



# DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the  
West River Radio Club



February—2008

Volume III—#2

## VITAL STATISTICS

The West River Radio Club, an ARRL affiliated club, was founded in 2004 through the efforts of KA1ZQX, Tim Bell, and N1JSG, Richard Pierce.

Our 56 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  
W1CWB, Chas Baker; VP  
KD6MPY, Sean Sanderson; ED/VE Liaison  
K1KU, Darrel Daley; Secretary/Treasurer  
KA1ZQX, Tim Bell; Public Relations/ARES

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*Welcome everyone to 2008!*

After a wonderful year of accomplishments in 2007, what more can we do? We had 11 informative monthly meetings, a very successful Field Day 2007, along with a rainy Girl's on the Run event. On the RACES side, we had 4 great RACES Drills, and we are now covering all of the locations during the Entergy Vermont Yankee Drills with RACES. We even overcame a few obstacles during the FEMA drill, and many more things too numerous to list. This is a result of the dedication you all have devoted to improve the art of Amateur Radio, which is one of the many responsibilities attached to your licenses.

While I am writing this in mid January, I am also pleased to announce that the year of 2008 is going to be another one for the books. Many new things are in the works right now for the improvement of Amateur Radio in our area and

across the state. Keep your eyes and ears open for details which will be coming to the surface real soon.

One of the bigger improvements will be the final installation of antennas at each of the EOC's to improve and expand our communication capabilities. This process will be finalized this year with the installation of Windom Antennas for HF capabilities at all of the EOC's

The Vermont RACES program has entered into a mutual agreement with the Vermont State CERT program. The RACES program has created a portable radio system which will be located in the CERT trailers within the county/LEPC districts. This is good because many CERT programs across the state have many RACES operators also involved with the program. By deploying these radio systems, we extend the capabilities of radio communications where the mountain shadow areas are not covered in many valleys. Now I wonder where that would be.....

The West River Radio Club has many achievements to recognize itself. We are filing with the State to become a 501 3 (C) nonprofit organization. Our structure and depth of knowledge by our members is increasing. We have also submitted an application to the ARRL to become, and obtain the designation of being a "Special Services Club".

As you can see, without your assistance and continued renewal of your membership to the West River Radio Club, we would not be the great club that we are. So here is to 2008 and our continued success.

73

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de N1TOX

John Borichevsky – President WRRCL

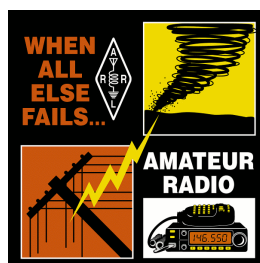
## "The Weekend That Changed Amateur Radio."

(Ed: The following was submitted by David Andrews, N1ESK)

That is how attendees at the 2007 AMSAT Space Symposium in Pittsburgh, PA described the recent announcement by AMSAT-NA that it has been in discussions with Intelsat to place an amateur radio payload on a future Intelsat geostationary satellite in a 'rideshare' arrangement.

At this point no formal agreements are signed. A period of engineering studies, funding discussions, and detailed planning must take place before any agreement may be finalized; however, AMSAT is convinced that we must proceed under the presumption that an agreement will be reached. In order to achieve our Strategic Vision and Mission of 'Continuous Coverage' and not knowing whether we will indeed be placed on an Intelsat platform, the Eagle program will continue with development of the Eagle space frame in 2008. Our primary focus in 2008 will be those areas of common development that will benefit both Eagle and 'Rideshare' opportunity, such as the communications suite and other electronics.

Traditional linear transponders using SDX technology will be incorporated into both platforms. In addition, the 'Advanced Communications Payload' (ACP) will be a combination of S2-Band and C-Band that will provide 500 voice grade channels and the ability to provide video and other digital services. Concurrent with development of ACP for placement on Intelsat and/or Eagle, AMSAT will develop an affordable ground station designed to allow amateurs to utilize the ACP from apartments, for emergency communications, and to overcome CC&R restrictions.



## CALL FOR PICTURES

I can't say that past requests for articles to be printed in this rag have been too successful, but our motto here is "NEVE SAY DIE."

No doubt it's because of your innate shyness and the embarrassment that would come along with seeing your name in print. Maybe it's your lack of faith in the Editor's ability to "clean up" your contribution so as to make it appear that you graduated Summa Cum Laude from some famous school of journalism.

Whatever the reason, my new tack is to ask for pictures. They don't have to be large. In fact, those 5-6 MB downloads are not appreciated by the 44 kbps speeds my dial up modem strains to achieve. For print purposes a 100KB file is more than sufficient. No digital camera or jpgs on file? No problem, as I have a professional scanner. If you're willing to trust me with a print or negative until I get it scanned, why, we're in business.

