



RADIO AMATEUR News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

March • 2012

An ARRL Special Service Club

Vol. 22 • No. 3

NEXT MEETING: MARCH 13

“TRANSCIVER DESIGN PART II LEARNING DESIGN TOOLS”

RICH LANG W1ELL WILL PRESENT PART II OF his current project: *Designing and Building An HF Transceiver*. He will continue the discussion begun in January, along with additional demonstrations. More details can be found in the December '11 **NEWS & VIEWS**.

Following the presentation will be snacks and a chance to catch up with folks.



VERMONT QSO PARTY: 24 HOURS OF STORIES

Mitch W1SJ

WHEN YOU OPERATE IN A CONTEST FOR 24 HOURS or more and make hundreds of contacts, there are dozens of stories. The stories run the gamut of glorious runs right down to the times when one cannot buy a contact. The stories include how equipment worked well, or failed at key times. And finally, there are the human stories—running into folks you haven't spoken to in years.

At the Friday night start of the QSO Party, I was really happy that 20 meters was still open and producing contacts. Shortly

Continued, page 3

HAM-CON WRAP

Mitch W1SJ

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, HAM-CON 2012 was a success. Attendance was around 300, up from last year. The gate was higher and expenses were a bit lower, resulting in higher revenue. And most important: everyone enjoyed the show! The overall assessment is that the new location at the Holiday Inn was a hit.

Not too bad considering that last April we were literally tossed out in the street by our former venue. We were given the ability to return there, but only if we moved the date by a considerable amount—into April. Ultimately, we decided to stick with our traditional date, for many reasons. In the summer, we thought we had a new venue set up to go, only to learn that we couldn't use that location either. It was a struggle, to be sure.

Even when we finalized plans for the new location, we had to recreate the show since the layout of the space was quite different. This allowed us to reinvent some things we were doing.

With three forum rooms available, the first thought was to increase the number of forums. However, a nagging complaint I kept hearing was the lack of a space for attendees to sit and meet others. Demographically, we are getting up there in years, and sitting down is becoming more of a necessity. And I still wanted to offer something more than the two rooms of forums. Then we also realized that placing W1V and other activities in the lobby was not going to happen. Thus the “Activities Room” concept was born, which combined Relaxation Area, W1V, Tech Table, and several mini-forums all in one place.

I thought the concept worked quite well and it certainly helped the W1V operation as there was ample room for operators and spectators. The mini-forums were a hit! All of these forums had 5–7 interested people standing around, which was the ideal number we were looking for. We didn't have large numbers of attendees using the relaxation part of the room, due partially to the fact that folks didn't really “find” the room until later in the day.

The forums program was fantastic. All

the forums drew around 15–20 people and some had even more. I'll be the first one to tell you that I felt I was selling out when I scheduled forums on Cell Phones and Computers, but both these forums had a fervent following and were the right topic at the right time. There were a lot of great comments on our guest presenters, Joel Hallas and Gordon West. The skype hookup with Gordo in Southern California was near perfect and it really felt like he was in the room with us. Special thanks to Ron KK1L for running Tech on that. He made it look very easy, although I know that these high tech presentations can have problems. The technology is such that we can bring virtually anyone from anywhere electronically to the show! Not to be overlooked, the non-technical forums, ARRL, RACES/Irene, and Sounds of DX were also well attended and enjoyed.

Anytime you think everything is planned properly—guess again! The set up for the vendor room was based on the number of vendors we had in the last two years. We had a somewhat smaller room and we lost

Continued, page 3

RANV:

SECRETARY'S REPORT

JEFF N1YD, SECRETARY

JANUARY MEETING

Business:

- We welcomed five new people to our meeting: Matt, Denny, Kevin KC2KGL, Shane, and Nelissa.
- The Hamfest will be at the Holiday Inn this year; a new location. We will have three forum rooms and a lot of space. We will also have a special event station, W1V, set up; the flea-market; and expert speakers. Look for "HAM-CON" on Yahoo groups to get in on all the details.
- There is an interesting net on Echolink 9123 at 10:00 on Mondays.
- We voted to spend \$60 for an ad in the Vermont Ham Directory. On February 12TH there will be a webcast from W1AW.

