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 SPECIAL HISTORICAL EDITION MARCH 2002 ON THE INTERNET AT: www.qsl.net/k4wrc

An Anecdotal-Pictorial History of Amateur Radio in Wellington and the WELLINGTON RADIO CLUB



**** Zoom-in on the images with the magnifier tool! ****

The Historical Advantage

People frequently debate whether we can learn from history but few would dispute the usefulness of a written record to refresh memories... both good and bad. After two and a half years of high activity, a great many Wellington Radio Club memories are worth recording. With a lot of achievements, a few disappointments and a large number of new members, it's timely that the Wellington Radio Club's origins and growth be documented.

In the Beginning

In some respects it's hard to believe that Wellington, now a city of 40,000 with a mega-mall, was only cow pasture or farmland about thirty years ago. But it was! The earliest signs of future urban sprawl appeared in the early 70s when sales offices and model homes sprung up like weeds.

However, from the 70s through the incorporation of Wellington in 1996, it was as if amateur radio operators were nonexistent out West. Our neighbors rarely saw antennas. There were never amateur radio meetings held here; no mail or email received on emer-

gency communications matters nor for that matter were there invitations issued from any local organizations on any aspect of our hobby. While PB County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service and Emergency Management were long established, they seemed to lack viable outreach programs and didn't attempt to organize radio amateurs in this area for emergency communications.

Survival of the Stealthy

With community development came a multitude of property owners associations. A master property owners association was formed, *First Wellington*, that enforced their rules and regulations as well as deed covenants. It had its squad of "antenna police" daily scouring the community, ever ready to pounce upon any new outside antenna installation and threaten legal action.

Yet there was ham life "underground"

and even a bit on the surface. A very few hard-core radio amateurs were able to negotiate waivers to restrictive deed covenants. Some brave souls erected "invisible" antennas and many more had attic antennas. Even after a tower was



The WRC spirit...open to all who believe in the Amateurs' Code.

legally erected, there was often harassment of the radio amateur. Sometimes because of a neighbor's complaints. John, WB4MOZ received letters demanding that he reduce his 75 foot tower to 30 feet because they claimed it was part of his home!

After the incorporation of Wellington in 1996, the power of the property owners associations waned with the establishment and growth of the Village's Planning and Zoning Department. That Department applied the County's Universal Land Development Code which most hams felt fairly treated radio amateur towers and antennas. Finally, in August 2000, *First Wellington* dissolved.

Help Wanted: Motivated Hams

Perhaps in light of Hurricane Andrew, Wellington's Village Council decided to create an Emergency Operations Center, EOC, for its jurisdiction. It was located at the Village's Water Treatment Plant on Wellington trace.

Even after the Village's own EOC was established, it received no offers of assistance from outside organizations to help establish, or for that matter run, its communications function. Neither ARES nor RACES tried to organize hams residing here. Not to be left floundering, the Village EOC had to resort to print advertising to fulfill its needs for volunteers to set up and man the EOC communications section.

That advertisement caught the eye of Larry KS4NB who volunteered and initiated the planning, acquisition of used equipment and its installation for the new EOC. With basic public safety and amateur band capabilities, the new EOC was ready for business.

He was appointed Wellington EOC's Communications Coordinator. Shortly afterwards a grant was received for a new EOC building and equipment to provide added public safety and enhanced amateur band communications capabilities.

Larry worked with Ken Roundtree, Emergency Management Director, to send letters on behalf of the Village informing local amateurs of the progress and needs of the EOC. That ultimately led to the formation of an independent Wellington Radio Club, WRC, about a year and a half later.

An Amateur Radio Community in Turmoil

That year and a half was a period of chaos in the history of Palm Beach County's amateur radio organizations. Leaders of the emergency communications establishment were openly attacked and derided on the air. Allegations and threats were made, county hearings conducted, people disciplined and very little accomplished. Even extortion letters were sent through the U.S. mail and threats emailed... all anonymous. A formal investigation was begun by State law enforcement agencies.

