



Western Tidewater Radio Association

"HAMTOWN WAVE"

Volume 1, Issue 9

December 2006

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

Next Meeting – January 8, 2007

(This is the Annual Meeting)

Presidents Corner:

DECEMBER 2006

Highlight of recent WTRA activity was our quarterly meeting at Angelo's. We had a great turnout, about 21 including guests. Most notable guest was Richard Childress, Director of Emergency Management for Isle of Wight County. Richard gave a briefing on the state of emergency communications facilities between the IoW Emergency Operation Center and other Tidewater emergency control centers. A lively Q&A followed which was very informative.

Also at the November meeting, the nominating committee, chaired by Jarvis Hearn, W4VWH, reported its slate of officers for 2007. All officers presently serving will return, but with the President and Vice President trading places. That is assuming that the presented slate is elected, which may not happen if there are further nominations from the floor at the annual meeting in January when elections actually take place.

The 2006-07 contest season on the airwaves is in full tilt. Both the CW and the SSB weekends of the ARRL Sweepstakes were spent with like interested friends from the Virginia DX Century Club operating for the 24 hour allowed maximum. Our main goals were to have fun and fellowship and to make at least one contact with each of the 80 ARRL sections which includes all of the 50 states, all Canadian Provinces, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. We were successful in achieving the “Clean Sweep” both times.

The World-Wide DX contest, sponsored by CQ Magazine, is also split into the CW and the SSB halves, the SSB half held in October. The CW weekend is the last full weekend in November. The ARRL Ten Meter Contest is in early December as is the 160 contest at the other end of the HF spectrum.

Look for a report on WTRA’s second Volunteer Exam session in this issue.

Also, check out Janet’s, N4JMA, bio in the current issue of the Portsmouth Club newsletter. She makes a great case for amateur radio as an insurance policy against being isolated by total failure of commercial communications services.

Have a great Holiday Season. It has been a great year for the WTRA and, I hope, for each and every one of its members. I have enjoyed working with all of you and am looking forward to another year.

73 & 88,

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 Chair: Dick Harrell, W4RBH

Public Information Officer / Newsletter Editor: Ron Harvey, W4RRH

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee has put forth the following slate of officers for the coming year:

Chris Peters, N4KIT for President
Jim Wise, W4PRO for First Vice-President
Jarvis Hearn, W4VWH for Second Vice-President
Richard Harrell, W4RBH for Treasurer
Tom Stanfield, N4WXS for Secretary
Ron Primmar, N4TJI for Trustee

These officers were presented during the November dinner meeting at Angelo's Restaurant and will be voted on during the January meeting.

During the January meeting the floor will be open for other nominations by the body.

As chairman of the committee I would like to thank Ron Harvey and Dick Harrell, the other two members of the committee for their input during the nominating process. These two fellows are easy to work with and are great club members.

We would like to thank each and everyone who served as an officer during the 2006 year which is coming to a close. Perhaps we can take a few moments during the first meeting of the New Year to express our appreciation for the great work our leadership has provided in making this the best Club year we have experienced thus far. Our programs have been excellent and our membership is at an all time high.

Great work folks!

Jarvis Hearn, W4VWH
Chairman of the Nominating Committee for 2007

THE SPUD BLASTER



I thought I had heard of every imaginable way to get antennas up in trees until I received an email from WTRA's one and only honorary member, Britt Belyea, W4GSF. Britt had witnessed a presentation on using a well-known pneumatic device called a Spud Blaster to hurl an object over almost any tree with a line attached for pulling up an antenna support. Britt called it to my attention because I had recently been looking for partners to share the cost of a super slingshot that can do something similar, but at about three times the cost. Constructing my version of the Spud Blaster presented an irresistible challenge. It took about a day and fifty bucks.



When I was young and indestructible (so I thought) I climbed up a pine tree using spikes and a leather lineman's belt. Getting down was another matter. I was rescued by a friend with an extension ladder. So much for that method. Next, a half-pound weight on a short piece of rope was propelled over a tree limb by a motion something like a vertical discus throw. That works, but takes a lot of patience because of the inherent inaccuracy. Not to be used near breakable objects.

