



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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RANV HOLIDAY PARTY

Join Us December 9th
For An Evening of Fun

The **RANV** Holiday Party will be Tuesday, December 9th at the QTH of W1SJ 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, cocktail franks, meatballs, egg rolls, 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. 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 *right away* 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.ranv.org/partys.html.

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

COMING UP!

The big item this month is the **Holiday Party** in a few days and I hope a lot of our members and their families can make it.

This weekend is the **ARRL 160 Meter Contest** and likely few of our readers will venture into this CW-only world. That's too bad, because the Top Band is in top form right now. As 10 and 15 meters languish, 80 and 160 meters are great! But you need lots of wire to play.

The week after is the **10 Meter Contest**. This has become something of a joke up here in the higher latitudes. Last year, I had the highest contact total from Vermont with a whopping 25 QSO's. I do better than that on 1296 MHz in the VHF Contest! With the current conditions at rock bottom, it is likely that the pickings will be slim and will require big power and big antennas. But ten meter conditions can often be like the Vermont weather and you never know when things will open up wide. Keep the radio on and listen!

The last two years, we have had our **Winter Breakfast** at the Lincoln Inn in mid-January. Besides eating, we carry on an organized discussion on the state of amateur radio in Vermont. Both times, we have had a great turnout – on the order of 35 people. Proposed dates are Saturday January 17th or 24th. If you are still interested in this gathering, please let me know and I'll set it up.

Keep warm this winter. Turn on the amp and make contacts!

SEASONS GREETINGS
FROM RANV

OUR LAST *RANV* MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

The November meeting was called to order by President Brian at 7:07 PM on November 11th. There were 19 members in attendance.

Brian started off by explaining the reason we have to move the Winter Hamfest from Milton. This was due to the fact that the school district wasn't going to allow any use of their schools by outside groups. There was further explanation as to how the steering wheel selected the new location, the Hampton Inn in Colchester. The reasons included better location and better facilities, not to mention that there would be little set up that the club would have to do. A motion was made by Paul AA1SU, seconded by Jim KE1AZ that we allocate up to \$1400 for the use of the Hampton Inn. The motion passed.

Next, a motion was made by Bob W4YFJ, seconded by Bob KB1FRW to allocate \$65 for an ad in the *Vermont Amateur Radio Directory*. The motion passed.

Mitch W1SJ told us that the large generator that we have been using at Field Day was returned to the owner and we are looking at a replacement. A motion was made by Bob KB1FRW, seconded by Bob W4YFJ to allocate up to \$900 for a new Honda EU-2000I when and if needed in the future. The motion passed.

Next up were our annual elections. The current officers were re-elected unanimously to serve for the next year.

The holiday party was the next item on the agenda. A motion was made by Alden K1HA, seconded by Bob KB1FRW to allocate up to \$200 for the event. The motion passed.

Paul, AA1SU once again pleaded with the membership to submit articles for the newsletter. He also mentioned that we placed FIRST in 2A

ON THE BANDS

by Mitch W1SJ

Last week, I operated in the Sweepstakes phone contest. The Sweeps is one of the most trying contests to operate in. The exchange is long and detailed, containing 2 numbers, a category and the section. You cannot guess the exchange like in the 59 VT reports. You gotta copy it correctly, or the log checker will take it away from you! The 24 hours of the Sweepstakes is much like the 26 miles of a Marathon. To do well, you have to be alert and on top of your game, or you screw it up. Believe me, I know this very well, because I find out about all sorts of screw ups in the log when contacts get removed! Suffice it to say, while a good station and a big antenna helps, it is operator skill and saavy (*and of course location*) which determines the score.

Oh, and propagation plays a big part. Fortunately the propagation was great this year. I have been getting quite depressed as my score has been dropping for the last 5 years and was buried in the 1500 QSO range. This year, I managed to work over 100 QSO's hour after hour and nearly reached 1800 QSO's, which is a very good year. And none of this was done on 10 or 15 meters! The best hours were done on 80 meters overnight.

and TENTH nationwide in Field Day scoring. Well Done!

The topic for this meeting was interfacing to your radio. Brian N1BQ demonstrated how you can use your HT to remotely control devices via DTMF tones. He was able to turn a lamp on and off with an HT. He explained how the whole system worked, and some of the coding to do so.

The membership then headed to the snack bar around 8:30 for the obligatory snacking.

The rallying cry when choosing bands in our current sunspot minimum is to go low! In New England, our motto is, "there ain't no meters like 80 meters!" and I live and die by that. Over half the QSO's (1040) were on 80 meters, and of those, 237 or 22% were west of the Mississippi. Some 91 QSO's were from the Pacific Coast. And you thought 80 meters was a local band! By the way, all this was done on a dipole, much like the one depicted in the *RANV* logo!

