



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the West River Radio Club



March—2011

Volume VIII—#III

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

KB1J, Rich Austin; VP

KD6MPY, Sean Sanderson/WK1L, Bro Frank Hagerty ED/VE Liaison

K1KU, Darrel Daley; Secretary/Treasurer

KA1ZQX, Tim Bell; Public Relations/ARES

PREZ KORNER

Hurry up Springtime!

Have you had enough snow yet? I sure have. With over 70" of snow measured this winter, I'm ready to throw in the towel!! So let's look forward toward the coming of spring. Indeed, we will need to look at our list of things to do in the months coming up to do around the house, at work, and our volunteer jobs as well. While my listing of items around the house and work will be different from yours, but I'm sure the spring cleanup will be huge all over. But I'm looking forward to it!

Many things are lined up for this summer for us to participate in. From Field Day 2011 (yes, it's almost planning time), many Grace Cottage Hospital events, and the annual Girl's on the Run event in Brattleboro. Then I am sure there will be more things add to the list as we go along. We will do our best to promote amateur radio and provide Emergency Communications as needed. This is what we do the best overall. We have a great group of volunteers who devote personal time to these events which we are now an annual entity of the organizations events. Job Well Done!!!

I would also like to add a hearty congratulations to all the new licensed amateur radio operators we have from our last VE session in February. We have added 5 new operators from our Technician Class which was held at the American Red Cross Office in Brattleboro. As a continuing effort of education, we will be starting a General Class real soon for those who would like to upgrade his/her li-

cense. And for the Generals who want to upgrade to Extra, we hope to have a study session also. The Extra session is still in the planning stages. Stay tuned!!

Another item I would like to mention this month is the "Vermont QSO Party". WRRC has hosted the Vermont QSO Party for the past 2 years under the supervision and ownership of CVARC. This was our last year and this fun is coming to a close for us. But we will still be in the mix from year to year as we have permission from CVARC to maintain the web site presence. This will eliminate bouncing the site from club to club and participants who bookmarked our site will not know where to go—plus, the web search engines have all of our information already so it just makes sense to leave it with us. It was fun rebuilding knowledge of Amateur Radio in Vermont around the world via the contest. Congratulations and another "Job Well Done" to everyone who was involved in writing the rules, the members who made it work within the time line we set forth, and also those who closed out the season and sent out the mailings. It was a very successful event for WRRC and we have received many acknowledgements to that fact.

And now we will "March" on. For our VEM RACES members, we have a VY Drill on Tuesday 8-MARCH and 10-MAY. As this is the graded exercise year, we will again provide the necessary radio communications. So I ask each of you to come to a meeting and make this year even better than ever. It is our members who make this club great! See you at a meeting or event soon!

Until next month!

73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRC



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 March follows:

Mar 7 KA1TWV, Elaine

Mar 14 KA1ZQX, Tim

Mar 21 KB1J, Rich

Mar 28 K1KU, Darrel

April 4 N1TOX, John

April 11 KB1J, Rich

April 18 KA1ZQX, Tim

April 28 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 KA1ZQX, Tim at ka1zqx@arri.net

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way.

I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved. "

Will Rogers (1879-1935); actor, comic, columnist

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

Spring 'n Summer projects

For just average people, whoever they are, that could mean a lot of things.

- * Spring Cleaning
- * Start getting your wood ready for the 2011-2012 season
- * Start the garden
- * Clean up the branches, etc. that the winter storms dumped in the yard
- * Add your personal favorite



But, whereas Hams are definitely not *average*, we are confronted by more enjoyable choices:

Put up a new antenna. This assumes, of course, that you have an appropriate amount of real estate for the antenna in question. Do you all know why 160 meters is called the Gentleman's Band? I didn't think so. My friends, a half wave on 160 cut for 1.8 MHz is 260' long. The thinking was, especially in the olden days, that Gentlemen are wealthier than those who are not gentlemen. (c'mon, they were thinking in generalities.) Ergo, they could afford the land to hang one of these monstrosities. The moral is, don't approach your condo governing body with a request to hang a *halfway dipole* for 160 meters.

