



Radio Amateur News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

AUGUST 2009

Vol. 19 No. 8

RANV SUMMER PICNIC

Sunday, August 2nd we held the RANV Summer picnic at Kill Kare State Park and as it has done most days this summer, it rained. But amazingly, this did little to dampen the enthusiasm of the event. While the attendance was down a bit (13), most everyone stayed at the event all afternoon. We found ourselves a nice covered area under the porch of the main house, where we were sheltered from the rain and had comfy chairs at our disposal. It actually was quite pleasant there. Burgers were roasted and a simple dipole was tossed into the tree. W1V was on the air with low power and low antenna and still managed to get a small pileup with Paul, Brian and Barb at the helm. My only regret was that a planned Geocaching trip to Burton Island will have to wait for next time. The moral is that you should never give up due to the weather since we had a great time nonetheless.

STARC SUMMER HAMFEST

Saturday, August 15th 6AM to 3PM

RAVEN INDUSTRIAL, Route 78, SWANTON

I-89 to Exit 21, Route 78 East, for 1.5 miles.

Fest is 0.2 mile past John Deere Tractor sign, on right.

ADMISSION \$8 - CAMPING \$5 - VENDORS FREE

Early admission Friday 3PM: Vendors / Campers

Info: nlarn@yahoo.com, 802-309-0666

HOME BREW EVENT

At the STARC Hamfest, we are celebrating the Heathkit era and all the fun and education that era brought to hams. So, don't forget to bring your favorite Heathkit product so that we can include you (*and it*) in our 2009 HomeBrewHams photo! Please bring and demonstrate your favorite home-brewed widget. Share ideas! Swap war stories!

Prizes have been ordered, and they are American made kits with professional printed circuit boards.

Bring a QSL or business card so we can staple it to our half of your admission ticket to help with our records.

2009 RANV FIELD DAY HALL OF FAME

AA1SU Paul – CW op; Equipment; Bonuses; Set up; Tear down.
AB1DD Carl – GOTA Organizer; Equipment; Set up; Tear down.
AB1T Doug – CW op; Equipment.
K1JCM John – Set up; Tear down.
K2MME Howie – CW op; Setup; Tear down.
KB1FRW Bob – VHF op; Equipment; Traffic; GOTA Coach; Set up; Tear down.
KB1KPO Jerry – VHF op; Set up; Tear down.
KB1LIE Jon – GOTA op.
KB1LIF Barb – VHF op.
KB1MAQ John – GOTA op.
KB1MDC Alan – Setup.
KB1OQK Kathi – GOTA op; Setup; Tear down.
KB1PNF Alan – GOTA op; Tear down.
KB1RQX Chuck – GOTA op; Setup; Tear down.
KB1RRF Vinnie – GOTA op; Setup; Tear down.
KB1RVT Nick – GOTA op.
KE1AZ Jim – GOTA Coach.
KI4IW Cliff – Phone op.
N1BQ Brian – VHF op; Set up; Tear down.
N1COB Nina – GOTA op; GOTA coach.
N1WWW Robin – Food; Tear down.
N1YD Jeff – Demos; Set up; Tear down.
N1YWB Jeff – Phone op; VHF op; Setup; Tear down.
N1ZBH Moe – GOTA Coach; Set up.
W1BZD Melanie – GOTA op; Setup.
W1EAT Tom – CW op.
W1EBR Gene – GOTA coach.
W1RFM Robert – Setup.
W1SJ Mitch – Chairman; Phone op; Equipment; Set up; Tear down; Results.
W1ZN Craig – Phone op; Tear down.
W4YFJ Bob – GOTA Coach; Bulletins.
WT1L Chris – Phone op; Tear down.
WY0N Jim – Setup.

LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl AB1DD, Sec'y

The July 14th meeting was called to order at 7:11 by President Brian N1BQ with 22 members in attendance.

We will be having our summer picnic at Kill Kare State Park in St. Albans on August 2nd.

There is also another event that we will be providing communication assistance for. This is a reunion of Buffalo Soldiers at fort Ethan Allen on August 1st.

Mitch W1SJ reported that we made around 4400 contacts during Field Day, but the final score wasn't compiled at that time.

At this meeting there was a timely presentation on lightning by Rich AB1KN. Rich gave some theory as to how lightning strikes formed, and how they find their way to their target (*usually our equipment*). The presentation was illustrated by high speed photography of strikes (*pictures about 5 nanoseconds apart*) to show how streamers are formed and then attract the main strike. Rich brought up some new research as to how lightning was initiated, and it turns out that Cosmic Rays play a big part in this! Another interesting phenomenon was the "cloud up" lightning. These are discharges above the clouds that pilots and astronauts have seen, but were largely dismissed as something else. Rich will be back to do some more at a later date.

