



# Western Tidewater Radio Association

Volume 1, Issue 1

April 2006

PO Box 323 Smithfield, VA 23431-0323 <http://www.qsl.net/wtra/>



## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

Welcome to Volume One, Issue Number One of the WTRA Newsletter. Ron Harvey, W4RRH, has enthusiastically accepted the editor's job and is off and running with this first edition. I hope that all members will support his efforts by contributing articles, photos, and new ideas. Without your input, the newsletter will be just a list of some of the events you already know about. Ron has asked me to do the first page of each issue. My bag is DX, but I'll try to not bore you with too much about my own interests.

WTRA committees are teeming with activity. I won't go into detail on that because each chairman will write his or her own report. I will say that we have a great repeater, plans for a super Field Day, an expanding membership and interesting program meetings with increasing attendance. Fred, KG4BKI, is developing an information package to welcome all of the new members.

In emails to the membership, I have asked for comments on license upgrade programs we could or should undertake. The response has been enthusiastic, although not in agreement on how to go about it. My idea is to help WTRA members who want to earn greater operating privileges. To me, the goal of recruiting new hams into the hobby and the club is a good one, but secondary.

The distribution of license class within WTRA is heavy on each end, with most of them holding either Technician or Extra Class licenses. Therefore, I would like to see a progressive series of classes that start with Morse code and technician theory. Both of the above goals would be addressed, code for the no-code techs, code and theory for the wannabes. General and extra classes can be scheduled later.

I realize that the FCC is proposing to eliminate the Morse code requirement, and many think it would be easier to just wait until they do. My fear is that some will lose interest in ham radio without ever having an opportunity to operate on an HF band. Five words per minute of Morse code give that opportunity. The FCC shows no indication that they will grant ten meter privileges to technician licensees when the code requirement is abolished, so they will have to jump from tech to general, a giant leap for the non-technical. Without the opportunity to do some HF operating, the incentive may not be there. Along with that, goes my plea for the generals and extras to give helping hand to the newcomers.

As I am writing this, the Virginia QSO Party has just begun. I hope everyone had a good time.

73, Jim Wise, W4PRO

**Western Tidewater Radio  
Association Club Officers and  
Committee Chairs:**

**President: Jim Wise, W4PRO**  
**Vice President: Chris Peters, N4KIT**  
**2nd Vice President: Jarvis Hearn, W4VWH**  
**Treasurer: Dick Harrell, W4RBH**  
**Secretary: Tom Stanfield, N4WXS**  
**Trustee: Ron Primer, N4TJI**  
**Repeater: Dick Harrell, W4RBH**  
**Public Information Officer / Newsletter  
Editor: Ron Harvey, W4RRH**

**Editors Corner:**

*This newsletter is compiled to keep the Western Tidewater Radio Association members and hams in the Tidewater area familiarized with the happenings of the WTRA Club as well as other events. It also provides amateur radio news. Remember this is your newsletter and most of the information is going to come from the readers. So to share that information with others, please send all news, reports, list of items for sale, buy or trade, pictures, radio jokes, etc. to:*

**Ron Harvey (W4RRH)**  
**Email: [w4rrh@wt4ra.org](mailto:w4rrh@wt4ra.org)**  
**Phone: 757-357-2660**  
**Address: 400 Pagan Road**  
**Smithfield, VA 23430**

**Club Calendar:**

2 April - Springfest. New location this year (again!) to the Portsmouth Moose Lodge. The location is on George Washington Highway in the Brentwood section of the city. The space is said to be 3 times larger space than last year.

