



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the
West River Radio Club



March—2009

Volume IV—#3

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 44 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/WK1L, Bro Frank Hagerty ED/VE Liaison
K1KU, Darrel Daley; Secretary/Treasurer
KA1ZQX, Tim Bell; Public Relations/ARES

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

So what's in "your" Crystal Ball?

As a proud member of the West River Radio Club, or a frequent follower of the "Digital Dispatch", you all know we do carry a full plate from year to year. From our great monthly meetings with interesting topics and presentations, to local event participation and our emergency communications team deployments, we continue to grow and retain the level of expertise we demonstrate from event to event. My crystal ball says the future looks good.

Let's look at the WRRRC group as a whole. Townshend is a great location for many of our members in the West River Valley. This is how we got the "West River" in our name you know. Yes it is a stretch for some of our members who live along the Massachusetts line to attend, but the drive is worth it. Without partnering with Grace Cottage Hospital from the beginning, I'm not sure where we would have our meetings. This location was our beginning for our EmComm deployments. Yes, GCH was the very first VEM-RACES EOC in the Health Care Group. Plus, we always enjoy working at the Grace

Cottage Hospital Fair Day event meeting many hams from New England who come and visit the area every summer.

To expand on EmComm, we have our portions of the VEM-RACES team. This group of members utilizes amateur radio to provide parallel and sometimes primary radio communications with multiple locations. Not many other groups can do that. The RACES program has grown from just a few members in Windham County to 29 members strong. There are now 197 members statewide. This local success is based on the efforts we do with Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee and making the program stronger drill after drill. Expanding into the Health Care Arena is now bonding the efforts of the RACES members as one solid group across the state. Looking into the Crystal Ball, we can see the deployments of the Pactor III modems across the state providing accurate digital information to hospitals and EOC's, not only in Vermont, but neighboring states and countries. Not many other states can raise that flag at this time.

Some of our members belong to CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Program. This is another arm of VEM that the community members can assist others within any area affected with a disaster. ten of our members belong to CERT who can provide timely radio communications with information of an event to the command center without barriers or boundaries. We also remember that the primary purpose of CERT is not radio communications, but disaster relief. The radio communication portion seemed to travel with the expertise of the groups who join CERT. No, not every CERT member has a radio or a ham license, but to be paired up with a radio operator provides another level of security and safety.

So what does all this mean? Everyone always looks into the future as if they were looking into a "Crystal Ball". Everyone, and every program, will have a goal in mind. For the most

part, it is to be successful and enhance the quality of the program for the future. This can be achieved by camaraderie, group participation, and leading programs to the level of success where you do it all over again next year. Maybe it was a single project that we started and felt we could have done better, then on the second round, we did better learning from the first time. The members of the West River Radio Club are always making suggestions to make the club events even better. We have an information packed program plan this year thanks to the input of our members. We will have both our club and public events which are always fun and successful. The future looks bright and rewarding.

So what's the vision in your crystal ball look like? Share your views; we would love to read about them.

Until next month!

73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRC

UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

March 1: WRRC ARES net...19:30L, 147.015, positive offset and 100 Hz PL tone.

March 7–8: ARRL DX contest, Phone. See rules at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2009/intldx.html>

March 10: Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital, Townshend, VT. 19:30L Our fearless PC Gurus, John, N1TOX, and Chas, W1CWB, will enthral us with information on networking computers.

March 21: Once more we'll gather to enjoy food and fun at the New England House restaurant on Route #9 in West Brattleboro. RSVP via Paul, KB1OQH – kb1oqh@hughes.net

March 28: Monthly luncheon meeting at the PanAsian Restaurant by Staples in Brattleboro—11:30L

March 24–April 4: DXpedition to Lord Howe Island. Call used will be VK4FW. Go to <http://dx-hamspirit.com/2008/11/09/vk9la-lord-howe-island-mar-23-to-apr-3-2009/> for details

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

Whaddya you doing here?

Here it is almost the beginning of March and there is still snow on the ground. Imagine that! I managed to grab a picture of two deer in our back yard searching for fodder.



Well, we (that's my wife and I) knew what we were getting into when we moved here. After 21 years in Alaska this felt like Florida to us. We both happen to have a serious dislike (read hatred) for hot, humid weather. Now some Alaska friends happen to think that we were crazy for moving to someplace that had winter and snow. We both happen to like having four seasons, though. Unfortunately, Alaska only had two – winter and the fourth of July.

I'm not sure why you are living here. I do hope, though, that it's a better reason than, "Everyone has to be somewhere." I trust that you'll admit that Vermont is one beautiful state, no matter what time of the year it is. Also, every time I complain about a busy traffic day in Brattleboro my wife reminds me that we could be driving on one of the major roads in New Jersey. Point well taken.

