simply type in any talk group number you like. Tap Connect and you will be ready to transmit right away on the last talk group you described. It is fascinating!

Here is a brief list of talk groups to try:

TG 311438	WECA Westchester
TG 31364	Lower Hudson Valley
TG 3136	New York Statewide
TG 3172	Northeast
TG 3100	USA Nationwide
TG 93	North America
TG 91	World-wide

The Worldwide talk group 91 is nearly always active with truly *worldwide* QSOs in progress, endlessly. Consider this your digital voice DX window to enjoy. Close your eyes and you might think you are listening to 20 meter USB when the band is open!

Another very useful utility is BrandMeister's 'Hose-line', <https://hose.brandmeister.network>. You can instantly see everyone who is on DMR right now. Tap the 'Player' feature in the upper right-hand corner and you can listen in, too. Just enter the talk group number you want to hear and away you go!

I hope you enjoy **Digi Voice** as much as I do! So convenient and interesting to use! It takes all the configuration frustration out of the world of digital. Is DMR 'real amateur radio'? The correct answer should be: "Are sit-back-and-watch QSOs on FT-8 'real amateur radio'?" Welcome to the world in the year 2026 and good DX!

- Karl N2KZ



Diamonds are for pleasure

In the September 2026 issue of *PCARA Update*, Jay NE2Q mentioned that he was first licensed 68 years ago. I cannot match Jay's achievement, but during summer break 2026, I did celebrate a significant anniversary — 60 years as a licensed radio amateur.



"Gaining gold", (*PCARA Update*, September 2016, pp 7-12), described how I first got on the air. I had joined Ainsdale Radio Club in the late summer of 1965. With the club's guidance, I sat for the City & Guilds Radio Amateur's Examination, passed the Post Office Morse Test at 12 words per minute in Liverpool then received my "Amateur (Sound) Licence A", with call sign G3VNQ in late August 1966.

My first station consisted of an ex-Royal Air Force R1155L communications receiver plus a home-built AM/CW transmitter for 160 meters. The antenna was 120 feet of wire wrapped around the back yard and adjusted for resonance with a "roller coaster" variable inductance.

Before leaving for college, I enjoyed five weeks of 160 meter activity, filling 10 pages of my "Webb's Radio" log book. Happy times!



Heathkit Mohican receiver above vintage R1155L receiver with external preamp.



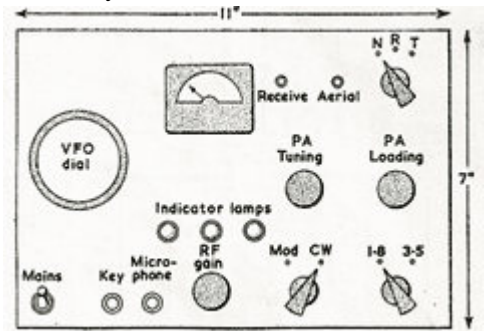
First page from paper log book showing 160 meter QSOs in August 1966.

How were things in 196x?

Technically, things were rather different 60 years ago. My first amateur radio station was based on vacuum tube technology. The only solid-state items were a transistorized calibrator with 1000/100 kHz crystal to mark the band edges and a secondhand Heathkit Mohican receiver for use away from home.

Transmitters and receivers relied on a **free-running oscillator** to set the operating frequency, possibly mixed with a crystal oscillator for the higher frequency bands. Vacuum tubes generated a good deal of heat, and the free-running oscillator would drift with temperature. As a result it was advisable to switch equipment on 15 - 30 minutes before any SSB or CW operation. This would give the VFO (variable frequency oscillator) time to warm up and settle down in frequency.

The transmitter's free-running VFO had to be "netted" to the incoming receive signal before a reply could be sent. Vintage radio amateurs would be skilled at rapidly netting the transmitter VFO to the frequency of the received signal. Usually, there was a "NET" switch on the transmitter which applied power to just the VFO stage, while leaving the receiver unmuted and still connected to the antenna. The transmitter VFO dial was then adjusted for a "zero-beat" heterodyne with the incoming carrier.



