



Radio Amateur News & Views

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JULY 2001

10 Great Years of RANV

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FOX HUNT WORKSHOP The July 10th RANV Meeting

Join with us for our July meeting as Mitch W1SJ leads us in a workshop on everyone's favorite pastime – **Fox Hunting!** For the first part of the meeting, we will spend a few minutes on the theory of Fox Hunting – why it works, and why it often doesn't work! There will also be a discussion of strategies and equipment used by successful hunters. After the short talk, most of the meeting will be practice in finding several transmitters hidden around the site. For the first hunt, Mitch will show you how to do it. For all subsequent hunts, you're on your own! Be sure to bring all your fancy Fox Hunting equipment, if you have any.

For our pre-meeting festivities, I will break with tradition for the summer season. Our pre-meeting will take place at **Al's French Frys**, across the street from Zachs, our usual dining spot. Come early – about 5:45 – since Al's gets plenty busy. The meeting will start at 7 PM sharp!

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RANV SUMMER PICNIC AUGUST 4th

Be sure to mark Saturday, August 4th on your calendar. That is the date of the RANV Summer Picnic at Knight's Point State Park. Festivities get underway at 11 AM. RANV will again invite all area amateur operators and families to join us in this event. We will provide admission to the park, soda, and charcoal for the grills. You bring the rest! We also have some hot dogs and hamburger buns while they last!

There are a number of activities at the picnic to take part in. First and foremost is the barbecuing and eating aspect, something I know we are all experts in. This is an amateur radio event, and therefore, there will be radios and antennae setup for casual contacts. We plan to have an HF transceiver and dipole in the trees. In addition, we are also planning a full-blown satellite station (*with tracking rotor*). Anyone interested in bringing a PSK-31 setup?

At 1 PM will be the regional meeting of the *Yankee Clipper Contest Club*. This is a club for contest and DX enthusiasts. The meeting will be short, but there will be plenty of opportunity to pick the brains of testers.

There are also many activities for normal people! The short list includes swimming, paddleboating, fishing, volleyball, soccer, etc. Bring any necessary sporting goods.

Knight's Point State Park is located on North Hero Island. Take Route 2 to the Champlain Islands and go through South Hero and Grand Isle and cross the drawbridge onto North Hero. The park entrance is a few hundred feet past the bridge on the left. Tell the attendant you are with the Radio Club. Be sure to bring all necessary play items, sporting goods, clothing, towels, food and garbage bags. Do not bring any pets since they are not allowed in the park.

Please let Paul AA1SU (aa1su@arrl.net) know how many in your party are coming so we can get an accurate count for planning.

OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Grant K1KD, Sec'y

The last RANV meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM on June 12th. There were approximately 20 hams in attendance.

Paul AA1SU started the meeting off by announcing some ham radio related events coming up this summer. On July 14-15th, special event station N2V will be active aboard the Cumberland Ferry to commemorate 250 years of ferry service from New York to Vermont. Contact Ed N1PEA to get involved in operating. Another activity to get involved in is the MS-150 Green Mountain Get-away, a fundraising event for the Multiple Sclerosis Society to be held on August 11-12th. Volunteers are needed during this bicycle tour to provide communications. Finally, the annual RANV picnic will be held at Knight's Point State Park and will be Saturday, August 4th.

The main presentation for the meeting was a two-part talk given by Brian N1BQ on APRS and connector systems for radios. During the first half of Brian's talk, we learned about all of the various connector configurations encountered in ham radio and how to make connections more universal. Since there are many different manufacturers of ham radio gear, connector compatibility can often be a problem. Brian offered a unique solution to this problem by standardizing all of his equipment connections using Anderson Power-Pole connectors. Some advantages to using these connectors include high current rating, large number of make/break cycles (*how many times you can plug and unplug before it wears out*), and guaranteed polarity matching.

Next, Brian talked to us about Amateur Position Reporting System (APRS). APRS was introduced in 1991 and since then has grown into a worldwide communication network. It can be used as a position locating and tracking system. Brian explained several instances where APRS has played a role in assisting

THE PREZ SEZ

by Paul AA1SU, President

What an outstanding Field Day this was! We had so many new and eager faces just itching to get on the air and make those valuable contacts. It paid off too, as we will have these new operators to use in the future, where they will be even more experienced. Thanks go out to all of the visitors that stopped by for a visit, gave us a contact, and egged us on.

