



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the
West River Radio Club



September — 2008

Volume III—#9

VITAL STATISTICS

The West River Radio Club, an ARRL Special Service Club, was founded in 2004 through the efforts of KA1ZQX, Tim Bell, and N1JSG, Richard Pierce.

Our 52 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
W1CWB, Chas Baker; VP
KD6MPY, Sean Sanderson; ED/VE Liaison
K1KU, Darrel Daley; Secretary/Treasurer

- In an emergency, tune in to media reports for important information. Know which stations can provide up-to-date local information
- Keep important phone numbers by each phone in your home.
- Know the best escape route from each room in your home.
- Know where family members will meet in case they can't get home. One location should be near your home, and another should be outside the neighborhood.
- Know your community's public alert system and your child's school emergency plan.
- Try to make radio communications via our local net or check in with a RACES group leader.

Take time now to create a family emergency preparedness plan, and then practice it with your family.

Have periodic rehearsals, including some with the lights out. In an emergency, the electricity may be off. For some handy guides and helpful information, please visit the VEM website at <http://www.dps.state.vt.us/vem/>. At the VEM site, you will find guides for home and business use, along with other useful information related to any emergency currently happening around the area. (There are also links to the RACES and CERT programs there also!)

And speaking more about being prepared, we need volunteers to assist with our weekly WRRR ARES Net. Please contact Tim Bell, KA1ZQX (ka1zqx@verizon.net) and put your name on a date. This helps you become prepared to run the net during a disaster. Just think, you might be the only one with power and a surviving antenna! Rookies are welcome!! We all had to start taking the big step at some point along the way. You can do it!!

Be prepared.... You never know "IF" and "WHEN" something will happen..

Until Next month,

73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRR

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Being Prepared

Yes, here we are in the month of September and this month is "Emergency Preparedness Month". The kids are back at school, the homes are now quiet, and everyone should be back at work, right? But what happens if an emergency breaks out? What will you do? Where will you go? What happens if you are not with your family during this time? Will you be able to meet at a predetermined place?

You are a born planner. You plan trips, vacations, work routines, and grocery list, so why not plan what would happen "IF" something happened within your home town, "IF" there was a major catastrophe that happened, "IF" you were to evacuate, or "IF" your family was in another town who needed to evacuate that town.

One of the primary things to do is to talk with your family about the need to be prepared for an emergency. Then make a plan. The following suggestions will help keep you and your family safe in the event of an emergency.

- Make sure everyone in your family knows where you keep emergency supplies and a first aid kit.

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

Whose horn should you blow?

Decorum, good taste, and a bit of modesty dictate that it definitely shouldn't be our own. If you read the President's Corner in the last issue you'll surely agree that John, N1TOX, must have a fair amount of decorum, good taste and modesty. A lot of horns got blown, but not his own. I'm going to take a few words in this issue to blow the horn he wouldn't.



Tim, KA1ZQX – As President started us off with great aplomb to a bang up first year as a club. Then *service to country* called him over to that big sand box in the mid east.

N1TOX, John stepped up to the plate as President in 2005 and has been there ever since. Come to think of it all of our Board members have been there since the start, with the one exception of the Vice Presidency. Chas, W1CWB, assumed the VP chores this year and Sean, KD6MPY, moved over to be our full time VE Coordinator and Education Director.



Anyway, in blowing John's horn for him let me start by saying that he is one of the few *work-a-holics* I've known. For most of us just holding down one volunteer job is enough, especially if you have a full time job. For John, though, the more he takes on the better he seems to do. To name just a few of those unpaid chores.....

- State of Vermont RACES Coordinator
- Club web page designer and maintainer
- Supplying all kinds of PC designed goodies, like maps, for our membership.
- ARES involvement
- President of the WRRC
- Elmering
- A distinguished charter member of Antennas R US
- Keeping your Secretary/Treasurer and editor on the ball. This may be his most difficult task.
- Some more that I probably forgot

The whole purpose of this short tribute is to say thanks. In fact, a BIG thanks. I know that I hold great admiration and appreciation for all of your efforts on behalf of the WRRC and its membership. You've accomplished a lot in leading us in spreading the good word about Amateur Radio in the state of Vermont. As a non-gambling type I'd even be willing to bet that a high percentage of our members also do.

