



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the
West River Radio Club



October—2011

Volume IX—#VIII

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 48 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

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

Meet Reggie

Reggie who, you ask? Why Reginald Fessenden, of course. Who did you think I meant? Reggie Jackson? He played baseball and this newsletter is about Ham Radio.

I'll bet that some of you know the role that Reginald Fessenden played in the history of our hobby. That's good, because I sure didn't, until, that is, I was looking over articles I had saved having to do with the early movers and shakers in radio - Names like Guglielmo Marconi, Heinrich Rudolph Hertz, Count Alessandro Giuseppe Antonio Anastasio Volta (WOW!), Joe Henry, Lee DeForest, and Michael Faraday. I could add a few more names, but enough is enough. Anyway, I found an article devoted to the subject of this month's column. So here goes with a summary of what Professor Fessenden contributed to the field of radio.

He was born on October 6, 1866 in Knowlton, Quebec. By the time he was 21 he was working directly for Thomas Edison at his New Jersey laboratory.

He coined the term *continuous wave*. Now why would he do that? He had this grandiose idea that it would be possible to transmit the human voice over the air. He knew that the short bursts of energy emitted by the spark transmitters used by Marconi would not be capable of



sending voice over the air - something more "full time" was needed.

He assigned one of his assistants at the time, Kittner by name, to build one. A chap by the name of Brashear was assigned to build the interrupter. By 1900 he was ready to rock and roll. He just needed a place and way to test his new toys.

Providentially Fessenden got a job offer from the US Weather Bureau. They needed their range extended to make the use of radiotelegraphy practicable in relaying weather observations. He was to receive the princely sum of \$1.50 an hour or \$3000 a year. His assistants would get .60/hour and \$1200/year. One of these assistants, Frank Very, suggested that they use the Vickers House on Cobb Island in Maryland. Besides the fact that Frank's sister lived on the island they felt that the house would be far from prying eyes.

And why wouldn't they want any prying eyes nearby? Well, you see these *wasscally weseachers* didn't want the higher ups at the weather bureau to learn that besides trying to extend the distance of Morse signals they'd also be able to see if they could transmit voice signals. Maybe the weather people didn't trust Reginald because they assigned one Alfred Thiessen to help with the experiments. When he learned what Fessenden and Very had in mind, though, he became hooked on the idea. A good thing, too, for Willis Moore, the head of the US Weather Bureau had heard of attempts to send messages by voice and was quoted as saying, "We want nothing to do with that sort of quackery." He felt that it would be a waste of the taxpayer's "money on such tomfoolery."

To make a long story longer on December 23, 1900 Reg fired up the generator and checks the connections. Thiessen is one mile away. After fixing a couple of glitches he telegraphs Thiessen he will try again. He shouts into the microphone, "One, two, three, four. Is it snowing where you are, Mr. Thiessen? If it is telegraph back and let me know. "Yes it is!" is Thiessen's excited response.

This is as good a place as any to end this thrilling account. I should note that I believe that there are others who lay claim to being the first to put "voice" on the air. I'll look into that one of these days. Better yet, you look into it, let me know your results, and I'll publish them.

Towards the end Fessenden purchased a small es-

tate called "Wistowe" in Bermuda. He died there in 1932 and was interred in the cemetery of St. Mark's Church on the island. An editorial in the New York Herald Tribune said:

It sometimes happens, even in science, that one man can be right against the world. Professor Fessenden was that man. He fought bitterly and alone to prove his theories. It was he who insisted, against the stormy protests of every recognized authority, that what we now call radio was worked by continuous waves sent through the ether by the transmitting station as light waves are sent out by a flame. Marconi and others insisted that what was happening was a whiplash effect. The progress of radio was retarded a decade by this error. The whiplash theory passed gradually from the minds of men and was replaced by the continuous wave — one with all too little credit to the man who had been right.

(For the information here I am indebted to an article in the July 2001 issue of QST by Vic Curtis, WA3YUV entitled *Fessenden Lost and Found* and the write-up on Reginald Fessenden in Wikipedia.)



FINANCES

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

45 Full members—3 Associate members
60% of the full members belong to the ARRL

Checking = \$1,790.75/Cash on hand = \$66.57



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

K1EGL, Chuck—10/21
W1CWB, Chas—10/27



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

To be good is noble.
To tell others how to be good is even nobler.
And a lot easier. — Mark Twain

(Editor's note: I've tried the above and he's right.)

UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

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

October 11: Monthly meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room at Grace Cottage Hospital. This will be a skywarn session. Register at <http://cstar.cestm.albany.edu:7775/skywarn/Talks.htm>

This meeting only we begin at 18:30L.

October 14-15: The fall version of NearFest. Get details at <http://near.fest.com>

October 29: Monthly luncheon meeting of the WRRRC at the PanAsian Restaurant by Staples in Brattleboro. We begin at 11:30L

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

10 UNDENIABLE TRUTHS

William Reuter (AE0BR) on February 28, 2005

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 Ham-fest.)
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!

STORM, WHAT STORM?

Oooooohh, That one!!

Well, Mother Nature made a decision. It was Vermont's turn to get slammed by weather beyond what we could all imagine. As we all know. Tropical Storm Irene came knocking at the door was barged in like a party gone wild! Flooding, devastation, houses washed away, business gone and more. Very few towns escaped the wrath of this storm. In all of my life being a native Vermonter, I bet I have put mileage on 90% of the state highways and I have never seen such a wide spread amount of devastation and the vast amount that has happened.