Now the above doesn't have much to do with Ham Radio, but nowhere in my contract does it say that I have to only write about our hobby. But I will. Sometimes it just takes me awhile to warm up to it.

Spring and summer are really on the way. You've had all winter to clean up the shack, but, like me, you probably never got around to it. Now it's time to think about the outdoors. If you have your priorities straight you'll forget about the garden, lawn, house painting, etc, and get busy on your antenna farm. Maybe it's just checking for frayed rope or if the bucket full of rocks you use as a counter weight is rusted through.

Maybe a new antenna is in your future. That's the case at this QTH. As if a Force 12-C4 at 50', a home brew Windom, and Cobra were not enough, But my log is really lacking in confirmed QSOs on the gentlemen's band. So, this spring/summer an inverted L will soon adorn our yard. I won't go into details on what goes into making an inverted L, but if you'd like to learn more here are a few URLs to sample:

<http://www.bloomington.in.us/~wh2t/invertedl.html>

<http://www.antennex.com/preview/archive3/ltv.htm>

<http://www.kn4lf.com/kn4lf3.htm>

you great success.

If you don't feel up to doing the job all by yourself, be aware that a local firm comprised of club members has performed wonders in installing wire antennas. See the last page of this newsletter. Although we don't charge for our services, a small donation to the WRRRC is never turned down.



FINANCES

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

41 Full members—7 Associate members
63.4% of the full members belong to the ARRL

Checking = \$1815.90
Cash on hand = \$91.36

MORE RESOURCES

(Ed: The following tip comes to us from Fred, WA1LIE, in Waitsfield, VT. Thanks, Fred.)

This is a great site where you can download an audio presentation in mp3 format for the Tech and General exams. I've quickly reviewed one of the General "Pod Classes" and found it to be well done and somewhat entertaining.

<<http://hamradioclass.com/download.html>>

It seems like a great way to get the instruction required for licensing. If anyone decides to use this approach, and has questions on the subject material, please feel free to contact me for clarification of your questions.

73, Fred—WA1LIE



Quote of the Month

There are two types of people who predict the future:

- ⇒ Those who don't know.
- ⇒ Those who don't know that they don't know.

Bishop Kenneth Ulmer

THE WRRRC ARES NET

WHEN: Every Monday evening at 19:30L

WHERE: The Marlboro Repeater—147.015 MHz.
Positive offset and a 100 Hz PL

WHAT: The net varies between rag chewing on some Mondays and a bit of training on others. Often there is a combination of some training and rag chewing.

The NCS lineup through March follows:

- Mar 2nd KB1J, Rich
- Mar 9th KB1KSR, Ed
- Mar 16 K1KU, Darrel
- Mar 23 W1CWB, Chas
- Mar 30 KB1J, Rich



All are welcome and encouraged to check in.

You'll get in some rag chew time with a little training thrown in now and then.

A TRICK

OK, I lied a bit. Let's just say that I'm practicing to get into politics.

Wouldn't it be nice if you always had our club's web site before you on your PC, or at least down in the task bar, all rarin' to go at the click of a mouse button?

Here's how to do it, assuming that you're using Internet Explorer. I'm sure that there's a way to do this in other browsers, too.

- Open Internet Explorer
- Go to our web site at www.westriverradio.org
- Click on the address above and it will be automatically selected (highlighted)
- Hold down the CTRL key and press the letter C <CTRL+C>
- Pull down the *tools* menu by clicking on it
- Select (by clicking on it) *internet options* at the bottom of the pull down menu
- The farthest left tab at the top, *General* will be selected automatically
- The top item in that window will be *Home Page* and you will see a highlighted web address (URL...Uniform Resource Locator)
- Hold down the CTRL key and press the letter V <CTRL+V>

Presto Chango!! Our club URL will pop into that home page slot

Now, whenever you start up Internet Explorer it will automatically go to the WRRRC home page. No longer will you have to be in the dark about meeting times, what the program will be, what public service events are coming up, what Ol' Sol is up to

for activity and just oodles of other information you'll wonder how you ever lived without. I.e., you will be **IN THE KNOW!**

And did I tell you? There will be no charge for the above information.



THANKS

This is probably as good a time as any to offer hearty thanks to those of you who contribute your further support of the WRRRC by also belonging to the ARRL.

We are not **JUST** affiliated with the ARRL...we are also a SSC (Special Services Club). Look for the SSC logo we proudly display in each edition of the newsletter. In order to maintain this standing 50% or more of our members must belong to the League. We are fortunate in that 26 out of 41 *full* members do belong.

And what is a Special Services Club? I thought that you'd never ask. It's a club that fulfills the following requirements:

- New Ham Development and Training
- Public Relations
- Emergency Communications
- Technical Advancement
- Operating Activities

So, thanks again, and keep up the good work.



