



# RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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## **NEXT MEETING: Some (Not-So) Simple Audio Preamplifiers**

**Larry Heyl**

Tuesday, January 14, 2014

How good an audio preamp can you build with two, or maybe three, or even four transistors? The answer is a guarded “surprisingly good.” Larry Heyl will present an informal mix of theory and practice describing his pursuit of circuits with good performance while trying to avoid a host of problems chosen from the usual suspects of component selection, circuit design, temperature and supply voltage sensitivity, which lead to some less than obvious choices. In the spirit of full disclosure and truth in advertising, while his current crop of designs do have 2, 3, or 4 transistors in their amplifier cores, part of the fun is explaining (or rationalizing) the need for additional components for active loads, low noise voltage regulators, and other such odds and ends. Larry will pull together interesting topics and results from his design, fabrication, and test effort to make for an intriguing talk.

Larry decided to have heart surgery after 38 years of engineering practice and having garnered a bunch of patents for what he terms stupid op amp tricks. He still enjoys calculating, constructing and cursing at electronic gear, and hopes his saga will make for part of an enjoyable evening.

## **RANV – LOOKING AHEAD**

Mitch W1SJ

Many publications do a “Year In Review” at this time. I hate this waste of paper and electronic bits. It’s like watching a rerun of a bad TV show (aren’t they all bad??). Instead I’ll offer, “Looking Ahead”.

Despite some struggles in organizing meeting programs, recruiting and building on-air activity, RANV is doing quite well as we head into 2014. Membership is still holding at 110-120, the same level it has been for the last 20 years. Meetings continually draw 15-20 people each month. On-air activity is at its highest level in a long time. Our two largest events, Field Day and HAM-CON, draw a large number of club members. By contrast, other radio clubs are not doing all that well. In Vermont, while two other clubs are prospering, the others are in rough shape. Dropping

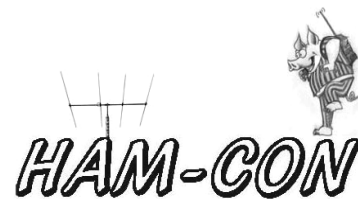
enrollments, lack of activities, lack of funds and even in-fighting have left clubs in precarious states. The story is no different outside Vermont. (Continue on page2)

**HAM-CON is coming!** In 8 short weeks it’s time once again for the annual winter gathering of hams, geeks, nerds, radios, boatanchors and exquisite junkie. While we love to make fun of ourselves, the thing is that HAM-CON is considered one of the best small hamfests anywhere. Attendees keep telling me that year after year, so believe it!

Right now I’m putting together the program. This is an inexact science as I have to figure out what things people want to see and then attempt to bring in the people to make it happen. I’m always looking for reasonable suggestions, so keep those cards and letters coming.

We will have a program similar to previous years with both long and short forums. We plan to set up W1V again this year. However, we need help in the form of a left or bucket truck to put up the antenna quickly. Anyone? We plan to have the RANV Flea Market table again. Everyone asks about who the vendors will be. Unfortunately, we have little control over that. The reality is that the vendors are getting older, the profit margins getting slimmer and the costs involved in traveling 4-7 hours up to Vermont are increasing. We’ll try our best, but getting a large number of vendors is a tough road for all small shows these days.

The thing we all need to be doing is selling the show by networking with all our ham and electronics type friends. Gone are the days when everyone gets on the radio all the time, so we have to resort to using more social media (gasp!). However you do it, reach out to your pals and make sure they accompany you Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> to HAM-CON 2014!



## Looking Ahead Cont.

When one looks up club information on the ARRL site, we find that RANV is one of the largest clubs in New England. The Yankee Clipper Contest Club with 300+ members is the largest, but it is a regional contest club. Both the Minuteman Repeater Association and Pioneer Valley Repeater Associations are a bit larger, but they are clubs which primarily support repeater networks. In terms of full service clubs, RANV ends up the largest in this category.

After two paragraphs of puffery, now the reality. We are only as good as the officers and movers and shakers who got us to and keep us at this level. When they go away and no replacement is found, we founder. A play on words, for sure, but very real, because I have seen this countless times, in and out of ham radio. Our continued success is to keep true to our vision and to make sure we attract and retain talented and motivated people in the organization.

There are challenges right ahead of us. We need a new newsletter editor starting in February. RANV is one of the three clubs left in Vermont which support a newsletter. Unlike everyone else, we mail hard copy to everyone, because it is important. This is a crucial tool in our arsenal – let's make sure we keep it healthy.

The other challenge is one which we have been eschewing for years – recruiting new hams. Vermont's ham radio population has remained stable for years – good news when you consider that most other Northeast states are losing ham population. But are the new hams actually doing anything, or are they simply hanging the license on the wall and moving on to something else? We've struggled with this for years and need to continue struggling to feed a new influx of members into the club each year. There is no black & white answer – just a lot of little things to do to get a positive flow.

Challenges aside, this will be a real fun year! The ARRL Centennial Celebration will be putting WIAW on the air from each of the 50 states. We will get to perform this honor in late March. It will be real blast and we need everyone to help out to pull this off!