Many repeaters in the County experienced frequent jamming and often nets were severely disrupted. The situation deteriorated to the point that meetings could no longer be held at the County EOC. In fact, there were no County ARES/RACES meetings at all for months.

Repeater usage in the County dropped dramati-

(Right) Field Day 2000 in Wellington was unusual... a consortium of seven Palm Beach County radio clubs. This partial view of the site shows three of the seven "communications vehicles" with their associated temporary 40 foot towers.

(Below)

The 75 foot tower of John WB4MOZ and xyl Leola WA4SBD can hardly escape notice during the holidays! Its star is thought to be the tallest in Wellington and perhaps all the Western Communities.



De W2IDX



De KS4NB



De KS4NB

The TWENTY MILE BEND BIKE RACE - one of many Public Service events where WRC volunteers have trained and worked alongside ARES personnel. The WRC has participated in almost all such Central County public service events.

cally as the average ham was revolted by what he heard. Many turned off their radios for fear of what the kids or spouse might accidentally be exposed to. There seemed to be no relief for a great hobby turned sour by a few unsavory radio amateurs!

Birth of the Wellington Radio Club

Amidst this chaotic scene, sixteen hams were brought together by the Wellington EOC's recruitment letters. The initial organizing meeting occurred on April 22, 1999 when the name was chosen and the proposed Constitution and By-Laws were discussed. They met for the second time on May 17th to finalize the founding charter and elect officers. (See page 7 for founding members).

The Constitution and By-Laws reflected their concern about the all-time low state of amateur radio affairs in the County. Besides the typical ham club objectives, the cornerstone document also uniquely stated that the WRC will *"maintain an honorable, wholesome and harmonious image of the Radio Amateur in our Community by conducting the Club, its programs and activities in the spirit of The ARRL Amateur's Code."*

With its adoption, a club name and the election of officers... the Wellington Radio Club was born.

The WRC's Infancy

Another unusual provision of the WRC Constitution was that a Board member would be the ARES City Coordinator-Wellington, the link between it and County ARES. Although autonomous of both the EOC and ARES, there was a desire to work with a national organization. This led to an agreement with the ARES EC which was hoped would minimize the impact of County ARES/RACES' problems on the newly formed WRC. In June 1999, the ARES coordinator was appointed for Wellington.

At the WRC's first program meeting in June, the Village's Director of Planning and Zoning made it crystal clear that the Village would not impede the erection of outside amateur radio antennas that posed no danger to the property owner or his neighbors. In fact, he prepared an information and application package for Wellington's radio amateurs that accelerated the permit process for taller towers. Knowing Village officials were "friendly", many hams finally felt their antennas could come out of the closet or they could replace inefficient attic antennas!

The Storms

Many of the challenges facing the WRC occurred that first hurricane season. To help fulfill its emergency communications objectives for that season, the WRC placed its first repeater on the air in June '99 and began its Wellington Emergency Net. The repeater's antenna was one abandoned by the FHP on top of its 265 foot Wellington Tower. The 147.045 repeater was borrowed from Board Member Jeff, WA4AW. It was a 60s vintage GE Progress line machine with tube finals but it performed well providing reliable, nearly countywide communications.



De KG4FKY

Over 2000 children are reported missing daily! Here, anxious child searches the crowd for her parents as KS4NB confers with PBSD Deputies Chandler and Eisenman.



De KD5QNH
Hernando MS

LOST CHILD & COMMUNICATIONS CENTER - 5th Anniversary of Wellington Celebration. One of the most successful public service events for the WRC and VOW-EOC. That evening, three children separated from their parents, including the one pictured above, were quickly reunited while working with PBSD.



De KS4NB

Popular Child ID Program. Dick KG4QBQ takes child ID photo while volunteer from Royal Palm Beach Police Dept., Community Services, assists at Royal Palm's Target store.

