



# RADIO AMATEUR News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

February • 2013

An ARRL Special Service Club

Vol. 23 • No. 2

**NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 12, 2013**

## **"MOVIE NIGHT!" VP8ORK, South Orkney, 2011**

LOCATED JUST BELOW 60 DEGREES SOUTH, THE SOUTH ORKNEY ISLANDS are one of only four DXCC entities within the UN Antarctic Treaty Zone. Both Britain and Argentina have scientific bases on the islands, but neither nation holds a recognized sovereign claim. But even without national bureaucracy, staging a major DXpedition to a stateless, international piece of land is still challenging and expensive. Icebergs, rugged cliffs, and strict environmental regulations are just a few of the reasons why these islands are so difficult to activate.

Against the backdrop of stunning Antarctic scenery learnt what it took for the MicroLite Penguins to bring another of the DX world's most unique, and most wanted, on the air.

After the show, enjoy some of our usual chew 'n' chat time!



## **THE CASE FOR A REALLY GOOD SOLDERING IRON**

**Bob DeVarney W1ICW**

THE OTHER NIGHT I WAS AMUSING myself, thinking up a list of indispensable tools for the beginning ham or electronics hobbyist, and trying to prioritize them. You know the kind of list... the top five tools you can't be without when starting out in electronics, kind of thing. Right near the top of the list was a really good soldering station. Time and again, I see many new hams and beginning electronic nerds starting out with a decent set of hand tools, but nothing (or nearly nothing) in the way of a soldering iron. As a bit of a tool fetishist, I take it upon myself to set the world straight on this matter.

If you think about it, in *our* hobby at least, there is precious little you can do without a soldering iron. Soldering a dipole together. Fixing a broken power wire on a mobile rig. Putting on a PL-259 connector. Soldering the cat to the dog... you get the picture.

*Continued, page 5*

## **ARRL UPDATE**

THE NEW ENGLAND DIVISION CABINET MEETING was held in Springfield, MA on January 5, 2013. There were about 30 people present, including our Paul AA1SU.

### **FCC NEWS**

The FCC and Congress want lots of broadband access, especially on the 225 MHz to 4 GHz range. ARRL requested a new allocation action from the FCC for 472-479 KHz. Various VE exam administrative changes are being discussed such as the reduction in number of required VE's, changes in grace periods, and consideration of lifetime licenses. There have been some enforcement issues, primarily on the commercial side with pirate stations and non-approved equipments.

### **AROUND THE LEAGUE**

The 100th Anniversary National Convention is coming up in Hartford, CT on the 3rd weekend of July, 2014. The committee has already been formed and is at work! There will be no Boxboro convention that year. The League is looking for ways to

*Continued, page 2*

## **HAM-CON IN 2 WEEKS!**

**Mitch W1SJ**

HAM-CON is Saturday, February 23rd 8<sup>AM</sup>-2<sup>PM</sup> at the Holiday Inn Convention Center. And in the words of the immortal Ed Sullivan, "we have a really big shooooow planned for you."

I'm excited to announce that we will have **Bob Heil K9EID** as our special speaker coming to us live from Illinois via Skype. Bob is an audio engineer par excellence and many of the radio stations and concerts you hear just might be using one of his microphones. If you operate at my shack or at Field Day, you would also be using one of his headsets. Be prepared to take a trip into the audio world and learn how to sound like a million bucks on the air!

**Joel Hallas W1ZR** will be back by popular demand. He'll start us off with a forum on building antennas and lead into the very popular "The Doctor is In". Make sure to bring a list of your most pressing ham radio questions and the Doctor will provide the answers and guidance.

*Continued, page 3*

## **RANV BY THE NUMBERS—FEBRUARY**

**Mitch W1SJ**

28	# of attendees at the Ham breakfast
57	# of tall stories told at said breakfast
6	# of ops at W1NVT multiop last weekend
2231	# of QSOs made at W1NVT in QSO Party
138	# of multipliers worked at W1NVT
500	# of people we HOPE to get at HAM-CON!

Tune in next month for the stories behind all these numbers!