Front panel layout of 160 meter transmitter. Top right: **Net/Receive/Transmit** switch. **PA Tuning** and **PA Loading** controls are below the switch.

The need to net frequencies faded away with the arrival of 100W HF vacuum-tube **transceivers** such as the Yaesu FT-100 (1966), KW2000A (1966) and FT-101 (1970). In a transceiver, transmit and receive circuitry is housed in a single case, sharing a common VFO.

Vacuum tube transmitters require adjustment of the output stage circuitry as the frequency changes. The power amplifier (PA) will probably have a pi-output network to match vacuum tube impedance to antenna impedance, with air-spaced capacitors for plate **tune** and **load** brought out to knobs on the front panel.



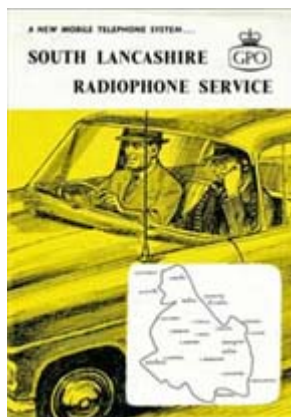
Yaesu/Sommerkamp separates — FL-dx500 transmitter and FR-dx500 receiver from 1960s-70s. Transmitter **Plate** (Tune) and **Load** controls are arrowed.

Any radio amateur who can simultaneously adjust two rotary controls for maximum power output probably dates back to the vacuum tube era. This 'hollow-state' technology was not superseded until **all-solid-state** 100W HF transceivers became well established — starting with the Icom IC-701 (1979), Kenwood TS-180S (1979) and Yaesu FT-107 (1980).

Home tech

One privilege of being a radio amateur in 1966 was the authorization to transmit on a wide choice of frequencies. The U.K. Post Office had a monopoly over electronic communication and jealously guarded all radio transmission. Everyday people had **no** access to anything that could radiate RF energy. There was **no** Citizens Band in the U.K. of the 1960's, no R.F. remote controls, no garage door openers, no cell-phones, no wireless keyboards, no Bluetooth. The only people with access to RF transmission worked in specialized agencies such as Police, Fire and Ambulance plus shipping, aircraft and taxi dispatch.

There was a public mobile radio-telephone service introduced by the Post Office in 1959 for the South Lancashire area. It operated on 164 MHz FM for the base station and 159 MHz for mobile transmissions, with 50 kHz channel spacing. Human telephone operators handled incoming calls while monitoring the calling channel and controlling the four traffic channels. Base station equipment and some of the mobiles were supplied by Pye Telecommunications. There were few users thanks to the cost of bulky mobile equipment and high service charges. On-air transmit time was limited because of the small number of working channels.



Not invented yet

Some of the technologies not yet available in 1966 included color television, pocket calculators, GPS, Internet, podcasts and Smartphone.



In 1966, there were only three television channels broadcasting in the U.K. — BBC1, BBC2 and ITV. On July 1 1967, color television was launched with Wimbledon Tennis coverage on BBC2. Transmissions were on 625 line UHF using PAL (Phase Alternating Line) color technology from Germany.

Electronic calculators were arriving, beginning with large, desktop models that mimicked mechanical calculators, but using cold cathode tubes and dekatron

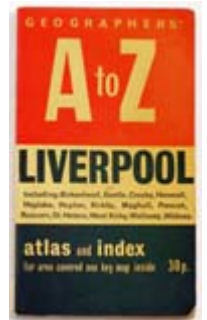


Sinclair Oxford Scientific calculator.

counters. The first UK pocket calculators based on integrated circuits were introduced by Clive Sinclair in 1972-1973.

Where am I?

Road users of the 1960s had no GPS or smartphone to guide them to their destinations. Instead, they depended on written directions and paper maps. The Automobile Association, Ordnance Survey, Bartholomew and Geographers' A to Z produced bound road atlases and folded maps. Motorists could read a map and visualize the route to their destination — a skill that has almost disappeared today. Most U.K. hamfests and mobile rallies had a **talk-in station** to guide in visiting mobile amateurs.



