



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the
West River Radio Club



April—2012

Volume XIII—#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 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:

KA1ZQX, Timothy Bell; President
KB1J, Rich Austin; VP
WK1L, Bro Frank Hagerty ED/VE Liaison
N1TOX, John Borichevsky; Secretary/Treasurer
KA1ZQX, Tim Bell; Public Relations/ARES
W1CWB, Chas Baker; Technical Advisor

THE PAST PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

Back from Vacation...

While traveling countryside of the islands of the Southern Caribbean, one cannot just look at the wonderful and breathtaking views, one also scopes out ham shacks! Ok, for someone to totally enjoy the aspect of ham shacks, I guess you need to be a licensed amateur radio operator. On many of our excursions from the cruise ship, we traveled the country side, through the rain forest, mangroves and beaches. While many of you who go on vacation to relax and forget stuff back home, this is what I do also. But there were things that do catch your attention. Familiar things...

On a few of our tours of the destinations which we stopped at, we visited many historical land marks, a rum factory, beaches, caves, and many more of the tourist "things to do". But while traveling to these destinations, you travel through many towns. Sections of towns that are run down, areas that are well off, and sections that are just making it through. Then boom, there it is! Out of the corner of your eye you see something. A glimmer of hope, sight you have seen before, and something you cannot quite put your finger on. Then you realize what you have seen. Could it have been? Were you dreaming? Come on folks let me get a clear view of that. You squirm in your seat and become a contortionist to get the best view, and then.... it has passed. Then you ask yourself why the local expert who is narrating this tour did not point it out. Sigh....

What was that you ask yourself? DUH! It was a Ham

Shack! Yes, you did see the antennas. You did see the coax. You also saw the house. Your heart starts to race from excitement. You started thinking about sending out a CQ and grab the microphone. CQ CQ CQ de N1TOX.... QRZ? But there were no replies... Some of the homes (or shelters you might call them) had 25 - 30' towers and some just had poles with antennas on them. Then you question yourself "what were all the antennas for"? Many of the antennas were HF dipoles almost in a flat delta loop. They are stretched to all four corners of their property to accommodate the 120'+ making the 80 meter loop. Then you see low towers with HF beams and the 2/440 beams mounted on the homes to go island hopping. Oh the drool starts to flow, the fingers begin to twitch and then you need to think, did I work this ham? Maybe I did.

In my past years of operation, I have worked many hams in the Caribbean as this is an easy location for me to get to because of the large HF blocker to the west of my house. I wonder if I have worked that individual and think how he or she got the signal back to me with that contraption of an antenna array. Hey, whatever works, use it!

After we returned home, I had to try to remember where I was and look the ham up in my log. No, there were no pictures that I could take as I was not driving and the local tour guide did not warn me about the ham shack on the right, what nerve! Hey tour guide, I'm a ham from the USA!!! DUH!!! Then looking in the log I did see that yes, could it be??? I did work that ham! I saw the QTH! Then I made a record of the "near visit". Maybe if I go back, I might knock on the door and say "hi". We will see what happens on the next visit.

I guess this only goes to show that event on a postage stamp of a property lot, you too can be an Amateur Radio Operator. Just remember that a small and compact area is not a restriction to expand your privileges, but an obstacle which you can overcome and become a better ham. So work that DX Call. Work it hard and make it memorable. You never know when you will be "oh so close"!

Until next month!

73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – Past President WRRC

UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

Ongoing: WRRC ARES net...19:30L, 147.015, positive offset and 100 Hz PL tone. Curious as to who the NCS will be? Go to http://www.westriverradio.org/WRRC/WRRC_Pages/ARES_Net.html

April 13: Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRC in the EMT room at Grace Cottage Hospital. Meetings start at 19:00L. Come learn about software logging and making LoTW submissions, as well as other things.

April 28: Monthly lunch and Board meeting at the Pan Asian Restaurant in Brattleboro next to Staples. We start at 11:30L

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

PRODUCT REVIEW

(Ed: With Field Day just around the corner I wanted to get out the info on a couple of possible power source for the club to invest in.)

Standby and Field Day Power Source

Luminescent Electronic Products Inc., PO Box U-235, Trinity Site, NM - 43210, offers a self contained portable nuclear reactor for communications applications. The reactor will provide power for as long as 12 years. The reactor output is rated at 20kw, decreasing to 15kw after 12 years.

To protect users from undue radiation, each reactor includes a shielding kit comprising five self-stick lead plates and twenty radiation-monitor film badges. The lead plates attach to the external structure of the reactor. For additional safety, the manufacturer offers an optional 1000 foot long extension cord.

