



Radio Amateur News & Views

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SHOW AND TELL NIGHT The October 12th RANV Meeting

For our October meeting, we bring back a popular topic from the past – *Show and Tell night*. The concept is simple. You bring a piece of radio equipment to the meeting, show it off to the group and tell us about it. Tell us how you acquired it, tell us how you use it, tell us why it is so good (*or so bad*) and tell us any other tall tales which are associated with your particular piece. You don't have to give a technical talk (*unless you want to*), you don't have to be a great orator and you most definitely will not be voted off the island or out of the meeting house. Fruit (*for throwing*) will not be provided. You can make your talk as serious or as funny as you like. And, you are certainly welcome to bring *several* pieces of equipment. We hope to have a sizable group of people talking about their stuff so no one person has to ramble on too long. In the past, we have had some very unique items show up at the meeting. But, you don't have to bring anything unique. A plain old transceiver is suitable too. Your story about it is what will be unique!

So, don't miss this meeting and don't miss the opportunity to speak about your beloved piece of equipment! You can practice some of your speechmaking at dinner at Zach's at 6, prior to the meeting. The meeting will start at 7PM at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington.

VETERAN'S DAY PARADE

by Bob KB1FRW

Here is the last chance of the year before the winter snow to hone your communications skills at another exciting event. A Veteran's Day Parade will be held in Burlington on Saturday, November 6th and will run from 7:30 until 1:00. The parade route is not cast in stone yet, but it looks like it will start at Burlington High School, travel down North Avenue and end up at Waterfront Park.

The ham positions needed include 6-10 parade marshals, director shadow, police liaison, review stand shadow and 1-2 net controls. Equipment needed include an HT and spare batteries, headphones, pad of paper and pencil and personal comfort items. Reward at the end of the parade (*i.e. T-shirts or food*) is currently unknown. The incentive program for early sign-up is that the sooner you enlist the better your chances of getting the job you request. Sign up early and often.

FOX HUNT

The next RANV Fox Hunt will be Friday, October 15th, starting at 6 PM. Fox W1SJ and co-fox W1DEB will return. They are taking suggestions on where you would like them to hide! Rest assured, they will drive you crazy during the hunt. They also have a new book of jokes for your entertainment pleasure. Start planning your strategy!

The rules: Check -in on the 145.15 repeater, and hunt on the input, 144.55 MHz. The fox will be located in a public assessable spot in Chittenden County and put at least an S-1 signal in at I-89 exit 14. The fox will engage in at least 10 seconds of transmitting and about 50 seconds of debauchery out of every minute. First finder gets all the bragging rights and gets to hide in the next hunt.

MEMBER NOTES

Jeff N1YWB has left Vermont, temporarily, we hope, to find a suitable job. He is working in White Plains, New York and commuting from Long Island each day. Jeff reports that there just weren't any good programming jobs here. Like, are there ANY good jobs here? Jeff plans to drop in from time to time on IRLP and will visit on occasion.

Ed N1UR is coming along with a new QTH in Montpelier and reports that the tower is 75% done as we go to press. He expects to be ready to go for the Fall contest season.

OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Dave WIDEC, Sec'y

At 7:04, President Brian N1BQ called the meeting to order with 23 members in attendance. His first announcement dealt with the October "Show and Tell" meeting. Anyone with anything of interest is encouraged to bring it in and present an off the cuff "Show and Tell". Leo and Leela volunteered to pick up refreshments for this meeting.

A short discussion regarding the Summer Picnic resulted in a vote to approve the expenditure of \$150 to reserve the shelter at Kill Kare State park for the 2005 Summer Picnic.

A motion was passed to approve the payment of a contribution of \$300 to a member whose car was damaged by the Field Day dining shelter when it was uprooted during a severe wind-storm. The subject of having a release was discussed and it was agreed that a release execution should be obtained at the time that the contribution is made.

Vermont Section Manager, Paul AA1SU announced that a Chittenden County Legislator, Pat Brennan was going to be a co-sponsor of the son to be re-introduced PRB-1 Bill.

Bob KB1FRW is organizing a group of communicators to assist with the Veteran's Day Parade in Burlington. Please contact Bob if you would like to help with this Public Service event.

A brief but formal ceremony took place during which Mitch W1SJ was presented with an official entrenching tool, AKA "The Little Hog". The object of the ceremony was to make clear to Mitch, that bendy shovel blades are un-ham-like and totally inefficient in the field!

