



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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WEATHER KEEPS HAMS HOPPING

Mitch W1SJ

THE MEMORIAL DAY HAM public service doubleheader is over and it was a rollicking and wet time! The Essex Memorial Parade was Saturday, May 28th and the forecast called for rain and thunderstorms. Fortunately, none of this came to pass. The Parade had a lot less volunteers this year, but fortunately, we had a large ham radio crew to pick up the slack. And then, there were no commercial radios for the non-ham marshals, which was probably more of a good thing!

The field in the Fairgrounds was quite wet. Driver of the larger rigs refused to try to drive across the grass (smart move). So we had to cache the large vehicles up on the gravel road and stage them so that they came into the line of march in time. This worked well, but it did take a lot more effort to set up. A lot of cancellations and last minute changes produced a good deal of traffic between the line up area and the reviewing stand at the Five Corners.

The parade was $\frac{3}{4}$ over when the large tractor trailer used to house the Shriner Go-Karts grabbed a telecom line and pulled down a power pole dumping a high voltage line across the line of march. Fortunately, a backup route was quickly devised and the latter 3 divisions were able to join the parade, albeit after a long pause.

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NEXT MEETING:

JUNE 14, 2011—INTRODUCTION TO SDR

THE JUNE MEETING'S PRESENTATION WILL BE BY GENE RISI W1BR. Have you heard about SDR (Software Defined Radio) and wondered what it is? Or seen some information but still have lots of questions?

If the answer to either of the questions is YES, then this should be an hour well spent. Gene W1BR has only been a ham for a few years, but has been an electronics enthusiast since he first started disassembling his parents' appliances. Gene's hope is that this presentation will get you eager to start playing with software defined radio, or help resolve any initial frustration you may have had while playing with SDR.

After the presentation there will be canned demos and a Q&A session.

And snacks!



FIELD DAY COMING

Mitch W1SJ

IN A LITTLE OVER 2 WEEKS it will be time for Field Day! RANV will be working hard to defend its first-place finish in the 2A category. There are a lot of excellent challengers out there and all sorts of pitfalls in the way. Will we be successful? No way to know for sure except to give it our all.

The facility worked quite well last year and no major changes are planned. Hopefully it will remain dry for a few weeks so that we don't have to set up in a lake. It looks like most of our core operator group will be back. The key thing is to get enough help on Friday and Sunday for set up and take down. As we all get a bit older each year, it is imperative that we have an adequate number of helpers so that no one person is forced to overextend or get

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HELP, HELP, & MORE HELP NEEDED

FIELD DAY AS SEEN FROM GOTA

Carl AB1DD

THE ONLY THINGS CERTAIN ARE death, taxes, and Field Day. Although they have some things in common, we should look forward to Field Day. Lots happen during this event, but the part I concentrate on is GOTA. GOTA is "Get On The Air." A station set up for new hams, inexperienced hams, and non-hams, GOTA is a fun place to get a little time in on HF. You don't need to know what you are doing, not many of us do anyway. A mentor is provided to tell you everything you need to know, and help you along. There is a need for people to operate over the 24-hour period we are on the air. An hour (or more if you want)

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Upcoming, Notices, & Other Misc

- RANV: July Meeting—7/12
- Field Day 6/24, 25, 26
- Steering Wheel: 3rd Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30—Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners

- Dues due? Pay online at www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html
- VT Ham Radio Calendar www.vthrc.net

RANV: MAY MEETING **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Jeff N1YD, Secretary

ABOUT 15 MEMBERS CAME TO THE May meeting.

- We voted to spend \$400 for Field Day.
- The annual picnic will be on a Sunday in early August. Our usual picnic site at Kill Kare State Park is presently under water, but it might be OK by then.
- Jim, KE1AZ, will bring snacks to our next meeting.

Presentation

Club President Bob Allen, KB1FRW, gave a talk and demonstration called "Soldering 101." In previous meetings we saw how to deal with teeny tiny stuff. Bob's talk focused on the big stuff—like PL-259 connectors and half-inch copper pipe for J poles.

For PL-259 connectors, Bob recommends an 80-watt soldering iron, or even a butane torch. Without enough heat, the insulation can burn before the metal gets soldered. Having enough heat lets you work quickly.

