

The Monitor

February 2007



Upcoming Events

TSRC Meeting February 10, 2007, 9:00 am
EBA's, Hanover, NH

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President's message

Well, we've finally got some winter here in Twin State land. My pond is finally frozen and the fire is lit. Time for some of those winter radio projects! My only problem is that I seem to be just as busy with work and family as I ever was. Oh well, there's always retirement.

I'm really glad to be a part of TSRC because it seems to always keep me more focused on our wonderful hobby when I might otherwise slip into inactivity. Many hams go through periods that can last many years where they operate little or no ham radio. This is sometimes unavoidable as other obligations rightly take priority. But in many instances I think it is simply a lack of interest. That's why I'm delighted at the prospect of this year's programs for the club meetings. As Ken, AC1H, mentions in this newsletter we have Tom Frenaye returning, more shack presentations, Fox Hunting, mobile operation and contesting, all in the pipeline. We also have the trailer to work on and some necessary work on the repeater just to keep things interesting.

I look forward to the coming year and our varied activities and I hope you do too.

See you at the meeting!

William Daugherty, KX1Y
Twin State Radio Club President

Programs: Looking Ahead

Attendees at our January meeting gave their input on what programs and activities the TSRC should support during the year. Here are some of the ideas they proposed that will be in our planning for future meetings.

Everyone enjoyed the presentation in December when Dave, KA1CRP, described his shack and setup for working DX. Widespread sentiment said we should have similar presentations in the future featuring the shacks of other members. So, we will continue the trend this month (February) with a presentation by Bill, WB1BRE, of his

versatile equipment collection at his, and Dot's, fabulous mountain top location.

Too bad for the rest of us that we all don't have setups like Dave and Bill, but even we will get our chance later in the year when another meeting will be devoted to shacks and equipment. Rather than featuring just one person's shack, this meeting will let everyone bring in one or two photos of their setup to share. Even if your operating position is just an HT in a shoebox, a photo will help your (non-gender specific) fellow club members visualize your operating experience.

At the March meeting we plan to have a return visit by Tom Frenaye, the ARRL New England Division director, (Thanx to WB1BRE for arranging Tom's appearance.) If you're a QST reader you know there is much going on between the ARRL and FCC so this should be an informative meeting. Since Tom is coming from a distance we want to maximize the value of his trip by inviting non-TSRC hams and members of other clubs. So please invite of your non-TSRC ham friends to our March meeting.

Our April meeting will be devoted to mobile operation - more about that later. And look forward to a fox hunt some Spring evening.

For another future meeting we are seeking a speaker on the topic of "contest operation using a modest station. If you know an effective speaker who could enlighten us on this topic please let me know.

Ken AC1H

Help Wanted

As announced in the last newsletter and at the club meeting, I will be stepping down as newsletter editor and webmaster soon. This means we need someone to take over these duties.

If you are interested in these positions, please contact me or KX1Y as soon as possible.

Mike, K1IH

TSRC E-mail Reflector

The TSRC reflector is a good place to get or give help. list equipment for sale, announce your results in the last contest, recruit volunteers for a public service event, and more!

Point your web browser to <http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/tsrc> Follow the instructions there and you will be able to do all of these!

TWIN STATE RADIO CLUB AT THE 2007 ARRL VHF SWEEPSTAKES CONTEST

This year could be best characterized as the year that the weather cooperated and the bands didn't! We had about the same station setup and the same antennas as last year and mild temperatures made easier to move around outside and to heat the shop.

Friday and Saturday morning were busy times with station setups. We moved the tower rotor controls to the 2M, 6M and 432 operating positions and then used the rotor control cable extensions to activate each rotor. Thanks to Rex AA1KL, we had laptops at the 2M and 6M positions with Writelog software. Rich W1HZN provided the primary 6M rig with Rex' rig as a backup. Ken AC1H provided the 2M amp and drove it from a 2M allmode rig belonging to KA1UAG. The 432 rig and amp were also supplied by KA1UAG. We did 222 Mhz operations on FM from the console position with another computer with Writelog. The 432 position login was done on paper and then transferred to Writelog.

