



Radio Amateur News & Views

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DXPEDITION WITH ED The July 8th RANV Meeting

You've read about ham radio DXpeditions, seen pictures in QST and on the web and perhaps even have worked a few. DXpeditions always seem to ignite the imagination of ham operators because of their often exotic locations. Heck, many still think Vermont is an exotic location!

This month, we are very happy to have Ed N1UR give a talk and presentation on some of his DXpedition activities. Ed has traveled to various spots in Asia and has made many DX contacts from the other side. Come see what a DXpedition to an exotic locale looks like!

Join us for the next **RANV** meeting on Tuesday, July 8th, at 7:00 PM, at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington. Pre-meeting activities and general debauchery will take place at Zach's on Williston Road, starting at 6.

RANV SUMMER PICNIC New Day: Sunday, August 3rd

The **RANV** Summer Picnic will be held Sunday, August 3rd at Knight's Point State Park in North Hero. Festivities get underway at 11AM. As always, **RANV** will provide the admission, the barbecue paraphernalia and sodas.

Traditionally, the **RANV** summer picnic (*in lieu of the August meeting*) is held on the first Saturday in August. However, a number of events have caused us to push this out to Sunday. The Burlington Radio Club was in a dilemma in scheduling their hamfest and was stuck going head to head, with either the **RANV** picnic or the MS-150 Bike Ride. After some hurried consultations, MS-150 coordinator Paul AA1SU and Brian N1BQ decided that the path of least conflict would be to move the **RANV** Picnic to Sunday, August 3rd. We pray that the new date will offer up the same perfect weather that the Saturday has always given us. So the lineup for events in August: Saturday, August 2nd is the hamfest at Essex High School; Sunday, August 3rd is the picnic and Saturday-Sunday, August 9-10th is the MS-150 Bike Ride.

Attendance at the Picnic has been a little off the last few years. Most of this is due to conflicts with other activities. We want to make sure that all steps have been taken to insure a fun day for all. Is there something else we should be planning? As in the past, we will have an HF and VHF radio and required antennas set up. There is plenty of opportunity to engage in low-key (non-contest) operating, in between eating and swimming and talking. If there is anything else which you would like to see take place, please let us know.

MS-150 TOUR

by Paul AA1SU

Now that Field Day is over, hams can still be active in the community through many of the charity events that we provide communication coverage for. The next one that comes up is the MS-150 Bike Tour on August 9-10th. I coordinate this particular event, and I am in the planning stages. If you are available on this weekend for either one or both days, I could use your help at a rest stop, or in a SAG Wagon. The ride starts at Sand Bar State Park in Milton, and proceeds to Johnson State College. On Sunday morning, the riders wake up, and head back to Sand Bar. They have three different routes to travel each day, and the return trip is different, so that the riders can see different scenery on the way back.

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LAST RANV MEETING

by *Howie K2MME, Sec'y*

Brian opened the meeting to 19 attendees. Paul AA1SU passed around a copy of the certificate declaring Amateur Radio Week. Bob W4YFJ will provide snacks for the July meeting. The August meeting will be the picnic on Sunday (*not Saturday*), August 3rd, at Knight's Point State Park. The club pays the park admission and provides charcoal and soda. Brian reminded us that this day change was due to the fact that the BARC flea market is on Saturday, August 2nd, at Essex High School. He called for all of us to attend and support this and all flea markets. The MS-150 Bike Ride is Aug 8-9th and volunteers are needed. Several hams are going skyward to various mountaintops for the VHF contest. CVARC is holding SKYWARN training on July 2nd. Don N1QKH (*seconded by Dave WIDEC*) made a motion to pay \$157.50 for the cost of a new club banner. Preparation for Field Day was discussed. Many hands were raised for setup, operating and breakdown. The main callsign will be W1NVT and the GOTA callsign will be W1PU.

The main event was "Equipment Night." We had lots of rigs set up, including a TS-690, FT-897, TS-850 and IC-746. Everyone was given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the gear before Field Day. The equipment owners were on hand to offer help. A computer with the NA logging program running in practice mode was used by many to reacquire themselves with the software. Having the actual FD equipment and logging program on hand should make for easier operating by all.

