



Radio Amateur News & Views

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GORE MOUNTAIN VHF EXPEDITION The May 9th RANV Meeting

Our May meeting will feature Henry KT1J and Paul K1PJM speaking about their VHF/UHF Expedition up Gore Mountain in New York. Several hams in the Addison County area have been making this mountain their home during the June and September VHF QSO Parties. Gore Mountain is near North Creek in New York, literally in the middle of nowhere, but just into Grid Square FN23, which is fairly tough to work. The KT1J operation is similar to the WB1GQR setup on Mount Equinox except that they run (*or try to run*) maximum legal power and all or most of the VHF, UHF and microwave bands. Henry and Paul will detail some of the challenges they face each time they have to assemble all of the needed equipment on a fairly remote mountain.

At the beginning of the meeting we will count ballots for the Bylaws revision. Don't forget to review the Bylaws changes and vote. And as always, pre-meeting activities will commence at Zach's on Williston Road around 6 PM, with the meeting starting at 7 PM at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington.

PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

Charlotte Covered Bridges Half Marathon.

This will take place **Saturday, May 6th** in the morning in Charlotte. Amateur operators will serve as checkpoints, bicycle mobiles and shadows. Activities get underway at 7:30 AM at the Charlotte Central School on Hinesburg Road. Operators will need a mobile setup or high power HT. Volunteers get a T-shirt and can stay for barbecue lunch. Contact Steve KB1IVE: 388-3585, E-mail: june24@adelphia.net.

Essex Memorial Day Parade.

This will take place **Saturday, May 27th** in the morning in Essex. Amateur operators will serve as Parade Marshals to assure that participants line up in an orderly fashion and march safely down the parade route. Activities get underway at 7:30 AM at St. James Church on Route 2A at the Fairgrounds and is over by noon. Operators will need to have a reliable HT with spare battery. Contact Mitch W1SJ: 879-6589, E-mail: w1sj@arrl.net.

Vermont City Marathon.

This will take place **Sunday, May 28th** in the morning and early afternoon over a route throughout Burlington. The Vermont City Marathon (VCM) has the largest amateur radio team supporting a public service event in Vermont. Hams provide communications for aid stations, race officials, medical personnel and communications for a variety of other locations. The radio gear required is a 2-meter HT and an extra battery. Volunteers get a marathon T-shirt. Contact Mitch W1SJ: 879-6589, E-mail: w1sj@arrl.net.

HOSSTRADERS

Time for the annual Spring trip to Hosstraders this Friday and Saturday, May 5-6th. The location is the *Hopkinton State Fairgrounds* in New Hampshire. Take I-89 into New Hampshire and head for the *Exit 7 - Davisville* exit. After getting off, go left under the highway for 0.2 miles and then go right (*Warner Ave.*). The fest will be about a mile down on the left side. The trip is about 2 hours from Burlington.

The fest opens at 9 AM on Friday and ends 1 PM on Saturday. Exams will be given on Saturday at 9 AM. Admission is \$10 Friday before 3 pm, or \$5 afterwards. Sellers pay \$10 additional. There are plenty of hams and goodies on both days.

For communications, use 145.15 MHz into New Hampshire, then 145.33 and 146.895 MHz. At the hamfest, use the 146.67 MHz repeater to talk amongst our group.

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OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

President Brian N1BQ called the April meeting to order at 7:12. There were 19 members present.

Brian thanked Bob W4YFJ for bringing the snacks. The dates for upcoming events were announced. There will be an APRS Workshop at the QTH of N1BQ on April 21st, along with the April RANV Fox Hunt at the same time. The MS Walk-a-thon in Burlington and the balloon launch in Milton will be on April 22nd. There will be 2 other balloon launches from New York on the 19th and 21st. Hosstraders will be on May 5-6th and the Covered Bridges Half Marathon on May 6th. Contact Paul AA1SU to offer help if you won't be at Hosstraders. May 27th is the Essex Memorial Parade. May 28th is the Vermont City Marathon. Contact Mitch W1SJ if you wish to help out at any of these. Brian also announced that there are two new APRS digipeaters in Orleans and in Royalton. If anyone needs help with a Kantronics KPC-3 upgrade, they should speak with N1BQ.

Bob KB1FRW found out that we are a non-profit club, but not yet one that can accept tax deductible gifts. That is still in the works. On another topic, he said the headline for the repeater is on the way.

Brian then gave a brief overview of how our money is divided up between our checking, savings, and CD accounts.

