



Radio Amateur News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

JUNE 2007

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HAM RADIO DELUXE SOFTWARE FIELD DAY PLANNING The June 12th RANV Meeting

The June RANV meeting will have not one, but TWO topics. First, we will start with a brief discussion and period of planning and coordination for Field Day. Most of the Field Day planning is done on the web, but there are still a lot of details which are best solved face to face.

The main topic will be on *Ham Radio DeLuxe*, a comprehensive suite of programs that interface to modern day CAT (*computer access technology*) transceivers. *Ham Radio DeLuxe* started out several years ago as a simple program to interface to the then wildly popular Yaesu FT-817. A Swiss ham, Simon Brown, HB9DRV, wrote *FT-817 Commander* which did more or less what its title implies. But then it grew to a multi-rig capable program with mapping, logging, PSK, DXCluster capabilities in a smooth, fairly easy to use, integrated package. The article on page 5 gives further details.

The presentation will be done by Carl, Bob and Brian. There will also be a demonstration of how the program works with an FT-817.

Join us on Tuesday, June 12th, at 7:00 PM for these two great topics. The meeting will be at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington. Dinner and discussion will be a 6 at Zack's on Williston Road.

FIELD DAY JUNE 22-24

FIELD DAY SCHEDULE

Tue 6/12 7-9 PM: RANV Mtg - FD
Mon 6/18 7-9 PM: Meeting- W1SJ
Fri 6/22 2-9 PM: Field Day Setup
Sat 6/23 10 AM: Generator Setup
Sat 6/23 2 PM: Field Day Starts
Sun 6/24 2 PM: Field Day Ends
Sun 6/24 2-6 PM: Take Down

With all the mention of Field Day in this issue of *News & Views*, you would think that it is a big deal.

It is a big deal. Field Day is our largest activity in terms of size, time and expenditure. And you know we are quite serious about it. Last year, we were the highest scoring group in the country in our class. In simplest terms, we were the top of a field of 500+ entries and that puts us in the top echelon of Field Day groups. We didn't get there by accident. It took planning, knowledge and lot of hard work and some help from the propagation gods. We hope to continue to be successful at this.

Field Day... continued on Page 3

VHF QSO PARTY

The ARRL VHF QSO Party will be this weekend, June 9-10th. All amateur bands above 50 MHz are available, which means Technicians can fully participate. The contest runs from 2 PM Saturday until 11 PM Sunday. The center of activity will be on 6 meters above 50.135 MHz and 2 meters around 144.200 MHz. With the spring being peak time for Sporadic E activity, 6 meters promises a lot of action, although openings are never certain. A common pastime is to drive or hike up to a hill or mountaintop to take advantage of the elevation. Activity is not limited to 6 & 2 – there is also a lot of action on 222, 432, 903 and 1296 MHz, as well as a growing activity on the microwave bands. If you don't have SSB, you should be able to snare a few contacts on 146.55 and 446.00 MHz FM. The most important part is to turn the radio on and call. No one can work you if you don't power up! I'll be operating as WB1GQR from Mount Equinox and most should have no problem working me at the top of the hour when the beams point north. Get on and make some contacts!

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OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

The RANV May meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by President Brian N1BQ. There were 26 members and guests present.

After welcoming everyone, the discussion turned to 2007 Field Day. The dates are Friday, June 22nd through Sunday, June 24th. People are needed for all aspects of this event. Needed are operators, set up and tear down crews, GOTA operators, and control operators for GOTA. Please contact Mitch if you can help out. Dave W1DEC made a motion, seconded by Paul AA1SU, that up to \$500 be allocated for Field Day expenses. The motion passed unanimously.

The first order of business was finding a volunteer for snacks for the June Meeting. Bob KB1FRW was elected.

Paul, AA1SU announced that anyone joining or renewing their ARRL membership through the club would get a free ARRL Repeater Directory.

Bob W4YFJ talked about an upcoming special event, activating the lighthouse at the Shelburne Museum. Dates talked about were August 4-5th or August 18-19th. Bob will contact the museum to see if they will let us do this. If you are interested, contact Bob W4YFJ.

