



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the
West River Radio Club



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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

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Holiday Greetings 2008

As we bring the roller coaster year of 2008 to a close, what can we say? We saw gas way over \$4.00 per gallon for months, the economy tank, and businesses close. But on the other hand, we also saw a lot of good in 2008 to chat about. It was another one for the books.

We filed for 501(C)(3) status as a club. Our Vermont State paperwork is done and the federal paperwork is being processed.

RACES, well we trumped our efforts yet again. We brought Marlboro, Dummerston, Transportation Staging Area and BFUHS on line. With the help of Mark, KB1HCG, we were also able to get the final antenna installations completed at all of the EOC's in the EPZ. Remember, 2009 is a FEMA/NRC Graded year... It's going to be busy!

In April, we asked you the question presented to me by David, N1ESK, "Has anybody asked you how,

or why, you got interested in amateur radio?"

This question brought in some articles for publication in the *Digital Dispatch*. What's that you say? You did not write your story? You can still get your story published by submitting it to the Editor in Chief, Darrel, K1KU (kl7dn@sover.net). We are always looking for things to put in there from our members.

As part of our Special Services recognition which we obtained this past year from ARRL, we look at our public service events we participated in the March of Dime – Walk for Babies, along with the Girls on the Run 5K event. For one of our sponsors, we participated in the Grace Cottage Hospital Health Fair (as a CERT Group) and Fair Days for our 4th time.

Field Day 2008 moved to Vernon at the *Old Pond Chapel*. While we setup and heard the weather reports of severe thunderstorms, localized flooding, and high winds, we stuck to our guns, as we always do, and setup for the weather and marched on. Yes we did have damage. My radio got wet, and well, we did good considering the events. If you missed our placement and receive *QST* we are on page number 74, 4th column, 14th group from the bottom.

We are still in the middle of the pack and did even better than last year. So who is your Elmer? In August, I presented some hidden talents of our members who can assist you beyond Amateur Radio. Is there anything else outside the radio world? There are many more talents in our club to be explored. Ask your questions, get the answers.

Did someone say Mechanic? Tim (KA1ZQX) and Mark (KB1HCG) rose to the occasion and worked on the FEMA MERS vehicle at the 5th Annual VEM RACES Conference. There is something about mud wasp clogging up the works to stop the show from going forward. Heck, I would have never guessed what happened to the truck and where to look.

So as we bring 2008 to a close, we keep on

growing, our club gets stronger and stronger. Our membership continues to grow because of our achievements, goals, and informative club meetings. We have a new program agenda which will be posted soon on our web site. Plus, I have been working on a new look for the WRRRC web site also. Anybody want to help out? Let's make 2009 another banner year for WRRRC!!

Let's also remember to attend the Annual WRRRC Luncheon Meeting and Election of Officers on December 13, 2008. Become involved, run for an office. There are plenty to go around! We will be starting at 11AM and going until we are done. Attending, bring a dish to share. Please RSVP and advise Gaila (KB1OQG) (ggulack@hotmail.com) what you can bring. Gaila is coordinating this year's event. Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season.

73

de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRRC



RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

It Really Happened.

This is the story of a very unusual QSO, probably the strangest, and definitely most rewarding, of my 30 year life as a Ham radio operator. Shy types like me always hesitate to put material like this out in the public spotlight. Even people close to me might begin to have their doubts as to the veracity of what is to follow. Some might think that I'm on the verge of going into *lip strumming* mode. At any rate, nearly a year has passed and I'm not getting any younger. It's a story that needs telling, no matter what the reaction might be. They scoffed at Galileo, too.



So, here goes with the truth, and nothing but the truth....if for no other reason than that some grouchy old non believer out there might discard their grumpy outlook and join in the spirit of the season.

While taking a break from some late wrapping of Christmas presents on December 24 of 2007, I turned on the rig and tuned to the low end of 40 meters, the place where those high speed

CW guys hang out.

Now I'm not too much of a rag chewer on CW unless it's in the 20-25 WPM range, but while tuning up and down the band I couldn't help but catch a very clean fist sending out a CQ at around 30-35 WPM. It wasn't exactly a needle pinning signal, more like a 549, but very copyable.

CQ CQ CQ DE NP7SC/AA

Now that's a somewhat unusual call and though I'm usually looking for DX I had a premonition that this is one Dude I should work, or at least make the attempt to. My hand moved to the Bencher and I started pumping out the dits and dahs, but a tad slower than the NP7 was sending...

NP7SC/AA DE K1KU K1KU ES QRS PSE KN

Well Praise the Lord...He came back to me and right over the top of all the QRM and QRN, too. And, gentleman that he was, he had dropped back to a speed that I could live with....well, sort of.

K1KU DE NP7SC/AA

TNX FER THE CALL OM

UR SIGS 559

NAME IS SANTA SANTA ES HOME QTH IS NORTH POLE NORTH POLE

CURRENT LOCATION ABT 3000 FT OVER WATSON LAKE IN YUKON TERRITORY CANADA SOHWCPY?

