



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

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VINTAGE EQUIPMENT AND ENIGMA MACHINES The November 14th *RANV* Meeting

For our November meeting we are pleased to have as our honored guest, Tom Perrera W1TP. For those who go to a lot of hamfests, Tom is no stranger. He sets up a large display of vintage code keys, bugs, code sounders and Enigma machines. Tom is a historian and collector of such equipment and is the leading expert on these pieces. In this meeting, Tom will focus on the Enigma machine. This machine was used during World War II to code secret messages and art called cryptography. A key word was used to scramble the message at the sending end and then to decode the message at the receiving end, using a similar machine. I've seen a few examples of these machines and they are truly a mechanical marvel from 60+ years ago. Today everyone uses computers to scramble messages. Many Geocaches use various forms of cryptography to hide the exact coordinates! But Tom will talk about the granddaddy of cryptography and give us all the facts, details and stories to go along with it.

The meeting starts at 7 PM at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington. Dinner will be at around 6 at Zachs on Williston Road.

ELECTIONS

Pursuant to the By-Laws of the *RADIO AMATEURS OF NORTHERN VERMONT*, enclosed in this month's newsletter is your ballot for election of officers. Families receiving one newsletter will receive the correct number of ballots.

Nominations for officers come from the membership, or (*much of the time*) people are asked to run. We have found one candidate for each office. However, any club member in good standing, who agrees, can be written in.

Brian N1BQ, Bob KB1FRW and Carl AB1DD have agreed to continue as President, VP/Treasurer and Secretary, respectively.

Please show your support for our officers by voting. Either bring your ballot to the meeting, or vote by E-mail.

COMING UP!

This Fall is Contest Season. Everyone talks about emergency preparedness, but how many actually train to operate better? There is no better way to sharpen your skills than to operate in the **ARRL Sweepstakes**. This is much more than a 59VT contest. You have to send all sorts of information and send it correctly. The Phone SS is November 18th. The phone affair has become the premier competition in Vermont and many high scores come from right here! You can get on with a 100 watts to a dipole and work lots and lots of stations, all the while, picking up valuable skills. Don't have a station? Ask around – someone may be willing to invite you in!

The *RANV* Holiday Party will be Tuesday, December 12th at the QTH of W1SJ/W1DEB. The format will be similar to previous years. Some food will be provided and the rest will be pot luck. **Please let Mitch know your attendance plans by December 5th.** Any other ideas for food or activities is always appreciated.

IN THIS ISSUE...

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OUR LAST *RANV* MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

The October meeting was called to order at 7:16 PM by President Brian N1BQ. A total of 18 people attended this meeting. The first order of business was the announcement that the annual elections will be held in November. Ballots should be in the next newsletter.

Brian next reported on the Hosstraders Hamfest that was held the weekend of October 6-7th. There was great weather, although those of us who stayed overnight found the temperature to be about 32 in the morning.

John K1JCM gave a short report of the Scout campout on October 7-8th. He reported that about 200 to 250 Scouts were able to participate, and all had a good time. It was reported that the fox hunting was really popular.

Next month's speaker will be Tom W1TP who will talk about Enigma machines.

December's meeting will be the annual holiday party at the QTH of Mitch W1SJ, and will be a "non-ham" event. Families are welcome.

Jeff N1YD will provide snacks for the November meeting.

The presentation for this meeting was about the state of Packet Radio. Brian N1BQ talked about when, where and how packet radio started. He then discussed the different ways packet is used, from DX cluster nodes to Winlink2000, and APRS. Although there isn't any packet radio activity in this area, but maybe someone can re-ignite some interest.

The meeting ended around 9 PM when snacks were served.

NEW HAMSTERS FROM CLASS

by Mitch W1SJ

The numbers are a bit smaller but the Weekend Class continues to crank out the new hams. This past class in October had an interesting mix of students.

