



# Radio Amateur News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

December, 2002

Seasons Greetings from RANV

Vol. 12 No. 12

## RANV HOLIDAY PARTY Our December Meeting

Join with us for the **RANV** Holiday Party on Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. The Party is a fun gathering for members, family and our friends in the ham radio community. The major event at this party will be EATING and a whole menu of stuff is planned. This will include: deli platter, veggies, munchies, cheese/crackers, chili, cocktail franks, meatballs, drinks and all kinds of desserts. Mouths will get a double workout as they will be used to yap it up whenever they are not being stuffed with eats! Bring along all sorts of stories, pictures, videos and conversation pieces! The W1SJ/WB1GQR station will be on the air to broadcast this event live on 160 meters through 70 cm and on the Internet to whomever dares to hear it. The **RANV** Holiday Party is a FAMILY event, so also bring along other family members who generally wouldn't be caught dead at a club meeting or Field Day! There will be plenty of non-ham types for them to talk to.

The Party will be at W1SJ/W1DEB's QTH in Essex. If you need directions, please contact W1SJ. Festivities get underway AFTER 5:30 on Tuesday.

Important! If you haven't already done so, please let W1SJ know how many in your party are coming so we can have accurate planning of food amounts. At that time, we can also determine who will be bringing whatever to make sure we have enough drinks and dessert. Contact Mitch at w1sj@arrl.net or call 879-6589 days.

## 10 METER CONTEST

The ARRL 10 Meter Contest takes place next week and you won't want to miss it. Sunspot numbers are still very high and conditions are great!

The 10 Meter Contest starts Friday night December 13<sup>th</sup>, at 7 PM. With good conditions, this is an easy and fun contest to partake in. Don't miss it! During the day, you will easily work tons of stations in Europe, but you will have to get up early, since the European run is 7-11 AM. In the afternoon, there are plenty of stateside stations to work with a few South American stations thrown in. If you are lucky, you even might bag a few contacts in the Pacific.

Ted and Fred will be putting the flagship station of the Road Kill Amateur Radio Club, W1PU on the air. Operators are needed for both phone and cw. Ted says that this is the premier contest training event of the year and several of our crack Field Day ops cut their teeth in the 10 Meter Bash. To join in with the W1PU effort, drop Ted a line at k1hd@arrl.net.

## COMING UP!

There are a whole bunch of ham things to do in the next month. In fact, some will engage in the dubious activity of eating *hams* this holiday season.

Just as you receive this newsletter the 160 Meter Contest is starting. It's not all that easy to crank out a suitable antenna and then stay up all night working CW, but it's a lot of fun.

All that operating sure works up an appetite and we certainly hope to see you at the Holiday Party on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Details at left.

If you are looking for something more sane, try the 10 Meter Contest on December 13-15<sup>th</sup>. Plenty of DX and stateside contacts for everyone!

Looking for entertainment this New Year's? You couldn't find a better bargain than Straight Key Night! It's free and lasts all day. On the downside, it is on CW, and liquor free - usually, but not always!

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Seasons Greetings!

## OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Bob KB1FRW, Sec'y

President Brian N1BQ, called the meeting to order November 11th at 7:00. The first order of business was a motion by Sara to allocate up to \$200 for food for the RANV Holiday Party. It passed unanimously.

The first topic of the meeting was on Geocaching, an activity that has been taken up by several local hams. Brian, who discovered this a year ago, introduced it. Mitch followed with a nice presentation on Geocaching.

To Geocache, you need a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver and the cache coordinates. GPS works by tracking several special satellites that circle the earth and transmit signal information. GPS receivers take this information and use triangulation to calculate the user's exact location. With distance measurements from a few satellites, the receiver can determine the user's position and display it on the unit's electronic map. The accuracy of a GPS is around 50 feet when you have a lock on 3 or more satellites. Sometimes foliage makes that difficult to do, as you need a clear line-of-sight path to get a signal. GPS accuracy and good camouflage make finding the cache difficult at times. Mitch suggests bringing a flashlight and a compass along, also appropriate dress for the area the cache is in.

Caches can vary. The common cache is a container filled with goodies. You bring a trinket, exchange it with something in the cache, and then sign the enclosed log.

You can find all about Geocaching and where the hidden caches are at <http://www.geocaching.com>. Read the information there and it will guide you to your first cache!