"A to Z" Road Atlas.

Got the message?

Despite the lack of Internet, e-mail, fax, message boards, blogs and social media, the general population — and radio amateurs — still managed to keep in touch.

Only one third of 1966 households had a Post Office land-line telephone. In addition, a shortage of twisted pairs meant that some households had to share a "party line". Pick up the phone and instead of dial tone, you might hear a conversation already underway!

Radio amateurs made use of telephone call trees for DX alerting and for emergency call-outs by Raynet, the Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network. But don't stay on the phone too long — all calls, including local connections, were charged by the minute in the U.K.

For households *without* a phone, for emergencies and for special occasions there was an older service, the **Post Office Telegram**. Messages were transmitted between Post Offices by teleprinter, printed out on a strip of gummed paper, pasted onto a telegram form then delivered by hand.

One early school leaver that I knew was employed by the Post Office as a "Telegram Boy". These youngsters were issued with speed-limited Bantam motorcycles to race around town at 15 mph, delivering important messages and waiting for a possible reply.



Bantam Motorcycle in GPO livery as used by Post Office Telegram Boys. [Wikimedia CC- by-2.0.]

As more and more homes acquired a landline telephone, the Telegram Service declined and was finally closed in 1982.

Repeat, repeat

When my U.K. license was issued, I started on 160 meter AM, then moved up to exploring the HF bands on SSB/CW. At the same time I was also becoming interested in VHF, starting with the 4 meter band (70 MHz) where amateur operation was mostly on amplitude modulation using government surplus sets and retired radiotelephone equipment. The 4 meter band had good propagation, especially in the summer months when Sporadic-E extended the range. Later, I moved on to 144 MHz SSB and 432 MHz.

There were **no** amateur repeaters in the U.K. until 1972 when GB3PI came on-air from Barkway near Cambridge using European channel R6, 145.750 -0.600 MHz. The first amateur repeater covering the north-west was GB3MP, on-the-air in 1976 from Moel-y-Parc, North Wales, also on channel R6.

News of the world

In the 1960s, the nearest thing to an amateur radio podcast was the Radio Society of Great Britain's weekly **GB2RS News Bulletin**, read out every Sunday morning on 3600 kHz LSB and on 145 MHz AM by operators around the U.K. On-air reception reports were welcomed by the newsreaders. The service continues to this day.

How many other hobbies have the ability to distribute their *own* news through their own medium?

- NM9J



VHF/UHF antennas at home. From top to bottom, 432 MHz vertical, 144 MHz 8-element Yagi, 432 MHz Parabeam and U.K. 70 MHz band 3-element Yagi.

HamX™ 2026 booth tour video

At this year's Northeast HamXposition™, August 13 - 16, 2026 in Marlborough MA, Rob AD2CT conducted video interviews with many of the vendors in the Exhibit Hall. The video is now available on PCARA's YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@peekskillcortlandtamateur7670> and can be found at this direct link, <https://youtu.be/mxBbhVLMYzo>. New products and services for the amateur radio community are highlighted.



Scott NA0MT describes accessories from Side KX on the Elecraft booth at HamX. [AD2CT pic.]



Chuck K9CFA shows products on the ABR Industries booth at HamX. [AD2CT pic.]

Run Against Hunger 2026

Our twelfth year

PCARA and WECA have once again been invited to provide communications support for the Annual Harry Chapin Memorial Run/Walk Against Hunger, taking place on Sunday October 18th, 2026. The first Run Against Hunger was organized in Croton-on-Hudson to honor singer-songwriter Harry Chapin who died in a Long Island auto-accident in 1981. This year will be the 46th occasion that the event has been commemorated. The run is being organized as an in-person race on Sunday October 18th along with a virtual event during October 10-17.

10K route change

In November 2024 the 130-year-old Quaker Bridge in Croton-on-Hudson was deemed unsafe by Westchester County and closed to traffic. Contractors working for Westchester County began removing the old bridge in July 2026, ready to begin construction on its replacement. The bridge should reopen in summer 2027.

