



Radio Amateur News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

NOVEMBER 2007

Vol. 18 No. 11

RACES and ELECTIONS or *ELECTION RACES?* The November 13th RANV Meeting

The November meeting will begin with the annual elections. Mail in ballots will be merged with E-mail and with hand carried ballots and the results tabulated. Given that the slate is the current officers standing for election unopposed this will likely be just a formality.

The latter half of the meeting will be a brief presentation by Bob W4YFJ covering the significant changes and upgrades that have occurred in the status, readiness and equipment for RACES in Vermont. The RACES HealthCare Network, sponsored by Vermont Emergency Management has undergone a complete in-depth makeover, placing radios and trained operators in every major health care and emergency management facility in the region. Bob will be there to tell us all about it.

With the short program this month, we have left ample time to do what hams do best – converse and tell tall stories. Make sure you stop by and join the fun!

Activities get underway with dinner at Zack's on Williston Road at around 6. Although I have heard that some folks start arriving by 5! The meeting will be at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington and will start at 7.

COMING UP!

This Fall is Contest Season. 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 17th. 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.

The RANV Holiday Party will be Tuesday, December 11th 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 4th.** Any other ideas for food or activities is always appreciated.

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 (*or have been coerced*) 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.



Bryan KB10AH and son building a J-Pole

OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl AB1DD, Sec'y

The October 9th meeting almost was the meeting that wasn't. The theme for this meeting was building a 300-ohm twinlead J-pole antenna. Assignments were made for the items for this project. The day before the meeting, it was realized that we didn't have hardly enough twinlead. Bob, KB1FRW thought that he could just run over to Radio Shack before the meeting and pick up a spool. As he found out a little later by 5 PM, Radio Shack doesn't have twinlead any more. Uh oh! During this time, Brian N1BQ and I were on the 146.61 repeater, on our way into town. Bob got on and explained the situation. What to do? We started to discuss the situation, and figured Brian could stop at Circuit City, Best Buy or Home Depot and see if any of them had any.

During this time, many others broke in with suggestions. Someone said we should try Jim Lynch, the satellite guy over on Swift Street. I tried calling him, but he was out on a job. Another was Aubuchon Hardware. Since I was near one, I headed out to check. Paul AA1SU came in and he was near a hardware store in Colchester, and he would stop and check. Another person was over in Essex, and stopped at another possibility. Well, as you might have guessed, we were out of luck. No one sold 300-ohm twinlead. Bob KB1FRW had some at home, somewhere. As meeting time grew closer, we were wondering how many antennas we could make. Fortunately, the Calvary came to the rescue. Alan KB1MDC showed up with a bunch, and we were in twinlead heaven. Alan made a special trip from North Hero to bring what he had. Thanks to all for bringing this all together.

The meeting got underway at 7:08, called to order by President Brian N1BQ. There were 22 members and guests in attendance.

CLASS RESULTS

by Mitch W1SJ

The recent Weekend Ham Radio Class graduated 2 new amateurs. This would not seem to be a spectacular showing, but any new hams are better than none, so we will celebrate the moment!

Alan KB1PNF is a teenager who goes to Mount Mansfield Union High School. He got interested in ham radio by watching his dad operate. Oh, by the way, his dad is Jim KE1AZ!

It looked like there would be only 1 student in the class until I received a call Friday night before the class. The caller, Doug indicated that he was interested in going all the way to General. With the class only 14 hours away, I questioned the logic in this approach, but he was clear that he wanted to try. After two long days, Doug was annointed KB1PNG. Oh yes, you probably know his dad - Don N1QKH!

The General class resulted in two other upgrades, Dick KB1LAZ and Larry W1LKR, who told me at the beginning of class that there was no way he could pass the General. Proved him wrong!

I haven't heard any of the new hams on yet, but be sure to say hello when they show up!

Announcements included the upcoming Near-Fest and the results of Mitch's class, that produced 2 new hams and 2 upgrades.

We then had introductions, followed by nominations for new officers. The current officers were all nominated, and will appear on the ballots for elections in November.

The November snacks will be supplied by Jim, KE1AZ.

The rest of the meeting was constructing the 2 meter J-pole. Quite a few members successfully built the antenna. All the ones we tested were close to tuning just where they should have.

The meeting adjourned around 8:30 and everyone rushed to the snack table.

