



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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MOVIE NIGHT:

The March 10th *RANV* Meeting SCARBOROUGH REEF 2007

This is a 60 minute movie documenting the 2007 DXPedition to Scarborough Reef, in the South China Sea. This is a dangerous place, often patrolled by pirates and unfriendly governments. If that wasn't bad enough, the reef is actually only a few rocks which poke above the ocean at high tide. Equipment, antennas and generator sat on small makeshift scaffolds. With operating shifts running 10 hours or more, it was quite an effort considering that there was no room to walk, stretch or sleep. Want to know the details - watch the movie. Also check out <http://www.scarboroughreef.com>.

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

HAM-CON!

HAM-CON the First is now history. Most everyone will agree it was a momentous event. It was also a lot of work! It shouldn't be all that hard to simply move a show to a new spot. But alas, the devil is in the details. And we have dealt with a lot of details over the last 2 weeks!

The basic information you all want to know is that attendance was just around 400. This is significantly more than last year's poor showing but a little off the numbers we posted between 2002-2005. This attendance is both a relief and somewhat disappointing. It is a relief in that we were successful in transplanting the Hamfest to another venue and drawing a reasonable number of people despite a dreadful economy and really low ham radio activity. It was

disappointing in that it would have been nice to ramp up the attendance to beyond what we were seeing at Milton. We did some extra promotion beyond that of previous years, but this didn't seem to change things too much. OK, so I have big expectations.

The other good news is that the pricing was perfect. After much larger expenses to run this event, we retained the same amount of money as the last few years. Trust me, we were concerned about this!

Everyone liked the convenient location. There was little talk-in and it wasn't really needed as everyone found the building. The layout with forums and fleas co-located in the same area made it easy to find everything and everyone. No sojourns

down long hallways were needed. And meeting in a hotel ballroom versus a dingy cafeteria (sometimes used as gym) certainly raised our socioeconomic level several steps out of the gutter.

But there were issues. The first issue was space. The facility was sized based on the attendance and vendor participation we had over the last two years at Milton. However, this year, the vendor participation shot way up. This was a good thing, but it caused some logistical nightmares. By the time I had laid out the 4 big vendors in the flea market, there wasn't much space left! I did a lot of computer planning with tables and room layouts until we created enough of a flea market overflow. The good news is that, as far

as I know, everyone who wanted a table got one – even the folks who waltzed in after 8:00.

By adding extra table slots, I had to chew up some aisle space, particularly in the lobby. Originally the lobby was going to be more open, but space was needed for tables. By 9:30, the show was rockin'! It was packed in the flea market and in the lobby. It looked like a mini version of Dayton Hamvention in its heyday! And again, this can be both good and bad. The crowded room made people think that there were more folks there than there actually was. With everyone in one general place, it also made it easier to bump into people you knew instead of folks wandering around the hallways.

The crowd density played havoc on the temperature and humidity. This was solved later in the morning when Carl adjusted the thermostat to turn on the air conditioning. We did have a pool next door, if it got really hot!

Parking was another problem during the crush hours. This was something that the hotel staff and our people didn't plan properly for and that will be worked out next time. There were other functions going on which had some reserved parking spots and some busses taking up other spots. I have been to the Hampton for other conventions with a greater number of attendees and parking was never a problem. Perhaps those groups carpool more!

The monster forum schedule of 10 forums in 2 rooms over 5 hours went off without a hitch. Unfortunately, the early and late forums had poor attendance, while some of the forums mid-morning had 25 or more. A solution for the mid-morning crowds would be to pop into the forum rooms for a while!

After much struggle with cold weather and wind chill, the antenna erection team lofted a tribander up 30 feet and we got W1V on the air. The station worked well, and looked great with Gene's state of the art TS-950 with large screen monitor. While we had operators scheduled to keep

the station on, it is still disappointing to observe very few other people wanting to operate a ham radio station.

The Tech Table run by Mike N1FBZ was quite the popular spot with all sorts of radios tested and technical information dispensed.

And the RANV Flea Market table, new this year, was an unqualified success. It was so popular that Bob KB1FRW was late getting his stuff there and there was no more room! Lots of folks were very happy that their stuff was sold. Sadly, I wasn't one of those folks!

It is prudent to share some of the details about running a show so that everyone understands what we are up against. Despite this being a hobby, running a show is a business. There is expense, there is income and the ultimate success depends on keeping the customers happy. There is a careful balance between the amount of room required for activities. Too little room and things get too crowded. Too much room and the show looks like a flop. And even more important is that space costs money!

Some have suggested that we convert Forum Room 1 to Flea Market space. That would mean half as many forums. There was something like 150-200 people total in the forums. Obviously, someone is going to these. There are other meeting rooms in the Hampton we could move the forums to. To get to them, you have to walk down a long corridor past the pool and find a different elevator to go down to the first floor. Then you have to walk down another long corridor. And not all of our attendees walk all that well! If we put forums in those rooms, we wouldn't have a big crowd as half the attendees would end up lost all over the hotel.

Some have suggested venues like the Sheraton. Their big room downstairs is way too large for us, costs way too much for us, and it is very hard to book. Their ballroom upstairs can be divided, but then we would have to schlep boat anchors

OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

President Brian, N1BQ called the meeting to order at about 7:15 on February 10th. There were 22 members and guests present. Brian first introduced Andrew and Dave, two photography students from St. Mike's. They were there to take pictures of people in action. This was for an assignment for their course. At least they picked a good action meeting!

Next we talked a little about Ham-Con on February 28th. Talk it up! We also went around the room introducing ourselves.

We went right into the main part of the meeting, building a PSK interface or a charge pump LED flashlight. Everyone spent the next hour building or helping others turn the pile of parts into a working device.

Next month we will view a movie, the Scarborough Reef DXpedition. The meeting ended around 8:30, although some stayed a little longer finishing up their kits.

up and down stairs and elevators.

The space crunch we saw this time can easily go away if one or two of the large vendors don't show up. So, I'm not too sure that we need to resort to draconian measures to increase space. But we have a year to think over how to handle and manage the crowd in the space we have. The location is worth keeping.

The list of thank you's is long! Between the show getting more complicated and my ability to do 40 things simultaneously definitely waning, more and more people are involved. From the folks manning the various tables, RANV, Flea, Tech, Tickets, the various set up people, the forum speakers and coordinators and everyone else, you all did a tremendous job! I want to thank each and everyone who worked so hard on this event to make it the success it was.

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

RANV

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