What else is there to say, other than to keep up the good work.



Amateur Radio Profile Wil Shaffer, WB1CZA

I was introduced to amateur radio by a cousin, Bill (W3SFK), when I was about 11 years old. Bill had returned to our hometown in Western Pennsylvania to set up a residence and law practice. He had only a baby child, so he took me under his wing, I guess for companionship. I think he set up his rig before even starting to unpack the household goods. Just about every evening I sauntered over to his house to work the bands. But other interests, such as school, marriage and career, took over my life, and amateur radio took a very definite back seat.

Flash forward about 15 years, having settled in Fairfield, Connecticut. I came across an announcement in the local rag sheet publicizing a novice licensing course to be given at the high school by a local ham. Cost: five dollars. Instructor was an extremely active ham who, nonetheless, found time to hold down a full-time job with a major corporation without sacrificing his dedication to amateur radio. I regret that I can't remember Cliff's call. The class had about 30 people in it, but Cliff worked with each person to make certain that he/she could pass the test (both the written test and 5 wpm CW). Most everyone in the class earned their Novice ticket, thanks to Cliff's dedication and determination.

Most of Fairfield is a veritable flatland, flat as a pancake, so I decided to construct a vertical antenna with a ground plane. I attacked my yard with a pick and shovel, digging about a dozen spokes, laying wire and connecting each strand to the antenna. The vertical and my TenTec CW rig served me well during the summer. But when cold weather set in and the furnace has to be turned on, my ham operations kept turning the furnace on and off. And it

got pretty cold in the basement where I had set up my rig. My CW skills steadily improved however.

Fast forward another 25 years, now relocated to the beautiful ski slopes of Southern Vermont. This time an announcement in the local rag sheet about the WRRC and its participation in field day exercises. So I visited the motley WRRC crew at Ed's and sparred with the usual suspects – John, Darrel, Sean, etc. I then began attending the monthly meetings and soon joined WRRC. Very self-conscious about my novice ticket, I jumped at the opportunity to sign up for the Technician course in 2006, and earned my Technician ticket in November. Soon after that, the club offered the General course, and I immediately signed up for that course as well, subsequently earning my General in July of 2007.

After my long history of being 'in and out' of amateur radio, I feel that, thanks to WRRC and more time on my hands, I now have 'roots' in the hobby. I am very pleased with my current relationships with amateur radio and WRRC.



GOIN' MOBILE



Jack, N1HOS, takes his mobile operating seriously. It seems that he's always tweaking and peaking things, looking for the best antenna, bonding this and that – continually seeking perfection.

Well, it looks like Nirvana has been achieved, as witness this latest photo from Jack showing his completed mobile station.



GENERAL CURTIS LeMAY

This issue deals with a high ranking Air Force officer and his involvement with Amateur Radio. Unknown to me, he also ran for the Vice Presidency of the United States in 1968 with George C. Wallace. He was born on November 15, 1906.

Needless to say, this will be a short history, and mostly deal with his contribution to our hobby.

Lemay became known for his massive incendiary

attacks against Japanese cities during the war using hundreds of planes flying at low altitudes. He had concluded that the high altitude bombing used in Europe was unsuitable for the Pacific theater. Our losses were very high as the Japanese had very efficient daylight air defenses.

Upon receiving his fourth star at age 44, LeMay became the youngest full general in American history since Ulysses S. Grant.

In 1949 LeMay returned to the US to head up the Strategic Air Command. During the 10 years that he commanded SAC he transformed it into a modern, efficient, all-jet force.