K1KD LEAVING

by Mitch W1SJ

If you follow the RANV reflector, you have just learned that Grant K1KD will be locating to Rochester, Minnesota next month. He is looking for help to take his tower and antenna down next Saturday, November 10th. Contact Grant directly if you can lend a hand.

Grant will be transferring to IBM Rochester and wife Gina has landed a job at the Mayo Clinic. While Minnesota seems very far away, it is only a few hours from both their families in western Iowa and this is the primary reason for the move. Rumors about making this move to dominate in the Minnesota QSO Party have been unfounded.

For his last Vermont hurrah, Grant operated in the ARRL CW Sweepstakes, broke 1000 QSO's and kicked butt (*including mine*).

We hope that Grant and Gina will have the time to stop by at the holiday party to say goodbye. We will certainly miss Grant at club events and certainly at Field Day, where his contesting talents will be very much missed.

Contacting RANV

In Person: Meeting, November 13, 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

VP/Tres Bob KB1FRW 434-2517
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.

BOOK REVIEW: *Ham Radio's Technical Culture*

by Stuart ND1H

Publishers have produced hundreds of books about ham radio, and most of us own at least a couple dozen. The books hams typically buy have to do with technical or operating aspects. Most of us have several editions of the ARRL Handbook, an assortment of antenna books, maybe a couple of Hints & Kinks editions, and the like. There are even some novels and kids' books that feature amateur radio in one way or another.

The book I'm reviewing here is nothing like any of those. It's not a technical resource, and it's not an operator's guide. Instead, it's a history of the hams and how they fit into (mainly American) society. The author, Kristen Haring, is a scholar in the field of History of Technology. I thought it would be very interesting to read, for instance, what the wireless revolution and the Internet revolution have in common. In fact, the book promises just that, with the front leaf description starting, "Decades before the Internet..."

Not to pull any punches, I'll tell you now that I was pretty disappointed in the book. Aside from a few areas where I thought Haring provides real insight in interesting areas, most of the book seemed like a very dry recitation cobbled together from reading old editions of QST and CQ magazines. I'll try to highlight here both the good and the disappointing aspects, so that you can judge for yourself whether you might want to give this book a read.

Starting with a highlight, Haring collects a number of explanations for why amateur radio operators are called hams. While the real origin appears to be lost to history, that opens the door for some imaginative explanations. Many think the term might come from operators "hamming it up" in their QSOs, or relate to the "ham fisted" manner of some CW operators. Less common explanations: the abbreviation "am. radio" got morphed to "ham radio" for some reason related to pronunciation; a club station used the call HAM based on the initials of club

members; and that some people operated out of abandoned smokehouses that were appropriately called "ham shacks."

I also appreciated how Haring conveys the amateur spirit as one of cooperation and a high degree of technical and operating competence. She compares it with a number of other technically challenging hobbies, ranging from model airplane construction to photography.

Haring discusses computers from time to time in the book but misses a glaring opportunity. Although she does a good job of discussing hams' use of practical abbreviations such as HI HI for humor, OM for old man (a male operator) and FB for fine business (or "that's good"), it surprised me that she does not mention the corresponding 21st century Instant Messaging equivalents, such as LOL for laughing out loud or my favorite, POS for parent over shoulder. This would be an opportune place for her to draw some parallels and bridge these very different but highly related means of communication.

She seems to miss chances like that throughout the book. For instance, she spends a number of pages talking about the "masculine" nature of amateur radio and makes an obvious omission in her reasoning. She talks about how the radio industry was initially male oriented, but women's smaller hands were actually more suitable for radio construction work. She follows this with a point about how Collins radio first hired women to build radios in 1942 and only two years later more than half of the assemblers were women. Clearly, there was a reason other than smaller hands driving this change: Rosie the Riveter did her work because Rob the Riveter was in uniform overseas. Her point may be valid but wasn't supported by the example she gave, and she could have used this as a tie-in to the extensive discussion she had elsewhere about the war years.

Haring's extensive treatment of gender issues caught me by surprise. There are pages talking about how

this technical fraternity was portrayed with "heterosexual masculinity," and how ads showing one man whispering into the ear of another might be thought of differently outside of a ham radio audience. There is another whole section on how hams treated women. This mainly focused on how wives and girlfriends were ignored, particularly during good DX conditions. One wife was reported to say that she "needed to get another husband for upstairs use." Haring next segues into how basement or other out-of-the-way ham shacks were often thought of as a refuge or haven—much the way some Vermonters characterize their ice fishing shanties. What I found lacking here was any analysis about whether hams were different than other groups of men during the time periods she focused on.