This reactor glows in the dark, making it easy to find on dark nights at remote communications and Field Day sites.

Because your communications site will probably not use all the power this reactor can generate, you can sell excess power to your local utility company. The company offers the PMK-1 phasing and metering kit as an option. This kit allows you to connect your reactor to the local power grid. Each PMK-1 includes standard power sale contracts and Rural Electrification Board rules and regulations.

Each reactor package includes a standard 23 volume site-evacuation plan. The plan includes a blank Nuclear Regulatory Commission application. The

plan is also available on CD in assorted MS Word or PDF formats. The user-friendly templates let you type in the information with your word processor. This lets you create a complete printed document. Plans can also be downloaded at www.gittaglowon.org

Reactor prices start at \$2.3 million. Delivery is 7 years after receipt of order.

Please inquire direct.

[I have no idea of the source of this 'hot-scoop'. Found it on my door step after a 4 day visit to Livermore.] de W6AAQ



Three Mile Island Camp Generator

Compact nuclear-powered generator provides ample electricity for standard camp or boating equipment. Generator is impervious to salt water, abrasion or meltdown. Nuclear fuels are perfectly safe, weather resistant, entirely safe, long lasting, completely safe, easily replaceable, fully safe, easy to use and totally safe. Our Three Mile Island Generator is built into a handsome, durable cement case for easy transport. A convenient and extremely safe item. Discontinue use in case of nausea, hair loss or pale greenish tinge. Wt. 86 lbs.
ENOLA Three Mile Island Camp Generator, \$4200.00 ppd.

IS ANYBODY LISTENING?

When you're on the air you really never know. And here's the proof.

I managed to make some time to play around in the ARRL DX CW contest on the weekend of February 17 – 19 of this year. You just never know; there still might be a country out there that I don't have on 10, 15, or even 20. As the latest solar cycle comes to life so does Amateur Radio. After all, how many times in a Ham's life does he or she have the opportunity to enjoy 10 meters? And since the WARC bands came into existence, 12 meters, too.

May I digress? No matter your answer, here I go. When I first became a Ham in 1978 at the tender age of 42 we were in the middle of solar cycle #21. For your information the cycle we've just entered is #25.

To continue, the year was 1978 and my newly built HW-101 was ready to be put to work. And did it work. What's going on here, I wondered. I'm talking (mostly via CW at first, because that's how it had to be done back then) to folks all over the world. Is this neat or what? In my case, the answer was a resounding YES! As a result, this new Ham was hooked for good.

Getting back to the ARRL DX CW in February - I was enjoying some rapid fire CW QSOs. Now skip ahead

to March 21 of the same year and yours truly is retrieving his mail from the box at the Putney post office. My eye was attracted to a large 4.25" X 6" colorful post card. (see the graphics below) Now I'm used to getting QSL cards in the mail, but not regular post cards.

It was definitely a pleasant surprise to learn that SFC Gary Huegel, stationed Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan, had listened to one of my contacts in the ARRL DX contest. I'm glad that he included his email address on the card because I immediately got off an email to him letting him know how much I enjoyed the card and thanking him and his mates for their service to our country in this dangerous part of the world.

So there's a bit of a human interest story for this edition of your favorite newsletter. I may get motivated to do a write up on SWLs one of these issues. I have quite a few of SWL cards in my vast collection.

In the meantime, be careful what you say. You never know who might be listening.

DON'T MISS THIS ONE

The WRRC proudly announces its first annual Snipe hunt on Putney Mountain. Gather in the parking lot at the base of the mountain at 05:30L on the morning of April 21. Please RSVP to the event coordinator at:

Gordon Pugh, W2NH
48 Valley Cemetery Road
Athens, VT – 05143 (or Greece, I forget which one.)

Include a SASE if you wish to receive a copy of the rules.

Please, only bring shotguns, sling shots and bows with or without arrows. We are allowing arrowless hunting for this maiden event to satisfy those club members who belong to PETA.

The use of good luck talismans, modified duck calls, or artificial Snipe calls will NOT be allowed.

