



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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CONSTRUCTION NIGHT The February 10th *RANV* Meeting

Our February meeting will be another one of our infamous project construction nights.

This session will offer you choice of **two** projects. The first project is a PSK-31 interface consisting of a couple of 600 ohm transformers and an optoisolator circuit to key the transmitter.

The second project is a highly efficient charge pump circuit pumping up 3 AA cells to power a string of high intensity LEDs to make a very bright light. I got involved with it because the author recommended a kit I sell as the micro-processor to drive the pump. Along the way I was able to pare down the circuit so it is even simpler and more powerful and now less than half the cost of the original project. I found the circuit so good that I have been able use it in other projects. Both projects are fairly simple to build.

Any one planning to build should bring along a small soldering iron, solder, small diagonal cutters, wire strippers and small needle nose pliers. If you don't have one or more of these items we should have enough extra to share.

There will be 10-12 of each kit available for construction. Please make reservations with Brian N1BQ ahead of time, or otherwise it is first come, first serve on the meeting night. The kits will be about \$10 each, free to anyone under 18.

There will be documentation available ahead of time for the two projects. Look for a posting on the *RANV* Reflector when they become available.

Don't forget to come to Zach's on Williston Road at 6 PM for pre-meeting eating and psyching up. The meeting will start at 7 PM at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington.

ARTICLES NEEDED

After requesting member input for articles for *NEWS & VIEWS*, I am disappointed to say that there has be no input. Nada. Nothing. I cannot write the entire newsletter by myself. Soooo, unless the inbox at w1sj@arrl.net starts getting filled up with ham radio articles, newlsetters will be a scarce as rare DX or even disappear. Probably not a good idea!

COMING UP!

There really is only ONE thing that you all should be focused on and that is HAM-CON. For the contesters, remember that the ARRL DX Contest is coming soon. CW on the week before HAM-CON and Phone the week after. It all goes well, I'll be in a semi-rare DX spot where snow shovelling is not necessary! Stay tuned for details!

HAM-CON!

I really hope that the fact that we are having a Convention at the end of the month isn't new news to anyone reading this. But in case you missed it or were catching a well-deserved nap somewhere, here it is. **HAM-CON - The Vermont Ham Radio Convention is Saturday, February 28th 8 AM - 2 PM at the Hampton Inn Convention Center, I-89 at Exit 16 Colchester.** You have two missions. 1. Come. 2. Bring people with you. Think of yourself as a pied piper, and with HT in hand, you lead a merry throng of hamsters to the Hampton on Saturday morning.

Ah c'mon SJ, don't be silly! OK, I'll get dead serious. If we don't hit our projected attendance levels for this show, it will indeed be a one hit wonder. At the old location, after the first 50 people filed in the door, we had our bills paid. It will take a LOT MORE than that this time. And there are plenty of good reasons not to come, i.e. recession, layoffs, no money, bad weather, no interest. Fine, now come anyway and have a good time.

Notice that the show runs from 8:00 until 2:00. That means I expect to see a lot people around in the early afternoon. We have great activities running all day and it is unfair to the folks who have forums in the afternoon to simply zip out and do something else. As much as I like to, I just can't schedule everything at 10:00!

HAM-CON... continued Page 3..

OUR LAST *RANV* MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

The January meeting was called to order at 7:10 by President Brian N1BQ. There were 15 members present.

First, were the announcements. The 3rd annual Northern Vermont Breakfast Meeting will be held on Saturday, January 31st at the Lincoln Inn at 9 AM until Noon. Good food, fellowship and a short discussion on attracting and retaining new and current hams will be the agenda.

The Vermont QSO party will be on February 7-8th.

HAM-CON will be on Saturday, February 28th. This show will be at a new location, the HAMpton Inn in Colchester. Many new and interesting forums and activities will be found here. For information, visit www.ranv.org/hamcon.html.

Important item: Bob W4YFJ will handle the task of supplying snacks for the February meeting.