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

**Kathi K1WAL, Secretary**

### JANUARY MEETING

Bob KB1FRW opened the meeting pretty much on time. The meeting began with announcements:

- VT QSO Party Feb. 1–3. Mitch W1SJ announced openings for multi-ops from W1NVT. 6 people indicated interest.
- HAM-CON is Feb. 23rd. Bob KB1FRW went over the jobs that need to be filled: antenna crew for Friday evening, Registration table, Flea Market table. Mitch W1SJ told us the forums that are lined up. A motion was made and approved to spend \$60 for an advertisement in the *VT Ham Directory*.
- Paul AA1SU discussed the recent ARRL conferences he attended in January—see the article in this issue of *News & Views*
- Kathi K1WAL will provide snacks for the February meeting
- The February meeting will be Movie Night – *VP8ORK South Orkney 2011 DXpedition*

#### Presentation: N1MM Logger

Paul AA1SU gave a presentation on the *N1MM Logger*. *N1MM* is a free ham radio contest logging software program for Windows (XP, Vista, 7, 8). Since the program is wide-ranging and time was limited Paul discussed some highlights that he has found useful.

There are multiple windows including a nifty grayline map, data entry window, bandmap, digital interface, logs, etc. The user can configure station data, club and packet node calls, and ports for radio control. Paul suggested using the highest baud rate possible. Paul had a radio set up for a demo. He was set up for CW with voice and called CQ a couple of times.

Other features are the ability to turn a

**THE 2013 VERMONT  
AMATEUR DIRECTORY  
WILL BE ON SALE  
AT HAM-CON!  
GET YOURS!**

ARRL Cont.

present its history as well as focusing on the future.

The *Digital QST* has generally been well accepted. Some web browser interfaces are not so great, and apps are not useful for the vision-impaired.

Space for digital modes are not keeping up with usage on the band plans. Time to revisit?

WRTC 2014 will be doing more test runs this July. The antenna raising fixtures that have been developed are being tested. KM3T and K1DG are available for club talks.

**T**HE ARRL BOARDS OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING was held January 18–19, 2013. The legislative objectives adopted for the 113th Congress of the United States are:

- Objective #1:* The ARRL seeks legislation instructing the FCC to extend the requirement for “reasonable accommodation” of Amateur Radio station antennas (a requirement that now applies to state and local regulations) to all forms of land use regulation.
- Objective #2:* The ARRL opposes legislation that would lead to the relocation of amateur spectrum or to sharing arrangements that reduce the utility of existing allocations.
- Objective #3:* The ARRL opposes legislation that diminishes the rights of federal licensees in favor of unlicensed emitters or encourages the deployment of spectrum-polluting technologies.

*Continued page 5*

### REPEATER ACTIVITY HOUR

Evenings: Tuesday 8-9 PM

Mornings: Thursday 9-10 AM

Members out of area can reach the repeater via IRLP node 7230 or Echolink node 97406

rotator, the ability to check partial call signs, duplicate checking, and best of all log templates for contests! It also shows the abbreviations for states and counties which is very useful.

Paul posted additional details on the RANV Reflector. The link to the software is <http://n1mm.hamdocs.com>. There is a lot of information on the website so be sure to give yourself time to explore.



### CONTACTS

Bob KB1FRW, President

[mcamp@gmav.net](mailto:mcamp@gmav.net) 434-2517

Jim Hefferon KE1AZ, V-Pres./Treas.

[jhefferon@smcvt.edu](mailto:jhefferon@smcvt.edu)

Kathi K1WAL, Secretary

[k1wal@arrl.net](mailto:k1wal@arrl.net) 985-8535

### EDITORS

Kathi K1WAL 985-8535

[k1wal@arrl.net](mailto:k1wal@arrl.net)

Robin N1WWW 349-0214

[n1www@arrl.net](mailto:n1www@arrl.net)

Newsletter submissions to either:

[n1www@arrl.net](mailto:n1www@arrl.net) or [k1wal@arrl.net](mailto:k1wal@arrl.net)

US Mail: POB 9392  
South Burlington, VT 05407

Web: [www.RANV.org](http://www.RANV.org)

Reflector:

[groups.yahoo.com/group/RANV](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RANV)

Meetings: 2<sup>ND</sup> Tuesdays • 7:00 PM  
113 Patchen Road  
South Burlington  
The O'Brien Civic Center

Repeater: 145.150, PL100; WB1GQR

New Hams, Mentoring:

[RANVMentor@gmail.com](mailto:RANVMentor@gmail.com)

**John Grow VE2EQL** always has very thought provoking forums and this year he will really blow you away with two forums. The first is "Remote Radio Control Via iPhone or iPad" where he will make contacts on his Elecraft K3 in Montreal using his phone! Finally, we see an important use for the smart phone. His second offering is "DC & Battery Use". A fact of electronic life is that we all need power. And if the power company isn't available, this talk will show you how it's done.

