



# DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the  
West River Radio Club



February—2010

Volume VII—#1

## 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 46 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

### Wow, 6 years running and more to come

As the "2010 Book of Events" opens up for the year, we see more stuff for us to do right off the starting block. This year, we are hosting the 2010 VT QSO Party which is coming up this weekend. This is a great contest to put Vermont hams back onto the map. We will be the sought after contact in this contest instead of us seeking others. It's going to be a great contest. And the best part, it is FREE and you can participate right from your own ham shack!!

On Saturday May 22, 2010, we will be providing our ongoing communication support and assistance to the Girl's on the Run event in Brattleboro. This occasion has been a fun affair to watch and support over the past years. Other items we will be supporting will be our normal Energy - VY Drills, Moore Dam Drill, Health Care Facility drills and many more. Stay tuned for more dates to come up.

On the administrative side, our Education coordinators will be planning our license classes and VE Sessions for the 2010 year. This will include classes and study sessions for various levels of licenses. Our 501 3 C federal application is in the mail. Thanks to Chas for all of his work on this application process. We will be applying to maintain our Special Services Club designation. This needs to be completed every two (2) years.

This will be another great year for WRRC and our mem-

bers. There will be a lot to do and I'm sure more things will be coming up along the way. Lend a hand to assist at one or more of these events. It will be rewarding to you, the club and the requesting organization.

Until next month!

73

.....

de N1TOX

John Borichevsky - President WRRC



## RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

### You're so vain

I'm not much into pop music, but I do remember some lyrics from yesteryear that went something like, *You're so vain, I'll bet you thought this song about you*, or something to that that effect.



I would imagine that there are a lot of types of vanity:

- \* Personal appearance (I know that I spend a lot of time making sure that my hair looks just right)
- \* Clothing
- \* Pride in possessions
- \* Pride in our vast knowledge about just about everything. My claim to fame is that I learn just enough about something to be dangerous and then move on to new conquests.

Did you know that "vanity" is actually built into the FCC regulations? Sure you did, and it's called the *Vanity Call Sign* program. It offers Hams the chance to pick out the call they want instead of taking a call that is issued at the whim of some bureaucrat's computer in Gettysburg.

Many Hams take advantage of this perk, even some in the WRRC have used it. But why, you ask?

My unscientific survey shows that getting your initials is high on the list of reasons.

W1CWB has his initials  
W1AAT, Allen Tinker  
K1GE, Glenn Edson  
N1CB, Carl Breuning

WA1YNE, Wayne Dorsett. OK, that's not his initials, but his entire name. A fellow high school student from years ago was W6ALT.....Yes, his name was Walt.

K1DD, Daniel Drost, probably has one. By the way, if it weren't Daniel's call it would be mine. I even thought of W1DD, but that belongs to Robert Rupprecht (shouldn't he be W1RR? He could be, but W1RR belongs to John Kenny. So, shouldn't he be W1JK? Enough already.). Besides, W1DD sounds too much like someone with a lisp calling you a LID.

W1RRC - Yes, even clubs get vanity calls. See the connection? **West (1) River Radio Club**. You're sharper than I thought. Another call we have is WR1VT

Other reasons:

- \* Deceased relative's call. There is a special procedure for this that I didn't delve into as I have other important things to do.
- \* Nice sounding call. This is where I fit in. When I discovered that Daniel, K1DD, had taken the call I wanted I went for a call that was short to proclaim my exalted status as an Extra Class operator and would sound good on CW. K1KU works well for this as the next character, with one exception, starts with the opposite sound of the ending character of the previous character....Get it? DAH-DI-DAH DI-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH DAH-DI-DAH DI-DI-DAH

I do a lot of CW work and this works well for me. Occasionally someone confuses me with K1KI or K1KS, but not enough to get excited about.

So, interested in getting a personalized call sign? Below are some web sites that might prove to be of help. I Googled vanity call and was inundated. Needless to say, this service is not free, but the cost is nominal, at least when compared to what you paid for the gear you have around the place and in your car.

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/vanity.html> If you go about half way down this page you'll see a lengthy list of URLs where you can get information.

## FINANCES

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

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

Checking = \$1316.77  
Cash on hand = \$21.06



## GIZMO

Gordon, W2NH, put me onto this item and it is definitely, as we used to say, **NEAT!**

It's called a *Ham radio info toolbar*, and to get it go to <http://www.haminfo.co.uk/> and select the download appropriate for your browser and operating system. Use File/Open File from the browser's tool bar to open the file that you selected. It will install itself as a new tool bar that you can customize for yourself.