The main topic of the evening was a talk by Mitch W1SJ. The topic was his DXpedition to Sint Maarten or Saint Martin, depending on the side of the island you are on. We got a good geography lesson on the island, along with some interesting facts, like the airport is the 2nd busiest in the Caribbean. Mitch talked about the trials and tribulations of a contest station especially when you are the DX. Broken amplifiers aside, over 6000 contacts in a 48-hour pe-

THE PREZ SEZ

by Brian N1BQ, President

I have been away from the keyboard the last few months and some might expect I would come back all humble – not likely! We live in new times, fast times. Geeky things change and often change again before you have barely registered the first change. Which brings me – yes, again – to the matter of the RANV Internet Reflector. This is one of our most powerful resources and not taken advantage of by more than a handful of members.

The usual reason I have heard when pressing non-participation in the RANV list is something like “I get enough email, I don't want my mailbox jammed up.” But it is not the case. The RANV list averages a lot less than a half dozen messages a week. “OK”, you say, “why should I bother subscribing then if there is so little said”? The point is that when things do come up the club officers and/or members have a widespread forum to get the word out and collect the response rapidly. Try it! Send an E-mail to ranv-request@wpi.edu and place SUBSCRIBE XXX in the message where XXX is your E-mail address.

The above discussion leads me to another area. This past week we had yet another Steering Wheel meeting at Friendly's discussing, as always, topics for meeting presentations and activities. It isn't always easy when you have been at the reigns for several years as I have, to keep coming up with new ideas. I will grant you

riod is nothing to sneeze at. The last part of the trip he was a tourist and showed us what the rest of the island was like. Probably the best part were the pictures of the airplanes landing over the beach, or the view from the hotel looking down on the landing airplanes. Thanks Mitch for an enjoyable presentation.

The last order of business was Stuart WB2PBH volunteered to bring the snacks for the next meeting.

that a few members have been very helpful to us in suggesting topics, but I wish it were more than just the same few. There is a rumor about that a good portion of the membership almost doesn't care what we present, they just show up wanting to be entertained. Which begs the question, why do you belong to a ham radio club? Do you look upon it as an *entertainment subscription*? You pay us money and we supply ham radio oriented entertainment, complete with newsletter? We're not Disney!

Or did you join RANV because you are interested in the hobby and want to take part in ham activities. Do you view your dues as a donation to help fund the activities of the club? If that is the case why don't we see more of you? RANV is an active club and we have good participation for a hard core of the club, but it's the same couple dozen people all of the time which represents only a fraction of the membership.

I would rather be postured as the head cheerleader or head coach – so let's see you at a meeting and or an activity. Hope to see you there!

Contacting RANV

In Person: Meeting, May 9, 7pm,
O'Brien Civic Center
113 Patchen Rd, So. Burlington

By Mail: PO Box 9392,
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By Radio: 145.15 repeater

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

OUR FIRST FOX HUNT

by Ed NIUR and Christine (future ham)

April 21st – 5:45 PM: We are sitting at I-89, Exit 14 and Christine and I are ready for our first ever Fox Hunt. We decided to use a 4 element yagi that I purchased last year at Hosstraders for \$20. We had practiced the night before finding the peak signal and the null to DF the Fox. Christine sat in the back of our convertible, holding the yagi and turning it while watching the S-Meter on our Icom V-8000. I was driving and also watching the meter. We picked up the Fox immediately with a direction that looked like NW from our location. But how far away were they? We decided to drive to Exit 15 and see if the signal got stronger or weaker in that direction and where the signal pointed. As we got to Exit 15, at 6:10, we were convinced it was now pointing back towards where we were.

We got back on I-89 and got back off at Exit 14 heading towards UVM. At one point we were so saturated with signal we could not get a reading anywhere but full scale. (*Note to self: buy attenuator at Hosstraders.*) At 6:20, as we sat next to the water tower at the top of the hill, we were convinced that it was coming from somewhere back behind us. We decided that the Sheraton parking lot was a good possibility as well as the parking lot near the back of Fletcher Allen. By 6:35, we had canvassed all of those locations with almost always fully saturated S-Meter on the radio. This included looking into virtually every car in the parking lot. I think by the time we left the Sheraton, they had notified Security to check out a suspicious black car with something funny going on in the back seat. I looked across the road and saw the strip mall with Verizon and Staples and said that is really the only place left that is consistent with the antenna readings and that we haven't checked.

So, across the road we went with full strength S-Meter signals the whole way. We decided to circle the building and low and behold found the Fox transmitting from behind a van. It was of course, John K1JCM and the time was 6:45. Also, found that our friend Mitch W1SJ (*with Debbie W1DEB*), had already found the Fox. He got there 10 minutes before us.

