

The Monitor

November 2004



Upcoming Events

- TSRC Meeting November 13, 2004, 9:00am
100 Cummings Hall
Thayer School of Engineering
Hanover, NH
- TSRC Meeting December 11, 2004, Noon
Tom Dent Cabin, Hanover, NH

Cold Ham and Ice: Amateur Radio and Radar Geophysics in Antarctica

A Program by Bert Yankielun, WA1O (ex- KC4/WA1O)

The November 13th TSRC meeting will be held in 100 Cummings Hall, Thayer School of Engineering at the west end of Tuck Mall Drive. From North Main Street proceed west on Tuck Mall past the cemetery to the turn around. Cummings Hall is on the left. The entrance to 100 is on the south side of the building about midway down the building.

This is NOT a breakfast meeting! No food will be available!

For over 100 years, people have been performing exploratory and scientific traverses across the harsh and remote Antarctic landscape, and in much of that time, ham radio has contributed to the safety and welfare of these explorers. While times have changed and Iridium satellite communications have replaced much of the HF communications, Ham Radio is still a respected means of communications, and a tradition on the Ice. This presentation recounts some of my experiences on two recent traverses: International Trans-Antarctic Expedition (ITASE) and the South Pole Traverse (SPT). ITASE was a purely scientific traverse focused obtaining climate change data from the western Antarctic plateau. SPT was a logistics-based exploratory traverse that is pioneering a surface route from the U.S. coastal Antarctic base at McMurdo for the resupply of the U.S. Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station. On both of these traverses ground penetrating radar (GPR) was used for scientific and safety purposes. The experience of living, working with radar, and hamming in Antarctica will be discussed.

Message from the President:

Since my last message to the Twin State Radio Club many things have transpired, in our own local microcosm, nationally and around the world. The common denominator seems to be that most people are staying plenty busy, perhaps busier than they have ever been.

Locally, TSRC has supported a couple more charitable events and made some valiant attempts to complete some necessary tower

work before winter sets in. Twin State Radio Club members provided communications support for the annual American Diabetes Association fundraising walk and for the annual Fairlee CROP walk. Both events were judged outstanding successes by their organizers. The ADA walk raised its highest contribution total ever and was blessed by very balmy, cooperative weather. The Fairlee CROP walk was challenged by somewhat cooler weather and a completely different and hair-raising new route that kept TSRC members on their toes trying to keep walkers and motor vehicles from occupying the same places at the same times. Once again, TSRC was ably represented by members who exhibited their customary professionalism and "can do" attitude.

Nationally, we survived yet another campaign season and presidential election. We are now in the midst of the traditional post-election crowing on the one hand and hand wringing on the other. Fortunately, I believe that will soon be lost in the fervor of Campaign 2008 which has apparently already begun.

Globally, we have again been threatened by a high-profile (if low-visibility) terrorist ringleader who evidently thought he could influence our electoral process with his veiled promise to rain death and destruction on those who failed to follow his voting tips. Although the notorious malcontent seems to be little more than a paper tiger these days, his threats should serve as a reminder that we live in dangerous, unpredictable times. We would be wise to prepare for the unexpected and for those times when self-reliance will be the key to survival. Living in a country that has historically provided its citizens with the necessities of life, it is easy to become blind to the possibility that such might not always be the case. The current hurricane season has demonstrated to some Americans how our municipal services can be overwhelmed to the point that they become ineffective, at least temporarily. What would you do in such a situation? Would you survive? Would your loved ones? What can you do to maximize your chances?

From a Twin State Radio Club perspective, we have been making a few changes with an eye toward generating a bit of excitement and providing an atmosphere that will have a little of something for everyone. Our vice president, Ed Feustel, N5EI, has forged ahead with plans to bring speakers and other interesting presenters to our meetings on a regular basis. The fruits of his efforts will be evident at our next club meeting on November 13th when we will be treated to a presentation about Ham Radio as practiced in Antarctica. I urge all members to attend this meeting. The presentation is sure to be interesting and unusual and the speaker is known for his energetic and

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compelling style. Be sure to read about this event elsewhere in this newsletter since it has necessitated a change of venue for the meeting. Family members, friends and members of area Ham Radio clubs are invited to attend as well.

