



# DIGITAL DIGEST

A publication of the  
West River Radio Club



September—2007

Volume II—#9

## VITAL STATISTICS

The West River Radio Club, an ARRL affiliated club, was founded in 2004 through the efforts of KA1ZQX, Tim Bell, and NIJSG, Richard Pierce.

Our fifty members pride themselves on belonging to an active and productive organization with involvement in many aspects of this great hobby: public service, special events, Field Day, repeaters, emergency communications, contesting and chasing DX.

### Current officers are:

N1TOX, John Borichevsky; President  
KD6MPY, Sean Sanderson; VP  
K1KU, Darrel Daley; Secretary/Treasurer  
KA1ZQX, Tim Bell; Pubic Relations

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### Great Efforts.....

When one speaks about “Great Efforts”, one thinks about commitment, dedication, involvement, satisfaction, communication, and working with others. The *West River Radio Club* members often excel beyond one’s expectations. Making others take notice of who we are and what we can do to assist them. This “Great Effort” is getting us noticed more and more.

Great efforts do not go unnoticed. Here is proof. While at the *Guilford Old Home Day* meeting (for the continuation of the Guilford Fair) on Thursday after the RACES drill, our efforts during the 8-Aug-07 drill were noticed. Dick Clark, Chair of the Select Board for the Town of Guilford, went on during the

meeting on how we went from “RACES is not deploying to Guilford” to “Tim, KA1ZQX, showing up to cover Guilford as the State low band radio system died”. This shows our flexibility and how we can adapt to situations. He praised our efforts of being available, what we do and how effective we are. Why did this happen? For one, working together with your town officials made this recognition happen. Talking to the members of your town select board, event planning staff, local fire chiefs, and EMD’s does put us on the map.

We have documented many of our efforts over the past years and we are proud to be of service to the communities we support and live in. The Strolling of the Heifers, March of Dimes Walk America, Diabetes Walk, Operation Homer (on the CERT side), Grace Cottage Hospital Fair Day and Operation Support our Troops just to name a few.

Great Efforts makes our served agencies happy which in turn makes our members happy for a job well done. So *please* remember, if something fails and someone is not satisfied with our efforts, we all start from ground zero all over again. By keeping the Great Efforts you have demonstrated in the past will keep us moving forward and also put us in the spot light for more endeavors to come.

Until next time...

73

.....

de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRC



## RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

**Y**ou may have noticed that this is a short issue of the DD. Watch out! I can hear the cheering from here. I do have a good excuse, though; well, good enough to satisfy my employees.



My wife, Marion, and I are just back from almost two weeks in The Great Land, namely, Alaska. We were visiting old friends and checking out for the gazillionth time that fantastic scenery. I'm still astounded that in Vermont we've been referred to as Flatlanders. Let me tell you – Alaska has REAL mountains.

Don't get me wrong. It's good to be back in the Green Mountain State where the hills may be smaller, though beautiful nevertheless. But I digress.....On with the column and an enchanting story about Charles Proteus Steinmetz.

Steinmetz was a brilliant electrical engineer who worked for General Electric at their Schenectady plant in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

After his retirement he was called back as a consultant – not as common an occurrence in those days as it is now. It appears that there was a performance problem with one of GE's huge electrical generators and no one was able to correct it.

As the story goes Steinmetz closeted himself for several days with the generator, the engineer drawings, paper, and pencil. After several days he emerged from his solitude confident that he had discovered the dilemma.

After his departure GE's engineers found a large chalked X on the side of the generator casing. There was also a note telling them to cut the casing open at the X and to remove so many turns from the stator. If done as instructed the generator would perform properly. The engineers did as told and the generator performed as it should.

When asked what his fee would be Steinmetz (unlike modern day consultants) had no idea what amount would be proper. So, he replied that he wanted \$1000.00 – an outlandish sum in the early 1900s. The GE big wigs understandably wanted an itemized bill.

Steinmetz acquiesced and sent them a statement including only two items.

1. Marking a chalk X on the side of the generator = \$1.00
2. Knowing where to mark the X = \$999.00

Now whereas I am the editor of this rag I have allocated to myself the right to preach, and so I will. What kind of “mark” are we making in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century? It may not be as big as Charles Steinmetz's mark, but be we young or old; we have the option to make a worthy one.

Until October –  
73 de K1KU, Darrel



## DA DRILL

**V**arious club members once again performed their public service obligations by participating in a RACES drill on August 8. Twelve of us found ourselves deployed to assorted sites around Windham County where we proceeded to hone our operating skills by passing and receiving traffic to and from VEM in Waterbury, VT.

Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) in Vernon, Brattleboro, Halifax, and Guilford, as well as the Emergency Operations Facility/Joint Information Center (IFO/JIC), and the Incident Field Office (IFO) were surrounded by lots of RF energy put out by WRRC RACES members. Also staffed were Grace Cottage Hospital, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Springfield Hospital, and the Brattleboro Retreat.

The good (?) old days of setting up portable operations in parking lots are gone forever, well, in most cases. Most of the sites now have permanent sta-

tions set up, or at least antennas. The day will shortly come when all we have to do is arrive, plug and play.