As a result the 10K Race is unable to make use of the bridge this year and will once again follow the modified route from 2025 — see below.

Sunday schedule

Timing of the races will be the same as for 2025. The 5K Race/Walk starts at 8:30 a.m. This is followed by the 10K Race which begins at 10:00 a.m. The final event is the 1 mile Fun Run which begins at 11:45 a.m. The 5K Race/Walk starts near the school, the other two events begin further away, beyond Five Corners/Veterans Corners. Finish lines are all close to Croton Harmon High School.

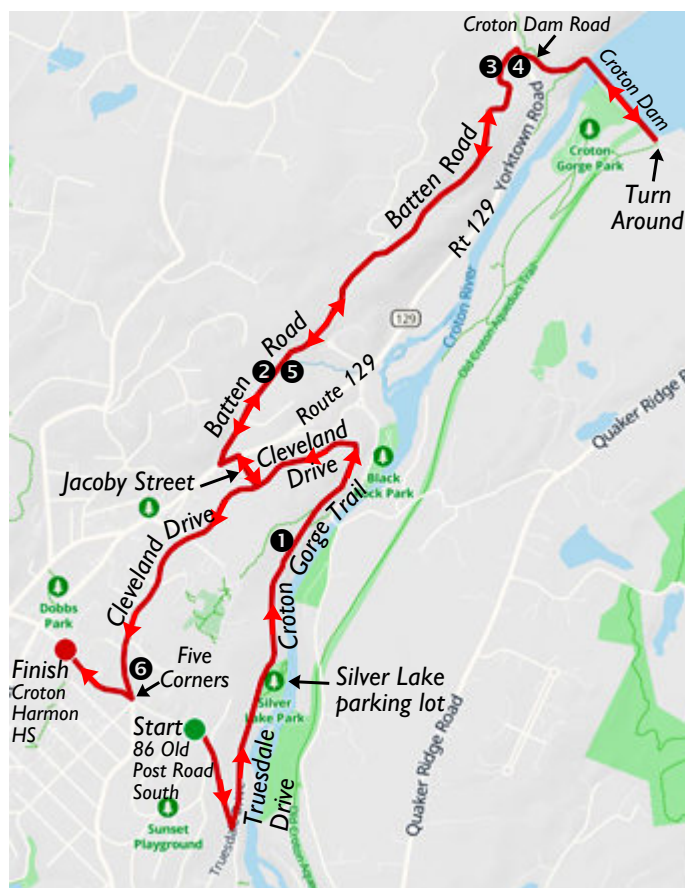
5K Race & Walk, 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

The 5K Run/Walk begins near the High School and continues along Old Post Road South, down Truesdale Drive, east on Cedar Lane, then north up Nordica Drive and Truesdale Drive, through Croton Gorge and returning down Cleveland Drive to the High School.

10K Race, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

The 10K Race starts southeast of Veterans Corners at 86 Old Post Road South, then a sharp left turn into Truesdale Drive. North to the Silver Lake Parking Lot and onto the Croton Gorge Trail. At the end of the trail, onto Cleveland Drive, right turn into Jacoby Street, left turn onto Grand Street/Route 129, then quick right turn onto Batten Street. Follow Batten Street to the end then cross Route 129 into Croton Dam Road. Cross Croton Dam and turn round at far end barrier. Return over dam, Croton Dam Road, across Route 129 and back

down Batten Road. Left turn onto Grand Street/Route 129 and quick right onto Jacoby Street, returning down Cleveland Drive to Old Post Road South and the High School.



Revised 10K Route, showing circled mile posts.

One Mile Fun Run, 11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

The start point of this run/walk is on Cleveland Drive, just south of Veteran's Corners. North on Cleveland Drive to turn-around at CET (Carrie E Tompkins) Elementary School on Gerstein Street, then back along Cleveland Drive, finishing at the High School.