Mitch next talked about the upcoming Vermont City Marathon and the Essex Memorial Day Parade in Essex. As usual, volunteers have been hard to come by.

John gave an update on the Norris Scout camp project. More equipment has been donated. Volunteers will be needed to help staff the station during the summer camp season. Contact John K1JCM if you can help out.

The guest speaker was Mike N1JEZ. Mike is involved in the consolidation project on Mount Mansfield, and HD radio for Vermont Public Radio. He had an excellent series of photos that showed the construction of the towers and

THE PREZ SEZ

by Brian N1BQ, President

I have a mish-mash of thoughts for this month. First we should all offer a grand round of applause to W1RC, et. al. for the newly inaugurated Nearfest rising like a Phoenix from the ashes of Hosstraders. It was great to be back at Deerfield and to be at a well attended, well run hamfest. It was heartening to see the support from the ham community.

Being in Hosstraders' old venue on Hosstraders' traditional week-end, and conducted on Hosstraders' timetable it would have been easy for many people to lose sight of the fact that this was a first time effort put together with less than three months lead time. I hope you all fully appreciate what a stupendous job Mike and company did. I think everyone is looking forward to the next Nearfest in the fall on October 12-13th.

We have the St. Albans hamfest coming up on August 17-18th. They have opted for a two-day Friday-Sat-

antennas on the mountain. By the way, HD stands for *Hybrid Digital*, NOT High Definition. Mike explained how a digital signal was inserted in the band pass of the analog signal so both could be transmitted at the same time. As in digital TV, more than one program stream can be transmitted at the same time. VPR is streaming 3 programs, the "regular" broadcast, the BBC world service, and a classical music feed. Not all the stations do this yet, but will in the near future. Mike also explained that there is a delay present in the digital programming, and in an attempt to synchronize the analog and digital signals, a delay is inserted. A problem arises, though. Not all receivers have the same delay, due to the digital to analog conversion. So, if optimized for one brand, a jump can be heard on another brand when the signal switches from the analog to the digital signal. Mike also had an HD receiver that he demonstrated.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30, and re-convened for snacks.

urday schedule. Last year was their first year and it went quite well. Let's do our bit by attending and, better yet, bringing stuff to sell or trade.

You say you don't have that much to justify a table? Collaborate! Take those one, two or three items and get together with one or more friends and share a table. That way, taking turns, you all get to walk around and gain brownie points at home for reducing clutter. Oh yeah, you might even make some money!

Field Day is upon us: Friday, June 22nd to Sunday June 24th. We will be finalizing plans at this month's meeting. If you can make it, get in touch with Mitch. Operators are needed as well as the usual labor for setup and take down.

Let me finish with a question. How are all you Technician Class operators coming along with upgrading to General now that CW is no longer an obstacle? There was a big initial flurry of upgrades but there's a lot more of you who haven't that I know can with just a little effort. Want some help? Just ask. RANV has some of the most technically savvy members I have ever seen.

Contacting RANV

In Person: Meeting, June 12, 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
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Please send submissions for the newsletter to the editor, W1SJ.

FIELD DAY IS COMING

by Carl AB1DD

What is Field Day? Field Day is the premiere operating event of the whole year. Clubs and individuals all over the U.S. and Canada set up stations to participate in this event. Stations range from simple single operators operating from home, to large multiple operator stations operating from temporary locations. Some stations use commercial power, some use portable generators or batteries. This event demonstrates the ability of Amateur operators to set up and operate from "the field" under not so ideal conditions.

The Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont set up and run their Field Day operations in Williston. We set up a small city, with our own power and light department, restaurant, operating positions and everything we need to operate for the 24 hours that this event lasts. There is a CW, Phone, VHF, and GOTA station.

One thing we need is operators. This is where you can help. The GOTA (*Get On The Air*) station is for new hams and those who don't get on the air much. Although the Phone and CW stations are highly competitive, the GOTA station is more laid back and fun.

