

DIRECT CURRENTS-QRP

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

NEW ENGLAND QSO PARTY

May 2-3

May 2026 Issue

Mark your calendars—our club will once again be on the air as **K1WAS** for the 2026 New England QSO Party (NEQP), taking place the weekend of May 2–3, 2026. This is always one of our most enjoyable and productive operating events of the year, combining contesting, station testing, and great teamwork.

Operating Schedule

We will be setting up and operating across both days:

1. Monday, April 27
 - Pre-NEQP Zoom meeting 7:30 pm
2. Friday, May 1
 - Set Up at WAS 10 am.
3. Saturday, May 2
 - Contest begins: 2000Z (4:00 PM EDT)
 - Operating continues until 0500Z (1:00 AM EDT Sunday)
4. Sunday, May 3
 - Contest resumes: 1300Z (9:00 AM)
 - Ends: 2400Z (8:00 PM)

As required by contest rules, we will schedule an 8-hour overnight break to ensure everyone gets some rest before Sunday's activities.

Operating Categories & Modes

NEQP offers flexibility in how we participate. Depending on operator availability and station

(Continued on page 2)

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.

- **Pre NEQP Meeting** - April 27 at 7:30 pm on Zoom
- **May Meeting** - Canceled due to proximity to NEQP.
- **June Meeting** - June 01, 2026 at 7:30 pm
- **Special Pre Field Day Meeting** - Monday June 22 at 7:30 pm
- **July, August** - There are no meetings in the Summer. See you in September.

NOTICE

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



readiness, we will decide whether to operate as:

- Single Transmitter, Multi-Operator or
- Multi-Transmitter, Multi-Operator

In addition to our contest stations, we will also have an **FT8** “play station” set up outside of the contest. This is a great opportunity for experimentation, learning, and casual operating alongside the main event.

Pre-Contest Planning

We will hold a pre-NEQP Zoom meeting on Monday, April 27 at 7:30 PM to finalize plans, including:

- Operating category
- Station layout
- Equipment assignments
- Operator scheduling

Your input is important, so please plan to attend.

Important Note: May Club Meeting

Our regular May club meeting is canceled to allow full focus on NEQP activities.

Field Day Preparation Opportunity

Remember, this contest doubles as a **Field Day shakedown exercise**. It's the perfect time to:

- Test radios, antennas, and power systems
- Evaluate setup and teardown procedures
- Identify and resolve issues ahead of summer operations

If you are planning to bring equipment to Field Day, please bring it to NEQP so we can test it under real operating conditions.

Learn More

For full contest rules and details, visit:

<https://neqp.org/>

Whether you're a seasoned contester or just getting started, NEQP is a fantastic opportunity to get on the air, learn, and contribute. We look forward to seeing you there and making this another successful outing for K1WAS!

WE TAKE 2ND IN MULTI MULTI CATEGORY-2025 NEQP

The 2025 New England QSO Party (NEQP) was an exciting and educational event for us, operating from WAS in Westport (CTWES) in the multi-operator, multi transmitter (unlimited) category. Last year's effort was truly a team endeavor, with support from Jon AI1V, Sam W1SMF, Douglas WA1SFH, Jeff KB1LZ, Dan N3DAW, Steve K1RF, and David KB1LTW.

One of the major changes for last year's operation was our first-time use of N1MM Logger+ across three stations. While the software is a powerful tool for contesting, our initial experience came with its share of challenges. From network access issues to unexpected fatal errors during startup after installation, we encountered a number of technical hurdles that required on-the-fly troubleshooting. Despite these setbacks, the team adapted quickly and kept the operation moving forward.

In addition to software experimentation, we also put new hardware to the test. This included band-pass filters, a triplexer, and choke filters. These additions were aimed at improving station performance and reducing interference between transmitters—an important consideration in a multi-transmitter



environment. The setup provided valuable insights, and while further refinement is likely needed, it was a solid step toward optimizing future operations.

So, how did we do?

By the end of the contest, K1WAS logged approximately 323 contacts, including 233 CW and 89 phone QSOs. Our reach extended across 45 states and 4 Canadian provinces, a respectable showing given the technical challenges faced. Notably, we achieved nearly complete coverage of New England counties, missing only one—the Northeast section of Connecticut. We achieved:

- 1st in county CTWES for multi multi
- 10th in CT all categories
- 2nd in New England for multi multi
- 2nd in NEQP contest for multi multi.

