



Western Tidewater Radio Association

"HAMTOWN WAVE"

Volume 3, Issue 3

March 2008

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

NEXT CLUB MEETING MAY 12, 2008



Upcoming VE sessions:
None scheduled at this time.



January Club Meeting





QUARTERLY WTRA MEETING PROGRAM BY NQ4K VIRGINIA QSO PARTY



Officers and Committee Reports

Vice President (w4pro)

Virginia QSO party -

This is in addition to the minutes of the January 11th meeting, which will be posted by our Secretary.

The program was by Gordon Miller, NQ4K, who drove down from the D.C. area to promote the Virginia QSO party, an annual on-the-air contest sponsored by the Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club. This year's party will be held on the weekend of March 15 & 16. Complete rules are available on the SPARC website, www.qsl.net/sterling.

In brief, points are awarded to stations operating in Virginia for two-way QSO's with any station. Stations outside this state get points for contacting stations in Virginia. To make a QSO, Virginia stations give a QSO serial number and their county or independent city. Other stations give their QSO number and state, province or country. The counties act as multipliers. SSB contacts are good for one point, CW and Digital for two.

Why participate? Every one who submits a log gets a certificate and plaques are awarded for high score in each of the many categories. And it should be a lot of fun. If you are working towards Worked All States or Worked All Counties, this is a chance to pick up a lot of new ones

N4KIT has suggested a club multi-operator entry. Details have not been worked out at this time. The drill would be to decide on a host for the contest who would make his or her station available to WTRA members who wish to participate. Our entry can be mix of SSB, CW and Digital modes, depending on the capabilities of the host station and the preference of the operator. Most WTRA member stations can work phone or CW, but digital may be iffy. This is primarily an HF event, but there is a VHF only plaque.

If you have ideas, suggestions or just want to let it be known that you want to participate in the QSO Party, let N4KIT or W4PRO know so we can judge the level of interest.. If you wish to operate from your home station, go right ahead. Your score there will be added in to the WTRA total if you name the WTRA as your club when you submit your log.



Treasurer's Report (by W4RBH):

Main Account Balance as of 2/20/2008	\$ 1589.19
Cash and checks waiting deposit	\$ 48.00
Remaining budgeted expenses for 2008	\$ 706.74
Recent expenses:	
Dinner for Guest Speaker and his XYL	\$ 23.02
VE Program Account Balance as of 2/20/2008	\$ 153.03

WTRA members from 2007 who have not already paid their 2008 dues are reminded that dues for 2008 were due no later than January 31. If you have not done so already, please mail your dues to the WTRA at PO Box 323,

Smithfield, VA 23431. An e-mail was sent to each delinquent member reminding them that dues are past due. *A follow-up e-mail will be sent soon to delinquent members to give them one last chance to renew before club privileges (e-mail list, e-mail reflector, auto-patch, speed-dial, etc.) are suspended.*

Membership Report (by W4RBH):

Currently there are forty-eight members on roll. Additionally there are eight 2007 members that have not renewed for 2008.

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.

During February we had our first tornado watch for the year and just prior to that there were smoke warnings from the outbreak of brush fires. With spring not too far away and the possibility of sever weather is getting a little better each day, I guess it is time to review our procedures for the use of the repeater's weather alert feature and to discuss SKYWARN training.

Whenever WTRA members 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 following the repeater's tone alert and voice announcement, they should announce the nature and duration of the alert. This will make others monitoring the repeater aware of the alert. During the alert the repeater's normal courtesy tone will change to a Morse code "W". The change in courtesy tone is to alert later repeater users of the weather alert and the need for them to check the current weather status on the 162.550 MHz weather radio frequency.

The codes for activating the weather alert feature have been previously e-mailed to all WTRA members.

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 encourage the use of the weather alert feature for these.

You should also use the Weather Alert feature if you witness a severe weather event, but there are no current alerts from the National Weather Service (NWS). Many of the WTRA members are also trained NWS SKYWARN Spotters and know to also notify NWS directly if severe weather is spotted.

The NWS Wakefield website

(<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/akq/spotterinfo/skywarn.htm#Training>) provides a listing of current basic and advanced training classes. As of February 20, there are five basic classes listed and two advanced classes. The advanced training classes are new and will be conducted at the Wakefield office. These classes are intended for those that have completed the basic course. If interested check the website regularly for class availability. All WTRA members not previously trained are encouraged to attend one of these classes.



Where did the name "ham" come from?

The meaning of the word HAM according to The Original Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases (Americanized Version) is as follows:

ham (adjective)

Ignorant: lay, amateurish, nonprofessional, unqualified, inexpert, ham, unskillful, nonprofessional, ham, lay, amateurish, amateur, self-taught

WELL! We know better than that, don't we?!?!?!?!?!?