I would like to invite you to join us in this event. No experience is needed. You can even bring along non-hams to operate! There will be a mentor there to explain what to do, and assist you in any way. Your job would be to make as many contacts as you have time for. There is a short exchange of information, and the exchange will be scripted out so you will know what to say.

This event lasts for 24 hours. Each operator is asked to do an hour (*or more*) of operating time. If you don't want to do a full hour, that's OK. We can work with you on that. If you want to do more, that's fine too.

The event takes place on Saturday-Sunday, June 23-24th. The operating portion starts at 2:00 PM on Saturday, and runs for 24 hours, finishing up at 2:00 PM on Sunday. There is space for camping overnight. Food will be provided for those who are "working" during meal time.

Can't make it during the operating times? There are many opportunities to help out setting up on Friday afternoon, and tear down on Sunday afternoon. It is quite a sight to behold, a field turned into a small city.

More information is available on the RANV web site, www.ranv.org/fd.html.

Please let me know how you want to help out. Operators will need to be scheduled in advance so everyone isn't there at the same time. This is first come - first served. Get your requests in early. Get a group of friends together and come have some fun.

Contact: Carl AB1DD at: ab1dd@arrl.net.

Field Day... continued from page 1

This is why we need everyone to get involved with some aspect of Field Day. While the operators often get the most attention, we need the efforts of everyone – the antenna erectors, generator tenders and food wranglers to pull this off. The percentage of club members involved in Field Day over the years has been dropping. This is unbelievable! Field Day is all of amateur radio rolled into one neat little 24 hour package. It is inconceivable how few hams get involved and how few hams even want to operate a radio.

Field Day is a great tradeoff. You put in lots of hard work and time. What you get in return is priceless. The antenna knowledge you get from seeing how the antennas are erected cannot be obtained from simply reading a book. This knowledge comes from the expertise of our contesters who have something like 100+ years of combined experience. The knowledge you get from running a small city – including tents, shelters and power generation is also invaluable. There isn't much opportunity to learn those skills in everyday life. And finally, despite the tough times on Saturday morning when everyone is on edge before the start, the level of camaraderie is first class. Learning to accomplish great things while keeping it all in perspective is a classic life lesson.

To experience Field Day, you need to participate, not just show up and observe. True, observing is better than staying home, but doing something is much better. Because Field Day is minutely planned, one needs to commit to a job in advance. By the time Field Day starts, we have already been executing a well laid plan for over 24 hours. While it is true that we will put you to work if you just show up, it would be much better if this was planned out in advance.

So how do you get involved? First, decide on what you are doing and when you want to do it. If you are interested in setup or takedown, that all occurs on Friday or Sunday afternoon. During the Field Day period, we need operators, maintenance staff and folks to provide the food, whether it is purchased or cooked. Let me know at w1sj@arrl.net as to what and when. You will be provided with necessary training and our operations manual. On the Monday before Field Day, we have a final meeting to make sure we have all the things in place prior to the event.

CAMP NORRIS

by John K1JCM

We have received additional equipment donations that will allow us to set up the radio shack. We are still looking for donations, in particular, a locking desk/cabinet for the equipment and some RG-8 coaxial feedline.

We are planning a work day that requires coordination with a bucket truck to mount the Titan GAP antenna on an unused telephone pole.

We still need a few radio merit badge instructors. If you can help, please visit k2gw.tripod.com/radiomeritbadgeday/id21.html for the overview materials. If you are interested in helping with the setup work day or as an instructor, please contact me at k1jcm@comcast.net.

MEMORIAL WEEKEND MADNESS: ESSEX MEMORIAL PARADE & VERMONT CITY MARATHON

by Mitch W1SJ

To most, it is Memorial Day Weekend. For me, it has become hell weekend. I used to be a normal person and went away on this holiday weekend. Instead, I organize and run not one, but TWO public service events, at a time when finding volunteers are scarcer than finding hen's teeth. And this all takes place within 5 days when I return from a 1 week trip out to Dayton!