Brian N1BQ proceeded to enthrall all in attendance with a very professional power point presentation coupled with practical demonstrations of Portable Operation in the field, on the mountains, etc., including QRP and full power field radios, antennas, tuners and other equipment.

THE PREZ SEZ

by Brian N1BQ, President

Fall Hosstraders has come and gone, and the leaves are starting to drop. Its time to haul out the usual caveats about time running out for checking your antenna systems before Ole Man Winter comes blasting through!

It is also time for RANV elections. I am not going to put forth a case for my own re-election as the RANV Grand Poobah. I will simply say that I will run again and, if you will have me, I will serve as the president of our club for yet another term.

We have, by all measures, a successful club. Every meeting brings twenty to thirty or more people out. People come early and help set up and stay late and help take down and clean up. I would say that we see, over the course of the year, a core of about fifteen to twenty individuals who attend seventy five percent of the club meetings and activities and another twenty to thirty individuals who show up at 25% of the meetings and activities. This represents the majority of the local membership. When we put out a call for volunteers we usually get a sufficient response for the activity in question.

Why is it that we are flourishing when established clubs elsewhere are withering on the vine? I have recently had conversations with several individuals involved in clubs that are hardly more than moribund carcasses awaiting pronouncement by the coroner. In each of the cases, said carcass was being kept alive by two or three individuals doing everything. The key words in both conversations were "we put out a call for volunteers and no one responded!" What has RANV done differently? Now, were I on the stump for my reelection I might be tempted to point out my superior leadership qualities! But it is more than that. One thing may

be that the founding members of this club are still relatively young and vigorous. The other thing is that RANV was founded on a platform that it was the "FUN Club." We have tried hard to keep it that way and the membership has remained responsive.

I will point out that our success is due to our membership taken as a whole. Yes, a few individuals - we all know who they are - do quite a share of the work, but our success could not have been achieved by them alone no matter how Herculean their efforts. So, you guys and gals, all of you, please stand up and take a bow.

Now, before you need to let your hats out a notch, let me remind you that the reward for doing good work, is MORE WORK! We have had another very successful year and we have a good foundation for the one coming. But we need your continued support, strength and ideas to keep the RANV wagon moving.

Contacting RANV

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

OPERATOR TRAINING FOR EMERGENCIES

Part V. Operate!

by Mitch WISJ

Vermont Technical Coordinator

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

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

now! And that is also the secret to being a better operator — practicing your craft, not just talking about it.

I'll briefly cover two unrelated topics this month. The first topic is the making of equipment lists. I have equipment packing lists for every conceivable trip I would make with amateur radio. There are lists for Field Day, VHF contests, Marathons, Picnics, Hamfests and you-name-it. I bring a lot of complicated stuff for most of these events and I don't usually forget anything too serious. Start out by making lists for your favorite public service event, a ham radio day outing and a vacation which includes ham radio. If you don't go

"Don't make excuses, Operate!"

on vacation, take the opportunity to dream! Don't skimp — include everything you would want to operate on a trip. The only criterion is that everything has to fit in your selected mode of transportation. This is a very good reason why I drive a van and hate to fly! Include everything on the list, including food, clothing and care items. Review your list a number of different times and you'll be amazed that you will always find something to add.

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

The second topic I'll cover this month is contest operating. This was dealt with in Part 3 of the series and I will again urge you to take part in a contest to build your skills. I (*and many others*) consider the ARRL Sweepstakes the best all around

training contest. The exchange is a modified form of traffic and is much longer than the simple 59 Vermont we are used to hearing. In fact, there are 5 pieces of information (*number, class, call, year and section*) which must be correctly exchanged for each and every contact. In a contest where top scoring stations routinely make over 1500 contacts, that is 7500 pieces of information which are passed with speed and accuracy — accuracy in the 1-2% range! Sweepstakes is a stateside contest and stations with a reasonable antenna system can do quite well. In fact, from the Northeast, stations using only a high dipole are known to be competitive.

Think your station is weak? Some QRP entrants running under 5 watts log over 500 QSO's. How do they do that? One learns the techniques to make contacts in any conditions by practice and more practice. In other words, they **Operate!** The phone Sweepstakes is November 20-21st and is a 24 out of 30-hour contest. Put 15-18 hours into this and you will be a changed operator forever. Caution! This contest may be habit forming.

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

Operate!

**NEXT MEETING:
“SHOW & TELL NIGHT”
Tuesday, October 12th, 7 PM
O’Brien Civic Center**

RANV

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<http://www.RANV.org>