HAM - CON

It used to be called the Milton Hamfest, but for one reason or the other they moved to Colchester, VT this year. I had driven up with friends years ago and thought at the time that this is one long haul for folks who live in the suburbs of Taxachussetts.

Club members attending were:

W1CWB, Chas
N1TOX, John
K1KU, Darrel
WK1L, Bro Frank
W2NH, Gordon

This first annual Ham-Con was held at the Hampton Inn Convention Center in Colchester, VT on February 28. To get there in a timely manner the above named contingent left at 6 AM.

For me Hamfests are always fun, not because I always come home with some radio type goodie, but because there are always friends to meet and chat with. A really good treat is to meet up with someone who you've spoken to on the air, but never had an eyeball with.

That was definitely the case this year when we met many folks known from the Green Mountain Net and quite a few RACES members. Speaking of which, RACES had a table set up that was shared with the ARRL and Burlington NWS.

To make a long story longer, we all had fun. Now it's time to plan for the next get-a-way. And what would that be, you ask? Why, NearFest, of course. Plan on joining in on the fun at the Deerfield, NH Fairgrounds on May 1 & 2.



At the highest peak in St Thomas, USVI being 451' above sea level, real estate for communications here is a logistic nightmare. This is a picture of the major communication towers for traffic on and off the island from the Mountain Top Resort captured by John, N1TOX on one of his cruise stops this past February.

American Red Cross "Boot Camp"

By Bro. Frank Hagerty, S.S.E. WK1L

On February 5 and 6, four members of the West River Radio Club attended three courses which, together, make up an introduction to American Red Cross (ARC) organization and response to disasters, both local and wide-spread. Paul KB1OQH, Mark KB1HCG, Jack N1HOS, and Frank WK1L attended the three courses which make up the ARC's "Boot Camp":

Mass Care Overview (DSMCC200A), Fulfilling Our Mission: Translating Your Compassion into Community Action (DSGEN200A), and Shelter Operations (ARC 3068-11).

The Boot Camp courses are the basic entry level for getting involved with the Red Cross; that's where anyone who wants to volunteer in disaster relief starts. These courses were presented at the same time by all three Vermont ARC chapters, and in all three areas the program was "sold out." The ARC will be offering the program again, but a date has not yet been set.

"Mass Care," a 3 hour course, gave an overview of the activities performed by the Mass Care group in support of a disaster relief operation. The ARC has a very extensive operational plan to deal with any disaster; for local situations, some elements of the large-scale plan are put into action. "Shelter Ops," another 3 hour class, gave an overview of how a shelter operation is managed effectively and sensitively to meet the needs of people displaced as a result of a disaster. While this class did not train us for any particular "job" in a shelter, it taught us how the shelter is organized and run by a team of Red Cross employees and volunteers. "Fulfilling Our Mission," also 3 hours, helps you to translate your care and compassion into community action. The class prompts you to look at your own skills, abilities, and interests and see how you might fit with the ARC's mission as a volunteer.

I met the following week with Bruce Pollock, the Emergency Services Director for the Green Mountain Chapter, whose office is in Brattleboro. I asked him about what further training might be appropriate for WRRRC, RACES, and CERT members who want to work in collaboration with the Red Cross. First of all, the Green Mountain Chapter (which covers southern Vermont as far north as Ludlow) has no radio communication capability of their own. They usually rely on landline phones, cell phones, and email for their communications between shelters and other agencies. If these go down, they rely solely on RACES operators.

People interested in volunteering in shelters will need further training, which the Red Cross is happy to provide. Most courses are 3 hours in length; some are offered on-line, some in the classroom, and others a combination of both. In addition, there are 2 courses in Logistics: an overview course (ARC 3071-1) and Logistics Simulation (ARC 3071-2) that teach how to provide and distribute supplies, that is, Material Support Services. In conjunction with these

courses, one can also take ERV's: Ready, Set, Roll (ARC 3068-4) which prepares volunteers to operate an Emergency Response Vehicle and its equipment safely and effectively to meet feeding and other service needs of people affected by disaster. ERV's are trucks that carry supplies and meals for distribution in local areas.

Many of the tasks that need to be done in a disaster situation fit very well with the goals of CERT and RACES. Bruce Pollock is planning on attending the March CERT meeting.



**Did I mention?
Field Day is coming up. Mark your
calendar for the last full weekend in
June. That's June 27—28**

HAM CON PICTURES

Let's fill up some space at the end here with some pictures from the Ham Con gathering in Colchester. Maybe you'll be motivated to come join the fun next year.



RACES SET UP

**N1TOX, John—
Current state RACES
Coordinator**

**W1DEC, David—
Former state RACES
Coordinator**