Ordinary slingshots work for heights up to about 60 feet. A spinning reel with monofilament line helps reduce drag. It is best to pull up a length of light twine before risking line breakage because of the weight of the rope.

I haven't tried a bow and arrow, but have seen that method work very well. Getting the arrow to come down again is sometimes tricky.

That brings us to the most powerful device used for this purpose since the Rangers scaled the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc during the Normandy invasion. My version of the Spud Blaster is in the testing stages, but I am confident that it will do the job at hand. Using a fraction of the air pressure available, a small potato was last seen on its upward ascent at twice the height of the tallest tree in the Isle of Wight County. There have been no reports of new objects in orbit or damage in neighboring towns and counties so far. A slight modification to my tripod will facilitate aiming the blaster nearly straight up to ensure that the projectile comes to rest closer to my QTH.

My launcher uses two lengths of Schedule 40 PVC pipe and two valves to form an air cannon. This version is ten foot long, while others described on the Internet are about half that length so they can be fired from the shoulder like a World War II Bazooka. On one end is a bicycle stem valve (Pep Boys) for pumping up the larger PVC pipe. The other is a lawn sprinkler valve (Lowe's), which is

electrically activated to instantly release pressure into the barrel thus firing the cannon.

I hope to launch a line over an eighty-foot pine tree on the next suitable day. High winds can be a problem. I have installed a fishing pole with a spinning reel at the muzzle and a projectile made from two PVC end caps, wrapped with black tape to achieve a close fit to the barrel.

I just hope we get a nice warm, quiet day soon for the acid test. My eighty-meter antenna is still up only as a result of levitation, the support rope having broken months ago. The tree limb must have grown over the support rope during the several years this antenna has been up. You just can't beat dumb luck.

Jim Wise, W4PRO

Ham Radio Events Calendar

Monday January 8, Annual Meeting

We have scheduled 3 new VE sessions as follows (Chris – N4KIT):

Saturday January 27, 9 am to 12 pm at the Smithfield Library

Saturday April 28, 9 am to 12 pm at the Smithfield Library

We are tentatively scheduled to hold a session at the Bronco Club Picnic. I do not have date certain, but I believe it will be held June 9th this year. I expect the VE session will be given around 10 am. (Chris – N4KIT)

NOVEMBER WTRA MEETING



Speaker Mr. Richard Childress, Head of the Department of Emergency Management for Isle of Wight County.

WTRA Supports Carter '06 Functional Exercise

Ron Harvey, W4RRH, and I covered the “Carter’06 Functional Exercise November 2, 2006” drill today from 1:05 PM to the drill termination at about 2:15 PM at the Isle of Wight EOC.

We sent a packet message to VA EOC via KR4MA-1 advising that the I of W EOC was manned by amateur radio operators for the drill.

However, neither the Sussex EOC or VA EOC were manned with amateur radio operators so there was no direct contact. We were able to bring up the W4ZA 146.94 MHz repeater and the 146.76 MHz repeater using the remote base radio.

The packet radio on high power was not able to connect to TIDE, but was able to make it to LARCND; however, when connected via LARCND the link was frequently dropped. I then switched antennas connecting the shelter radio antenna to the packet radio and was able to get a reliable direct connection to TIDE. Some more testing may be needed in this area.

In spite of not having anyone to directly talk to we demonstrated the ability to send a packet message and to connect to the repeaters that the VA EOC would normally use.

It was a lot of fun and we got some really colorful badges. Richard Childress, Major Hines, and the event observer, seemed happy with our support.

73's

Dick, W4RBH

Officers and Committee Reports

Vice President

Since I was remiss in getting comments submitted for the last newsletter, let's see if I can remember... First off, we are well into contest season and I hope those that do contest are enjoying some better than expected propagation, given that it is the bottom of the solar cycle. Those that do not contest, but

may have some interest, now is a good time to get on the bands on weekends and listen to those contest exchanges and see how it all works. Anyone who is interested in contesting, please feel free to contact me for assistance if you would like.

