



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 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

Partnerships....

Last October, I wrote about a question that was asked of me at the 2008 RACES Conference. That question was, "How do we stay so energized, have people deploy and practice drills, and also have a group that works so well together?" The answer I provided was "We are a group of folks who are interested in amateur radio, emergency communications, helping out our local communities, club members, and our neighbors. We are committed to practice 4 drills per year with the Entergy Vermont Yankee and the VEM-RACES program, scheduled ARES drills and nets, CERT deployments, and many special events we support."

Thanks to our members, this comment still carries on toward the closing of our 6th year. As of this past Saturday at the VEM RACES conference, our neighboring states now know what we do and how well we have done over the past few years to be a leader in Emergency Communications. Our friends down in Massachusetts learned how we have become one of the leaders within our local areas and wish to have us help them be as good. The time is now, to reach out and help them along so our area groups, not just the West River Radio Club or Windham County, are the leaders. It is important to see the amateur radio operators in the Tri-State area become one strong group and we will reach out our helping hands and become one.

With this new partnership initiative coming to the surface, it is time to look back and realize the growth and team building we have done. As for me, I knew none of our members when we first started this wonderful club. As of today, we have all worked many events together, and with all of you, we have been the "A Team" for the RACES program because of our commitment to the Entergy Vermont Yankee EPZ. This has been noted both on the State and Federal levels.

So what is next? A lot! As we continue to perform our magic, provide communications for our local organizations, educate those who wish to obtain an amateur radio license, watch our club grow, and much more, we will continue to register for our Special Services Club Endorsement from ARRL with glowing reviews to continue on to provide the best service we can to our area. With our new partnerships on the horizon, the sky is the limit. Ok, it is understood that with amateur radio we can do moon bouncing which is further than the sky, but you know what I mean. We should all look forward to providing the area with the best service we can muster up and support our neighbors. We are the group that can make the difference and we will try to do our best!

Until Next month,

73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRR



EMCOMM - HOW

Let's get one thing straight from the get go. There are folks out there who are much more qualified to be writing about emergency communications than I am. To protect the guilty, though, I will not name names, or calls, either, but you know who you are. I would urge you to step forward and pick up the task of enlightening our readers on the many facets of Emcomm. Until those nameless souls do step up to the plate, here we go again with this month's exciting column.

In September we spoke to the basis and purpose of the Amateur Radio Service and the *why* of emergency communications. To review here is the basis and purpose as set forth in the FCC rules for Hams.

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.

This month we'll get a tad more specific. E.g., we'll talk a bit about emergency power. Just in case, I'll even define the term for you. Emergency power involves those methods we have at our disposal for getting electrons flowing without the aid of our AC mains.

Even though from time immemorial I've threatened to get a generator, we don't have one. What I do have may not be as effective, but it sure is cheaper – batteries. I know that there are some fancy super duper batteries out there with great stats, but my approach is simpler. I sneak across the river to Wal Mart now and the and pick up a deep cycle marine battery, the biggest I can find. At \$50 - \$60 a pop they're good for quite a few years if you keep the plates wet with distilled water and keep them topped off with an automatic charger. At the moment I have three of them, all charged – one in the vehicle, one in the shack, and one in the garage.

There's also a unit from West Mountain Radio that intrigues me. Frank, WK1L, has one, and the last I heard from him on the matter, he's happy with it. It's called the Super PWRgate backup power system and you can read all about it at <http://www.westmountainradio.com/SuperPWRgate.htm>