Two PM on Saturday came and we began operating in earnest. Things seemed to start slower than usual and the time between contacts on all bands was long. Then we began to hear other stations comment on the apparently poor band conditions. As the contest progressed on Saturday afternoon, it became very obvious that the contact rate was down considerably. We heard some stations move to CW to call CQ shortly after the contest started- an unusual shift! Generally, stations stay with SSB until Sunday to start calling CQ on CW as a means of extending the range of operations to get more grid squares.

We did wonder, especially on the 6m station, if there was a problem with VSWR or the antenna. Then there was a quick 6M contact with a station in Oklahoma which came and went as fast as the exchange! So we knew that the station was operating OK- it was just the band.

By the time Saturday dinner time arrived, we had worked out most of the stations on the bands and things were really slowing down. Off we all went to the house for the turkey dinner! We did pretty serious damage to the 16 lb bird and then tried a little more operating, but things were no better.

After a good night's sleep, we were at it again on Sunday morning and many new stations showed up on all bands. There seemed to be fewer operations with multiple bands this year. Normally, we make contact on 2M or 6M and then "hand off" to another band by picking a frequency for that contact. Many stations were operating in the single band category, which really limited the ability to pile up score and points.

By early afternoon on Sunday, we had again worked out most of the stations and our visiting operators packed up and headed home. I did operate for a while in the early evening and picked up a few more contacts before pulling the "Big Switch" and calling it a day.

About a week later, after the low temperatures had moderated, I warmed up the shop and merged the Writelog and paper log to get

our contact and point totals. The results have been submitted to ARRL for scoring.

Although the band conditions were poor, we had a great time and saw two club members active in their first experience at VHF contesting. We filled in the time between contacts with conversation and eating great snacks! Many thanks to all who helped with the preparation and cooking for the contest- Mary Ann N1DMW, Dot KA1LDS and Rich W1HZN.

Operators: Ken AC1H, Chuck W3WTO, Bill WB1BRE, Rich W1HZN, Bill KB1MOV, Dan N1DAN, and Dan N1UM

Band	QSOs	Points	Grids
6M	30	30	14
2M	36	36	15
222 Mhz	3	6	2
432	7	14	5
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TOTALS	76	86	36

TOTAL CLAIMED SCORE- 3096

Bill WB1BRE

Milton Hamfest and VE Information

This is the 3-week warning before the Milton Hamfest. Before I discuss that, some topics of immediate concern:

1. Unless you have been hiding in a hole, then you know that all Morse code testing ends on February 23rd, the day before Milton. That means that upgrades to General will just require a 35-question exam. As a result, there will be a lot of customers at the VE Session. To keep things from resembling a mob scene, please let me know what type of VE services you require by completing the questionnaire at this site: <http://www.hamclass.net/ranv/survey2.htm>. Based on the response, I will be able to muster the required men and materials needed to get everyone processed efficiently. I hope.

2. If you are interested in help to reach your General upgrade, I will be holding a General upgrade class on March 18th in Essex Junction and April 1st in Manchester, NH. I offer a Technician Course on the Saturday before each of these courses. I also have On-Line versions of Technician, General and Extra Class Courses as well. All sorts of details on these can be found on-line. Call me if you have any questions not answered on the sites.

For the live VT or NH Class go to: <http://www.ranv.org/week-end.html>.

For the On-Line Course, go to <http://www.hamclass.net>.

3. Vermont QSO Party is this weekend starting Friday, February 2nd at 7 PM ending 48 hours later on Sunday. Get on and put Vermont out there! It looks like 20 meters daytime and 80 meters nighttime will be the best bets. You have to call CQ to work people. I will have WB1GQR fired up all weekend and would love to have

operators – especially inexperienced operators willing to learn how to make a lot of contacts. Put your new General Class license to the task! The QSO Party is low stress, low QRM, high rates and a lot of fun. Contact me by phone (879-6589) or E-mail if you would like to do some operating.