After seeing John's set up, some of our readings made more sense. We got fully saturated at the top of the hill near the water tower because John was beaming his signal with a 4 element beam right at the water tower. That was confusing for sure – but good sport by John. That is – after all, the game.

RANV BYLAWS CHANGES

by Bob KB1FRW

More than a year ago, the Steering Wheel Committee embarked on a fact finding mission to investigate the pros and cons of incorporation and tax exempt status. It was decided and voted on by the members to become incorporated, so we asked Jeff Spencer W1RL to do this for the club. As part of this process, Jeff noted that the bylaws were in need of updating to comply with the law if we are to become tax exempt. The wording of the bylaws needed to include charitable intent and some other changes as noted below. Although the formatting and layout is quite different, the new Bylaws are mostly minor changes in definitions or procedures and there have been some additions.

Changes

1. Changed termination of membership procedures
2. Defined special meetings and annual meetings
3. Defined voting procedures
4. Changed how nominations are done
5. Defined procedure for filling Board of Directors/Officers vacancy
6. Raised non-voted amount Board of Directors/Officers can spend to \$100

Additions

1. Stated the office of our agent
2. Defined quorums for elections and expenditures
3. Defined Board of Directors

The bylaws are posted at: <http://www.ranv.org/ranvbyl.html>

This site will bring up both sets of Bylaws; old (*white background*) on top and new (*blue background*) on the bottom. This will allow you to view both at the same time. If you can't access them through the Internet just call one of the Officers and we will be happy to send you a copy of each.

In this newsletter is a form to vote this change. Please indicate your preference and return the ballot before the next meeting.

MS WALK-A-THON

by Bob KB1FRW

Another spring is here and the walk-a-thons are springing up everywhere. Saturday morning April 22nd was overcast and 48° at the Burlington airport – it wasn't exactly warm. I headed to Burlington High School to meet John N1LXI, John K1JCM, Jon KB1LIE, Thomas KB1KVV and Robert W1RFM.

We all met up at the parking lot at 7:30 AM. We were right on the edge of not having enough people to cover all the necessary positions. Fortunately, K1JCM brought along non-ham brother-in-law Rich, complete with cell phone. We were able to cover the walk very well with 2 bike mobiles (*JCM/KVY*), a cell phone communicator on the SAG bus (*Rich*), a director shadow (*RFM*), hams at both rest stops (*LXI/LIE*) and a net control (*FRW*).

The bike mobiles have been very useful at this event as the course has about one and a half miles that is not accessible by automobile. This year's walk went very well with no emergencies and only a few minor equipment failures, Robert gets extra credit for keeping up with the event director as she has a habit of moving around from one thing to the next at a run. I would like to say job well done to all the people who helped out as it is for a great cause and I hope to see you all next year!

MEET THE MEMBER – *Paul AAISU*

How did I first get started in Ham Radio? Well let me think. When I was in elementary school on Long Island, I checked a book out of the school library on the subject. It was about a young lad who studied for and earned his license. The story line covered such things as rag chewing with other Ham Radio operators around the world, and neighbors complaining about interference from his antenna when he wasn't even home.

My dad is W3HYV, but he is inactive and never really talked that much about the hobby. At some point he gave me an old receiver to listen to. It used a separate 120 volt power supply that he built as a young man. The only thing that I can recall listening to was some Morse code and WWV. I really liked WWV for some reason. I can't recall any particular voice transmission, but I think it was a combination of Ham and Shortwave radio. Eventually, the power supply failed, and my Dad never got around to repairing it.

From there, my interest in radio faded, and I moved on to more important things in life, like school, cars, and girls. Along about 1994, I was living in an apartment in Essex Junction, and decided it was time to start searching for a house. There was this cable station on the TV that had home listings. My wife and I would watch it from time to time to get a feel for the housing market. One evening, an advertisement for a local Ham Radio class came on the air, and something clicked. All those years of wondering what it would be like to have my own Ham Radio license came rushing back to me, and I wrote down the phone number. Eagerly I called the number to get the details. The nice man on the other side of the line explained to me what was involved and that there was a fee. I thanked him, and told him that I had to think about it. I didn't call back. The nice man was Mitch W1SJ.

About a year later, I was settled into my new house in Colchester when the phone rang one night. It was Mitch inquiring if I was still interested in the class. At this point, I still could not swing it. However, he called the next year, and the next year (1997), I finally said yes to the class. I took Mitch's spring Technician class, and I taught myself the Morse code with Gordon West tapes from Radio Shack. On Sunday night, I nervously took all three tests, and could not believe it when I passed! My new call sign was N1YTX, officially issued on March 20, 1997.