Starting with the youngest in attendance, **Taylor KB1OAD**, Williston, (*I'd guess 12-15*), has a full ham pedigree considering that her dad is Craig W1ZN and mom is Sue N1NZN. Perhaps she will get her school friends interested in amateur radio, too!

Bryan KB1OAH, Burlington works for the Department of Health in Burlington. They have a grant to buy amateur radios to link their facilities to be used in times of disaster. Bryan is the first of many (we hope) hams to be trained to use this system.

Linda KB1OAG, Essex, shares a home with Tom KB1FMV so she is no stranger to amateur radio! One of her jobs is to coordinate convoy vehicles to accompany wide loads on their trips. As I drove up 22A, stuck behind a giant house trailer, I thought about Linda and what I would say to her on 146.52!

Sara KB1OAE learned about amateur radio and took the big leap into taking the class.

Brian N1YDM, Essex, recently moved to the area from Maine and already had his license. He took the class as a refresher. We hope to see him get active!

Marc KB1OAC, Stowe, really knew he wanted to do amateur radio, as he was to first to enroll, back in August.

Dennis KB1OAB, Hyde Park, lives at the perfect ham address: Beam Road. I guess dipoles are not allowed there. He is interested in using amateur radio on his boat.

Rod N1PLA, Essex, took the General upgrade portion of the class. Now retired, he is active with the Coast Guard auxiliary and is working to set up an HF station to link the stations. Rod and Dennis had lots of sailboat discussions during class!

Kathy KB1OCA, Winooski, took the class in Manchester, New Hampshire. She obtained equipment from family and checked out the Milton Hamfest last February before enrolling.

Congratulations to all and make sure that you say hello to them as they show up on the air!

Two weeks later, I took the show to New Hamster and produced 14 new Hamsters. That class had 5 states represented: NH, VT, ME, MA and GA! It is really good to see the hobby grow like that. And I'm well on my way to Hamclass WAS!

The next live classes will be in March. The On Line class at hamclass.net is available all the time. Go out and make new hams!

Contacting *RANV*

In Person: Meeting, November 14, 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

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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.

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

-the last ones, hopefully

I got back from a trip last Monday and realized it was time to do the newsletter. Except for the meeting minutes sent by Carl, I had absolutely nothing. It was already 11 days past the deadline. And I really had nothing to write about either. I threw my hands up in disgust and did nothing.

I am burnt out and cannot write the newsletter anymore. I can edit it and I can make contributions, but the thought of writing most of it is no longer fun. This issue came up last year and we put a solution in place to have others collect the material and get them to me for editing. That was fine and it worked well. But that plan ran its course and we are right back to where we started.

The purpose of the newsletter is to report the local ham radio news and to serve as a place to share ideas and views. Unfortunately, it has become more of a place to share just my ideas. That's getting pretty stale.

In looking at the various options, none look good. In fact they look rather grim. We could find another editor. That would be great. But realize, what we are looking for is someone to write and edit and put together the newsletter month after month. Finding someone with the talent and willingness to do this is hard enough. But then, finding someone who will do this for more than a few months starts to look impossible.

It was suggested to cut back on the size of the newsletter or cut back on the frequency – such as every 3 months. When the newsletter becomes nothing more than an announcement of the next meeting its worthiness becomes questionable. After all, we all should know when the meetings are. Many other newsletters in our area are a meeting announcement, past meeting minutes and the remainder is fill culled from the Internet. I have steadfastly refused to follow this format. Folks can do their own web searching. And if

we go to a 3 month format, we simply take a monthly problem and move it to a quarterly problem. The newsletter will still have to be written and edited.

The final option is to do away with the newsletter altogether. Some say it's a throwback to a past era and it doesn't have much relevance anymore. I don't know how many folks read the newsletter. It appears that many club members "haven't gotten around to reading it" when discussion of the newsletter comes up. I get the sense that more non-members read the newsletter on the web. Certainly we found that out when the Web site went down last month. Those who support this idea should know that radio clubs who did away with their paper newsletter took a noticeable hit in membership. Those clubs which did away with their newsletter virtually went out of existence overnight. This may not be the best solution if we care about keeping the club around.

