



July • 2013

An ARRL Special Service Club

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**NEXT MEETING: JULY 9**

**“ALL ABOUT THE CHAMPLAIN FERRIES”**

**Bob KB1FRW**

WELCOME ABOARD for a tour of one or two of Lake Champlain Transportation Company's ferries. I will show you how they work and where modern electronics are used on the oldest operating ferry in the United States and then we will see the changes that have occurred in a recent repowering of a sister ship. If time and scheduling allows we might make it onto our tour boat which is mostly fly by wire.

**Time:** 1845

**Place:** Drive onto the ferry dock at the lake end of King St., park where the night watchman directs you and then gather to the north of the main office, about 100 feet, where there is a vehicle ramp.



## News & Views

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### Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- RANV: Aug Meeting—Picnic, **Saturday 8/10; Kill Kare State Park**, St. Albans; 11 AM–5 PM
- WRTC/IARU Event—July 13
- MS Bike Ride—S/S, 8/3 & 4
- STARC Hamfest—8/10, 8 AM–5 PM
- Steering Wheel: 3rd Tues, 6:30-8:30; Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners, Williston
- 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)

**ST ALBANS HAMFEST • AUGUST 10**

### FIELD DAY 2013 REPORT

**Mitch W1SJ**

In the planning for FIELD DAY 2013, we had it all going right. We had a dream team of 8 CW operators, plans to run multiple radios at CW to pick up more contacts, a strong setup team, and years of experience running a smooth operation. As anyone who follows sports will tell you, how you look on paper is one thing—making it happen is something completely different. Our road to glory got potentially sidetracked. I say *potentially*, because we really don't know how this will all play out until the results are announced in October.

The devil is in the details, they always say. And the detail which many seemed to miss was the correct date. Field Day is always the **4th full weekend of June**—it is NOT the *last* weekend of the month. I've known this for years and I sent e-mails out to everyone well in advance, announcing the correct date. There were also two articles in the newsletter. And yet, almost half the crew ignored the communication and went with their (incorrect) assumption. We lost several participants to other activities planned on the wrong date and were late in planning certain things.

In terms of score, we were down about 1000 points. The big winner this year was phone, up 326 points over last year. Sadly, the big loss was at CW, down 880 points. We are all trying to understand that. We had a great station and great operators, certainly equal or better than last year. The conventional wisdom is that there were less CW stations to work this year. We started out real well, but through the night and Sunday the CQ's went unanswered and few new stations were found while sweeping the bands. Meanwhile, phone gorged on a

20 meter feeding frenzy fed by short skip. And when 20 meters ran out of gas Sunday, a fresh 15 meters opened up to provide big numbers the rest of the way.

How could phone be so successful while CW struggled? Dunno. Propagation is like the weather; anyone who claims to truly understand it is telling you a fish tale. Ultimately, all we can determine at this point is that we did our best and we “gots what we got.”

GOTA was another story. This operation has two very important goals: new operator training, and generation of extra points. We know that planning suffered due to the date mix-up and low participation. We fell short of the allotted contacts and missed opportunities on many of the bonus points mainly because no one was “minding the store”. The result was that we were down 500 points—a considerable number. But worse were reports of operator confusion and that some operators were not following the directions of the coaches. To put this in perspective, we did well in scoring, but we strive to be the best in the business, and we missed the mark on that.

All other aspects of Field Day ran well. Setup was like clockwork and take down,

even though interrupted by an hour-long downpour, went smoothly and efficiently. The VHF and Satellite stations did what was expected of them and we got all of the non-GOTA bonuses. We managed to have a cookout on Saturday, despite the poor weather—thanks to the folks who put that together. On the down side, the number of participants at GOTA was down and the number of visitors to the site was way off. The rainy weather no doubt had a hand in this.

We've looked at the negative side of things, but consider that we will still have one of the highest scores in the country and we bring a level of planning and organization better than any other Field Day group. We socialized, we learned new things, we had fun, and as far as I know, everyone had all their arms and legs intact when we were done. But we strive for excellence, and when some items fall short, as they did this year, we focus on those so that they get fixed and we don't repeat the bad history.

Look next month for the actual Field Day numbers and more insight as to how we did. Have a nice summer!





# SECRETARY'S REPORT

Kathi K1WAL, SECRETARY

## JUNE MEETING

### Business:

- The meeting opened with some last minute Field Day planning: a final headcount of who will be available for the many jobs and that go with Field Day before, during, and after. Paul AA1SU had contacted local politicians and agencies for our bonus points.
- We welcomed two visitors —Dennis KJ6S-DC (father of Scott KB1ZBU) and Roseanne (who goes by Roe) who has been newly introduced to amateur radio and is very interested in getting her Technician license.
- Bob KB1FRW said he would be able to set up a tour of the Ferry docks or a boat for a future meeting which was well received.

### Presentation: CW

The evening's presentation was all about CW! Jim KE1AZ started us out with a history of Morse code. He started in 150 BC with how the ancient Greeks sent messages over long distances by representing letters using 5 torches in an up or down position. Jim then talked about the use of semaphore flags during the Napoleonic wars. This lead up to Samuel Morse and what made him interested in long distance communications. Morse was a painter. While working on a portrait to the Marque de Lafayette in 1825, Morse learned that his wife back home in Connecticut was ill. By the time he got home to Connecticut she had died. This started Morse thinking about long distance communications.