Congratulations to all involved. Thanks go out to all who helped set up, all who made contacts, all who kept us running and all who took down our systems.

Overall, the 2025 NEQP operation was a success, not only in terms of contacts and coverage but also as a learning experience. The combination of new technology, team coordination, and problem-solving under pressure made for a rewarding weekend. With the lessons learned last year, we are already looking forward to an even stronger performance in this years NEQP.

International Digital Contest

June 6 - 7

The N1KT station will be on the air for the In-

ternational 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 N1KT this year!



FIELD DAY 2026

Summer Field Day is about **8 weeks away**—and that means it's time 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. Saturday breakfast will be provided by Ned KA1CVv.

Overnight: Anyone staying overnight?

Number of Stations: We will have 5 stations operating HF. Two CW, two digital and one SSB. Last year, 4 stations 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). We plan to operate 5E and have an alternate power station also. 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?

ARRL 2025 10-Meter Contest Weekend at Westport Astronomical Society

From December 13–15, 2025, members and friends of the Housatonic Amateur Radio Club gathered for an exciting and productive weekend participating in the ARRL 10-Meter Contest. Operating from the WAS classroom in Westport, Connecticut, we assisted the operators from the Westport Astronomical Society Amateur Radio Club (WAS ARC) and were joined by the Greater Fairfield Amateur Radio Association (GFARA) and members of the Greater Norwalk ARC (GNARC).

Setup began promptly at 10:00 a.m. on



Friday, December 12. The contest itself ran for 48 hours and we could operate 36 of those 48 hours. It started Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. and concluded Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m. We operated as a multi-operator, single-transmitter station, and in addition, we ran a separate “fun” FT8 station that was not entered in the contest but provided plenty of enjoyment and contacts.

Operators participating throughout the weekend included Dan N3DAW, Rusty K4SSA, Jeff KB1LZ, Sam W1SMF, Steve K1RF, Mike KA1EOU, Jim KC1RBG, Marilyn NU7T, Peter KC1YRA (a brand-new Technician, licensed just two days earlier in our Tech class!), Larry AB1JC, and Gary WE1M. We were also visited by Connecticut Section Manager—and club member—Douglas WA1SFH, whose encouragement and enthusiasm were a real inspiration.

Our primary contest call sign, K1WAS, was active on both SSB and CW using the hex beam. At the same time, the FT8 “fun” station operated as N1KT, also using the hex beam through a triplexer on 20 meters. This configuration performed exceptionally well, allowing both stations to hear and be heard clearly with no mutual interference. T

The contest station featured our newly purchased Windows 11 computer, complete with eye-catching white, color-lit keyboards. We did encounter a minor chal-

lenge during Friday setup when we discovered the new computers only supported Display Port video, while the wall monitor did not. Fortunately, an adapter was quickly obtained and the issue resolved. The FT8 fun station ran on an older Windows 10 system—still perfectly serviceable for the task.

The N1KT FT8 fun station logged an impressive 231 contacts, counting toward awards (but not the contest score). Meanwhile, K1WAS completed 173 CW QSOs and 149 phone QSOs, for a total of 322 contacts. That resulted in 990 QSO points, with 125 multipliers, yielding a claimed score of 123,750. So, was this enough? For Multi Op, Single Transmitter, Low Power we earned

- 1st in CT
- 2nd in New England
- 8th in the USA

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who operated, supported, and visited during the weekend. It was a great demonstration of teamwork, technical skill, and the fun of amateur radio. Well done, everyone!



April ZOO(M) MEETING

The meeting began at 7:30 pm on Zoom.

In attendance were:

Larry AB1JC, Gary WE1M, Jim KA1PUG, Jon AI1V, Dan N3DAW, Jeff KB1LZ, Ned KA1CVv, David KB1LTW & Marilyn NU7T.

Agenda:

1. ARRL DX SSB Contest March 7-8 discussion.
 - a. 175 contacts, 519 QSO Points, 88 multipliers
 - b. Total claimed score 45,672

2. And while we were contesting, Dave Schadlich:
 - a. Set up the new All-Sky Camera
 - b. Replaced the Digipeater with one based on a DigiPi.