The newsletter is not the only problem area. All of the officers are getting weatherbeaten trying to come up with an interesting meeting topic each month. We are all running out of ideas and virtually nothing is coming in for ideas. The Fox Hunts look like they will go away since very few are interested in them anymore. Hunts used to draw 7-10 teams now can barely draw 3 teams. From the standpoint of the club leaders it seems like we are running an entertainment company. We provide the entertainment in the newsletter, at the meetings and hamfest and the membership comes. It really needs to be deeper than that.

Of course, this problem doesn't exist in a vacuum. Ham radio is shrinking all around us. And it is not the fault of the Internet, E-Bay or Cell phones. It is our fault. We have found other things to do. It is important that we all realize that we, as a group have the power to turn this

around. Part of the problem is that fewer new people (our new blood) are getting into amateur radio. But one can argue that the reason new people aren't being attracted to amateur radio is because we are not out there doing our thing and promoting ourselves. There are over 1000 licensed hams in Chittenden County. What percentage of them do you hear on the air or see at meetings, activities and hamfests? I rest my case.

So, I don't have a magic solution to any of this. I am just as stumped as you are. But I do know that we, collectively, have the dubious task of reinventing ourselves to form a healthy community, not one which is dwindling year by year. If we choose to do nothing, we are sentencing ourselves to oblivion. I'm not making this statement just to scare you. Look at the numbers and you will form the same conclusions.

With all the doom and gloom, there are some good points. With 120 members, *RAV* is one of the largest and most active clubs in the Northeast. We just won Field Day, we put on a great hamfest and always have interesting meetings. We certainly have something worth saving.

But we cannot rest on our laurels. The forces which are eroding ham radio in other areas are certainly tugging at us as well. We need to reinvent ourselves. We need to get as many members together at one time and place to have an open forum and see what we really want to do. Actually, it wouldn't be a bad idea to do this for all amateurs in our section of Vermont, but let's deal with the club first. This can take the form of a meeting, an afternoon forum at Milton or better yet, a Saturday or Sunday meeting were we all can meet and decide where to go from here. If nothing else, we can decide what to do with the newsletter.

FIELD DAY RESULTS: **RANV WINS IT!**

by Mitch WISJ

We did it! **RANV** captured the top spot in the Field Day 2A category. And this time, it wasn't a squeaker – it was rout! When the dust had settled we had bested second place KJ9D by almost 1200 points. In fact KJ9D, K0GQ and W4KJ in spots 2-4 were all within a few hundred points of each other. Overall, we were 15th in points and 9th in QSO's. Last years' numbers were 26th in points and 11th in QSO's, so we definitely showed improvement. And those guys who were ahead of us were running way more transmitters than we were. I can't be sure what the difference was this year compared to other years except to say that many more Northeast stations appeared to be gracing the top of the list.

In the local area, all of the club scores were up a bit and everyone ended up higher in their respective category. In the chart below, the percentile shows how well some local groups did. With 100% being first place and 0% being last, we see that four groups did very well in their categories.

Winning the 2A category is real special. With nearly 500 participants, in is far and away the most competitive class. Despite our best efforts, winning it is not something we do often. We last captured the flag in 1999 and 2000 and before that, in 1985 and 1986. Over the years, **RANV** and before 1993, its predecessor, the *Silicon Junction Radio Club* have dominated the 2A category in Field Day more than any club.

This also feels good because this was such a tough year to plan. We were short on operators, we were short on setup people and at times it really looked like we were going to have a rough time mounting an effort. But we not only put the people in place, we executed the plan nearly flawlessly.

Thanks again to all who made Field Day such a success. We'll do it again in another eight months.