During Hurricanes Floyd and Irene, WRC volunteers staffed the EOC along with Village officials around the clock. During these and other crises, like Y2K night, the Mayor and Village Council members regularly visited and often stayed for hours. There's little doubt that their firsthand observations account for the positive acceptance of amateur radio activities in Wellington. The WRC volunteers, the Wellington Emergency Net and the repeater served the Village well.

The "Human" Storm

A "human storm" developed in late September, 1999. W8WW was politely kicked off the WRC repeater because he failed to meet the its established standard of conduct... the spirit of the Amateurs' Code.

With the bravado of a con artist, he called a number of Village authorities claiming his right to free speech was violated and that he was discriminated against because of his German heritage. To its great credit, the WRC Board stood firmly behind the K4VOW Trustee's decision. The Trustee, Larry KS4NB, clearly explained the nature of the situation to Village authorities and the WRC waited for a reaction.

Soon however, the banishment from the WRC repeater was sealed in concrete once it became public knowledge that the FCC just cited W8WW for improprieties. It cancelled his callsigns and Trusteeships for the FART, BARF and three other bogus clubs. Riley Hollingsworth, the FCC's enforcement attorney, even placed the WRC's repeater restriction in writing to W8WW... to the applause of many. By decisive action, the WRC had demonstrated its good judgement and sense of responsibility to the Village.

The Onset of Tranquility

Hollingsworth and the FCC deserve high praise for their successful legal and psychological campaign, waged nationally, to stamp out the kind of turmoil experienced in Palm Beach County. Knowing the FCC was behind them, most local repeater operators have taken a stronger stand on user conduct.

In the Palm Beaches, some semblance of tranquility returned. Individuals were cited or prosecuted by the FCC and most of the bogus club members moved away or become silent keys.

Repeaters of Our Own

The search for a permanent repeater and frequency pair ended in February 2000. After numerous consultations, the Board decided to start using the 147.285 with a newly purchased, 100% solid state GE Mastr Executive II mobile radio converted to repeater operation. That frequency pair had been unused locally for several years and was confirmed by several months of monitoring.

After a six month provisional period the WRC repeater became coordinated by the Florida Repeater



K4WRC-K4VOW REPEATER SITE A prime mover of the Repeater Committee, John WB4MOZ stands next to the two meter system... a converted GE MASTR Executive II, CAT 300 controller, Motorola power supply and Sinclair duplexor in cabinet. On the left is the 440 MHz repeater built and donated by John. Four other Village & FHP systems share the tower shelter.

VOW EOC - VOW RACES WELLINGTON RADIO CLUB

GUIDE FOR SET 2001



Simulated Emergency Test -
Oct. 28th - Sunday - 1230 to 1530 Hours
Tornado Strikes Wellington & Royal Palm

SET 2001 - AN EXERCISE FOR EVERYONE!

The SET Committee had as a primary goal making the emergency communications scenario not only realistic but also one where participants would be able to follow events laid out in a plan on a rough timetable. After studying emergency communications responses to a number of natural and manmade disasters, a pattern repeated itself and that served as the core of our SET 2001 Plan.

Please review the Plan to determine when you would like to join the SET. Verify the nature of each net operating at that time, see page 3, and read the **HOW TO PARTICIPATE** hints, page 2, before you jump in. Let your imagination guide you in preparing a short report. Then check-in to the appropriate Net on the 285. Try emergency power first, handhelds and mobiles, and lastly from your base station. Recheck every hour.

VOLUNTEER!!! Participating agencies may request assistance. Although this is a **SIMULATION**, you can still volunteer just as if this were a real crisis. Needs may be announced just as they arise in a real situation! If you are not available to be a volunteer during the SET, asked to be placed on the **STANDBY LIST**.

Remember... everyone is invited, so don't stand on the sidelines!