K1KU DE NP7SC/AA KN

Very needless to say, when my fingers felt for the Bencher this time around they weren't nearly as steady as before. Am I glad that he slowed down for me. With my hand as shaky as it was I felt like I should be doing 7-10 WPM. But even my 72 year old grey matter was working well enough to start putting it all together

NP = North Pole

SC = Santa Claus

And where else would he be on December 24 other than aeronautical mobile? After all, there are a lot of kids out there depending on his safe journey. This is one I've got to check out with the DXCC desk – a new entity??

DE K1KU

RRR

WOW SANTA WHAT A QSO THIS HAS TURNED OUT TO BE/

SO MANY QUESTIONS BUT KNOW U MUST BE 1 BUSY GUY AND IN A HURRY SO WONT HOLD IT/LOTS OF MILES TO GO FOR SURE/

CANT BELIEVE THAT YOU FOUND RM FOR A

**CANT BELIEVE THAT YOU FOUND RM FOR A KEY/STRAPPED TO YOUR LEG?
SO BTU AND HW? NP7SC DE K1KU KN**

Well, I won't bore you with the text of the entire QSO. Besides, I didn't get it all down on paper. I do remember enough, though, to answer many of the questions you probably have and restore hope for those of us who still "keep the faith" and are young at heart.

Yes, it's a vanity call and getting it apparently took some "pull" with the folks at the *Friendly Candy Company*.

His gear? It varies, as he usually "borrows" one of the rigs that he's delivering to some deserving Ham and only runs low power, in the 100W range.

Santa's mode of choice? CW, of course, and for most of the reasons that we who love it prefer it.



Those eight reindeer make good time, even under a full load. How about 100 MPH with a strong tail wind? So that was what was causing that *whooshing* sound.

He doesn't always come down chimneys, even when available. It all has to do with his, shall we say, girth. He guaranteed me, though, that there's not a lock in the world that he can't pick. Other than a few missing cookies, less cider in the pitcher, and new packages under the tree, no one is ever aware that anyone has been in the house.

You might be wondering about *the list*. He does keep one and definitely knows who has been naughty and nice. If you're a LID don't get your hopes up for any new rigs or accessories.

Santa also recommended keeping an upbeat and positive attitude. Keep on smiling. It's later than you think. Don't let the pessimists get to you. Do your part to promote our great hobby. That might be the best gift you can give others, not just during the holiday season, but throughout the year.

He belongs to FISTS, along with W1ZS, Burt, KD6MPY, Sean, and myself.

There's a lot more to tell, but a pile up was developing



and I wanted to give some other deserving Hams the same thrill I was enjoying. So I signed with the OM and definitely jotted down his closer before he went back to a TF3 with a big signal.

**TNX FER NICE QSO DARREL/73 GUD DX
CUAGN NEXT YR ES GOD BLESS
K1KU DE NP7SC SK**

That's my story, folks, and I'm sticking with it. I'll even take a lie detector test – you pay, of course. To answer what you're probably thinking – NO, I didn't sample the holiday punch before this QSO.

Any doubts that I ever might have had are gone forever....There is a Santa and he rewards good behavior. Still a doubting Thomas? You have a year before you to get your CW speed up a bit. Then drop down to the low end of 40 and tune around.

The jolly OM and I have a sked in just a few more days on December 24, 2008 around 7.015 MHz at 22:00Z. If you hear a QSO going on between K1KU and NP7SC feel free to toss your call in. In the true Spirit of Christmas we'll welcome you with open arms. Hey, we'll even QRS for you.



HOW'S YOUR ACRONYM IQ? Not mention abbreviations

If you tuned into this column last month you found the following acronyms:

AMSAT – Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation
5BDXCC – 5 Band DXCC (DXCC = DX Century Club)

FACTOR – Digital Mode Combining Aspects of Packet and AMTOR

ITU – International Telecommunications Union

COR – Carrier Operated Relay

For the New Year take a shot at these:

IC

CATVI

I/O

OSCAR

UTC

They just get easier and easier, don't they?

A NEWBIE & UPGRADE

This November a small team of WRRRC members held a Technician class at the Putney Fire Department and closed off the course with a VE exam.

As a result of that class we can now welcome Steve Young of Springfield, VT to the ranks of Amateur operators. Congratulations, Steve. We look forward to seeing you soon at a WRRRC meeting or event.

Congratulations are likewise due for Adam Barker, KX1EQX of Bondville, VT. Adam stopped by to take his upgrade exam for General and passed with flying colors.

Congratulations are also due Sean, KD6MPY, for organizing the entire affair. He, along with John, N1TOX, and Darrel, K1KU handled the instructional chores and administered the exams.

The present plan is for a General class in March, 2009. Stay tuned for further details. As with all club classes, the last session includes an exam at the end. If you (or if you know of someone) want to either upgrade to a higher class license or take an exam without taking the class, get in touch with Sean, KD6MPY at kd6mpy@arrl.net

Quote of the Month

In my many years I have come to a conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two is a law firm, and three or more is a congress.