The membership also voted at the last meeting to substitute a Christmas party for the December club meeting. This party will be held on December 11th and will also require a different meeting place. The club has engaged the Tom Dent Cabin on the Dartmouth College campus for the party and details will be made available to all as soon as they are solidified. Although billed as a “Christmas party”, it will be non-denominational, non-religious and non-alcoholic. It will be an opportunity to hang out with the group in a semi-secluded cabin with some potluck chow, Christmas treats, music and, most likely, some sophomoric silliness. Please plan to join the fun on the second Saturday in December. I look forward to seeing all of you there and I encourage you to invite family and friends to join us as well.

73,
Charlie Wilber, N1AOK
President
Twin State Radio Club

Holiday Party

On December 11, starting at noon, TSRC will hold a Holiday party for the whole family at the Tom Dent cabin in Hanover. Bring a dish to share; your choice whether its a plate of Christmas cookies, a main dish or something else. Plates and utensils will be provided.

The Adventure Radio Society

For something a little different, rather exciting and definitely interesting it might be worth your while to visit the web site of the Adventure Radio Society.

The Adventure Radio Society (ARS) is an organization of more than 1700 amateur radio operators the in United States and many other parts of the world. Five and a half years old and growing steadily, ARS sponsors uncommonly interesting events and supports the development of imaginative equipment and antennas. The ARS Sojourner is the monthly magazine and information center of the organization. ARS makes extensive use of the Internet to exchange information among its members. Membership in ARS is free. The Membership Chairman is Richard Fisher, KI6SN.

The purpose and philosophy of ARS is to promote a sense of adventure by supporting radio operation from beautiful and remarkable location. The organization sponsors events that encourage the use of human-powered travel, in its myriad forms, to reach outdoor operating sites. There is, consequently, much interest in and support for the development of imaginative equipment and antennas. ARS members have designed many new radios, antennas and other devices themselves while also improving on existing designs or using them in novel ways. The membership includes people from a wide variety

of professions, many of whom lend their unique expertise to the promotion of Ham Radio “adventures.” Doctors, engineers, educators, writers, photographers and many others have contributed to the substantial archive of articles maintained online by ARS.

A visit to the Adventure Radio Society’s web site will reveal a large collection of articles about new equipment, operating procedures, survival tips and “trail friendly” radios. Members have recorded details of their own adventures, often with stunning photographs accompanying them, and posted them in the archives. Articles about home brew equipment abound as do reviews of new equipment, lab tests and head-to-head comparisons of similar radios and other items.

Since the focus of the Adventure Radio Society is operating from outdoor locations around the world, it should come as no surprise that there is also an emphasis on low power (QRP) operation. After all, the lower the power, the lighter the battery (or batteries) you have to take along. As a result, you will find many articles about QRP equipment and accessories in the archives. In fact, on the first Monday of each month the ARS hosts its renowned “Spartan Sprint”, a contest that rewards contestants based on number of contacts and total weight of equipment. The lighter the equipment, the higher the score. In addition, the ARS sponsors the “Flight of the Bumblebees” every July. Also known by the acronym “FOBB”, this unique event finds ARS members scurrying to locations all over the world by whatever human-powered method they can to set up stations in remote locations and talk exclusively with other “Bumblebees.” Bicycles, kayaks, canoes, rappelling ropes and just plain old feet have all been pressed into service for this wildly popular event. Both FOBB and SS (Spartan Sprint) have enjoyed a steady increase in popularity, so much so that some ARS members have had to write custom software just to keep track of the contestants.

For a different perspective on Ham Radio, think about visiting the ARS web site. Browse through the current issue for the latest news and articles. See if you recognize any of the Spartan Sprint winners. Wander through the archives and read some very interesting and entertaining accounts of members’ adventures. Marvel at some of the amazing photographs included in many of the articles. Read some of the equipment reviews and pick up some tips on wilderness operation and survival. Learn how to build unique equipment of your own. Pick up pointers on tried-and-true lightweight and easily deployed antennas. If any of this strikes your fancy, consider joining the Adventure Radio Society. Membership is free and you can submit your application right from the web site. Even if you don’t join, I think you will find a visit to the ARS web site to be a “good read” regardless of your interests.

The Adventure Radio Society web site can be found at <www.arsqrp.com>. Check it out. I believe you will find it time well spent.

