

Northeast HamXposition 2022

By Tony Baker – AA3HD

This year's Northeast HamXposition was the first time it hosted **both** the ARRL New England and Hudson Division conventions. It took place from August 26-28 in Marlborough, Massachusetts at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center; only minutes away from restaurants, shops, and other hotels. Proceeds from the convention benefitted scholarships for both New England and Hudson Division students. Volunteers and speakers also were drawn from both Divisions.



Welcome banner clearly shows this year's HamXposition is for both the New England and Hudson Divisions.

This year's event featured many of the things regular New England Division Convention attendees have become accustomed to, including a Saturday morning keynote address, Friday and Saturday night banquets with guest speakers, a large outdoor flea market, ample indoor vendor space, a variety of Ham radio related forums, a Technician's licensing class, a kit building class, three VE sessions, ARRL and the W1QSL Bureau, a special event radio station, (W1A), and various Ham radio club displays and/or information tables. From everything that I experienced over the weekend, I would say the convention was unquestionably a complete success.

The list of vendors/exhibitors was impressive to say the least and included Aesop Engineering, Algonquin ARC, Amateur Radio Digital Communications, ARRL, CW Academy, Elecraft, Gold Medal Idea, Ham Radio Outlet (HRO), M17 Project, MARS, Momobeam, N3ZM Keys, Nashua Area Radio Society, NE Sci-Tech, Nashoba Valley VARC, Near-Fest, New England Amateur Radio, Quicksilver, STARS, Skywarn, W1QSL Bureau, West Mountain Radio, Wounded Warrior, and YLRL/WRONE. What did surprise me was that Yaesu, Icom, and Flex were not there.



Photo of some of the commercial vendors at the convention.

Much of Friday was reserved for vendor and exhibitor set-up, but that doesn't mean there wasn't anything going on. For example, there was a Skywarn Spotter Class and a kit-building class. You could operate the special event station W1A without a reservation...there were plenty of elmers available to help you out if need be. The flea market also was open, but got washed out by a severe thunderstorm.

Friday's activities ended with the Contest/DXCC Banquet. The guest speaker was Joe Reisert - W1JR, who presented his "Untold DX Stories" that focused on his early radio days and helping get people into DXing. He also spoke of DX'peditions he made in 1957 and 1958. He wrapped up with some other stories and information about some of the most prominent DX and DX'ers of yesteryear. One lucky attendee at the dinner walked away with a grand prize of a \$500.00 gift certificate to HRO.



Joe – W1JR.

I spent some of Friday mingling...greeting people I knew and meeting some new people as well. Richard – K1RAW, was of the new people I met. He was a soft-spoken elderly gentleman with quite a remarkable ham history. Richard is member number 1 of the 10-10 Net. Back in the 1970's he would work all over the world on just 35 or 40 watts on AM. As a soldier in Vietnam, and ham radio operator, he would assist fellow soldiers make phone calls back to the US via phone patches through Senator Barry Goldwater. When he got home from Vietnam, he continued to assist Senator Goldwater to make phone patches between soldiers in Vietnam and their families in the US. Richard and Senator Goldwater remained friends until the Senator passed. Richard also was in frequent QSO's with Jordan's King Hussein, and met the King when he came to Massachusetts. Just meeting K1RAW made my visit to this year's HamXposition worth it.



10-10 Net member number 1 – Richard, K1RAW.

The weather fully cooperated on Saturday, and flea market sellers, (and buyers), were active at least an hour before the official opening time of 9:00 AM.



Partial view of the flea market activity on Saturday.

Also at 9:00 AM, ARRL CEO Dave Minster – NA2AA, gave the Keynote Address following the official opening of the convention with the pledge of allegiance. He talked about both the good things and challenging issues now facing ARRL. I found Dave to be open, honest, and thus conveying an air of transparency. He viewed hams as a community of like minded people, and this community is 'family.' But like all families, there are both good and not-so-good members. He spoke of how ARRL both protects and promotes amateur radio, actively working with both the FCC and IARU. He stressed the need to get youth involved in amateur radio, and invigorating radio clubs to get those inactive to be active. Amazingly, only about half of the 780,000 licensed in the US are on the air