There, I've tried again. Remember the motto here – **NEVER SAY DIE!**



(Ed: The editorial on page #3 is in lieu of my monthly Runnin' on Empty column. C'mon, stop cheering.)

It is the editorial from the January 2008 of WorldRadio. [Italics mine] It is written by Nancy Kott, WZ8C, a lady with a strong dedication to promoting Ham Radio. She is the Editor of WorldRadio magazine and Head Honcho for the North American FISTS CW Club.

I admire Nancy's enthusiasm for and devotion to Amateur Radio a lot and agree with the gist of her statements below. Upon reading the editorial I emailed her my compliments and received a lengthy response. She said that responses to the editorial have been mostly positive. She jokingly stated - "Let the chips fall where they may, but, hopefully, not on my head." My rejoinder was that "If you're not taking any flak you must not be over the target."

Whether you agree or not she expresses concepts worth pondering.)



## EDITOR'S LOG

**T**here has been serious damage done to the reputation of Amateur Radio; a license that was once proof of having a working knowledge of circuitry, antennas and propagation has been reduced to a multiple choice exercise that a child can pass after a few hours of memorizing key phrases. I will not even comment on the elimination of the Morse code requirement.

That is all water under the bridge, what's done is done, onward and upward and all that good stuff. Hams are picking up the pieces and trying to carry on with dignity befitting their licenses. *We are getting new licensees into the ranks, although the statistics have shown that the numbers expected by those responsible for the deterioration of our standards are not happening — many of the new people are not getting on HF and/or they are not sticking around.* Who can blame them? They were promised exciting communication opportunities and what they got was a call sign and a "now what?" look on their faces. Some have Elmers and will discover that with some studying and work, they can indeed have what this magical world of Amateur Radio has to offer. But, most of them are floundering and left to their own devices.

Entrenched in the Amateur world via WorldRadio and FISTS, I have opportunities to interact with a wide cross-section of people. They contact me with their ideas and questions, which I appreciate and am happy to hear. However, I am very concerned. I see a trend that new licensees know they are missing out on something and they want to be involved, but they are sorely lacking guidance.

For example, I got a phone call from a new licensee who wanted to start a new "operating event" similar to the child's game where kids line up and whisper a message down the row. The idea is to see how the message has changed by the time it gets to the last child. This new licensee wanted to give a message to someone, intended to go around the world and then back to the originator, and the "fun" part would be to see how the message changed in the process. And you would have a list of all the people who passed on your mes-

sage, giving you a list of "new friends" in the process.

I asked, "You mean, like traffic nets?" "What's traffic? What's a net?" was the reply. I thought it was a practical joke, but the longer we chatted, the sadder I became. I suggested they get on the air and talk to people all over the world directly — that's how Hams make new friends — and gave them info on traffic training nets.

This is just one example, I have dozens more. The new licensees who don't explore what is available or learn the traditions and the lingo are not going to be Hams; they will just be Federally Licensed Operators. Not Lids exactly, but folks who didn't take the time to develop respect for what they're getting into before trying to leave their mark. So, they end up discouraged with a license that gathers dust in a drawer. Local Elmers (mentors) are out there. New Licensees, but they don't know where to find you. YOU have to take the first step to find them. Attend local club meetings (listings are in **WR** and on our web page). Be receptive. Amateur Radio really is magical. You need to earn the rewards, especially when the license was handed to you on a silver platter.

Nancy Kott – WZ8C



### **Hams To The Rescue In Northwest Flooding**

The glue that held rescue  
and recovery together...

10:31AM Thursday Dec 06 2007 by Karl

**T**he flooding in the Pacific Northwest has impacted T-Mobile customer support, severed communications lines, closed highways and overloaded area wireless networks. In the midst of communications chaos, ham radio operators are being praised as the heroes of the day by the Associated Press and area emergency officials:

A network of at least 60 volunteer amateur radio operators working along the coast and inland helped keep crucial systems



such as 911 calls, American Red Cross and hospital services connected. They relayed information about patient care and relayed lists

of supplies needed in areas cut off by water.

*"One of the problems in this is always communication," says Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski after visiting impacted areas. "I'm going to tell you who the heroes were from the very beginning of this...the ham radio operators. These people just came in and actually provided a tremendous communication link to us."*

(Relayed by John, N1TOX from [Broadband.com](http://Broadband.com) – probably one of those geek sites that he hangs out on.)



### NUMERO III

**O**n December 8 of last year a goodly number of members and friends of the WRRRC met at Grace Cottage Hospital for our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting. It was a time to eat, chew the rag, solve some business matters and, above all, celebrate our third successful year of growth as a Ham club. If the first three years are any indication of the future then 2008 is going to be one BANG UP year.