THE PREZ SEZ

by *Brian N1BQ, President*

Field day has come and just barely gone. Many of us are pretty hammed out, but the summer is just getting going.

Join us at the July meeting, when Ed N1UR, comes to us with a presentation and slide show of some of the DX expeditions he has been on. It's the ultimate ham vacation.

Saturday August 2nd is the BARC Hamfest at Essex Junction High School starting at 8AM.

RANV will hold its annual picnic on Sunday this year, August 3rd, at Knight's Point State Park in North Hero. RANV picks up the tab for sodas, admission, and charcoal. You bring yourself, your family and food. Just tell the nice person at the gate you are with the ham radio group. Things start rolling around 11 and go on until you run out of steam. There is fun, food, fun, radio, fun, fox hunts, fun, swimming, fun, and then maybe some more food!

While Field day is a good place for new ops to get their feet wet on HF operating, it can also be rather hectic and there often isn't time for Elmers to really spend the time to bring a newbie up to speed. The picnic is whole different ball of wax. There is all kinds of time, less crowding on the bands and far less pressure. Hope to see you all there.

In Field Day, RANV's main effort, W1NVT, the 2A station at Redmond Road in Williston garnered some 3300 QSOs and about 10K points in the initial estimate. Things started off bright and sunny on Friday afternoon, very hot and humid as we got the first tower up. Then things only got better. It almost didn't seem like Field Day - it didn't rain! A fun and safe time was had by all.

The QRP group, N1QS, sort of RANV's 'other Field Day' in Underhill State Park had a more pedestrian 440+ QSOs, beating their prior performance by a dozen QSO's or so and coming up with just under 5K points. The highlight of the event was a virtuoso snoring performance by one op, best left unnamed, at about 4:00 that was heard from one end of the site to another.

Another reminder for the calendar down the way is the CVARC Hamfest on September 20th at the Waterbury Armory.



Field Day Phone Tower of Power

Contacting RANV

In Person: Meeting, July 8, 7pm,
O'Brien Civic Center
113 Patchen Rd, So. Burlington

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@wulfden.org

VP/Tres: Bob KB1FRW 434-2517
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.

RANV FIELD DAY RESULTS

by Mitch WISJ

Another Field Day has passed and we have collectively put in another great effort. The line score will show QSO and point totals down 10% from last year, but don't let that fool you. Last year, we had tremendous propagation conditions and set a QSO record for ourselves on phone. This year conditions were mediocre – virtually no life on 6, 10 and 15 meters and rotten conditions on 40 meters in the morning. When all things are considered, I feel we did better than last year.

This year, we had a major shakeup in the antenna configuration for most of the stations. The monobanders on the ladder, a mainstay of the phone station for almost 20 years, was reformulated into monobanders on an AB-577 rocket launcher, purchased last year. That got our antenna heights up to 50 and 60 feet on 20 and 15 meters, respectively. Did this make a difference? I'll say it did. We managed 100 QSO's on 15 meters in the last hour of Field Day, on a band which was virtually dead! The 20 meter yagi also showed a little more zip this year compared to previous years, but only time will tell.

The GOTA and VHF stations had all their antennas combined on one mast (*ladder*). This made setup a little less complicated, as it eliminated one tower. The triband yagi and the higher dipole definitely helped the GOTA station get out better. With more antennas consolidated and some eliminated, we managed to have all antennas and all tents erected by Friday night. This was the smoothest setup we have had in a long time.

Another plus this year was a full compliment of operators at the main stations. Nine operators kept the phone and CW stations humming along for 24 hours. No one had to pull double shifts this time. The GOTA and VHF stations were manned much of the time, but I was disappointed in the general lack of interest in operating. Some new operators who stepped in were quickly overwhelmed by the contest chaos. Field Day is not the place to learn how to operate – you have the worst case scenario in terms of propagation, noise and confusion going. The club needs to make a concerted effort to identify potential operators, get them to commit and train then all during the year.

