



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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An ARRL Special Service Club

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NEXT MEETING: August 9th

SUMMER PICNIC KILL KARE STATE PARK

It's that time again! Summer Picnic time! Once again we'll be at Kill Kare State Park in St. Albans, this year on Saturday, August 9th. This is the same day as STARC's Hamfest at the St. Albans VFW, 353 Lake Street. Why not make a whole day of it by heading over to the hamfest first (opens at 8 AM) then come to Kill Kare and show us your new toys!

RANV will supply park admission, soft drinks, and charcoal. You bring the rest. Be sure to bring family and friends, food to eat, appropriate sporting goods and clothing, and any radio stuff you would like to play with. Leave pets at home since the park doesn't allow them, and it is too hot to leave a pet in the car.

We will set up a couple of radios, and if things go right, we'll have a remote radio setup to operate at W1AW/1 during the picnic. It's starting to look like another Field Day!

Directions: Take I-89 North to Exit 19, St. Albans. Go past the light and down the access highway 1 mile to Route 7. Make a right and head 0.5 miles into downtown St. Albans. Look for Taylor Park (big green) on your right and then look for Lake Street and make a left. Go 3 miles on Lake Street until you see The Bayside Pavilion at your left and a Shell station at your right. Make a right turn and head north. You will pass St. Albans Town Park. Keep going!

You will only go 0.7 miles from the turn and will cross a small bridge. Right after this bridge, turn left on to Hathaway Point Road. Unfortunately, the Park sign is often missing, so pay attention. Go 3 miles to the Park entrance.

THE MOST RADIOACTIVE TIMES EVER

Mitch W1SJ

We have a huge July issue of News & Views. This is because the last 3 weeks have been the most ham radio active weeks in New England ever, highlighting a very active year in which it seems everyone is chasing W1AW contacts.

Field Day, the last weekend in June, saw RANV crank out 4500 QSO's and 14,000 points, once again putting us amongst the leaders in this event.

Two weeks later, a group of 118 competitors, 59 referees and hundreds of support staff convened in Massachusetts for the Seventh World Radiosport Team Championship. This was like a combined super Hamfest and Field Day over the course of 5 days.

And a mere 3 days after that, many of the same people, plus a few thousand others got together in Hartford, CT for the ARRL 100th Anniversary National Convention. Anyone who is anyone in ham radio was there and it was a tremendous time.

And don't put that radio down yet! In another few weeks, starting on the evening of August 5th, we get to be on center stage for the second W1AW/1 bash in Vermont.

2014 RANV FIELD DAY BOX SCORE

80 CW	68	80 SSB	294
40 CW	418	40 SSB	337
20 CW	653	20 SSB	1738
15 CW	111	15 SSB	392
GOTA CW	0	GOTA Ph	500
VHF CW	4	VHF Ph	31
Sat CW	2	Sat Ph	0
Total CW	1256	Total Ph	3292

4548 QSOs 2410 Bonus 14016 Pts

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
QSO's	4547	4639	5467	4565
Bonuses	2150	2450	2070	2230
Points	13876	14802	16320	14230

FIELD DAY 2014 Mitch W1SJ

This year's Field Day was a bonafide Murphy year. We lost key operators and not one, but two computers gave up in the heat of battle. The fact that these major setbacks had a minimal effect on our score says a lot about how we are organized to deal with such things. The line score was 14,016 points and 4548 QSO's compared to last year's 13,876 points and 4547 QSO's. The good news is that despite the issues, we went up by 240 points and 1 QSO. But looking from the other end of the spectrum, the bad news was that we didn't really improve much.

Things started off well. Setup was quick and smooth - nearly perfect. We had a sizeable team and beautiful weather and things got done quickly. You guys on the setup team rock! A couple of mistakes in the setup manual were found and these have been corrected for next time. A balky PL-259 on the end of the dipole coax required attention. And, the extension mast was left off of the center tower which holds up the dipole.

Right at the start of the operating period all sorts of bad things started happening. Our ace CW operator, Doug AB1T wasn't able to attend due to a family emergency. We already had a smaller CW operator crew this year, leaving Paul, Howie and Linn to do virtually all of the operating. We were able to get Doug back on Sunday for a couple of hours and Tom W1EAT to help fill in Saturday evening.

