



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the
West River Radio Club



September—2009

Volume VI—#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 55 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

PREZ KORNER

Back to School...

What, is it Back to School time already? Is it autumn? Where did the summer go? Well, we always say the same thing at this time of year and back it up saying "Wow, what a summer". But this year we are all saying "When was the summer of 2009?" Between all the rain, cooler days, lack of sunshine etc, the only way I knew it was summer was the longer days of sunlight. Wake up with the sunrise at 0530 hrs and watch the sun set at 2045 hrs. Then the only way I really knew it was summer was the 2 weeks of high humidity and high temperatures, that is when the central air conditioner broke, go figure. It's fixed now and the temperatures we are now heading towards 45 degree temperatures overnight. Go figure!

So it is now time to tune up the equipment and get ready for the new solar cycle ramping up. With the recent sporadic openings of 10 and 6 meters over the past month, it's time to try a new frequency or revisit some old friends which were not there over the past few years. HF can be a real fun frequency range to operate in when the conditions are right. I personally have operated HF on 80 to 17 meters on my own, and during field day, I have operated 160 to 12 meters. Many of my restrictions are of a result of my location. It's something that I know will change. But learning how to overcome some of these issues is the learning experience of a lifetime.

So why should I mention this? Well, in hopes that you will

enhance your knowledge of the art of amateur radio. Maybe you have not operated on either 15 or 10 meters, or maybe you have, but not in a while. Give it a try. How about 6 meters? How about trying a digital mode like CW, yes it is still alive, Air-Mail, PSK-31, SSTV, RTTY and many more great modes to explore. Ok, some of you do not have a radio that will operate at these frequencies or modes. Get to know your Elmer! Visit an Elmer's ham shack and operate those frequencies that you currently do not have the abilities to operate. Maybe you will get interested in upgrading your license class or radio equipment.

Did someone say license upgrades? Yes, we will have our annual Fall General Class starting soon for those of you who have your Technician License and wish to upgrade. And for the General License holders, we will also have an Extra Class study group for those who are interested in upgrading. If you are interested, please contact our education team to enroll. Bro. Frank Hagerty and Sean Sanderson will be glad to add your name to the list. Another thing to think about, for the general license holders and above is to become a VE (Volunteer Examiner). All you have to do is download the training manual, take a test and send it into the league. They will grade your exam and mail you your credentials required to be a VE member. Then you can also administer the exams you are qualified to give.

So the phrase "Back to School" is not just for the kids. Let us all try to enhance the art of amateur radio by upgrading our knowledge of this great hobby, learn some new modes of operation, build an antenna, or help someone learn something that you know. Become an Elmer! It is a real simple thing to do, just share your knowledge. You do not have to know "everything amateur radio", just a portion of it. Let's all get "Back to School" and learn.

Until next month!

73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President
WRRRC





OTHER HOBBIES

A B1JY, Janice, has another hobby. You guessed it—painting saw blades as well as anything else lying around the place (Watch out Dick!).

This particular painting was done for a customer that had returned from a trip to Italy. Too bad that Janice wasn't able to get the tower straight :-)

Thanks to Dick, AA1XU, for sending this along.

Is there something else you enjoy besides the great hobby of Amateur Radio? Shoot me a short blurb and a picture if you have one and I'll put it in the next issue.



CRABBY OLD MAN

(Ed: The following poem was sent along by Jack, N1HOS. In light of the rash of SK notices that we've had and the fact that none of us is getting any younger, it seems very appropriate. Thanks, Jack.)

What do you see nurses? - What do you see?
 What are you thinking - when you're looking at me?
 A crabby old man, not very wise,
 Uncertain of habit with faraway eyes?

Who dribbles his food and makes no reply.
 When you say in a loud voice 'I do wish you'd try!'
 Who seems not to notice the things that you do.
 And forever is losing sock or shoe?

Who, resisting or not lets you do as you will,
 With bathing and feeding the long day to fill?
 Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?
 Then open your eyes, nurse you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am . As I sit here so still,
 As I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
 I'm a small child of Ten with a father and mother,
 Brothers and sisters who love one another.

A young boy of Sixteen with wings on his feet
 Dreaming that soon now a lover he'll meet.
 A groom soon at Twenty my heart gives a leap.
 Remembering, the vows that I promised to keep.

At Twenty-Five, now I have young of my own.
 Who need me to guide and a secure happy home.
 A man of Thirty my young now grown fast,
 Bound to each other with ties that should last.

At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone,
 But my woman's beside me to see I don't mourn.
 At fifty, once more, babies play 'round my knee,
 Again, we know children my loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me my wife is now dead.
 I look at the future shudder with dread.
 For my young are all rearing young of their own.
 And I think of the years and the love that I've known.