Just to recap matters your new slate of officers for 2008 are:

- ♦ N1TOX, John Borichevsky – President ([n1tox@comcast.net](mailto:n1tox@comcast.net)) 802-257-5526
- ♦ KB1LQB, Chas Baker – VP ([chas.baker@gmail.com](mailto:chas.baker@gmail.com)) 802-258-4571
- ♦ K1KU, Darrel Daley - Secretary/Treasurer ([k1ku@arrl.net](mailto:k1ku@arrl.net)) 802-387-5822

Current appointed Board of Director positions are:

- ♦ KD6MPY, Sean Sanderson – Educational Director/VE Liaison ([kd6mpy@arrl.net](mailto:kd6mpy@arrl.net)) 802-368-7343
- ♦ KA1ZQX, Tim Bell – PR and ARES ([ka1zqx@verizon.net](mailto:ka1zqx@verizon.net)) 802-365-7046

As your elected and appointed leaders we encourage your active participation in club events and there are a lot of events to choose from:

- ♦ Field Day
- ♦ Public Service events
- ♦ RACES and/or ARES involvement
- ♦ Doing a club presentation
- ♦ Doing a write up for this newsletter
- ♦ Teaching part of a Ham class
- ♦ Being a Volunteer Examiner

We're also anxious to know of any concerns, complaints, or even compliments you want to share with any or all of us. That's why our email addresses are shown above. For our PC disadvantaged members I've even thrown in some phone numbers.

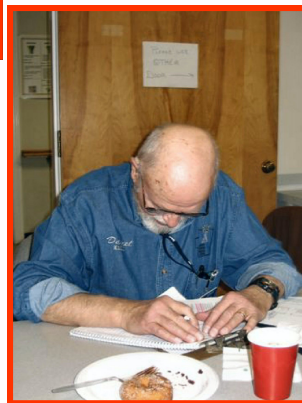
Here are some assorted pictures taken during the gala event.



**How many Geeks does it take to change a projector bulb?**



**It must have been one exciting meeting**







**Liz Bell—KA1ZQX,  
Tim, and Abi Bell**



**KB1HCG Mark,  
checking the  
roster**



**N1HXC, Scotty,  
W1CWB, Chas,  
and KB1J, Rich**

**Was it an in-  
coming call?**

## VERMONT YANKEE

**T**hrough the graciousness of friends in high places in Waterbury John, N1TOX, and your humble editor were invited on a tour of the inter sanctum of the nuclear power plant in Vernon. Did we accept the invitation? Well, does a chicken have lips? We sort of tagged along with a larger group of folks from assorted state agencies who were involved in a training session that day.

Whatever the excuse used we were glad for it and got our eyes and ears filled with all kinds of great information on how 75% of our electrical energy is produced. Unfortunately, no cameras were allowed or I'd share some of the visual treats we had with you.

Many years ago I had arranged for a group of Hams and spouses to tour the plant. Since 9/11 those halcyon days are long gone. The security has heightened considerably since then – razor wire fencing, gigantic concrete blocks strategically positioned, only five visitors per guide, and a plethora of armed guards. Our guest cards had to be "swiped" to get through several doors within the plant, cards which somehow with the miracle of modern electronics, had been "stamped" with our hand prints.

It's an experience I soon won't forget. Our thanks to Rob Schell, KA1ZPI and Lew Stowell for making it all happen.



(Ed: The article and picture to follow are a contribution by Jenifer, KA1CYZ. Thanks, Jen)

## Area "Hams" benefit from Radio Station's Technology Upgrade

December 29, 2007

**R**adio personalities past and present, professional and amateur were on hand for the cleaning out of WTSA Radio's old broadcast studios on Western Avenue last weekend. Usable electronic equipment and a huge collection of music were being moved to the new studio on Putney Road. A large number of electronic components no longer useful to the station were donated to the West River Radio Club, a local association of amateur radio operators who maintain a "ham" radio network to provide emergency communication in disasters or drills. Members of the club came to help dismantle the old studio and carry items to waiting vehicles...or to the dumpster. Those present marveled at the evolution of broadcast technology upon discovering old vacuum tubes from the 1950s and 60s, and CDs residing on shelves next to bulky old tapes and 45rpm records.



**KB1HCG, Mark, and KA1ZQX, Tim**

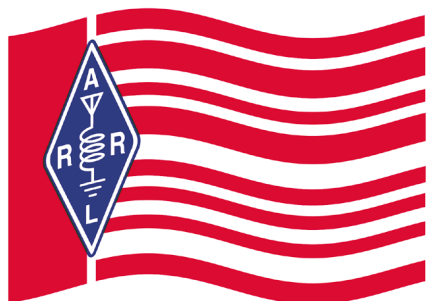
## VE TEST SCHEDULE - 2008

**T**he following dates have been scheduled for VE sessions in 2008. Times and locations will be noted as each date draws closer.