To start at the beginning...

- Strip the wire correctly,
- Install the outer sleeve,
- Screw on the end,
- Solder the end to the braid with a 80–100-watt iron,
- Finally, solder the center conductor.

For any soldering on circuit boards, remember that rosin flux is conductive. Clean off rosin after soldering using an alcohol/acetone mix and a stiff brush.

Steel wool, a flux pen, and Nocorrode solder paste are all useful in their own ways.

Then (since propane torches are not allowed indoors at the O'Brien Civic Center) we all went outside to see a demonstration of how to solder copper pipe:

- Make both surfaces shiny,
- Apply lots of flux,
- Heat it with a propane torch, apply solder.

It's a thing of beauty when it works.



RANV **THE PREZ SEZ**

Bob KB1FRW, President

FIELD DAY, FIELD DAY, FIELD DAY, IT IS THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN! Plan, plan, plan—then scurry around gathering radio stuff, meet in a big field or two and work until you think you might drop (only on Sunday) putting up four towers and antennas, three tents. Get all the radio stuff working and get on the air for 24 hours making as many contacts as you can. Then tear it all down and put it away for next year.

This is one of the RANV showcase performances. We routinely place in the top-ten stations in the nation in the 2A category, which has the largest number of entries. We have finished number one 6 times since 1986 and have no intention of letting up this year! The show consists of 4 continuous running stations, CW, Phone, GOTA, and VHF/UHF that need to be setup, manned, and torn down all in a three-day period. This takes quite a slew of people (about 30 last year) so we need you. In exchange for your blood, sweat, and tears you get bragging rights if it all stands up for a day and if the propagation gods smile upon us. You also get to learn how it all goes together, a valuable skill set that applies to many aspects of Ham radio.

So come one, come all and help out this year with any part you feel like. There is opportunity to operate if you are a contester type (see W1SJ) or a relatively inactive or new ham (see AB1DD) or you want to take a chance with 6-meter at the UHF-VHF station (see KB1FRW).

We setup three main operating areas with four 50-ft. towers and antennas, three tents including a 32'x 16' for GOTA/VHF. We need setup and tear down help plus some one with a pickup truck to move things Friday afternoon and Sunday afternoon (see the above call signs to help), all jobs are important and make the whole event work. Anyone want to take care of the food?

This all takes place June 24-26th at the Chittenden Solid Waste District field (why do you think they call it "Field Day"?) in Williston. Come visit even if you can't lend a hand and be sure to get on UHF/VHF and HF and give us a contact. We are usually right near the UHF/VHF calling frequencies and will move to any band you have.

Last weekend was quite a time with Saturday kicking off with the Essex Memorial Day parade that almost ended disastrously when a large semi truck in the parade tore down an overhead wire as it was leaving the Champlain Valley Fairgrounds, trapping three divisions (30%) of the parade on the fairgrounds. Some quick thinking and some good luck got the parade rerouted a bit out of order but it continued.

Then the next day was the Vt City Marathon which hadn't got off to a very good start earlier in the week when W1SJ and I tried to put up the Marathon primary

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US Mail: POB 9392
South Burlington, VT 05407

Web: www.RANV.org

Reflector:
groups.yahoo.com/group/RANV

Meetings: 2ND Tuesdays • 7:00^{PM}
113 Patchen Road
South Burlington
The O'Brien Civic Center

Repeater: 145.150, PL 100; **WBIGQR**

New Hams, Mentoring:
RANVMentor@gmail.com

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Prez Sez cont.

repeater only to find that the antenna tower we used was gone and we didn't have what we needed to get the job done. Two more trips (and one lightening storm) later we had it on the air Saturday afternoon only to discover a few hours later it was too noisy to work well in the low signal areas. This gave W1SJ the opportunity to setup the net control station at the waterfront and go and fix the antenna. It was pretty nip and tuck for a while.

The Marathon itself went off with very few glitches considering how the setup went and the runners were able to enjoy their day in the sticky hot sun. Fortunately the repeater came down a lot easier than it went up and by 4:00^{PM} on Sunday it was over.

Plugged in the NEAR-Fest Amp the other day and it didn't blow up so I may be making progress there, but I have slowed down on that for a bit while I learn more about it, more to come.

