



# DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the  
West River Radio Club



February—2013

Volume VIII—#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 52 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, Tim Bell; President

K1KU, Darrel Daley; VP

WK1L, Bro Frank Hagerty ED/VE Liaison

W1CWB, Chas; Technical Advisor

N1TOX, John Borichevsky; Secretary/Treasurer

## THE PRESIDENT'S KORNER

Welcome to the West River's Radio's 10<sup>th</sup> year! I hope this New Year finds all of you warm and healthy. We had a great Annual meeting with great food and great company! Thank you again for a great 9 years in existence. We could not have done any of this without you the members.

This last year we focused on what can you do in amateur radio. We had a lot of events and a lot of fun was had at each event. Yes, sometimes it can be a little work, but with many hands, it becomes a little lighter work. We have a lot of good programs scheduled for our club meetings and a lot of ideas for activities for this year. Will you be there to lend a hand? As always, we have our RACES drills/walks etc., be we never know when we will be called to do what we do best. Make sure you have gone through your "go kits" again and makes sure your batteries and equipment are ready to go. Since there isn't much gardening going on, this is the time to get that upgrade book out, tune or build that antenna, and be ready for that next event.

If there is something you would like to see done at a meeting? Is there something you would like to share? As always, just let the board of directors know and we will try and get it in the schedule. What can you do to help make this 10<sup>th</sup> year even better? See you all soon!

Till then, 73  
KA1ZQX/Tim

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## 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.

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@arrl.net](mailto:ka1zqx@arrl.net)

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Talent is God-given; be humble.  
Fame is man-given; be thankful.  
Conceit is self-given; be careful. - John Wooden

## FINANCES

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

Checking = \$1,906.94/Cash on hand = \$120.00



## SKs

It is sad to report that two of our members recently "slipped the surly bonds of earth".

They were N1DLK, David Keniston and Art Rizzi, KB1SPF.

Though neither of these gentlemen were able to be active in club affairs, they will nevertheless be missed. They both were faithful in maintaining their membership and their financial support was greatly appreciated.

Consoling thoughts and prayers go out to the family members of these two hams.

## WE'RE OFF & RUNNING

**Y**es, folks, the end of a decade has arrived. A stalwart group of area Hams met in the Townshend, Vermont's town hall in November of 2003 and voted to start a Ham club.

We met again on December 16, 2003 and moved things along even more. I've put the minutes from that meeting in this newsletter.

In early 2004 we got more organized, voted on a set of by-laws, selected a name suggested by Gordon, W2NH, elected some officers, and started scheduled meetings. The idea of forming a new club was the brain child of KA1ZQX, Tim Bell, and N1JSG, Richard Pierce.

As the header says, WE WE'RE OFF AND RUNNING.

And we haven't stopped running since those early halcyon days of our existence. Every year we've found new and exciting things to do to promote Amateur Radio in this area. I hesitate to do lists because I might leave out something, but here goes anyway. I urge the astute readers of this rag to point out my omissions.

- Ham classes for all license levels
- VE Sessions
- Publication of a monthly E letter
- Public service
- EmComm activities
- Field Day
- Holding a yearly dine out
- Advertising our club at hamfests
- Monthly educational programs

So, to those of you who have been with us for the entire trip, your dedication, loyalty and contributions over the years are greatly appreciated. It has paid off. To those of you who have joined along the way, we're glad to have you as a part of this ongoing venture and hope that you stay with us for a long time to come.

This 10<sup>th</sup> year got off to a rousing start on Tuesday, January 8 when we held our first meeting of 2013. Sixteen members and two guests showed up to help launch us into the final year of a decade of fun, camaraderie, learning and promotion of the great and varied hobby that Ham radio is.

As at all of our meetings, fun was had and we were treated to a good program on Winlink presented by John, N1TOX.

If you couldn't make this gathering, not to worry ... We've reserved a spot for you at our next meeting on February 12. We can almost guarantee that it will be worth any effort you make to get there.