Field Day is the ham radio highlight of the year for most of us. It brings out the best in all of us, as we struggle to get this project off the ground and running; all on emergency power. We all learn how to be better operators because of Field Day, and we bring that experience home with us. For example, I know that Fred N1ZUK had to learn how to set up 3 different modes, in the field, just so that we could have a demonstration station. We were all very impressed with the nice set up. Fred is considering leaving up a packet node at his house, now that he has the experience. I know that I personally used it several times while we were getting ready for Field Day. With the packet systems temporarily down in Plattsburgh, it would come in very handy.

As usual, Richard WN1HJW and Karen did an outstanding job with the cooking. You just can't put on a good Field Day with hungry hamsters, I always say. Of course, no food would have been prepared, were it not for the great shopping done by Bob KB1FRW. I called on him just days before the big event to come through, and without a written list. Richard tells me that Bob

stranded motorists or helping a search party reach lost persons. In one instance, APRS even helped local police track down a stolen car. Brian explained how remote APRS units are being used to assist the National Weather Service in collecting weather data. The system is comprised of a global network consisting of both RF and Internet links.

did a great job picking out the food. I have been assured that there will definitely be a list in place for next year. One of the things that we do each year is write down notes on how to do things better.

Meanwhile, in the Novice Tent, several recently licensed young hams were getting a taste of HF on Ten Meter SSB. The band did not really open too much this year, but that is part of operating on these frequencies. CW in the Novice portion of the bands was also in the logs, giving them even more of a thrill. I'm sure that this experience will stay with them for most of the following year. Leo KB1EZE even got to work with Mitch W1SJ in the Phone Tent for a few minutes. I remember that moment very fondly when I first became a ham in 1997.

Thanks to all of you that set up, operated, and/or tore down. We could not have done it without you. You made it all possible. So, keep coming to those meetings, keep operating, and keep reading about it.

Contacting RANV

In Person: Meeting, July 10th, 7pm,
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By Mail: PO Box 9392,
So. Burlington, VT 05403

By Radio: 145.15 repeater

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Please send submissions for the newsletter to the editor, W1SJ.

FIELD DAY 2001

by Mitch WISJ

By all measurements, it was another great Field Day effort. We had participation, we had everything working right, we had competitive results, we had some good openings here and there, we had a corps of youngsters experience their first Field Day and we had fun. All of this occurred despite the fact that the weather was less than ideal and there was a downpour for a few hours. Lest we not forget, Field Day doesn't have to be this easy. I can remember years with sloppy weather, equipment failing left and right, power outages, very few people and all the while we are asking "are we having fun yet?" The fact that everything came together is certainly a little bit of good fortune, but also a lot of planning and homework beforehand.

For me, some of the best times of Field Day are the days before the event when equipment is hauled out, put together, tested and often re-engineered. This is done at a time when it is quiet and there is no racing against the clock. It is a time when one can sit back and really think how do we make things work better. Others have discovered this secret fun part of Field Day. Eric has designed an operating shack in a horse trailer and has worked on various pieces of balky equipment. This year, Fred discovered the joys of preparation by putting many hours into the layout and design of a fantastic 3-mode demonstration station, highlighting the abilities of Slow Scan TV, APRS and a packet node. And Jeff spent some time and will be spending more time on perfecting our satellite antenna situation.

Setup went a lot more smoothly this year than previous years. We didn't really have that many more people, but we did have a tighter plan to work with and saved a lot of time by not making the same silly setup mistakes we make each year. Paul, with the big truck, was instrumental in getting equipment, includ-

ing antennas, towers and tables to and from the site, despite a tough weekend work schedule. Eventually, it took about the same amount of time to get the antennas up, but it didn't seem as rushed or as tiring as before. We even set up all the tents, saving us this work on Saturday. I had the phone station up fully operational at 11:30 in the morning, a new site record. In fact, all antennas

"A big difference this year was the collection of kids we had for the Novice station."

were in place on Friday night, and there was no last minute messing around with antennas on Saturday. This was fortunate, given the wet weather.

