



# DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the  
West River Radio Club



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Volume VII—#VIII & XI

## 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 51 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

### Planning Your Projects... "A DIY/FYI Lesson"

It was twilight time on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and I was outside watching the dogs play on the hill, romping and rolling, playing with sticks and just having fun. During this time I happened to look up to see the clouds and the night sky getting darker. Above my head was my G5RV antenna. This antenna has been up for about 5 years thanks to the help of Darrel - K1KU, Sean - KD6MPY, and Burt - W1ZS. This was a kick in the pants from this hardy trio to get me on the air as I just received my General License. Now mind you, this installation was a great one, 25' - 30' in the air and I've talked to people in the UK, Russia, South America, the Caribbean, Africa and more places to numerous to say.

*BUT*, oh there is that magical word that will scare the snot out of someone, I was looking at the trees to which the antenna was attached to and said, I can go higher. Now any station manager will tell you that "higher is better" and "the higher you go, the better your signal". So I started to theorize on how to get that antenna higher. I had the technology, I have the material, it's only time. I needed to find the time to make the magic happen.

Well, as many of us know, we have had some good rain and wind storms last month. One such storm was on July 16, 2010. I was at work and got a call from Sue (the YL / CO) once she got home. Sue left me a voice message

which was "A tree has fallen in the back yard and call me ASAP!" Ok, the mind spins out of control once your CO leaves you a message like this. Ok, we have tall trees which shadow the house in the afternoon and could do damage to the house. Yes I was not thinking about my antennas. So I returned the call and she said, "the house is fine, the dogs and kennel is fine, but your antenna.... Well.... It's toast!" So I asked which one? Was it the VHF/UHF vertical, the HF vertical, or the long dipole?" She said the dipole. Relief and the thought about raising it up became a reality!

So on the ride home, I'm wondering if I need to replace the antenna with the same model, repair it, or scrap it totally and replace it with another model. The options were developing and the door for opportunity was there. Then I remembered that I was thinking earlier in the month that I "really" wanted to raise the antenna's height and how was I going to accomplish this. I think someone was just making my dreams come true, or just really pushing my buttons! Who knows.... So I arrived home and found one of our Maple trees snapped at the 20' level and the top dropped on my G5RV. One end was tied tight to the tree and the other end was counter weighted. The counter weight did its job as it flew up the tree and returned back to the ground when the antenna broke at the insulator. Ah, minimal damage. So the plans were to clear the dropped tree, clear out the 20' piece of the tree left, and clear out the damaged trees along its path. Then the bigger question came up, do I put the G5RV back up or string out my 160m Windom? I decided to put the G5RV back up.

So this past weekend, I put my plan into motion and I decided to utilize my launcher. I knew I could clear the tree top with it. I assessed the area to avoid harm and not blow out any windows. I viewed the surrounding obstacles, the road, traffic, proximity of the house, power lines, and where I wanted to tie the antenna lines down. I found the optimal spots to position myself with my launcher. The plan was After collecting all my necessary equipment, I shot my first line. It sailed over the pine tree right where I wanted it. The tie line was straight down and the antenna is now about 45' up on the north end. I was worked out, now to put it into action.

Excited. I tied the counter weight to the antenna and it was just perfect. It was just as I imagined it to be on my 4<sup>th</sup> of July vision. And now it is time for the southern end of the antenna. I placed myself at

the predetermined location, loaded the launcher, aimed and pressed the button. Crap, I hit the trunk of the tree and the projectile smashed into many parts. So I reloaded the launcher with a new shot, and after 6 failed shots, I aimed the launcher into the target area, released the reel, and press the fire button. It went through the opening that I wanted it to go through. It was a text book launch right on target. But, Uncle Murphy came to the party (go figure). The projectile caught a limb on the back side which reflected it to the right and sent it sailing due EAST. Please note that I was shooting due NORTH!! Well, it went to a very bad spot which I did not anticipate happening at this position. I went 200" due east after hitting the limb and the results were not favorable at all. I will not go into details, but it was not my day. Nobody got hurt, I did not damage any property, but the situation was not good. So I collected my equipment, regrouped, and after shooting the area again, success was obtained.

My point here is to plan for everything. Review the whole area, leave yourself an out, think of the worst and make your contingency plans. Make an alternative plan should your primary goal not work. Some things might not go as planned, and then some things will go as planned. Then there are the surprises that will pop up and make you wonder why you did not think about it.