I've been using it for some time now and, believe me, it has all kinds of goodies and links for Hams on it.



## ORIGIN OF LID

I hope that you aren't one. The term is mostly applied on the HF bands and refers to an ill mannered or bad operator. This could involve tuning up on top of a QSO in progress, over driving his/her audio, sending sloppy CW, etc. Below you'll find some thoughts as to the origin of the term. Personally I prefer the ones that concern the Prince Albert tobacco tins. After all, I remember those from my youth. Here are some ideas on the term's origin that I've run across over the years.

\* My granddad was a railroad telegrapher. He said that the term lid came from operators who would put the lid of a Prince Albert tobacco tin on the sounder so they could copy the code easier. It was a practice that was frowned on by operators who did not have to do this and it became the slang used for bad operators. They would also say that such an operator had a "tin ear". 73 - Mark, WA0DC

\* The best explanation I have heard was that if "lid" was not sent properly in landline (American Morse) code, it sounded like "dd": daaah, dit dit, dah dit dit. (daaah = long dash) It was a basic test of a proficient operator. 73 - JD, ac6pv

\* I have also heard that LID came from the early days of land Morse. An operator who could not send well put a LID, e.g. slowed down the traffic J. Gold, WB2AFS

**From The Internet** - Actually no, it isn't the lid, but it is the can itself. The tobacco can was shaped similar to a pocket flask but had a flip top metal lid on it. If you removed the lid and stuck the can in between the sounder and the reflecting box then it amplified the sound and gave it a little rounder tone (removed some of the click). Some of the local old timers tell me they would fill the tobacco can with sand. Varying the depth of the sand changed the tone.



## ED'S JIG

If you thought that this would be about a dance step developed by KB1KSR when he and his YL Lois used to trip the light fantastic, you've got another think coming. I'll give you a minute or two while you use it, your *other think*, that is.

This is a short recapitulation of Ed's short presentation at our last regular meeting – the one about a simple way to trim 300Ω TV twin lead when making up a portable J-pole antenna, which was what some of us attempted at November 2009 meeting.

To make a long story longer, after watching several of us look foolish in our attempts to shave off some twin lead insulation at the proper spots using pen knives, hack saws and everything short of a chain saw, Ed went home and invented the device seen nearby. It allows one to insert the twin lead into one end, measure off the required distances, and use a ¼" chisel to cleanly whack away the insulation.

Not only did Ed make a jig to do this and demonstrate how it was done; he made up a jig for each and every one of us at the meeting. For that reason I'm personally awarding Ed the BIG HEART prize for 2010.



## NUMBER 6

That's right – we have celebrated six years of existence as a club. At least my files have pictures from annual meetings going back to December 11, 2004 and minutes I've recorded back to December 16, 2003. At this point let's all pause and pat ourselves on the back. If you're near another member, go ahead and pat them, too.

Feel especially proud if you were part of the original group that met on a wintry, snowy day in November of 2003 at the invitation of Tim Bell, KA1ZQX, and Richard Pierce, N1JSG. Those two should feel especially proud of what they caused to happen. And, just exactly what did happen?

What happened was the birth of a Ham Radio club that has proceeded to do all kinds of good things for our fantastic hobby, not just in southern Vermont, but throughout the entire state. Come to think of it, as we are hosting the VT QSO Party this month our influence will be witnessed by the world wide Amateur community.

So if you were a charter member and still giving support both personally and financially, CONGRATULATIONS! If you've joined since the club's inception,

well, you deserve congratulations, too.

Thanks to all who have made it come about and let's keep the ball rolling. Below you'll find a few pictures from our annual meeting last December.



AA1XU, Dick

KA1ZQX, Tim  
KD6MPY, Sean  
N1TOX, John



KB1KSR, Ed  
KB1HCG, Mark



N1TOX, John  
KB1OQG, Gaila



W1CWB, Chas  
KD6MPY, Sean

OUR CLUB REPORT  
CARD FOR  
ACHIEVMENTS OVER  
THE YEARS



## CURIOSITY

(Ed: The following short talk given at a Long Island Ham Club meeting was submitted by Gordon, W2NH as food for thought.)

President's Message

February 2010

**A**t the recent Ham Radio University, the keynote speaker from the ARRL, Steve Ford, WB8IMY, pointed out that too many people in today's modern technologically based world do not care to know how things work. There is simply no inquisitive nature to be found in so many people.