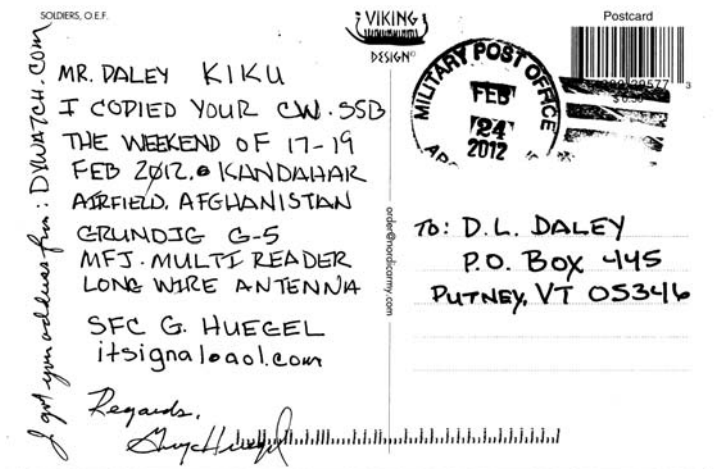
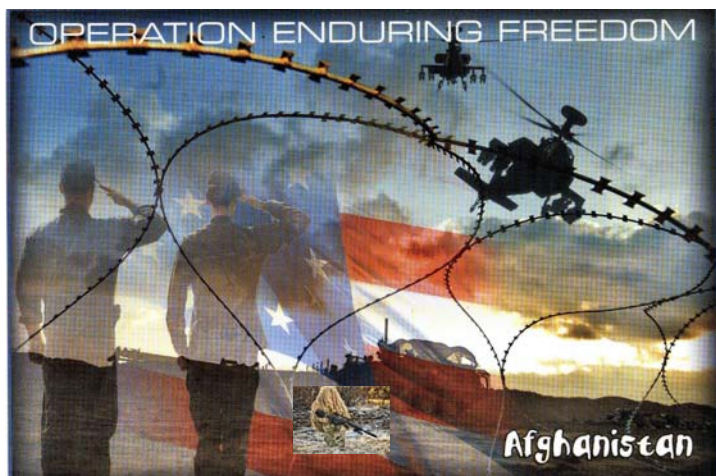
The use of bright orange outer wear is encouraged. Communications, if needed, will take place on 2 meter simplex. A frequency will be assigned on the day of the hunt.

The hunt will end at noon when we gather on the summit of Putney Mountain for a lunch of roasted Snipe. All entrails will be collected to provide sustenance for the current residents in Gordon's cat house.

Bring your own plates and utensils. The WRRC will provide fire making materials and a chain saw for dropping a tree or two. It would be appreciated if a few of you would pack some dry kindling to use as a fire starter.

The prize for the largest bird bagged will be an autographed copy of the award winning cook book by Me Sum Klutz, *101 Ways to Wok Your Dog*. All decisions of the judges will be FINAL. A nice certificate suitable for framing and signed by Wayne LaPierre will be awarded to the 2nd and 3rd place winners. Good hunting.

AAR's can be submitted to Bro Frank, WK1L. These will assist us in planning for the 2013 event, if there is a 2013 event.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain, and most fools do. - Benjamin Franklin



An unidentified Ham stalks an elusive Snipe during last year's hunt.

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

My adopted Grandson

If the truth be known he could be my Great Grandson, but that's a subject for another day. Then why did I have to adopt one? The answer is simple. I don't have one! And it's not the kind of item that you can acquire by going into Home Depot and asking the clerk in which aisle they keep grandsons.

Believe me, more than once have I chewed out our two sons for never having provided me with a real honest to goodness Grandson. After all, when we were in the making kids stage of our marriage all I had to do was say, "I want boys," and lo and behold, there they were. It's that simple.

Before some feminist out there reads this and has a tizzy fit (or whatever kind of fits feminists have) let me state right up front that I have nothing against Granddaughters. Come to think of it we have three of them and I love 'em all. And therein lies the problem – all three of them are girls.

Back to the question – why did I feel the need to adopt one? Although this may come as a shock to some of you – and if it does, let me know so that I can recommend some suitable counseling – **BUT** girls and boys are different. I'm not just referring to the plumbing, either. Anyway, to save some explaining that might cause a lot of embarrassment to me I'm going to bypass this question. Let's just say, plain and simple like, that I wanted a Grandson. And here's how I found one.

Our supremely talented church organist and choir director, one Christian Huebner, and his lovely wife, Kristen, have two neat kids, one boy, and one girl. Now their daughter Karis is really first class in all respects, but as explained above, I'm overstocked with Granddaughters. Their son, Noah, though, well that's another matter.

For one, he's extremely smart, so right off the bat we have a lot in common. He is also a good age for Grandkids to be, like seven. I don't know if his biological parents and grandparents would go for it, but I'd highly suggest that he be "frozen" right where he is. OK, maybe I'd allow another year or two of growth, but if you're not careful you wake up some morning, and, horror of horrors he's mutated into a teenager. I've been there and done that and, take my word for it, that period in life can be kind of ugly. It's not the kind of thing you want to discuss in polite company.