Have you ever wondered why radio amateurs are called "HAMS"? Well, the story goes like this: The word "HAM" as applied to 1908 was the station call of the first amateur wireless stations operated by some amateurs of the Harvard Radio Club. They were ALBERT S. HYMAN, BOB ALMY, and POOGIE MURRAY. At first they called their station "HYMAN-ALMY-MURRAY". Tapping out such a long name in code soon became tiresome and called for a revision. They changed it to "HYALMU" (hi-al-moo), using the first two letters of each of their names. Early in 1910 some confusion resulted between signals from the amateur wireless station "HYALMU" and a Mexican ship named "HYALMO". They decided to use only the first letter of each name, and the station call became "HAM".

In the early pioneer days of unregulated radio, amateur operators picked their own frequency and call letters. Then, as now, some amateurs had better signals as commercial stations. The resulting interference came to the

attention of congressional committees in Washington and Congress gave much time to proposed legislation designed to critically limit amateur radio activity.

In 1911, Albert Hyman chose the controversial WIRELESS REGULATION BILL as the topic for his thesis at Harvard. His instructor insisted that a copy be sent to Senator David I. Walsh, a member of the committee hearing the bill. The Senator was so impressed with the thesis that he asked Hyman to appear before the committee. Albert Hyman took the stand and described how the little station was built and almost cried when he told the crowded committee room that if the bill went through, they would have to close down the station because they could not afford the license fees and all the other requirements which the bill imposed on amateur stations.

Congressional debate began on the WIRELESS REGULATION BILL and the little station "HAM" became the symbol for all the little amateur stations in the country crying to be saved from the menace and greed of the big commercial stations who didn't want them around. The bill finally got to the floor of Congress and every speaker talked about the "...poor little station HAM". That's how it all started.

You will find the whole story in the Congressional Record. Nationwide publicity associated station "HAM" with amateur radio operators. From that day to this, and probably to the end of time in radio, an amateur is a "HAM".

Unfortunately for this story, none of it checks out. A past president of the ARRL did extensive research in an attempt to confirm this story. There is nothing in the Congressional record about little station HAM. This story first surfaced in an amateur publication in 1948, and doesn't seem likely to die, but it appears to have no factual basis.

So, does anyone really know?
Linda Wise (w7pro)



Smithfield Villa Ham Radio Station "Put to the Test"

Sunday afternoon, Feb 17, about 4:00 PM, the "Smithfield Villa Ham Radio Station" was "Put to the Test". Our Vice President, Jim Wise (w4pro) showed up at the station with his bag of "to go kit" items for this test. This station consisted of a Kenwood TS-570D transceiver feeding an attic installed "alpha delta" antenna. No external antenna tuner was used.

Jim set up his “keyer” and “paddle” with several cables and jumpers. In short order, he was sending “dits” and “dahs” as well as receiving them. He worked all of the continents where there was activity, **North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania, missing only Antarctica.** He worked the following countries: **Dominica, Canary Islands, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Hawaii, Japan, St. Kitts, Netherlands Antilles, Bermuda, Virgin Islands, Grenada, Bahamas, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Italy, Hungary, Madeira, Germany, Slovak Republic, Brazil, and Argentina; a total of 21 different countries.**

The test lasted for one and one half hours. Thirty one (31) contacts were made on the 15, 20, 40, and 80 meter bands. Twenty (20) meters was active in the north and south direction while forty (40) did best to the east. The method of communication was CW at twenty five (25) words per minute. When a station was not receiving well, the speed was reduced to about twenty (20) words per minute. This was a DX experiment, so no contacts were made within the US.

The test was considered a success; however, the owner of the station failed the test as the “dits” and “dahs” were coming so fast he could only get a few letters using the “sound alike” five words per minute method.

Ron Harvey (w4rrh)
Station owner



Item for Sale

Yaesu FT1000 MP Mark V. This is the 200 watt version with the heavy duty power supply. It comes with all the original equipment that came with it from the factory; hand mike, manual, schematics, Yagi QSL and all the original packing and boxes.

I am asking \$1850.00. This unit has had very little use. It may be seen and examined at my home.

Jim Jackson (KD4FN)





Emails Received

Web Sites on Storm Chasing and Tornadoes

Hi Ron --

There might be some info you'd consider referencing from the below URL's by inserting their URL's or quoting from them in the newsletter.

<http://www.cimms.ou.edu/~doswell/Chasing2.html>

<http://www.cimms.ou.edu/~doswell/ChasFAQ.html>

Janet Andrews -- 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.