Have a great end of the summer and enjoy the fall. I bet it will be spectacular!

Until next month!  
73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRRC



## 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 August follows:

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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 N1TOX, John at [n1tox@comcast.net](mailto:n1tox@comcast.net)

## UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

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

**August 7**—Grace Cottage Hospital Day on the common in Townshend, VT. For many years now we've set up the club canopy, strung an antenna and tried to work a few stations. You're invited to come on out and do some rag chewing with your fellow club members and help explain Amateur Radio to our visitors.

Why not come out, relax, meet some folks and maybe enlighten someone about our great hobby.

**August 10**—Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital at 19:00L. The program will be

**August 15:** Club picnic at the Townshend Dam. Stay tuned for more details.

**August 28**—The monthly Board Meeting will be held at the House of Pizza in Brattleboro next to Staples. Gather at 11:30

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



## RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

*Thanks, Oliver...*

I know that some of you have written for publication, even for so humble a publication as the Digital Dispatch. John, N1TOX, has been faithfully supplying words of wisdom, instruction, and what have you since we first began "E publishing" this thing in January of 2006. AA1T, Grant, was a faithful contributor of technical articles until he moved to Connecticut. Others have taken a stab at contributing material and done a good job of it, but keeping up a monthly output has been too much of a chore, either from a time or "idea" standpoint. We're hoping that our newest contributor, WK1L, Frank, will stick with it awhile.



Another contributor who has been faithful over the years has been.....drum roll and/or fanfare, please, K1KU, Darrel. I usually find the time to knock out something that I hope is part way meaningful. It's the *idea* thing that can be a problem – What will I write about this time?

That's why I want to thank Oliver, W1OKO. If what transpired below had not transpired, well, this aging editor might still be scratching his head over what to write about for the August issue.

Oliver had recently let me know of some pictures he had posted on picaswa web. (Do you think that Google intentionally made it sound like Picasso?) But I digress – these were pictures he had taken over Field Day weekend 2010

at Signal Hill in Saint Johns, Newfoundland. Now any Ham radio operator who is the least bit least bit knowledgeable about the history of radio knows that on December 1, 1901 the first transatlantic radio signal was received here by Guglielmo Marconi. No BFOs then so he would have heard something like three short snake hisses. But that's all it took to make history.

To be honest, I'm thankful to Oliver at the same time that I'm kind of bugged. I've been to a lot of sites in the USA where Marconi set up his towers and stations:

- Glance Bay, Nova Scotia
- Wellfleet on Cape Cod
- Navasink Lighthouses on New Jersey

You'll notice that one site is missing from my visited list. That's right, Signal Hill. It frustrates me that someone has visited someplace that I want to and haven't. It doesn't really frustrate me all that much. I happen to believe that our lives can be extended by planning things in the future, i.e., have a dream. As long as that dream isn't fulfilled you're just going to have to live long enough to make it happen - Right? Or, as Hams say, Roger?



**Signal Hill on Nova Scotia**



**Cabot Tower on Signal Hill**



**ARS VO1AA inside Cabot Tower**



**The VO1AA Field Day setup—June of 2010**

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

I have learned that everybody wants to live at the top of the mountain, forgetting that how we climb is all that matters. – Gabriel Garcia Marquez

## AND THE WINNER IS

Why Ira, W1IRA, of course! And what did he win? - One nice certificate and the pride in knowing that he worked all thirteen of the original colonies over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. Hearty congratulations.

Just after sending out the July issue of the Digital Dispatch I received an email advertising the *13 COLONIES INDEPENDENCE WEEK SPECIAL EVENT*. Go here and learn all about it <http://13colonies.info/> You'll be able to see what the certificate looks like and learn the rules for the event.

We're all happy for Ira and I'm happy to know that at least one person out there reads emails from me – Not just reads them, but acts on them.

