



Radio Amateur News & Views

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RANV HOLIDAY PARTY

Join Us December 12th
For An Evening of Fun

The RANV Holiday Party will be Tuesday, December 12th at the QTH of W1SJ and W1DEB in Essex. Festivities will get underway at 5:30 and will run until 10:00. Arrive at any time, but no food guarantees are made if you show up late! If you need directions, contact W1SJ at w1sj@arrl.net.

We have an assortment of food planned, including the usual cold cuts platter, wings, cocktail franks, meatballs, knishes, fries, drinks and munchies. We'll also have an assortment of other tasty items, depending on what everyone brings. See below for more information on this.

There is no formal meeting and nothing specific is planned. Past activities have included the telling of tall tales, playing with computers, getting on the air, and viewing videos and pictures. We have some nice pictures and videos of our winning Field Day effort to share with the group this year. Everyone is especially encouraged to bring non-ham guests as well. That way, normal people (*non-hams*) have people to talk to!

It is key that you let Mitch know how many are coming. If you haven't already, please let him know the number of attendees who are likely "definite" and the number of attendees who are likely "maybe". This information is needed by December 7th so that the proper amount of food can be ordered. If you don't say anything, there will be no food for you! If you would like to bring something, let Mitch know that, too. If it is a food dish, you should come around 5:30. If you plan to arrive later, bring a dessert item. The best way to pass this information along is by using the RANV Holiday Party Survey form, found at: www.hamclass.net/ranv/survey1.htm.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the Party!

NEW RULES!

The FCC gave us an early Holiday present when they finally published the Report and Order in Docket 04-140. The new rules take effect midnight December 15th. The big news is extra room on the phone bands, particularly on 80 and 40 meters. The table on page 3 shows the changes. In addition, Technicians with code get the entire General CW sub bands to use.

There were a lot of other changes as well. The rules restricting auxiliary stations to above 222 MHz have been changed. This means that hams can now legally control repeaters and other remote systems on 2 meters. And for those interested in Spread Spectrum Communications, this is now allowed on 222 MHz.

A couple of changes were made to the vanity call sign program. A new rule allows licensees to express a preference as to which club may receive his/her call sign. A new rule limits the number of vanity applications to one per day per applicant to make the process fairer.

A couple of new exam rules are in place. Morse code credit is given to any applicant who has passed a code examination in the past even though his/her license may be expired. Future volunteer exam sessions do not have to be publicized.

Several other rule changes and clarifications were made. Specific details are on the web. I'll see you all in the new phone sub bands in a week!

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OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

The November meeting was called to order at 7:10 on November 4th by president Brian N1BQ. There were 21 members and guests present.

The first order of business was annual elections. All three officers were re-elected: Brian N1BQ President; Bob KB1FRW Vice President – Treasurer; Carl ABIDD Secretary.

Since there were a few faces that haven't been to a meeting in a while, so, next up was introductions.

Upcoming events include the 10 Meter contest on December 9-10th.

The Holiday Party will be on December 12th at the QTH of Mitch W1SJ. It was noted that this should be a family affair, keeping the nerdiness to a minimum. Bob W4YFJ made a motion, seconded by John K1JCM to allocate up to \$150 to Mitch W1SJ for food. The motion passed unanimously.

Our guest speaker was introduced. Tom Pererra W1TP was generous enough to travel from Hancock to give a presentation on the German Enigma Machine. The Enigma machine was a device that could code and decode secret messages for the German military during World War II. The machine used a method whereby a key was pressed and a light would light to indicate the coded letter. After each key press, an elaborate 3-5 wheel mechanism would rotate, changing the combinations which lights the letters. By doing this, there were many, many possible combinations. The computed combinations amount to 10¹²⁴ possibilities. That is 10 followed by 124 zeros! That's why even now, with modern computers, it takes a couple of years to break the code.

Tom showed a video with rare footage of these machines in use. He also showed an example of a message "cracked" by modern day computers giving us insight into the U-Boat crew who sent the message.

Tom not only had an Enigma Machine on display, but also had the Russian built Fialka machine, too. It has even more possible encoding combinations. Everyone enjoyed this presentation, and Tom has already expressed interest in a return engagement.

We adjourned at 8:30.

THE ED SEZ

by Mitch W1SJ

The Prez doesn't have much to Sez lately, so I have taken this space over to give you all a good howling each month.

First item: I will continue as editor until the February, 2006 issue and after that, I'm done. While I do not mind editing content and writing an occasional piece, I don't have the time nor the desire to write an entire newsletter each month. Someone else can do that. So if a new editor is not found, there will be no more newsletter. And if there is no more newsletter, there won't be much of a club after that.

Second item: Activities which are not supported by strong attendance will go away. The Fall Fox Hunt was cancelled for lack of hunters. Right now I am trying to plan the Holiday Party. Only 14 people bothered to answer the survey. Half of those are not coming. The overall feeling I get is that this event is not all that important to most of our members. I need to buy food now and we only have around 10 folks committed to this. If this doesn't change a lot, this will be the last Party.

In RANV we have been fortunate that very few people are willing to do much of the work to make things happen. Speaking for myself, I don't re-

quire payment or lavish praise, but I do need to see that a lot of people are benefiting from the hard work.

To emphasize the positive spin, our club is in much better shape than most. But that thought, by itself, is not good enough. While we have some strength left, let's turn things around.

Things need to change. Your officers are getting burnt out. To address these issues we are planning a special brunch meeting on a Saturday morning in January. Possible dates are the 13th or 20th. We will have food, a short program and spend the rest of the time brainstorming where we want to go next as a club. We can then figure out what to do about the newsletter, what to do about dropping activity level and what to do about fewer hams. We have a hamfest coming up in under 3 months and we had better show some team spirit! Lack of attendance at this meeting will signal that the group really doesn't care all that much about the club or amateur radio.