John Adams - US diplomat & President (1735 - 1826)

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 = \$1428.28
Cash on hand = \$51.11



UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

December 13: In lieu of our regularly scheduled meeting the annual meeting of the WRRRC will be held in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital. We start gathering at 11:00L for rag chewing and a mini hamfest. We'll sit down to a potluck meal at noon, followed by a short meeting at 13:00 for the purpose of electing officers for 2009. KB1OQG, Gaila has graciously taken on the organizational duties for the potluck. Give her a shout at ggulack@hotmail.com or 802-275-4277

December 31: Dues for 2009 are due. Why not pay them at the annual meeting. Checks made out to WRRRC are preferred, but cash is acceptable. The cost? Still a bargain at \$10 or add another \$5 for another family member.

Have a safe and joyous holiday season. We want to see you next year.



(Ed: This can be a confusing time or the year. Should you risk offending someone by wishing them a Merry Christmas? Maybe you should have said, "Happy Hanukah" or "Best Kwanza wishes to you and your family." To take the anxiety out of your life when it should be a happy and relaxed time I had a lawyer friend of mine whip up a statement that will absolve you of any guilt at all. The below is guaranteed to please even the most politically correct acquaintances.)

PC CHRISTMAS WISHES

Please accept with no obligation, implied or implicit our best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non-addictive, gender neutral, celebration of the winter solstice holiday, practiced within the most enjoyable traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice, or secular practices of your choice, with respect for the religious/secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all.

And a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling, and medically uncomplicated recognition of the onset of the generally accepted calendar year 2009, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures whose contributions to society have helped make America great, (not to imply that America is necessarily greater than any other country or is the only "AMERICA" in the

western hemisphere), and without regard to the race, creed, color, age, physical ability, religious faith, choice of computer platform, or sexual preference of the wishee.

(By accepting this greeting, you are accepting these terms. This greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal. It is freely transferable with no alteration to the original greeting. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her/himself or others, and is void where prohibited by law, and is revocable at the sole discretion of the wisher. This wish is warranted to perform as expected within the usual application of good tidings for a period of one year, or until the issuance of a subsequent holiday greeting, whichever comes first, and warranty is limited to replacement of this wish or issuance of a new wish at the sole discretion of the wisher.)



It's time to wrap up another great year with a Ham rendition of The Night Before Christmas. Our thanks to WA3YFQ for his creativity.

T'was the night before Christmas,
And all through two-meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up
From the tower, quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Tech-Pluses,
Took their HTs to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
by a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,
and, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX Packet Cluster,

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam -
A flying sleigh, with an
Eight element beam,

And a little old driver
who looked slightly mean.
So I thought for a moment,
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa
The Santa of Hams.
On a mission, this Christmas
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,
And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of CQ,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late QSLs
For a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded
It into the earth, till
The station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Re-soldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp...
(Never worked right before --
Now it works like a champ).

A new, low-pass filter
Cleaned up the TV,
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That would not compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep
In the bag that he brought,
And he pulled out a big box,
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?
A Yaesu, for me?!"
(If he thought I'd been bad
it might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate Station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those hours
that I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy,
It was my call he sent,
But the cards and the postage
Will cost two month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.
Seventy-Three."

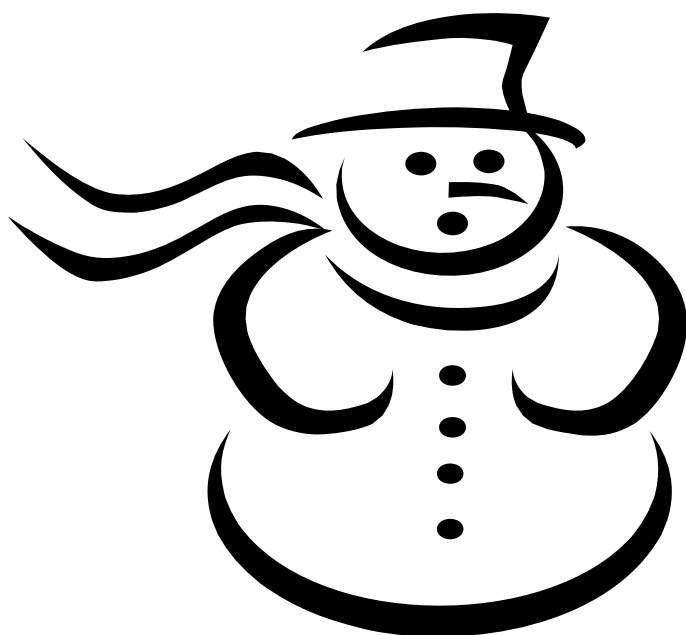
Then he grabbed his HT,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,
And the pile-up was big,
But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final
came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What a ham might expect,
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX."

de WA3YFQ



CUL es 73 de K1KU SK