The VE Team held another exam session yesterday and we had a grand total of 1 candidate to test. Even so, it was a good session and we are pleased to welcome Tony Michalek, visiting family from New York State, to the ranks of General Class operators. The next VE session will be held January 27th at the Smithfield Library. Which brings me to rules changes. The R&O in FCC docket 04-140 which was released back in October was published in the Federal Register on Nov. 15th, which means the rules changes go into effect Dec. 15. If you have not already, I urge each of you to read the changes (especially the new frequency privileges) and also to obtain a new band chart. Joe WC4R posted one to the reflector the other day, and there is also one available on the league website. For those studying for upgrades, the rules changes resulted only in the deletion of several questions from the question pools. Questions relative to the new rules will not be added until the regularly scheduled update of the question pools, so continue to use your existing study materials.

I guess that's it for this month, see you on the bands!

73, Chris

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

Treasurer's Report:

Main Account Balance as of 11/20/2006	\$ 979.70
Remaining anticipated expenses for 2006	\$ NONE
Recent expenses:	
10/20 – Reimbursement for VE Testing Supplies	
11/13 – Guest Speaker Dinner	
11/13 – Special Recognition Dinners	
11/14 – SERA Dues for 2007	
VE Program Account Balance as of 11/20/2006	\$ 40.52*

***On November 2, WTRA opened a new checking account to keep expenses related to the VE Testing program and associated Amateur Radio Training Classes separate from the remaining club funds.**

Dues Reminder: Dues for 2007 are due by January 31, 2007. Several members submitted their dues at the recent Nov 13 meeting. Annual dues are \$18.00 for renewing members and \$28.00 for family memberships. In addition to the above, new members pay a one time \$2.00 "New Member Fee". You may bring dues to the January business meeting or mail them to the WTRA at PO Box 323, Smithfield, VA 23431.

Membership Report:

Currently there are 42 members on roll.

Repeater Report:

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

I am beginning to see more members using the remote base radio. Ron, W4RRH, and I were able to demonstrate it's capabilities to Isle of Wight county officials during the recent "Carter '06 Functional Exercise" which was a emergency response drill covering Sussex, Prince George, Dinwiddie, Southampton, Isle of Wight, and Surry counties. WTRA members not already trained in the use of the remote base radio, and who are interested in this capability may request information from me by sending an e-mail to w4rbh@wt4ra.org .

FCC "Omnibus" Amateur Radio R&O Published in *Federal Register*, Takes Effect December 15

The Highlights

The FCC has:

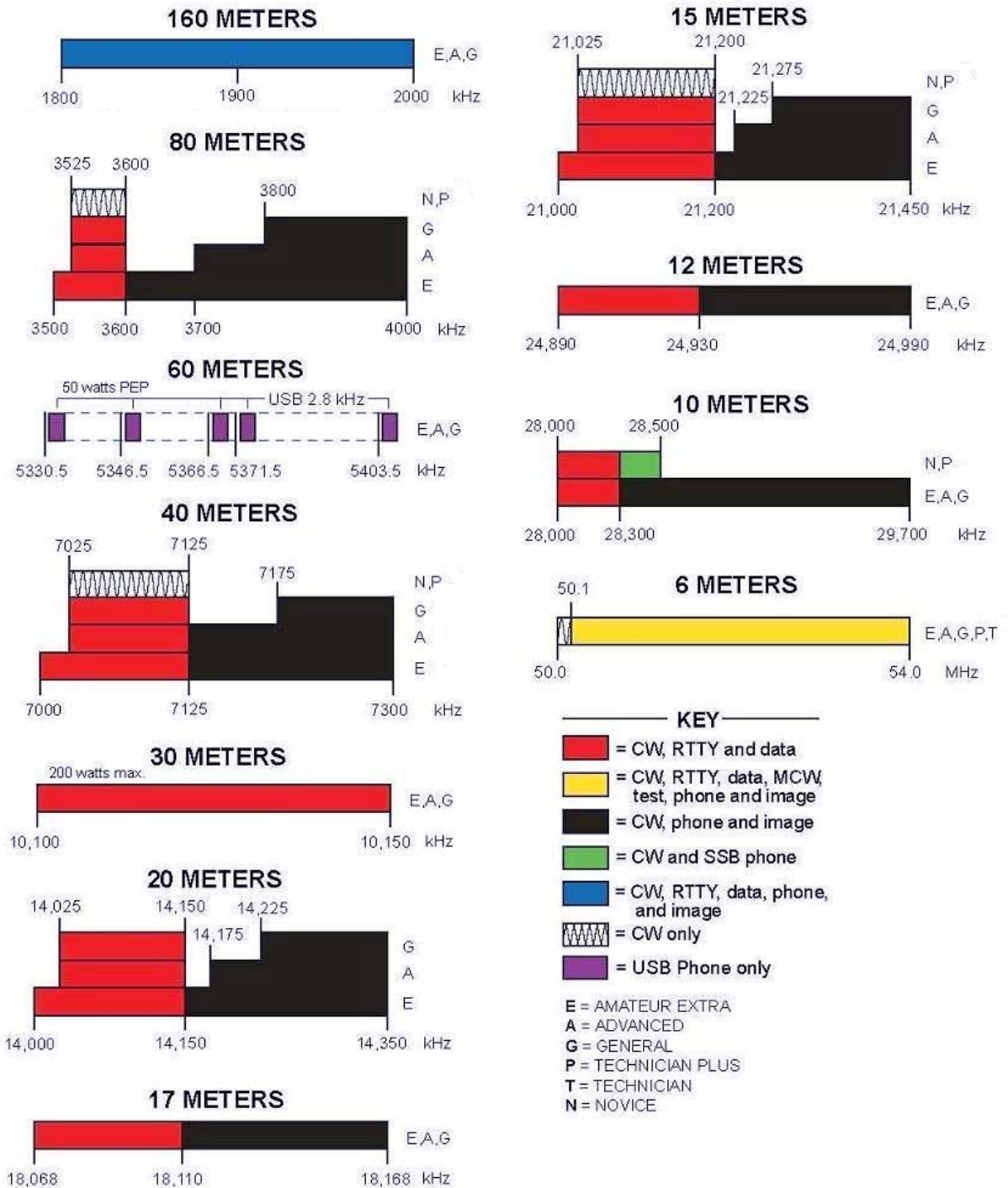
- expanded the phone subbands in the 75 and 40 meter bands;**
- agreed to allow Novice and Tech Plus (Technician with Element 1 credit) licensees to operate in the General class CW subbands on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters;**

- **implemented rules to discourage multiple vanity call sign filings on the same day from the same applicant;**
- **permitted auxiliary stations to transmit on portions of the 2 meter band;**
- **permitted the use of spread spectrum on 222-225 MHz;**
- **permitted amateurs to retransmit communications from the International Space Station;**
- **permitted amateur licensees to designate a specific Amateur Radio club to receive their call sign in memoriam;**
- **eliminated certain restrictions governing the manufacture, marketing and sale of external RF power amplifiers intended for Amateur Radio use;**
- **clarified that "amateur stations may, at all times and on all frequencies authorized to the control operator, make transmissions necessary to meet essential communication needs and to facilitate relief actions";**
- **deleted the frequency bands and segments specified for Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) stations;**
- **deleted the requirement to publicly announce Amateur Radio examination locations and times, and**
- **permitted Amateur Radio stations in Alaska and surrounding waters more flexibility in providing emergency communications.**

The FCC also took several other miscellaneous actions.

US Amateur Bands

www.wt4ra.org



Obtaining a Vanity Call of Your Choice

Well there is definitely a story to getting a vanity call of your choice. And a bit controversial in certain circles. The primary method to obtain a neat 1x2 or 2x1 call in the 4th call district is to watch for calls that will be made available "returned to the pool" due to "cancellation" through expiration. So when someone doesn't renew a 1x2 or 2x1, you wait 2 years (+1 day) after it expires and then apply for it. Better yet, until the rules change, put in multiple applications 'cuz it is a true pari-mutuel lottery. The more "shares" you "buy" the better your odds. That is how I got W4VX. I put in multiple applications and my odds were better than 60%. Joe, WC4R used this process too. Be aware, this is controversial in some circles. In fact, the rules are changing so that only one application is allowed per applicant per call sign. Until the rules change, do what you can to get the call sign. Available 1x2 or 2x1 vanity call signs in the 4th call district are rare!