and/or active. ARRL initiatives like the club grant program and Teacher's Institute are examples of how ARRL is currently trying to grow and stimulate our hobby. He hopes to grow these programs. He also stated that the ARRL is operating at a \$1 million deficit. Right now it is 'surviving' because of the endowments it receives, but Dave wants to turn this around so the ARRL does not necessarily have to depend on endowments. The ARRL also is facing a need for leaders...new, young leaders. Much of the ARRL leadership are members of our more senior community. 2023 will be the year of the volunteer. ARRL will be making some exciting announcements regarding this initiative soon. Lastly, Dave asked ARRL members to do three things: 1) Become Diamond Club members...this costs \$95.00 per year rather than \$49.00 per year. Check the ARRL website for all the benefits that come with Diamond Club membership. Life members can be Diamond Club members for \$50.00 per year. 2) Get just one person active on the air over the next year. This can be someone newly licensed, or someone who is licensed, but inactive. 3) Since 2023 will be the year of the volunteer, Dave has asked that all members 'move up one rung' in their responsibilities as an active ham. For example, if you don't belong to a club, join a club. If you are in a club, become an officer in the club, or get on a committee in the club. If you are a club officer, get active in the section...etc., etc., etc.



ARRL CEO Dave Minster – NA2AA gives the Keynote Address.

Saturday and Sunday were crammed full of educational, informational, practical, and operational forums. Unfortunately, some of the forums I wanted to attend were held during the same time slots, so I had to choose which ones I thought would be most interesting to me or that I would enjoy the most. Some of the topics covered in the forums included Fox Hunting, AMSAT, Getting Started with Winlink RMS Express, HF Basics for EmComm, Message Forms for Disaster Ops, Working HF DX, History of the Vacuum Tube Radio, How to Fail at Running a Radio Club, Go Kit Strategies, High-Powered Magloop Construction & Theory, Elecraft K4 Update, Introduction to Microcontrollers, Linux in Your Hamshack, and Cybersecurity for the Amateur Radio. Again, this is only a partial list of the forums offered throughout the weekend. In one of the forums I attended I learned that actress Hedy Lemarr invented and received a US patent for Frequency Hopping Spread Spectrum. Her invention led to the advent of Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and GPS. However, the US military used her invention to make our communications more secure, and our torpedo guidance systems less susceptible to jamming during World War II. Who knew?

The Convention Banquet Dinner was held Saturday evening. Famed kit builder Joe Eisenberg – K0NEB was the guest speaker. Joe went through his interest in kits from the time he was in

elementary school in Nebraska, and many of the exciting adventures he had as a result. One story of particular interest to me was the time he had a QSO on a radio he built with a US Embassy official in Managua, Nicaragua following a disastrous earthquake that had leveled the Embassy. The diplomat asked Joe to notify the US State Department, which he did. Joe then notified the local NBC news affiliate, which wasn't sure whether to believe the 13 year old Joe, but Joe had made a recording of the call and gave it to the TV station. They passed it on to NBC News headquarters in New York, and before Joe knew it, he was famous with all kinds of news trucks around his house. Joe was a great speaker, and had many exciting and humorous stories. The banquet ended with a lucky winner going home with a brand new Yaesu FT-891 transceiver.



Joe Eisenberg – K0NEB speaks at the Grand Banquet.

Saturday's activities wrapped up with an evening of freelance open mic activities that included storytelling and music-making. It was a fun and relaxing end to a busy day.

Sunday, the last day of the convention, was just a half-day, but still chocked full of forums and the flea market. But for me, staying around to the end was highlighted by the prize drawings. The Minuteman Repeater Association had a raffle and gave away a mobile transceiver, an HT, and a dual band base antenna. More prizes given away by the convention organizers ranged from ARRL gift certificates to Heil headphones to amateur radio books, to crimp tools, and everything in between. The runner-up prizes were an Icom ID-5100 and an ICOM IC-705. The grand prize winner – from Brooklyn, NY – won a Flex 6400.



HamXposition 2022 closes out with the giving away of a new Flex 6400.

The official attendance to the convention hadn't quite been tabulated by Sunday, but over 1,500 paid attendees had come through the doors as of mid-day Saturday. Unnamed convention officials estimated the paid attendance will be around 2000.

Personally, I'm looking forward to next year's HamXposition, and also hope it will again include the New England and Hudson Divisions.

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