Club	Call	Cl	Pts	QSO	Par	PI	Tot	%
RANV	W1NVT	2A	13856	4643	22	1	448	100
SOVARC	K1SV	3A	6412	2333	30	20	277	92
GMWS	N1VT	4A	5680	1512	38	15	126	89
NVQS	N1QS	2AB	5125	634	22	5	22	81
CVARC	W1BD	4AC	2366	823	20	66	126	48
BARC	W1KOO	2F	1396	453	7	37	61	41
WRiverRC	W1RRC	2A	1548	286	28	199	277	29
CVARC NY	W2UXC	2A	740	145	20	411	448	08

RANV.ORG DOWN!

by Mitch WISJ

Last month, just after the newsletter was up on the web site, I started getting E-mails indicating that the **RANV** site was down. Indeed, I had noticed some problems with accessing SoverNet on that weekend, but by Monday all seemed OK. However, the web site was still down. I finally was able to get into the main SoverNet web site and learned of the fire next door to their office. While this fire did not directly affect the servers, the gallons of water used to fight this blaze poured into basement containing the Web servers and quickly inundated them. It was an interesting situation since RANV.ORG was in the basement and was dead, but SOVER.NET/~RANV was somewhere else and was up. Knowing the situation, I quickly loaded our web space on the SOVER.NET server and we had a backup web – sort of. You had to know to go there, since any attempt to go to RANV.ORG brought up the dreaded *Error 404 – Page Not Found* error. A day later, SoverNet installed a new server and I reloaded RANV.ORG and we were back in business after a couple of days.

It is not so much the story, but the lessons learned here. The **RANV** Web being offline for a few days was hardly a life threatening event, but it was very much inconvenient. I, as well as many others, use the **RANV** page to access all sorts of information. It was nice to see how many people use the site and were impacted. Worse would be those businesses which use a Web site as their prime means of contact. Businesses which use their Web site to sell or provide products were wiped out for those days. And woe unto those who didn't back up their sites. I believe that everyone's sites were backed up and were able to be restored, but I wouldn't bet the farm on that. Backups can get corrupted too. Clearly, SoverNet was caught in this situation and they went to school quickly on how to and how not to install servers (*i.e. not in basements*). They have ramped it up and are making all sorts of changes as a result of this. By their 24-hour nature, web sites and entire ISP's really should be in brick and steel structures, with provisions for backup power and dry fire suppression. I suspect few ISP's in Vermont are set up this way, but I also suspect they all are taking a very serious look at disaster prevention and recovery.

Since things can always go wrong, I am working on duplicating the **RANV** Web on my Hamclass web site. When this is completed, that secondary address will be published. So, if the primary site ever goes down, simply call up the secondary site and it will be business as usual. As amateur radio operators who plan on providing services during disasters, we really need to plan for our own internal "disasters".

OFFICIAL RANV 2006 ELECTION BALLOTS

TWO WAYS TO CAST BALLOT:

1. Deposit in voting box at start of November 14th meeting
2. E-mail to ranv@sover.net **no later than noon Tuesday**. You must include serial number in E-mail

VOTE EARLY AND VOTE OFTEN!

Do not Mail ballot!

Write-ins must be: a real living person, a member of *RANV*, agreeable to accepting the office



There are TWO ballots on this sheet for use by family members.
Only ballots with bonafide serial number will be counted.

President

- Brian Riley N1BQ
- Write In _____

Vice President - Treasurer

- Bob Allen KB1FRW
- Write In _____

Secretary

- Carl Dow AB1DD
- Write In _____

ranv_____

President

- Brian Riley N1BQ
- Write In _____

Vice President - Treasurer

- Bob Allen KB1FRW
- Write In _____

Secretary

- Carl Dow AB1DD
- Write In _____

ranv_____

CUT HERE! - otherwise your name will show on the back!

**NEXT MEETING:
“VINTAGE ENIGMA MACHINES”
Tuesday, November 14th, 7 PM
O’Brien Civic Center**

RANV

P.O. Box 9392

South Burlington, Vt 05407

<http://www.RANV.org>