Full details of the three race routes are available at the Run Against Hunger web site, <https://runagainsthunger.com/course/>. Details of radio station locations should be available from David KD2EVI before race day. Register your interest by sending a message to David KD2EVI using the e-mail address on page 2. Be sure to bring a high-visibility vest and program your mobile and HT for WECA repeaters including:

147.060 +0.600 PL 114.8
145.110 -0.600 PL 114.8
447.475 -5.000 PL 114.8
146.565 Simplex

Please watch for announcements about possible changes to frequencies, water-stops, mile-posts and routes. Setup at the High School should begin around 7:30 a.m. for Net Control at the usual location on the school driveway.

Fall foxhunt October 24

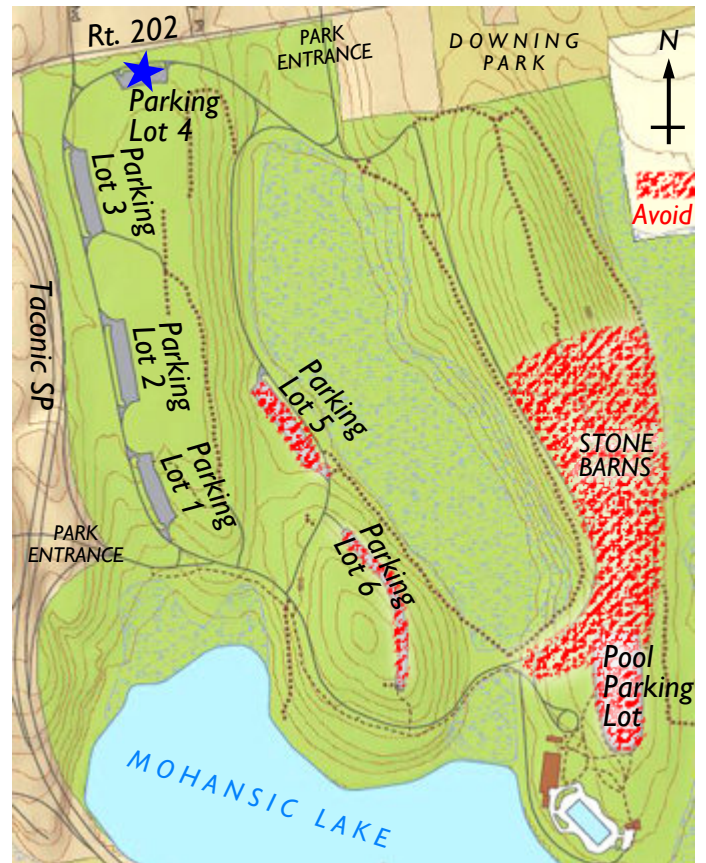
PCARA's next Foxhunt is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday October 24, 2026. Rules will be similar to previous PCARA events in FDR State Park.

One difference this time will be the return of "Harry Potter – A Forbidden Forest Experience" scheduled to take place in the evenings at FDR State Park from October 16 to November 29. See <https://hpforbiddenforestexperience.com/westchester/>.

The Harry Potter experience last visited FDR Park in 2022. The experience will be located once again in the Stone Barns area north of the Pool Parking Lot, with Parking Lots 5 and 6 also in use. All should be avoided. In addition, there will be Disc Golf events taking place near the Foxhunt on October 24.

Here are the Foxhunt rules courtesy of Lou, KD2ITZ:

- Transmission: FM simplex on 146.565 MHz.
- Transmissions start at 9:00 a.m.
- All are welcome to participate.
- Participants must start in Parking Lot #4.
- Participants are not allowed to enter FDR Park before 8:45 a.m.
- Participants are not allowed to enter any restricted areas of the park, including those closed for the Harry Potter Experience.
- The transmitter will be hidden within the confines of FDR Park.
- Please be mindful of other events scheduled for October 24 including "Ghoul's Fest 2026" Disc Golf tournament on the Disc Golf and Ace Place courses near Parking Lots 1 and 4.
- Once the event begins, participants must remain on foot, without assistance of vehicles of any kind.
- Participants are encouraged to work in groups of two or three.
- Participants who locate the transmitter should discreetly inform the event coordinator who will note the time. Avoid revealing the site to other participants who are still hunting.
- The participant who locates the transmitter in the least amount of time will be invited to assume the role of fox at the next event.
- Any changes due to weather or unforeseen circumstances will be posted to the PCARA Google Group and Facebook Page.



