



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the
West River Radio Club



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Volume 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 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

N1TOX, John Borichevsky; Secretary/Treasurer

WK1L, Bro Frank Hagerty ED/VE Liaison

K1KU, Darrel Daley; Digital Dispatch editor

W1CWB, Chas Baker; Technical Advisor

THE PRESIDENT'S KORNER

As I write this, I think about all the things we can be thankful for on Thanksgiving. In this country of ours, we have our problems, but what about all the things we have. I am personally thankful for my family, job, friends and this great club of ours. In a couple of weeks we will be having our annual meeting and be celebrating the culmination of our 10th year as a club. As I look back, I think of all the things our club has been involved in . . . walks, disasters, ECOMM. We have lost a few good friends, and made many more.

We are getting ready to start a new year, election of officers and gearing up for a new year of support for ECOMM etc. If you haven't really gotten involved in club activities yet, let this be the year you step out and fire up that radio of yours. Now would be a good time to get some of those projects built in your shack so you can test them out when the weather gets nice, plan your next get-away. Are you ready to upgrade? Now would be a good time to study on these long nights and short days. Whatever the project, do it with a buddy. It makes the job a lot easier!

With all this said, thanks for your support this year while I was president. We look forward to what we know about and try to be ready for what may come. Hope to see you all for our annual meeting. Thanks again for all your support for me, the other officers and the club. Thanks for supporting what our club is about also.

Oh yes; Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from the entire Bell family.

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@arrrl.net

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

One of the annoying things about believing in free will and individual responsibility is the difficulty of finding somebody to blame your problems on. And when you do find somebody, it's remarkable how often his picture turns up on your driver's license.

P. J. O'Rourke

THE TRUTH ABOUT SANTA CLAUS

Eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote a letter to the editor of New York's *Sun*, and the quick response was printed as an unsigned editorial Sept. 21, 1897. The work of veteran newsman Francis Pharcellus Church has since become history's most reprinted newspaper editorial, appearing in part or whole in dozens of languages in books, movies, and other editorials, and on posters and stamps.



"DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old.

"Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.

"Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.'

"Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?"

"VIRGINIA O'HANLON.

"115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET."

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except [what] they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether

they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! He lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

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

December 14: 2013 annual meeting of the WRRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital. Gather at 11:00 AM. Bring stuff for a mini hamfest. Potluck lunch at noon, followed by a short business meeting to elect officers for 2014. Chas, W1CWB, is in charge of the arrangements—chas.baker@gmail.com. Let him know how many will be attending and what you're bringing for the potluck.

Also check out WRRRC events on the club calendar at http://www.westriverradio.org/WRRRC/WRRRC_Pages/prgplan.html

(Ed: Once more, and with great pleasure, I bring you the latest news from our friends at Ham Hijinks. Isn't it wonderful that there is news that can bring a smile into our lives?)

Ham Radio Club In Hot Water After "Honest Mistake"

By WBORUR on the scene

BEAVER DAM, Wisconsin; May 9, 2013 – A local group of amateur radio operators will not be invited back to next year's fundraiser for the local heart association.

The Dial Spinners, a ham radio club based in rural Catoosa County, volunteered for event communications during last week's "Walk It, Run It or Bike It" fundraiser. (Participants gather pledges per mile from donors and may walk, run or bike the course.) Shortly after the 5K event started, things took a bad turn – literally.

"Alexander Feldman* had the course map and that was probably our first mistake," says club president Thomas O'Happerstam, a radio amateur veteran. "He was responsible for guiding the lead car and the initial participants in the right direction."

While the group of 15 volunteers manning course checkpoints were chatting on a local repeater about lunch plans and the "code /no code" controversy, Feldman inadvertently guided everyone onto the wrong street. And then another. And then another. And then another.

"When it was all said and done," adds event organizer Jane Brookhaven, "our 5k event turned into something closer to 20k. People were dropping out like flies and we had to call in extra vehicles to pick up the stranded walkers, runners and bicyclists. It wasn't pretty. It even made the local Beaver Free Press newspaper."

For his part, Feldman says he's not exactly sure what happened...but has an idea.

"I think I was holding the map upside down," says Feldman who has a history of navigation mistakes. In 2006, Feldman intended to drive a group of hams to the "Big Badger Hamfest" in Madison, but ended up in Racine. He also completely missed Field Day one year because he "just couldn't find the damn thing."