The speaker for this meeting was Tom W1EAT. Tom's topic was tuners, or getting the signal from the radio to the antenna. He started off with a visual demonstration of an antenna between two trees. With Bob KB1FRW and Paul AA1SU acting as trees (*a mighty oak or a weeping willow, we'll never know*), Tom strung an imaginary dipole between them. He then went on to explain how a dipole would be set up and how it would be fed with ladder line or coax. Since the radio is designed to "see" a 50 ohm load, and the antenna most likely isn't 50 ohms, something is needed to make them match. So, enter the tuner. Its job is to essentially make the radio happy. Tom first showed an auto tuner, and described it as basically a magic box. Push a button, it makes noise, and when it quiets down, there should be a match between the antenna and radio. He next talked about manual tuners. One word of warning he of-

BREAKFAST MEETING A HIT

by Mitch W1SJ

We had another fine Breakfast Meeting to close out January. When all were counted, 32 folks showed up at the Lincoln Inn last Saturday to eat and yak about ham radio. The group represented 6 Vermont counties, Canada and 5 area radio clubs in Northern Vermont. Roughly half attended last year's breakfast, meaning that we are getting a turnover of new people each time. The old and new were well represented with Bob W4YFJ (*about 55 years as a ham*) and John KB1RRD (*15 days as a ham*).

The discussion topic was on recruiting and activity. By a quick vote, everyone thought there was a problem with ham radio recruiting. Most, but not all thought there was a problem with the level of ham radio activity.

The discussion started with trying to define what a "ham" is so that we could address the problem. Is a ham someone who just happens to hold an amateur license, or is there more to this?

The discussion then focused on how new hams get help. Without an Elmer to turn to, who do you call to help sort out all the information out there? Some ideas of universal E-mail addresses were discussed, but this is best left to the individual clubs.

The focus went back to how to actually recruit the new hams. Some suggested a demonstration in the Malls. This was tried years ago and never resulted in any new members. The problem is that ham radio doesn't show off well - little action. Other discussion looked at promoting ham radio in the schools.

We didn't resolve any problems, nor did we set a goal to do so. But it is always productive to understand the dynamics of our organization and try all the little things to make it better. These recruitment and activity problems we see in Vermont occur all over the country (*and world*), and in fact are the same problems I see in other non-technical organizations I and others belong to. The best thing we can do is to embrace the changes coming our way with a smile and continue having fun in what we do.

That being said, breakfast was very good!

ferred: if you are using a T-match tuner, be careful with the settings. If the variable capacitor is set near zero, the signal will go to ground. Not good for those DX contacts. Tom modified his tuner by placing a switch in the circuit that would place a 50 ohm load on the antenna so he could QSY without retuning. (*Remember, he is running QRP - don't try this with high power!*). Another modification is a switch that places a capacitor across the output capacitor to extend the range of the tuner. Tom finished up with a question and answer session.

At 8:30, we QSY'd to the kitchen for snacks.

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

RANV HAM-CON FLEA MARKET TABLE

by Robin N1WWW

Is your shack beginning to look like McGee's closet? Tired of hearing unfinished projects scream silently? Looking for some mad money? Have we got a deal for you!

RANV will have a special flea market table - a free service, a membership benefit, for **RANV** members who have a few things to sell, but who don't want to be tethered to a sale table. Hopefully, it will also prove to be an attraction for HAM-CON attendees who are looking for *good* used equipment. No junky junk, please! Just bring good, usable equipment (*or fixable without unreasonable expense*).

There will also be a swap board where you can post what you have to dispose of but couldn't bring, or what you're looking for.

The table will be attended at all times so you can just drop off your items and return to pick up money or unsold goods when you leave. Remember, there are no table fees or hidden costs, you take home all your proceeds. Such a deal!