We thundered away to lighten(ing) the snack tray at 8:30.

THE POWER SUPPLY

by Alden K1HA

Back in the early 60's, W2UUV of Fishkill, NY, and I, then WA2QKH of Nichols, NY, used to sched almost daily around 3665 kHz CW. We both ran QRP. He ran around 300 mW. I ran something less than 200 mW to an 80 M dipole at 50 feet. My rig was a cobble of 3 transistors wired loosely together on the desktop and at first was powered by a 12 V-lantern dry cell. W2UUV worked at IBM and his goal was to have a transistor on the air within hours of its birth on the production line. My goal was merely to QSO and compare notes. As time progressed, I thought I needed some versatility in the power source (*QRO - wow!*). So, using an old military tuner case, I cobbled together a low current dual variable voltage supply and used it for the duration of our experimenting. My crowning achievement was a citation from the Canadian DOT through the FCC that I was interfering with CHU, Dominion Observatory Canada on 7.335 MHz. I still have that citation as a badge of honor. I ran across the supply the other day and did not have the heart to toss it into the dumpster at the transfer station. Now, this supply is not a thing of beauty nor high technology. It does, however, contain many useful components for the builder, such as:

- 2 meters (~3½"). One is a 0-1 ma movement with a homebrew scaled faceplate, the second is 0-50 Vdc
- 6 Binding posts
- 6 Switches (1 toggle, others rotary)
- 1 Variac with pointer knob
- 1 Indicator light
- 2 Panel mounted fuse holders

I'm sure there are at least 2 transformers and other components.

If there be an amateur with heart so bold as to rescue this unit, I would recommend for scavenging, that ham can become the proud owner by simply contacting k1ha@aol.com. No charge - no guarantee.

FIELD DAY

by Alan KB1PNF

When I showed up at Field Day I could tell that there might be some pressure. Carl AB1DD immediately greeted me and said that we were about 50 contacts short of the number we needed for the maximum points on the GOTA station. I had only ever gotten 20 at a Field Day before. I also hadn't operated in quite a long time and was worried I would have a hard time getting in the swing of things. It took me some time, but eventually I started picking up contacts left and right. I was going on a serious run but I had to take some time off so that other kids who were under eighteen could get on for bonus points.

It was honestly hard to get off. I had just started to get up to a 150 QSO/hour rate and so I got nervous and twitchy when I had to give it up. All I kept thinking about was the 50 contacts we needed. I had already passed my previous record and I wanted to see how many contacts I could get. Eventually the kids got off and I was able to get back on but my worst nightmare had come true - 20 meters had gotten cold. There was hardly a contact in sight. Carl came over and switched the station over to 40 meters and the change was immediate. I was back up to my previous rate and more importantly, I was getting closer and closer to that 50 mark. I watched that number get closer and closer until eventually we made it. Carl even blew his car horn in celebration! What I had been so nervous about being able to accomplish had been brought about with an hour left and I put the headphones down with a sigh and a feeling of accomplishment.

But Field Day was far from over and the towers had to come down sooner or later. When the official contest time finished, we began the sometimes frustrating, sometimes interesting and always impressive job of taking down the towers. I remember remarking to Brian N1BQ that it still amazed me that these towers could be taken down so quickly and yet be both so monstrously gigantic and so effective. The work took a long time but when I left I left with a smile and a feeling of true accomplishment.

TWO METER SIMPLEX - Not a Social Disease!

Shel Ball, KC1VT

The improvement of quality and quantity of local repeaters has been met with a distinct roll-off in the amount of activity on 2-meter simplex. I'll share some of my personal experiences, and why I think we need to improve our simplex signals, put up really great 2-meter verticals and beams, and get local again. Most of us can always get into the 146.61 or 145.15 repeaters without much effort. And most of us already have decent signals on simplex, except we just aren't using this great mode. Here are the reasons we need to get back to good old direct local station-to-station communications:

- It gives you much better indication of how your station is performing.
- It allows for much greater, in-depth QSOs with your neighborhood hams.
- You can have the satisfaction that your own station is really doing the work, rather than the repeater.
- You can shoot the breeze about pretty much about anything at length with a much smaller audience.
- When the repeater goes down (*and it will*), you will be a prime situation to talk with your local hams in an emergency.
- You can't time-out on simplex. (*or maybe you can, read below*)
- It is simply good amateur practice to move to a simplex frequency, rather than tying up a repeater for a long time.

Simplex simply means one transmitter at a time or one person talking at a time. What a concept! Most of our ham conversations are simplex, in that you cannot hear the other person talking at the same time you transmit. It would be great if my family dinner table conversation was like that! Simplex is really just that. Simple - one station talking at a time to one other station, direct, on the same frequency. No duplexers, no offset. Simply simplex!