**N1TOX, John, keeps the crowd enthralled at our last meeting.**



**And here's the proof that they were enthralled**

**[The last page of this newsletter has the minutes from our first official meeting.]**

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## SOME HISTORY

**G**ordon sent along the following link. It covers a bit of Ham radio history from the **real** olden days.

He informs me that, though he was not present at the original session, it has been sixty five years since he has complied with what at the time was a "new" rule. Go to <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F70714FE3D5B13738DDDAC0994DA415B828DF1D3> to find out what we're he's talking about.

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## RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

**W**hat prompted me to burden you with the following is that every year around Christmas time Marion and I watch "A Christmas Story". We've done this religiously for several years. Hint: If you put it on your DVR you can skip through the commercials, unless, of course, you like watching commercials. It's your call.

This blurb from Wikipedia will tell you more about it.

***A Christmas Story** is a 1983 American [Christmas comedy film](#) based on the [short stories](#) and semi-fictional [anecdotes](#) of author and [raconteur Jean Shepherd](#), based on his book [In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash](#), with some elements derived from Wanda Hickey's [Night of Golden Memories](#). It was directed by [Bob Clark](#). The film has since become a holiday classic and is shown numerous times on television during the [Christmas](#) season on the network [TBS](#), often in a 24-hour marathon.*

*In 2012, the film was selected for preservation in the [National Film Registry](#) by the [Library of Congress](#) for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".<sup>[1]</sup>*

At any rate, I worked Jean Shepherd. OK, it was only on two meters and off of the Greylock repeater, I believe. I forget his location. He was quite a guy and definitely left a legacy when he became a SK.

Below I've pasted in his SK announcement in QST. If you feel like a few laughs around Christmas time 2013 you've gotta watch A Christmas Story.

Amateur Radio Relay League  
WIAW QST

ZCZC AX07  
QST de W1AW  
Special Bulletin 7 ARLX007  
From ARRL Headquarters  
Newington CT October 18, 1999  
To all radio amateurs

SB SPCL ARL ARLX007  
ARLX007 Radio Legend Jean Shepherd, K2ORS, SK

Radio broadcasting legend Jean Shepherd, K2ORS, died October 16. He was 78. News reports say Shepherd died in a hospital near his home in Sanibel Island, Florida.

One of the original radio "talkers," Shepherd gained a loyal following of overnight listeners during his more than two-decade tenure at powerful WOR in New York during the 1950s, 60s and early 70s.

Shepherd remained active on HF SSB and occasionally on 2-meter FM. A former ARRL member, he did some hamming from his boat in Florida in recent years.

On the air, "Shep" worked without a script or reliance on telephone callers spinning yarns--typically with a sardonic edge--often based on his boyhood years in Hammond, Indiana, and his time in the Army and occasionally mentioning ham radio. Among the characters he created was alter ego Ralphie Parker, who appeared in his 1983 film classic "A Christmas Story," which he wrote and narrated.

Shepherd also penned numerous articles and several books, including In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash in 1966 and Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories in 1971. He also produced the TV programs Jean Shepherd's America and Shepherds's Pie for PBS, as well as several PBS American Playhouse productions, including The Phantom of the Open Hearth and The Great American Fourth of July and Other Disasters.

His third wife, Leigh, died last year, and he had no survivors.

"He captivated a generation with his stories," said vintage radio buff John Dilks, K2TQN. "He is survived by Schwartz, Flick, Bruner and all of the other wonderful characters he created."

For detailed information on Jean Shepherd, visit [shepmain.htm](http://shepmain.htm) or

<http://www.spacelab.net/~bkaye/Shep.html>.

NNNN  
/EX



THE PAST PREZ CORNER

Hopeful Planning

When I obtained my General License, I had the help of Burt Eldridge, W1ZS, Darrel Daley, K1KU, and Sean Sanderson, KD6MPY help put up my G5RV antenna. It was installed about 25' above ground level. I was very happy with its performance and it worked great. I was able to contact multiple stations "across the pond" and down south really well. So I enjoyed this antenna position for many years. I was capturing many new station signals, making contest contacts, and basically having a great time with my new license. All was good, but I later realized that I was missing many stations to the west because of the landscape.