In the operations department, things were virtually flawless. Antennas went up, worked well and stayed put during the weekend. The generators hummed along without failure for 24 hours. However, in a Murphy twist of fate, the UPS we had installed in the CW station to *back up* the generator, acted up on Sunday morning. Sometimes, you just can't win! Otherwise, there were no equipment failures all weekend long. If there was, we had plenty of spares. Anything that was less than perfect this time is being discussed via E-mail and we will have a sizeable punch list of improvements for next year.

The RANV Field Day catering department hit an all-time high this year. Chef Roberto (KB1FRW) put on a feast of steak, chicken and burgers. The food expense stayed the same as previous years and we didn't have very much left over. The buying of all of the food and its preparation takes a lot of work. We're indebted to Bob for this great work and giving up valuable operating time at the GOTA station.

About the only thing on a less than positive note was that the number of visitors was down from previous years. I don't understand this, since the publicity for Field Day was out there and the weather was perfect. Participation was about the same as previous years. Frankly, it would nice to see more amateurs involved in Field Day, but so be it.

Was Field Day a success? We put up yet another competitive score, we improved on site setup and takedown, we got new hams involved, we socialized and ate well and, based on what I have been hearing, we had fun. Taken all together, Field Day was an unqualified success.

FIELD DAY HALL OF FAME

AA1SU Paul – CW op, CW equipment; traffic/bulletin bonuses; tear down.
AB1T Doug – CW op.
K1KD Grant – Phone & CW op; CW equipment; set up; tear down.
K1ZK Zach –GOTA op.
K2MME Howie –CW op; set up tear down
KA1KLJ Matt –GOTA; set up; tear down.
KB1EZC John / KB1EZD Leela / KB1EZE Leo – GOTA op; set up.
KB1FRW Bob – GOTA & VHF op; food purchase; chef; delivery; set up; tear down.
KB1ITV Michael – Equipment delivery.
KB1JDT Johannes – Field cutting.
N1BQ Brian – Equipment delivery; Set up.
N1QKH Don – VHF & GOTA op; set up; tear down; field cutting
N1YWB Jeff – Phone op; GOTA assistant; demo stations; satellites; set up; tear down.
N1ZBH Moe –Set up.
N1ZRA Neal –Set up; tear down.
W1DEC Dave – Set up.
W1EAT Tom – CW op.
N1ALX Alex – GOTA op.
W1SJ Mitch – Chairman; phone op; phone equipment; delivery; set up; tear down; results.
W4YFJ Bob – Set up; tear down.
W1ZK Ralph – CW op.
WE1H Matt–Phone & CW op; set up; tear down
Thanks to K1HD, K1IBM, KK1L, N1DTQ, KB1FUV and KA1LEX for equipment loan.
Visitors: KB1FVA KD1R W1DEB W1RL
5 Geocachers, 3-4 others

FIELD DAY BOX SCORE

80 CW	171	80 SSB	565
40 CW	384	40 SSB	168
20 CW	343	20 SSB	1367
15 CW	56	15 SSB	100
GOTA CW	2	GOTA Ph	137
VHF CW	1	VHF Ph	71
Sat CW	0	Sat Ph	2
Total CW	957	Total Ph	2410

Total QSO's	3367
Bonuses (all!!)	1600
Total Points	10248

Dash - L

by Paul M. Dunphy, VE1DX

Editor's note: We have all heard plenty of Echolink activity on the repeater lately. Here is a funny story about Echolink which came across the editor's desk.

One of the Local QRPers came by the other day, and he was carrying a laptop computer and a pair of handie-talkies. There was joy in his stride and a gleam in his eye. We had seen him coming and, for a fleeting few seconds, considered ducking out the back door. This fellow was a high-tech QRPer, and he usually wanted to talk about something that was over our head. Thinking back to what the Old Timer had told us about being open to new ideas, and about the Amateur's Code, we decided to see what was up.

We opened the door and the QRPer burst in, laying his equipment on the table and looking at us with a happy gaze in his eyes. "I've found the perfect way to work DX!" he proclaimed. It's so much easier than chasing HF propagation, or listening to Red-Eyed Louie's reports on the DX he's heard lately. Besides, Louie's job has been replaced with packet clusters. Who needs him anymore, for that matter?" We thought about it for a minute and wondered who would feed the data into the clusters if all the Red Eyed Louies of the world packed it in. However, we'd learned many years ago not to present a QRPer with too much logic. Maybe another day we'd both be up for that argument, but today he seemed to have other things on his mind.

