



Western Tidewater Radio Association

"HAMTOWN WAVE"

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



NEXT CLUB MEETING MAY 12, 2008



Centenarian still going strong

Jarvis Hearn has been an amateur radio enthusiast for decades. Every morning he spends hours patching himself through and conversing with other club members. (Used by permission of The Smithfield Times – Staff Writer Simon Owens)

Officers and Committee Reports

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Most of you no doubt have noted my conspicuous absence from this column the last two months. Unfortunately, the responsibilities of my "real life" job have consumed most of my time since mid-January, and for that, I am truly sorry. Now that the move we were doing is finished, I hope to be able to once again devote a considerable amount of time to club and amateur radio activities.

CYLCES

No doubt that most of you, like me, have read the predictions of the start of solar cycle 24 in the ham magazines lately. All this talk of a new solar cycle got me to thinking that it has been just over 11 years since I got my first ticket. Back in 1996, we were at just about the same point in cycle 23 as we are in cycle 24 today. At that time, I had no elmer, did not belong to any clubs and basically taught myself for the license exams. I had once, as a twelve or thirteen year old boy in the 70's, wanted to get a ham license. Then as in '96, I did not have an elmer and lacked encouragement.

Once I got that ticket, then it was on to getting on the air. In those days, I worked a lot of DX, all on 10 meters and all on 'phone. I spent a lot of time doing what most rookies do... reading, learning, getting on the air, trying to figure out new modes, studying for upgrade exams and so forth. As it turns out, the WTRA at that time was also a new club. The WTRA and I did not become "acquainted" for a few more years. So given the re-birth of a new solar cycle, I thought I would use this space to talk a bit about some of the things that have changed, and some that have stayed the same in the last dozen or so years, for amateur radio, for the WTRA and for me personally.

In 1996, Amateur radio had 5 license classes to offer. Today there are but three. Some will argue one is better than the other and visa versa. It really does not matter. What is at the core is the magic of radio. That two people on opposite sides of the world, with no wires in between and with simple equipment sometime even homemade, can communicate with one another... and even become life-long friends without ever having met each other face to face. That part of ham radio will never change. It is still magic.

In 1996, the WTRA had about a dozen members and had just started out as an organized club. At that time, the club held regular business meetings, had a "special program" meeting now and again and supported RACES District 10 Emcomm. Today, we have 50 members, still support D10 Emcomm, we have pretty regular technical program meetings, we host a VE team and have recently held license training classes. We have also sponsored and/or supported a few special event stations in the past 18 months or so. So the club has grown a great deal over the course of Cycle 23. I would just like to remind everyone that an active club like ours cannot be kept thriving and moving forward by just a few people. It takes help and support from the entire membership to keep a club like ours going. So keep your eyes peeled for opportunities to jump in and help out, and don't hesitate to do so when the chance comes along!

As for me personally, I have been thinking that this new solar is my opportunity to work on my CW and see what I can do with some CW DXing and contesting as the sunspots come back. I also

want to continue with the license courses and VE sessions that we have started so that no one who wants to get their ticket has to do it the way I did.

73 and CU on the air!

Chris – N4KIT

VA QSO PARTY REPORT

By Chris – N4KIT

The weekend of March 15 – 16 brought this year's edition of the Virginia QSO Party. This year it was decided that the club would make some effort to get more members on the air, and help in that respect by offering a station for "rookie" contest operators to come and work under the tutelage of a more experienced operator.