This thing goes between your power supply and battery to keep the battery on full charge and automatically switch over to it when the mains go kaput. West Mountain Radio also sells some high end batteries for the discriminating Ham. Check their two models out at <http://www.westmountainradio.com/MKbatt.htm> If the power actually does go out, and it does quite a bit here in the hinterlands of Putney, you might want

to look into some DC type of lighting in the shack so that you can find your key or microphone if you're one of those SSB type of guys. At Field Day I use one of those new LED lanterns – no mantles or white gas to mess with. If anyone would like a good, but used two mantle Coleman lantern give me a shout. It's yours for the taking. Speaking of West Mountain Radio (**NO, I don't get a commission on their sales to WRRRC members**) they sell a little LED unit that looks like it would be nice to have around. It doesn't even take up any desk space. It even comes with a 6' cord and Powerpoles attached. <http://www.westmountainradio.com/PWRbrite.htm> You do have one of their Rigrunners, don't you? C'mon, lets get with the program. <http://www.westmountainradio.com/HAMintro.htm>

Until next month, or until someone with some real Em-comm savvy steps in...

UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

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

October 6—November 24: General Class starting on Tuesday, October 6 and running through November 24 with breaks for WRRRC meetings on 10/13 and 11/10. The VE session will be on December 1. The class will be held in the VEM office at 230 Main Street in Brattleboro, VT—Suite 306.

Early October: The Contoocook Valley Radio Club will be a General class in early October in Bow, NH. The contact person is K1JNE, Jen Eastman at 603-226-9425. They will use Gordon West materials. Students need to purchase their materials from HRO (\$19.95) prior to classes beginning.

October 13: Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital at 19:00L. The program will be a refresher course on Ham Radio Deluxe plus satellite communications using HRD. Program leader will be K1EGL, Chuck.

October 16-17: NEARFest at the Fairgrounds in Deerfield, NH. Get details at <http://www.near-fest.com/>

October 31: This month's luncheon meeting will be at the House of Pizza by Staples in Brattleboro, VT. Start time is 11:30

November 23: VE session sponsored by the Franklin County ARC. Contact Al Woodhull, N1AW for further information. awoodhull@hampshire.edu or 1-413-549-2983

N1PBX—CONRAD

I've been informed by Conrad's wife, Carole, that he just returned from Dartmouth where he underwent tests to see why his ticker was not ticking normally. The good news is that the ticker is in FB shape and, in the words of Inspector Clouseau, "The problem she is solved."

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

A potpourri

Now don't be asking me what *potpourri* means, OK? I just hope that you have a dictionary in the house. Maybe you'll need to ask your neighbor or one of your kids. Sometime wives are a good source of knowledge.

Marion and I subscribe to Netflix, the cheap version where you get two DVDs a month. It only costs \$5.99 a month and you can keep the DVD a long time without them bugging you to hurry up and watch it and send it back to them. I know this because we've tried it. Anyway, we were watching a Ken Burn's production (Did you know that he lives in Walpole, NH?) and I was reminded that he also produced *Empire of the Air* based on the book by Tom Lewis. I put it in the queue on the Netflix site, it arrived, we watched it and it's still good, even on the second go-a-round. It offers some intriguing history of the early days of radio and you'll learn a lot about David Sarnoff, Lee de Forest, and Howard Armstrong – how their lives were intertwined, the squabbles and lawsuits they all endured.

There is a holiday in Japan called *Respect for the Aged*. For those of you wondering about why I should know this arcane fact I'll bring you up to speed. Our younger son, Matt, is married to a lovely Japanese lady, Reiko by name, and they live in Otaki on Hokkaido Island, the northern one. Together they added one more grandkid, a girl, to the family collection and we'll be going there next spring for a visit. In doing some research on when holidays come over there I ran across this *Respect for the Aged* event.

Now I have become a true believer in having respect for the aged, especially since I entered their ranks some time ago. I often feel that I don't get nearly enough of it and would promote any effort to encourage the younger set to bequeath more of it on us old coots, but especially on me.

Speaking of Japan and Ham Radio, one of the neat things about our hobby is its world wide nature and the kinship that exists between Hams of many different cultures and political/religious outlooks. For example, on our 2002 trip to Japan we visited with JH8RZJ, Kai and his wife in the apartment in Sapporo. If you look carefully at the picture of Kai you'll see his DXCC 5 Band Plaque from the ARRL and a print by his favorite artist. Yes, that's a Norman Rockwell picture.