Please take a gander around your shack and see what you might have accumulated in a fit of enthusiasm, but never really used, or what has been put aside in favor of something newer. Many newly licensed hams are looking to get started on their equipment addiction as inexpensively as possible, so help reel them in. I've heard folks say the pickin's lately just aren't what they used to be. You can help bring back the thrill by hauling in your unused stuff. And maybe take home some pocket-money - or not. Maybe you'll stumble on something you've coveted and - ZAP! - another fit of enthusiasm strikes.

Of course, there *are* a few rules:

1. Sellers limited to maximum of 10 items
2. Weight limit of 35 lbs per item and 100 lbs total all items
3. Label each item with call sign and suggested price (*please round off dollars as no coin change will be available*)
4. Seller to supply table attendant with a Manifest List identifying each item, with description, condition, suggested and lowest prices, payment accepted: cash or check
5. Unsold items must go home with the seller.

"Item" means:

- a base, mobile, or hand-held radio (*usable or fixable at reasonable cost*)
- misc. related equipment (*test equipment; lone power supplies, TNCs, tuners, GPS, antennas, tools such as soldering guns/irons, meters, etc.*)
- laptops and small peripherals OK.—*No monitors, printers, or desktop computers*
 - books, manuals, magazines (ham-related)—as boxed unit(s), or per attendant's decision
 - a box of usable wire/parts/etc (*no broken, unusable pieces*), up to 35lbs.

Feel free to contact me with any questions at 897-2668 or by E-mail to n1www@arrl.net.

HAM-CON... continued from page 1

So here is what we have on tap. There are 10 forums, almost always running two at a time. Go to the HAM-CON Web and check the schedule and make a plan for what you want to see, because things will get crazy when you get there. The schedule is being tweaked as this is being written so check there in a week. In Forum Room 1 (*closest to the entrance*), we start off with "Product Reviews" which is look behind the scenes of how the ARRL reviews all those neat radios. Next is "Powerline Noise Forum", which takes an in-depth look at how noise is generated, how to find it and how to get it stopped. We have some real exciting stuff in "Low Frequency Operation on 500 KHz". Fred Raab W1FR, one of the holders of WD2XSH will talk about operations on the 600 Meter band, a place where a dipole would be 936 feet long, assuming you had the room for one! Then we have a real treat - John Grow VE2EQL will take us on journey to darkest Africa as he recounts his DXpedition to Guinea. It is quite a story. If you like DXpeditions, stay right in your seat, because we also have a movie on the recent operation from Scarborough Reef in the South China Sea. If you remember the picture, the station sat on scaffolding pitched on a rock, which is all there is when it's high tide!

Not to be outdone, Room 2 will feature the National Weather Service and they will talk about the equipment and expertise they use to forecast weather. I have heard comments that the official dart board and Ouija Board will be on display, but I have no further information. A number of new hams have asked for a forum on "Setting up a Ham Station", so that is exactly what we will do. Details will be offered on station set up from microphone to antenna. The ARRL Forum will be back and will present a snapshot of ham radio from the perspective of our national organization. And for something completely new and different, we will offer a forum on the "State of Commercial Communications". Our cousins in the Two-Way Radio Services (*Commercial and Public Safety Radio*) use similar equipment on nearby frequencies, but there are differences! What can we learn from their techniques? Stick around and find out what is out there!

A couple of tables of note will be set up. Robin N1WWW will be running the **RANV** Swap table to help you move some of that valuable stuff you have. See the article next door. Mike N1FDU will have some test equipment set up to do some basic checks of your portable or mobile radios. No repair will be offered, but there will be plenty of great advice. The **RANV** Table will be in the middle of the proceedings, and serve as the information center, door prize area and place to go if you get lost. And our flagship station, W1V will be on the air from the outer lobby. Get on and put Vermont on the map.

Oh, and by the way, there will be Flea Market and hundreds of hams there too. But you already knew that. All the information you need is at www.ranv.org/hamcon.html.

**NEXT MEETING:
“Construction Night”
Tuesday, February 10th, 7 PM
O’Brien Civic Center**

RANV

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<http://www.RANV.org>