



Radio Amateur News & Views

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THE POOR MAN'S SPACE PROGRAM The September 13th RANV Meeting

Near space research is known as *The Poor Man's Space Program*. Instead of expensive high altitude rockets, the vehicle of choice is the latex sounding balloon. Instead of costing thousands of dollars per foot of altitude with a rocket, they cost on the order of a dollar per thousand feet of altitude with a sounding balloon. So, where does amateur radio come into the picture? The predominant driving force in near space inquiries is the amateur radio community. What draws hams to this? The answer is fairly simple; "We got the frequencies and the licenses!" Putting a balloon up is one thing, getting the pictures and data back is another. It must either be transmitted back or else recorded on board and the payload recovered. Either way it involves radios and transmitters. It was only logical that hams became involved.

There are over ten groups involved in ARHAB, a loose acronym for *Amateur Radio High Altitude Ballooning*. Each year, in the beginning of July, there is a conference held in the Midwest. In conjunction with it is the "Great Plains Super Launch" where over 20 balloons are launched in a single day, sending chase teams across several states. Typically the balloons reach 90 to 120 thousand feet before bursting, often covering as much as 300 miles on the ground. A typical flight lasts two to three hours.

Brian N1BQ will give a one-hour presentation including still pictures and movies taken in flight. There will be a selection of balloon payloads and equipment for examination.

Contacting RANV

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

COMING UP!

Our Fall Ham Season is upon us and there is plenty to do! The weekend right after Labor Day, September 10-11th, is the *VHF QSO Party*. Get those 6 and 2 meter SSB radios out and get on the air. Monitor around 50.125 and 144.200 MHz and you will eventually hear something. I plan to be on Mt. Equinox and will swing the beams north at the top of the hour. If you can't find anyone on SSB, then make some noise on 146.55 FM.

We will have the first of several exciting RANV meetings on September

13th, when we will discuss the *Poor Man's Space Program*. Details appear above.

In a few short weeks, Friday, October 7-8th, is *Hosstraders*. And on October 15-16th, is the *Fall Weekend Ham Radio Class* for you aspiring hams.

For our October meeting, we will have a presentation on how integrated circuits are made at IBM.

The final Fox Hunt of the year will be Friday, October 14th. You have a month to get your equipment and skills honed to find the Fox!

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OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl AB1DD, Sec'y

The RANV summer picnic was held on August 6th at Kill Kare State Park in St. Albans. It was an almost perfect day: sunny, some breeze to keep cool, and the temperature in the low 80's. Around 30 members, families and guests were in attendance.

The day started early for the advanced guard, Carl AB1DD, who arrived around 9 AM to stake out a claim. Others started arriving a little before 11 AM. Ted K1HD and AB1DD arrived by boat and stayed at Burton Island for a few days. Transceivers were set up, antennas strung in the trees, and fires started for lunch. Mitch W1SJ wanted to get a vertical dipole up in a tree. The method of choice was to tie a length of fishing line to an arrow and shoot it over a branch. Well, the arrow went up, and the string stayed down. The string didn't go up, the arrow didn't come down. Fortunately, the second try worked better, the string went over a branch about 70 feet up. The dipole was raised up and everything was in place. The first arrow didn't return to earth for a couple of days, but was found Monday morning by AB1DD. Brian N1BQ set up a QRP station, and a 2-meter station was also on the air. Some lighthouses were contacted, as well as some PSK contacts made.

Later in the day, a small group of 4 made the trek to Burton Island by small outboard powered dinghy. Mitch W1SJ ran off in search of a geocache on the island, while the others made a quick visit to the nature center and then the snack bar for some ice cream. Upon returning to Kill Kare, around 5:30 PM, it was found most everyone had left. After a quick look around for leftover items, the last of the picnickers left. It was decided that everyone had an excellent time, and plans are underway for next summer's great adventure. Mark your calendar now for next summer. You don't want to miss it! See the RANV web site for picnic pictures.

THE PREZ SEZ

by Brian N1BQ, President

The kids are back to school, some trees have already begun turning color and mountain gardens are starting to turn in final crops. It's that time of year when we start back to regular meetings and presentations. The coming lineup looks great. This month I will be doing a presentation about amateur radio and near space exploration. October will have John K1JCM with a presentation on IBM and chip fabrication.

Another aspect of this time of year is that now, while it is still pleasant, is the time to check your wire antennas, beams and rotators before winter comes howling in to find their weak spots. I would sure rather work when it's 50-70 degrees than 20-30!

The passing of the Morse Code requirement is all but an accomplished fact. The current Notice of Proposed Rulemaking from the FCC is looking to hear if there just might be some new arguments out there that haven't been moaned over already. We can expect sometime in late winter or spring to see the Morse Code requirement gone. As our activities move indoors, all you Technicians out there should save your extra lunch money and buy a copy of the General Class Manual and start studying. Your newly acquired CSCE is good for one year; it is almost a slam dunk that the new structure will be in place before it expires. Only one more thing to do, start dropping hints to your significant other that you want an Icom-7800, a Steppir tri-bander, a rotor, and a 100 foot tower from Santa!

Looking forward to seeing you all this Fall.

EXTRA COURSE

by Mitch W1SJ

A course covering the Amateur Extra Class is now available. This course is part of the on-line series of amateur radio courses, including courses for General and Technician.