To demonstrate Geocaching, we used a few GPSs to find a cache that Mitch had hidden near the meeting site. It was a little wet in the rain, but fun.

The ballots for club officers were counted. There were 18 valid ballots: President: Brian Riley N1BQ, 18 votes; VP/Treasurer: Bob Allen KB1FRW, 18 votes; Secretary: Howie Ferber K2MME, 14 votes, Dave Cain, W1DEC, 4 votes. The new officers will be installed at the Holiday Party.

## THE PREZ SEZ

by Brian N1BQ, President

Thanksgiving has come and gone leaving in its wake turkey sandwiches for another week. As hams, this month we have the ARRL 160 meter and 10 meter contests coming up and innumerable special events. Don't forget "Straight Key Night" on New Year's Eve. Locally, we will all be gathering at Mitch and Debbie's home for the annual RANV Holiday gathering in lieu of the regular meeting.

At our last meeting, a grand time was had by all. We scoured the back fields looking for the geocache hidden by Mitch. I want to take the time to specifically thank Mitch for a great presentation that got everyone involved and probably helped a lot of would-be geocachers get off to a good start. The second part of the meeting was a presentation by Paul, AA1SU, Vermont Section Manager and Carl, KC1WH, Section Emergency Coordinator. We

Vermont Section Manager, Paul AA1SU, got our attention with a raffle for 2 ham radio books which Joe K2KBT and Carl KC1WH won. Paul spoke about "The Big Project", an effort by the ARRL to give school children a chance to experience ham radio by providing books, hams and even complete stations to interested schools. Paul noted that the ARRL web site should be checked often as the articles there are constantly being added.

Next was Carl KC1WH, speaking on the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). Carl is the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) for Vermont and he is trying to improve and build the organization. Carl discussed the differences between ARES and RACES, noting that RACES works with Vermont Emergency Management, and the State Police, and ARES works with groups like the Red Cross, National Weather Service, and Salvation Army. The rest of the talk was focused on the need for new ARES members and some of the training available. Carl said that he was working on some funding sources to help defray the cost of training. He ended his talk with a call to arms to sign up for ARES.

We ended the meeting around 9 and headed for the snack room.

learned that the Vermont Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is in need of serious rebuilding. I would urge everyone who signed up to follow through. Check out the Emergency Communications Course offered by the ARRL online. Keep in contact with Carl and when Public Service event season comes around again this Spring and get out and participate. No dozen practice drills will teach you as much as participating in one real live event.

In January, we will be starting the first in an irregular series titled "Computers in the Ham Shack." The inaugural presentation will be titled, "What can I do with that old DOS computer gathering dust on the shelf?" the answer is "lots" and we will show you how. Again, in keeping with the hands-on policy we are trying to promote, there will be a number of computers present with these applications running for you to play with.

On a somber note, I will take this moment to say goodbye to Betty W1OKH. Many of our members remember hearing her say, "this is W1OKH standing by for W1SLR" many a weekday afternoon on 146.61. Sara W1SLR has written an article elsewhere in the newsletter. Those of us who knew Betty were better for it.

### Contacting RANV

In Person: Meeting, Dec. 12th, 5:30pm,  
W1SJ/W1DEB QTH

By Mail: PO Box 9392,  
So. Burlington, VT 05403

By Radio: 145.15 repeater

WW Web: <http://www.ranv.org>

President: Brian N1BQ 899-4527  
n1bq@wulfdn.org

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mcamp@gmavt.net

Secretary: Howie K2MME 651-0842  
k2mme@juno.com

Editor: Mitch W1SJ 879-6589  
w1sj@arrl.net

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

# ARRL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COURSE

by Mitch WISJ

I've just completed the Level 1 *ARRL Emergency Communications Course* (ARECC-1). This course covers all aspects of basic emergency communications. If you have been following the amateur radio news, you probably have heard that the ARRL received a \$181,100 homeland security grant. The ARECC Level 1 course is the primary target for this funding.

The structure of the course is primarily computer-based learning. All course activities take place at your computer. The course is run by an organization called the *Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium*. They provide the servers and the structure for on-line courses for various Connecticut colleges and the ARRL. Volunteers from the ARRL provide the actual course content. You enroll on-line at the ARRL web site and are asked to provide a credit card. The usual course fee is \$45. If the course is covered in the ARRL grant, this is refunded on course completion. You are required to successfully complete the course within 8 weeks.