Our regular readers know that the two events are the *Essex Memorial Parade* on Saturday and the *Vermont City Marathon* on Sunday. The parade is very easy to plan – simply find enough bodies with radios willing to line up the troops and march through the center of town. But alas, even this was not so simple. Our home repeater for this event, K1IBM 146.85, lost its site. It is in the process of transitioning to a new location and new ownership. In the meantime, it had to be resurrected at my shack and was hooked into a duoband antenna of dubious performance. And finding volunteers, while never easy, was even a rougher job.

Eventually, we had a team consisting of AA1SU, KB1DUI, N1LXI, N1WCK, N1WQS, W1DEB and W1SJ. Our job was to line up the teaming masses into lines and report changes to Glen N1WCK at the reviewing stand. And the “masses” get wilder and crazier with each passing year. Consider a motley crew including: school marching bands who would just as soon march in circles, legions of little kids on little bikes, fife and drum corps shooting everyone with muskets, several loud bagpipe troupes, a couple dozen trac-

tors and fire trucks, Ronald McDonald, Champ, a Senator (*Bernie*) and the Governor, and you get a good idea of what we get to deal with each year. But everyone lined up and marched pretty much where they needed to without incident.

Recruiting for the Marathon was even more stressful. Right off the bat, I lost my two net controls who are connected with Middlebury College where they were having commencement with Bill Clinton as the keynote speaker. This year, there were a

lot of folks going out of town, having family over and even getting sick. With 10 operators less, I had to do some major shuffling of operators to make sure all of the key assignments were covered. And amazingly, we got away with it. Stuart ND1H made his debut in the Net Control chair with me and did a fine job. One of the operators mentioned that he was “unflappable”, which is a good thing to be in that job when the you-know-what hits the cooling fan.

Things started out with a flurry of problems which we handled quickly on the two nets – by all accounts a typical year. And then the rains came – not later in the afternoon as forecast, but right in the middle of the Marathon around noon. And an amazing thing happened. There was no traffic for around 30 minutes. The rain cooled off the runners, which meant no medical issues and with the supplies already in place, there wasn't much to talk about on the radio. And it is true, I managed to catch a nice relaxing cat nap in the middle of this (*don't try this on a net unless you know how to do it!*). As the race wore on there were more calls for medical intervention, including a very serious situation. But with the cooler weather, things were a lot quieter than last year's run in the heat. The repeaters worked well, traffic got passed quickly, and by all accounts, we got the job done.

Lots of event organizers use cell phones and question the need for amateur radio communications at all. In the *Vermont City Marathon*, we all know that just listening to the traffic on the net can produce a wealth of information and save many unnecessary phone calls.

There were 34 hams who were part of the *Vermont City Marathon* communications team. **RANV** members who participated: K1CRS, K1PJM, K2KBT, K2MME, KB1MDC, KM1Z, KB1MPL, KB1NHQ, KB1OAH, N1LXI, N1LXI, N1TND, N1UFI, W1DEB, W1RLR, and W1SJ. Special thanks to KB1FRW for procuring the Marathon repeater site and helping to install the repeater.

“The repeaters worked well, traffic got passed quickly, and by all accounts, we got the job done.”



A runner makes his way by Net Control at 26 miles, 140 feet

THE FESTER REPORT

by Mitch W1SJ

We are coming out of the spring hamfest season, and what a season it has been! The BIG news has been the premiere of Nearfest, the hamfest which replaced Hosstraders. Nearfest moved back to the traditional Hosstraders location at the Deerfield Fair, which last hosted a fest back in 1991. If you are keeping score, that is when RANV was founded!

So what was it like? For an old attendee such as myself, it was like being transported back in time 16 years. The old Deerfield Fairgrounds is pretty much the way it was back then, save for a few buildings changing hands. True, the flea market wasn't quite as big as it was back then, but it was big enough. And in true Deerfield style, the weather was near (*fest*) perfect, a far cry from the wet years at Rainchester.