I was on my second tour of duty on phone and the skies opened up. The noise of the rain on the tent was so loud, I had to strain to hear sta-

tions, even using headphones. The rain didn't affect the rate, as I had a record number of contacts in the log. I had to batten down all of the windows and doors of the tent and turn the lights on. In the glare of the lights I saw fine mists of water floating around the tent, the 0.1% of water which does manage to pass through canvas. My thoughts turned to how this high humidity would sit with the transmitter, which has 1000 volts on the plates! Fortunately, all held up. With the exception of the pool of water at the tent entrance which had to be drained every so often, the phone tent stayed ship shape. The CW tent had some problems. Their backup battery power system was right at the door and it complained about being submerged in water. A little draining action and plastic righted the problem. We learned some lessons about rain: all power connections must be in the tents and raised off the floor which gets wet!

A big difference this year was the collection of kids we had for the Novice station. In years past, we have always gotten Tech+ operators, usually seasoned contesters in their own right. With virtually every Tech+ upgrading these days, it is hard to find someone of the right class to operate this station. Next year the ARRL promises a major change or to do away with this bonus. This year operators were Alex, Leo, Leela and Colin, ages 11, 10, 9 and 7, assisted by dads KB1EJC and W1RL and with technical support from N1YWB. The bad news was that 10 Meters was fleeting in its openings, and the band was dead most of the time. But when it opened, new operators got the thrill of working pile-ups. They also got the experience of working live CW over the air, something John KB1EJC said was much different than the software practice mode! And Leo wasn't content to work a dead 10 Meters. He found a way into the phone tent and man-

FIELD DAY BOX SCORE

80 CW	158	80 SSB	513
40 CW	401	40 SSB	249
20 CW	188	20 SSB	1153
15 CW	284	15 SSB	92
Nov CW	9	Nov Ph	92
VHF CW	0	VHF Ph	146
Sat CW	2	Sat Ph	17
Total CW	1042	Total Ph	2262

Year	2001	2000	1999	1998
CW	1042	1233	1209	1100
Phone	2262	2130	3304	2674
Total	3304	3363	4450	3774
Points	10092	10294	12194	10748

The Crew:

Phone: W1SJ K1HD N1ZUK K1KD N1YWB
CW: AA1SU K2MME W1EAT K1KD
Novice: N1ALX KB1GBF KB1EJC/D/E
VHF: KB1EQG KB1EXM
Staff: W1RL N1SRC KA1KLJ WN1HJW Karen
Visitors: W1DEB WB2SSU KB1EUF
KB1DBR W1DEC K1KD-YL KB1EXM-YL

FOX TAKES HUNTERS SHOPPING

by Mitch WISJ

Every time I am anointed as the hidden transmitter, or Fox, I try to come up with a hiding spot which is interesting and somewhat out of the ordinary. I had some interesting ideas for our latest hunt which were never put into effect. Instead, born out of necessity, I found an even more interesting place to hide.

I learned that the in-laws were coming up from Florida and had plans for dinner Friday night – the night of the Fox Hunt! All attempts to change these plans failed. The concept of a “Fox Hunt” was way too foreign a concept to change any plans. I was between a rock and hard place, as I didn’t want to cancel the hunt and couldn’t blow off family either. I considered being the fox during dinner, but the stares from ham-unfriendly people and the probable ensuing discussion afterward made me change my mind. Fortunately, folks from Florida eat dinner very early and they chose to go to Outback Steakhouse on Dorset Street. I had a chance to work this out! I put the hunt on hold for a half hour. After finishing dinner at 6:45, I had to hide fast. I first thought about hiding in the construction area at the center of Williston Road. However, with temperatures hovering near 90, I decided to land in the first air-conditioned place I could find – University Mall across the street! I decided to keep moving throughout the mall instead of standing still to make it more interesting and to keep from being hassled by Security. With my two HT’s, I was all set.

The hunt started and hunters were treated to a signal which was quite copyable at I-89 Exit 14 (1000 feet away), but which varied all over the place as I moved about. I was concerned that some of the mall noises would give my location away, so I sought refuge in the parking garage. While up there, I had a great signal. Occasionally, I would hang out in the back of the mall or in Sears to make the signal weak.