We are back sponsoring the Vermont QSO Party this year and with the Centennial Celebration, this is going to be much larger. Everyone will be on looking for points in the Celebration and we'll be right in the thick of things. Both the QSO Party and the WIAW/1 operations are perfect places to get new hams on the air.

Activities pick up in the summer with the World Radio Team Championship in July. A

few RANV members will be helping out to set up the world stage in Massachusetts where 60 of the best contesters in the world go head to head. And a week later is the ARRL Centennial Convention in Connecticut.

And we will be busy enough with our own large activities, HAM-CON in February and Field Day in June. Both take a lot of planning and commitment from many people to put off.

I just put together my 2014 calendar. In it, I identify all the ham activities, (contest, hamfest, other) and block out the dates. Then I put in all of the non-ham weird stuff I do and family stuff. There were a couple of gut-wrenching conflicts I had to decide on (lessee, should I do the NAQP CW or go to the Cat Show in January?). The calendar is my road map to sanely get through the year and be able to do as much as I want to. I highly recommend you set this up now!

Looking ahead, we certainly have some challenges keeping things running smoothly. But we have a load of fun ahead of us too. I can hardly wait!

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### 2014 – A RADIOACTIVE YEAR! Mitch W1SJ

There will be a tremendous amount of radio activity this year! All year long is the ARRL Centennial QSO Party (December QST, page 67 or <http://www.arrl.org/centennial-qso-party>). We touched upon ONE aspect of this activity in another article – the WIAW/1 activation.

Overall, the Centennial QSO Party will run all year and stations will collect points from various members of the ARRL. Each ARRL member is worth a point and each life member is worth 2 points. Various ARRL appointees are worth 10-60 points. If you manage to track down the ARRL president, that's 300 points. Closer to home, we can offer you a holy grail of high ticket QSO's. QSO's with W1SJ are worth 100 points as a "past section manager". Same deal with W1ICW. QSO's with current Section Manager AA1SU are worth 175 points!

So, you go through the year making contacts with all sorts of hams on all the bands and modes accumulating points. There are 26 band-modes on HF alone (9 bands and 3 modes each, except 30 meters). That should keep us all busy! The good news is that you don't need any sophisticated software to keep track of this. You upload your logs to LOTW and it figures out the points for you! The bad news is that you must be registered with LOTW, so if you have been procrastinating about this, now is a good time to move forward with this.

A whole host of other operating events occur during the year. January 18<sup>th</sup> is the North American QSO Party. This is a nice contest, because it runs in a 10 hour window, starting at 1 PM Saturday. With all competition within North American, stations are easily worked with small antennas. This will provide a great start towards your Centennial Points collecting.

February 1<sup>st</sup> through 2<sup>nd</sup> is the Vermont QSO Party. Make sure you get on either from home or from my station to help put Vermont on the air.

March 1<sup>st</sup> through 2<sup>nd</sup> is the ARRL DX Contest. And yes, DX stations will be looking to collect ARRL Centennial Point as well, so activity levels should be up.

March 26<sup>th</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup> is the WIAW/1 activation from Vermont. We plan to have blast. Make sure you find time to join the party!

So there you are – 4 big operating events in the first 3 months and we haven't even touched about the CW and Digital contests! And with 10 meters still going strong (as of this writing) there will be plenty of fun for everyone. It's currently 10 degrees F outside. Now's a good time to get outside and get those antennas in shape for 2014!

## CONTACTS

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

Jim **KE1AZ**, VP/Trea  
jhefferon@smcvt.edu

Kathi **K1WAL**, Sec'y 985-8535  
k1wal@arrl.net

### EDITOR

Kathi K1WAL 985-8535  
k1wal@arrl.net

Newsletter submissions to K1WAL

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US Mail: PO Box 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> Tuesday • 7:00 PM  
113 Patchen Road  
South Burlington  
The O'Brien Civic Center

Repeater: 145.150, PL 100; WB1QR

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New Hams, Mentoring:  
[RANVMentor@gmail.com](mailto:RANVMentor@gmail.com)

## ANNUAL HAM BREAKFAST

Start off the New Year right! The Winter Ham Breakfast will take place Saturday, January 25th, 9:00 AM until noon at JP's Deli, 39 River Road (Route 117), 1.4 miles east of the Five Corners. The first hour is devoted to eating and meeting. That is followed by a semi-disorganized discussion on some aspect of amateur radio. With 30-40 folks showing up, it is like a mini-hamfest. Actually, it may be better than a mini-hamfest, as there is plenty of food and companionship to make for a fun morning! Make plans to join us on January 25<sup>th</sup>!

## VERMONT QSO PARTY 2014

Mitch W1SJ

The 2014 Vermont QSO Party will take place Saturday-Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup> through 2<sup>nd</sup> UTC. The activity will start 7 PM EST on Friday (January 31<sup>st</sup>) and finish up Sunday night at 7PM.

RANV will once again host and run the Vermont QSO Party. This was supposed to be passed around to other clubs, but things fell through the cracks this past year, so we will make sure the event comes off without a hitch.

