



# Radio Amateur News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

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## VERMONT HAM BREAKFAST Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 9 AM

The annual Vermont Ham breakfast will be Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 9AM until noon at the Lincoln Inn at the 5 Corners in Essex Junction.

The purpose of the gathering is for Vermont hams to great, meet and eat. The mid-January date is usually good since there is not much going on. We had such a gathering last year and over 40 hams came out from all over. It is hoped this will become a cherished tradition over the years.

The first part of the agenda is eating, something that we likely are all experts in. Breakfast and lunch are available off the menu. I believe they have HAM too! Sometime after 10:00, we will start our discussion topic, "Ways to build on-air activity". A number of hams have commented that local activity is down and hams, new and old, are frustrated in setting up stations and making contacts. This will be a perfect opportunity to share ideas on this topic which is core to amateur radio.

If there is any other pressing topic you would like to discuss or present, there is some time for that too. But please let me know that ahead of time. We hope to be finished up by noon.

So remember, the breakfast is THIS Saturday. Come any time between 9 and noon. Please let all your ham radio friends know about the breakfast. Local talk in for the event will be on 145.15.

## RADIO FREQUENCY INTERFERENCE The January 8<sup>th</sup> RANV Meeting

*This meeting has already occurred and you missed a great time!*

Interference. We all get it. We are all frustrated by it. What is it, where does it come from and how do you track it down and stop it? Those are just some of the questions that our resident Doctor of Interference, Mitch W1SJ will answer. He has compiled a list of 10 different types of interference we can be hit with and he will have the low-down on each type. You will find out how to deal with these problems, but you also may be frightened on how extensive interference is in our daily lives.

Activities kick off with dinner at Zack's on Williston Road starting at 5:30. The meeting will start at 7 PM at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington. Hope to see you there!

## ON THE AIR ACTIVITIES

### Vermont QSO Party

The Vermont QSO Party will start Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, at 7 PM and run 48 hours until Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 7 PM. It is an activity where Vermont stations call CQ and have the world work them. Sadly, it has, in reality, become the WB1GQR QSO Party, as I make tons of contacts, and few others from Vermont show up. Let's change that! Once again, I am opening my station for all hams to come by and enjoy the ability to makes lots of contacts from a very good station. We know that there are many hams out there with minimal HF stations or no HF stations who would love to try this out. All you need to do is to commit to a time slot during the day Saturday or Sunday. I'll give you everything you need to be successful: expert training, lots of encouragement and the magic boom headset! Once you experience a run of stations calling you, you will never be the same! Contact W1SJ to sign up for operating slots now!

### NA QSO Party

This is a sleeper contest which few non-contesters know about, but it is a lot of fun! The NA QSO Party starts Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 PM and runs 12 hours until Sunday, 1:00 AM. IF you go to the January 19<sup>th</sup> breakfast, you'll have plenty of time to get home and start calling

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# OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl AB1DD, Sec'y

The month of December found the membership of The Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont at the QTH of Mitch W1SJ and Debbie W1DEB for the annual holiday party.

The festivities got underway at 5:30. Guests came and went throughout the evening, and there were 24 members and guests total. While some busied themselves preparing the feast, others did what hams did best: talked. Stories were swapped, and tales were told. There was a short technical symposium on MFJ antenna analyzers. Alan KB1MDC had a chance to purchase an MFJ-269 analyzer, and wanted to see if it worked. Bob KB1FRW and I brought along our analyzers to compare with Alan's. After giving Mitch's antenna system a good workout, it was concluded that all three analyzers were pretty close to being the same, so we recommended that Alan buy the one he had.

Shortly thereafter, the food was ready and everyone dug in. It was mentioned earlier that what hams did best was talking, but we may have disproved this as we found that this group was also very skilled at eating! The food list went something like this: 2½ pounds of cold cuts, 70 meat balls, 20 pigs in their blankets, 12 potato puffs, 14 broccoli puffs, 13 chicken puffs, 13 meat puffs, 31 egg rolls, 2-3 pounds of wings, 3 pounds of fruit, 1 pound of fries, 1 package of chips, 1 platter of sushi, 1 platter of cream cheese, ½ block of cheese, ½ bag of tortillas, 5 liters of soda, 1 gallon of cider, 1.5 loafs of bread/rolls, 1 bottle of wine and a partridge in a pear tree. What is unknown was the weight gain per ham. It should be measurable.

There were also some on air activities, with at least one contact with Cuba. Stories and comraderie continued until about 9:30, when the

# THE PREZ SEZ

by Brian N1BQ, President

By the time you all read this the New Year will be upon us. The holiday party was another great success. Some 24 people attended and all had a great time, and all were well fed and all were full of holiday cheer. We also saw some new faces and some we haven't seen for a while.

Our upcoming meetings will include topics such as Radio Frequency Interference, Remote Control Vehicles, and even a trip to the National Guard to see their fancy new communications vehicle.