The ARECC 1 Course consists of 21 Learning Units, the last of which is the 25-question "final exam". Each unit consists of a certain amount of reading, which is found on the *Lesson* section of the web site. There are facilities to print the lessons for those who have trouble reading on-line and would like to kill a few trees. Each unit has a *Questions* section, where 5 or 6 multiple-choice questions pop up. The quizzes are self-grading and the scores are not reported. Finally, each unit has an associated *Activities* section. This is comparable to homework. There are 2-4 long-answer questions assigned. Typical questions will require you to do a little research on other web sites, compose sample traffic or generate a list of needed equipment for an event. The answers must be compiled and E-mailed to your mentor.

The mentor is an amateur operator who has taken the course and is trained to be a mentor. He or she will review your responses and discuss the answers with you via E-mail. This is where you can ask questions or engage in discussion about a particular topic. There is also a Conference Server (*reflector*) which can be used for group discussion.

I found the course to be quite comprehensive. With 30+ years of public service experience, I really didn't expect to find all that many revelations. A good amount of the course was geared towards having the proper attitude needed for working with non-amateur groups during stressful situations. It seems like this might be a minor point, but one or two amateurs with bad attitudes can turn other groups completely away from us. There was also significant discussion on equipment, including understanding how to maintain batteries. And, just as important – a unit on how to maintain *yourself* during an emergency.

A number of the activities ask you to come up with responses to typical emergencies in your community. I replied that we have not had any large disasters in Vermont for a long, long time. Some will cite the 1998 Ice Storm or the 1993 Blizzard as disasters, but these really pale when compared to the big disasters we hear about in other parts of the country. My mentor told me that he has heard this same response from other Vermont students. However, we must not be complacent and think that we will never see a disaster. There is nothing which guarantees we won't have another disaster like the Flood of 1927 – and that was a very real and serious disaster which would be many times worse today due to high concentrations of population.

I feel that there is a key missing piece to this course – work experience. The course, by itself, with no on-the-job training is nice, but use-

less, in my opinion. An operator needs to learn the concepts and then put them into practice soon after, lest they be forgotten.

I recommend this course to any amateur operator who is, or wants to be involved in emergency or public service communications. For best results, plan to finish the course before being involved in a public service event, so you can practice what you learned.

If you are interested in technical pursuits, the ARRL also offers on-line courses in Antenna Modeling, Digital Communications, Satellites and Radio Frequency Interference. For details on all of these courses, go to the ARRL web: [www.arrl.org/cce](http://www.arrl.org/cce).

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## MEMBER NEWS

Our worldwide network of operatives have filed this report on **RANV** members, past and present:

**Eric N1SRC** and **Kristen AA1SK** have settled into a new home in Kuna, Idaho, outside of Boise. I've been trying to find an IRLP path to talk over there.

**Dave W1DKL** cannot come to the party this year, but he reports that it is warm in Florida. Hmm!

Those glowing lights above the town of Georgia are not from an aurora, but from the barrage of RF from the newly erected antenna system of **Grant K1KD**. He has run up some big scores in the CW CQWW and both modes of SS.

**Phil WB7EKM** is packing up and moving back west to South Dakota. He should be there by year end.

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## Welcome to RANV

**Mike KB1ITV** of Jericho has been active on the 145.15 repeater.

**Moe N1ZBH** of St. Albans is also active on 145.15 and is likely best known as the man behind the grill at last year's Field Day!

## RANV CLOSES ANOTHER ONE!

by Paul AAISU & Mitch WISJ

RANV has a long history of holding its Steering Wheel Meetings at eating establishments that eventually go out of business. I was driving by *Cruiser's* Restaurant on the way to the club picnic this past August, when I glanced over at the building and noticed that it looked abandoned. A few weeks later, I called the phone number just for kicks; I got no answer. A few weeks later, I tried again: phone disconnected.

*Cruiser's*, near Creek Farm Plaza in Colchester, was a sort of transition place that we used when *Shoney's* went out of business in July, 1999. We were looking for a restaurant that was closer to Grand Isle, because an officer lived out that way, and it was always a long haul for him to go anywhere in the Burlington area. However, we grew tired of this place after about six months or so. They seemed to close earlier and earlier each time we went, and even ran the vacuum cleaner around us towards the end (*we had a tendency to stay late anyway*). Eventually, *Friendly's* opened up in the same building that *Shoney's* was in, and we had a change of officers too. We talked about it, and decided to go back. But as usual, our short stay there was the kiss of death for *Cruiser's*. *Friendly's* remains open to this day (*so far*).