If you know where I reside, there is a solid hill behind my house, which is to the west, blocking my signal path. I thought about what I could do to get my 200 watt signal to the west coast of the United States at a minimum. Eh, that should be easy (so I thought) all you need to have is a good antenna and just apply more power. Well, that idea did not work. So I replace the coax feed line with a more shielded cable, and nothing. Then I thought about a ground reflector and well, that made things a bit worse. So I tried a lower take off angle which helped getting to Texas so this was a start. But I still did not get the real desired results.

So one day I was talking to my grandson and he was asking what was up in the air? I thought he was looking at an airplane or UFO. But no, he was looking at the feed line to my antenna. So I tried to explain what was up there and how we got it up there.

The antenna I was talking about was shot up with a sling shot. Limited in obtaining the proper height by design, but there are different items that will get the desired elevation of the antenna much easier. But what could that be? So while thinking about my "toys" I have to use, I remembered building the antenna launcher, the star of the show, the thing that can make your dreams come true, the problem solver. Then to make this dream come true, I needed to scope out the taller trees I have available to me. A 55' pine tree has always been the focus of my attention. The dreams of getting to the top of that tree and gaining another 30' in height, the new QSO's I could make, all of the new contesting I could perform, I just needed to make the plan. The plan now rattling around in my brain was to raise my antenna, higher, taller, flatter and yet invisible to the XYL. Yes, the plan was then put on paper and then put into place.

Yes, the plan was put into place to raise the antenna to new heights. I had the 55' pine tree on one end and a 40' Maple on the other end. It was the best that I could do. The plan was to use the launcher to reach new heights with the antenna. The plan looked great on paper, execution was a snap, and best of all, and it should work. I have the material in house to do the work. So I proceeded. The first thing I needed to

do was to drop my existing antenna and collect the ropes and check it out for failure points or weaknesses. Then I needed a good day to do the work, sunny and no wind.

Then unexpected things happened when a tree broke across the antenna and pulled it down snapping the dipole line and that was it. I thought the antenna was dead and a sad day was had by all. But I soldered the broken end and really thought hard about putting the antenna back up in the air. I thought and thought hard, only to think that this was the ultimate time to use the launcher and put that antenna way up in the air and make those QSO's I really wanted. So launcher in hand, I shot the lines high in to the pine tree and sort of where I wanted it in the maple tree.

Then I raised the antenna up into the air. The first end was on the maple tree end then I attached the antenna to the cord dangling from the pine tree and started to raise the antenna. But the line got caught on some lower branches and they would not budge nor let go of the rope. I tried for hours to no satisfaction. So I ended up with a slightly sloped antenna. Did it perform any better? No it did not. Was it "ok" as is? With regrets, yes it was usable. I used it that way for a couple of years until Tropical Storm Sandy hit. Then all the sudden, the gods move (or broke) the branch that was holding my line lower than expected and the antenna flew up into position, only to make contact with tree branches on the bare metal of the wire. Now I ground out during windy days and the SWR goes bonkers. Dang!!!

So why not lower the antenna and try it again? Well, when the antenna flew into its new position, the rope in the pine tree wrapped around a branch and now it is stuck! I cannot raise it, nor lower it. It's stuck and now a permanent fixture of the tree. Maybe I can get it down when they come to cut down a few trees, but for now, I have to use it as is...

So be careful of what you wish for. You might just get something that you did not expect.

Until next time!  
73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – Past President WRRRC



[We're happy to welcome two contributors this month, both speaking on the subject of Fox Hunting. Some exciting adventures are planned for you this spring on a a real, honest to goodness fox hunt.]

## BRING ON THE FOXES

**F**ox Hunt definition 1: Chase of a fox by horsemen with a pack of hounds. Modern foxhunting became popular among the upper class in the 19th century. The hunt may take place on any grounds (woodlands, heath, or fields) where a fox is suspected to be. The riders, outfitted in distinctive scarlet coats, meet at a host's house; the fox is

chased until it either escapes or is cornered and killed.