Over the past year of promoting the on-line class, I have found numerous misconceptions about this technology. There are on-line courses offered by colleges which are nothing more than reading assignments and homework. This course is a true multimedia class. Each lesson comes up with a slide, appropriate diagrams and 1-2 minutes of discussion by the teacher. This is followed with reviews and quizzes. Unlike a live class, the student can listen and re-listen to lessons until the key elements are memorized or understood. Students can ask questions via E-mail or via an on-line, live, chat facility. Unfortunately, the one big missing item is motivation. In a live class, the teacher provides that with fun stories about amateur radio. Or, in desperate situations, we lock the door and assure everyone that they don't leave until they finish the course. While the on-line class is very convenient in that it can be scheduled at any time and there is no commute, the student has the responsibility to provide his or her own motivation to keep on target and finish. I haven't devised a method to whack a student over the head through the computer. Yet.

So, here is your chance to get your Extra! The Extra Class course is \$99 (*Technician and General are only \$59*). You will need a course book for the courses, purchased through W5YI. If there is solid interest in the course (*10 students*), I'll run a one-time live class in conjunction with the on-line class. To get information or enroll in the on-line courses, go to www.hamclass.net.

The 1-day Technician and General courses will be offered on October 15-16th in Essex. Call me if you would like to enroll or click on the "Ham Radio Class" link on the RANV web.

CARL PHILLIPS KC1WH

Carl Phillips KC1WH passed away this summer at the age of 56. Carl was known to many in amateur radio as the Vermont City Marathon Communications Coordinator, a position he has owned and developed for 16 continuous years. Carl was also Vermont Section Emergency Coordinator, and he visited every Vermont radio club in his quest to organize amateur radio's ability to provide emergency communications. Although not a member in recent years, Carl was a Charter member of RANV and was very active in the Steering Wheel planning meetings in the early years. He was a regular at Field Day, often operating during the tough early morning hours.

The details of Carl's passing aren't clear. He clearly had a medical issue but he didn't share details. Weight loss, and later, a difficulty in walking became evident. Carl came to Field Day and spent a few hours visiting, but told me that he could not see the log on the computer screen and would not be able to operate. I was concerned, since a sudden loss of vision is never good. A month later, Carl passed away in his sleep.

I first met Carl in 1990 when he took the 12-week Technician Radio Class. Over the years, I had the opportunity to work with Carl on a number of activities including Marathons, Field Days, contests, and public service events, the most recent of which was the Table Top Exercise held at UVM in April. We spent a great deal of time discussing details and logistics of public service communications. Carl spent a lot of time and energy on rebuilding the Vermont Amateur Radio Service to the point where there is a now solid working structure. I liked Carl because he was dead straight honest. He would share his true viewpoints on a topic without any spin or political correctness and I always knew where he stood on an issue. On occasion, we even agreed on everything, which made the conversation a lot shorter! Carl will certainly be missed by many folks in the ham radio community.

A memorial service for Carl will be held Saturday, September 24th, 10 AM at St. Mark's Parish Hall, 1251 North Avenue in Burlington.



Carl KC1WH at the last Vermont City Marathon

AUGUST FOX HUNT

by John K1JCM

Robert W1RFM and I were in the right place at the right time in June to locate the Fox. So, we began planning our strategy for being the Fox. First, we remembered the tactic of our previous two hunts – changing power levels and using horizontal polarization. Then we picked up the book *Transmitter Hunting* by Joe Moell. Robert and I found an idea that we thought would make this hunt fun – background sound effects. We downloaded wave files with jets taking off/landing/crashing, ferry whistles, train noises, sirens, motorcycles and bus noises.

The evening before the hunt, Amy KB1KXF and the XYL helped us check out our site. We worked simplex to ensure our Leddy Park location, coupled with our yagi pointing west and oriented horizontally, would deliver an S-1 signal to University Mall, near I-89 Exit 14.

The hunt started promptly at 6 PM. And just as prompt was the, “you're not S-1 at Exit 14” chant. So, while we were pretty confident we had the required signal, we cranked the power up to get started. The reading started with a story about Reginald Fessenden, “The Forgotten Father of Radio”. We were excited to have six hunters looking for us. Unfortunately, one of them took exception to my pronunciation of “telegraphy” and “telephony”. Apparently, W1RFM was a better reader than I was.

With Robert and I trading paragraphs and inserting our background sounds, it took 54 minutes before Robert saw a porcupine enter the parking lot and knew we had been located. At 6:56, Mitch W1SJ and Debbie W1DEB had pulled along side us.

We gave our first clue at 7:09, “We are Cold” (*next to Leddy ice rink*), followed by, “Remember the Miracle of 1980” at 7:21. At 7:33, Paul AA1SU appeared and brought the highlight of our evening when he shared how he was right near us, then heard the train background sound—and headed to downtown Burlington!

Our last clue was at 7:40, “Where Peggy Fleming may have performed”. Kayle KB1JOO and YL appeared at 7:41, about the time we started reading a story entitled “In Dreams Begin Technologies” which shares how for some folks, solving problems does not stop when they go to sleep. At 8:05, Dan N1NZH and Steve N1UKT arrived, followed by Bob KB1FRW at 8:12. Juniors Pizza was selected as the location for our post hunt feast.

W1SJ will be the Fox for the October hunt – looking forward to it!

August Fox Hunt Summary

6:56 W1SJ/W1DEB

7:33 AA1SU

7:41 KB1JOO

8:05 N1NZH / N1UKT

8:12 KB1FRW

DNF KB1IWK

**NEXT MEETING:
“POOR MAN'S SPACE PROGRAM”
Tuesday, September 13th, 7 PM
O'Brien Civic Center**

RANV

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