The curse of RANV is so powerful that we don't even have to eat in a business to close it down. We simply ordered deli platters from the A&P in Essex – and it's gone too! We shouldn't forget *Zach's* in Colchester on Route 15 – it is now an American Legion Hall! No wonder the proprietor of *Zach's* on Williston Road stares at us suspiciously. He has to know the strong mystical powers he is dealing with. We had a few brunches at *Ponderosa*. It closed and became *Evergreen Eddys*. Hey, and we also eat at Knight's Point State Park. And it is looking questionable whether they will open again! I have a great idea – let's have RANV meetings in all of the local shopping malls. Then we will be rid of them and all the traffic too!

The history doesn't lie. Back in 1991, RANV was born in a restaurant called the *Village Leprechaun* in Milton. After two years or so, we had to resort to *Denny's*, next door to the Champlain Mill in Winooski for a couple more years. It became *Higher Ground*. The curse there is so strong, that they are planning to knock the entire building down! Moving onto a more solid restaurant, we tried a fixture in the community – *Howard Johnson's* in South Burlington. After a year, they closed down and became a *Friendly's*. Next, we moved up to *Shoney's* in Colchester for about three years. All told, our tally is 7 restaurants and 1 supermarket killed in ten years. More information about the Steering Wheel's sordid past can be found in the *News & Views* web archives, June 1999.

## CONTEST CORNER

by Paul AAISU

We start this month of great contesting with the *ARRL 10-Meter Contest*. It is 48 hours, starting at 7 PM on Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. There are 9 single operator categories to choose from. First, you can operate QRP, Low Power, or High Power. Then for each power level, you can choose from Mixed Mode, Phone Only, or CW only. Finally, the tenth category is Multioperator. This is single transmitter, mixed mode only. The exchange is signal report and state. DX stations will send signal report and sequential serial number. If you are a Novice or Technician with HF privileges, you are worth eight points for CW QSOs. When you sign with /T or /N. All of the nitty gritty details can be found on page 114 of the November *QST*. Please remember to put "Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont" in the club section of the summary and log sheet. This is very important. Also, please let me know by E-mail if you are sending in a log, so that I can inform the League. I can be reached at aa1su@arrl.org.

Just as you receive your newsletter is the *ARRL 160-Meter Contest*. It is not as popular as the *10-Meter Contest* because few hams have effective antennas on 160. The contest is all CW, and takes place over night, both of which will discourage many. But it really is a fun contest and hundreds of stations can be worked.

Things are quiet through the holidays, but on New Year's Eve, *ARRL Straight Key Night* begins at 7 PM and runs for 24 hours. This is not a contest. The emphasis is on ragchewing, rather than on fast exchanges. When participating in this event, send SKN rather than RST to indicate your participation and to clue in passers by. When it is over, send a list of the stations that you worked to the contest branch of the ARRL. Also include your vote for "Best Fist" and "Most Interesting QSO" by January 31, 2003. It does not have to be a station you worked.

Okay, enough with the CW stuff. The *ARRL RTTY Round-Up* starts on Saturday, January 4, 2003 at 1 PM and runs until 7 PM on Sunday. You can operate for no more than 24 of the 30 hours, and you can't take more than two breaks. This is one of the premier worldwide digital contests, and it brings out the best operators from around the world. Several modes are allowed, including PSK31. The exchange for is signal report and state. DX will send signal report and a consecutive serial number. Recommended operating frequencies are available on the ARRL Contest web site. Other important quirks and information are on page 94 of the December *QST*.

To round out the month, the *North American CW QSO Party* starts at 1 PM on Saturday, January 11. You can operate no more than 10 of the 12 hours. The exchange is name and state. You can send your own name or a funny nickname. For example, a few years ago, most operators in Florida sent Chad.

Next month: the world famous *Vermont QSO Party*.

## NEED YOUR HELP

by Mitch W1SJ

RANV needs your help to serve you better! Officers and members have been meeting at the monthly Steering Wheel meetings to put together another year of great meeting programs. In January, we will start with the first of a series called Computers in the Shack. We also have plans for another meeting on Internet Linking and a meeting devoted to emergency and public service operating. But, there are a lot more meetings left to fill and we are wracking our brains thinking up topics you will be interested in. You can help us by providing some suggestions on programs you would like to see at upcoming meetings.