It was my privilege to host the multi-op "training" station at my QTH. Unfortunately, I only had one guest operator, perhaps due to my work schedule and inability to spend any time at all planning and recruiting. At any rate, Lyle KI4WKT came over on Saturday to operate and learn. We started out with me "in the chair" for a short time operating "search and pounce" – scanning the band with the VFO and working stations calling CQ in the QSO party. Then we traded seats and Lyle had a go of it and made a few contacts. I tried to keep my mouth shut as much as possible and let Lyle work and ask questions as he needed to. I know from my own experience that it is very hard to concentrate on what you are hearing on the air with someone chabbering instructions in your ear. Anyway, after a bit, we changed seats again and I demonstrated for Lyle how to "run a frequency", i.e. find a clear frequency and call CQ. After a few minutes of watching, Lyle took over and started calling. Now maybe I should tell you that 80 meters was not great on Saturday with a noise level of S-8 that got steadily worse as the afternoon progressed into evening. Anyway, Lyle did a FB job and put several more Qs in the log. As he could only stay a couple of hours, he checked out about 4:30 and at that time we had about 40 QSOs in the log.



The following is a summary of the WTRA member club activity for the VA QSO Party weekend. Thanks to all of you who made even 1 QSO... I hope you enjoyed it and will be back for more next year!

Callsign	Number of QSOs	# VA Counties	# States	# Countries	Total score
W4PRO	29	16	8	1	725
N4KIT	268	62	25	0	26,600
W4RRH	3	2	1	0	9
W4RBH	32	1	9	5	832
WTRA Total	332	81	43	6	28,166

Vice President (W4PRO)

THE ART OF QSL'ING

Of all the "Q" signals hams have used over the decades, one stands out. QRS, QRK, QNK, QSA, QRU and most of the others are seldom heard on the bands today, except for the CW traffic nets.

But QSL still means confirmation. It is most frequently used to let the other guy know you have received his last transmission. But this little piece is about confirmation in writing of a two-way contact with another amateur. Namely, a QSL CARD. If you plan to apply for one of the many operating awards available, you are probably going to need QSL's to prove you made the required contacts.

At our annual meeting, we heard all about the ARRL incoming QSL bureau from Dick Maylotte, W2YE, who is the manager of one of the bureaus. If you have worked any DX stations, there is a better than even chance that there are cards awaiting you at your bureau. All you have to do is send some stamped-self-addressed envelopes to your bureau and you will receive them automatically. The ARRL website lists the bureaus and any other info you may need.

The ARRL Outgoing Membership QSL Bureau is an entirely different animal. Notice it is a membership bureau. You have to be an ARRL member to use the outgoing bureau. Anyone can use the incoming bureau, ARRL member or not.

Why use the bureaus? Certainly not to save time. The bureaus work very slowly, taking six months or even a year or more to return your card. But the bureau does save money and work.

Here's the drill. You can sort the outgoing DX cards in order of prefix and send them to ARRL Headquarters along with the mailing label from your QST (ARRL's monthly publication) and \$5.00 for each half pound of cards, which is about 75 cards. Any form of proof of membership is acceptable, but the mailing label is easiest. No need to address the cards. The bureau waits until they get a lot of cards going to the same country, then sends them in bulk. An incoming bureau in that country takes care of it from there.

More complete information is available on the ARRL website. Just search on: ARRL, Services, QSL Bureaus, Outgoing. You cannot send cards to U.S. stations via the outgoing bureau, only DX, including Canada.

I have used both bureaus for many years and have found them both to be the cheapest and easiest way to send and receive cards. But if you really want a confirmation from that rare one you just worked, and you want it right now, there are better ways.

Direct QSL'ing is the fastest and surest way, but it is expensive and time consuming. If you use the bureau, you don't have to address the cards or even know the addresses. But to QSL direct, you have to address each envelope and the included SAE (self addressed envelope). The guy you need the card from almost never looks forward to receiving your card. He has them by the shoebox full, especially W4 cards. So you have to make it easy and inexpensive for him if you want him to take the time to respond. The SAE makes it easy and return postage makes it inexpensive. You take care of the return postage by including that with your card and the SAE makes it easy for him. A couple of green stamps (dollar bills) is the most popular method. There are also International Reply Coupons (IRC's) which can be purchased at the U.S. Post Office. IRC's can be used by the DX station to prepay returning your card. But be careful. Most post office employees are not familiar with them and will sell you worthless IRC's that are not authenticated properly. Foreign postage stamps can be purchased, but I have no experience with that. I think it would be doing it the hard way. I send and receive green stamps most of the time and have never had a problem. But, just to be safe, don't put your call on the outside of your envelope. Dishonest postal workers in some foreign countries know to look for that.