Lemay was an active amateur radio operator and held a succession of call signs; KOGRL, K4FRA, and W6EZV. He held these calls respectively while stationed at Offutt AFB, Washington D.C. and retired in California. KOGRL is still the call sign of the Strategic Air Command Memorial Amateur Radio Club. He was famous for being on the air on amateur bands while flying on board SAC Bombers. Lemay became aware that the new Single Side Band SSB technology offered a big advantage over Amplitude Modulation for SAC aircraft operating long distances from their bases. In conjunction with Art Collins (WOCXX) of Collins Radio, he established SSB as the radio standard for SAC bombers in 1957.

As Vice Chief of Staff for the United Air Force from 1957 – 1961 and was then made Chief of Staff. In this position he repeatedly clashed with Robert McNamara and nearly everyone else over strategy in Viet Nam. He had further problems with President John F. Kennedy and Defense Secretary McNamara during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

LeMay was essentially forced into retirement in February of 1965 and it looked like he was headed for a career in politics, but this didn't work out either. Because he ran for Vice President on the George Wallace American Independent Party ticket he was falsely labeled as a segregationist. In truth, he had been a strong advocate for desegregating the armed forces.

He died on October 3, 1990 and is buried in the United Air Force Academy cemetery in Fort Collins, CO.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

To be good is noble.
To tell others how to be good is even nobler.
And a lot easier. – Mark Twain

GRACE COTTAGE FAIR DAY - 2008

Yet once again (for the 5th time, to be exact) assorted WRRC members set up the club canopy, strung an antenna, set up a station, put out assorted Ham literature, chatted, met with the public and just plain HAD FUN.

The day was August 2 and the place was the Townshend Common. Gathering clouds and the sound of thunder reverberating in the Green Mountains forced us into an early tear down and departure.

For the first time we were honored to be the first "booth" visited by Governor James Douglas as he toured the crowd. David, N1ESK, said it well..."Only in Vermont." Where else does the state's governor show up unannounced to do some glad handing with no driver or body guard. I have seen it happen in Alaska, but that's another story. I've met Governor Douglas before in similar circumstances – Everyone was an eye out for an official vehicle with a state trooper at the wheel. Then right before our eyes he pulled into the parking lot in his personal car.

And so, thanks to all of you that did your bit in one way or another:

- Providing gear, tables, or chairs
- Helping with the set up and tearing down process
- Or just being there to enjoy and contribute to the camaraderie

W1CWB, Chas	N1REB, Jeanette
N1ESK, David	KB1NXN, Emily
N1TOX, John	N1PBX, Conrad
KB1KSR, Ed	N1JSG, Richard
KB1J, Rich	N1HOS, Jack
K1KU, Darrel	

For 2009 remember the following essentials:

- What:** Grace Cottage Hospital Fair Day
- Where:** The common in Townshend, VT
- When:** The first Saturday in August

Along with those listed above we'd enjoy your presence, too.



Now we know how old Walter, KB1NJA, is.



N 1 J S G ,
Richard, &
KB1KSR, Ed
yuk it up



N1TOX, John
N1REB, Jeanette
KB1NXN, Emily



W2NH, Gordon
KB1KSR, Ed
N1PBX, Conrad



KB1J holds forth at our special event station

SHE WINS AGAIN

Once more N1REB, Jeanette comes through with the first and I think only definition of last month's *word of the month*—Reflected power

A: residual power fed back to the radio that is not transmitted through the antenna

B: residual information fed back to the husband by the power of the wife's glazed look that is not absorbed by the wife

The definition after "B" must apply to something, that, as a man, I'm totally unfamiliar with. So be it, and we'll just let it rest at that.

FEMA MERS Unit Staged in Waterbury

(Ed. The below comes to us from Rob Schell, KA1ZPI, Chief of Field Operations Up in Waterbury, VT)

WATERBURY – In response to the ongoing flooding issues within Vermont, FEMA has deployed their Initial Response Vehicle (IRV) to Vermont to assist with field reporting of flood damage. The IRV communications vehicle is part of FEMA's Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) detachment. First response personnel interested in seeing the capabilities of the IRV are welcome to visit the unit today at the Vermont Department of Public Safety Headquarters in Waterbury. FEMA representatives will be present to provide brief tours and answer questions. The unit will be in operation until 3pm.