Not only do we have meeting programs to decide, but the Milton Hamfest is right around the corner and I am working on forums for that, as well. We will have forums by the ARRL and on QRP and Contesting and possibly on Satellites and Microwave. Beyond that, it is an open book. Not only are forums planned, but we also try to do some hands-on demonstrations as well. Help the Milton Hamfest get better by suggesting new possibilities.

As you know, we put out a newsletter each and every month. It is the journal for all of our members. Someone once mentioned to me, "I have nothing to add and I'm not a writer." Neither am I - I just have learned how to fake it! Your amateur radio experiences - what you do on the air or in setting up your station is very important and of interest to us. The newsletter should not just be the W1SJ or AA1SU or N1BQ ramblings - it should be all of our ramblings. Please help the newsletter with suggestions, or even with the articles themselves.

If you have any input for the above, send them to Mitch at w1sj@arrl.net or Brian at n1bq@wulfden.org, or come to the Steering Wheel at Friendly's on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday - December 17<sup>th</sup>.

## CHECK YOUR E-MAIL

by Mitch W1SJ

As you know, I maintain E-mail lists, one for RANV and the other for Vermont hams. The lists are used for looking up addresses and very infrequently for very important announcements of club or ham radio business. For other comments, there are various reflectors (RANV, W1MOO, NVQS), which have a smaller, more active following.

It is very difficult to keep these addresses accurate and current. It is said that 33% of all people change their E-mail address each year! The few times I send out a mailing, I get a fairly large list of dead addresses which have to be removed. As a user, I'm hit with the same frustrations of changing Internet providers and spamming. But since E-mail has replaced the telephone as the best way to communicate (*at least for me*), I work hard to keep a single address working all the time.

The Internet companies have certainly kept it interesting. Just last month, both Hotmail and Juno starting blocking mail forwarded from addresses containing ARRL.NET. They think it is spam! Fortunately, this has been fixed.

The ARRL.NET forwarding is a useful and valuable member service. As a member, you can specify the ARRL.NET address as a forwarding service. You can't simply do this by wishing it - you must go to the members-only ARRL web site and enter the address you want to forward to. This information is sent to the vendor who does this forwarding for the ARRL (*they're in Indiana*). BUT - you must keep this information current. If your are forwarding to a address and that account changed or goes away, your mail to ARRL.NET will get bounced. If you haven't checked it lately, send yourself mail to your callsign at ARRL.NET and see if you get it!

Please take the time to check your E-mail listing on the RANV web. The member list is at [www.ranv.org/memb.html](http://www.ranv.org/memb.html) and the Vermont ham list is [www.ranv.org/email.html](http://www.ranv.org/email.html). You won't be on the member list if you are not a member, and you won't be on the Vermont ham list unless you live in Vermont and have an E-mail address. If the address is incorrect, send me a correction. I have recently changed the coding on these lists to keep the webcrawlers away and hopefully the spam that comes with them.

Please take the time to check your E-mail!

## W1OKH SK

by Sara W1SLR

W1OKH has gone silent. Our good friend Betty Tucker, W1OKH, became a ham three years ago, in honor of her husband Lloyd - the first W1OKH - who had gone silent some two years before. I had my first contact with Betty on the Burlington repeater about two years ago, and for many months I would expect her there in the afternoons as I drove home from work: "W1OKH listening for W1SLR." Our conversations were not technical, but often about gardening or cooking, interests we shared.

Getting her ham license at age 80 was not the only accomplishment that showed her lifelong interest in learning and her connection to the world. Betty would also tell me of her other activities. She was a member at Racquet's Edge, and swam there regularly. She was active in her church, and took trips that were designed to bring together volunteers with people who needed help, as part of the effort to deliver dental care to slum kids in Brazil, and to renovate homes for needy folks in Oklahoma. She earned an associate's degree at CCV when she was 70. She brought music and teaching to inmates and shut-ins, and brought her example of energy, service, and good humor to us all.

Betty faced her illness with courage and grace, and died on November 26<sup>th</sup>, peacefully at her daughter's home, among her loving family. Except to have been privileged to know her longer, I could not have asked for more for her. She was my friend, and I will miss her.

**RANV GALA  
HOLIDAY PARTY**

**Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>  
5:30-10pm  
at W1SJ**

**RANV**

P.O. Box 9392

South Burlington, Vt 05407

**<http://www.RANV.org>**