13 May - Skywarn training in Windsor. Limited seating so sign up now - [w4vx@wt4ra.org](mailto:w4vx@wt4ra.org).

10 June - Bronco Club Pig Pickin' Tailgating' Event. Remember the TEST SESSION.

24-25 June – Field Day (details to follow)

## **Officers and Committee Reports:**



President: (see page 1)



Vice President:

From Your Vice-President

Greetings fellow WTRA members! Just wanted to offer a few comments for this first (revived?) edition of the WTRA newsletter. First, thanks to Ron Harvey, W4RRH for agreeing to edit the newsletter. I am quite sure that Ron will do a FB job. This past weekend was the Virginia QSO Party and I hope that many of you got to try out a bit of "low-key" contesting. Owing to the large amount of work left to do on our new "accessory" building



(my woodshop and Brenda's dojo/studio), I was only able to stay awake long enough Saturday evening

to log about 12 contacts on 80 meters. Each of the stations worked was quite pleased to get Isle of Wight County into their logs though!

I would also like to remind everyone of the 1st Annual WTRA Homebrew Key Contest. Entries are due in and will be judged by round-robin voting at the next quarterly meeting in May. Entries may be of the Straight Key, Paddle, or Bug variety and you may enter one of each type if you wish. So dig into your junk boxes and get those creative juices flowing for what I hope will be a very fun time for everyone. I hope to be able to display some of the entries in the contest in a display at Field Day.

And speaking of Field Day, I am (albeit slowly) coming around to being ready to select the 2006 Field Day site. I understand that the Franklin Repeater Users (FRU, our "sister" club) MAY be planning to host a Field Day site at Barrett's Landing, complete with a pig pickin' and all. Boy, I don't know if I can handle all that Carolina Barbeque on two consecutive weekends hi hi! Seriously, we will begin planning in earnest for our own Field Day very soon, probably as soon as I get the roof on the building shingled! Hopefully, that will be done by the time you read this...

Till next month, 73 to all and enjoy all your ham radio (and non-radio) activities to their fullest.

Chris Peters



*Second Vice President (Jarvis Hearn):*

The Second Vice President keeps the paperwork in order each year for the Club. The Club Treasurer helps with this task. The paperwork comes in about the last part of March each year and we make the adjustments to the officers' section of the paperwork as needed and return the paperwork back to the Incorporation Commission in Richmond with a \$25 check to cover the cost.

Incorporation helps protect individual members of the Club from certain aspects of legal action. Like Club insurance, it is not needed until it is needed. The \$25 per year seems to be "good insurance."

**WE ARE INCORPORATED!**



*Secretary (Tom Stanfield):*

**Western Tidewater Radio Association  
Minutes for meeting February 13, 2006**

1. On Monday, February 13, 2006, the Western Tidewater Radio Association convened for a dinner meeting at Angelo's Seafood & Steak House in Smithfield.
2. At 6:25 PM, the meeting was called to order by Jim, W4PRO after attendees introduced themselves around the table. Janet Andrews, new member as of tonight, spoke on why she became a ham.
3. 12 members and 1 guest were present.

4. Jim, W4PRO announced he is looking for volunteers for a publicity chairman.
5. The floor was turned over to Bruce, KE4GFM, who reported on the February 7 VOPEX exercise at the Isle Of Wight EOC, and, then to Fred, KG4BKI, who reported on the participation in Surry.
6. Secretary's Report: Tom, N4WXS distributed copies of the minutes of the January 9 meeting around the table; upon review the minutes, motion by Dick, W4RBH to accept the minutes was seconded by Linda, KG4UKS, and it passed.
7. Treasurer's Report: Dick, W4RBH presented a report on the club's treasury and announced that dues are still due from four more members.
8. Jarvis, W4VWH asked the blessing over tonight's dinner.
9. Dick, W4RBH provided an update on WTRA members who are away on extended travel.
10. Jim, W4PRO mentioned the group of 3Y0X operators going to Peter I Island for a DXpedition.
11. Repeater Report: Dick, W4RBH reported that the WT4RA repeater is working fine.
12. Old Business: None.
13. New Business: None.
14. With no further business to be brought forth at this time, a motion by Bruce, KE4GFM to adjourn the meeting was

seconded by Jack, KG4NUH and the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.

