



Radio Amateur News & Views

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EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT TUNERS...

BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

The January 13th RANV Meeting

The *Antenna Tuner*. It is also known by its formal name, the *Transmatch*. And it is also known by its technical name, the *Impedance Transformer*. A tuner is a true black box with mysterious magic and karma contained inside. Few hams know how to use it correctly and fewer know how or why it works.

For our January meeting, we have recruited someone who claims to know nothing about the subject. Tom W1EAT does claim to know a lot about eating which is why his callsign is W1EAT. However, don't kid yourself. Tom only runs 5 watts and manages to work everything, so we know his antenna system is doing something right. Some of the questions he might answer will include: What is a tuner and what does it do? Do I really need a tuner? Should I use a factory built or home made tuner? What are some simple home made tuners and antennas which work well together? Tom will also have a show and tell session and explain about modifications he has made to perfectly good tuners that never did him any harm before he attacked them with a drill!

The meeting will be Tuesday, January 13th starting at 7 PM at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington. Eats and merriment will precede the meeting at Zack's on Williston Road, starting sometime around 6.

COMING UP

The next 2 months are loaded with ham radio activities! Starting this Saturday, January 10th is the NAQP CW, followed by the NAQP Phone on January 17th. On that same weekend is the VHF Sweepstakes. January 23-25th is the CQ Worldwide 160 Meter Contest. This is a CW contest, but 160 meters is very hot right now. Rather do 160 Meter Phone? The Phone version of this contest is February 27-28th, the night before and after HAM-CON. And, February 7-8th is the Vermont QSO Party.

We have a slate of activities for the next 3 RANV meetings. On January 13th, we will learn about tuners. On February 10th, we will hold another Construction Night where we will build a radio to computer interface. And, March 10th will be movie night! Oh, and don't forget the Breakfast Meeting at the Lincoln Inn on Saturday, January 31st.

Finally, remember that HAM-CON is Saturday, February 28th. Don't miss it!

WINTER BREAKFAST MEETING JANUARY 31ST

All hams are invited to the annual *Mid-Winter Breakfast Meeting*, Saturday, January 31st, 9 AM until noon at the Lincoln Inn in Essex Junction. What do we do at a Breakfast Meeting? Well, we mostly eat breakfast and yap a lot. Sort of like the Holiday Party, except earlier in the day. Lincoln Inn has a whole selection of Breakfast and Lunch dishes to choose from. With 35+ hams from all over Northern Vermont, there is no shortage of hamsters to talk to.

After the dishes are cleared, we will launch into a group discussion of some hot ham radio topic. Unlike at hamfests or club meetings, the breakfast meeting affords the best opportunity for an interactive discussion in a large group representing several different clubs. The topic this year will hover around recruiting new hams and building more activity. We don't guarantee a solution, but we will have fun along the way!

There is nothing to sign up for. Simply show up at the Lincoln Inn, at the Five Corners in Essex. If you want to skip eating (*why?*) show up after 10, otherwise, we hope to see you at 9:00 on January 31st.

OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

On Tuesday, December 9th, members of RANV descended upon the QTH of Mitch W1SJ for the annual Holiday Party. There were 29 members and guests involved in this assault. The first wave arrived starting at 5:27 PM, with others arriving at a fast pace. Most brought ammunition in the way of food. How can a gathering like this be a success without large amounts of food? The menu included stuffed eggs that Brian N1BQ monitored closely so none would go to waste. They did anyway, but to quite a few waists. Bob KB1FRW dropped off his deadly cargo of chicken wings and promptly left. They weren't that bad. There were lots of sandwich fixin's and finger food. Myriad combinations of meatballs, franks, egg rolls and fries kept everyone busy. Deserts and plenty of soft drinks topped off the defensive systems.

The evening's entertainment was provided by Jeff N1YD. His expertise was along the EOD line. (*That's Explosive Ordinance Disposal, for the uneducated.*) Jeff managed to secretly obtain a large canister of liquid nitrogen. Although liquid nitrogen isn't explosive, placing a rubber ball into the canister, waiting a minute, then throwing the ball on the ground produces a loud POP and the destruction of said ball. The pop was loud enough that Paul AA1SU, who was out on the street, ran into the garage to see what had happened. We had the chance to explode a few other balls and even tried a balloon.

It was really interesting demonstration - thanks, Jeff. Please note, do NOT try this at home! Liquid nitrogen is dangerous. All proper safety precautions were followed and protective gear used in these demonstrations. We had responsible (!?) amateur radio operators supervising this demonstration. The neighbors thought we were all nuts.

Our Holiday Party wound down around 9, and everyone went home without any injuries.

ARTICLES NEEDED!

by Mitch W1SJ

Articles, information, stories and anecdotes are needed for **News & Views**. Last year we put out a call for articles and got a tremendous response. I have just used the last article from that group and nothing is left on the shelf.

The material you submit needn't be some earth shaking discovery or Pulitzer Prize winning writing. I am simply looking for stories related to amateur radio and communications. They can be stories of your experiences (*always interesting*), informational articles or even entertaining articles. They must be about radio, of course, and should also be original. I don't want **News & Views** to simply parrot whatever anyone else can read on the internet. Good grammar and spelling would help, but is not essential. I have the means to quickly clean these things up.

Ideally, the length of your article should be one page, which is 700-1000 words, but shorter or longer pieces can be accommodated. If the article has time value, please indicate that, otherwise the material is rotated into the newsletter as space permits.

Member input is crucial for the success of the newsletter. With an assortment of material to use each month, this allows me more time to write articles and have enough material to produce a full newsletter, instead of a shortened version. It also leaves less space for my scathing editorials which will benefit us all. Please seriously consider contributing. Send all material to me at w1sj@arrl.net.