Many DX stations have QSL managers who act as go-betweens for them and do most of the work. Lists of managers can be found in most Amateur Radio publications. Use the manager if there is one. It saves money if the manager is here in the USA.

There are also private QSL Services that will, for money, do just about anything you need done except work the DX for you. I use a private service only as a last resort. They are rather expensive, but save some work.

Be sure that you make out his card correctly with the time in UTC, not your local time. Don't forget that the date doesn't change at midnight local time. While we are on daylight savings time, it changes at 8:00 PM. If your card is two-sided, be sure that your call is on both sides.

Fancy (expensive) QSL's are nice but if you work lots of DX, you may want to have some el-cheapo cards also to answer all of the cards you will receive from stations that QSL every contact they make regardless. Some operators figure that it is easier to print labels for every contact, stick'em on cheap cards and send them out in bulk.

Where do you get your cards? There are many suppliers in the USA and many others are springing up overseas. My last cards came from LZ1JZ in Bulgaria. Tony will email you a proof before he prints the cards, so you know what your cards will look like before you make payment. He has a stateside contact in Washington State who handles the money, so you don't have to worry about foreign currency. As with most purchases, the more you buy the cheaper it gets. One thousand two-sided full-color cards run \$85 and that includes postage.

It has been said many times that the final courtesy of a QSO is a QSL card. I have only touched the surface of this subject, and have not addressed many of the finer points. Having operated from a dozen countries or so and sent and received thousands of cards, I believe I have covered the essentials. I haven't looked lately, but if you want to read about the nitty-gritty details, I'm sure there are volumes about this subject on the web.

One final tidbit: Every once in a while, I still get a request to confirm a QSO I made on my first DXpedition which was in 1973. Yes, I still have some VP2MDX cards.

Jim Wise, W4PRO

Treasurer's Report (by Dick Harrell - W4RBH):

Main Account Balance as of 3/20/2008	\$ 1566.17
Remaining budgeted expenses for 2008	\$ 706.74
Recent expenses:	NONE
VE Program Account Balance as of 3/20/2008	\$ 153.03

Membership Report (by W4RBH):

Currently there are fifty members on roll. The initial 2008 WTRA roster was e-mailed to all members on March 11.

Repeater Report (by W4RBH):

The WT4RA repeater (147.195+) and remote base system continues to function normally, although there have recently been a few brief periods where the repeater was noisy. I have not been able to do my regular monthly power checks at the repeater as doing my recent move I seem to have hidden my RF Power meter. Hopefully it will show up soon. Members are encouraged to check-in to the weekly net sessions each Thursday at 7:30 PM.

Do you ever wonder if your touch-tone (DTMF) keypad is operating correctly? The repeater provides the capability to test you pad. Just key your radio and enter the code 375 (this code is open to all hams) and then while the radio is still keyed, press any or all of the keys on your pad. When you un-key the radio, the repeater will respond with the voice announcement "Key Pad Test" and read back all of the tones that it was able to decode in the order you sent them. If your radio is equipped with a touch-tone pad it is a good idea to periodically check its operation.

I'm still looking to hear from WTRA members that have signal reports for the repeater beyond the normal 35 to 45 mile radius. Send your reports to w4rbh@wt4ra.org and I will include them in the newsletter.



Items for Sale

YAESU

FT1000 MP Mark V with the heavy duty power supply. This is the 200 watt version. 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)

CUSHCRAFT R7000 ANTENNA

The all new R7000 is a 10 through 40 meter, no ground radial antenna that is expandable to include 80 meters. It has a power rating of 1500 watts. Asking price is \$200 (new price was \$400).

