



# **Western Tidewater Radio Association**

## **"HAMTOWN WAVE"**

Volume 1, Issue 7

October 2006

PO Box 323 Smithfield, VA 23431-0323 <http://www.wt4ra.org>

Next Meeting – October 13, 2006

### Presidents Corner

October 2006

Thanks to a very strong spirit in the WTRA, it has been an exciting month. We had a very successful public relations effort at the fair, chaired by Ron Harvey, and supported by several members. We have a short list of possible new hams and we made contact with several people who are interested in working with us. The heavy rains were a distraction, but they didn't dampen our spirits.

V.P. Chris Peters, N4KIT, conducted a seminar on volunteer exams which served as a warm-up for the planned September 30<sup>th</sup> testing session. An audio breakout system for interconnecting several headsets with separate

volume controls to a Morse code generator was built and tested. Chris will probably comment in his column on how that worked out.

A pool party/cookout was held on August 26th at the home of Jim and Linda. There was a good turnout, about 29 members and guests. The weather and food were both great.

I have asked Jarvis, W4VWH, to chair a nominating committee and he has generously accepted. A slate of officers for 2007 will be presented at the November WTRA business meeting. If you see Jarvis coming your way, there is no need to run. As a minister, he has surely learned from experience how to twist arms without hurting anybody.

**Jim Wise, W4PRO**  
**President**

### 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 Chair: Dick Harrell, W4RBH**

**Public Information Officer / Newsletter Editor: Ron Harvey, W4RRH**

### VE Testing Session:

The first testing session of the WTRA-VET is scheduled for September 30 at 10:00 AM at the Smithfield Library located on James Street.

## WTRA Booth at the IOW County Fair

The IOW County Fair Booth was a big success, thanks to those of you who participated. I hope those that did not get to help at least got to see the fine job that was produced. For those that did not get to see the booth, here is Linda and Jim Wise having the watch.



**Jim and Linda Wise**

The event started with a dry run at the Wise's. We set items up just like it was going to be at the fair. It was a good thing we did that as we found out the 2 meter radio was not working properly and it got attention. Other items, like the banner poles being too high, were not noticed. The main ones in attendance at the dry run were the ones that were going to be operators at the fair. After we felt comfortable with the setup, the items set overnight and the next morning were loaded in a station wagon and pickup truck. Off to the fair grounds where we had to hunt for our assigned location. We had a good spot as we were near the electrical distribution box inside a tent. Items were set up

about the same as they had been the night before. There was a stand made out of PVC which held the club banner and a Joey Pole Antenna. Underneath the stand were the projection screen and a table that had miscellaneous items including peanuts and trail mix. On the right side of the booth was a table that held an HF station set up. On the front table was a 2 meter battery operated radio, DVD player, VHS player, projector, much handout material and our information showing what WTRA actually does. We had plenty to display. Thursday set-up was done by Jim and Ron, with Linda and Jim Wise taking over the first work shift. Chris Peters came on and he and Jim stayed 'til closing time. Certain items were taken to Chris' home for night stowage. The next day, Friday, operators were Lloyd and Judy Gatling, Ron and Anne Harvey, and Chris Peters, Joe Roth and Kirsten. Saturday's festivities were manned by Tom Marstein, Chris Peters, and Dick and Betty Harrell. Sunday's workers were Chris Peters, Bruce Powell, Jim Wise and Ron Harvey. When I got there to help take things down, most of the work was already done. I know Fred Weaver, Tom Stanfield, and Stu Tyler came by. If anyone else did or helped, you will have to forgive me, I just don't have the record. Monday, Jim and I went through items, sorted them out and the ones that Jim kept were put in his attic for storage. I'll say to everyone GOOD JOB, THANKS. Muddy, yes but the Fair grounds personnel helped all they could. We did get some leads for persons interested in amateur radio.

Ron (w4rrh)

## BETTER LOW-BAND PROPAGATION by Jim Wise

Fall is when a ham's fancy turns to better propagation. Conditions for long-haul contacts on the low bands are about as good as they ever get for two reasons:

1. Lower temperatures in the upper atmosphere result in less absorption of radio signals.
2. We are at the very bottom of the eleven-year sunspot cycle, which also reduces absorption.

