



Radio Amateur News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

AUGUST 2005

Vol. 15 No. 8

RANV SUMMER PICNIC August 6th at Kill Kare State Park

Our August meeting will be the annual **RANV** Summer Picnic, **Saturday, August 6th**. Festivities get underway starting around 11 AM and run all afternoon. **RANV** will supply park admission, soda and charcoal. You supply the rest! For those who are new to the picnic, major activities include eating and talking. There is also fox hunting, antenna stringing, working DX, yakking on the repeater and perhaps even some interesting modes like PSK-31. Other activities include swimming, hiking, boating, volleyball and fishing. We can even take a ferry over to Burton Island and activate a rare DX island. When all is said and done, eating appears to be the hands-down favorite!

Be sure to bring family and friends, food to eat, appropriate sporting goods and clothing and any radio stuff you would like to play with. Leave pets at home since the park doesn't allow them, and it is too hot to leave a pet in the car. Please let Brian know how many are in your group so that we can plan.

Directions to Kill Kare are as follows: Take I-89 North to exit 19, St. Albans. Go past the light and down the access highway 1 mile to Route 7. Make a right and head 0.5 miles into downtown St. Albans. Look for Taylor Park (*big green*) on your right and then look for Lake Street and make a left. Go 3 miles on Lake Street until you come to the lake and the community of St. Albans Bay. The Bayside Pavilion will be at your left and a Shell station at your right. Make a right turn and head north. You will pass St. Albans Town Park. Keep going! You will only go 0.7 miles from the turn and will cross a small bridge. Right after this bridge, turn left on to Hathaway Point Road. Unfortunately, there is no sign for the Park at this junction, so you will have to pay attention. Go 3 miles to the entrance of the Park. We should be in the corner. If you have a GPS, the coordinates are: N44 46.778 W73 11.035. If you get lost, give a yell!

The last few **RANV** meetings and events have been poorly attended. It is time to turn this bad trend around. This is a pure fun event and there is no reason why a majority of the membership cannot make it out for part of the day. Lack of support of club activities will mean that they will go away! Be sure to bring lots of family and friends. We want this to be a social event and not necessarily a total Geekfest (*OK, bring the laptop, but leave it in the car!*)

See you at the picnic!

FOX HUNT AUGUST 26th

Don't forget to plan for the next **RANV** Fox Hunt, Friday, August 26th, starting at 6 PM on 145.15. John K1JCM will premier in his first Fox role, assisted by Robert W1RFM.

The rules of the **RANV** Fox Hunt are simple. The fox is located on publicly accessible property within Chittenden County, in such a spot where there is **more than** an S-1 signal at I-89 Exit 14 (*Fox should check this ahead of time*). The fox transmits on the input to the 145.15 repeater (144.55 MHz) for **over** 10 seconds out of every minute (*more is desirable, though*). First finder of the Fox wins the hunt, receives all appropriate bragging rights and becomes the Fox for the October Hunt.

IN THIS ISSUE...

On-Line Renewals
No Mo' Code
VT QSO Party Future
Friday Night at Dan's
Prez Sez

OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

The sun gods had big smiles on for our July 12th meeting. This was our 2nd annual Fox Hunt and Geocaching event. Some 10 RANV members and 10 geocachers braved the 85-degree weather and gathered at Mills Riverside Park in Jericho. The festivities got underway around 5:15 with chef Brian N1BQ a.k.a. *Brianbr* manning the grill, turning out mass quantities of gourmet tube steak and burgers.

As we were consuming the feast, Mitch W1SJ a.k.a. *DX Hunter* was sneaking around hiding the Fox Boxes and Geocaches. When he returned, there was a short "how to" and teams were formed. A ham and a few geocachers made up each of the teams. They then scattered in all directions in search of the Fox Box. Some of the teams found the Fox Box fairly easily, while others had problems. There was a barrier between the picnic area and the Fox Box in the form of a stream. After figuring out that the Fox Box was on the other side, most found it. There they found the coordinates for the cache, and they were off once again. The cache was located in some dark bug-infested woods and GPSs were giving readings all over the place. Some not so nice comments were overheard from the cachers regarding *DX Hunter's* hiding spot. Finally, the cache was located by most of the teams and items were exchanged. There was a second Fox Box and cache close to the picnic area and a couple of teams found them without a lot of trouble. Many of the cachers also went off on side trips to find the 5 other full time caches hidden at this park.

