



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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NEXT MEETING: Holiday Party

The 2013 RANV Holiday Party will be Tuesday, December 10th at the QTH of W1SJ in Essex. Arrive at any time, AFTER 5:30. I am busy running errands and preparing for the event before this time, so please do not call early. If you need directions, contact me at w1sj@arrl.net BEFORE Tuesday night.

To be honest, I find running Field Day a lot more easy than preparing for a party. You can help greatly by doing two things:

1. Attending the party – there isn't much point of having this activity if you don't attend.
2. Letting me know who is coming and who is bringing what. If you keep this a dark secret or don't say anything until the last minute, then I get stressed out because I have no idea on how much food to have. Please go directly to www.ranv.org/partys.html and answer the questions. Please don't communicate this by sending E-mails or leaving phone messages – those get lost.

In the past few years, we have had a ridiculous amount of leftovers. As such, I will be cutting back the on the amount of food purchased....unless I hear that we will have a larger turnout.

The party is open to all club members, their families and hams in our area. This is a good opportunity for those mystery members who we never see to appear at a club function. And please do bring family as this is a family event. It doesn't matter if they are not interested in ham radio. Debbie will be at the party and I guarantee she won't be talking about ham radio! She tells me about all sorts of weird (to me, at least) conversations which have gone on at the party in past years.

If you plan on bringing something, please let me know so I can make sure that we cover the basic items and we don't get dupes. If it's a main dish, you should come around 5:30. If you plan to arrive later, bring a dessert item. Miscellaneous suggestions include: soda, cider, pies, cookies, cheeses, dips.

The party will go on, rain or shine (shine might be interesting...). We will not postpone the event in the event of snow, unless it is measured in feet.

Again, remember to fill out the RANV Holiday Party form, found at: www.ranv.org/partys.html. We look forward to seeing all of you at the Party!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Please check the mailing label on your newsletter. If your membership is expired, or if it is up in the first two months of 2014, please consider renewing now. Paypal is the preferred way to renew. Although it costs us more, it is, administratively, a lot easier for all of us.

Renewing your membership before it expires is very important for two reasons. First, we publish a membership list in January. If you are expired, you drop off the list. Second, having to keep track and send reminder notices is added work for the unpaid staff. It is a lot easier to not have to do this. You do not lose any time on your membership. If you expire in February 2014 and renew now, then your new expiration date is February 2015. So, get those renewals in!



SECRETARY'S REPORT

KATHI K1WAL

Business:

Our November meeting started with collecting and counting the ballots. Mike N1FBZ and Dave KCAPK counted with ballots and you guessed it- the incumbents, running unopposed, won: RANV President Bob KB1FW, RANV VP/Treasurer Jim KE1AZ, and RANV Secretary Kathi K1WAL. Surprise surprise!!!

The membership voted to approve \$60-\$140 for the purchase of a projector bulb for the club's projector. While the current bulb works now it is causing enough uncertainty that a handy replacement is necessary.

The upcoming Holiday Party was discussed. Bring a dish to share - Hors d'oeuvres and finger foods are always good. Please let our host Mitch W1SJ know if you are coming, if you are bringing anyone with you, and what dish you will bring. Sign up on the RANV website at www.RANV.org/partys.html.

The Presentation:

Our presentation was by Gene W1EBR who talked about his recent tower project.

Gene started by showing how the tower looks now: a lovely deep green (his town's zoning board made him paint the tower green) standing 48' tall with an unpainted cubical quad (2 X's with 5 rings) covering 20-17-15-12-10 meters. The antenna he built from a kit with a few modifications. The tower is a Rohn HDBX-48.

Gene's first spot of locating his tower turned out to be too expensive for the footing. Other locations were thwarted by trees so he ended up using a bare spot in his front yard near the road. This bare spot happened to be bedrock. The rock was schist in layers. He drilled (rather, he had drilled) 3 2" diameter holes 5' down. The base plate was on top of wedge anchors made of ductile iron. He prestressed the anchors by tightening it until the plate deformed slightly using an 8' wrench. Anchoring cement was used on exposed rebar. Since the cement set in 15 minutes he had to crank that wrench fast! Gene recommends Williams Ground Anchor Systems from Form Engineering when anchoring into rock. This is what the mining engineers use!

Since the trees weren't located in useful positions on his property he placed a section of tower next to 'main' tower for a pulley/wench system with a marine battery to power it. This system had a key lock for keep unwanted riff raff from fooling around with it. He anchored the wench into the rock and had a strap pulling the little tower back for tension. This way he can raise and lower the tower by himself.