More significantly, though, I was disappointed in how the book reads in the past tense, both literally and in its substance. It reports extensively on how things were in the twenties through the seventies, but rarely ties that into how things are done now, or whether they're likely to continue or change. In that sense, it reminds me of a sixth-grader's research report that is drawn from an encyclopedia and recites the facts, but doesn't give any real context or analysis that has meaning for the present day. It reads like an account of an ancient civilization—something that is now gone.

There may be some aspects of the technology and the hobby overall that deserve such treatment. It's fair to talk about the HW-101 as a kit transceiver that can no longer be purchased unbuilt from Heathkit. I found Haring's discussion about the transition period during the 50's and 60's from homemade equipment to store-bought very interesting. I never realized that homebrew contests with cash prizes were instituted to keep people interested in building rather than buying. And it certainly does make sense that state-of-the-art homebrewing is easier for point-
Book Review... continued next page

Book Review... continued from previous page

to-point wiring between tube sockets than it is for some of the tiny SMT components that are typical now.

But for the vast majority of the subjects she considers, there are modern day aspects that are just ignored. For hams who read the book, it's not a problem because we are able to distinguish between what is obsolete and what isn't. But the main audience for this book is not hams. Haring has a Ph.D. in History of Science from Harvard, and this book is written for a non-ham who, for whatever reason, wants to understand the ham radio culture. By portraying so much of it in the past tense, she leaves an incorrect impression of the current culture.

As I mentioned, there were a number of interesting tidbits that Haring presents along the way. She states that Collins was the first manufacturer to provide fully assembled ham transmitters in 1931. She recounts a "stagnation period" in ham radio from the late 60's through the early 70's: In the decade between 1965 and 1975, the number of licensees grew at a rate of only half a percent, whereas previously there had been a doubling of licensees every decade. She also does a commendable job explaining how the communications industry targeted hams in recruiting efforts, often paying bonuses to hire hams. There's a really nice tie-in that she presents between "amateurs" and "professionals" as she explains that the proficiencies of each may be equal, but it's just that the amateurs are doing it for fun and not as part of their "day" job.

The treatment of the war years in this book is extensive, and includes what I found to be the most interesting analysis. I never knew of the ARRL's strong efforts in 1940 to prevent American hams from being silenced by the government as had been done in other countries. I didn't realize there was a two-page poem, *He Also Serves*, written to highlight the importance of domestic hams as war was looming. As we all know, ultimately hams were silenced during the war. However, it was a gradual process. First, hams were limited to domestic contacts, then frequencies were limited. Next, the dreaded "Order 75" required extensive showings of citizenship not just for the ham, but for the ham's entire family as well, in order to retain operating privileges. This caused a real problem for hams with post Civil War family members who were born in places and at times when good records simply were not kept. For the people who were still allowed to operate, many monitors kept close tabs on what they were conveying in their QSOs and suspicion developed around any unnecessary communications. Finally, just after Pearl Harbor Day, the entire Amateur Service was shut down for the duration of the war, save a War Emergency Radio Service (WERS) that had very limited operations. Here too, the book just touches on the evolution of the *Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service* (RACES) but gives the reader no indication that services such as RACES or ARES continued past the early cold war years.

The book includes a thankfully short treatment of CB radio and its tensions with the Amateur Service, and a thankfully longer, but still not sufficient, discussion of the crossover between radio and computer technologies. For a book that was first published in 2007, it's incomprehensible why there wasn't more than just a page or two on ham radio's technical culture in the 21st century.

If anyone would like to give the book a read, let me know and I'll be happy bring it to an upcoming RANV meeting and lend it to you. I don't see the book listed in the ARRL store, but it is available from the MIT Press website.

FIELD DAY RESULTS

by Mitch WISJ

We had to issue a "stop the presses" call as Field Day results have hit the street. The good news is that we kicked butt in Field Day 2007. The bad news is that we didn't kick everyone's butt and failed at our attempt to repeat as 2A champs. As the Dodgers always said, "wait till next year!"

The K0GQ group from Missouri got by us this year. They posted a soapbox and one finds that the clubs are quite similar. I recognize some of their operator calls from other contests and some of them have operated at top scoring PJ2T in the DX Contest. I also noticed that they use similar yagis and dipoles for antennas (*their largest antenna was at the GOTA station!*). The difference in scores was only 328 points, a literal bloop and blast as they say in baseball. That's only 164 SSB contacts. If only the GOTA station reached that 500 QSO plateau. If only all the GOTA ops who made 16 QSO's made a few more and we got more bonuses. If only the VHF station passed more QSO's. In a competition, it's the minute details which will kill you every time. These are things to think about next Field Day.