Although the lack of sunspots has virtually killed ten meters because there is not high enough ionization for reflection at that frequency, absorption is the real enemy on 160 and 80 meters. Signals on those bands could be received at great distances all day every day if they weren't almost completely absorbed by the D layer of the ionosphere. So when the guys who operate on

ten, fifteen, and twenty meters are wringing their hands about the bands being so sick, that is exactly the same time the low-band aficionados are salivating over the improved long-distance possibilities. So, if you are working for any awards that require confirmations on 80 or 160 meters, now is the time. Special receiving antennas are the secret, such as Beverages and "U"s. I need several zones on 80 meters to qualify for the Five-Band Worked All Zones Award and plan to not miss this golden opportunity.

Jim Wise, W4PRO

## Ham Radio Events Calendar

Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM till noon – Amateur Radio Test Session at the Smithfield Library on James Street. See [www.wt4ra.org](http://www.wt4ra.org) to register and more info.

Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> – WTRA membership meeting - This will be nominations night for 2007 officers.

## Officers and Committee Reports

### Vice-President (Chris Peters):

It's been a great month for the WTRA and I would first like to start by adding my thanks to all the folks that contributed to the success of our County Fair booth, whether in time developing display materials, lending of equipment, time spent manning the booth or any combination of the foregoing. All the efforts paid off in a successful event. Thank You!

We developed a list of folks interested in amateur radio at the Fair, and I am sure one of us club officers will be contacting those folks in the very near future. I think our next major undertaking should be to offer a Technician licensing class, with possibly also a code element. I had a couple of folks that I spoke with inquire as to whether we would offer the code as part of the class. At any rate, I have acquired and modified 11 PowerPoint presentations directly relating to the 10 sub-element topics of the Technician syllabus. I am

also developing a course syllabus which lays out the 2 sub-elements to be covered in each class session (total of 5), as well a list of possible demonstrations and visual aids to be used in each class session. I hope to have that completed within about a week or two.

On the VE Team front, we currently have three folks pre-registered to take exams at the Sept 30 session. Two of those are pre-registered for scratch to General attempts, so will be taking the code exam. I do not have any pre-registrations from any club members looking for code upgrades. Tom Marstein KF4QFH will be taking his Extra Class exam at the session. If you would like to take an exam element at the September 30 session, please pre-register online at the club website as soon as possible so I can have a rough idea of how many folks to expect. Of course there is the likelihood that we will have at least a couple of at-the-door registrations.

On a personal note, I received a Super CMOS 3 electronic keyer kit for my birthday and am in the process of building that now. I hope to have pictures for you in next month's news letter. That's it for now... until next month 73 AR de N4KIT SK.

### **Secretary's Report (Tom Stanfield):**

#### **Western Tidewater Radio Association Minutes for meeting August 14, 2006**

- 1. On Monday, August 14, 2006, the Western Tidewater Radio Association convened for a dinner meeting at Angelo's Seafood & Steak House in Smithfield.**
- 2. At 7:10 PM the meeting was called to order by Jim, W4PRO.**
- 3. Attendees introduced themselves around the table; 16 members and 2 guests, Gerry and Kathy Stewart were present.**
- 4. Repeater Report: Dick, W4RBH gave a report on the status of the repeater, auto patch, and remote base.**

5. **Secretary's Report:** The minutes of the May 9 meeting were published in the newsletter; motion to accept the minutes as posted was seconded and it carried.
6. **Treasurer's Report:** Dick, W4RBH presented a report on the club's treasury; motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented was seconded and it carried.
7. Dick, W4RBH discussed the resolution of plans to upgrade the EOC and reported on the progress of implementation.
8. Next, the floor went to Ron, W4RRH who announced some changes to the content of the newsletter.
9. Dick, W4RBH reported on the revision of the club website which includes an online membership application form.
10. The floor went to Chris, N4KIT who mentioned that we have 12 accredited volunteer examiners; information from W5YI; ready to conduct first exam session; and discussion of where to hold the session.
11. **Old Business:** None.
12. **New Business:** Jim, W4PRO announced an upcoming cookout to be held August 26<sup>th</sup> at his home.
13. With no further business to be brought forth at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM, followed by a video presentation of amateur radio DXpedition at Peter One Island and Roger Western, G3SXW's DXpedition to Tristan de Cunha in the South Atlantic.