Contact Ted Martin at 357-9852.

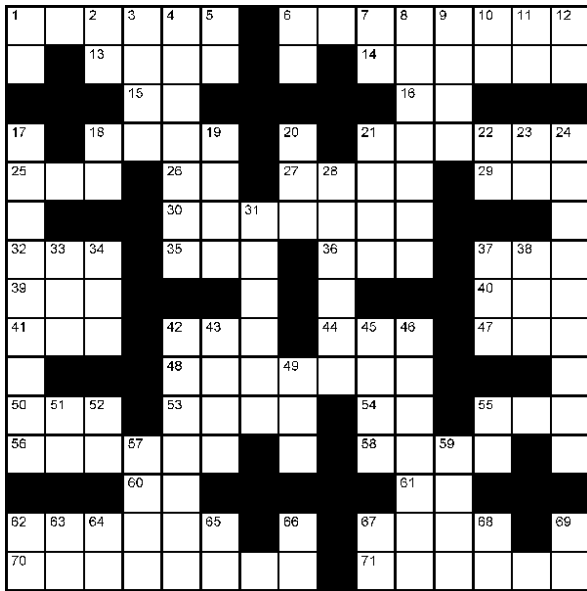
Joe Roth (WC4R) has provided us with the following puzzle.

The Amateur Radio Crossword Puzzler

By H. Ward Silver, NØAX

Cross-Modulation

Reprinted with permission, ARRLWeb January 22,
2008, Radio Puzzler Cross-Modulation



Across

1. Impassive
6. Spurious splatter
13. Makes molecules
14. Here I am!
15. Telephone (CW abbr)
16. Province for VO1 (abbr)
18. Searched with "Vista"
21. Adjustments
25. Tease
26. CW for "Stand By"
27. Around the world or off the moon
29. Transfers data on the Internet
30. Nevertheless, it moves!
32. Capacitor loss factor
35. Partner to WPA section
36. Unwanted products
37. Digital voice equipment maker
39. What's left over from gross
40. Type of phono connector
41. First all-transistor logic family
42. Wipes out the HF bands
44. See ya!
47. Universal method (abbr)
48. Tool
50. Unrecorded contact (abbr)
53. Forever (abbr)
54. Engineer that signs tower drawings (abbr)
55. World time
56. Halves of the day (three words)
58. Video line
60. AMSAT designator

61. Antenna switching relay (abbr)
62. Clear night
67. Take quickly
70. Small frequency adjustment (two words)
71. Rover operation