Brookhaven says there may be a silver lining to the embarrassing incident, though.

"Because of Mr. Feldman's course and our pledges per mile — we raised a lot more money than usual!"

*Editor's Note: Feldman's grandfather portrayed himself as the famous "Wrong Way Feldman," who was featured in TWO Gilligan's Island episodes.



TIP OF THE MONTH

Surrender yourself to the fact that life is not fair. It wasn't even meant to be.

GERATOL NET

No, it's not the beverage that old Coots used to consume in order to gain more energy, vitality, virility, or what have you. As I remember it (Yes, I'm one of those old Coots) that particular concoction had as much alcohol in it as the makers could manage without having to have their product labeled as an adult beverage.

This "Geratol" stands for *Greetings Extra Radio Amateurs Tired of Operating Lately*. It is a Ham radio net. Contrary to the concept many have of this net it is **NOT** comprised of old Coots. For those who are curious as to why I capitalize each and every occurrence of the word Coot there is a logical explanation; I am an old Coot and feel that the attainment of this milestone is deserving of every kind of recognition possible.

I was reminded of this fine gathering when I recently received an email from N1KL, Kevin, asking if I might be interested in getting on the air with them when I could. See, I told you that Hams are thrilled at the prospect of working 1 Kinky Unicorn.

Actually, I was an active net member for several years after we first settled in Vermont in 1983. Believe me, a Lot of Hams want VT, and especially on 80 meters.

Enough rambling...If you're an Extra op stop in and join the fun at 3.668 MHz every night at 20:00L (01:00Z the next day). Tell them that K1KU sent you.

For more details check out their site at <http://geratol.net/>

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

(This tale has been around for several years; and each year an embellishment or two is added as I look back at my many memorable QSOs and resuscitate another small incident or two from the gray matter archives.

It Really Happened.

This is the story of a very unusual QSO, probably the strangest, and definitely most rewarding, of my 33 year life as a Ham radio operator. Shy types like me always hesitate to put material like this out in the public spotlight. Even people close to me might begin to have their doubts as to the veracity of what is to follow. Some might think that I'm either on the verge of going into *lip strumming* mode or have actually crossed line at full speed ahead. At any rate, nearly a year has passed and I'm not getting any younger. It's a story that needs telling before I go off

into that big ham shack in the sky....no matter what the reaction might be. After all, they scoffed at Galileo, too.

So, here goes with the truth, and nothing but the truth....if for no other reason than that some grouchy old non believer out there might discard their grumpy outlook on life and join in the spirit of the season. And don't smirk – we know who you are!

It happened like this. While taking a break from some late wrapping of Christmas presents on December 24 of 2010, I turned on the rig and tuned to the low end of 40 meters, the place where those high speed CW guys hang out. Listen, if anyone needs to build their listening speed up it's this op.

Now I'm not too much of a rag chewer on CW unless it's in the 20-25 WPM range, but while tuning up and down the band I couldn't help but catch a very clean fist sending out a CQ at around 30-35 WPM. It wasn't exactly a needle pinning signal, more like a 549, but very copyable.

CQ CQ CQ DE NP7SC/AA

Now that's a somewhat unusual call and though I'm usually looking for DX I had a premonition that this is one Dude I should work, or at least make the attempt to. My hand moved to the Bencher and I started pumping out the dits and dahs, but a tad slower than the NP7 was sending...

NP7SC/AA DE K1KU K1KU ES QRS PSE KN

Well Praise the Lord...He came back to me and right over the top of all the QRM and QRN, too. And, gentleman that he was, he had dropped back to a speed that I could live with....well, sort of.

**K1KU DE NP7SC/AA
TNX FER THE CALL OM
UR SIGS 559**

**NAME IS SANTA SANTA ES HOME QTH IS NORTH
POLE NORTH POLE**

**CURRENT LOCATION ABT 3000 FT OVER WAT-
SON LAKE IN YUKON TERRITORY CANADA
SOHWCPY?**

K1KU DE NP7SC/AA KN

Very needless to say, when my fingers felt for the Bencher this time around they weren't nearly as steady as before. Am I glad that he slowed down for me. With my hand as shaky as it was I felt like I should be doing 7-10 WPM. But even my 77 year old grey matter was working well enough to start putting it all together

NP = North Pole

SC = Santa Claus (I wonder what the reaction was in Gettysburg when they got the request for that vanity call?)