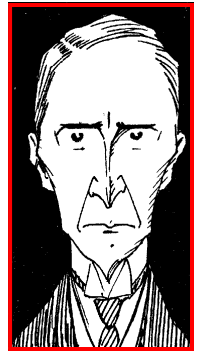
I'm now an old man and nature is cruel.
 Tis jest to make old age look like a fool.
 The body, it crumbles grace and vigor,
 depart.

There is now a stone where I once had a heart.

But inside this old carcass a young guy
 still dwells,
 And now and again my battered heart
 swells.

I remember the joys I remember the pain.
 And I'm loving and living life over again.

I think of the years, all too few gone too fast.
 And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.
 So open your eyes, people open and see.
 Not a crabby old man. Look closer see ME!



THE WRC 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 September follows:

- Sep 7 K1KU, Darrel
- Sep 14 KB1KSR, Ed
- Sep 21 W1CWB, Chas
- Sep 28 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.

Want to be a Net Control Station? Contact Tim, KA1ZQX, at ka1zqx@arrl.net

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

Or, why should I care?

Those of you who missed our last meeting on August 11 sure missed out on a lot of fun. In fact, with rare exceptions, at all our meetings we have fun. That's what Ham radio is all about, right? Did you think that we're supposed to sit around whining and moaning with dour looks all the time?

So, if you weren't there that's OK, as I'm going to give you a run down on what happened and even include some pictures. But don't expect this kind of treatment after every meeting. In fact, I've almost decided to stop worrying about whether or not you show up. Now our DX members, the ones in other states, are definitely forgiven. For them it's a long haul and gas is not exactly cheap these days. I can remember getting a lot of mileage when I put 50 cents worth of gas in my first car, a Plymouth I owned in the early 50s. But I digress.....

Most of the fun this last meeting had to do with the demonstration of the W4SSY spud gun. Did it fire potatoes? Not really, but there was once a contraption that did fire them and thus the name. This particular "gun" is really a line launcher for getting antennas way up in the trees, if you have tall enough trees, that is. It was described in the March, 2009 QST. Your humble editor is one who likes to get all enthused thinking of things for other folks to do. (Someday I'll tell you about the club kite.) In this case, though, the *thing* was this antenna launcher.

So I says to Frank, WK1L, "Frank, I think that it would be a great idea if we built this W4SSY spud gun." For those of you that don't know me well enough, WE means "I'll help all I can, but you (that would be Brother Frank) will do the heavy thinking and constructing.

To make a long story even longer, one Saturday morning, after fortifying ourselves with a cholesterol laden breakfast, WK1L, Frank and yours truly ruined a half-way decent Saturday by scurrying thither and yon procuring the parts for our project. We ruined the better part of another day learning that the parts list and instructions for our spud gun were, shall we say, a tad bit less than accurate. Fortified with our new found knowledge, Frank procured the other parts needed and we were off to the races.

In the interests of time and space I will conclude by saying that the WRRC now has a spiffy antenna launching device. Long gone are the days of pulling back on a sling shot, thereby risking the loss of one or both eyes when that stretchy thing with the pocket breaks. What you missed on August 11 was witnessing the proof of my prior statement. The projectiles can easily fly over 100' to 150' trees. Don't take my word for it. There were witnesses present and they have all promised to testify under oath.

Since writing this John, N1TOX, has built his own spud gun and AA1XU, Dick is embarking on the process of making his own.

Also, since writing this the club launcher has received a coat of forest green paint and has successfully put a line way up in a tree for my soon to be raised 160 meter inverted L.



WK1L, Brother Frank



W2NH, Gordon
Checks out some
rig deviation



WK1L, Frank
KA1ZQX, Tim

KB1J, Rich
WK1L, Frank
N1TOX, John
KA1ZQX, Tim



FINANCES

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

50 Full members—5 Associate members
60% of the full members belong to the ARRL

Checking = \$1470.86
Cash on hand = \$60.48



UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

Ongoing: WRRRC ARES net...19:30L, 147.015, positive offset and 100 Hz PL tone.

September 8: Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital, Townshend, VT. 19:30L

September 25-27: CQWW RTTY contest. See rules at <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/RTTYDX09ContestRulesJuly09.pdf>

September 26: This month's luncheon meeting will be at the Pan Asian Restaurant by Staples in Brattleboro, VT.

October 3: RACES conference at the VT State Police Academy in Pittsford, VT

FOR SALE

AA1XU, Dick, wants to part with his low mileage MFJ Differential T tuner, Model 986 and rated for 3 KW. It's one year old and used for four months. Mint condition. Paid \$349 and asking \$250. Contact Dick at 1-413-3845 or aa1xu@verizon.net



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

In wine there is wisdom,
In beer there is freedom,
In water there is bacteria.
Benjamin Franklin

A HAMS BEST FRIEND

I guess that this could be a lot of things:
Your dog - or cat, if you're W2NH
Your XYL
Your YL
Your live in house keeper
Your tax preparer

OK, enough foolishness, for now, at least. How about your PC, or Apple, if you are so inclined.