So if your estate can't hold a half wave for 160, well, think smaller. Maybe you could dry a different antenna. Have you ever tried verticals on other than VHF/UHF? If you've ever wanted to try your hand at DX and can't afford a tower and beam, a vertical might be your answer.

Try something different. Got a G5RV hanging in the trees somewhere? G5s are OK, I guess, but I've always wondered why my friend, Bill Fleig, K1BF, refers to them as the British attenuator. Try a Windom, Carolina or otherwise. You'll find a lot of arguments on the web on why they out perform a G5. I've used one for Field Day (a Carolina) for many years have had great luck with them. I also have a home brew one, not a Carolina, here at home and love it. Like the G5 they're good on all the bands, starting with the lowest one you cut it for, on up to 10 meters and probably even 6.

Antennas happen to be an easy and inexpensive way to have fun with the hobby. Not too many of us are brave, or stupid, enough to pull the cover on that latest "computer designed to look like a radio" that we purchased. But with a bit of wire, some insulators and a feed point of some kind we can tinker to our heart's content.

Operate portable. I'm not talking Field Day here, but that's a lot of fun, too, and you'll see a plug for it elsewhere. I'm thinking of just regular old run of the mill portable setups. Last fall, WK1L, AA1XU, N1YPS, and yours truly drove up to the summit of the Mohawk Trail for some fine grub prepared by WK1L, Frank, camaraderie and operating.

Over the years I've activated several light houses for the ARLHS (Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society) events. There is also the club's annual special event station. This year we'll be set up at the Grace Cottage Health Fair. Another option is to go solo or get a partner - find a picnic table somewhere, set up a simple antenna, hook the rig up to a battery and see who is out there cruising the ether and listening for your signal.

I'd go on with this, but I'm sure that after reading the above you can't wait to start building antennas or making up a kit for some portable operations.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy birthday wishes for the month of March go out to:

K1IK, Al
KB1UEF, Michael
W1ERE, Irv

Keep hanging in there, guys.



FINANCES

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

41 Full members—3 Associate members
60.98% of the full members belong to the ARRL

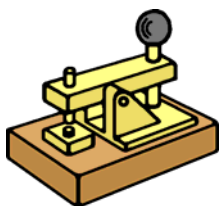
Checking = \$1,905.00/Cash on hand = \$77.07



Code or No-code

(Ed. Note: A warm welcome to a new contributor to the Digital Dispatch, namely, KA1ZQX, Tim. Your editor truly appreciates all the contributions he can get. Perhaps we can encourage Tim to be a consistent donor. And he picked a subject dear to my heart.)

You may ask the question what is Morse code? Most new Hams today are not immersed much in Morse code. Morse code was used for many years to pass messages, whether it was during the war or just for fun in Ham radio. What has happened to Morse code you may ask? Most recently; since the inception of the internet most people have gotten used to sending messages via e-mail. And the fun of sending messages over the radio diminished. A lot of us older hams still try and keep this way of communicating alive.



Is Morse code really worth learning? Most definitely! It can be a fairly challenging "language" to learn. I learned it by force, if I can put it that way. It was my job! Back in 1985, new in the Army, I learned how to copy Morse code. At first it was like "Greek" to me! Some nights a good head banging against the wall might have made my head feel better. But by the end of my AIT (Advanced Individual Training), five months later I was able to copy 20 plus words a minute. It can be done, it just takes practice.

Well the gist to the story is. . . Is it worth the average person to learn this language? I say yes! Morse code is the only way of communication that can be sent in any form. It can be sent by tone (most common), light, any type of tapping, static and even written down. Morse sent in plain language, missing a letter is no problem. Most blanks can be filled in just by re-reading it. Not so the way I learned it. I copied mixed letter/number 5 figure groups. Our traffic was sent off to analysts. Missing a letter was not so good. Some of our targets sent Morse at 30 wpm plus. It is a language that you really don't forget, but just loose your speed. Today my speed is really down, but maybe with some brushing up I may be ready for field day!

There are a few different ways to learn Morse code. Maybe one letter at a time or by a Morse code program from the Web. There are quite a few different code programs on the web to choose from. Here are a couple: <http://www.justlearnmorsecode.com/>

(downloadable), http://www.dxzone.com/catalog/Software/Morse_Code_Training/ or <http://lcwo.net/>

There is a wealth of information, techniques on the web. Ready to try it? We are here to help, just let us know when.