The hamfest is coming, the hamfest is coming! It will be held on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> (*always the last Saturday in February*). Every year I hear a ham or three say something along the lines that they didn't realize the date and scheduled something else that weekend. I will be polite and just say "baloney!"

The hamfest is the lifeblood both for the club and also for amateur radio in Northern Vermont. It's a time and place to get together with other hams and exchange pleasantries, equipment, and ideas. It's a time and place to reach out to new hams and extend a welcome and maybe a helping hand.

Every year we get the same dozen hard core members who show up Friday night and stick around Saturday afternoon and do all the heavy lifting (*literally and figuratively*), plus another dozen who give their time taking tickets, doing demonstrations, manning the club table,

gathering wound down. Those who didn't attend missed a good time. Finally, on behalf of the membership, the Steering Wheel wants to thank Mitch and Debbie for hosting the party once again this year.

etc. Some of them have expressed the opinion that they might not be available to help because would like to attend the hamfest, for once instead of working the whole time. Another dozen or more bodies helping out would dilute the sacrifice required of the volunteers to a point that they could easily do both!

So, mark the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February on your calendar. Be prepared to spend a few hours with your fellow hams. Try to find some time Friday night to give us a hand setting up and/or an hour or two Saturday to help out with the various tasks needed to run a successful hamfest. Failing that, get together with a couple of your ham buddies and bring some stuff to swap or trade. Three or four guys taking turns at watching a table still get to see and do a lot at a hamfest.

I hope I see you there.

## Contacting RANV

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

# MILTON HAMFEST ACTIVITIES

by *Mitch WISJ*

Planning for the 2008 Milton Hamfest is under way! Based on people's comments, I have decided that our focus for this year is "Building On-Air Activity". Many have commented on their frustration in setting up and operating an HF station so our forums and demonstrations will be geared towards that.

I am still putting together the specific forums, but can hint at some of the things we will see. We plan to have a special event HF station, W1V, operating though the Hamfest period on 20 and 40 meters. The goal is to get as many operators on the air to experience first hand making lots of contacts. We don't want spectators, we want participants! Prizes will be awarded to the operators who make the most number of and furthest contacts. The station will be open for both new hams and old hams alike, so show up and get on the air. Experts will be on hand to guide you through the process.

Since everyone is still asking what to do when they get on the air, I have decided to bring my "Best Operators" Forum, which I do at Dayton, to the Milton Hamfest. Here, you will find out, first hand, how one works thousands of stations each and every year. There are also plans to have a basic HF antenna forum and perhaps a propagation forum as well. We are also looking at bringing back the Contest Forum and adding a DXpedition Forum. And as always, I am looking for input on how to make the Hamfest better each year, so don't feel shy about writing!

The Milton Hamfest and ARRL Vermont Station Convention is Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 8AM until 1PM. Make sure you tell everyone about it, and make sure they and you both come! It's not much of a Hamfest if everyone tells me that they are sorry they can't make it. Don't do that. Make it!

Full details on the Hamfest are on the **RANV** Web. Keep checking the web site, since things change daily!

# ARRL APPOINTMENTS

by *Paul AAISU, VT SM*

I am pleased to announce that Bob Brown W4YFJ has agreed to take on the ARRL Field Organization appointment of District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) for Vermont's District One. This district encompasses Chittenden, Grand Isle, and Franklin counties.

As you probably know, Bob was our Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) up until this past spring. Bob wanted to pass the reigns on to someone new, but still wants to remain active in Vermont ARES. Our current SEC, Fred Messer WA1LIE could not be happier that Bob has decided to continue his ARES support. A recent quote from Fred, "Bob brings a wealth of experience in Eccoms as being the past Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC-VT) for Vermont, from his everyday job as a 911 Dispatcher, long time Amateur Radio Operator and service in the Navy as a radio operator."

Bob also keeps the ARES membership list up to date. Please congratulate Bob on his appointment.

I am also proud to announce that Jane English KD6PCE of Calais has been appointed to Assistant Section Manager for Vermont. Jane brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from six land, and we are glad to have her here in Vermont. Jane's sub-title will be Special Projects Officer, and I will be working closely with her on various items. During the 2007 Vermont S.E.T., Jane was the liaison to the New Hampshire HF Net, and prior to that, was the organizer of the very successful 2006 Vermont S.E.T. During the 2006 Field Day, she also visited several clubs on my behalf. In 1999, Jane served as a shadow to Steve Harcourt of the California Department of Forestry during a bad season of forest fires. Jane has also been a Vermont EC since February 2006. Please join me in welcoming Jane to her new appointment.

Tom Long KB1NGQ of Water-

bury Center has been appointed to DEC for District Three. This district covers Washington, Orange, and Lamoille counties, and is the largest geographic district of all of the 8 Vermont ARES's Districts. Tom replaces Fred who previously held that appointment. Fred tells me, "Tom brings a gift for organization and training within a large group. He is self-disciplined and a self-starter. So look out, things will continue to happen here within District 3".