A whole new crew of hams from all over New England worked to make the show happen. The Shriners in their funny hats were not seen anywhere. Save for a bit of delay getting everyone in Friday morning, the fest crew did a bang-up job of making the show work. True, there were some sizeable problems, but few in the flea market knew about them. The only comment I can make is that we should have had a better turnout from Vermont. Maybe next time. Check out www.near-fest.com to see many pictures of all the happy hamsters.

The Nearfest group raised enough money to be solvent for the Fall show, and we all look forward to that on October 12-13th. Plan now to be there.

Ten days after Nearfest, I found myself on the long trip out to Dayton. As gas prices started at \$2.92 in Vermont and reached \$3.26 in mid-Ohio, I wondered if anyone else had the cash to afford the trip out. After some periods of rain on setup day (*Thursday*), the rest of the long weekend was sunny with moderate temperatures. Perfect hamfest weather. Half the people I spoke to said the attendance was down and half said it was up. This tells me that the attendance was about the same as last year and the year before. With 20,000 attendees, 2000 outdoor flea market spots and 500 inside vendor spots, there was certainly enough to do!

I found myself in the middle of a minor buying spree which included a new HT, used mobile radio, used flat screen monitors and an expansive collection of cables and connectors. I also found some funny (*and expensive*) electrical tape which doesn't have sticky stuff on it, but adheres to itself and forms an excellent bond. But I will still tell you that most of the time at Dayton was not spent buying stuff, but instead meeting and yakking with other hams. I can easily run into 100 other folks at Dayton and if I spend just 5 minutes with each, well, there's almost a full day of shopping shot to hell. This is something that we all need to understand – that the purpose of the hamfest is social first, then financial.

The trip home included a side trip to the wilds of Michigan, home to the auto industry, Motown and \$3.50 gas to pick up another tower for the RANV Field Day arsenal. We were going to visit the Chrysler museum, but it was closed, so we settled on seeing the Detroit zoo and commented how the residents looked just like the folks we left down in Dayton, minus the HT's.

HAM RADIO DELUXE

by Bob KB1FRW

Ham Radio Deluxe is a CAT (*computer access technology*) control program created by Simon Brown HB9DRV and Peter Halpin PH1PH. It is a suite of four integrated programs available for free. The features include: Built-in logbook, DX cluster, customized band layouts, satellite tracking interface, scanning, bandscope, mapping, PSK31, call sign lookup.

The software is free for use by radio amateurs and shortwave listeners. Registration is optional and without cost.

Although your particular radio may not be supported, this is only for the digital control part. You can still use the other components of the software. Many radios are supported.

These include:

Elecraft: K2.

ICOM: IC-703, IC-706, IC-707, IC-718, IC-725, IC-726, IC-728, IC-729, IC-735, IC-736, IC-737, IC-738, IC-7400, IC-746, IC-751A, IC-756, IC-761, IC-765, IC-775, IC-7800, IC-781, IC-821H, IC-910H, IC-R10, IC-R20, IC-R75, IC-R8500, PCR-1000.

Kenwood: R-5000, TS-140S, TS-2000, TS-440S, TS-450S, TS-480, TS-50S, TS-570, TS-60S, TS-680S, TS-690S, TS-790, TS-850, TS-870, TS-940S, TS-950, TS-B2000

Ten-Tec: Argonaut, Jupiter, Orion, RX-350

Yaesu: FT-100, FT-1000, FT-600, FT-817, FT-840, FT-847, FT-857, FT-890, FT-897, FT-900, FT-920, FT-990.

You can download the program at:
hrd.ham-radio.ch/downloads.html

We will be discussing some of the aspects of this program at the June meeting and will have a radio that is under command of the software to play with.



Cramming a rocket launcher and assorted Dayton junque in the back of the van!

NEXT MEETING:
“Amateur DeLuxe Software”
Tuesday, June 12th, 7 PM
O’Brien Civic Center

FIELD DAY
Friday-Sunday June 22nd-24th
Redmond Road, Williston

RANV

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