Until next time,
KA1ZQX
73



PART 907

I'm prompted to pen this article because Field Day is just around the corner. Well, the last full weekend in June may be a couple of corners away, but March is definitely time to envision the setting up of screen houses, hanging antennas, making contacts, eating grilled burgers and junk food, consuming liquid refreshment, etc. No wonder that, even when stacked up against all of the many ARRL contests, Field Day is the most popular operating event in America. You'll read more about it as the day draws closer, but in the meantime....

I was reminded of Part 97 because over the FD weekend the most commonly FCC rule bent and/or broken is probably the one having to do with *Control Operators*. If it has been awhile since you passed your exam here's a refresher course.

The purpose of the control operator is to be responsible for the transmissions of their station and to assure compliance with FCC Rules.

Now 99.999% of the time you, as the control operator, are responsible for your own actions in fulfilling the above FCC mandate. The FCC assumes that K1KU, the station licensee, is also the control of Amateur Radio Station K1KU. But, during Field Day things tend to stray from the norm. There are often guests present, some licensed operators and others not.

Let's say that your crazy Aunt Hortense stops by for a visit. She's never seen you operate your station and is enthralled by your mastery over all those knobs and buttons and communications skills. Wanting to humor your most eccentric relative (beside, she's quite old and very wealthy) you invite her to sit down and make a couple of contacts. This is perfectly legit. All you have to remember is your license class. Are you a General? Then don't stray outside of the band segments allocated for General Class License holders.

The same holds true if the neighbor kid stops by. You actually invited him because he just earned his Technician ticket. Just like for Aunt Hortense, stay where you belong as a General and be in CONTROL. Just because the kid has a license doesn't mean that you can turn him loose and run over to the food tent for a snack.

So there you have it. Are you a new Tech and think that you might like to take part in this year's FD with

the WRRC? I hope so. Each year we try to have a GOTA station. That's a *Get on the Air station. This is a special category or entry, the purpose of which is to allow new Hams, non Hams, or Hams who have been inactive for a long time to "get the feel" of making contacts.*

You can start by setting aside the last full weekend in June for having fun with your friends in the WRRC. Stay tuned for more information as the magic day gets closer.

UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

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

March 8: Monthly meeting of the WRRC in the EMT room at Grace Cottage Hospital. The meeting begins at 19:00L

March 8: RACES drill

March 26: Monthly meeting at the Panasian Restaurant by Staples in Brattleboro. We meet at 11:30L

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

Studio Microphone Boom Bro. Frank Hagerty, S.S.E. WK1L

I have used a variety of microphones and means of supporting them over the last 22 years of being on the air, including desk mic stands, long goose necks mounted on a flange, fixed and adjustable rigid mic booms, and hand-held mics—none of which really met all my needs, particularly once I started using a computer to log entries and control radios. I wanted something that could be mounted in a convenient place so it would swing left and right, in and out, and up and down—to reach me wherever I was sitting, either in front of the radios or at the computer keyboard.

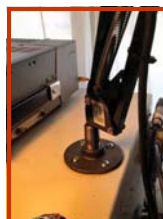
A couple of years ago, I spotted a swing-arm spring-loaded "studio boom" made by Heil in the HRO catalog. It looked like just what I needed. The only problem was the price (then \$ 99.95, now \$ 109.95). Then there was the question of how to mount it on my radio shelf. HRO also carries a Heil flange mount, and the price is \$ 25.95. I was NOT going to pay that much money for a mic boom.

As I looked at the photo of the Heil boom, I saw that it was very similar to a swing-arm lamp—and I had several of those already. I simply drilled out the rivets that held the lamp housing to the metal strap attached to the pin at the end of the boom. I then attached a dynamic microphone (600Ω) to the strap with two nylon cable ties run through the rivet holes. To prevent the mic from sliding out, I wrapped the connection with electrical tape. (To operate the mi-

crophone, I use the control built in the Altoids can that was featured in our last newsletter.)