**Program:** Chris, N4KIT gave a presentation on DX contesting and demonstrated logging software.

**Tom D. Stanfield, N4WXS (formerly KC4WCH)**  
Secretary



### *Treasurer's Report (Dick Harrell):*

<b>Account Balance as of 3/20/2006</b>	<b>\$1362.92</b>
<b>Remaining budgeted expenses for 2006</b>	
	<b>\$ 504.11</b>
<b>Actual income to date vs. estimated for 2006</b>	<b>\$ (22.00)</b>
<b>Recent expenses:</b>	
<b>11/19/2006 Dinner for guest speaker</b>	<b>\$ 11.89</b>
<b>1/17/2006 P O Box rent</b>	<b>\$ 38.00</b>



### *Membership Report (Dick Harrell):*

Currently there are 39 members on roll. A copy of the 2006 club roster was e-mailed to all members on March 13. New members for 2006 club year include the following:  
David Smith, KI4NSA  
Dean Maddern, WB4GUH  
Cheryl Maddern, KG4ZCR  
Helen Eggleston, KI4LWD  
Bob Bain Jr, KI4JZY  
Janet Andrews, N4JMA  
Herb Bevan (returning past member), KF4RYN



### *Repeater Report (Dick Harrell):*

The WT4RA repeater continues to function normally. Output power from the amplifier remains at 130 watts. The occasional noise problem on weak signals is believed to be related to feed line damage near the antennas. Attempts are being made to make arrangements with one of the people servicing other antennas on the tower to see if they will do an antenna and feed line inspection for us.

With the approach of the spring thunderstorm season, users are reminded that if they hear a severe weather alert (thunderstorm warning, flood warning, tornado watch or warning, etc) they should place the repeater in the Weather Alert mode and announce the nature and duration of the alert. Once the alert is over the member placing the repeater in the weather alert mode should return the repeater to the normal mode. Because at many times of the year there are almost daily Thunderstorm Potential statements or Thunderstorm Watches, I do not usually use the weather alert feature for these. You should also use this feature if you witness a severe weather event, but there is no current alert from the weather service.

A copy of repeater codes for 2006 was e-mailed to club members on March, 13.



*Field Day:*  
*(see Vice President's Message)*



### **Items for Sale, Trade, or Wanted**

HF TRANSCEIVER FOR SALE  
YAESU FT-901DM. Excellent  
condition. CW filter, built-in keyer.  
Three way power capability, 115/230  
A/C, and 12 volt DC. Tube finals,  
digital readout. Jim Wise 357-0462  
[w4pro@arrl.net](mailto:w4pro@arrl.net)

For sale: MFJ Versa Tuner II MFJ941C  
Price: \$50.00  
Detail: Rated at 300 Watts  
Contact: Chris Hosman, KC4F  
E-mail: [chrishosman@cox.net](mailto:chrishosman@cox.net)  
This is from an estate sale. In original  
box.

For sale: Heathkit Q Multiplier GD125  
Price: \$15.00  
Contact: Chris Hosman, KC4F  
E-mail: [chrishosman@cox.net](mailto:chrishosman@cox.net)  
This is from an estate sale. I don't  
have the ability to test this  
device but it's outward appearance is  
excellent.

For sale: Kenwood TS430S HF  
Transceiver  
Price: \$350.00  
Details: 100W max  
Transmit: 10-160 m + WARC  
Continuous Receive: 0.15-30MHz  
Contact: Chris Hosman, KC4F @  
[chrishosman@cox.net](mailto:chrishosman@cox.net)

This is from an estate sale. The radio  
has been tested and appears to  
operate normally. All associated  
equipment has already been sold.

### **FRANKLIN USER'S GROUP MEETING**

A small and enthusiastic group met  
for our quarterly meeting at Fred's.  
Bronco Club Raffle tickets were  
distributed. If you want tickets let me  
know and I will hook you up. We  
seem to be pretty well set for Bronco.  
Stu has the paperwork in place for  
our ARRL listing and door prizes.  
He has arranged for a program related  
to weather and 'old wife's tales' that  
should be pretty good.