HAM-CON NEWS

Planning is coming along for HAM-CON. Forums which are planned include a discussion by the group doing experimentation on 500 KHz under a special license from the FCC. We will also have a "How-to" forum on setting up a HF station. Other forums will include Radio Frequency Interference, Contesting and ARRL. Back by popular demand, we will have a new DXpedition DVD to watch.

In the flea market department, most of the previous vendors will be returning and I am talking to some others. We will have a vendor making call sign hats, as well. Right now I am working to fit everyone into a different sized space with different sized tables. BIG jig-saw puzzle!

We plan to have another special event station, W1V and invite guest operators to hand out those valuable Vermont contacts. We are also thinking about having a test set-up to measure basic receiver and transmitter functions.

What else do you want to see or do at the Convention? We want it to be so chock full of great stuff that you never want to go home. Tell us how to make that happen!

We can plan all we want, but the success of the show rides on getting people to it. I can send all sorts of E-mails, but the thing which really works is for each of us to call our friends and convince them to meet us there. A personal invitation is the best way to promote!

Contacting RANV

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

SANTA CLAUS ON THE RADIO IN MONTREAL

by Suzanne VE2SZN

Every Christmas for many years now, my husband, Noble John Grow of the Karnak Shrine (*known to us as VE2EQL*), organizes an Amateur Radio Communication link between Santa Claus at the North Pole and the children of the Shriners Hospital in Montreal. As John is a past Canadian Armed Forces member, with the 712e Communication Squadron, he includes young reservists from the Unit. Reservist Tarik El Qarmi (*Elf Tarik*) and Shane Farr (*Elf Shane*) were the happy volunteers. John, of course, provides the amateur radio equipment. The North Pole station is set up in the cafeteria solarium area, away from any patient's prying eyes. The radios are installed and then testing is performed to insure reliable two-way communication. The second radio is set up in the Child Life Department.

Our Santa Claus, Noble Jerry Stein, also known as "Ma-ger" the clown, is the first one to arrive. He is well known and appreciated by every one at the hospital. The moment comes to start the activities. With "Elf Tarik", I head on to the Child Life room, which is filled with waiting children. With anticipation, the children greeted us with smiles and sparkling eyes.

The activities start by a call to the Shriners Hospital from "Radio Santa North Pole." After a few repetitive tries, the hospital responds. "Radio Station Santa, This is the Shriners Hospital in Montreal", is responded, and so the link is established. Elf Shane, at the "North Pole", provides a visual update of the activities to the excited children. "Santa is busy exercising the reindeers, and will be on the air shortly. Weather conditions here are fair and many transport planes are arriving with materials for the workshop." From the cafeteria, Santa Claus transmits his joyful Ho! Ho! Ho! Now it is his turn to talk to the children.

One child comes from Newfoundland! He has been waiting for a long time to be able to communicate with Santa who asks him if he has been a good boy? Of course! He is always a good boy and while his parents are listening attentively, he tells Santa of all the presents that he would like to receive for Christmas.

Then, it is the turn of a young girl from Ontario. Strangely though, as it may seem at first, she does not want to talk to Santa, however, he engages her and asks her what she would like for Christmas? She responds with a puzzling answer. She does not want anything for herself but instead, if Santa would send a house for everyone of her family to live in at the same time, since they are poor. Taken aback by this request, Santa is stunned. Seeking divine inspiration, even for him, the seconds stretch, seemingly, into eternity. How would he keep the hope of this child alive? "Good Things Happen to Good People", he replies kindly, "But for yourself, what would you like for Christmas?" The youth answers, "Anything would be just fine." Santa, with a teary eye is moved by the child's request, thinking that if it would be answered, the family would finally be able to share a meal all together at the dining room table, especially for Christmas.

The little boy from Newfoundland wants to talk to Santa again. He recounts his adventure of last evening at the Bell Center, the hockey game, and his ride on the Zamboni. Santa listens attentively.

Santa continues to listen to the children's requests. At first, they are shy to speak in the microphone, but after a few words, they are comfortable.

So, now we have finished talking with all the children available, we head on to the solarium to join Santa and Elf Shane. We exchange our impressions of the day, as we are all

happy with the experience. Santa "Ma-ger", our helpers *Elf Tarik*, *Elf Shane* and myself, complete a magical event for the children. It is richness for the Shriners community and for everyone, to have volunteers to keep the children's heart, spontaneity and hope alive.

FUN ACTIVITY

By Mitch WISJ

There is a lot of talk about building activity on the air. Here is fun activity which is fairly easy and not all that time consuming. It takes place in the dead of winter when there isn't much going on.

This activity is the *North American QSO Party*, or NAQP for short. It is a contest, but it is different in that it is only a 10 hour contest on Saturday and the maximum power allowed is 100 watts. In other words, the amps get the weekend off! It also means that the big boys will not have a 10 db power advantage. Everyone runs the same power!

The phone NAQP is on Saturday January 17th. The contest starts at 1 PM, which allows you the morning to handle errands. While the contest ends 12 hours later at 1 AM, you are only allowed 10 hours of operation. Most East Coast NAQP participants bail out by 11. While this is a 160-10 meter contest, with current propagation, the lion's share of the activity will be on 20 meters during the day and 80 and 40 meters at night. The multipliers are states, provinces and countries only in North America.

As you might have heard, the ARRL is sponsoring the *Triple Play Worked All States Award*, acknowledging working all states on phone, CW and digital. The NAQP is a perfect way to pick up all of those states. There is also a CW NAQP (*January 10*) and a RTTY NAQP (*February 28*). Get on and make some noise!

NEXT MEETING:
“Everything About Tuners”
Tuesday, January 13th, 7 PM
O’Brien Civic Center

RANV

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<http://www.RANV.org>