Tom D. Stanfield, N4WXS  
Secretary

### Treasurer's Report / Membership / Repeater Report (Dick Harrell):

#### Treasurer's Report:

Account Balance as of 9/19/2006	\$ 1011.84
Remaining budgeted expenses for 2006	\$ 135.01
Actual vs. estimated income for 2006	\$ 86.00
Recent expenses:	
Club Picnic	\$ 80.59

VASC ARG Contribution	\$	50.00
wt4ra.org Domain Name Renewal	\$	9.24
PVC Frame for Club Banner	\$	40.63

### Membership Report:

Currently there are 42 members on roll.

### Repeater Report:

The WT4RA repeater (147.195+) and link system continues to function normally. Output power from the repeater amplifier remains at 130 watts.

Does everyone know what LiTZ is? Do you know that it is a function available on many repeaters including the WT4RA repeater?

LiTZ (i-added to make it easier to pronounce) is a simple method to indicate to others on an amateur VHF/UHF FM radio channel (repeater or simplex) that you have an immediate need to communicate with someone, anyone, regarding a priority situation or condition.

LiTZ stands for LONG TIME ZERO (Some books list this as LONG TERM ZERO). The LiTZ signal consists of transmitting DTMF (Touch-Tone) ZERO for at least 3 seconds. After identifying and sending the LiTZ signal the operator may announce his emergency situation and request assistance or in some instances the repeater may automatically provide instructions for contacting emergency services directly. The main benefit of this system is that it allows amateurs traveling outside of their normal operating areas a method to obtain emergency assistance or assistance information from repeaters that they may not be familiar with.

The WT4RA repeater supports the ARRL LiTZ emergency format. As used on our repeater, when a station transmits a DTMF “ZERO” tone for a full three seconds, the repeater will respond with the following voice announcement:

“Long Time Zero Emergency Assistance – Attention Control Operator Call Police”.

This message is basically an attention getter to alert monitoring stations that help is needed. If a control station doesn't immediately respond any monitoring station should identify and offer assistance. Some repeaters may respond with the actual DTMF codes to reach emergency services via the auto

patch. Remember that the emergency auto dial codes provided to all WTRA members are open for all repeater users and may be passed over the air to any station needing to make such a call.

Stations involved in a situation that does not involve safety of life or property, should try giving a general voice call before using LITZ. Use LITZ only when your voice calls go unanswered or the people who respond can't help you.

## Photo Gallery (County Fair)



Satellite Tracking Program by Fred Weaver



QSL Card Display by Linda Wise



The Booth



Chris Peters Takes the Helm



## Dick Harrell talks with the County

**Items for Sale** - (Items don't have to be radio equipment. Anything electrical or electronic is fair game. A couple non – electrical items are OK, but we don't want to make the Newsletter a miscellaneous trading post.)

Kenwood ts830s w/ssb and cw filters and new finals and driver installed last month. It comes with Shure desk mike. \$400  
Jim Jackson, [jlj3rd@visi.net](mailto:jlj3rd@visi.net)

## Links of Interest

### WTRA HOME PAGE

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

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

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

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

[www.w5yi.org](http://www.w5yi.org)

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

[www.hello-radio.org](http://www.hello-radio.org)

### NWS Wakefield

<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/akq/>

### Wakefield radar loop

[http://weather.noaa.gov/radar/loop/D\\_S.p19r0/si.kakq.shtml](http://weather.noaa.gov/radar/loop/D_S.p19r0/si.kakq.shtml)

### WVEC-TV loop

[http://www.wvec.com/weather/image/ry/doppler/skymax\\_loop\\_large\\_region.gif](http://www.wvec.com/weather/image/ry/doppler/skymax_loop_large_region.gif)

### WTVR-TV loop

<http://files.wtvr.com/radarloop.gif>

### NexStorm lightning real-time

<http://www.yorkcounty.gov/weather/nexstormlightning/StormVue.html>

### National Hurricane Center

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

### Weather Matrix

<http://www.weathermatrix.net/>

### Weather Underground

<http://www.weatherunderground.com/>

Intellicast  
<http://intellicast.com/>

WC4R weather  
<http://members.cox.net/kg4kaw/>



### Emails Received

Another great job on the newsletter, Ron. I'll try to have more for you this coming month.

Jim (w4pro)

**Please submit items you would like to be in the WTRA Newsletter to [w4rrh@wt4ra.net](mailto:w4rrh@wt4ra.net) no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.**