On top of the 'main' tower is a 10' mast for his UHF/VHF vertical. The overall height of the tower plus all the antennas is 78 feet. He put the rotor section lower on the tower and put a thrust plate on top. He used 14' aluminum from the thrust bearing down to the rotor.

Gene did what he could to keep expenses down. One area he did not skimp was for the copper for his grounding system. He used copper ribbon to encircle the tower with several ground rods.

Gene is very happy with the results. This project took him a while to complete what with constructing the antenna, the engineering, the rock issues, and back surgery but it got done. It bears witness to the expression *Never Give Up!*

THE TEN METER CONTEST IS COMING UP MITCH W1SJ

The ARRL Ten Meter Contest will be held on the weekend of December 14-15th. Will you be operating in it? You'd better! All of the propagation forecasters are telling us that this will be the last hurrah for 10 Meters for a long time. The band is open right now and is expected to be in good shape for the contest. We are on the "second" hump of the current sunspot peak. Last year was a big dip (and a big wipeout on 10) and the year before was the first hump with great conditions. After this year, we head down into the sunspot minimum. Forecasters are expecting upcoming sunspot peaks to be quite poor, so this might be the last great gasp on 10 Meters in our lifetime.

The contest starts Friday, December 13 at 7 PM. At this time, the band is usually dead, but you might pick up some locals and perhaps some E-skip or even scatter. If the band is in good shape, Europe starts rolling in around sunrise, at 7AM, with the peak at 9-10 AM, finally falling off in the afternoon. The U.S. rolls in through the mid-morning and then all through the afternoon until an hour or two after sunset at 4:30. And then the whole show repeats on Sunday, giving you an extra day to do your DX shopping. Things finish up at 7 PM Sunday, just about the time the band has rolled over and died.

The rules are simple enough – just give a signal report and your state. U.S., Canadian and Mexican hams will also give their province or state, so it wouldn't be a bad idea to learn the Mexican states, while you are at it. DX stations will give you a serial number.

If you have a station, make sure you get on. If you don't have a station see if you can get yourself invited somewhere. And remember, Technicians can operate at 28.3-28.5 MHz, the portion of the band where 90% of the activity takes place.

See you on 10 meters!

THE RESULTS ARE IN
Mitch W1SJ

The Field Day results are in. I think. There were some late minute changes, so things weren't what they originally seemed. The listing is QST is, well, not correct.

Once again the Batesville, Arkansas group took top honors in 2A and we took second. They did this by setting a new 2A record of 16,862, besting the old record (us) of 16,320, set in 2011. They did this with a heavy CW attack with a total of 4953 QSO's. Back when we set the record, we had 5467 QSO's, so we still hold the 2A QSO record!

There is no use in crying about how we didn't win. It wasn't going to happen, even if we were perfect. The Arkansas group had the propagation, the tools and the will to succeed. We had the latter two, but the propagation for us was lacking. We were the highest Field Day score in New England by quite a bit, across all categories. So, we definitely got the job done, as best as the conditions would allow.

To be a contester, you live with the fact that the game is rigged. Certain areas usually have better propagation than others. It is a fact that typical conditions will favor the Northeast in a DX contest and favor the South and West in a stateside contest. I operate the Sweepstakes every year with the foregone conclusion that several stations out west will beat me, no matter what I do. We live for times like 2011 when we blew everyone away in Field Day and I beat everyone in my category in the Sweepstakes. But that is the exception rather than the rule.

The early confusion was that the Arkansas group originally claimed over 20,000 points. I stated that they must have counted one of their logs twice, because there was no way a 2A group could amass that point total, given the conditions. That assumption must have been correct, because a few weeks later, there was a score reduction. The second piece of confusion was that the ARRL, either in a moment of confusion or cost cutting, decided to list the battery and commercial power entries in with everyone else. Normally, there is a 2A, 2A Battery and 2A Commercial category listed. When they did this, a 2A battery entry had a higher score than us, but if you go to the results database, they are clearly in a different category.

The bottom line is that we are one of the class Field Day groups in the country, along with the other top 25 or so groups who consistently put on a great Field Day and produce a high score as well. The challenge, as it always is, is to sustain that effort year after year, despite changes in personnel and conditions. And that is just what we will be doing next June.





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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday • December 10 • 5:30pm

QTH W1SJ
ESSEX

Holiday Party

Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- HAM-CON February 22, 2014!
- Steering Wheel: 3rd Tues 6:30; Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners, Williston
- VE Exams every 2nd Friday; Red Cross Building 29 Mansfield Ave, Burlington
- Dues due? Pay online at www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html

www.RANV.org