



Western Tidewater Radio Association

"HAMTOWN WAVE"

Volume 2, Issue 10

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

"How I Love Those _____ Hills" (you fill in the state)



BLACKWATER CANYON

AUTUMN

By Margaret E. Sangster

When autumn flings her banners wide upon October air,
All nature seems to thank its God for making life so fair.
The hills go robed in amethyst; the trees are dressed in fire,
The very air seems thrilling with a passionless desire.

One somehow feels that God on high must love this season best,
He holds it as a mother holds her babe close to her breast.
The pressure of his hand is on all nature like a prayer-----
When autumn flings her banners wide upon October air.

WTRA IS NOW 50 MEMBERS STRONG

Presidents Corner:

We have quite a busy month coming up in the club this month with quite a number of activities. First, October 2nd, 10th, 16th, 17th, 23rd, and 24th from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at the Smithfield Library brings the second edition of the much lauded KG4BKI Technician Class license course. We hope anyone thinking about getting their ticket considers attending this fine offering by Fred. Speaking of getting your first ticket, look elsewhere in this issue for this month's installment of "How I Got My First Ticket".

Immediately following the Technician class, the VE Team will hold a test session on Saturday October 27th – 9:00am also at the Smithfield Library. We hope to see all of Fred's students as well as all of you who have been making noise about upgrading come out and take your exams. Remember to bring two forms of ID and copy of your license.

And finally, I am please to announce the first installment of the WTRA Technical Workshops as part of the brand new Elmering Program. The workshop is titled Antennas 101 and will cover most of the antenna basics in a presentation, as well as a practical workshop in which we will build one or more wire antennas. The workshop is open to all and anyone with a wire antenna project in mind is encouraged to bring materials to construct their own antenna. We will have a test rig set up with SWR reading capability, as well as an MFJ Antenna Analyzer to test the results of our efforts, as well as to illustrate the concepts covered in the presentation/Q&A. Anyone interested in attending the class should contact me, N4KIT at n4kit@wt4ra.org and let me know that you are planning to attend. The workshop will be held on October 13th starting at 9:00 am at my QTH. Parking is at a premium so I would like to have a headcount and also encourage car-pooling as much as possible.

73 for now & see you on the air!

Chris – N4KIT

The Exam Room:

REMINDER: The NCVEC Question pool committee has released the regularly scheduled revision of the General class question pool. The new pool consists of 486 questions and one figure and was released in early January. The new pool is effective on July 1st, 2007. Copies of the new pool and the figure graphic may be obtained from <http://www.w5yi.org/page.php?id=24> . If you are working on your General upgrade, be sure to keep this in mind, as new exams are now in effect!

Upcoming VE sessions:

Saturday October 27th 9:00 am Smithfield Library



News Items:

- The Franklin Amateur Radio Club is now open for new members. Membership is \$5.00 through the end of 2008. Contact Fred Weaver (kg4bki)
- The FCC will reduce the regulatory fee to obtain or renew an Amateur Radio vanity call sign by more than 40 percent starting September 17. In a *Report & Order* ([R&O](#)) released August 6, "Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2007," in [MD Docket 07-81](#), the Commission will cut the fee from its current \$20.80 to \$11.70. This marks the lowest fee in the history of the current vanity call sign program. The FCC is authorized by the Communications Act of 1934 (as amended) to collect vanity call sign fees to recover the costs associated with that program. The vanity call sign fee has fluctuated over the 11 years of the current program -- from a low of \$12 to a high of \$50. The FCC says it anticipates some 14,700 Amateur Radio vanity call sign "payment units" or applications during the next fiscal year, collecting \$171,990 in fees from the program.

More info at <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2007/08/31/105/?nc=1>

Ham Radio Events Calendar

- **Fred (kg4bki) has reserved the Smithfield Library Community Room the following date:**

27 October 2007 - Saturday Test Session

- **Fred has a Tech class scheduled:**

2 Oct - Orientation

10 Oct - Session 2

16-17 Oct - Sessions 3-4

23-24 Oct - Sessions 5-6

Test on 27 Oct.