"How are you going to work DX without understanding propagation?" we asked carefully. "Simple!" the QRPer began, "And I'm here to show you how it's done." We just looked on as he opened up his laptop and started plugging in cables and hooking up adapters. "Shouldn't you bring that into the shack?" we asked, "That's were all the HF gear is, and the coax runs to the tower and all the antennas too." The QRPer grinned and simply said, "Don't need it. I'm working on 2-

meter DXCC. I want to be the first in the world to do it, too!"

"How are you going to work DX without radios and antennas? And you and I both know you can't work 2-meter DXCC without repeaters or satellites. Repeater assisted contacts don't count for DXCC, and if you do it by satellite, it's a Satellite DXCC, not 2-meters. "

"Just watch me." He said mysteriously, reaching down and unplugging our phone from its wall jack and plugging in a line from his computer. We shoved our cap back on our head, scratched a bit, and pulled the cap back forward. "What are you doing with the phone lines?" we asked, wondering if he was up to something illegal. "You're not hooking up one of those things to make long distance phone calls without paying for them are you?" The QRPer looked up at us in consternation. "Don't be so foolish." He said, "I know better than that. I'm hooking the laptop up to my ISP." We didn't know exactly what an ISP was, but we thought back to the wisdom of the quote "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

As soon as he had things set up to his satisfaction, he typed in a few lines and the computer squawked and squealed for a few seconds, and then a couple of windows popped open. "There", he said, "I'm connected."

"OK", we said quietly, wondering what was he was connected to. "Here's how it works." he began, "I'm dialed into the Internet with my laptop, and I've got my 2-meter handie-talkie connected to the computer with a RigBlaster. Follow?" We nodded, for although we still weren't sure on the ISP part, we knew what a RigBlaster was, and we knew what the Internet was. We'd seen a demonstration of the Internet at a shopping mall last fall. And one of the PSK31 types had tried to hook a RigBlaster up to our TS-

920 last summer. Since we weren't overly impressed with the Internet or what the RigBlaster had done to our HF rig, we were just as happy that the QRPer was contented to stay out of the shack.

"Now, here's how it works", he said, stepping back and holding the second 2-meter handie-talkie. All I do is key up the EchoLink node number of the station I want to work on my DTMF keypad here. I've got this radio on the same simplex frequency as the one connected to the Laptop with the RigBlaster. Just using 250 milliwatts, too! That will select the DX station from the EchoLink list and connect us by VoIP. Then I just talk to them and bingo! I've got a DX QSO. I can connect to anywhere in the world! This is pretty slick, right."

We didn't know what to say. We decided to ask for clarification, in spite of our previous decision to not remove the doubt of our being thought a fool. "What's VoIP and what's an EchoLink?" The QRPer gave us a pained look and answered "VoIP is Voice Over IP and EchoLink is the controlling software that runs on my laptop. Where have you been the last year or so?"

We decided not to argue and simply replied, "OK, we understand. So where's the DX?" The QRPer's look of exasperation increased and he blurted out, "Where it's always been, in those far away lands over the horizon like VK, ZL, and in all of Europe and Asia and in the Caribbean and the like. Where did you think it would be? On my laptop?"

At this point we still weren't sure, so we just nodded and the QRPer punched a few codes into his handie-talkie. Then he called a GM station. We jumped back as the Scottish accent called him right back. Son of a Gun! We were impressed, but not convinced this was DXing. The QRPer exchanged a few more words with the GM station, ending it all by saying, "And be sure to QSL by the bureau, 7'd3s." Up until the

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“7’d3s” we had managed to take things in stride, but enough was enough. “What kind of foolishness have you dreamt up this time?” we roared! “Every time you start playing with computers, you come up with some way to cheat your way into more DXCC points, or to bend the rules, or to keep acting like you just were licensed last month! You know better than this!”