Dannie is set to go with the barbeque.  
Chris is set with the admission/door  
prize tickets and the potential for  
some Bronco Club t-shirts using the  
previously distributed logo. Bronco  
flyers will be at Springfest and at  
some other places. The raffle prize  
will be a Magellan GPS like last  
year's prize.

Advertising in the Repeater Journal.  
I will have the current listing in the  
RJ corrected as it had the previously  
discussed date. Most of us will be at  
Bronco on 10 June. Also, an ad will  
be placed on the same page as my

column in the RJ. It will be either 1/6 or 1/4 page.

I think we are set to have the test session and I will put a double nail in that with Carl W4CAC. It should be good to go. Relative to this - we have not had too many folks testing here, so spread the word on the test session.

FIELD DAY - When the subject of Field Day came up there was considerable enthusiasm relative to hosting a FD event. W4LG offered his place at Lake Gaston as a site. The idea getting the most traction was an FRU Field Day at Barrett's Landing Park. The donation of a pig for the event has been tendered and Dannie has agreed to cook it. The rest would be 'bring a dish to share'.

Following the meeting several of us moved to Barrett's Landing to scope the place out. Tree locations for G5RV type antennas look pretty good. Looow band capability was discussed and there is interest and experience to support 160M antenna erection. A 10/15/20 beam is available and there could be a 40' tower to put it on.

The group supporting an FRU field day was small, but a solid core of

support. It would be good to have another dozen sign on to this to make sure the whole pig gets eaten.  
Fred (kg4bki)

**Name This Item!!**



What is it? What is it used for. What was it made from? Write [w4rrh@wt4ra.org](mailto:w4rrh@wt4ra.org) with the answer. Only correct ones will be listed in next month's newsletter.

#### LINKS OF INTEREST

WTRA HOME PAGE

[www.wt4ra.org](http://www.wt4ra.org)

(Please submit links that you would like to see in this box)

## May Trivia

For the month of May, we would like for you to give a little history of your study, classes, and testing to get your first amateur license. Mention any peculiar items, if there were any. Send information to [w4rrh@wt4ra.org](mailto:w4rrh@wt4ra.org) Lets see how many we can get!!!

**DON'T FOR GET THE KEY CONTEST FOR THE NEXT WTRA CLUB MEETING**



## VA RACES Inc, District 10

### Contact Information

Title	Name	Call	Email Address
District Emergency Radio Officer	Chris Hanslits	W4VX (ex KA8UNO)	<a href="mailto:w4vx@charter.net">w4vx@charter.net</a> <a href="mailto:w4vx@wt4ra.org">mailto:w4vx@wt4ra.org</a>
Emergency Radio Officer – Isle of Wight County, Town of Smithfield	Bruce Powell	KE4GFM	<a href="mailto:ke4gfm@wt4ra.org">mailto:ke4gfm@wt4ra.org</a>
Emergency Radio Officer – City of Franklin	Fred Weaver	KG4BKI	<a href="mailto:kg4bki@wt4ra.org">mailto:kg4bki@wt4ra.org</a>
Emergency Radio Officer – Southampton County	Chris Hanslits	W4VX (ex KA8UNO)	<a href="mailto:w4vx@charter.net">w4vx@charter.net</a> <a href="mailto:w4vx@wt4ra.org">mailto:w4vx@wt4ra.org</a>

## Training Opportunities

SKYWARN Training, Provided by the National Weather Service, Wakefield Office  
Saturday May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
Windsor VA

Citizen's National Bank  
9:00 AM until 12:00 PM  
Registration is required.

If you are interested in the class please send and email to Chris Hanslits, W4VX, at  
<mailto:w4vx@charter.net>  
Seats are still available!