And what did Ira work the thirteen colonies with? His station consists of the following:

ICOM 7000

A new Hex Beam as well as an older trap vertical

Ameritron ALS-1300

Palstar auto AT

Here are a couple of suggestions from your Editor:

- Put the dates on your E calendar for 2011. You all keep E calendars, don't you?
- Save the above URL to your favorites
- Remember that it's there shortly before the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of 2011
- Get on the air and have fun – Not duly licensed? You have a year to get that General
- Let me know that you played in this special event and I'll put your name/call in print

In the meantime we'll have to work on getting Ira to use some of his operating skills at Field Day in 2011

### PC controlled IC-7000



Heil Mic  
Sony "self powered" speaker  
Ameritron ALS-1300 solid state amp & Palstar auto-tuner

### W1IRA's Hexbeam

The owner of this fine station can be contacted at [w1ira@vermontel.net](mailto:w1ira@vermontel.net)





## A TRIP TO MARS

**W**1LTD, Bob Marcotte, our WRRC representative in Perkenville, VT, sent along the following link with his personal comments - <http://www.archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30256> This link will take you to a DOD, Department of Defense web page and the video. Some of the old coots may have used the gear shown. The younger set may wonder that hams actually communicated with such primitive equipment.

The *MARS* he refers to is not of the planet variety, but rather the *Military Affiliate Radio System*. As you'll see from his note, Bob was very active in MARS at one time. Your humble editor and KA1ZQX, Tim were also involved with this fine group.

*This is what some in MARS used to do before satellite phones and cell phones replaced this aspect of MARS.*

*The movie is on line and is 28 minutes/40 seconds in length. I never ran any MARS phone patches, but have run patches to the Canal Zone on the ham bands around 1975 to KZ5JA's folks here in Greeley every other week on 15 meters.*

## WORD FROM THE WAR ZONE

**O**ccasionally an email arrives here from our Warrior in Residence, Tim, KA1ZQX. Considering his current QTH, It is always great to hear from him. After all, it's not as if he's on a camping trip in the Adirondacks.

There was a club "function" recently and I've attached a picture of his involvement in it.

Tim reports that our club package arrived safely. Instead of my trying to paraphrase his thanks for this I'll just paste in his answer:

*I want to officially thank you all for the care package you sent over to me. It was appreciated very much. Nothing goes to waste as we all share when someone needs something. It's always nice to have things sent from home. It really up lifts your spirits for the day or a few days. Make sure all know how much we all appreciate the thoughts, prayers, letters etc. that are sent our way each and every day.*

He informs us that temperatures are in the "high 100s and into the teens." That news convinced me that I should stop complaining about the two days when it topped out at 91F here in Putney.

He looks forward to seeing us all in another 5-6 months. The feeling is mutual, Tim. In the interim, stay safe and God Bless.



## WHAT'S IN YOUR SHACK?

**E**lsewhere in this issue you've read about W1IRA, Ira's doing a clean sweep in the "work the thirteen colonies special event station." When Ira sent me the email on his accomplishment he also gave me a run down on what his station consists of.

If you'll send me a list of what you use in your shack to make all those exciting QSOs I'll stick it in the next issue. Pictures are welcome, even if the operator is also included. You can even tell me why you chose the particular equipment you did - *It looks purty*, or *Them there colored lights sure flash on and off real nice*.

Having done this editing job for several years now I know that I probably won't hear from anyone, but here's your chance to make a liar out of me. A warning, though...If no one is heard from you'll probably read about all of the gear in the editor's shack.



## SITE OF THE MONTH

Riddle of the month - What do a lot of Hams collect?

- Boat anchors
- Keys
- Project parts
- Toenail clippings?
- Ham magazines
- QSL cards

That list above could go on and on and somewhere it probably does. Even though all of the possibilities are correct, I've never had a Ham offer to show me his or her toenail collection. If you happen to have one please bring it to the next meeting or email me a digital picture for inclusion in the next newsletter.

What I was thinking of was QSL cards, probably because I and other members of the club collect them. At least I know of one person who does. A non member, but friend in NJ also collects them. That would be Ken, W2PSU. Ken Recently sent me a link to the site of Bob Green, W8JYZ. Bob not only collects QSL cards, he has devoted an entire web site to them, especially the older ones.

They are all scanned and can be viewed as thumb nails or in a larger format. They are also all broken down by call area. For those Hams who are nostalgia buffs this site is a godsend.

If you qualify as an *antique* Ham you may even have some old cards around the place. If so, Bob wants them. After all, when you go to that big ham shack in the sky where are those cards of yours going to end up? Unless your survivors are interested in things of this nature - probably in a recycle bin somewhere. So go to Bob's site and find out how your grieving kin can get your QSL treasurers saved and enshrined for posterity.

<http://oldqslcards.com/>