In the 6 weeks between now and then, please think about the direction you want our organization to take and what you are willing to do.

UPDATE E-MAIL

by Paul AAISU

As you may know, *Adelphia* is now Comcast and subscribers have been asked to go to a web site to make changes to their E-mail address. Those who use arrl.net need to take the additional step of changing the forwarding address from adelphia.net to comcast.net. Otherwise, you will miss out on E-mail and my Section News Summaries, and other ARRL Bulletins that you may be subscribed to. To make the change:

1. Go to www.arrl.org and log in
2. Click Member Data Page
3. Click Modify Membership Data
4. Change your email address
5. Click Submit Modification.

You can also check what Bulletins you are subscribed to and adjust, as you feel is needed. These steps need to be taken any time you change your email provider.

Contacting RANV

In Person: Holiday Party, Dec 12, 5:30 pm, at W1SJ

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
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ab1dd@arrl.net

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

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

ON THE BANDS

by Mitch WISJ

It's right in the middle of the Fall Contest Season and here I am, writing this column while in the midst of operating in the 160 Meter Contest. Wait – what did he say? Did he say he is writing the column and operating at the same time?

Yup. Hey, I've fixed amplifiers in the midst of Sweepstakes pileups, so writing a small expose during a CW contest shouldn't be too hard. It's the second night and with the sucky 20 QSO/hour rate, I have plenty of time to bang something out. If you see any strange call signs here, it means that I logged some of my contacts in the article and wrote some of the article in my log!

It proved to be another battle royal in Vermont for the Sweepstakes. I was super determined not to repeat the mistakes I've made in the last 2 years and get far behind everyone after a few hours. I worked on the station and made sure everything was working well ahead of time. With a station consisting of 25-35 year old equipment, maintenance and planning is essential. At the start of the contest, I went in with a plan and with plenty of attitude. Fortunately, no one attempted a frequency grab. I likely would have instantly slaughtered them in the middle of their CQ.

It was dead bottom sunspot conditions, which meant that 20 meters didn't last long after the 4 PM start. My plan was to bail quickly to 80 meters and that happened by 6:15. It took an hour for 80 meters to heat up and then things went fast and furious. After 2 great hours, things went into the tank. Conditions got strange and everyone decided to share the frequency with me. Gee, thanks guys! After 2 funky hours, things got back to normal rates.

Of course Ron KK1L and Grant K1KD were running their own pileups. I was happy to see that I was ever so slightly ahead of everyone

after a few hours. This was certainly a big improvement over getting *moidered* as I did in the past few years. Interestingly, Grant K1KD jumped down to 80 meters about the same time I did and we went neck and neck all night. Ron KK1L seems to do better on 20 meters as it goes long and he stayed there for a while. When the dust had settled by the usual 4 AM break time, I pulled about 80 ahead of Ron and 150 ahead of Grant. Grant, I later learned, had a stomach virus and didn't show up for Sunday at all.

Sweepstakes Sunday was its usual gut wrenching, drawn out affair. The key is to keep the rates steady and not do anything too stupid to lose ground. Traditionally, I have made up a lot of lost ground in these tough conditions. After getting beat up on 80, 40 20 and then 15 meters, I found an open spot high on 20 meters and held a decent rate for most of the afternoon. When it was all over, Ron closed the gap a little bit, with the raw scores at 1569 to 1509. As always, it will be interesting to see what the log checkers pull out for errors.

Fast forward 2 weeks to right now. The 160 meter contest started with a bang – literally! The contest started and I couldn't hear squat. Every damn contact required multiple repeats. Noise crashes peaked over S-9. I first thought the neighbor got some high tech jamming device, but the noise was too random. Then I felt rumbling and loud noises. Was that the amp blowing up? No, it's the neighbor banging on the door. No, it's not that. When I noticed a flash outside, it occurred to me that this whole problem was a thunderstorm. In December? Yes! Here is proof positive global warming is here. So I'm sitting in front of the radio with these headphones on and asking myself, "Do I want to make contacts?" or "Do I want lose the

headphones and live beyond to-night"? Being the dedicated con-tester, I chose the former, although I can't tell you it was the wisest choice.

One of the good things about the sunspot low is that 160 meters is very hot during these years. Not this year. The first night had no Europe and very little out West. It was like a lead blanket was on the antenna. A few far west stations showed up near sunrise and I picked off a few Europeans tonight, so I was optimistic. However except for a few quick openings, there was not much long distance stuff I could hear. It has been a long night begging for contacts close by.

Next week is the 10 meter contest. If they gave points for listening to static, we would all win. However, making contacts is the goal, and that might be a tall order unless something weird happens and the band opens up. But, you'll never know unless you are there CQing all weekend!

NEW RULE CHANGES

CHANGES IN VOICE BANDS

CL	OLD	NEW	GAIN
E	3750-4000	3600-4000	150
A	3775-4000	3700-4000	75
G	3850-4000	3800-4000	50
E	7150-7300	7125-7300	25
A	7150-7300	7125-7300	25
G	7225-7300	7175-7300	50
E	21200-21450	21200-21450	0
A	21225-21450	21225-21450	0
G	21300-21450	21275-21450	25

CHANGES IN TECH CW BANDS

OLD	NEW	GAIN
3675-3725	3525-3600	25
7100-7150	7025-7125	50
21100-21200	21025-21200	75
28100-28500	28000-28500	100

**THE EVENT OF THE YEAR:
“RANV Holiday Party”
Tuesday, December 12th, 5:30 PM
W1SJ QTH**

RANV

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South Burlington, Vt 05407

<http://www.RANV.org>