Map shows Fall Foxhunt 2026 locations in FDR State Park. Avoid the areas hatched in red.

More daylight?

As explained in *PCARA Update* for September, the **Sunshine Protection Act**, enabling year-long Daylight Saving Time, was approved by the House of Representatives in July 2026. The legislation was awaiting action from Senators who returned from their recess on September 14. However, the Senate is divided on the issue and has not yet scheduled a vote. Senators leave the Capitol on October 5 for a break, and do not return until November 9, 2026. This resumption of activities would be too late to affect the change to Standard Time, currently scheduled for Sunday November 1. This is the date when clocks "fall back" one hour from 2:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Several Canadian Provinces have decided to adopt year-round daylight saving time in 2026. Alberta, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories have now been joined by Manitoba. Yukon had already made the change in 2020.

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association

Mail: PCARA, PO Box 146, Crompond, NY 10517

E-Mail: mail 'at' pcara.org

Web site: <http://www.pcara.org>

PCARA on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pcararadio>

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@peekskillcortlandtamateur7670>

PCARA Update Editor: Malcolm Pritchard, NM9J

E-mail: NM9J 'at' arrl.net

Newsletter contributions are always very welcome!

Archive: <http://nm9j.com/pcara/newslett.htm>

PCARA Information

PCARA is a **Non-Profit Community Service**

Organization. PCARA meetings take place every month (apart from July/August break). See <http://www.pcara.org> for current details.

PCARA Repeaters

W2NYW: 146.67 MHz -0.6, PL 156.7Hz

KB2CQE: 449.925MHz -5.0, PL 179.9Hz

N2CBH: 448.725MHz -5.0, PL 107.2Hz

PCARA Calendar

Sat Oct 3: PCARA Monthly Meeting, 10:15 a.m., Putnam Valley Library, 30 Oscawana Lake Rd., Putnam Valley, NY.

Sat Oct 3: PCARA VE. Test Session, 11:30 a.m., Putnam Valley Library, see below.

Sat Oct 17: PCARA Breakfast, 9:00 a.m., Uncle Giuseppe's, 380 Downing Dr, Yorktown Heights, NY.

Sat Oct 17: 10:00 a.m. New York QSO Party.

Sun Oct 18: Harry Chapin Run Against Hunger, Croton on Hudson. 5K - 8:30 a.m, 10K -10:00 a.m., Fun Run -11:45 a.m.

Sat Oct 24: PCARA Foxhunt, FDR State Park, starts 9:00 a.m.

Hamfests

Check with organizers before leaving.

Sat Oct 10: BARA (Bergen Amateur Radio Association) Fall Hamfest, Westwood Regional High School, 701 Ridgewood Rd., Township of Washington, NJ. 8:00 a.m.

Sun Oct 11: Nutmeg Hamfest, ARRL Connecticut State Convention, Francis T. Maloney High School, 121 Gravel Street, Meriden, CT. 8:00 a.m.

Sat Oct 17: Mount Beacon Amateur Radio Club Hamfest, 8:00 a.m. Knights of Columbus, 1278 NY Rt 9G, Hyde Park, NY.

VE Test Sessions

Check with the contact before leaving.

Oct 3: PCARA, 11:30 a.m., Putnam Valley Library, 30 Oscawana Lake Rd., Putnam Valley NY. Must contact VE Lou KD2ITZ, radiocassetta'at'gmail.com.

Oct 8: WECA, Westch Cnty Fire Trg Center, 4 Dana Rd Valhalla NY. 7:00 p.m. Contact VE, rcasino48'at'gmail.com.

Oct 16: Orange County ARC, Munger Cottage, 40 Munger Dr., Cornwall NY. 6:00 p.m. Contact VE: joed99'at'verizon.net.



Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association Inc.
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Crompond, NY 10517