Our appreciation is extended to the folks listed below who did their bit in helping to fulfill that vital ingredient of Part 97 of the FCC rules that goes a long way in helping us hold onto our allotted frequencies. Vermont has one of the most viable RACES programs (the most viable?) in the USA, thanks, in part to the efforts of these people.



**KB1OVK—Mike at the mic**

KA1ZQX, Tim  
K1EGL, Chuck  
K1KU, Darrel  
KB1OQH, Bruce  
N1HOS, Jack  
KD6MPY, Sean  
KB1NJA, Walter

N1PBX, Conrad  
W2NH, Gordon  
WB1CZA, Wil  
KA1TWV, Elaine  
W1WOL, Bil  
KB1KSR, Ed

Interesting in joining this elite team? It's easy. Just send an email to John, [N1TOX \(n1tox@comcast.net\)](mailto:n1tox@comcast.net) or Darrel, [K1KU \(k1ku@sover.net\)](mailto:k1ku@sover.net) and will have an application rushed to your address.



## THE LIGHTNING MAN

I've always had a historical interest in those whose inventive genius allowed two way wireless communication to eventually happen.

Knowing that little tidbit it's easy to see why my YL, Marion, had no difficulty in convincing me that we should go out of our way a bit on a recent return trip from New "Joisey" to visit Samuel FB Morse's former home, Locust Grove, in Poughkeepsie, NY. The stop was well worth the few extra miles. And can you believe it? There's even a gift shop. By the way, those middle initials of his stand for Finley Breese and not Fine Business.

Though operated privately the site is registered as a National Historic Landmark. The beautiful Italian style home sits on several well manicured acres with spacious lawns and beautifully maintained gardens. Though now partly obscured by trees when Morse lived there he had a commanding view of the Hudson River.



Morse was a noted painter in the early 1800s, but what brought him fame plus a bit of wealth

(after some nasty court battles) was his invention of the land line telegraph. I had poor luck with a demonstration model of his "key" as it doesn't sound out the beautiful dit dah rhythm we CW aficionados love so much. Rather you hear, to my ears, at least, an obnoxious "klacking" sound. Whatever, those early telegraph pioneers soon learned to copy by ear and found that they could do without the printed out ribbon of paper that was part of Morse's original design.

The next time that you're anywhere near Poughkeepsie and Route #9 in New York stop in and say hello to the ghost of and learn more about this intriguing and eccentric painter/inventor. In the meantime you might want to read a fairly new biography of Morse – The Lightning Man by Kenneth Silverman.



## SITE OF THE MONTH

### Power Outages

Have you ever wondered who has power and who does not after a storm? Here is a site hosted by Green Mountain Power that covers all of the utility companies in the State of Vermont. The site is called "Vermont Outages" and the URL is <http://www.vtoutages.org/>. The site has power outages broken down by county and utility company. There is also a link for weather alerts by county also. This site updates automatically every 30 seconds so it is "real time" and accurate.



### GCH Fair Day

For the fourth year in a row the WRRC was represented at the Grace Cottage Hospital Fair Day in Townshend, VT. On August 4 the club members listed below greeted the public with information about Ham Radio, CERT, EmComm, RACES, you name it. We even offered directions to the porta potties and trash cans. Talk about public service!

Several of our sign in guests were Hams from CT. They appeared suitably impressed with the many things that the WRRC is accomplishing.

Brochures were handed out from the shade of the club canopy, and several contacts were made via the club's end fed Zepp. This had been erected the evening before by KA1ZQX, Tim, KB1KSR, Ed, and K1KU, Darrel. Emitting the RF into the ether was N1TOX, John's new FT-897. Now that's one nice rig! I'm sure that along the way a few tall tales were told, too. Not that any member of the WRRC would stretch the truth.

So a hearty thanks to those who showed up to share in the work, camaraderie, and fun. We'll look forward to seeing you and others next year.

KB1HCG, Mark	KA1ZQX, TIM
W2NH, Gordon	N1TOX, John
KB1KSR, Ed	N1PBX, Conrad
K1KU, Darrel	WB1CZA, Wil

KB1J, Richard	N1JSG, Richard
KA1TWV, Elaine	KB1NJA, Walter



## SEPTEMBER DOINGS

(Es looking ahead)

**September 11:** Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital. 19:00L

**September 27:** RACES drill

**September 29:** Regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors at the PanAsian Restaurant by Staples in Brattleboro. The meeting starts at 11:30L



### NEED HELP?

**W**e can't solve any personal problems, but for Ham related matters we'll try our darndest.

- General club related matters: contact our President, John Borichevsky, N1TOX – [n1tox@comcast.net](mailto:n1tox@comcast.net) or 802-257-5526
- Membership, ARRL renewals or joining the League, club apparel orders, and financial information: contact Darrel Daley, K1KU, [k1ku@arrl.net](mailto:k1ku@arrl.net) or 802-387-5822
- VE tests, club programs, or Ham classes: contact Sean Sanderson, KD6MPY, [kd6mpy@arrl.net](mailto:kd6mpy@arrl.net) or 413-695-5133
- PR or ARES ideas? Contact Tim Bell, KA1ZQX at [ka1zqx@arrl.net](mailto:ka1zqx@arrl.net) or 802-365-7046