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SCENARIO CONDITIONS:

- Severe Rain over two days; Hail Stones
- Flooding in the Western Communities
- Tornado spotted and touches down
- Total Power Outage west of Jog; major high voltage lines along and across SR 80 down; FPL substation damaged
- Roads Blocked; State Road 80/441 impassable
- Special Medical Attention Needed
- Some Residents in the area are Homeless
- Telephones out in wide area - no 911; SR80 BellSouth Switching Center damaged
- Cellphones overloaded

October's SET... Tackling Preparedness From a Different Angle

"Looking back over the past years' exercises, training activities and Public Service events, a gap was seen in the nature of the events we had prepared for and how we prepared for them. This SET is one way in which we can more closely approach the kind of emergency situation we all too tragically have experienced in recent times.

I encourage everyone to participate... whether for a quick checkin or extended role playing."

Ken Roundtree, Emergency Services Director, VOW



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Planning for Wellington's Simulated Emergency Test began in August 2001. Little did the SET Committee know how timely the exercise would be... it only knew that no SET of its kind had been conducted in the County for years. It broke fresh ground by the extensive use of role-playing and a customized SET GUIDE. By October 28th, emergency response groups across Florida and elsewhere joined the WRC in focusing on crises other than hurricanes.

Council. During that time, it was discovered that our input frequency was being used as the output frequency of a linked Dade-Key Largo system. This caused significant interference to our operations. Although such linked systems are prohibited by the FCC on two meters, it still took the WRC months of diplomatic effort to resolve the problem. Once resolved, the WRC system enjoyed interference free operation from northern Broward through southern St. Lucie counties. More importantly, it permitted reliable emergency communications throughout the Western Communities with just handheld radios.

An equally effective UHF repeater on 442.050 MHz was donated to the WRC by John WB4MOZ in April, 2000. He designed and built the repeater using the best of both Motorola and GE modules. It has never failed us in nearly two years of operation!

The First Field Day in Wellington

A few months of tranquility was the tonic needed by the WRC to plan for its first emergency exercise... Field Day 2000. Word spread quickly and six other radio clubs from throughout the County requested to participate. They were the *Boca Raton Amateur Radio Association, Florida Atlantic University Radio Club, Motorola Radio Club, PB Trackers' Society and the West Palm Beach Amateur Radio Club.*

The Village's support was terrific including a prime public site in front of the New Community Center on Forest Hill Blvd., the city's heaviest travelled thoroughfare! The hard work of all the groups' 100 or so volunteers made it a field day to remember and one hard to live upto.

The Divorce

At the beginning of July 2000, the ARES Wellington coordinator position was abruptly eliminated without notice, explanation or just cause by the ARES County EC. The news was discovered on the County ARES public website... without even a courtesy telephone call being made to officially notify the WRC. Much later, the official line was that there was an ARES "reorganization" and it was unfair to the other 36 municipalities to have only one City Coordinator.

That only led to strengthen the views of some WRC leaders and members that it was unwise to be tied to an organization that still showed signs of instability. Part of their argument was that in the Western Communities, the WRC could just as well serve as the role model for emergency communications. The affiliation of the WRC with Palm Beach County ARES eroded rapidly.