What was my first station? My first station was an Icom IC-W32A dual band HT. I bought the matching speaker microphone, power accessory, bayonet adapter, roof mount antenna, and went mobile. I really enjoy working as many repeaters as I can—even to this day.

Eager to learn more about the hobby, I jumped feet first into Field Day. I went to a planning meeting at Mitch's house where I met Tom W1EAT (*he likes to eat*). By now, I had my General Class License and was anxious to get on the air. After discussing my ambitions with Tom, he loaned me a 5-watt Ten-Tec Argonaut 509, a code key, a Johnson Viking antenna match and set me loose. We also threw a 100 foot wire antenna in the air. I nervously made my first CW contact on July 20, 1997, and I never looked back.

But let me back up to Field Day. The night before Field Day 1997, I passed my Advanced Class license, and decided to try and get the 20 WPM code element out of the way for the Extra Class. Through some miracle, I passed both! I soaked up all I could at Field Day, and even worked in the phone tent for a while. When 2 PM Sunday came around, I asked Mitch if I could use my own call sign on the phone station. He set me up in the Advanced portion of 20 Meters and let me go. I threw out "This is N1YTX/AA, QRZ:?" and the pile-up started. The rush from the pile-up was incredible, and from there on, I was hooked on contesting. My Advanced call was KE1IB.

Realizing that 5 watts was not always being heard in the pile-ups, I purchased a Ten-Tec 580 Delta from Tom. This was a 100-watt rig, and I could work the world a little more easily. Within a few years, I had my WAS-CW, WAS-SSB, WAS-RTTY and DXCC. I then concentrated on 5BWAS, and finally earned that January 10, 2001. Since then, I earned WAS-160. Now I'm going through a period where I'm not concentrating that much on the wallpaper chasing, but I hope to get back into the swing of it soon. My current rig is a Kenwood TS-690S. Over the years, I have set it up for contesting by purchasing the computer interface, and the tight filters on e-Bay. I've learned a lot about making 13 pin DIN connectors too. What a nightmare!

What are my other radio interests? I like to experiment with different aspects of the hobby. You might be able to tell that by now. I went through a Packet Radio phase

that taught me a lot about computers and E-mail. Previously, I had never used a personal computer. I also really enjoy RTTY, but never really got into the other digital modes. Then one day, at the Hosstraders Hamfest, I purchased a RASCAL interface kit from a ham that never got around to building it. It was for his Kenwood TS-570S, and it utilized the dreaded 13-pin DIN connector. After I assembled the RASCAL, I got on and enjoyed PSK-31 and Slow Scan TV for a while. That was a blast, but I lost interest in it (*for now*). I have also recently taken an interest in Shortwave Radio listening. I hope to explore other modes, like AMTOR, in the future, but with two jobs, a house, and the Section Manager position, it's hard to find the time.

Oh! Did I mention that I was the Section Manager? Yes well somehow, someone noticed all of this pent up ambition, and asked me to run for Section Manager in 2002. I start my third unopposed term on July 1st. Previous to that, I was the president of **RANV** for a few years, and before that, the club secretary.

Some of my other interests include a 1969 Corvette that I tinker with once in a while. I don't take it out much, but when I do, it's a real head turner. I also have five great cats. One keeps me company whenever I operate. If I don't pay enough attention to her, she pushes her head at me. Once, this caused my knee to turn off a power switch at a computer table that I was operating RTTY from early on. Needless to say, the whole station shut down, and it was one of those old 386 computers that took 5 minutes to reboot. And of course, my house and yard keep me busy. Whenever I'm tending to the yard, I usually put in a few minutes of antenna farm pondering.

My wife, Kay does not share my ambition for the hobby, and I have to be mindful of that. This may be one reason that I do more CW and Digital contesting than Phone contesting. However, I have been looking into Digital Voice Keyers, for this reason. She is a wonderful kind person, and we celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary on April 2nd.

Currently, I work at The Granite Group, which is a plumbing wholesaler, and part-time at the Home Depot, in the electrical department. Both jobs have taught me a lot about the trades. I have a policy that my weekends are not complete if I don't see a fellow Ham Radio operator in Home Depot. My weekends are usually complete!