Presentation:

Rich Lang, W1ELL gave a presentation on an SDR transceiver that he is designing and building himself. It is based around a PIC DSP that makes all kinds of processing possible. The radio will have knobs (connected to encoders) and HTTP control.

One part of the project is to make custom circuit boards. Rich found that Free PCB is a good tool to draw a design, and it even does auto-routing of the wire traces. To build the board, one can send the design to "Express PCB," or etch it at home using assorted tricks and chemicals.

We didn't get to see a completed radio, but Rich's project is quite ambitious.

Part II will come in March.



RANV FLEA-TABLE

The table saw quite a lot of business, again, this year—many very good bargains were found, and sellers did very well overall. Not much was left when the day wound down.

There is a market for your old stuff, but it's got to be useful and in decent shape. Not perfect, fixable seems OK, but not *junky* junk! Keep an eye open as you poke around your shack, and pile up those things you no longer have a need or use for. Then haul 'em in to the flea-table next year!

Many thanks to those who brought in stuff to sell



ARRL NEW ENGLAND DIVISION CABINET MEETING—JANUARY 7TH



VERMONT WAS ABLY REPRESENTED AT THE NE DIVISION CABINET MEETING last January by Paul Gayet AA1SU, Vermont SM; Gerry Ashton WY2Y, Green Mountain Wireless, President; Bob Allen KB1FRW, RANV, President; and Carl Dow AB1DD, RANV, Vice-President. The New England Division meets twice a year; the goal is to have a number of clubs represented, although the winter meeting can be tricky due to weather curve-balls. Around 35–45 people from the New England states attend the meetings which are usually held in Massachusetts or southern New Hampshire.

Talk centers on Spectrum Issues, League happenings, FCC issues, Enforcement, EmComm, and efforts to grow membership in clubs and the League. With the ARRL's 100TH anniversary coming up, Centennial Celebration ideas were a hot topic at this particular meeting.

The next Cabinet meeting will likely be in late June/early July. If you'd like to attend, let Paul know.

CONTACTS

Bob KB1FRW, President 434-2517
mcamp@gmav.net

Carl AB1DD, V-Pres./Treas. 482-3878
ab1dd@arrl.net

Jeff N1YD, Sec'y 879-1789
jbonn@us.ibm.com

EDITORS

Kathi K1WAL 985-8535
k1wal@arrl.net

Robin N1WWW 349-0214
n1www@arrl.net

Newsletter submissions to both (in case one of us is away): k1wal@arrl.net
n1www@arrl.net

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; WB1GQR

New Hams, Mentoring:
RANVMentor@gmail.com

one large vendor, so there should have been plenty of room. It didn't quite play out that way!

Carl had a real problem with vendors flowing in early and completely using up all available tables and space. When I arrived, we did a lot of creative rearranging to get almost all of the vendors in, but a couple of the later arrivals didn't get tables. While we make no guarantees about table availability, we do feel bad about this. This was a good/bad scenario. *Good* to see the number of vendors increase after 2 slack years, *bad* that we had to turn some customers away. Now I know what airlines go through every day to fill airplanes up! Rest assured that we already have some plans to deal with this next year.

All morning, the vendor room was filled with tables chock full of stuff and happy

hamfesters perusing (and later buying) some of the said stuff. Certainly, the room looked very busy and active. Afterwards, many of the vendors indicated that they were happy with the sales results. Many of the buyers indicated the same.

The new location made things challenging and kept all of us on our toes. Bob had to reinvent how we were to set up the yagi when we learned the AB-577 tower would not be able to be used. And then there were last-minute snags which had to be overcome. But it worked! We pointed the beam NE and ran Europe all morning before doing a run toward the states. Several operators stopped by and enjoyed operating for extended periods of time.

The closing ceremonies ran a bit late as we were making things up as we were going along! We eventually fell back on our original plan to open up the wall between two rooms so that everyone fit comfortably. This year, Kathi K1WAL, along with Carl AB1DD, wrangled more door prizes so we had more stuff to give away. It was also great to see that many folks hung around until the drawing.