All night long, I admonished hunters for relying on their beams and loops, knowing full well that when they got close, directional antennas wouldn’t work much. Several times, I watched Bill N1IRO and company go in and out of the parking lot with their phased verticals on the car. I also enjoyed watching them search all over the bushes in the bank parking lot next door. They were so close I could throw something at them!

I didn’t have my reading material with me, so I had to make up long transmissions ad lib. Listeners on 145.15 were treated to talks on a number of topics, including the VHF Contest, Field Day and Fox Hunting. I got tired of watching hunters, so I went inside for a while and did some window shopping.

Tired of shopping, I then went up the steps to my perch atop the garage. I saw Bill up there, so I retreated down the stairs to the mall. Unbeknownst to me, Bill had a helper (*Josh N1VWC*) who caught me red-handed at the second level.

Bob KB1FRW was in his first hunt and using a series of small antennas, he did quite well. He showed up at the top of the garage where I was standing across the lot. However, he made the mistake of telling me he found me on the radio. Like any good fox, I scooted down the stairs and hid at another level until Bob finally ferreted me out.

It would have been a quite interesting hunt if several hunters lugged yagis into the mall. The turnout was small for this hunt so we did not get to test what would happen.

There will be a number of hunts coming up this summer. First, there will be a talk on Fox Hunting and several practice hunts to hone your skills at the July 10th RANV meeting. At the picnic, on August 4th, we will have several transmitters hidden around the park. Finally, our regularly scheduled countywide Fox Hunt will be Friday, August 10th.

HAM SUMMER FUN

by Mitch WISJ

Now that Field Day is over, you might think that there isn’t much happening in amateur radio for the rest of the summer. There are all sorts of great activities taking place in the next couple of months.

This week will be the RANV meeting on July 10th. I will be leading the group in a workshop on Fox Hunting Techniques. The meeting starts at 7 PM and will be held at the O’Brien Civic Center.

On the weekend of July 14-15th is the N2V Special Event from aboard the M/V Cumberland, celebrating 250 years of Ferry service on Lake Champlain. Operators are needed to keep the station on HF and VHF bands all during the day and evening. Contact Ed N1PEA at n1pea@arrl.net for details.

Also on that same weekend is the IARU HF World Championship. This is a worldwide DX contest and is a great way to pick up new DX. The operating period is a very tame 24 hours (8AM Saturday until 8AM Sunday). See April QST or <http://www.arrl.org/contests> for details

On August 4th is the RANV Summer Picnic at Knight’s Point State Park. This activity combines the best features of a family picnic and ham radio portable operation. See details on this on page 1 of this newsletter.

On Friday evening, August 10th, 6 PM will be the summer RANV Fox Hunt. Bill N1IRO and assistants will be hiding in some tantalizing spot. This is a great time to test your newly learned Fox Hunt skills!

On August 11-12th is the MS-150 Green Mountain Getaway. Operators are needed to provide communications for this event which runs from St. Albans to Johnson on Saturday and goes back to St. Albans on Sunday. Contact Paul AA1SU at aa1su@arrl.net to join the action.

Not enough fun for you? Have an idea for an activity that we can all take part in? Let your thoughts be known at a meeting or via E-mail. All activities have started this way!

VERMONT CITY MARATHON

By Carl KC1WH

On Memorial Day weekend, approximately 3000 marathon runners participated in the 13th annual Vermont City Marathon. The 26.2-mile course starts at Battery Park, winds around the streets of Burlington, and finishes at Waterfront Park. The weather on race day was intermittent light drizzle, with overcast skies and moderate temperatures — almost perfect for running. Michael Khabotov, a 28-year-old from Siberia, Russia, broke the VCM course record with a time of 2:17:03, a full minute faster than the existing record. This was a fast pace – the second place finisher this year completed the course in 2:27:36.

Along the same route, a 5-leg relay race was run simultaneously with the Marathon. Approximately 2500 additional relay runners participate, mere mortals for whom 5 miles is a more enjoyable, realistic distance. The “Aviator Track Club”, including 3 UVM and 2 BU track stars, won the men’s open relay in 2:21:55. Some of the non-winning relay teams included “Engineering Feets”, “Little Chocolate Donuts”, “Longitudinally Challenged”, “Mo’Lasses”, “Roadkill”, and “The Swinging Chads”.