## NETS

Name	Time/Date	Frequency (MHz)	Comments
WTRA/D10 Net	19:30L Thursdays	147.195 (100Hz PL)	Traffic Welcome
Franklin Repeater Users	21:00L Sunday	147.300 (131.8Hz PL)	Traffic Welcome
Mid Atlantic Emergency Net (MAEN)	20:00L First Wednesday of the Month	5.3305 USB Primary 5.3465 USB Secondary	60 Meter HF Net Regional
Old Dominion Emergency Net (ODEN)	18:30L First and Third Monday of the Month	3.947 LSB +/- the QRM	75 Meter statewide HF voice net
Virginia Digital Net (VDN)	Tuesday 19:00L	3.680 LSB, 1000 Hz AFSK. Usually starts with CHIP64 or MFSK16	Traffic Net (NTS), Good place to experiment with new HF digital modes and traffic handling

CHIP64 and MFSK16 can be downloaded from <http://xoomer.virgilio.it/aporcino>

### Report from Isle of Wight County and Smithfield

Last summer we discovered that Isle of Wight County had installed some new antenna structures out behind the EOC. One structure abraded the suspension rope on the DXCC antenna, causing it to fall down. A work party soon made a repair but it isn't pretty. One end of the dipole is hanging down beside the new steel tower.

At about the same time it was discovered that the HF rig in the Isle of Wight EOC was causing interference with the newly equipped County Dispatch Center. Thanks to Fred Weaver, KG4BKI, Chris Hanslits, W4VX (ex KA8UNO), Dick Harrell, W4RBH, and Bruce Powell, KE4GFM, several attempts have been made to solve that problem; some more successful in reducing the interference than others but none eliminating it entirely. Dick spent some time with the communications supervisor and the company that installed the dispatch equipment to track down the interference. Ferrite beads helped but were not installed on all circuits requiring them. Fred, Chris, and Bruce in various combinations tried out several antennas in various locations to see how they affected the problem.

It does not appear feasible to re-install the antenna at its present location. Unfortunately, that location was chosen by default -- there is no other convenient location. We shall have to erect an antenna in the field on the West side of the EOC. It also appears that we will need to move at least the HF operating position to the West wall because unshielded wires for the Dispatch equipment are on the other side of the brick wall from our rigs.

Bruce Powell, KE4GFM, has the task of developing a proposal for presentation to Major Hines and Richard Childress. Anyone with ideas on what would improve our operating positions should contact Bruce for consideration.

During the VOPEX exercise in February, Chris Hanslits, noticed that the signal strength from the 146.760 repeater in Williamsburg, which carries the regional emergency net, was much diminished, making the sound very noisy and tiring to listen to. Recently, an antenna with more gain and at a somewhat higher elevation was tried. Although the signal quality was improved, it still wasn't great. Options are being considered.

Our equipment problems are bad enough but with some money and work, we will solve those problems. A problem of longer duration, which cannot be solved, with time, money, or effort, is having enough personnel resources to fully staff two EOCs and two shelters for more than a day.

If you are not a member of VA RACES, we cannot call upon you in an emergency.

If you have not taken any emergency communication training, you cannot be very effective.

So, please register with VA RACES at [www.varaces.org](http://www.varaces.org) then follow the links to start your training by browsing through the VA RACES mission and vision power point presentation. Follow that with the FEMA IC 100, 200, and 700 on-line courses. Next, whenever local training is available make an effort to attend. These three training opportunities are each very different in their material but all are important to doing the job right.

Remember, we earn our radio spectrum by providing communication services to our communities.

Bruce Powell, KE4GFM  
Emergency Radio Officer (ERO), Isle of Wight County and Town of Smithfield



### **Sharing Information and Requests:**

I am in a Model "A" Ford Automobile Club and we have always had problems with radio communications while we were on a tour. Would you suggest the best radios that we could use and the participants **not** be required to have a license? We would be happy if we could approach **good** communications for 5 miles. We have tried CB and the little hand held units used by the public like you get at Wal-Mart. Neither work very well. Is there anything we can get that is better than these? What about MURS? Please respond.

Thanks,  
Ron Harvey  
EMAIL [w4rrh@wt4ra.org](mailto:w4rrh@wt4ra.org)