73, Bob KB1FRW



Parades & Marathon cont.

The good news is that the RANV Go-Kart performed flawlessly as I was able to cruise several divisions along the parade checking for problems. The no-so-good news is that Representative Peter Welch is not a CW operator because the high speed CW emanating from the van was clearly bothering him and he changed divisions. The CW had no effect on Governor Shumlin however.

Thanks to AA1SU, KB1FRW, KB1KCL, N1LXI, N1WCK, N1WQS, W1DEB, W1OKH, W1SJ, W3BH, W4YFJ.

Less than 24 hours later, we were back at it, providing communications for the Vermont City Marathon. Rain and hot, humid weather promised to make things very challenging for everyone. Fortunately, things didn't get too hot, and runners adjusted to the less than optimal conditions.

A number of changes made things interesting. A major change at the finish line had everyone nervous about how things would work out. The repeater site underwent changes and we struggled for several days to set up a suitable mount for our antennas on the building and have it work right. This year, we were able to borrow the Vermont Emergency Management trailer. This gave us a self-contained, air-conditioned operating facility which was much improved over the tent we were used to using. It did take a bit of thought to figure out how we would fit everything into place, but it worked perfectly. Although our new location in the park was quite muddy, we were right next to food tent, which was very helpful!

I can report that no one got swept away by the high tide in the lake, there were no lost busses, no lost kids, and we had an average number of medical calls.

In non-communications results, Jim KE1AZ finished the full marathon in 5:08 and Laura KB1MRT ran a leg in the 3-5 runner relay. Neither carried a radio in the race.

In all, 37 hams were involved in providing communications for the 2011 Vermont City Marathon.



Field Day cont.

injured. As anyone who is at Field Day can attest, when we have a lot of help, the antennas go up in short order. Please let Mitch know what times you will be able to help out at the site.

Once we get the facility in place, we need to make sure we have the operators to put the contacts in the log. We put the experienced contest operators in phone and CW where the rates can be quite high. There are early morning slots for newer testers to try their hand. For the casual operators, we have the GOTA station (HF) and VHF stations to keep running. We try to keep these stations running throughout the day and early evening. Operators are scheduled, so please contact Carl AB1DD to get on the GOTA schedule. We also need young operators for the youth bonus. Get those kids to the Field Day site so we can get 'em on the air!

Gotta GOTA cont.

is all the time needed. Get a friend or two and sign up for some time in the "big chair." I'll be setting up a schedule of operators soon, so get your time slots reserved today. First come, first served. The times are 2:00^{PM} on Saturday to 2:00^{PM} on Sunday, June 25 and 26. See you there!

PS, *There is also a need for mentors.* Same time frame, but you will need to hold a General or Extra class license.

Contact Carl, AB1DD@ARRL.NET



If you cannot make it to Field Day, please be sure to look for us on the air and give us a contact. The VHF bands get very quiet due to lack of activity. Get on and make some noise!

For more info and details visit <http://www.ranv.org/fd.html>

- Our Field Day planning meeting will be held on June 20th at 7:00^{PM} at the shack of W1SJ. If you are new to Field Day, this is the best way to get a feeling for what is about to happen on the weekend.
- Sign up for whatever hours you can spare to be available. If you can't decide, then come for the whole show! Contact Mitch W1SJ or call (802) 879-6589.

The operation will run from 2:00^{PM} Friday until 6:00^{PM} Sunday:

- Friday, 2:00–9:00^{PM}: **Antenna Setup**
- Saturday, 10:00^{AM}–2:00^{PM}: **Station Setup**
- Saturday 2:00^{PM}–Sunday 2:00^{PM}: **Field Day operating**
- Sunday 2:00–6:00^{PM}: **Tear Down**

FD Site Directions:

- Route 2A to Mountainview Drive at the lights. This is 2 miles north of I-89 or 1 mile South of Essex Junction.
- * Take Mountainview Drive EAST for 1 mile, turn left on to Redmond Road.
- * Take Redmond Road to top of hill (less than a mile). Look for hams, antennas, guy wires, etc. Park on the road (right/east side).





RANV

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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday • June 14 • **7:00 pm**

O'Brien Civic Center
113 Patchen Road • South Burlington

“ Introduction to SDR ”

www.RANV.org