He alluded to a scene that might go something like this. You are using your ht and someone asks what you are doing. You explain that you are using the transceiver to connect to a repeater, which is then retransmitting your signal over a larger geographic area. The individual is amused that people still do that "radio thing". They are about to make fun of you when they have to pause to answer their cell phone (otherwise known as a transceiver, connected to a repeater, retransmitting their signal over larger geographic area). Will they ever get it?

If you were to suddenly find yourself in an earlier time period, considering everything that you currently live with in the 21st century, would you make a difference in that earlier time period? If you were transported to the middle of the 19th century, would you have the ability to use your knowledge to make a generator to produce electricity, develop a phone, a camera, build a car, build a water pump, discover penicillin, and so forth?

Unfortunately, the answer in so many cases will be "no". This imaginary opportunity to build great wealth and a legacy of historic proportions just would not exist because we simply do not care how things work. If there were an emergency, and you were the only available operator able to access emergency equipment such as generators, antennas, towers, transceivers, etc., would you have any idea of what to do to set up a working communications station? That is the kind of training provided by events such as Field Day, and constantly reinforced by participation in "nets", which help to train us in how to be prepared for emergency communications.

So what is the bottom line? Never lose that inquisitive nature to learn how things work, and always be open to knowledge that others can pass on to us.

73,  
Richie, K2KNB  
President, LIMARC (Long Island Mobile Amateur Radio Club)



## KA1ZQX An Update

**I**n a recent email Tim informs me that he was heading for Louisiana for a month or so for, guess what, more training.

Keep your thoughts and prayers on Tim and all the other warriors working to preserve our freedoms.

Here's a picture that Tim sent along.



### HAM RADIO BILL

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/12/15/11247/>  
Read all about it at above...

#### Amateur Radio Bill Passes Senate, Moves to the House

On Monday, December 14, [S 1755](#) -- *The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009* -- [passed the Senate by unanimous consent](#); the bill now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration. Sponsored by Senator Joe Lieberman (ID-CT), and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), S 1755, if passed, would direct the Department of Homeland Security ([DHS](#)) to undertake a study on emergency communications. S 1755 points out that "There is a strong Federal interest in the effective performance of Amateur Radio Service stations, and that performance must be given -- (A) support at all levels of government; and (B) protection against unreasonable regulation and impediments to the provision of the valuable communications provided by such stations."

Members of the Senate [Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee](#) considered S 1755 on December 10. After it passed through Committee, it was placed on the Senate's calendar to be voted on. "We are grateful to Committee Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins for sponsoring the bill and arranging for its swift consideration and passage by the Senate," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ.

Similar in language to [HR 2160](#) (also called *The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009* that was [introduced](#) this past April by Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee [D-TX-18]), S 1755 calls on DHS to undertake a study on the uses and capabilities of Amateur Radio Service communications in emergencies and disaster relief and then to submit a report to Congress no more than 180 days



after the bill becomes law. The study shall:

- Include a review of the importance of Amateur Radio emergency communications in furtherance of homeland security missions relating to disasters, severe weather and other threats to lives and property in the United States, as well as recommendations for enhancements in the voluntary deployment of Amateur Radio licensees in disaster and emergency communications and disaster relief efforts and improved integration of Amateur Radio operators in planning and furtherance of the Department of Homeland Security initiatives.
- Identify impediments to enhanced Amateur Radio Service communications, such as the effects of unreasonable or unnecessary private land use regulations on residential antenna installations; and make recommendations regarding such impediments for consideration by other federal departments, agencies and Congress.

In conducting the study, S 1755 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to "utilize the expertise of stakeholder entities and organizations, including the Amateur Radio, emergency response and disaster communications communities."

S 1755 makes note of the fact that Section 1 of the Joint Resolution entitled [Joint Resolution to Recognize the Achievements of Radio Amateurs, and To Establish Support for Such Amateurs as National Policy](#) -- approved October 22, 1994 (Public Law 103-408) -- included a finding that stated: "Reasonable accommodation should be made for the effective operation of Amateur Radio from residences, private vehicles and public areas, and the regulation at all levels of government should facilitate and encourage amateur radio operations as a public benefit." The bill also pointed out that Section 1805(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 757(c)) directs the Regional Emergency Communications Coordinating Working Group of the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate their activities with ham and Amateur Radio operators among the 11 other emergency organizations, such as ambulance services, law enforcement and others.



## TWO MORE

Congratulations to KB1NWT, John, and KB1SPG, Rich, who became General Class Hams on January 28, 2010. Both John and Rich had taken the WRRRC sponsored General class in late 2009, but were unable to take the exam then. We wish them both the best with their newly earned privileges.