- **Antenna Workshop (Chris Peters) :**

I am planning to have the workshop at my QTH on October 12 (Saturday) starting at 9:00am.

As far as materials, it really depends on what you want to build. For element wire, the preferred material is No. 14 stranded copper-clad antenna wire, available locally from RadioWorks in Portsmouth. You can also use #14 stranded THHN electrical wire available from Home Depot or Lowes. You will also need some insulators and feed line. Insulators can be home-made from most anything, and I have some Lexan we will using to show how to home-brew some. They can also be purchased from RadioWorks. Selection of feedlines will be one of the topics we cover in the presentation, but typically the choices are 50 ohm coax or ladderline. The objective of the workshop is to give participants the information needed to make informed decisions about what wire antenna/feedline is right for their situation.

Hope you can make it!

How I Got my First Amateur Radio Ticket

By Chris – N4KIT

I first became interested in Radio in the early 70s at around age 10. My family lived in an old farmhouse built in the early 1800's in upstate New York. My brother and I had a "fort" behind a wall at the back of a closet under the stairs. There was barely enough room in there for one of us to get into and the access was through a "doggie door" type opening in the paneling. In order to be able to communicate outside our little "fort", we rigged up a wireline telegraph from whatever parts we could cobble together. Most of the wire was 2 conductor twisted wire stripped from the basement. The wire had served in a previous life as part of some kind of crude early fire alarm system. The sounders were SPDT relays from the alarm system wired up to act as buzzers.

Those activities lead through a progression that eventually lead to Basic Electronics class in the 9th grade, and frequent trips to the library to look at the ARRL Handbooks of the time to plan for the homebrew rig I would build. In those days, the ARRL publications were smaller in size, probably about 6 x 9 inches and the covers were all red and black. Anyway, I never found an Elmer and got around to trying to earn a ticket. That time was the tail end of the time you still had to either go to the FCC office or get a local ham to oversee your Novice exam. Well, the field office was 2 ½ hours away in Syracuse, and I didn't have a clue how to try to find a local ham. Anyway, it wasn't long before we moved from that farmhouse to Virginia, and I kind of lost interest in radio.

Roll the clock forward to the mid 1990's. By now I was married and had 2 kids, one of whom was old enough to be curious about how things work and also to start Cub Scouts. That brought the construction of a crystal set, and the bug bit me back, hard! By now, the internet had become fairly accessible to common folk, so I dove into learning with a vengeance. Frequent visits to the public library and surfing on the 'net brought a frenzy of learning and studying. In September of 1996, I traveled over to the Virginia Beach Convention Center for the VE session at the hamfest.

The VE session was held at the Holiday Inn next door to the convention center, and it seemed like the exams took all of the meeting rooms on the mezzanine level. Actually it was probably only one, but there were probably 50 people there to take exams, and it seemed like just as many VE's. Without belaboring the story, I passed the No-Code Technician exam that day, and the

VE's pinned an "I Passed!" ribbon to my shirt and sent me on my way like a third-grader over to the Hamfest. I started wandering around the 'fest and wasn't there long when a nice gentleman with curly blond hair walked right up to me, stuck his hand out and said "Hi, I'm Gordon, WB6NOA!" Many of you know that Gordon West writes a number of radio books and offers a complete line of study guides. Well, here was THE Gordon West, WB6NOA, in the flesh, talking to me! Turns out Gordon had sponsored the VE session. He handed me a big plastic bag full of literature and catalogs and cheerfully wished me well and sent me on my way to ogle all of the goodies.

A few days later, on my birthday, my first amateur radio ticket was issued – KF4MFQ. And the rest, as they say, is history. I imagine that the lack of resources and Elmering available to me as a youngster are part of the reason that I am passionate about our VE team and about trying to be there to Elmer folks that want it. Please remember what it was like when you were trying to get your license and jump in to help with the club activities for newcomers!

NEWSLETTER EXTRA

If you like cars of the 50s and 60s, turn your speakers on, hold down CTRL and click [here](#).