Everyone enjoyed the event and fellowship. The meeting broke up around 9:00 as it started to get dark.

FRIDAY NIGHT AT DAN'S

One of the best-kept secrets of radio activity in our area is the Friday Night get together in Dan's basement. This has been a long running social event with Bob W1ICW and Dan N1FYL. The festivities start with dinner at the *Hoagie Hut* in Colchester before moving to the basement. Very few people actually ever work N1FYL on the air, but he has one of the best-equipped tech shops anywhere. There is more stuff crammed in the basement than can be found at many small flea markets! Upon arrival, one can find a number of folks engaged in radio fixing, kit building, computer hacking, or even TV/video watching. Beside Dan and Bob, some of the people seen have included AA1SU, AB1DD, N1FDU, N1UXO, WB2JIX and a bunch of others I have missed.

Sometimes, I stop by to see what everyone is up to. Other times, I drag a piece of equipment which is giving me fits to see if a group approach helps to get it repaired.

Listen in on 146.61 or 145.15 on Friday evening and you will hear people making their way to Dan's!

THE PREZ SEZ

by Brian N1BQ, President

The dog days of summer are upon us; the weather has been interesting. The atmospheric propagation even more so. The conditions have been so bad over extended periods of time that we rejoice when we can work Western New York! I guess it is a matter of patience. There always does seem to be some band open somewhere 75% of the time.

The picnic is coming. I related in last month's newsletter we will be at Kill Kare State Park in St. Albans on Saturday, the 6th of August. This will be in lieu of the regular meeting in South Burlington. The club will supply the charcoal and lighter fluid as well as the beverages and ice. You supply the rest. We will have radios and antennae there for some operating and Mitch will be hiding some transmitters.

Once again I must ask the hard question: What are we, the officers of RANV, the men at the steering wheel of the club, doing wrong? Attendance at meetings is still down. I was embarrassed to see that the Geocacher guests at the July meeting at Mills Riverside Park, outnumbered the hams present (*several of the hams who did come weren't even members!*). It would seem to us that the membership is voting on our agenda with their feet by not coming to meetings. If that is the case what can we do to make it better? I asked this question two months ago and got exactly one response. Our Steering Wheel Meeting, where we discuss and set meeting agendas is a known event. We have always met on the third Tuesday of each month (*the week after the main meeting*) at 7 PM at Friendly's in Colchester. In the last two years maybe two people outside the board have attended the meeting and offered input. We cannot fix it if we do not know what is broken. It is YOUR club. We need YOUR input to make YOUR meetings interesting to YOU.

Contacting RANV

In Person: Picnic, Saturday August 6th
Kill Kare State Park,
St. Albans

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: Carl AB1DD 482-3878
ab1dd@arrl.net

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

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

RANV ON-LINE RENEWALS

by Mitch WISJ

RANV is now one of the first radio clubs to offer membership applications and renewals on-line. Renewing members can click on the RANV website and go directly to *PayPal* where they can pay the \$15 or \$20 membership dues directly from a credit card or existing *PayPal* account. New members can fill out a membership form right on line and have it directly forwarded to the database manager without having to acquire an application, write out a check, find a stamp and then find a mailbox. Go to the RANV website and all this can be done with a couple of clicks. In fact, there is even a provision for *PayPal* to automatically send out the renewal E-mails, but it was thought that this was too hard sell.