I keep hearing that amateur radio is quiet now, but will get popular again when the sunspots come back. That's such bunk. The lesson to be learned here is that in the shortwave communications game we play in, excuses and complaining about poor band conditions don't cut it. In fact, some of my best scores are in the depths of the sunspot cycle. The trick is to have a decent antenna and decent power level on ALL bands and know how and when to use them.

Contacting *RANV*

In Person: Party! November 9, 5:30pm,
W1SJ Essex QTH

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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Editor: Mitch W1SJ 879-6589
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Please send submissions for the newsletter to the editor, W1SJ.

THE NEW *RANV* E-MAIL GROUP

by Jim KEIAZ

One of the great things about a ham radio club is the chance to share experiences and know-how. There is no substitute for doing this face to face, but another way that is sometimes helpful is an E-mail group.

An E-mail group is a network of people who exchange messages – a bulletin board that has been souped up for the Internet. You can ask or answer questions, talk about things that have happened, or just read (*called lurking*). Of course, reading is fine, but contributing is better.

For years *RANV* had a simple E-mail list but now thanks to Carl AB1DD we have our own E-mail group, located at Yahoo. One advantage of this over the E-mail list is that, in addition to sending or reading messages, you can scroll through past messages for something that you remember from long ago. You can even search messages using Yahoo's world class search technology. So it is a big step forward.

To participate, you need to join, which is necessary to keep out spam. This article takes you through the steps that I went through to join. I recorded what happened as I joined, so it should fit with what you see.

I assume that you do not yet have a Yahoo account. Otherwise if you do then you can skip the next step to sign up. First, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com>. In the upper right in small letters it says, "New User? Sign Up". Click on "Sign Up".

You get a screen to sign up for a Yahoo account. Item number 2 lets you select a username and a password. Fill out the form and click to go on. You should pick something that you can remember. There is a confirmation screen; again select that you want to continue.

Now you have a Yahoo account. You should see a screen where you have some information about Yahoo Groups. For instance, you have the chance to join John McEnroe in his Ten Day All-Bran Challenge. I al-

ways wondered what the problem with John was.

But we don't want to go there. We want to go to the *RANV* group. One way to get there is to enter "RANV" in the box that says, "Find a Yahoo Group" and click to search. Your next screen is a choice of groups, and in my experience our group is the first choice, just called "RANV". You can tell it is right because it says "No Boring Bylaws." Click on the name.

Now you get a screen with the *RANV* logo. This is the group home page. It describes the group, including a summary of number of postings by month. Above the logo is a button that says "Join This Group". Click on that button.

You then go to a screen that checks your identity by asking you to read some distorted characters in a box. This form is called a *recaptcha* and is used to keep spammers out of the mailing list. Fill out the form and when you click on the button, the list moderator will get a notice and will soon respond by giving you access to the list. If you don't hear after three or four days, you can try contacting the list administrator at ranv-owner@yahoogroups.com.

Now you are a member of the list. You can read all of the messages and also write ones of your own. When you want to read the group, sign in to Yahoo by going to <http://www.yahoo.com> and clicking on "Sign in" in the upper right. Enter your Yahoo user name and your password, followed by clicking on the Sign In button. It is possible that you are still signed in from the last time that you were there.

On the left of the screen are a number of places you can go: Click on "Groups". On the next page in the upper left is a box called "My Groups", and one of the choices is "RANV"; click on that. Alternatively, if that does not appear in "My Groups", enter "RANV" in the box

labeled, Find a Yahoo Group, click on Search, and on the next page click on "RANV".

You are back at the home page for the *RANV* group, only now you are a member. On the left in the light blue box, click on "Messages". There is a list of messages to read. Navigation is easy: to read a message click on its title. To move to a page of newer or older messages use the arrows near the bottom right of the page.

One way to send a new message is to move to the bottom right of the page, near the message navigation links, and click on "Start Topic". Another way is to send a mail to ranv@yahoogroups.com.

If you decide that you want to change the way you read the messages, look in the upper middle of the page (*on my screen about an inch down*) for "Edit Membership". For example, you can select to read the messages only on the web page instead of getting them one at a time on email.

HAM-CON

Details and logistics are being worked out and we are getting excited about HAM-CON, our Vermont Ham Radio Convention February 28th. A group of us visited the Hampton Inn and worked out myriad details about where everything will go.

I am working on setting up the forums and hope to add some. Please pass along suggestions of things you want to see and hear about. The key is to create excitement so that hams from all over will want to attend and see what is going on.

Moving a Hamfest is very difficult since we are all creatures of habit. We are depending on everyone to help spread the work and convince everyone to show up. It is important that everyone contact all of their buddies and let them know. We have 3 months to do this and I am convinced that we can pull this off!

***RANV* HOLIDAY PARTY!**

Tuesday, December 9th

5:30 - 10:00 PM

W1SJ QTH

RANV

P.O. Box 9392

South Burlington, Vt 05407

<http://www.RANV.org>