So, besides being smart, cute, polite, well mannered (thanks to Mom, Dad, and the Grandparents) and saying all the right things at the right time there is one other BIG clincher. He wants to become a Ham. That's Ham as in Amateur Radio Operator. It just so happens that his biological Grandfather, Walter, a truly nice person and WWII veteran, used to be a Ham.

When hearing of this one of our WRRRC members, Jennifer, KA1CZE, immediately got a Technician license manual into Noah and Walter's hands. And when I got

the word shortly afterwards my aging but nevertheless fecund mind came up with a way to motivate these two potential members of the Ham fraternity.

With the assistance of my first wife the entire clan was invited to a Sunday lunch at our house. This is where wives come in handy. If I were a bachelor and invited six people over for lunch about the best I'd be capable of is tossing some deli meats, a jar of mayo, some pickles, and a loaf of bread on the table and telling the guests to have at it. Just to prove that I'm not completely thoughtless I would have also provided some paper plates and plastic utensils.

When learning that I would not be the food preparer the entire family enthusiastically accepted our invitation to dine and were rewarded with some truly fine fare, prepared, as usual, with panache by my dear YL.

With stomachs full and minds improved from some good conversation the men adjourned to the Ham Shack while the women headed upstairs to check out our Alaskan memorabilia. Didn't I tell you before that there were differences other than the plumbing?

The FT-2000D was switched on and a suitable antenna selected. Guess what? Nearly all of the bands were loaded with SSB signals from top to bottom with the ARRL DX SSB Contest. Now I enjoy contesting, but not today. I wanted Noah to be able to talk to someone.

I began tuning through 18 MHz offering thanks that no contesting had been allowed to encroach on the WARC bands, 12, 17, and 30 meters. It was here that my prayers were answered in the form of Gordon, W5OU, way out in Norman, OK. Gordon was calling CQ with a good 5/9 plus signal. I didn't even take the time to swing my Force 12 C-4 in his direction, but jumped right in. He heard me FB and when it was his turn to talk I swung the beam more south westerly.

It was a short, but wonderful QSO. Oklahoma is definitely not DX, but Noah could care less. He was talking to another human being on Amateur Radio and loving it. Both Noah and his sister, Karis both had a chance to speak with Gordon, and, gracious gentleman that he was, he acknowledged their comments. The next day my QSL card and SASE went out to W5OU with a note requesting that he jot down a short personal note to Noah. That card arrived the other day and I look forward to presenting it to Noah soon, so that he'll have a memento of his first QSO on Ham radio.

Even more, I look forward to signing off on Noah and Walter's CSCE at an upcoming VE session. I have the strong feeling that they are both suitably motivated and rarin' to go.

As a closer...One reason I feel especially good about this whole thing is that this is beginning to look like this hobby just might end up with two worthy and deserving new members.

SUCCESSFUL DX SECRETS

When I became a Ham in 1978 at the ripe age of 43 I didn't start right off chasing DX. I was having too much fun with my HW-101 just calling CQ and answering CQs on CW. As a Novice with the call sign of WL7ADU that's the only mode I could use, and, like other newbies of the period, I had two years to move up the license ladder rung to Technician, or I'd lose my Novice ticket and would have to start all over again.

I noticed early on that I was talking to folks all over the place; Japan, Russia, you name it. OK, Russia and Japan were right next door to Alaska, but the others weren't. And, yes, on a clear day you can see Russia from Alaska.

But, I digress, which is my privilege as I'm writing this. If you don't like digressions write your own article and I'll publish it – digression free, of course.

Before my first beam went up, a simple tri-bander on a 60' home brew tower, I was strictly a wire guy. As you're probably anxious to know, this tower was made of bolted together angle iron. Ralph Doyle, a local pilot and manager of the Birchwood Airport, knew what Ham radio was all about and clued me in on its location in tall weeds by the airport. He surmised that it belonged to the state and that they had forgotten that it was there. Like me you're probably astounded that any government agency would be careless with property paid for by the tax payers. That tower soon ended up on our 2.5 acre home site in Birchwood and the state was never the wiser. There, you survived another digression.

For the assorted hunks of wire I hung in our Birch and evergreen trees I used whatever I had at hand, or, when forced to, purchased. This was often bare copper clad wire – Ever work with that stuff? If so, you know that its obstinacy can make you say things you'd normally never say in mixed or any kind of company.

