

The Monitor



January 2003

Presidents Message

Greetings all.

Welcome to a new year. Hope everyone had a quiet and enjoyable holiday season.

Winter has hit and everyone needs to look out for the other guy when traveling. Almost brings back memories from storms a few years ago when Ham radio helped out in areas of no power. You never know when this could happen again with this much snow build up, so be prepared.

Upcoming is the VHF/UHF weekend in Strafford. Equipment lists have been circulating so if you are planning on participating see if there is something you may have that is needed.

March we will be having guests at the monthly meeting. The VT SM and SEC will be joining us to talk about ARRL and ARES in VT.

Field Day is starting to rear it's head again so if you can help out in specific or general areas please contact Jack N1MVO.

Hope to see many of you at the meeting this Saturday.

Verne N5IEP

Upcoming Events

TSRC Meeting	Jan. 11, 2003, 9:00am Ramada Inn, WRJ, VT
VHF Sweeps	Jan. 18-19, 2003 Strafford, VT
TSRC Meeting	Feb 8, 2003, 9:00am Ramada Inn, WRJ, VT

VHF SWEEPSTAKES FEVER INFECTS TSRC!

Its January and time for our "winter field day"- the ARRL VHF SWEEPSTAKES! From a small beginning with a few dedicated operators at our home in Strafford, this has grown to a full fledged operating event with many club members participating and a steady improvement in our competitive position in the scoring.

As indicated in my previous article, we will be again using my workshop for the station setups. We can put five stations in the room and we will need that capability seeing the way things are developing this year. We will be doing our usual four bands- 6M, 2M, 222Mhz and 70Cm. In addition, we hope to have Mike N1JEZ from Burlington join us with added muscle on some bands and a variety of microwave stations for added band scoring. As it looks now, we will have SSB, CW and FM capability on the four basic operating bands, more power on 6M (a KW amp!), a better antenna on 222 with more power and we plan to use hardline for as many bands as we can to reduce loss.

We will have both tower/trailers here this year and, with the addition of a fourth temporary tower, the antennas on 6, 2, 222Mhz and 70CM will each be on a separate tower with its own rotor. In addition, we plan to have at least two logging computers for the busiest stations- 6M and 2M. We may add a third if 70Cm looks busy.

Mike N1JEZ tried to make it to our site last year, but was snowed out on the interstate, so he is eager to join us this year. We are excited as Mike has an impressive suite of UHF and Microwave stations which may make for some interesting operating for those who have never worked at microwave frequencies. Mike will be collaborating with Dave UAG and we hope to learn where other microwave stations will be located to get those two-way contacts working!

A number of folks have already signed onto the event. This is a 33 hour event running from 2PM on Saturday, Jan 18 to 11 PM Sunday, Jan 19. We usually run until late Sunday afternoon, depending on weather and contact rates. Some folks like to operate overnight Sat/Sun and 6M and 2M are good most of the time. This is a good contest in which to learn about contesting in that the contact rate is reasonable and the pace of operation is "relaxed". You can hone your skills or get introduced to this popular aspect of the hobby and learn from some very good VHF/UHF/Microwave operators.

Setup begins on Friday and we try to get most of the antennas/towers up and operating so that we can do final station check-outs and last-minute changes on Saturday morning. If you are interested in participating in the VHF Sweepstakes, just drop me a line on Email, or let me know on the repeater. I will provide detailed directions to anyone planning to come.

Disclaimer

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Those who have been to our place know that the driveway is 0.4 miles long and all up hill! If you don't have a 4wd vehicle, let me know ahead of time as we have a parking area at the beginning of the driveway and we can transport anything you need up the hill.

Let me know if you plan to stay over either Friday or Saturday night and will need sleeping accommodations.

Plan to provide your own meals for breakfast on Saturday and Sunday. Lunch on Saturday is a random occurrence as the contest start is imminent. Dot and I provide a complete turkey dinner on Saturday evening for the whole crew and Dave UAG brings his world-famous spicy chili. If any of the turkey and chili survives, we have "leftovers" for lunch on Sunday. (Those operators that survive the chili continue the contest!)

We welcome anyone who has an interest in learning more about Amateur Radio and operating to join us on the weekend. You don't need to have an Amateur license to get the experience of operating and we especially encourage young people to try it.

The club is running a Technician license class the following weekend and this will be a two Saturday intense course with a test session following the classes. For more information contact Ken AC1H, ken.ten@earthlink.com

Bill WB1BRE





The small tower trailer is still the subject of discussion, since it has a variety of small problems that need attention, including the sticking problem as it comes down, and a better way to support the mast at the top. It will also need spot sandblasting and paint this year.

Special thanks to:

Verne Burden (master mechanic and carpenter)

Ken Downs (for stripping down and evaluating the comm. box at his home)

Ken's wife for doing his chores for several months while he recovered

Larry Richard, for providing the sandblaster and his expertise

Alan Bradford, for giving our fleet a home and for the use of his shop, tools and expertise.

Dave Colter WA1ZCN

Vehicle Committee Chair

Vehicle Committee 2002 Year End Report

During this year, the "motor pool" committee had to deal with some significant issues. I would first like to thank all the committee members for putting in some very valuable time. As our fleet has grown in size, so have the costs of maintaining and improving it.

We presently own the following:

1977 Dodge 4wd military ambulance (Comm. Van)

40' custom tower trailer

35' military tower trailer

Army surplus comm. box (pickup camper type)

Last spring, we estimated the probable costs of doing a variety of work to the fleet, and looked at the ways in which we use or might use each vehicle. The committee eventually determined that we really didn't need, nor could we afford all this equipment. This fall, we recommended to the membership that we sell both the 40' tower trailer and the comm. box, and it was so voted. Advertisements for the tower trailer are running, we're getting responses, and with any luck both will have been sold by the time you read this.

Throughout the year, we had planned to sandblast and paint the large tower trailer, but due to a variety of problems it didn't happen until the only warm weekend in November. With the awesome assistance of new member Larry Richard KB1ICS (who provided the sandblaster and compressor), we were able to get it done before the snow arrived - just barely. Unfortunately, Ken Downs and Dave Landry suffered fairly serious injuries in the process, but both have recovered nicely. The big loss is that Dave says his wife has declared him accident-prone and won't let him play with us anymore.

Other work this year included the wiring and interior of the Comm. Van, (carpentry by Verne Burden - now available for hire), a new muffler, exterior work lights, a dual battery system, and other small improvements.

Repeater Manager's 2002 Year End Report

This has been a relatively "quiet" year for the repeater committee. We added the 911 auto-patch, installed the 222 gateway link system, re-packaged the UHF repeater in a standard repeater chassis, and put the new Master II 145.33 repeater on the air. The systems are currently in good working order, save for some strange timer issues that make the courtesy beep pop up in unexpected places. This appears to be related to the fact that all three systems are linked full time at present.

I would like to thank the entire repeater committee for their prodigious efforts - especially Joe KB1FDA, Dave KA1UAG, and Dave N1HAC. While everyone contributed, these three made the big differences. A special thanks to the wives who had dinner with us at our meetings and suffered through our technical discussions.

Toward the end of the year, we became aware of a major challenge for 2003. In its move to digital television, NHPTV will be installing a new, wider, more rugged tower next summer, and removing the present one. Although the details haven't been confirmed yet, we expect that we will need to replace much of the existing antenna system to comply with new, more stringent site requirements. The costs for this are significant, and will require the club to raise quite a bit of money and/or donated material.

Dave Colter WA1ZCN

W1FN Repeater Manager

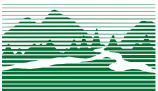
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