But we were tremendous nonetheless. We finished 19th across all categories. We were a QSO generating machine as we were in the top ten in that category. There is no other Field Day group who can claim the long term consistency and domination we do for a small club! W1NVT is one of the elite Field Day groups.

In local competition, the scores are similar to last year, albeit somewhat smaller. Only 5 out of the 12 Field Day groups fielded a GOTA station – it's not that easy!

FIELD DAY 2007 LOCAL RESULTS

Club	Call	Cl	Pts	QSO	Par	PI	Tot	%
RANV	W1NVT	2A	12368	3968	29	2	477	99
UdderClub	W1MOO	2A	10680	3221	29	6	477	99
GMWS	N1VT	4A	5910	1431	31	19	127	86
SOVARC	K1SV	3A	4600	1625	25	52	284	82
NVQS	N1QS	2AB	4115	452	8	7	21	71
BARC	W1KOO	2F	1416	619	16	33	69	54
WRiverRC	W1RRC	3A	1934	369	30	170	284	41
CVARC NY	W2UXC	3A	1570	391	16	207	284	28
QGC	WA1QGC	1A	575	52	3	132	167	27
CVARC	W1BD	2A	854	77	20	425	477	11
RIT RC	K2GXT	3A	964	197	5	258	284	10

OFFICIAL RANV 2007 ELECTION BALLOTS

TWO WAYS TO CAST BALLOT:

1. Deposit in voting box at start of November 13th 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 _____

SAMPLE

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

OCTOBER FOX HUNT

by Paul AAISU

The latest RANV Fox Hunt was held on Friday, October 19th. Yours truly, AAISU was the Fox, having been the first hunter to find Bob KB1FRW who was "hidden" at his home while having a cookout in August. The hunters this month included Bob KB1FRW, and Carl AB1DD. Additional check-ins that could not partake in the hunt (*the so-called sandbaggers*) were Mitch W1SJ, Robin KB1ODP, Steve KB1KJS, John N1LXI and Shel KC1MP.

For the October hunt, I decided to hide very close to I-89 Exit 14. The rules require the fox to be located in a public accessible spot within Chittenden County, provide at least an S-1 signal at I-89 Exit 14 and transmit at least 10 seconds out of every minute. Far too often, I find that the fox will not have at least an S-1 signal at exit 14, making the hunt that much harder. I concluded that going to the opposite extreme would

be a different kind of challenge. Having studied the map, I settled on hiding on a little dead end road off of Spear Street, called Berle Court. Once I arrived at my temporary den, I realized that I could drive into a field nestled up against I-89, and shield myself behind a shrubbery.

I read aloud a few different items to entertain the hunters and the sandbaggers. Mostly, I read the BARC Newsletter. I almost lost Bob as a hunter, as the BARC meeting happened to be that same night. The topic was a checkup of 2 meter and 70 cm rigs, with test equipment at the meeting. You see Bob had a radio that he wanted checked out. Fortunately, the lure of being the first to find the fox kept Bob in the hunt.

Within a short time, the hunters were zigging and zagging all around me, but unable to zero in on my location. Eventually, they found each other and teamed up in Bob's car. I

dropped a few obscure clues after a while, such as I was in my car, and a flashlight would be needed. At some point, I offered to lower my power from 50 watts to 5 watts. Carl, who by now was hopelessly wandering around the backside of the University Mall, said that this would be a great idea. So, I lowered the power and kept on transmitting. As I was reading a biography of Milton Berle, a car came into view. It drove passed me, farther into the field, and nearly got stuck in the soft grass behind Staples Plaza. A few minutes later, I was found. First Carl appeared, then to my surprise Bob. This is when I found out that they had teamed up. The time was 7:58 PM.

The next hunt will be in April 2008. It will probably be the third Friday, but this is subject to change. The fox will be Carl, or Bob, or both. Hope to see you hunting that night. Until then, have a great winter.

**NEXT MEETING:
“RACES” and Elections
Tuesday, November 13th, 7 PM
O’Brien Civic Center**

RANV

P.O. Box 9392

South Burlington, Vt 05407

<http://www.RANV.org>