While Vermonters are very resilient and bond together during tragic events like this, it was really good to see the humanitarian side of the Vermont population come to the surface yet again. Might you be a native Vermonter like myself, from the city, a foreign country or from the west coast, everyone bonded together to help as needed.

Here are some statewide stats for your information. Over 30 state roads were damaged, over 450 town roads were damaged, many bridges were damaged, railroad lines and bridges were damaged, and some towns were completely isolated. Some communication towers were running on generators, cell communications were spotty at times, houses were destroyed, property was lost, rivers have been moved, and much more. I could go on and on, but we could all share stories until next year of "did you see/hear that?".

What I can say if this, I am very proud of the West River Radio Club volunteers who came out in the face of disaster to assist our local Windham County towns. From working at our local EOC's, ARC Shelter operations, traffic control, moving generators, and just being prepared for a disaster, Job Well Done! Our 14 volunteer members' logged over a combined total of 1,500 working hours over 7 working days of deployments. We deployed to 13 towns and logged over 1,100 miles on the road getting to and from them. I really do not know how much time I devoted to the events as I called into many conference calls, pre-event coordination strategy meetings, covering for VEM communications during the SEOC move (along with 6 other remote locations) and handling deployments. We all know that many of you took time off from work, and some had to go to work. With all of the positive replies I have received back from the towns we assisted, it makes it simple to pass along to you, because they all said the same thing, "Thank you, your help, staff, and support was wonderful". And from the Directors and Team Leaders, Thank you all for being there.

As our strengths and knowledge grew into existence by working within the Entergy - Vermont Yankee EPZ, we have learned some really cool tricks that "make

communications" work. From slinging up a dipole antenna for HF communications with pneumatic launchers, setting up a cross band repeater on a mountain top with mobile rigs, working with other states and club repeaters, point to point communications providing direct or indirect messaging, remote radio operations, AirMail, and the NFMRA linked system, we make it work. Because we have practiced these efforts many times over the past 8+ years, we do know how to make it work and think outside of the box. It takes a dedicated crew to make it work, and we are just one of the leading groups in the state making it work.

Many of you did not know this, but we had 3 cases of radios staged in Southern Vermont, which were supplied by the ARRL ARES "HAM Aid" program, ready for deployment where they were needed. While the need was never there, we were ready to get them to location of need. These kits were comprised of 8 VHF HT's, a complete HF station with power supply, antenna tuner and antenna (with supplies) and (2) VHF/UHF transceivers with mobile mount antennas. These kits were returned to ARRL with a Thank You letter to ARRL for assisting the State of Vermont during it's time of need.

So what did we learn? You don't fool with Mother Nature, water will and can make a decision, and help will be there when you need it. Another thing that I learned was if you live on a mountain top, you can still be flooded out, even if you are not within any flood plain. So maintain your Vermont roots and help out!

So until next month when we talk about the future.....

73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRC

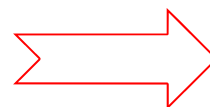


PHOTO MONTAGE

To make up for the scarcity of written material in this issue we'll conclude with lots of pictures that chronicle the devastation caused by Irene.

All of these were downloaded from <http://www.mansfieldheliflight.com/flood/> All photo credits go to Lars Gange and [Mansfield Heliflight](#)—Free usage is allowed for educational and editorial purposes. There are many more pictures available for viewing at the site shown above.

Those of you who attended the last meeting were treated to lots of pictures taken by WRRC members Mark Krakum, KB1HCG, Jenifer Ambler, KA1CYZ, David Dezendorf, KB1VGG, and John Borichevsky, N1TOX.





FOR SALE SIGN/NO TRACE OF HOUSE LEFT

KILLINGTON BASE LODGE



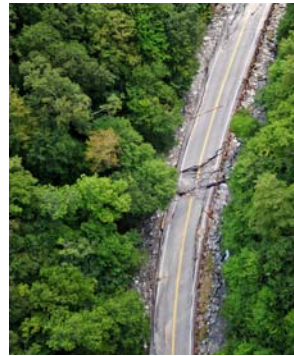
HOUSE IN ROCHESTER, VT



MAKESHIFT BRIDGE MENDON, VT



IRVING GAS STATION Bridgewater, VT



ROUTE 100 DAMAGE

Pelican cases can hold all kinds of goodies (Radios supplied by ARRL HAM Aid)



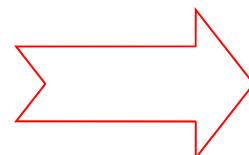
ANYONE NEED A HT? (Radios supplied by ARRL HAM Aid)



Route #4 & Route #100 Damage



OUR EM-COMM FOLKS ARE WELL EQUIPPED (Radios supplied by ARRL HAM Aid)





**SNOW
MOBILE
BRIDGE—
WATER-
BURY**



WOMAN CLEANING HOME

**TRUCK
IN
RIVER**



**20 FOOT CLIFFS
Mendon, VT**



WAITSFIELD CROPS RUINED



A JUMBLE OF CARS



WASHOUT NEAR PITTSFIELD

If this issue needs a moral it might be;

**KEEP THOSE GO KITS AND YOURSELF
AT THE READY**