Congratulations to all three of our recent appointees!

## W1NVT WAS

by *Mitch WISJ*

I upload W1NVT logs into the Logbook of the World (LOTW) system run by the ARRL. This is a giant database of everyone who uploads logs. When QSO dates and times match, an electronic QSL is certified. The numbers are staggering. Between my various call signs, I have 100,000 QSO's entered (*only since 1999*). That is out of 150 million QSO's in the system! The database shows that W1NVT has 50 states confirmed! Of this, 49 states are recorded on phone and 46 on CW. All of the W1NVT activity has been from Field Day. And I know we also have lots of QSL cards as well. Anyone interested in applying for WAS for W1NVT?

## TED RIEHLE KD1QZ

Theodore Riehle KD1QZ, passed away New Year's eve. Although we didn't see him much, Ted was a long time **RANV** member. Getting to meetings from his Savage Island location was always challenging! He is survived by wife Ayn N1WTU.

# NEWSLETTER WOES

by Mitch WISJ

You may have noticed that there hasn't been a January newsletter until now, which is much later than the meeting date. There is a reason for this. Your editor is burnt out. The agreement we all made was that information would be provided and all I need do is to edit it and format it. Unfortunately the amount of content has been far, far less than needed for even a small newsletter. At that, content often shows up late, causing a last minute crunch.

In RANV, we are fortunate to have an infrastructure which is superior to most clubs. We have better meetings, a better newsletter, a better repeater, better Hamfest, and a better Field Day than 90% of other radio clubs. This doesn't occur by accident; rather it takes hard work on the part of those who get the job done. When those folks stop doing the work, the things we have come to enjoy deteriorate, and then go away. And then one can question why bother having a club at all. Believe me, other clubs have been going through this process and it is not pretty.

In News & Views, the goal is to provide a journal of amateur radio activities specific to our area. Other clubs have chosen to take the low cost road towards newsletters. First, the newsletter starts to parrot a whole bunch of content on the Internet which anyone can download. Then, to save funds, the hard copy of the newsletter goes away in lieu of an electronic version. I don't know about you, but I skim items on the computer, but READ printed matter. I can carry a newsletter around with me and read it at din-

ner, in the shack, in bed, in the car (!?) and even in places where I won't even mention. Yes, you can also do that with a laptop, but it is much more cumbersome.

So, if I am involved with the newsletter, it will not resort to repeating Internet content or become a long list of items for sale. If it is not a publication which we all look forward to receiving and reading, then it is pointless to bother with it.

I am disappointed in some of the apathy I've heard and felt. There seems to be an "oh well" attitude about this. Perhaps no one is really interested in continuing with the newsletter. Would you feel the same way if your antenna fell down or if we lost 15 meters?

To continue the newsletter, we need support and input from all members. Some members have done a good job in providing content and I thank them. But we need more. There are 12 issues and we need about 2 feature articles (*about a page each or 800 words*) for each one. I contribute stories about the Hamfest, Field Day and some contests, so that ends up being about 20 articles per year. With over 100 members, certainly we can come up with that amount. Most of the content we are looking for is your radio experiences; something no one else can write about. It would be desirable to have a surplus of articles with non-time dated material so that I can pull these in at any time.

Take this not as an assignment, but as a celebration. When I write about ham radio experiences, I get more excited and can't wait for the next activity. Try it - you'll like it!

## Activities... continued from page 1

CQ. Stations operate a maximum of only 10 hours, so this contest will not drain you like some of the big ones. And here's an interesting twist: 150 watts maximum! The amp stays off! That means that this is more of a level playing field for many of the participants. When you work someone, exchange your NAME and STATE. No 599 in this one! Contacts only in North America count, so no running Europeans allowed! Search for NAQP on the web for all of the rules.

### CQ Worldwide 160 Meter Contest

Having the ability to get an effective signal on 160 meters is really important now that 80 meters develops a skip zone at night. The CQ 160 Meter contests are January 25-27<sup>th</sup> CW and February 22-24<sup>th</sup> phone. The phone contest is a lot of fun since the action is fast and furious and also occurs on Milton Hamfest weekend. So how do you put up a 160 meter antenna on a 40x100 foot city lot? Tough question, but make sure you attend the Antenna Forum at the Milton Hamfest to learn all the tricks of the trade.

### ARRL DX Contest

Two of the big contest weekends are the ARRL DX: February 15-17<sup>th</sup> CW and March 2-4<sup>th</sup> phone. This is a great way to pick up all sorts of new countries for your DXCC award. While it certainly helps to have good antennas and high power, I frequently pick off stations in this contest while operating mobile or portable when teaching class!

The goal is to have fun! But to do that, you have to turn the radio on!

**SATURDAY BREAKFAST MEETING:**  
**Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 9 AM**  
**Lincoln Inn, Essex Junction**

**RANV**

P.O. Box 9392

South Burlington, Vt 05407

**<http://www.RANV.org>**