The microphone I used was just about the same weight as the lamp housing, so I did not have to adjust the tension of the springs. But if you use a mic of different weight, you can easily adjust the spring tension to balance the load. To mount the boom on the shelf, if you have a table or shelf with easy access to the edge, you could use the clamp-on bracket that came with the lamp. My shelf doesn't allow that, so I found a 3/8" pipe flange and a 1 1/2" long 3/8" nipple at the hardware store for less than \$ 2.00. I got another to mount a swing arm lamp to the shelf, as well. So I have a great fully adjustable boom mic, and I saved \$ 133.

(Knowing, as did the Chinese, that a picture is worth a thousand words, he wisely sent along some pictures.)



CONGRATULATIONS

On January 29 and February 12 the WRRC held an entry level Technician class at the Red Cross office in Brattleboro, VT. As a result of this offering five new Hams have been added to the number of operators in the United States.

They are:

- ◆ Bennet Beres - KB1VGH
- ◆ Berton Wilkins - KB1VGJ
- ◆ David Dezendorf - KB1VGG
- ◆ Richard Warner - KB1VGI
- ◆ Ryan Hockertlotz - KB1VGK



The above folks have also earned a one year free membership in the WRRC. We hope to see them at a meeting of club event sometime soon.

WK1L, Brother Frank (Teacher/VE)
KB1J, Rich (Teacher)
KA1ZQX, Tim (Teacher)
N1TOX, John (Teacher/VE)

W1CWB, Chas (Teacher)
W1ZS, Burt (Teacher)
K1KU, Darrel (Teacher/VE)
AA1XU, Dick (VE)

A General class is in the offing for 2011. Maybe you'd like to upgrade or know of someone who would. If so, get in touch with WK1L, Bro Frank, at hager-tysse@myfairpoint.net



THANKS

To all who have renewed their membership in the WRRC for 2011.

If you haven't renewed we still leave you on the mailing list for the Digital Dispatch. You will not receive other newsworthy notifications or club minutes.

If at any time you wish to stop receiving this newsletter please notify the editor at k1ku@myfairpoint.net



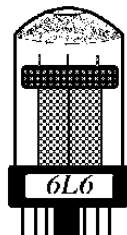
VERMONT QSO PARTY

For the second year in a row the WRRC hosted the VT QSO Party. CVARC (Central VT Amateur Radio Club) remains as the sponsoring club and retains control over who will host the event and any proposed changes in the contest.

Logs are still rolling in, but so far the results look good. So far the number of submissions is well over what it was in 2010. Member participation and the use of our club calls was way up for 2011. Thanks to all that took part.

- ◆ WK1L, Frank, used WR1VT (phone)
- ◆ W1CWB, Chas, used WR1VT and W1RRC (digital and phone)
- ◆ W1IRA, Ira, used WR1VT (phone)
- ◆ K1KU, Darrel, used W1RRC (digital and phone)
- ◆ AA1XU, Dick, operated as himself from Greenfield, MA.
- ◆ W1ZS, Burt, as himself

If you got involved please let me know (k1ku@myfairpoint.net)



FOR SALE

Some of our members have goodies to sell. As the bumper stickers say – **BUY LOCALLY**

HF Superpackerpro 100W QRP amp kit. The equipment can be seen at www.hfprojects.com. \$350.00 firm

To buy or get more information contact KA1WTS, Hank at: ka1wts@yahoo.com or 802-536-4670

-
- *Alinco 2 meter HT transceiver, Model DJ-80, with assorted accessories such as:
 - * speaker mic
 - * DC adapter
 - * 2 Ni Cad batteries
 - * Cig lighter adapter
 - * Charger

This HT is owned by N1PBX, Conrad and currently in the possession of K1KU. Make an offer.

The following gear was owned by the father of a friend or ours who became a SK. This equipment is currently in my possession. Make an offer.

* Kenwood TS-430 HF transceiver. A good starter rig for a new General. 100W output and all digital.

Assorted accessories:

- * Dry dummy load (300W limit)
- Barker and Williamson low pass filter
- *HF SWR analyzer
- *Kenwood MC-60 desk mic
- *Amp meter
- *Simpson 260 analog meter
- *Realistic speaker
- *MFJ-2028 noise bridge
- *MFJ-931 artificial ground

For purchase or questions on the Alinco and Kenwood contact K1KU@myfairpoint.net

CUL es 73 de K1KU SK