The QRPer took a step backwards and then glared right back into our eyes. “Look Buster, just because you didn’t think of it doesn’t mean it isn’t right. It’s not just my idea, either! There are almost 1000 EchoLink users around, maybe even twice that many. Why even VE1YX uses it. And he’s been around the track enough time to recognize a good thing when he sees it. This is the wave of the future, and it’s time you threw away that CW and SSB technology from the last century and joined us modern DXers! There is nothing illegal or immoral about this. It’s new technology, and just because I’m smart enough to figure out how to get my 2-meter DXCC with it doesn’t mean it’s cheating!”

“Isn’t DXCC supposed to use a radio?!!” we bellowed back at him. “You’re talking into a computer with a handheld! It’s going through our phone line somehow and connecting to another computer in Scotland. Where’s the 2-way radio QSO?”

“Right here in my hand and in the GM’s hand in Edinburgh!” he screeched back, getting beet red and shaking his handie-talkie at us. “It’s a good contact!” We took a deep breath and counted to 10. “How do you know he has a radio in Edinburgh?” we asked slowly, trying to bring the conversation back down to a civil level. “Because he has a -L after his call sign. That means he has a link to a radio, the same as I have! And if he didn’t have an -L, there’d just be his call, and I’d know he was just using his computer microphone and speakers. But this fellow has a -L, so it’s a good contact!”

“How does the -L get stuck after his call?” we asked quietly. “He typed it there when he set up his EchoLink software.” was the quick reply. We leaned over and looked at the computer screen. A few of the calls had -R after them, and a few more had -L, but most had nothing but the call. “What does the -R mean?” we asked. “Repeater!” the QRPer snapped back at us. “I can’t use those for DXCC because they are connected to repeaters, but the -L ones are good.”

We looked a bit more and said, “That station in Hong Kong, if he were to stick a -L after his call, or if that LA or GD were to do the same, and if they still used their computer microphone and speakers, how would you know?”

“How would I know? How would I know!! I’d know because Hams are honest, especially DXers. No True Blue DXer would ever think of doing something like that.”

We looked at him for a moment and then said “Romeo was in Burma.” He stared at us with a blank look and then said “What?” We repeated slowly “Romeo was in Burma.” (*this refers to a bogus operation from Burma years ago -ed*)

He looked at us for a moment, then snapped off his 2-meter rigs, unplugged his computer from the wall and began packing things up in their case. “There is no sense talking to people like you,” he said. “I try to show you how DXing will be in the new millennium and you start talking in riddles.

We shrugged our shoulders as he was walking out the door. There is no point trying to explain the Eternal Enigmas of DXing or the Mysteries of the Ages to someone who isn’t ready to understand them. So we just watched him stomp down the hill with his laptop and handie-talkies under his arm. Some day he might figure it out . . . but then again, maybe Romeo really was in Burma, too!

FOX HUNT RESULTS

By Mitch W1SJ

We had another great turnout at the latest RANV Fox Hunt, held June 20th. Jay K1UC made his first appearance as the Fox. At first, several hunters had trouble hearing Jay. He initially located at the Mill in Jericho – in a very low spot. A quick relocation to Sleepy Hollow Road made the signal come up quite a bit. Once again I picked off a bad yagi reading from the home QTH and took a quick tour of South Burlington until I got turned around and on the fox’s tail. First time hunter Johannes KB1JDT and sidekick Kayle KB1JOO just edged me out for the win. Johannes claims it was the superior directionality of his microwave antenna (!?). I think it was beginner’s luck and the fact that he started from his home, only a mile away. We’ll see next time!

The hunt ran from 6:00 until 9:00. Here are the results:

1	7:01	KB1JDT / KB1JOO
2	7:04	W1SJ / W1DEB
3	7:26	KM1Z
4	7:30	N1PEF
5	7:57	KB1FRW / N1ZBH
6	8:25	AA1SU
7	8:42	KB1EZC / KB1EZD
		DNF N1OSJ
		DNF KB1EDU
		DNF KB1IWK



Field Day GOTA and VHF Station

**NEXT MEETING:
“DXpeditions With Ed”
Tuesday, July 8th, 7 PM
O'Brien Civic Center**

**SUMMER PICNIC:
Sunday, August 3rd
Knight's Point State Park**

RANV

P.O. Box 9392

South Burlington, Vt 05407

<http://www.RANV.org>