Morse worked with a partner, Alfred Vail. At this time there were several inventors working on telegraphy. They were attempting to send whole words rather than individual characters. Morse had originally intended to transmit only numerals and

developed a dictionary to look up each word by its corresponding numeric value. It was Vail who realized the characters of an alphabetical code could be transmitted in actual words and sentences. It was Vail who considered the relative frequency of letters in the English alphabet. While working on this it struck him that the local newspaper who already worked this out in the type cases of the compositor!

Morse had difficulty getting a signal to carry over more than a few hundred yards of wire. He had a breakthrough with the help of Leonard Gale who added extra circuits, or relays, at frequent intervals and was able to send a message through about ten miles of wire. The first telegraphs used paper tape upon which impressions of the dots and dashes were made. When it became apparent that one could recognize the audio tones just as well, the use of paper tape disappeared.

Jim indicated that Samuel Morse was probably not someone you'd want to strike up a conversation with on the bus. Morse spent the rest of his life protecting his patents and suing people. He was also pro-slavery and anti-Catholic.

Jim had much more in his presentation that will soon be available on the RANV website.

After the history Mitch W1SJ talked about learning code. The biggest part of learning code is that you *have to practise!* It is best to practice for 1–15 minute intervals 3 or 4 times a day. Diddling with code two or three times a week won't do it—don't waste your time. It is also best to learn by ear, rather than visually. All the CW operators present agreed it is better to learn 13–15 words per minute. Learning at a slower speed will make it more difficult to 'speed up' later. The spacing between letters can often cause one to 'hit the wall' around 10wpm.

Paul AA1SU said he learned listing to the W1AW code practice (check out <http://www.arrl.org/w1aw> for the schedule and more information) or listen to ragchews on 40 meters and copy what people are saying.

For software, Mitch recommended *Morse Academy*, but it runs on DOS and doesn't always work in the DOS window of newer operating systems. Paul AA1SU recommended *Morse Runner*. Howie K2MME suggested copying code with headphones. He said low tones were best for him, around 400 Hz. He talked about tuning up and tuning down and zero beating a CW signal. Zack K1ZK compared zero beating to an orchestra tuning up to a signal note, the explanation put things in perspective for some of us.

Mitch played some segments of CW at various speeds. The CW guys were able to translate while the rest of us just had to believe them. That's incentive for learning!

Whether you were interested in learning CW or not it was a very informative meeting. I found it inspiring!



## MS RIDE "GREEN MTN GETAWAY 2013"

The MS150 is fast approaching on August 3 and 4. Here is an opportunity to provide community service as a radio operator! If you are willing and able, or have questions, please contact John Mauger N1WQS at [jollyjohn@comcast.net](mailto:jollyjohn@comcast.net)

For more information go to:

[http://bikemam.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/MAMBikeEvents?fr\\_id=19963&pg=entry](http://bikemam.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/MAMBikeEvents?fr_id=19963&pg=entry)



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

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## FIELD DAY PICS

Set-up

Below: KB1FRW, doing what it takes to get the #@\$! U-clamps clamped—Safety is always on our minds—somewhere...



6 bottom photos, clockwise from upper right:

- CW tent—Not everyone was focused on the task at hand at all times!
- K1ZK ready to rock 'n' roll
- Nic—a study in concentration. Nic, age 5, made three contacts on GOTA
- Two more future hams? Jeff N1YWB and his kids watching KB1WIZ at GOTA
- Nic (left) and brother Timothy, age 3. Timothy, assisted by Dad Eric KB1VNA, called out several times, but no answer. Next time!
- Dave KB1YGP and Jeff N1YD

## WRTC/IARU EVENT

JULY 13

Mitch W1SJ

THE SECOND LEG OF THE WORLD RADIO Team Championship Testing will take place **Saturday, July 13<sup>TH</sup>**. The WRTC is an event where some 60 two-member teams compete head-to-head in Field Day style, using stations with identical antennas. The goal of the test team is to work out all the bugs and to make sure all the sites play the same. WRTC takes place during the IARU Contest Saturday 8<sup>AM</sup> until Sunday 8<sup>AM</sup>. We work the same stations, but the scoring rules for WRTC are different. Some 30 stations will be put on the air for this year's test.

Vermont will be represented in this year's test. Brian K1LI and Mitch W1SJ are on both the Beam Team and Operating Team. On Friday, we will put up the antennas for the two stations located in Medfield, Massachusetts. Then, Saturday morning, we operate one of those stations in the contest for 24 hours. Our goal is the put the station through its paces and to make sure we have a similar signal to other stations all over the world. Of course, as testers, we also compete with each other for unnamed bragging rights!

During the day, we will be on 20 and 15 meters, working as many countries as we can find. It is not likely you will hear us up in Vermont. However, we switch to 40M

and 80M in the evening hours and will be very workable. Note that to be competitive, IARU and WRTC stations work primarily on CW, but a certain amount of SSB is also necessary to pick up various multipliers.

We hope to hear you in the pileups!



**RANV  
SUMMER  
PICNIC**

**AUG. 10 • 11–5**

**KILL KARE ST.  
PARK**