SITE OF THE MONTH

My apologies to those of you who, for whatever unfounded reason, dislike CW. One of the advantages of being the editor of this rag, though, is that I pretty much pick the content and I happen to like CW a lot.

I'm still mentally trying to fathom the notion held by some that it's an outdated mode of communication. Seems to me that people have been talking almost since day one, maybe even before, even if it was only an *UGH* or *ARAH*, or something of the sort. Translations of *UGH* or *ARAH* might have been:

"Don't throw that rock"

"Can you show me how to make a fire?"

"Have you seen Harriet since she went on the Nutrisystem diet?"

"Does your dinosaur bite?"

My thesis is that speech has been with us a LONG time, while CW was only started up in the 1830s. (Thanks again Mr. Morse) Now you tell me which the outdated mode of communication is. Throw into the mix various languages, accents, and dialects and human speech at times is not all that easy to understand. In CW, though *didah* is "A" no matter what language you speak or what part of the south you hail from.

Rest easy. I'm tempted, but this will not be a lecture on why you should learn CW. Just in case you want to join in the fun, though, the site below offers an excellent way to get your feet wet, although it will also serve you after you master all the letters, numbers and minimal punctuation marks required. To maintain and improve my speed I use RuzfXP (<http://www.rufzxp.net/>) but that's a story for another day.

For the price of one I've actually tossed in two great beginner sites. You can always find great bargains in the Digital Dispatch. Both allow the use of the Farnsworth method. I'll let you Google that one.

<http://www.qsl.net/g4fon/>

<http://www.justlearnmorsecode.com/>

Questions? There happen to be three CW aficionados in the WRRC, namely: (I hope that I didn't forget anyone. If I did let me know of your interest in being listed as an aficionado.)

1. KD6MPY, Sean (kd6mpy@arrl.net)
2. W1ZS, Burt (w1zs@arrl.net)
3. K1KU, Darrel (k1ku@arrl.net)

Anyone of us would love to answer any questions you might have on how to go about mastering this venerable method of communication. You might even be able to talk us into a class periodically to cover some of the DOs and DON'Ts of CW and practice a tad.



SHOCKING FACTS ABOUT ELECTRICITY AND HISTORY

(Ed: Did I run this before? With a memory like mine I need to rely on this rag's readers to tell me. Whatever, if it was printed once it was awhile ago, and, considering the state of the world, we all could use a laugh - maybe even two.)

Author Unknown

Today's scientific question is "what in the world is electricity and where does it go after it leaves the toaster?"

Here is a simple experiment that will teach you an important electrical lesson. On a cool dry day, scuff your feet along a carpet. Then reach your hand into a friend's mouth and touch one of his dental fillings. Did you notice how your friend twitched violently and cried out in pain? This teaches us that electricity can be a very powerful force, but we must never use it to hurt others unless we need to learn an important electrical lesson. It also teaches us how an electrical circuit works. When you scuff your feet, you pick up a batch of electrons which are very small objects that the carpet manufacturers weave into the carpets so they will attract dirt. The electrons travel through your blood-stream and collect in your finger, where they form a spark that leaps to your friend's filling, then travels down to his feet and back into the carpet. Thus complete- ing the circuit.

Amazing electronics fact - if you scuff your feet long enough without touching anything would you build up so many electrons that your finger would explode? This is nothing to worry about unless you have carpeting. Although we modern persons tend to take our electric lights, radios, mixers, etc., for granted, hundreds of years ago people did not have any of these things. Which is just as well, there was no place to plug them in. Then along came the first electrical pioneer, Benjamin Franklin, who flew a kite in a lightning storm and received a serious electrical shock. This proved that lightning was powered by the same force as carpets. But it also damaged Franklin's brain so severely that he started speaking only in incomprehensible maxims such as "a penny saved is a penny earned". Eventually, he had to be given a job running the post office.