The method that I thought was a little more bizarre but is absolutely certain is to "harvest" a call sign currently assigned to a Silent Key. If someone has passed away and the survivors have not informed the FCC so that the license can be cancelled the call sign it will stay on the books. Now, as your average ham, you can inform the FCC that a license holder has passed away. If you provide documentation from say the Social Security death index (SSDI), you can get the FCC to cancel the call sign. If you are the only one that knows the call sign has been cancelled and the call sign is made available you then file an application the same day it will be cancelled and as the French say "Voila!" you have a new call sign before anybody else could apply for it. This takes a bit of time matching up 1x2 and 2x1 licenses to the SSDI however there are folks that have compiled lists of these calls and will make them available. These lists are usually kept somewhat private because there are folks out there that form clubs to hold multiple call signs just to keep 1x2s and 2x1s out of circulation.

This method is detailed on several web sites the best of which are vanityhq.com and ae7q.com. ae7q.com has the best reports but they are more for the database savvy. For instance you can perform queries to see how many applications were filed for a given call sign. Or how many licenses a given ham is a trustee for, etc. Neat site!

If you want a 1x2 or 2x1 call it will take some work, especially if you want one with a "4" in it. Have fun with it. I was surprised how much I got into the process and how much I learned about the history of call signs. Did you know that the

FCC originally recycled call signs or when you moved to a different call district they would give you a call from that district with your old suffix if it was available?

I enjoyed the process and it was an exciting moment when I saw that I was assigned W4VX. I hope to put the call to good use and sure like the way it rolls off the key and tongue. AR

73's de W4VX

By the way, Joe Roth too got his WC4R 2x1 call the same way Chris did. He actually submitted 103 applications.

VA RACES Inc, District 10

Contact Information

Title	Name	Call	Email Address
District Emergency Radio Officer	Chris Hanslits	W4VX	w4vx@charter.net mailto:w4vx@wt4ra.org
Emergency Radio Officer – Isle of Wight County, Town of Smithfield	Bruce Powell	KE4GFM	mailto:ke4gfm@wt4ra.org
Emergency Radio Officer – City of Franklin	Fred Weaver	KG4BKI	mailto:kg4bki@wt4ra.org
Emergency Radio Officer – Southampton County	Chris Hanslits	W4VX	w4vx@charter.net mailto:w4vx@wt4ra.org

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 19:15L Friday 19:150L	3.578 USB, 1000 Hz AFSK. Starts with CHIP64	Traffic Net (NTS), Good place to experiment with new HF digital modes and traffic handling

Note the frequency change for the Virginia Digital Net. The frequency was changed due to the changes in band plan on 80 Meters.

Photo Gallery

Who is the sexy blond with W4PRO? Hint: It's not Linda (answer at bottom)



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.)

Jim Jackson KD2FN (365-0125)

1-Kenwood TS 430-S w/SSB&CW filters, FM board, PS 230 Power Supply, MC 50 Desk Mike and operating and service manuals. \$500.00. This unit has new finals installed by Burghart Radio.

2-Kenwood TS830-s w/SSB & CW filters, Shure 444d Desk Mike, operating and service manuals. Just back from service by Land Air Communications and under warranty \$400.00

3-Icom 725 w/ SSB & CW filters and MARS Mod. DC cable and Icom Hand Mike, operating manual. \$350.00

All the above units have full power from 160-60 meters and can be seen and/or tested at my home.

4-Kenwood Antenna Tuner AT-230 \$175.00

5- Kenwood Station Monitor SM 220. I have the manual but no cable \$225.00

I also have a Yaesu FT 1000 MP in excellent condition that I would trade toward a TS 2000 in like condition, or, sell for \$1150.00.

Links of Interest

WTRA HOME PAGE

www.wt4ra.org

www.wrrl.org

www.emcomm.org

www.varaces.org

www.w5yi.org

www.sera.org

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>

WVEC-TV loop

http://www.wvec.com/weather/image/ry/doppler/skymax_loop_large_registration.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/>

Hurricane Watch Net -

www.hwn.org



Emails Received

Ron,

At the VE session today a comment was made by a member of another local club relative to the WTRA Newsletter. It was something like - the WTRA newsletter make their's look bad. Or something like that. It was a great compliment to your work and shows it is being noticed beyond just the club!!

bki>

Please submit items you would like to be in the WTRA Newsletter to w4rrh@wt4ra.net no later than the 20th of the month.

Sexy Blond – KG4NUH Jack