**John Molnar WA3ETD** will give a talk on "Operating on Medium Frequencies (MF)". John also holds the experimental call **WG2XKA** in which he operates on 470 KHz, below the AM broadcast band. Did you know that there is a proposal to give hams a small band in this frequency range? Will you be ready to CQ when that occurs? John will show you how with designs for receiver and transmitter converters and designs for antennas. You won't want to miss it!

**Bob DeVarney W1ICW** has been operating moon bounce, also known as EME, for a few years now and has many QSL cards to show for it. You may think that this is all a bunch of hoey, but Bob regularly communicates all over the world on VHF frequencies such as 2 meters by literally bouncing signals off the moon. He'll show you how it is done and how you can take part in this very interesting part of ham radio.

The **ARRL Forum** will feature our Director, Vice Director and Section Manager who will fill us in on what is happening at the ARRL and in ham radio in 2013.

And if you get tired of going to forums, we'll have our video presentation, **VP8ORK South Orkney DXpedition**, which features radios, antennas and penguins!

The **W1V** special event station will be back, along with a bunch of mini forums on a variety of topics.

Oh, and we have vendors, flea market and tons o' stuff for sale. This year, **Ham Radio Outlet** will be joining us. Bring your shopping list. If you are looking for something esoteric, let us know and we'll see if they can bring it for you. And if you are too busy to sell your stuff, Robin will be running the **RANV Sales table**. See article on this in this issue.

We have a ton of activities for you. In fact, you might go nuts trying to figure out what you want to see first. That's great! Just think of HAM-CON as the local Disneyland for Hams. Now make sure you bring a carload of folks to the fest!



## GOT STUFF? LOOKING FOR STUFF?

**The RANV Flea Table at HAM-CON is Your Answer!**

**G**OT YOUR STUFF ROUNDED UP and sorted out, want-lists made? If not you'd better get hoppin'—time's almost up!

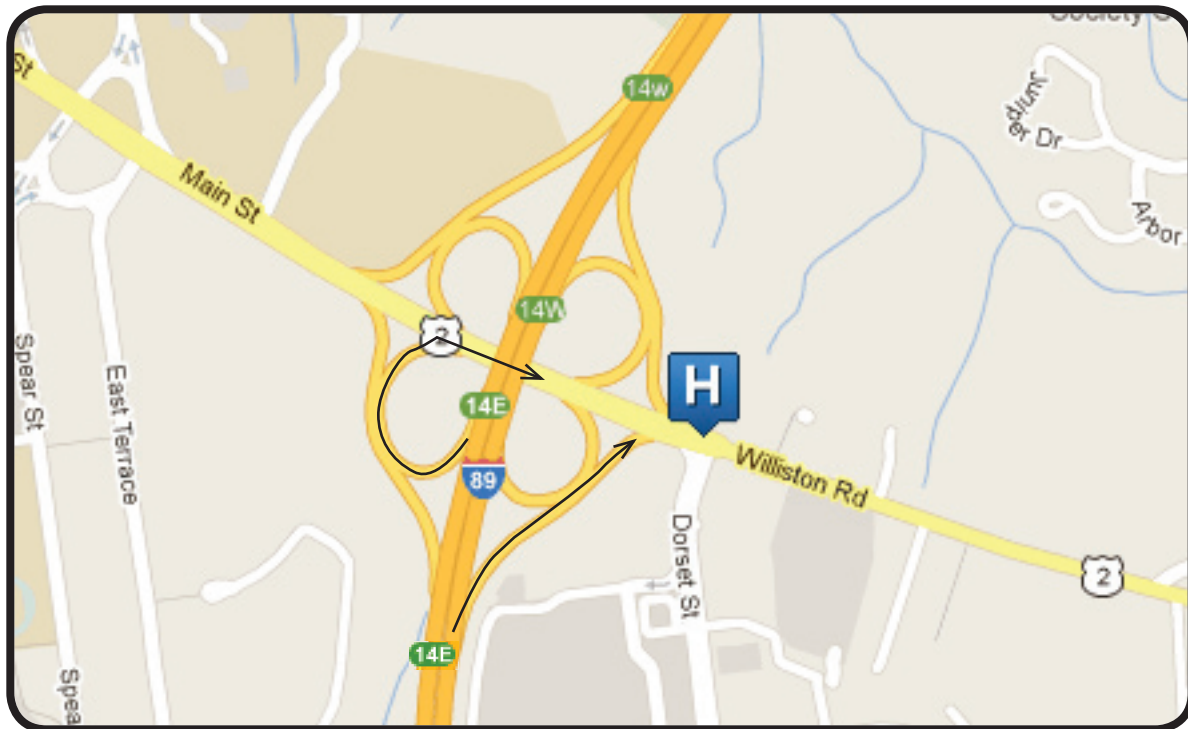
Table rules are pretty much as in the past: radio related only (includes laptops, APRS, etc)—rigs, accessories, connectors, antennas, tools, wire—you know the drill. Magazines: boxed only and sold by-the-box. Table-sitter has final decision on items and quantities accepted.