Tech Class Schedule –

The schedule is a little odd based on the room's availability, so here is the schedule: (All class sessions are 6:30 - 8:30PM, The Test Session is 9:30AM) **Members, pay attention to the 'Activity' as you are welcome to pitch in or suggest something or your own.**

OCT 2 - Registration and Introduction - I have training books for sale and there are a number of training guides on the Internet. The room has broadband, so some participants have brought their laptops for notes and downloads. Participants may also bring a jump drive or a CD to get copies of any materials used in the class. Activity - *Show and Tell - After talking about all the requirements and testing, talking about how the fun part of Ham Radio is good!*

OCT 10 - FCC Rules (T1) and Prohibited Communications (T2) - Activity - *Review of frequency Band Plans, Frequency Utilization Plans, Considerate Operators Guide, and Net Operations. Monitor net on the Williamsburg repeater. (Note that Technician Class privileges are expanded since the elimination of code and this is where that is addressed.)*

OCT 16 - RF Safety (T0) and Basic Electronics (T4) - Activity - *Use of the VOM.*

OCT 17 - Station Set-Up and Operation (T5) and Communications Modes and Methods (T6) - Activity - Packet(?) or maybe something on HF. Connecting your radio to a computer. Repeater Operation.

OCT 23 - Special Operations (T7) and Emergency and Public Service Communications (T8) - Activity - Traffic Handling

OCT 24 - Propagation and Antennas (T9) and Operating Practices (T3) - Activity - **JIM WISE W4PRO - PROPAGATION**

OCT 27- TEST

bki>

What is it? (no one responded)

Officers and Committee Reports

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

Treasurer's Report (by W4RBH):

Main Account Balance as of 9/20/2007	\$ 1096.57
Remaining anticipated expenses for 2007	\$ 146.25
Recent expenses:	
Field Day Site Reservation (Day 2)	\$ 35.00
VASC ARG 2007 Contribution	\$ 50.00
VE Program Account Balance as of 9/20/2007	\$ 118.03

Membership Report (by W4RBH):

Currently there are 49 members on roll. Everyone please welcome our newest member, Jack Howell, KI4YLV. Jack's QTH is Suffolk, VA. There is currently one additional application pending.

Repeater Report (by W4RBH):

The WT4RA repeater (147.195+) and remote base system continues to function normally. Output power from the repeater amplifier remains at 130 watts. Members are encouraged to check-in to the weekly net sessions each Thursday at 7:30 PM.

We seem to recently be in one of those ongoing band enhancement periods which are fairly common this time of the year.. Each morning at 9:00 AM the repeater turns off the tone access mode and instantly there is interference

from distant repeaters. This is especially noticeable on some mornings as one of our neighboring repeaters to the north runs a net beginning at 9:00 AM. I have been making a habit of placing the repeater back in the tone mode once I notice that we are experiencing a band enhancement; however, if I haven't done this and you detect that there is interference keying up the repeater please go ahead and turn the tone mode back on. The DTMF codes to do this are provided to all WTRA members.

This year on occasion we are also hearing stations working into a Pennsylvania repeater which apparently is also using the 100 Hz sub tone. In this case there is little that we can do to reduce the interference other than shutting down the repeater. If you do hear weak or noisy signals on the repeater just figure that they are from outside of our area and go ahead and use the repeater in a normal fashion. One great thing about FM is that the receiver will only detect the stronger signal.

Hopefully with the return of cooler weather the propagation issues will soon go away.



Emails Received

Ron, you are doing a terrific job on the newsletters!!!
They are always a happy find among the emails:)
Janet N4JMA

Please submit items you would like to be in the WTRA Newsletter to w4rrh@wt4ra.net no later than the 20th of the month. WHEN YOU SEND ANYTHING, PLEASE SEND IT TO w4rrh@wt4ra.org DO NOT SEND IT TO wt4ra@wtr4ra.org OR USE THE REFLECTOR AS THAT MAKES IT AVAILABLE TO CLUB MEMBERS BEFORE w4rrh USES IT. Thanks.