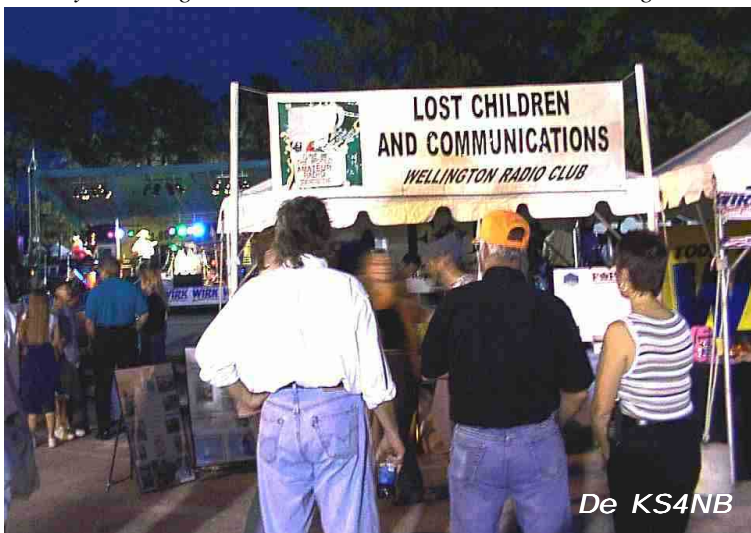
Wellington RACES... The 1st Step

After 20 years of the Village and its radio amateurs being forced to fend for themselves during periods of great change, it's easy to understand why there was a desire to maintain self-sufficiency and even some self-direction. To bolster its long-term communications ability and bring emergency communicators under local management, it was decided to form Wellington's own **Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, RACES**, group according to FEMA guidelines. It came as no surprise that Village au-



De KS4NB

***THE WRC MEMORY LANE NET** reflects our intense interest in ham traditions. WRC Member Fred NORBR, left, founded the Yesteryear Village Radio Museum at the South Florida Fairgrounds.*



De KS4NB

***WRC's LOST CHILDRENS BOOTH - Westfest in Royal Palm Beach** Providing a safehaven for kids separated from their parents and more effective communications between parents, law enforcement and event organizers shows how a simple need can be satisfied by a caring club.*



De KS4NB

***WRC HAM RADIO FLOAT IN THE WESTERN COMMUNITIES' HOLIDAY PARADE.** Complete with tower and beam and decorated in a patriotic motif! Many clubs provide communications at parades but few have their own high profile float. There are few better ways of reaching the public... in this instance as many as 25,000 viewers.*

thorities appointed the WRC President as its RACES Officer.

Shortly afterwards, there was a telephone call placed by a high level County official to the Village challenging the Village's right to form its own RACES organization. However, Wellington's actions under FEMA made its authority irrefutable. The appointment of Wellington's own RACES officer was upheld. Many believe the County's ARES/RACES appointees, not familiar with the guidelines, were behind that effort to stifle an independent Wellington RACES.

Growth of Public Service Activities

Nonetheless, WRC members have participated alongside ARES volunteers in nearly all central county public service events and exercises. The WRC has maintained its spirit of mutual assistance... a Club objective since its founding.

True to the commitment to its members and their communities, the WRC has not only provided typical communications services but also pioneered numerous public service events in the Western Communities. Previously, the area's 200,000 residents had received *absolutely* no organized amateur radio services. The WRC's *Lost Child and Child Identification* programs have proven popular and the WRC is believed to be the first radio club in the country to provide these services.

Emergency Communications Preparedness

Since its first multi-club Field Day, the WRC has followed up with its own Field Day 2001, added a second repeater available for emergency communications and conducted two Village of Wellington EOC Simulated Emergency Tests, SETs. All in addition to the WRC's weekly nets.