The Communications team included 39 people. My sincere thanks to:

Mark N1IAK	Avi KB1FVI	Marcia N1DSO
Dave W1HRG	Greg KB2TON	AJ N1ZWL
Renee N1UXK	Gladys KB2VTI	Ralph N1DXU
John N1LXI	Ron N1LDT	Robert N1QMX
Burton K1RMF	Charlie W1CHG	Tyler KB1GRI
Tom KB1DSO	Dan N1PEF	Jay K1UC
Earl K1YLB	Cliff N1RYS	Roger K1CRS
Steve N1EQP	Jim N1UWW	Debbie W1DEB
Elaine N1IJW	Ray KC1BT	Ronni KA1NRR
Buzz KB1EPQ	Betty KC1YW	Tom N1EXY
Fran KM1Z	John N1WQS	Wayne W1BHL

Thanks also to Mitch W1SJ, Dave W1HRG and Bob WE1U for setting up repeaters to support the activity.

Members of the Green Mountain Bike Patrol joined the Trout River bikers this year, circling sections of the course looking for problems and distressed runners. Two of these GMBP bikers are licensed amateurs, Bob KB1CLG and Chris KB1EMC, who provided a communication liaison from the bikers to Net Control.

Net Control activity for Aid Station support, course problems, and logistics was about average. But the cool weather put less stress on the athletes — so runner-related Net activity was somewhat lower than normal, including fewer stalled runners needing Pickup Van transport, calls for medical vehicle response, and slow runners passed by the Trailing Bikers.

Thanks again to everyone who supported the 2001 Vermont City Marathon, and I encourage you to join the Communications team next year.

Field Day... from page 3

aged to get himself on the air for a few minutes! I wonder if all young hams had this much fun at Field Day we wouldn’t have youngsters getting their licenses in droves. Amongst all the grass, dead bugs and pieces of black tape found in my boxes of stuff, my prize souvenir this year is my CQ Voice Box, which had my CQ erased and replaced with a CQ by 7-year old Colin KB1GBF, which wins the RANV award of the cutest CQ this year.

At the main stations, operators cranked out contacts. CW had a subpar year; phone was better than average. Much of this is due to propagation conditions more than anything else. This year, 15 and 75 meters were tremendous on Saturday evening – conditions which CW (15M) and phone (75M) took advantage of. However, both stations died from very poor conditions in the wee hours Sunday morning. We put up good numbers despite the fact that we lost 3 operators at the last moment due to schedule conflicts. It is good to see that our bullpen of operators is deep enough to take up the slack when there are last minute changes.

This year, there were some major changes at the VHF station as our usual operators N1SRC and AA1SK operated with N1QS. The VHF station was staffed by committee, with K1HD, N1ZUK and AA1SU taking turns on VHF. Much of the operating was done by new operators Mike KB1EQG and Matthew KB1EXM who were thrilled to experience some of their first serious operating. Six meters also provided some fireworks with a couple of spot openings.

A major effort of every Field Day is the collection of bonus points. We collected them all and added 1400 points to our score. The big focus this year, was the three mode demonstration station put together by Fred, which was good for 300 points. Both Fred and Paul copied the ARRL Field Day bulletin on Friday night (100 points). An article on Field Day in the Essex Reporter garnered another 100 points. We also originated and relayed a whole bunch of formal message traffic (200 points). Points were also collected for running 100% off of generators, public access and display, satellite contacts and contacts off of solar charged batteries. Finally, we picked up our last 100 points when Dave W1DEC, who is an elected official (2nd Constable of Town of Fayston) visited the Field Day site on Sunday.

From the days of “grab food whenever you can,” the RANV Field Day has improved 500% in the culinary arts. Bob KB1FRW was our purchaser and we had more than enough to go around and then some. In fact, he’s planning next year’s menu now! Richard and Karen did another fantastic job as chefs, despite sloppy weather. The large canopy served as a perfect place to get out of the rain and grab a meal.

The heroes were many. The fun was great! In fact, we all had a great time at Field Day 2001!

**JULY MEETING:
“Fox Hunt Workshop” with W1SJ
Tuesday, July 10th, 7PM
O’Brien Civic Center**

**RANV SUMMER PICNIC
Saturday, August 4th, 11AM-6PM
Knight’s Point State Park**

RANV

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<http://www.RANV.org>