4. Milton Hamfest and ARRL Vermont State Convention is Saturday, February 24th at Milton High School. Wherever you are, please be sure to get out and support one of the few remaining hamfests in our area. New dealers will include KJI, Quicksilver and Webster. Some of the active hosstraders are already promising table loads of goodies. We will have forums on HF Antennas, Portable Antennas, Buying HF Rigs, Emergency Communications, Computers in the Shack, D-Star Digital Communications, ARRL and New Hams. Demonstrations and display tables will round out the show. Full details are at <http://www.ranv.org/milton.html>.

5. The 2007 Vermont Amateur Radio Directory will make its debut at Milton. If your information has changed, please let me know. Also, if you have an Adelphia E-mail address, please let me know your new Comcast address. Please do not reply to this E-mail or send attachments as these will get lost. Instead, click here to let me know the changes.

Have a great ham winter season and see you at the Hamfest!
73, Mitch

It's official! Morse code requirement ends Friday, February 23.

Circle Friday, February 23, on your calendar. That's when the current 5 WPM Morse code requirement will officially disappear from the Amateur Radio Service Part 97 rules. On or after that date, applicants for a General or Amateur Extra class Amateur Radio license no longer will have to demonstrate proficiency in Morse code. They'll just have to pass the applicable written examination. Federal Register publication January 24 of the FCC's Report and Order (R&O) in the "Morse code proceeding," WT Docket 05-235, starts a 30-day countdown for the new rules to become effective. Deletion of the Morse requirement - still a matter of controversy within the amateur community - is a landmark in Amateur Radio history.

"The overall effect of this action is to further the public interest by encouraging individuals who are interested in communications technology or who are able to contribute to the advancement of the radio art, to become Amateur Radio operators; and eliminating a requirement that is now unnecessary and may discourage Amateur Service licensees from advancing their skills in the communications and technical phases of Amateur Radio," the FCC remarked in the "Morse code" R&O that settled the matter, at least from a regulatory standpoint.

The League had asked the FCC to retain the 5 WPM for Amateur Extra class applicants, but the Commission held to its decision to eliminate the requirement across the board. The R&O appearing in the Federal Register constitutes the official version of the new

rules. It is on the web in PDF format at, <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan2007/1800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/E7-729.pdf>.

Until 1991, when a Morse code examination was dropped from the requirements to obtain a Technician ticket, all prospective radio amateurs had to pass a Morse code test. With the change the US will join a growing list of countries that have dropped the need to demonstrate some level of Morse code proficiency to earn access to frequencies below 30 MHz.

The new rules also put all Technician licensees on an equal footing, whether or not they've passed a Morse code examination. Starting February 23, Technicians will gain CW privileges on 80, 40, 15 meters and CW, RTTY, data and SSB privileges on 10 meters.

Once the revised rules are in place, an applicant holding a valid Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) for Element 3 (General) or Element 4 (Amateur Extra) may redeem it for an upgrade. A CSCE is good for 365 days from the date of issuance, no exceptions. For example, a Technician licensee holding a valid CSCE for Element 3 may apply at a Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) test session, pay the application fee, which most VECs charge, and receive an instant upgrade.

The FCC R&O includes an Order on Reconsideration in WT Docket 04-140 - the so-called "omnibus" proceeding. It will modify Part 97 in response to ARRL's request to accommodate automatically controlled narrowband digital stations on 80 meters in the wake of other rule changes that became effective last December 15. The Commission designated 3585 to 3600 kHz for such operations, although that segment will remain available for CW, RTTY and data. The ARRL had requested that the upper limit of the CW/RTTY/data subband be set at 3635 kHz, so that there would be no change in the existing 3620 to 3635 kHz subband.

The ARRL has posted all relevant information on these important Part 97 rule revisions on its "FCC's Morse Code Report and Order WT Docket 05-235" Web page, <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/morse/>.

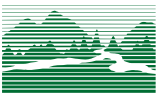
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ELECTRONIC ADDRESSES

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Part 97 <http://www.arrl.org/field/regulations/news/part97/>

Don't forget to check the TSRC Home Page!
Make it your default start page!
<http://www.w1fn.org>



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