73,
Charlie Wilber
N1AOK
ARS #1268

OPERATOR TRAINING FOR EMERGENCIES

Part V: Operate!

by Mitch W1SJ, Vermont Technical Coordinator

When I started this series 6 months ago, there was a lot of talk about operator training for emergencies. It was an exciting time as hams in our area started asking questions about how to improve their abilities in certain situations. Sadly, the last 3 months have resulted in a severe setback. Not only has talk about operator training subsided, amateur radio activity has dropped dramatically. Things have become very quiet on the repeater. On-air activities, such as the VHF QSO Party, public service events and other HF events have elicited few takers. Heck, even attendance at Hosstraders was quite low, despite good weather. Outside our area, things are even worse. From my perch on Mt. Equinox, I listen to FM repeaters all over New England and New York, an area including 600 repeaters, by my count. During the Monday morning travel time, I counted only 4 QSO's across the ENTIRE region. That's pretty pathetic. The overwhelming majority of us don't bother to even operate. And why we need 600 repeaters for 4 QSO's is another question which begs for an answer, but won't be dealt with here.

In this, the last installment of this series, I will give you the secret of operating success. It is simple and you don't have to go to the guru on the mountain to find it out. **Operate!** Don't talk about it; do it! I tire of hearing story after story which goes something like, "yeah, I'll get on one of these days when I find some time..." Don't make excuses, **Operate!** You don't have time? Lose the cell phone and computer, hook up a radio (*any radio*) and **Operate!** Don't just yak on the repeater; use new modes and bands. Have fun, darn it! Amateur radio doesn't work by just sitting around and talking about what you have done or what you will do. It is fun when you do it now! And that is also the secret to being a better operator — practicing your craft, not just talking about it.

I'll briefly cover two unrelated topics this month. The first topic is the making of equipment lists. I have equipment packing lists for every conceivable trip I would make with amateur radio. There are lists for Field Day, VHF contests, Marathons, Picnics, Hamfests and you-name-it. I bring a lot of complicated stuff for most of these events and I don't usually forget anything too serious. Start out by making lists for your favorite public service event, a ham radio day outing and a vacation which includes ham radio. If you don't go on vacation, take the opportunity to dream! Don't skimp — include everything you would want to operate on a trip. The only criterion is that everything has to fit in your selected mode of transportation. This is a very good reason why I drive a van and hate to fly! Include everything on the list, including food, clothing and care items. Review your list a number of different times and you'll be amazed that you will always find something to add.

The lists you create are useless unless you put them to work. Get out, and **Operate!** You will likely find that you left something home, hopefully not something very important. Don't get discouraged, just make good notes and include the proper items next time!

The second topic I'll cover this month is contest operating. This was dealt with in Part 3 of the series and I will again urge you to take

part in a contest to build your skills. I (*and many others*) consider the ARRL Sweepstakes the best all around training contest. The exchange is a modified form of traffic and is much longer than the simple 59 Vermont we are used to hearing. In fact, there are 5 pieces of information (*number, class, call, year and section*) which must be correctly exchanged for each and every contact. In a contest where top scoring stations routinely make over 1500 contacts, that is 7500 pieces of information which are passed with speed and accuracy — accuracy in the 1-2% range! Sweepstakes is a stateside contest and stations with a reasonable antenna system can do quite well. In fact, from the Northeast, stations using only a high dipole are known to be competitive. Think your station is weak? Some QRP entrants running under 5 watts log over 500 QSO's. How do they do that? One learns the techniques to make contacts in any conditions by practice and more practice. In other words, they **Operate!** The phone Sweepstakes is November 20-21st and is a 24 out of 30-hour contest. Put 15-18 hours into this and you will be a changed operator forever. Caution! This contest may be habit forming.

So, you want to be a better operator? Then get on for Sweepstakes. Don't make excuses. Clear some available time. Fix the antennas now. Don't have a General license? Upgrade now, or hook up with higher class ham and go multiop. **Operate** and you will improve your skills for any time or situation and you will have something to look forward to. Don't operate and you will simply keep telling everyone how you would have liked to get on the air. Not only is this important for you, it is important for amateur radio. You see, if we don't operate, then we don't really have much of a service, do we?

Operate!

Up On The Tower



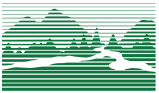
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Don't forget to check the TSRC Home Page!
Make it your default start page!
<http://www.w1fn.org>



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