So I switched to insulated wire and have been a fan ever since. I was never particular about the color of the insulation. If it was on sale, or a gift from another Ham, or I picked up some up lying beside the road, well, I used it. At one point I had a couple of wire antennas in the air, one with black insulation and the other with green. One night during a QSO with a guy in Ubangaland, one QE5QQ, I was having a hard time with the copy, only hearing him about 439. I asked him to stand by (QRX) while I switched antennas, going from the black wire to the green.

As the mechanic in Mayberry used to say, Shazam! When I got the switch accomplished there he was at 599 plus. This experience led me to do a bit of experimentation. I put up two dipoles, both the same length and height and fed with the same length and type of coax. Guess what? The antenna built with colored (not black) insulated wire always performed better.

Over the years I have learned that red is by far the best color of insulation for wire antennas. Yes, I've

tried nearly all the colors you can think of. OK, I haven't messed with mauve yet. I've also learned that just spray painting the wire doesn't do the trick. The insulation has to be solid red, chartreuse, or whatever. By the way, if you're after DX stay away from chartreuse. The farthest I could get with chartreuse was WK1L, Frank, five miles down the road in metropolitan Putney. Even then I needed a full gallon to just get a 339 report from him.

My search for the perfect color goes on. I have found that the lighter pastel shades are a disaster. Stick with vibrant hues. I also look forward to getting colored aluminum tubing for a home brew beam. As to VHF/UHF a lot needs to be done here, too. Will having a colored mag mount get you a Q5 report from that repeater that is on the ragged edge from your QTH?

If this short piece as piqued your curiosity and you do some research on your own be sure to forward me the results. In the meantime, may you have many colorful QSOs.



MEMBER & FINANCE STATS

34 Registered Members
3 Auxiliary Members

56% of the members belong to ARRL

Cash on Hand: \$114.57
Checking: \$1,725.70
Total Funds on record: \$1,840.27



WRRC VOLUNTEERS

The following club members who also happen to be members of Windham County CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) helped with traffic control during the recent VY protest march in Brattleboro.

W2NH, Gordon	N1HOS, Jack
N1TOX, John	W1CWB, Chas
WK1L, Frank	KB1OQG, Gaila
KB1HCG, Mark	K1KU, Darrel



Photo courtesy of the Rutland Herald

VE SESSION

On April 3rd the several VE members of the WRRRC held a session at VY Corporate Headquarters in Brattleboro, VT.

We want to welcome two new area Hams to the exciting world of Amateur Radio. They are:

- ◆ Fran Maynard. Fran passed his Technician and General tests
- ◆ Jim Harrington. Jim passed his Technician test

Congratulations on your achievement.

Congratulations to both of these gentlemen, as well as the VE team that assisted.

KA1ZQX, Tim N1TOX, John
WK1L, Bro Frank AA1XU, Dick
WA1TVS, Carter K1KU, Darrel

Some extra thanks to Frank for serving as the club liaison with the ARRL and coordinating the event.



L to R: KA1ZQX, Fran Maynard, WA1TVS, WK1L, Jim Harrington, N1TOX, K1KU



L to R: Fran Maynard, AA1XU, WK1L, Jim Harrington, N1TOX, K1KU

HEAR YE HEAR YE HEAR YE

KB1KSR OPEN HOUSE

Ed Phoenix, KB1KSR, will soon be 86.

To celebrate the event Ed and his wife, Lois are holding an open house on Saturday, April 28 and Sunday, April 29. The hours are roughly 1 to 4 PM on each day.

Please plan on stopping by for a short time to give this wonderful gentlemen your best wishes.

Ed was one of the original members of the WRRRC. Over the years he has been a consistent participant at club meetings and events. He has also performed volunteer duties as a member of RACES and the Windham County CERT team.

In a recent letter to President Tim Bell he told of the satisfaction he had in being with the WRRRC from the beginning and the assistance he contributed in giving us our unique name.

He also expressed his thankfulness that through our VE program we provided him the opportunity to do something that he had always wanted to accomplish, namely, become a Ham radio operator.

Since 2005 Ed and Lois have graciously allowed us to use their land as our Field Day site. With the exception of a year each in Vernon, Guilford, and Halifax their land has been our Field Day location.

We hope to see many of you at Ed's open house.

SPEAKING OF FIELD DAY

Why not plan on joining us for #8. Can you believe it? I can.

Once more we'll be at the QTH of Ed, KB1KSR, and Lois Phoenix. It's always the same time; the last full weekend of June. More details will follow as the time draws closer.

Field Day is always an exciting weekend on the Ham radio calendar. It consistently garners more participation than any other ARRL sponsored event.

If you're a old hand at FD then we welcome you back for another year of participation. If you're a newbie to the hobby we encourage you to come out, help with the setup, do some operating, and just plain have fun.