3. Flex 6400M
 - a. Power Supply? Astron 35M?
 - b. Power Pole Connection, power cable
 - c. Footswitch and Headset ... Heil?
 - d. Remote Access

4. Did anybody work the CQ Prefix SSB Contest from home Mar 28-29 ?

5. Upcoming Contests
 - a. New England QSO Party May 2-3
 - - would like to have a meeting to discuss this ... Monday April 27
 - b. ARRL Digi Contest June 6-7
 - - use any Digital mode except RTTY

6. Summer Field Day June 27-28 discussions
 - a. Grounds Maintenance
 - b. Remove old radio equipment - - Organize the corner
 - c. Dave says his company is moving, and office furniture may be available.
 - d. Decide about hardline... Discussed scrapping the 1 ½ inch stuff, examine possible
 - e. uses for the ¾ inch stuff, perhaps 100 feet
 - f. VHF/UHF beam on the tower?
 - g. Equipment at Discovery Museum? No action to report

7. Hob Nob Possibilities
 - a. Free up the table , move equipment to desk



- b. Learn about Flex Radio, training session
- c. APRS digipeater workshop? DigiPi ? AIOC ?
- d. Operating the new All-sky camera
- e. Meshtastic Stuff - - Mesh Core (Conrad Troutman?) install at WAS?
- f. Satellite Communications
- g. Digital Modes, FLdigi, Winlink, FT8, JS8Call, GridTracker, FT2 (?)
- h. Microcontrollers, C coding, and the Arduino Development Environment
- i. CW operations software for contesting,
- j. Learning Morse Code, and having QSOs with CW Hotline units

The meeting ended at 9:00 pm

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

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.

NOTICE

July 2026 is the Semiquincentennial, 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Gary WE1M has reserved the 1x1 call sign W1A (Whiskey 1 America) for June 28-July 12 [inclusive].



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!

"DIRECT CURRENTS - QRP" NOW AVAILABLE ON CLUB WEB SITE

We now offer a new "low calorie, low fat, non GMO, QRP" version of Direct Currents on our club web page. Beginning with the April Edition, it is offered every month. QRP issues are easily emailed and sent via text message. QRP issues have the same great taste and quality that you've come to expect from Direct Currents, but with half the guilt. Brought to you by your friendly neighborhood Direct Currents Newsletter Team. As always, full editions will still be emailed.



UPCOMING CONTESTS

- 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 15-16 International Lighthouse Light-ship Weekend
- Aug 29-30 WW Digi Contest
- 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

OUR SKED

- 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

- Goshen Hamfest - May 16
Goshen Fairgrounds, Goshen CT
- NorthEast Ham Xposition

Start Date: 08/13/2026

End Date: 08/16/2026

Location: Best Western Royal Plaza & Trade Center
181 Boston Post Road W.
Marlborough, MA 01752

Website: <http://hamx.org>

Sponsor: FEMARA, Inc.

Type: ARRL Convention

Talk-In: Minuteman Repeater linked repeater system

Public Contact: Bob DeMattia , K1IW

PO Box 2192 Littleton, MA 01460

I TAPPA KEY

UPCOMING CW CONTESTS

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

- - - **NOTICE:** Our N1KT web page now has our “reduced, low cal, low fat, non GMO” issues of our newsletter entitled, *“Direct Currents - QRP”*. They are available for download every month. - - - We will have a pre-NEQP Zoom meeting Monday April 27th at 7:30 pm, the Monday before NEQP. We will discuss the contest. - - - ***If you do not watch the news, you are uninformed. If you watch the news, you are misinformed!*** - - - **STOP**



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 27	125	5	2
2026	Apr 28	125	5	2
2026	Apr 29	125	20	5
2026	Apr 30	125	18	5
2026	May 01	125	12	4
2026	May 02	125	10	4
2026	May 03	115	8	3
2026	May 04	108	8	3
2026	May 05	105	5	2
2026	May 06	100	5	2
2026	May 07	95	20	5
2026	May 08	90	15	4
2026	May 09	90	8	3
2026	May 10	95	5	2
2026	May 11	100	5	2
2026	May 12	105	5	2
2026	May 13	110	5	2
2026	May 14	110	5	2
2026	May 15	105	25	5
2026	May 16	105	20	5

HOW TO INTERPRET THE BAND CONDITION NUMBERS

Solar Flux - higher is better

- 100+ best Good DX
- 90 better
- 80 good
- 60 poor

A index - lower is better

- 1 - 6 best
- 7 - 9 better
- 10+ poor

K index - lower is better

- 0 - 1 best
- 2-3 better
- 3+ poor



Housatonic Amateur Radio Club Information

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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SKCC# 3980

The Housatonic Amateur Radio Club is affiliated with the National Association for Amateur Radio. 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
Deacon Kenneth Johnson, NE1CU Assistant Editor
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