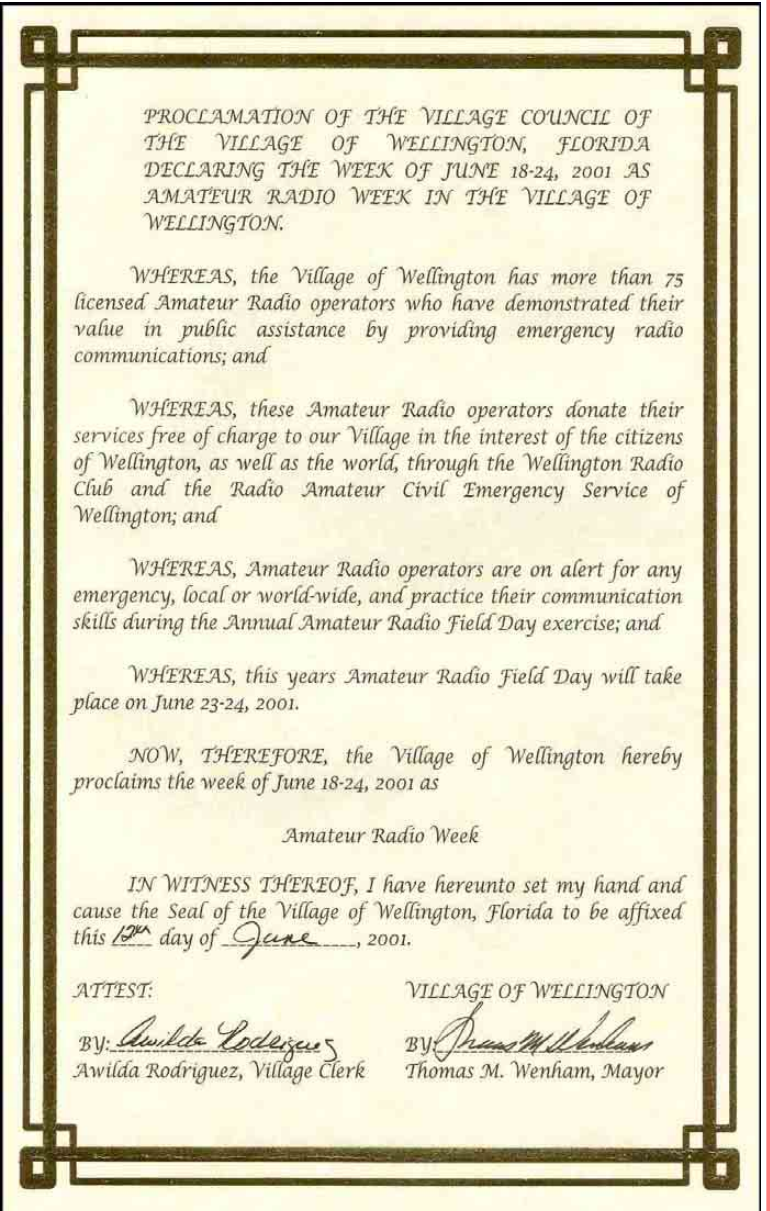
The 2001 SET was planned well before the disastrous events of Sept. 11th. By design, it was intended to be much more global than the repetitive, limited hurricane-related drills that have been the trademark communications exercises in Palm Beach County. It was a SET where *everyone* had the opportunity to practice emergency communications skills... not just those with EOC or shelter assignments. The Village of Wellington cosponsored the SET and WRC members staffed the EOC and a Village bus serving as a field damage assessment and Command Center.

Relative to both other local and regional SETs it had a high level of participation including members of SKYWARN, Air Force/Army/Marine MARS, Red Cross and employees from the Villages of Royal Palm Beach and Wellington. It was not only a giant step in going beyond very limited exercises but also prophetic... just one week later a tornado touched down in Belle Glade!

The Wellington Emergency Net has met on schedule 96 times for training and information since 1999... even on holidays such as New Years Eve 2001 when 11 stations participated! The *Memory Lane Net*, devoted to communications history, technology and practices, formed in June 2001 by member request and is still going strong.



FIELD DAY 2001 - the first large scale emergency exercise planned and executed solely by the WRC. Over 70 people attended and 1200+ FD contacts were made by two HF and one VHF stations at Village Park. The Village participated with both material and moral support unequalled by any municipality in the County!



Amateur Radio Week Proclamation of June, 2001. Easily read with the zoom function of Acrobat Reader.

In addition to manning the EOC during emergencies and simulations, WRC members have periodically tested and trained on the EOC's communications equipment and assisted in implementing improvements to the Village's tower site.

Better Than an Emmy...

Amateur Radio Week and Great Support!

In recognition of the WRC's services to its residents the Village of Wellington has twice proclaimed *Amateur Radio Weeks*.