Let any prospective Hams or those desiring to upgrade know of these dates.

- ♦ Feb 16 (Sat) 15:00L at Rescue, Inc.
- ♦ May 15 (Thurs eve) - TBA
- ♦ Aug 23 (Sat) - TBA
- ♦ Nov 20 (Thurs eve) - TBA

For further information get in touch with Sean, KD6MPY at [kd6mpy@arrl.net](mailto:kd6mpy@arrl.net)



## NET and TRAFFIC HANDLING

(NOTE: These skills used to be taught to, and learned by, new hams before they ever went on the air.)

**H**ave you ever been on the net and it seems that the whole net is just chaos? There are reasons why a net has rules. Only by practice do we become better operators, but how do we get there? By education. Below are just a few minor, but important rules of operating in a net or on the air. Listen to your mentors and ask questions. . . Many questions! There are a lot of old hams out there with bad habits, but with the FCC rule book, ARRL publications, mentors, etc, we all can learn to be better hams.

### TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR VOICE OPERATING:

**1. Thou shalt say: FOXTROT** ... NOT "fox." (FOX sound's too much like GOLF)

**2. Thou shalt say: KILO** ...NOT "kilowatt."

**3. Thou shalt not: Just stop transmitting** when you have completed your transmission and have everyone guessing if you are done, or if your radio broke, or if you had a power failure, or if you had a heart attack! **INSTEAD**, say the call sign (or tactical call sign) of the station you are passing it to, identify with your FCC call sign (or tactical call sign) if you know you will be transmitting again within ten minutes, and for HF (and VHF/UHF simplex) saying "**OVER**" is highly recommended. This will eliminate 99% of doubling and save an enormous amount of time and confusion.

**4. Thou shalt say:** The proword "**ROGER**" appropriately which only means: "I have received and I understand your last transmission." **DON'T** say **ROGER** (or worse yet ROGER, ROGER) when you mean "yes", "that's correct", or "I agree". Even worse, **never** say: **ROGER?** (or **ROGER, ROGER?**) *at the end of a transmission. (Unless you want to sound like a lid.)* Would you send R at the end of a Morse transmission?

**5. Thou shalt say: AFFIRMATIVE** to answer a question "yes."

**6. Thou shalt say: NEGATIVE** to answer "no."

indicate that you have received and understand the last transmission. Use **ROGER** for that.

**8. Thou shalt not say:** "Repeat" or "please repeat". It sound's too much like "received." **SAY AGAIN** followed by **OVER** is unmistakable.

**9. Thou shalt not say:** **QSL** in voice unless you are talking about a **QSL CARD**.

**10. Thou shalt not:** "Quick Key" — Always allow a 1-2 second pause before transmitting. (Someone may have a contact call or an **EMERGENCY**.)

Ref: EMCOMM Monthly, Jan 08

KA1ZQX, Tim Bell—DEC Windham County

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### SITE OF THE MONTH

**F**or those who are eagerly anticipating the arrival of Solar Cycle 24 and want more up to the minute information of its progress, here is a website you can visit to fulfill every waiting minute for its arrival.

The URL is <http://www.solarcycle24.com/>

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### FEBRUARY EVENTS ES LOOKING AHEAD

**February 9:** Lose those cabin fever blues dine out at the New England Restaurant. RSVP to John Borichevsky n1tox@comcast.net, **BUT do it NOW!**

**February 12:** WRRRC meets in the EMT room at Grace Cottage Hospital—19:00L

**February 23:** President's Day. Go buy a new or used car somewhere

**February 23:** Monthly lunch out at the PanAsian Restaurant by Staples—11:30L

**VT Emergency Phone Net:** This is ongoing—Every Sunday at 08:00L on 3.976 MHz



**Your humble editor's first HF rig—initially put into serious use in November of 1978**

### Father James Coombs

**O**n January 29, 2008 Father James Coombs, WA1CUV, became a SK. Although unable to attend meetings or events due to a physical disability he was nonetheless a dedicated member of the WRRRC, paying his dues faithfully every year.

Several of our members installed an antenna and set up a station for him at Vernon Green where he resided. He was able to enjoy our great hobby right up to the end. May we all be so blessed.

I count myself fortunate as someone who came into contact with him. He was a wonderful person with a great sense of humor who will be sorely missed.

**RIP**

CUL es 73 de K1KU SK