All items are to be marked with:

- your **call**,
- your **price** (no cents),
- item's **condition** and any **known issues**.
- Table-sitter must be given a list
  - with **your call**,
  - each item's **lowest acceptable price**,
  - your **HAM-CON contact info** (cell, HT frequency).

When you're ready to leave, stop by and collect your money and any unsold items. No charges or fees for this service—this is a benefit of your RANV membership.

Contact [N1WWW@arrl.net](mailto:N1WWW@arrl.net) with Qs.



# RANV SALES TABLE

**DROP-OFF "STUFF"/PICK-UP CASH • DROP-OFF CASH/PICK UP "STUFF"!**

Use your "RANV Member Benefit"! No charges or fees, just label and drop, and come back for your money.

Cut & tape these labels to your sale item(s) and fill out the Manifest to leave with Table Attendant.

*Remember:* HAM radio-related only (no CB, cell phone, etc), must be in working or repairable condition (indicate problems on tag), and no junky-junk! Any questions, call 349-0214 or email [N1WWW@arrl.net](mailto:N1WWW@arrl.net).

## RANV Sales Table sale labels

*tape to item, 1 per each piece (or 1 per box)*



Seller's Call:

Descript:

Condition:

Price:

Seller's Call:

Descript:

Condition:

Price:

Seller's Call:

Descript:

Condition:

Price:

Seller's Call:

Descript:

Condition:

Price:

Seller's Call:

Descript:

Condition:

Price:

Seller's Call:

Descript:

Condition:

Price:

Seller's Call:

Descript:

Condition:

Price:

Seller's Call:

Descript:

Condition:

Price:

## Manifest for Table Attendant

**Call:**

Contact: SMPLX: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell#: \_\_\_\_\_

**Item:**

Add'l info/comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest Price: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment accepted: **Check** \_\_\_\_\_

( all? VT only? circle 1 )

**Cash** \_\_\_\_\_

**Call:**

Contact: SMPLX: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell#: \_\_\_\_\_

**Item:**

Add'l info/comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest Price: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment accepted: **Check** \_\_\_\_\_

( all? VT only? circle 1 )

**Cash** \_\_\_\_\_

**Call:**

Contact: SMPLX: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell#: \_\_\_\_\_

**Item:**

Add'l info/comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest Price: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment accepted: **Check** \_\_\_\_\_

( all? VT only? circle 1 )

**Cash** \_\_\_\_\_

**Call:**

Contact: SMPLX: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell#: \_\_\_\_\_

**Item:**

Add'l info/comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest Price: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment accepted: **Check** \_\_\_\_\_

( all? VT only? circle 1 )

**Cash** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Follow format above for additional items)*

- Objective #4:** The ARRL seeks recognition of the unique resources, capabilities, and expertise of the Amateur Radio Service in any legislation addressing communications issues related to emergencies, disasters, or homeland security.
- Objective #5:** The ARRL supports the complementary legislative objectives of other radio communication services, particularly the public safety and scientific services that require spectrum access and protection from interference for noncommercial purposes that benefit the public.
- Objective #6:** The ARRL opposes "distracted driving" legislation that does not clearly exempt two-way mobile radio transmitters or receivers used by licensees of the Federal Communications Commission in the Amateur Radio Service.
- Objective #7:** The ARRL supports legislation authorizing FCC Commissioners to appoint an electrical engineer or computer scientist as an additional member of their staffs to ensure that Commissioners have adequate access to technical expertise when making decisions.



#### *Soldering Irons cont.*

We all need a good soldering iron in the hamshack, and as one who has tried a bunch of them, I feel qualified to comment on this.

My personal recommendation has always been, and still is, the Weller WTCPT (current model number) which is a 60-watt soldering station, complete with iron, stand, and water reservoir with sponge. These can be had nearly everywhere (except locally of course, although I did buy one once at Grainger's in South Burlington) for not much more than \$130.00. Heck, even Amazon carries them now! The older model of this station is the WTCPN which takes the same tips, but the iron is not interchangeable. The even older version was the WTCPS, I think.