Perhaps of equal importance is that the Village demonstrates its support of the WRC's public services by maintaining a formal Memorandum of Understanding with it. It's thought to be the only one of its kind in South Florida.

Without hesitation, the Village has partnered with the WRC and contributed its resources to every activity that has benefited this area's preparedness... from Field Days to SETs to skills workshops! We are uniquely fortunate to have developed such a cooperative relationship with officials concerned about their citizens.

An Evolving WRC

Often in 2001, the WRC's Board discussed even better ways to accommodate the growth of its activities and membership. When founded, the WRC's potential membership was thought to be a maximum of about 25 members. But it soon became apparent that the needs of a great many hams weren't being met elsewhere. Because of its blend of public service, emergency communications and traditional ham activities that stress positive image, the WRC has attracted a great many more members than first expected. This is especially the case in the Western Communities... home to about 80% of its members. The continuous effort to communicate with, motivate and provide for members' needs helped it grow to nearly fifty members by year's end.

Proposed changes to the Constitution and By-laws were debated in light of the WRC's experiences during its infancy. It learned the hard way that formal ties to outside groups at times impede fulfilling its Constitutional objectives and the needs of its members and their communities. The By-Laws Committee under Larry KF4TSQ, Vice-President, was activated to guide the WRC through the great changes expected in the years ahead.

G-d willing... in a time of change, there will be equal progress toward meeting the needs of our members and their rapidly growing communities in 2002 and thereafter.

**For further information about current activities, visit
The WELLINGTON RADIO CLUB'S website:
www.qsl.net/k4wrc**

Email us via the website for Membership Information.

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WRC-PBC SKWARN-WEATHERVINE Severe Weather Clinic conducted at the Wellington Community Center, August 2001. From right: Chris, KG4PJN of Weathervine and Mayor Wenham address attendees. It was the first webcast event from Wellington. **Weather in Wellington Month** began with Channel 5 Chief Meteorologist, Steve Weagle's great presentation at the WRC's monthly meeting.

WELLINGTON RADIO CLUB - Founded May 17, 1999

-PRESIDENTS-

LARRY LAZAR KS4NB - 5/99 to 12/01

-VICE-PRESIDENTS-

LARRY PHILLIPS KF4TSQ - 5/99 to 12/01

-SECRETARYS-

JOHN GREEN WB4MOZ - 5/99 to 3/00

KEN GOTLIB W9KEN - 4/00 to 12/00

JOHN MOOREMAN KG4JMO - 1/01 to 12/01

-TREASURERS-

GEORG SAMULKEWITSCH KR4WD - 5/99 to 12/01

-ACTIVITIES CHAIRMEN-

JEFF BEALS WA4AW - 5/99 to 12/99

FRED LEWIS N0RBR - 1/00 to 12/00

JACK WESLEY KG4FKY - 1/01 to 12/01

-CHARTER MEMBERS-

DK8NV	Gerd Rohleder	N4OCI	Gene Klein
K4YV	Roy Rosner	N4RMV	Mike Donner
KE4IEK	William Roberts	W2IDX	Bernie Schreier
KE4HLM	Sandy Wolff	W2WAK	Morris Silberberg
KF4TSQ	Larry Phillips	WA4AW	Jeff Beals
KR4WD	Georg Samulkewitsch	WA4SBD	Leola A. Green
KS4NB	Larry Lazar	WB4MOZ	John H. Green
N0RBR	Fred Lewis	WD4CRB	Dick Keith

-TRUSTEES-

K4VOW - Larry Lazar K4WRC - Georg Samulkewitsch

"By action of the Board of Directors all amateurs who attended the first two organizational meetings of the WRC are considered **Charter Members** - these members are named in these minutes. Any member wishing to decline this honor should notify any WRC officer. In addition, any amateur that joins the WRC by June 15, 1999 will be considered a **Charter Member**. Any additional charter members will be listed in the June, '99 minutes."

WRC MINUTES, MAY 17, 1999

Approved June 7, 1999