The purpose of the Vermont QSO Party is to put Vermont on the air! That said, the goal is for as many hams to get on the air during the weekend and maximize the number of contacts. This will take on special meaning this year as the ARRL Centennial Celebration will also be running and there will already be a good deal of activity. In addition, the Minnesota, Delaware and British Columbia QSO Parties, the 10-10 International, the CW Sprint and Black Sea Contest will be running concurrently, so there should be no shortage of people to work.

A comment that I hear each year is how rare Vermont is in the Vermont QSO Party! The few active stations are easy to find, but after that, finding Vermont stations is tough. We ask that everyone get on and call CQ for a while – especially during the peak times in the afternoons. Folks outside of Vermont really do

want to do well – the top three scorers receive a bottle of maple syrup!

Operating in the Vermont QSO Party is easy – just give a signal report and your county and copy signal report and state, province or country. Full rules are on the RANV web site. But if you plan to work stations in the other contests, it would be worth your time to learn their exchanges so that you can help them out too.

Before the QSO Party, do some research on contest logging to make things easier for both you and the log checker (me). N1MM Logger is the gold standard for logging these days, but any software which generates a proper Cabrillo log will do. While we will accept a paper log, this is not ideal, because I have to grab it from the PO Box and then check it by hand – but please do operate and submit a log!

Once again I'll be hosting a multi-op effort at my station. This is a great opportunity to get some operating time in. This event is particularly nice because it is quite low key and the QRM is low. And unlike Field Day, there isn't a whole bunch of people watching over you, so it is more relaxing. I'd like to fill all of the operating slots during the day, so please do contact me with desired times.

Spread the word – and see you on during the Vermont QSO Party, February 1-2.

## W1AW/1

By Mitch W1SJ

Have you ever had the urge to operate from W1AW- likely the most sought-after non-DX station there is? To do so requires a 4-hour pilgrimage to Newington, Connecticut. This is not a bad idea, really, as there is much to see there. But with winter weather making things interesting these days, extensive traveling is not really a good idea.

But you CAN operate from W1AW and not have to travel more than 15 minute or so! How is that possible? Through the ARRL Centennial Celebration! As part of this year-long celebration, W1AW will be activated from all 50 states. I will manage the W1AW/1 operation from Vermont during the period March 26<sup>th</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Another group

will activate W1AW/1 from southern Vermont in the summer.

How will this work? I'm not really sure – ask me in April! The plan right now is to operate W1AW/1 from my station as much as possible during the week. I can put at least two stations on the air simultaneously, and perhaps a third with some antenna erection in the spring. In addition, we are looking for key stations across Vermont to also get on to activate W1AW/1 during the week, especially using CW and Digital – modes I tend to not operate on.

This is not a contest – more like a DXpedition. Our job is to make W1AW/1 Vermont as available as possible – especially to DX stations all over the world. Hams will be vying to work W1AW portable from all 50 states, so activity will be intense. Contacts will be short, but a little ragchewing is also possible. But there is a lot to do. As this is not a contest, all of the HF bands are in play. We are talking about 160, 80, 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12 and 10 meters on CW, phone and digital. And let us not forget that digital can encompass several different modes, including RTTY, PSK, AMTOR, packet and others. We should also have activity on VHF and UHF for local hams to get involved.

Groups in other states who are already on the air set up very serious looking spreadsheets to sort out bands, modes and operators. And they are reporting big pileups! Clearly, we will need to get a lot of people involved if we are to meet our goals. The activity starts Tuesday night March 25<sup>th</sup>, 8PM (March 26<sup>th</sup> 0000Z), and runs a full week until Tuesday April 1<sup>st</sup>, 8PM. The weekend of March 29-30<sup>th</sup> will be the major focus of operation but we should be on each and every day. The big question is who will be able to operate from where and when.

We have a couple of months to talk about this and see how some of the earlier groups are doing to come up with a solid plan. We also hope to do a major recruiting effort at HAM-CON.

And the good news – HQ will handle the QSL's! But we do need how to figure out how to generate a consistent log across all the operating sites we will use.

The **NEWS & VIEWS** needs a new Editor ASAP! Sadly Robin N1WWW and Kathi K1WAL are unable to continue as our newsletter co-editors. The position includes collecting articles for upcoming issues, staying abreast of current (HAM) events, formatting the newsletter, having them printed, labeling and mailing. We will help you as you take over the reins and learn the job. If you are willing to take up this noble and rewarding venture please contact Kathi K1WAL.



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### NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY • JANUARY 14 • 7:00 PM

O'Brien Civic Center • Patchen Rd  
South Burlington

**Some (Not-So) Simple Audio Preamplifiers  
by Larry Heyl**

### Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- HAM Breakfast January 25
- VT QSO Party February 1-2
- HAM-CON February 22, 2014!
- W1AW/1 March 26 – April 2
- Steering Wheel: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues 6:30; Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners, Williston
- VE Exams every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday; Red Cross Building 29 Mansfield Ave, Burlington
- Dues due? Pay online at [www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html](http://www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html)