For the 2010 trip I've already been in touch with JJ8KGZ, Leo. Here's his email to me:

Hello Darrel,

I'm JJ8KGZ, Leo residing in Memuro, Hokkaido Japan. Nao JO3HPM forwarded me your message of your trip next May and I would like to meet with you if we can. My town Memuro is located about 200km east of Sapporo and it takes about 4 hours from City of Date. I do not know how long you will stay

there, but how about taking a short trip to the east part of Hokkaido. You can stay my home and I can take you around sight-seeing. OR I can visit you in Otaki and have some time talking with you as we have a cup of coffee or something.

I'm looking forward to meeting with you.

Leo

I just love it when I can implement Part 97.1 of our Basis and Purpose, to wit, ***Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill.***

FINANCES

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

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

Checking = \$1283.76
Cash on hand = \$60.48



GENERAL CLASS

Now most of our members have it, class, that is, but here I refer to another type of class—the kind where you study and earn rewards.

The WRRC is once more holding a class for those wishing to attain their General Class License. It all starts on October 6 and ends on November 24. There will be no classes on October 13 and November 10 to allow for the regular scheduled club meetings.

The VE session for this class will be held on December 1. The VE session is open to other than class members, so if you're doing self study or know of someone who wishes to take a Technician test or upgrade to General or Extra let Sean, KD6MPY (kd6mpy@arrl.net) or Frank, WK1L (hagertysse@myfairpoint.net) know.

Club members volunteering their teaching skills are:

- ◆ W1CWB, Chas
- ◆ K1EGL, Chuck
- ◆ N1TOX, John
- ◆ WK1L, Frank
- ◆ K1KU, Darrel



NUMBER 6

Where does the time go when you're having fun? It flies, that's what it does. Maybe some of you remember earlier statewide RACES conferences. I went back into the K1KU archives and found some pictures that I took on November 11, 2005 at the Vermont Police Academy in Pittsford, VT. Were you there? I have proof that AA1T, Grant, and N1HOS, Jack were. There were also many others from the WRRC there, too.

There have been a lot of changes for the better since then those early days of roughing it at our drills

* Setting up in our vehicles in parking lots

* Enduring less than ideal weather

* Running traffic to the powers that be in their heated indoor cubicles

Look at all the improvements. There are now just under 200 members statewide. Now we have radios in all the EOCs, the IFO, the JIC and other places with acronyms that may not have even been invented yet. There are even antennas to hook up to those radios. And none of this happened by waving a magic wand, either. Thanks are due to numerous kind souls who found the money to buy that gear or volunteered their valuable time to install it all.

This year's conference was once again held in Pittsford and saw our first effort to invite fellow Hams and RACES members from adjoining states to join us. It was great to see so many fresh faces and to be able to show off our VT RACES team accomplishments.

There were programs galore. WK1L, Frank, did his demonstration of the club's W4SSY spud gun and taught those watching how to build one via a live demonstration of its construction. John, N1TOX, our state RACES Coordinator also stood at the podium to cover various facets of this program.

Not a member of RACES? Feel bad because you're missing out on all the good feelings you get from fulfilling our public service mission? Dump those feelings right now and tell John, N1TOX, that you'd like an application. The more members we have the more the work load is spread around and the more there are to enjoy the fun.

WRRC members who made the jaunt north were:

W1CWB, Chas
KB1HCG, Mark
KA1CYZ, Jenifer
N1TOX, John
KB1NWT, John
N1HOS, Jack
K1EGL, Chuck
K1KU, Darrel
WK1L, Frank
KA1TWV, Elaine



K1KU, Darrel and WA1LIE, Fred, at the first drill I remember or have a pictorial record of. Fred drove Rover down from Waterbury where we set up things at the IFO in Dummerston.