We had a nice quick VE session which served 9 applicants and created 5 new hamsters. By 3:00 the space was emptied out and we all got to go home—a lot earlier than in previous years.

A lot of people work to make HAM-CON happen. They give up valuable vendor and forum time to do this and we all appreciate their efforts. Here's the list—I hope I got everyone: AA1SU, AB1DD, K1CRS, K1WAL, KB1FRW, KB1IVE, KB1LHB, KB1LOT, KB1MDC, KB1PDW, KB1THX, KB1WDN, KB1WUB, KE1AZ, KK1L, N1FBZ, N1LXI, N1PEA, N1WWW,

N1YD, NW1V, VE2EQL, W1DEB, W1SJ, W4YFJ, WY0N, and Sandy.

We call HAM-CON “the best little Hamfest in the world” and to-date no other “little” Hamfest has challenged this. We have a forums and activities programs which is better than shows many times our size. And unlike many other non-ham shows around us here in Vermont, we have remained solvent. It's not easy to put on shows like this anymore, but we'll keep chugging along so that we can showcase amateur radio in Vermont.

CHECK YOUR ADDRESS

RANV members are asked to check their mailing address and Email address we have on file so that we can communicate quickly and efficiently. You can check your mailing address in the January Newsletter (printed version only). Or check the mailing label on the back of your newsletter (assuming you got your newsletter!). Your E-mail address can be checked at www.ranv.org memb.html. If there is no address listed, it means that we don't know your address, or that the last one we had bounced. Thanks for taking the time to check these items.



into the event, I worked K5FLU in Mississippi. The call sign and location seemed very familiar, so I inquired about his name, which he said was Martin. Now I was sure. Martin is Martin F. Jue, whose initials are MFJ! I've spoken to him several times at Dayton while he was at the booth. And I thought he only operated CW. We chatted a bit, before I continued the run.

I moved to 80 meters to catch the Vermont activity window at 8:00, where I ran into Arnie W2HDI and Bob AB1NJ for the first of a few contacts. I then jumped into the DX Window and ran some 80 Meter DX for a while, but it was tough – high noise, poor copy. Paul W1IMD (originally from Burlington) sent me an E-mail from Maine telling me that I needed a better receive antenna. Yup, I know that! Heck, he didn't even give me a contact!

I was looking forward to the morning where the DX starts rolling in on 20 meters, but old man propagation had another idea. There was no DX on 20 meters and nothing on 10 meters, so I packed my bags for 15 meters, where the Black Sea Competition was in full swing. I got right in working many Russian and Ukraine stations. I stayed on 15 meters where DX was worked, albeit slowly. No big pileups of German, Italian and British stations this year!

Continued in April

HAM RADIO CLASS MARCH 24-25

Mitch W1SJ

The Spring Ham Radio Class will be coming up March 24-25th. If you are interested in taking the class, contact me immediately as registration will close soon. The Technician class (for new hams) will be offered Saturday and the General upgrade class will be offered Sunday. The package comes with books, on-line training and live class, with exam session at the conclusion. If you, or someone you know, are waiting for a good time to take the class, note that I will likely not offer it again for a long time, so jump on it now!

VEC Exams

Every 2nd Friday
6:30–8:00PM

29 Mansfield Ave. • Burlington

Tech, General, Extra class licenses.

Bring 2 forms of identification, copies of existing license and CSCE (if applicable), pens and pencils, and the exam fee (\$15—exact amount only please).

??S Email Ralph KDIR@arrl.net or the GBA ARRL VE Team website at BARCVT.net





RANV

PO Box 9392
South Burlington, VT 05407

NEWS & VIEWS

March • 2012

INSIDE

- Secretary: January
- HAMCON Wrap
- VT QSO
- ARRL Cabinet Mtng

Upcoming, Notices, & Other Misc

- RANV: April Meeting—4/10
- NEAR-Fest 5/4 & 5, www.near-fest.com/
- Steering Wheel: 3rd Tues, 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

NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY • MARCH 13 • 7:00^{PM}

O'Brien Civic Center

113 Patchen Road • South Burlington

***“Transceiver Design
Part II”***

www.RANV.org