Fox Hunt definition 2: Competitive Amateur Radio activity in which hams track down a transmitted signal, using gasoline powered horses or while acting in the mentality of a pack of hounds. The hunt may take place on any grounds (woodlands, heath, or fields) where the hidden transmitter is suspected to be. The riders, outfitted with funny looking antennas and dressed to kill, meet in an open field, parking lot, or football field; the fox is chased until the horsemen get tired, hungry, thirsty, or until the fox is cornered and killed or its batteries die.

Traditional amateur radio foxhunting encompasses all the best traits of our hobby. It gets us outside, working alone or in teams in a friendly competitive spirit, involves using our radio equipment and our skill in ways only limited by our imaginations, and has a very practical application. We learn to hunt down transmitters. Think lost hiker, stuck mic, leaky cable TV connection, or illegal transmitter. The possibilities are endless.

As a young ham living in the Deep South (Connecticut) my local club held fox hunts many times each summer. We varied the difficulty, locations, rules, frequencies, and so forth to keep everyone involved and interested. Inevitably we would end the hunt with a meal out, a BBQ, quick pizza, or trip to the beach. The club members became a family by spending time with each other doing something we all loved. What is there not to like about this?

Now that I have you interested, here comes the great news. The WRRRC will start hosting some simple fox hunts in the late spring. We will be using low power 2 meter transmitters. You should already be thinking... low power means we won't be driving all over kingdom come, you'll need a 2 meter portable beam, and maybe some means to attenuate the incoming signal.

Want to learn more? Read Brother Franks excellent article, Google "fox hunt", and stay tuned. More will be coming in the next few months as we prepare to become horsemen chasing the fox.

N1ESK, David Andrews

**My sources tell me that camouflage clothing will be provided so that the fox won't be able to see you coming, as this one does.**



## A Simple and Inexpensive 2 Meter Yagi for Fox Hunting

Bro. Frank Hagerty, SSE WK1L

At our last WRRC Board meeting we discussed the possibility of doing some fox hunting activity this Spring using the 2 Meter Band. Fox hunting is great practice for radio direction finding (RDF), and this can very much come in handy for a variety of reasons: finding the source of radio interference, search and rescue work, and just plain fun. If we combine radio direction finding with tools like maps, compasses, and GPS units, we can narrow down search areas fairly quickly. The radio equipment required is fairly simple: a 2 Meter handheld with a fairly good signal strength meter, a signal attenuator, and a directional antenna.

I agreed to look into antennas for radio direction finding (RDF). ARRL handbooks, antenna books, QST, and the Internet have lots of information on fox hunting and antenna construction. When we look at building such an antenna, there are a number of considerations:

- Portability
- How to feed the driven element
- Impedance matching
- Tuning the antenna
- Availability of component materials
- Cost
- Durability

There are two common methods for **matching the impedance** at the feed point: the **hairpin match** and the **gamma match**. Over recent years, I have seen many articles about using steel measuring tapes for Yagi elements—a very popular project for school groups, Boy Scout troops, etc. Here are links to a design using a **hairpin match**:

<http://www.ccars.org/Projects/TapeYagi/index.htm> and [http://theleggios.net/wb2hol/projects/rdf/tape\\_bm.htm](http://theleggios.net/wb2hol/projects/rdf/tape_bm.htm)