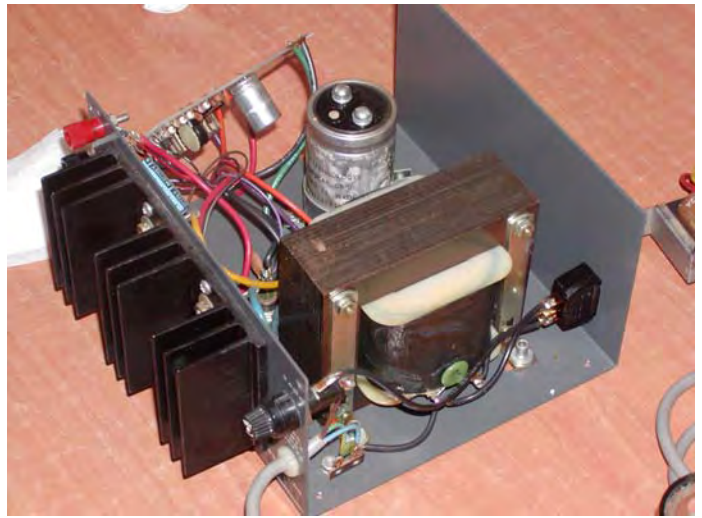
Down

1. CW for "End of Message"
2. Volunteer experts on technical subjects (abbr)
3. Common contraction
4. Electromotive force
5. Radio wave (abbr)
6. CW for double dash
7. Unlicensed radio service
8. Japanese radio maker
9. Reduced prices
10. Prefix of equatorial country
11. Band watcher
12. Home state to Ten-Tec
17. Uses the prefix LU
18. Province for VE6's
19. Right away (abbr)
20. Province for VY2
21. Not us
22. Continent for Zone 37 (abbr)
23. Nautical speed (abbr)
24. 6-meter propagation mode (two words)
28. How the ham gets to the antenna
31. Has rungs
33. Another name for radio equipment
34. Preceded 41 Across
37. Abbreviation for ham radio
38. Base-8 (abbr)
42. Holds something up
43. Something
45. Wobbly knees on the tower
46. Prefix meaning "electrical"
49. Mobile antenna mount
51. Quick Internet texting
52. One input to a mixer
55. Prefix meaning "not" or "reverse"
57. Hard to work
59. Inhabitant of A4, A6, A7, and A9
62. Western ARRL section (abbr)
63. Tough, brittle metal (chemical symbol)
64. Coldest continent (abbr)
65. Parent of S5, 9A, E7, and Z3
66. Magnetic metal (chemical symbol)
67. CW greeting early in the day
68. Prefix meaning "two"
69. Northeasternmost state (postal code)

Request answers to the Puzzle by an emailing to w4rrh@wt4ra.org



“and now we are power supply experts”



Twelve of the CLUB members met Saturday morning, March the 29th, for breakfast at Z's restaurant. Jim Wise (w4pro) brought us up-to-date on the latest power supplies. He discussed the older, heavy, large transformer type as well as the newer, smaller, light weight ones. Way-to-go Jim for a very good program.

Newsletter Extras

Lover dog

If you like dogs, you will love this.

<http://chin83.multiply.com/video/item/37>

A Virtual Spark Transmitter

[!http://www.zianet.com/sparks/transmitters.html#virtual](http://www.zianet.com/sparks/transmitters.html#virtual)

Check out the virtual spark gap transmitter....including sound! To save you some digging around; you can "toggle" the switches and rheostat (with

mouse button) to put it in transmit, raise and lower power, etc., and then you can send CW with the Key.

PUT YOUR CAR KEYS BESIDE YOUR BED AT NIGHT

Put your car keys beside your bed at night. If you hear a noise outside your home or someone trying to get in your house, just press the panic button for your car. The alarm will be set off, and the horn will continue to sound until either you turn it off or the car battery dies.



Emails Received

(one from Jim Wise from which the information was used by Chris Peters above)



THANKS TO Jim Wise, Joe Roth, and Dick Harrell for inputs to this newsletter.



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.

[NEXT CLUB MEETING MAY 12, 2008](#)

HOMEBREW DUMMY LOAD

This is a dummy load I made for my testing. If you do the math, this should only handle 40 watts (20 2watt resistors = 40 watts). I set my resistor pack in a quart can with mineral oil to help dissapate heat.

I have done extensive testing with this with as much as 200 watts without failure and it hardly even gets warm! Its a very simple project to build and the cost is about \$20.

PARTS NEEDED FOR PROJECT

- 1- S0239 flange mount connector
- 1- single-sided copper clad board
- 20- 2 watt, 1k Ohm high quality Xicon metal oxide resistors
- 1- bread board (use it for spacing and drilling the copper board)
- 1- Qt can
- 1- Qt mineral oil
- 1- copper wire (I used the ground wire out of 3 conductor house wiring)
- 1-ground strap

ASSEMBLY

Just set up the resistors in parallel with the leads as short as possible. You can also change the resistor count, value and wattage as long as you end up with 50 ohms. For instance, my project has 20 - 1000 ohm resistors which is 50 ohms. (1000 ohms divided by 20 resistors = 50 ohms).

If you plan on setting your project in oil, use only high quality resistors that will not become saturated with the oil. Make sure you ask when ordering! 73,WC4R