I started out in Ham radio in 1978, just before the start of the computer revolution. In those days I was perfectly content to crank out QSOs with my trusty Hot Water – 101 from Heath. In most cases I knew it was working fine when those glass bulb things inside it were glowing. The English call them *valves*.

As the saying goes, though, things have come a long way since those days. Today I'd be lost without my PC. I lie a bit, as there are actually four in the shack – two desktops, and two laptops. The one laptop is really an antique Compaq that I've held onto for Field Day and other portable operations where I'd rather see it get dropped or wet than my latest one. I hate to see a grown man cry. Three of them are networked together so that I don't waste precious energy running between computers with thumb drive dangling around my neck.

One of the desktops is hooked up to my FT-2000D along with a ton of other gizmos, like a Microkeyer, an old Morse Keyer (I think that Time Wave made it) that's has my Bencher hanging off of it and that is hooked up in parallel with the Microkeyer.

What I'm trying to get at is that computers can do a **LOT** to make your ham radio experience more fun and save you a lot of time. Let me list some of the ways. I won't go into a lot of detail here, but if my muses continue to prod me I'll keep this series going with some further ideas on the bulleted items below.

Logging. I have 21,541 contacts in my log book. If it were literally a log book I'd have to add a room to the house to hold all that paper.

Rig control. I used to scoff at the idea of having a PC control my rig. That attitude has changed, too. Now I love the idea of clicking on a call on the DX cluster and watch my rig go to that frequency. It even sets the split frequency for me if one is called for.

RTTY the easy way. I once owned a *green machine*, the old clunkers that Hams used to use on that mode. Fortunately, we moved out of Alaska before I had the time to get it up and running and I didn't feel in the mood to stick it in the Hertz moving van. Now my PC does all the chores for RTTY and a slew of other digital modes, such as PSK.

Contesting. I do my fair share of it and the joy of having some computer software track the states, countries, zones, multipliers, and dupes almost reaches pure ecstasy.



EMCOMM – WHY?

So why don't Hams, and a lot of other groups for that matter, just speak English? Now that's a good question and maybe we'll explore it someday. For now, though, just let me say that Emcomm is a shortcut slang term for *Emergency Communications*.

Many members of the WRRRC are involved in providing it. But the question in the sub head was *WHY?* That may be the easiest question to come down the pike in a long time.

One reason is the paste below from Part 97 of the FCC rules pertaining to the Amateur Radio service.

Skip ahead and read it now if you like. I'll pause a bit.....You'll notice that this wonderful hobby we enjoy has five fundamental purposes. My American Heritage Dictionary specifically says that if something is fundamental it is an **ESSENTIAL** and **NECESSARY** part of a thing.

I've included all five purposes below. That's just in case you forgot some of them since you took the test. I've put the one concerning Emcomm, small letter a, in bold. You may have noticed that this purpose comes first. That means to me that the main reason we enjoy our frequencies is **NOT** telling your wife or SO that you're headed into the grocery store and what does she want you to bring home.

Nor is the main reason for having our frequencies chasing after that rare DX in Ubangaland. But it's still fun and I'll continue to do it. After all, the Ham with the most QSL cards when they die is the winner.

The *WHY?* for me is that doing emcomm takes away some of the guilt I might feel if all I did was "chase" that Ham on Pitcairn Island. It's also why I do as many public service events as I'm able to - the March of Dimes walk, our special event at Grace Cottage Fair Day, etc.

If any of you reading this don't do emcomm and would like to get your feet wet, it's soooooo easy. Send an email to N1TOX, John (n1tox@comcast.net) to hop in on the RACES end of things and KA1ZQX, Tim (timothy.bell@us.army.mil) He'll get you up and running with the ARES arm of emcomm. For reasons we can cover later, if you belong to one, you should also belong to the other.

Stay tuned here long enough and I'll cover the difference between ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) and RACES (Radio Amateur Radio Civil Emergency Service).

Subpart A--General Provisions
§97.1 Basis and purpose.

The rules and regulations in this Part are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:

- (a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.**
- (b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art.
- (c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communications and technical phases of the art.
- (d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within

the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts.

(e) Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill.



THANKS

Your editor wishes to thank those who sent along material for this month's edition. Any information is greatly appreciated, mainly because it means that I can spend less time racking my brain for ideas and also writing it up.

This month's appreciation award goes to

- ◆ N1TOX, John
- ◆ N1HOS, Jack
- ◆ AA1XU, Dick
- ◆ K1KU, Darrel

Want to see your name and call here in October? Send something along and become a published author.

One final closing thought. Check out www.westriverradio.org and click on *Meeting and Event Times* on the left. We hope to see you at the September meeting or upcoming club event.

CUL es 73 de K1KU SK