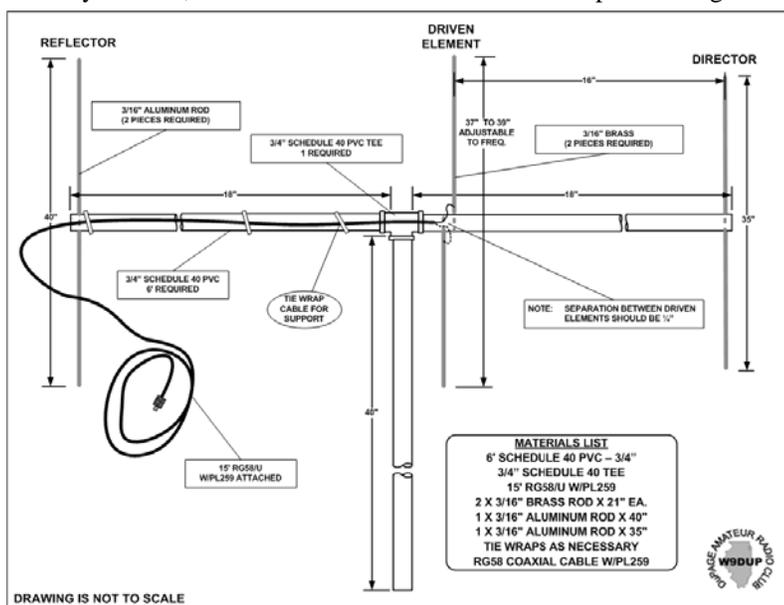
These are certainly low-cost designs, but the hairpin match can be a bit tricky to get just right; you adjust the spacing between the ends of the inner ends of the driven elements for the lowest SWR. But that can make tuning the antenna for a particular frequency a bit of a challenge. But my biggest concern is being able to get a good solder connections for both the feedline and the hairpin match with the steel tape. I'm also not sure how durable the antenna would be; when doing carpentry, I have found that it is often a challenge to extend a steel tape very far without having it twist or flop.

The **gamma match** can also be a bit tricky to get just right, but I found an elegant solution to this in an article in QST back in April of 1993, **"7 dB for 7 Bucks"** by Nathan Loucka WB0CMT. (If you are a member of the ARRL, you can view the article through the League website.) I recently found a project of the DuPage ARC on the Internet which used the same design with some slight modifications for a Spring 2010 fox hunting radio club project: [http://www.w9dup.org/club\\_projects\\_pdfs/fox\\_hunt\\_antenna\\_2010\\_apr.pdf](http://www.w9dup.org/club_projects_pdfs/fox_hunt_antenna_2010_apr.pdf)

What makes this design "elegant" is how the gamma match is achieved by overlapping the ends of the driven elements with 1/4" of separation. 3/16" brass rods are used for the driven elements—and brass is easy to solder to copper. The director and reflector elements are made with 3/16" aluminum rods, which are easier to find in longer lengths, and cheaper than brass. The cost of materials has gone up since 1993; I don't know if you can still build it for only 7 bucks, but it shouldn't be that much more expensive to get the parts. In the 1993 QST article, tuning of the antenna is done using small wire clamps and 4" pieces of 3/16" rod to each end of the driven elements. Loosening the screws and sliding the rod pieces (the same amount on each element) lets you tune the antenna for any frequency in the band. **NOTE:** The diagrams in the QST article and the DuPage ARC project show the director and reflector elements in opposite directions.

This looks like a solid design to me. By not gluing the PVC pipe connections with the "T", the antenna can break down into two sections for easier portability. If you make a set of reference marks on the PVC pipes and the "T", you can easily re-assemble the antenna with the elements in proper alignment. You could make a second set of reference marks (with a different color marker) for horizontal polarization; then the antenna could be used for VHF simplex contacts, too.

**Happy fox hunting!**



## PLANNING AHEAD

If you like to think ahead, and I mean think a head a LOT, then why not plan now to attend the ARRL centennial celebration in Hartford, CT on July 17 – 20, 2014. Before you even ask - "No, your editor was not on hand at the founding of the American Radio Relay League in 1914." I have met the granddaughter of TOM, though. She happens to live in Putney and has a wonderful portrait of Hiram Percy Maxim in her living room.

<http://www.arrrl.org/news/arrrl-plans-centennial-celebration-in-hartford-in-2014>



### UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

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

**February 12:** Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital at 19:00L. The program will cover home networking and feature that fearless Geek duo of N1TOX & W1CWB.