If either of you guys need help in hanging an antenna or setting up a HF station give any of your Board members a shout and will set our Elmer team to work on your plight. This applies to all club members as well.

Participating VEs were WK1L, Frank, AA1XU, Dick,

and K1KU, Darrel.

Are you ready for an upgrade? Do you know someone who is ready to enter the ranks of Amateur Radio as a Technician? Contact Sean, KD6MPY ([kd6mpy@arri.net](mailto:kd6mpy@arri.net)) or WK1L, Frank ([hagertysse@myfairpoint.net](mailto:hagertysse@myfairpoint.net)) and let them know your wishes.



KB1NWT, John—WK1L, Frank—KB1SPG, Rich

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## QUOTE FOR THE MONTH

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." - Albert Einstein (1879-1955); theoretical physicist, philosopher

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## UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

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

**February 5-7:** VT QSO Party. Get involved and help support this WRRRC hosted event. Rules at <http://vtqsoparty.westriverradio.org/>

**February 9:** Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital at 19:00L. The program will be a talk on WinLink presented by N1TOX, John

**February 27:** Regular scheduled monthly dine out at Brattleboro House of Pizza by Staples. Things start at 11:30L

Also check out WRRRC events on the club calendar at <http://www.westriverradio.org/> and scroll down the page a bit.

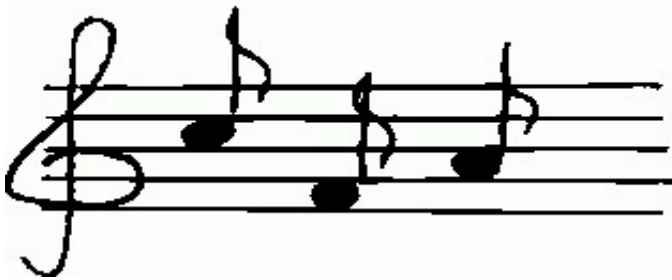


## SITE OF THE MONTH

- ⇒ Dead bands got you singing the blues?
- ⇒ Tired of watching old TV re-runs?
- ⇒ Finished coloring in all the books in your library?
- ⇒ Your nose hairs don't need trimming?

Fear not – all is not lost. Tune into the below and enjoy some Ham music that will surely gladden your heart. On the second go-around you may even be able to hum along. A word of warning. If you have a fear of heights, don't go here!

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSuGIge\\_mNc&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSuGIge_mNc&feature=related)



## FIELD DAY - 2009

**T**hose fun filled two days of operating are long past, but as the pop tune of yesteryear proclaims, "The melody lingers on."

My only purpose here is to notify all that the results were posted in the December issue of QST. The WRRRC is listed on page #67. Look for WR1VT. Are we at the top of the 3A category? No, and we probably never will be. That doesn't distract from the following truisms, though:

- ⇒ Every year we try to improve our antenna systems. In 2009 we added K1KU's versatile 40 meter and up vertical with three above ground radials. We also utilized to a big advantage WK1L's newly built NVIS antenna.
- ⇒ Every year we eat as if the end of the world as we know it is at hand.
- ⇒ Every year we have more fun that human beings should be allowed to have.

If you'd like to join in on that fun and camaraderie keep your eyes and ears peeled for what's developing for our Big FD gala on the last full weekend in June of 2010.



## Ten Undeniable Ham Truths

William Reuter (AE0BR) on February 28, 2005

I know these have been here before, but it is fun to revisit them. Can you relate to any?

1. That antenna is only temporary . . .
2. "If my wife ever finds out what this stuff cost, I'm a dead man...."
3. The worthless stuff thrown away today shows up on eBay tomorrow.
4. If you can't sneak it in through the basement window, bring it in through the front door wrapped in a fur coat.
5. You have absolutely no trouble finding your car in a crowded parking lot. (Unless you're at a Hamfest.)
6. One of your antennas or piece of gear that you seldom ever if at all use develops a problem, now all of a sudden you must get it fixed as if you use it daily.
7. The XYL will ALWAYS need help with something DURING a QSO, never before or after the QSO.
8. During tornado watches and warnings, we are more concerned about our antennas coming down than we are about our house being blown up.
9. Computer Nerds think that Hams are the real weirdo's.
10. "Christmas" and or "birthday" come about 15 times per year (or whenever an unbudgeted radio purchase comes up). Technically, I shouldn't be getting any more "presents" for the next 10 years!



CUL es 73 de K1KU SK