FM simplex in Vermont is pretty much wide open to the suggested frequencies, as there is not a lot of activity. Before you camp out on a frequency and say you are going to use in all the time, you may want to make sure there is no one using it for a repeater, Echolink or IRLP link. ith

With the long list of available frequencies and Vermont's low population, the simplex world is your oyster. While I certainly can't say that I know where all the activity is, there are certain hot (*or, lukewarm*) simplex frequencies in the area, and I hope this article is a start of a continuing discussion of where people are hanging out on simplex. Programming the following frequencies below in your radio will certainly pay off with some delightful unexpected QSOs: 146.415, 146.43, 146.46, 146.475, 146.49, 146.505, 146.52, 146.535, 146.55, 146.565, 146.58, 146.595, 147.42, 147.435, 147.45, 147.465, 147.48, 147.495, 147.51, 147.525, 147.54, 147.555, 147.57, 147.585.

Some simplex frequency notes:

146.445 This should not be used, since it is the input to the 147.045 MHz Rutland repeater! It is best to avoid this, to make sure you are not inadvertently keying their repeater.

146.49 This used to be quite a nightly free-for-all with a lot of hams 20 years ago. Neal N1ZRA uses .49 to talk to New Hampshire hams while simultaneously on 6-meters. It's a great mode to have a chat while tweaking things on other bands.

146.52 This is the National Calling Frequency. Use this one to establish a contact, then move off to a different frequency. I have participated in some longer winded QSOs on this frequency and I always feel a bit guilty. There are usually a few local hams hanging out there. And, Chip W1AIM, from his lofty perch in Cabot will answer you while roving around in Northern Vermont. When you see another ham on the road, this is the frequency you go to contact them. You'd be surprised at how many answers I get when I see a car go by and with an obvious antenna on the roof.

146.55 This is the defacto place for VHF contesters to meet. Avoid this for ragchewing during VHF contest weekends.

146.565 The Clinton County group meets here on no scheduled

basis. Meet Plattsburgh area hams that love to talk about rigs, antennas, hunting and New York State politics. A real friendly group.

146.58 Another popular contest frequency and a bit more activity as of late.

147.57 I hang out here. I try to have a rig on at all times. I don't get a lot of calls, but my ham buddies and locals know where I am, and others can check out how they are doing simplex from around the state into my particular location.

One other caveat: Many of these simplex frequencies are repeater frequencies in the New York City area. You normally will not hear these, but openings can and do occur!

My own personal vex is how to get a simplex signal to my buddies in Central Vermont with Camel's Hump right in the way. It hasn't been easy. But here are a couple of my experiences. From the entry of the Addison County Fair site off Route 17 in New Haven, I have a great mobile signal into W1KR in East Montpelier. A similar hot spot takes place on Shelburne Falls Road on the Shelburne/Hinesburg line. Now is this signal going direct or bouncing off a mountain? I have also heard hams on .52 from Island Pond while in Huntington. I guess it's bouncing off something like the face of Camel's Hump, so maybe I should be treating the Hump as a friend, rather than just "in the way." I also go do a bit of mountain topping and just drop my call in several times on a few simplex frequencies and it's amazing who will show up. Even with 5 watts and a stubby duck, you sound loud.

Let other hams know when you'll be on a mountaintop, or just hanging out on frequency. You'd be surprised at how many show up, or just do what I do, just drop your call in randomly and often on a bunch of simplex frequencies. You'll pleasantly be surprised who will come back. It would be neat for RANV members to use the newsletter or reflector to share their experiences. I would

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Simplex - from previous page

be interested to see how others have had success on simplex.

So, drop your call in on .49, .52, or .55 night or day from home or while mobile. You're not waking up the repeater trustee on these frequencies at 3 AM! Drop your call in early and often. It's like the old mantra, there was nobody on because no one was transmitting! And, you can't timeout on simplex, although I did! I was having a nice ragchew for about 5 minutes on simplex, and I heard a timeout signal. How could that be? The friend in New York was on Kenwood Sky Command and was on his HT operating his TS-2000 with a 5-minute timeout. Yes, even I can time out a simplex QSO!

2009 RANV FIELD DAY BOX SCORE

80 CW	188	80 SSB	263
40 CW	300	40 SSB	291
20 CW	440	20 SSB	1514
15 CW	209	15 SSB	572
GOTA CW	0	GOTA Ph	500
VHF CW	4	VHF Ph	130
Sat CW	0	Sat Ph	7
Total CW	1141	Total Ph	3270

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
QSO's	4411	4779	3968	4643
Bonuses	2190	2090	1850	2050
Points	13294	14754	12328	13858

Contacting RANV

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