**February 9:** CVFMA swapfest at the VFW hall in Springfield, VT—191 River Street. Setup begins at 07:00 and the main event begins at 08:00. There is no admission charge, but a \$5 charge for a table. Questions? Contact [swapmeet@cvfma.org](mailto:swapmeet@cvfma.org)

**February 23:** The monthly Board/luncheon Meeting will be held at the Panasian Restaurant in Brattleboro next to Staples. Gather at 11:30. Ten members showed up at our January meeting and enjoyed a fun time.

**March 12:** Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital at 19:00L.

**March 23:** The club's annual dine out, AKA *Beat the Winter Blues Dinner*, will be held at the New England House in West Brattleboro. Gather at 18:00L. If you want to get on the attend list contact N1TOX, John—[n1tox.vt@gmail.com](mailto:n1tox.vt@gmail.com)

Also check out WRRRC events on the club calendar at [http://www.westriverradio.org/WRRRC/WRRRC\\_Pages/prgmplan.html](http://www.westriverradio.org/WRRRC/WRRRC_Pages/prgmplan.html)

## HAM UNIVERSE

For one of his antennas my friend W2PSU, Ken, uses a Double Bazooka. He sounds great on the air with it and reports that it is a good "listener", very quiet and that sort of thing. If you ever want to have a chat with Ken he's easy to find at 7.255 MHz, especially on Wednesday, 1100 -1200, Thursday, 1100 – 1200, or Friday, 1400 – 1500.

When I mentioned an interest in it on the Green Mountain Net (3.933 MHz M-S at 16:30L) he shot off the specs for it via email. Those specs and construction techniques came from Ham Universe (<http://www.hamuniverse.com/about.html>) I must confess to not having heard of this site. Truth be known, there are a LOT of things I haven't heard about. You'd think that as a savvy septuagenarian I'd know it all by now, but it just shows to go ya .... Life treats us that way at times.

Just in case some of you still get the urge now and then to try yet another antenna, here's one that just might prove to be a worthwhile endeavor I'm including the page for those specs. At this point my favorite type of wire antenna is the venerable Windom. I use one at Field Day each June and have a home brew version hanging off of my 50' tower. They are truly great performers, but, who knows? Maybe the Windom has found its successor in the Double Bazooka. The beauty of antennas is that they're not too expensive; they're fun to play with and someday the experimenting just might pay off when you make a QSO that you wouldn't normally have been able to.

Before I forget, here's that site - <http://www.hamuniverse.com/bazooka.html>



CUL es 73 de K1KU SK



**MINUTES**  
**West River Radio Club**  
**16 December, 2003**

The second organizational meeting of the WRRRC was held on December 16, 2003 in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital. The meeting was called to order by Tim, KA1ZQX, at 7 PM.

Present were:

AA1T, Grant	K1KU, Darrel	KA1ZQX, Tim	KB1J, Richard
N1FXX, David	N1JSG, Richard	N1TOX, John	W2NH, Gordon
Ed Phoenix			

It was unanimously voted to proceed with the organization of a Ham club.

The following were elected as officers of the new club:

President – KA1ZQX, Tim  
Vice President – AA1T, Grant  
Secretary/Treasurer – K1KU, Darrel

After discussion the name of West River Radio Club (WRRRC) was voted on and nearly unanimously approved.

After discussion the following dues structure was voted on and unanimously approved:  
\$10 for a one year membership.  
\$5 for each additional family member.

K1KU will investigate the options offered by different banks for keeping our money.

W2NH, Gordon, volunteered to set up an internet group for us on Yahoo.

An informal poll showed that seven of those present belonged to the ARRL. It was agreed that affiliation with the League would be a good step to take. K1KU, Darrel, will procure the appropriate forms.

After discussion informal approval was given to the idea of periodically holding a Saturday daytime meeting to allow attendance by those unable to get to evening meetings.

The next meeting will be held on Saturday, January 17, 2004 at 10 AM. Subject to permission to be requested by KA1ZQX, Tim, this meeting will be held at the same location. Those in attendance will adjourn for lunch after the meeting.

Application forms for WRRRC will be available at that meeting so bring some money, too.

Is this exciting, or what??

Respectfully submitted,

Darrel – K1KU  
Secretary: WRRRC