DX IS...

by NIUR

This month was very interesting for DX on the HF Bands. The Andaman Islands (VU4/A) are on as I write this article. They are one of the top 20 needed countries on the DXCC list. There were some operations from there in the 70's and 80's. I had never worked them. These islands (*off the coast of India*) are literally on the other side of the world from us here in Vermont. Add to that, the low part of the sunspot cycle, and you are in for some tough sleddin' on this one. Such was the case in December, 2004 as well when the first DXpedition in 15 years happened on these islands. The DXpedition was about half done when the great Tsunami hit on December 26, 2004 that we all know so much about. The ham operators on the DXpedition instantly became critically needed radio operators for the emergency and the DXpedition ended.

The government of India decided to make a Thank You gesture to the amateur radio community and hold a week long "hamfest" of sorts allowing anyone to come and operate from VU4/A. That week started on April 17th and ends on April 24th. It is very interesting to hear four or five stations working "the Deserving DXers" on 20 meter SSB from a place that has only been heard twice in the past 15+ years. I worked them (*a new one for me*) on 20 meter SSB at 9:30 PM on April 19th. The signals here were an incredible S8 (*low part in the sunspot cycle*). I worked them the next evening at exactly the same time on 20 meter CW (*they were S5*). There were two times per day that they were workable from Vermont on 20 meters, this time and around 9-10 AM. I also heard the stations up to S7 on 17 meters (*using my 80 meter inverted vee*) and S4 on 30 meters (*using my 160 meter inverted vee*). Hopefully, this event will "loosen the Indian government up" and allow more frequent DXpeditions to these islands and others in the area. By the way, VU4/A was my 326th country. Not many left to go!

Also, this month is a DXpedition to Aves Island which is off the coast of Venezuela. Aves Island has been visited a few times in the last decade with a big DXpedition a couple of years ago. The prefix is typically YV0 but this group was using the special prefix YX0. This one is very workable from Vermont and is an excellent one for any Vermont ham with HF privileges to try DXing. It will even be workable at this point in the sunspot cycle from Vermont on 10 meters! They should be there until April 30th.

There is interesting news on the Sunspot Cycle going on right now. Most propagation experts agree that we are currently at the bottom of the sunspot cycle 23. There seems to be some disagreement as to when the conditions will start a noticeable upward trend. Anywhere from late this fall to mid-2007 is the range. The interesting news is that consensus seems to be forming that Cycle 24 may be 30-50% stronger than Cycle 23. This would make DXing quite a blast with even limited antennas in a few years.

Hosstraders is just around the corner. Consider going and picking up some coax, wire, and a used HF rig. There is A LOT of fun being had on the HF bands. If you try it, you may just get hooked on it - like me.

WHAT IS HAM RADIO? DO YOU KNOW?

by Kayle KBIJOO

Hello folks! I'm Kayle KBIJOO. I'd like to take a moment and tell you about ham radio. Umm, hang on a sec. - (**thud*.. *swoosh*.. *crash**). Sorry about that folks, I had to get rid of the soap box.

So why this topic? When I first took my Technician test in 2003 I wasn't really sure what ham radio was. I know you're asking why was I getting licensed then right? Well, I got interested because my boss was a ham radio operator and he was always talking about these people he talked to and how you could talk to people all over the world. It sounded a lot like CB to me but hey, I wanted to check it out so I took the test. So it's been three years now and I guess the question of what exactly is ham radio still exists, this question exists for many people including the media and communities.

During those three years I have had the privilege of working with an incredible group of people while working the Essex Parade, March of Dimes Walk, Burlington Triathlon, Field Day, and the Vermont City Marathon. Ham Radio is so much more than just chatting with others on the radio; we provide emergency communications in a disaster, support for events, assist in search and rescue operations, and many other community activities. I'd like to share with you all an experience from my personal life.

In 2004 I was traveling home from the Albany, New York area, it was late, snowing heavily, and visibility was poor at best. I ended up lost with no map or GPS - only my HT. Being somewhat new to ham radio, I didn't have any repeaters programmed in my radio. So I just started scanning the channels and throwing out a CQ. It took a mere 5 minutes before I got a response from a fellow ham. Although my signal was weak he directed me to the Cobleskill repeater from there he spent the next hour talking me all the way into Albany. I was home free from there. That moment has stuck with me ever since. I always wonder what could have happened had there not been someone out there willing to take the time to help me out.

Hopefully you found this of some interest or at the very least it has gotten you thinking; maybe you to can share your thoughts and experiences with others. In doing so we make everyone more aware of ham radio and what exactly it is.

NEXT MEETING:
“Gore Mountain VHF Expedition”
Tuesday, May 9th, 7 PM
O’Brien Civic Center

RANV

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<http://www.RANV.org>