I know, that seems like a lot of money, but think of it this way... this is a LIFETIME investment. There are few things in this world any more that actually last a lifetime, but I can assure you that this is one of them. I've had mine for at least 30 years (lost track actually) and I can't even begin to count the number of times I've used it, but I've built at least two complete Elecraft K2s, an Elecraft K1, several transverters from Tentec and Elecraft, never mind all the times I've used it to solder PL-259 connectors, audio plugs, you name it. It's safe to say without exaggeration that I've done tens if not hundreds of thousands of solder joints with mine.

You can of course get a decent soldering station that is NOT a Weller... there are many out there. The name Hakko comes to mind. But I recommend the Weller for the simple fact that you can get parts and replacement

tips ANYWHERE for them.

What? Replacing the tip? Yes, the tips do wear out over time, especially if you leave the iron on and don't tin the tip; they will oxidize over time and will become unusable. Tips are available from all the larger parts vendors, and if memory served me you could pick them up locally at Graybar and Grainger's last time I looked. And of course they show up at hamfests as well.

With the same iron, merely by changing the tip, I can go from a precision iron with a tiny PTR6 1/16" tip and 600° temp for doing surface mount work all the way up to a mondo PTE9 tip ( 900° ) which is perfect for soldering the braid to the body on a PL-259 connector.

In fact, I like the Weller so darn much I have two of them side by side, one with the big PTE9 tip left in it for when I need to heat up large amounts of real estate, and the other one which I switch tips in and out of frequently. Some might think that a bit of overkill, but the convenience is hard to beat.

Lastly, I will leave you with one parting recommendation. If the prospect of spending 140 bucks leaves you with heart palpitations and dry mouth, they can be had quite reasonably at hamfests, on ( dare I say the word ) eBay, and I have seen them show up at the next best kept secret, Electronic Surplus Services in Manchester, New Hampshire.

They are on Candia Road, right off I-93, and not much more than an hour and

**VE Exams**  
Every 2nd Friday  
6:30–8:00<sup>PM</sup>  
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).  
**Directions:**  
barcvt.net/directionsarc.html  
CARL AB1DD@arrl.net

**There will also be a VE Session  
at HAM-CON, at 1:00<sup>PM</sup>.  
Exams for Elements 2, 3, 4,  
and for Commercial.**

a half drive from the Burlington area. If you've not been here before, they are worth a special trip. These guys stock all kinds of electronic goodies from wire and cable in bulk to tools and test equipment. You never know what they are going to have in stock, so it's worth visiting often.

I've scored some PHENOMENAL deals on high-end coax down there, as they sell all their wire for 3 bucks a pound on the spool. Last trip down I got something like \$1,200.00 worth of RG-142 coax ( high power, teflon dielectric, RG-58 size that will handle a kilowatt ) for the princely sum of 24 bucks. Just an example. They usually always have used soldering stations in stock for less than 50 bucks, and you might even find a triple output station, like my Pace for \$120.00 which retails new for over a kilobuck. Place should have a twelve-step program. Good thing I don't live closer is all I'm saying...

Electronic Surplus Services website is here:  
<http://www.esssurplus.com/>

A good reference guide for the Weller iron is here, and includes the list of tips available:

[http://www.apexhandtools.com/onlinecatalog/Parts\\_Lists/WTCPT\\_OI\\_PL.pdf](http://www.apexhandtools.com/onlinecatalog/Parts_Lists/WTCPT_OI_PL.pdf)

Lastly, a good basic guide to soldering is here: <http://www.astro.umd.edu/~harris/docs/WellerSoldering.pdf>





# RANV

PO Box 9392  
South Burlington, VT 05407

---

## NEWS & VIEWS

February • 2013

### INSIDE

- Secretary's Minutes: Jan. 8
- ARRL Updates
- Soldering Irons
- HAM-CON

### Upcoming, Notices, & Other Misc

- RANV: March Meeting—3/12
- HAM-CON: 2/23
- Steering Wheel: 3rd Tues, 6:30-8:30  
Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners
- Dues due? Pay online at [www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html](http://www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html)
- VT Ham Radio Calendar [www.vthrc.net](http://www.vthrc.net)

### Next Meeting

Tuesday • February 12 • 7:00<sup>PM</sup>

**O'Brien Civic Center**

**113 Patchen Road • South Burlington**

**“MOVIE NIGHT!”**

*[www.RANV.org](http://www.RANV.org)*