Tim, KA1ZQX, at the same drill. Did I mention that it was winter?



Attendees at the 2004 RACES conference



WK1L, Frank, demonstrates the WRRC spud gun to the admiring throng

THE WRRC 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 October follows:

- Oct 12 KB1J, Rich
- Oct 19 KB1KSR, Ed
- Oct 26 N1TOX, John

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

NASA'S BAD NEWS

Below you'll find some quotes from a NASA web site.

An international panel of experts led by NOAA and sponsored by NASA has released a new prediction for the next solar cycle. Solar Cycle 24 will peak, they say, in May 2013 with a below-average number of sunspots.

"If our prediction is correct, Solar Cycle 24 will have a peak sunspot number of 90, the lowest of any cycle since 1928 when Solar Cycle 16 peaked at 78,"

says panel chairman Doug Biesecker of the NOAA Space Weather Prediction Center.

It is tempting to describe such a cycle as "weak" or "mild," but that could give the wrong impression.

"Even a below-average cycle is capable of producing severe space weather," points out Biesecker. "The great geomagnetic storm of 1859, for instance, occurred during a solar cycle of about the same size we're predicting for 2013."

It looks kind of discouraging for those of us who are ever in search of new DX to work. Oh well, if it weren't for bad news there wouldn't be any news at all. A look on the bright side (the side that we should always be looking for) reveals that there are other operating adventures awaiting us. How about...

◆ Working all states (WAS). Already done that? Then go for WAS on all the different bands or modes.

◆ Have fun with the state QSO Parties.

◆ Get involved in a different mode. After all, there is life beyond SSB or FM phone operations.

* RTTY

* PSK31

* Or, perish the thought, there is always the venerable mode beloved by many - CW

◆ How about county hunting? There are over 200 of them out there.

◆ Try for the new Triple Play award from the League. You work all 50 states on SSB, Phone and any digital mode. All the contacts must be confirmed via LOTW. Burt, W1ZS, already has completed the task.

◆ Don't know what LOTW is? It's Logbook of the World and you can learn all about it on the ARRL web site.

Are you set up for HF mobile? Many of us are and I'd like to push for some outings for these folks. Of course, the non HF mobile folks would be invited along in the hopes that they might get the bug. Relying on memory only (HA) here's who I think have HF mobile capabilities. If you qualify and don't see your name below give me a shout – k1ku@myfairpoint.net

* WK1L, Frank

AA1XU, Dick

* K1KU, Darrel

K1EGL, Chuck

* N1TOX, John

N1HOS, Jack

* KA1ZQX, Tim

KD6MPY, Sean

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SITE OF THE MONTH

A few months the featured site came from W1JO, Richard. While doing some linking on <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/rg4wpw/date.html> I ran across Bob Heil's web page.

Now Bob, K9EID makes good stuff. I happen to own his BM-10 Dual on a Heil boom with footswitch and HC-4 head set and more than happy with they way they work and have held up over the years. There are a lot of guys in this club who also own Heil equipment.

Speaking of foot switches, you do use one, roger? If you don't I strongly suggest you consider making the switch. If you don't feel that the expenditure for a professional boom or foot switch is worth it to you, then consider rolling your own with using one of those cheap extension lamp arrangements and wiring in a foot switch with your mic to handle the PTT chores. Once tried, you'll wonder how you ever lived without one.

Some advantages:

- * You free up some precious desk space
- * Both hands are now free to make notes or punch keys on your PC. You do have a PC interfaced to the rig, right? We'll save that topic for another article.
- * OK, I'm sure that there are others, but none come to mind right now. Why don't you contribute a few?

Before I forget, here's the site URL <http://www.heilsound.com/amateur/index.htm>

Take a moment and Send Tim, KA1ZQX, a Good Thought during his long Training stint in Texarkana, TX



CUL es 73 de K1KU SK



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