After Franklin came a herd of electrical pioneers whose name have become part of our electrical

terminology. For example, in 1780, Luigi Galvani discovered (this is the truth) that when he attached two different kinds of metal to the leg of a frog, an electrical current developed and the frog's leg kicked, even though it was no longer attached to the frog which was dead anyway. Galvani's discovery led to enormous advances in the field of amphibian medicine. Today, skilled veterinary surgeons can take a frog that has been seriously injured or killed, implant pieces of metal in its muscles, and watch it jump back into the pond just like a normal frog, except for the fact that it sinks like a stone.



But the greatest electrical pioneer of all was Thomas Edison who was a brilliant inventor despite the fact that he had little formal education and lived in New Jersey. Edison's first major invention in 1877 was the phonograph which could soon be found in thousands of American homes where it basically just sat until 1923, when the record was invented. But Edison's greatest achievement came in 1879 when he invented the electric company. Edison's design was a brilliant adaptation of the simple electrical circuit. The electric company sends electricity through a wire to a customer then immediately gets the electricity back through another wire. Then (this is the brilliant part) sends it right back to the customer again. This means that an electric company can sell a customer the same batch of electricity thousands of times a day and never get caught, since very few customers take the time to examine their electricity closely. In fact, the last year in which any new electricity was generated in the United States was 1937. The electric companies have been merely reselling it ever since, this is why they have so much free time to apply for rate increases.

Today, thanks to men like Edison and Franklin, and frogs like Galvani's we receive almost unlimited benefits from electricity. For example, in the past decade scientists developed the laser, an electronic appliance that emits a beam of light so powerful that it can vaporize a bulldozer 2000 yards away, yet so precise that doctors can use it to perform delicate operations on the human eyeball, provided they remember to change the power setting from "vaporize bulldozer" to "delicate".

FINANCES

The data below is valid as of the publication of this issue of the Digital Dispatch

43 Full members—9 Associate members
53.49% of the full members belong to the ARRL

Checking = \$1417.28
Cash on hand = \$45.04

UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

September 9 – Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital. The meeting begins at 7 PM.

September 24 – RACES reception centers drill

September 27 – Regularly scheduled monthly luncheon meeting at the Pan Asian Restaurant in Brattleboro by Staples. The meeting starts at 11:30 AM

October 1 – RACES VY drill

October 7 - Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital. The meeting begins at 7 PM.

October 10 – 11 – NEARFest at the Deerfield, NH fairgrounds. Go to <http://www.near-fest.com/> for further information

October 29 – RACES reception centers drill



A MOBILE HINT

Here's a good way to determine if your fuel pump is acting up.

Before shutting vehicle off at night, leave rig set to troublesome band/frequency. Make sure you leave fan blower switch off, heater controls off, wipers off, car AM/FM radio off, etc. Let vehicle sit overnight.

In the morning, go to vehicle. Get in and turn RIG power on - ONLY. Ensure EVERYTHING else in vehicle is off. Ensure rig still tuned to the troublesome band/freq. Make sure vehicle doors are shut (so open-door chime/buzzer is off.) Now put key in ignition switch and rotate to the last position just prior to the momentary crank position. This acti-

vates the fuel pump to pressurize the system before starting. If you hear interference come up, it's most likely the pump. This will be brief, as after system is pressurized, pump will shut off. SO BE PREPARED!!



AND IN CLOSING

Whereas I'm always looking for "stuff" to fill out this monthly rag my always fertile (well, 90% of the time) came up with the idea of posting member's QSL cards.

I should mention that I've been grateful for the many biographical sketches that have come in. Wil, WB1CZA's sketch in this issue is my last one on file. This means, horror of horrors, if nothing is received for the October issue you'll be stuck with my life's story.

Anyway, why not let the entire membership see what your QSL card looks like. You do QSL don't you? Just scan it into JPG format and shoot it off to me. (k1ku@arrl.net) Don't have a scanner? Give me a card at a meeting and I'll scan it for you. Hey, I'll even return the card in pristine shape.

CUL es 73 de K1KU SK