There is another reason for this new feature. Dealing with checks (*and renewal notices*) is a very labor intensive process. Renewal notices have to be hand-folded into the newsletters, sometimes for 2-3 months. Then when a check is sent, the Treasurer has to collect it from the post office box (*usually only every 2-3 weeks*), cash it, and write an E-mail to the database manager to update the club list. Not only does the staff not get paid, but the sheer time it takes to complete the process requires numerous requests for dues, which have already been sent. In contrast, payments sent on line are instantly updated via E-mail.

There is always concern that an on-line payment method can be hacked. *PayPal* has been around for several years and millions of transactions, and has an excellent track record of safety. It is our hope that because of the ease of the new system, we will attract more new members, retain more current members and have members renew more quickly than before. When you come up for renewal, give it a try!

NO MO' CODE?

by Mitch WISJ

The FCC has issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on July 19th, which seeks to do away with Morse code as a requirement for any of the U.S. amateur radio licenses. Over a year ago, the FCC asked for comments on a number of petitions for rulemaking (RM). These petitions not only asked for rolling back the Morse Code requirement, but also proposed various changes in the license class structure, particularly proposing a new beginner's class of license to replace Novice Class. The FCC has ignored all of the other requests and has focused singularly on Morse Code. Most of the comments favored removing the code requirement for General Class, while there was a 50% split in the feelings towards keeping Morse Code for Extra Class.

The FCC has taken the clean approach of completely eliminating the code requirement. If adopted, it hopefully puts an end to the decade of debate over this and simplifies Volunteer Examining Sessions. Under the proposed rules, only 3 written exams: Technician, General and Extra would only be offered and no code tests would be offered.

The deadline for comments on this NPRM is early October and for reply comments mid-October. Comments can be filed through the FCC website: www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs. How long the FCC takes after that to issue the Report and Order (R&O) is unknown, but I have a feeling that things will progress quickly now.

While many are welcoming the end of the Code requirement, there are amateurs who feel like this is the end of the world. Like any controversial topic, the opinions are all over the map. However, we need to realize that majority of commentors favor removing the code requirement, and after all, this is just a hobby. It is safe to say that whatever the FCC decides, there won't be any major loss of life over this. Now let's go work some DX.

VT QSO PARTY

The results of the 2005 *Vermont QSO Party* have been released. The WB1GQR multi-op (*2 of us*) bagged 1793 QSO's for a quarter million points. There were no other Vermont logs submitted. None! Dale AF1T from New Hampshire had 79 QSO's, in a combined VT and NH QSO Party log. Stations outside of Vermont can only work Vermont stations. Out of 1793 QSO's, only 16 were from Vermont. There were 5 other logs from out of state, claiming 18 contacts total.

This is pathetic. Vermont stations were rarer in the Vermont QSO Party than any other event. Part of this has stemmed from problems with the contest organizer CVARC. Last year's logs were lost and there were no results and no acknowledgement. This year's report came out, but only after 4 ½ months. It has been a problem to find qualified people to take on the job of administering the contest. Unfortunately, these problems are certainly not helping activity.

The Vermont QSO Party needs help. I prefer it to the larger New England QSO Party because it is less competitive and occurs at a better time of the year. The New England contest starts right after Hosstraders, and after 30 hours of hamfesting, the last thing I want to do is run a contest. Vermont is still considered a rare state and the QSO Party exists to put Vermont stations on the air. With the exception of my station, this just has not been happening.

It's time for some discussion on how to build activity for the QSO Party from all corners of Vermont. It is not just a contest, but an operating event. The idea is to get on the air and make contact, whether those contacts are short or long, phone or CW or digital. Maybe we should offer prizes. California provides a bottle of wine. Minnesota sends wild rice! Do you have ideas about the Vermont QSO Party? Send them along to the RANV reflector at ranv@wpi.edu. I really hope we can get a lot more folks on for next year.

RANV SUMMER PICNIC
Saturday, August 6th
Kill Kare State Park
St. Albans Bay

FOX HUNT:
Friday, August 26th 6 PM
145.15 Repeater

RANV

P.O. Box 9392

South Burlington, Vt 05407

<http://www.RANV.org>