And where else would he be on December 24 other than aeronautical mobile? After all, there are a lot of

kids out there depending on his safe journey. This is one I've got to check out with the DXCC desk – a new entity??

DE K1KU

RRR

WOW SANTA WHAT A QSO THIS HAS TURNED OUT TO BE/

SO MANY QUESTIONS BUT KNOW U MUST BE 1 BUSY GUY ES IN A HURRY SO WONT HOLD IT/ LOTS OF MILES TO GO FOR SURE/

CANT BELIEVE THAT YOU FOUND RM FOR A KEY/ STRAPPED TO YOUR LEG?

SO BTU AND HW? NP7SC DE K1KU KN

Well, I won't bore you with the text of the entire QSO. Besides, I didn't get it all down on paper. I do remember enough, though, to answer many of the questions you probably have and restore hope for those of us who still "keep the faith" and are young at heart.

- Yes, it's a vanity call and getting it apparently took some "pull" with the folks at the *Friendly Candy Company*.
- QSLing? To be honest, I haven't figured that one out yet. When anyone learns of a post office branch at the North Pole give me a shout. If I work him again this year I'll try to remember to ask if he has a QSL manager.
- His gear? It varies, as he usually "borrows" one of the rigs that he's delivering to some deserving Ham and only runs low power, in the 100W range.
- Santa's mode of choice? CW, of course, and for most of the reasons that we who love it prefer it. Key location? Strapped to his leg right above the knee. After all, it works for mobile CW ops in their cars.
- He got a bit of a late start this year. Some of the Elves came down with a "bug" (Apparently, those things can live at any temperature) and ice on the Reindeer antlers needed more de-icing than usual.
- Once on the road, though...sorry – once off the ground those eight reindeer make good time, even under a full load. How about around 100 MPH with a strong tail wind? (So that was what was causing that *whooshing* sound.)
- Speaking of reindeer, what do they use for fuel? Well, besides their normal diet of lichens a major supplier of pet food provides an enriched oat based food free of charge – just for the PR value.
- Another problem used to be the RFI generated by Rudolph's red nose. Fortunately, one of the Elves had spent some time as an Electronics Engineer and came up with some creative filtering schemes that solved that problem.
- Achieving a good RF ground when you're altitude is 3-4 miles high can also pose problems.
- He doesn't always come down chimneys, even when available. It all has to do with his – and I want to be tactful here... girth. He guaranteed me, though, that

there's not a lock in the world that he can't pick. Other than a few missing cookies, less cider in the pitcher, and new packages under the tree, no one is ever aware that anyone has been in the house.

- You might be wondering about *the list*. He does keep one and checks it twice, sometimes even three to four times. He definitely knows who has been naughty and who hasn't. If you're a LID don't get your hopes up for experiencing any examples of Santa's munificence.
- Santa also strongly recommends keeping an up-beat and positive attitude.
- Keep on smiling. It's later than you think.
- Don't let the pessimists get to you.
- Give some time to promoting worthwhile causes that are bigger than you are.
- Do your part to promote our great hobby. That might be the best gift you can give others, not just during the holiday season, but throughout the year.

There's a lot more to tell, but a pile up was developing and I wanted to give some other deserving Hams the same thrill I was enjoying. So I signed with the OM and definitely jotted down his closer before he went back to a TF3 with a big signal.

TNX FER NICE QSO DARREL/73 GUD DX CUAGN NEXT YR ES GOD BLESS

K1KU DE NP7SC SK

That's my story, folks, and I'm sticking with it. I'll even take a lie detector test – of course, you pay the fee. To answer what you're probably thinking – NO, I didn't sample the holiday punch before this QSO.

Any doubts that I ever might have had are gone forever....There is a Santa and he rewards good behavior. Still a doubting Thomas? You have a year before you to get your CW speed up a bit. Then drop down to the low end of 40 and tune around.



The jolly OM and I have a sked set for December 24, 2013 around 7.015 MHz at 22:00Z. If you hear a QSO going on between K1KU and NP7SC feel free to toss your call in. In the true Spirit of Christmas we'll welcome you with open arms. Hey, we'll even QRS.

And now, my YL Marion and I wish you and yours a joyous and blessed season, whether it be Christmas or Hanukkah.

"What if Christmas, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"

[Dr. Seuss, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*](#)