But there were technical problems at the CW station. There were supposed to be two computers networked together. The network never worked right. And then the second computer died. After several hours, we were some 200 QSO's behind last year's mediocre rate. Things didn't look good. In the wee hours I was able to set up another computer and copy the logs over, allowing use of the second station. Eventually the operators were able to learn to smoothly do a run on one station and fill in QSO's on the second. When the dust had settled, the CW numbers were 1216 - only 62 behind last year. Certainly nothing to celebrate about, since the 10-year average is 1324, but not quite the disaster we anticipated.

Meanwhile, the phone station hummed along with massive rates starting with a 209 QSO blowout the first hour. As the rate slowed in the late night, Jeff and I worked our two-radio magic, keeping the rates high. Jim and Bob (FRW) kept things going in the 4-8 AM graveyard before Jeff and I came back for the big finish. We banged out 2762 QSO's over last year's 2700, and the 10-year average of 2562. In fact this was the third best we have done over the years.

Last year's GOTA station was a mini-disaster and we had big plans to fix that. We were only partially successful. Our goal for GOTA is to provide a facility for inexperienced operators to get on AND MAKE CONTACTS. Tuning around and NOT making contacts is contrary to this goal. The issue was that a run frequency could not be established. A frequency change or band change are the proper fixes as opposed to tuning around. That's a skill best left to the experienced operators.

The good news is that once I made my displeasure known, the GOTA station changed bands and changed strategy and made lots of contacts. Overall,

it was a very successful operation as we maxed out the contacts (500) and maxed out the points (1000) with 10 operators and 3 youths at the helm. Yes, the operator log was a mess and our ops were often calling CQ on top of other stations (I get reports). We'll work on that next year.

Take down was another mini-disaster. Due to computer failures, our logs were spread across 9 files on 7 different computers. It was a slow, arduous process to make sure I had a good copy of each piece of log - which took the better part of an hour. The other issue was that the tuning of the CW dipole has always been poor and I wasn't willing to sweep this under the carpet like we've done in the past. So, we spent another hour getting the lengths on the dipoles correct. By the time we started take down in earnest, we lost a good part of the team. We didn't leave the site until 9 and Bob didn't get home until 11:30. That's no good and we are tasked to come up with a better exit strategy for next year.

We had a bunch of bad stuff thrown at us this - some avoidable, some not. But we still managed to keep the score high, nailed almost all of the bonuses, keep the activity level high and everyone had a good time. I hope. And that's the mark of one of the leading Field Day operations in the country. We keep performing well, no matter what is thrown at us. Thank you everyone for your hard work!

2014 RANV FIELD DAY HALL OF FAME

AA1SU Paul - CW op; Phone op; VHF op; Equipment; Bonuses; Set up; Tear down.
AB1DD Carl - GOTA coach; Set up; Tear down.
AB1T Doug - CW op; Equipment.
K1WAL Kathi - GOTA coach; Set up; Tear down.
K2MME Howie - CW op; Set up; Tear down.
KB1FRW Bob - Phone op; VHF op; Equipment; Set up; Tear down.
KB1IVE Steve - GOTA op.
KB1LHB Adam - GOTA op; Set up; Tear down.
KB1LOT Jim - Set up.
KB1MDC Alan - Set up.
KB1THX Tim - GOTA op; Set up.
KB1WXM Bob - Set up; Tear down.
KB1YGP Dave - GOTA op; Set up; Tear down.
KB1ZEB Larry - GOTA op; Set up; Tear down.
KC1CCX Chris - GOTA op; Set up; Tear down.
KE1AZ Jim - Phone op; GOTA coach; Set up; Tear down.
KI6ISG Bev - GOTA Op.
N1CAI Charles - GOTA op; Tear down.
N1YD Jeff - Demos; GOTA; Set up; Tear down.
N1YWB Jeff - Phone op; Set up; Tear down.
N6PRT Doug - Set up; Tear down.
W1EAT Tom - CW op.
W1LWH Linn - CW op; Equipment; Set up.
W1SJ Mitch - Chairman; Phone op; Equipment; Satellite op; Set up; Tear down; Results.
W1ZU Scott - Set up.
W4YFJ Bob - Bulletins; GOTA coach; Set up.
WL7CVD Duane - GOTA op; Set up.

ARRL Centennial Convention Mitch W1SJ

A mere 60 hours after the WRTC Closing Ceremonies was the ARRL 100th Anniversary National Convention in Hartford, CT. The show was purposely scheduled to follow on the heels of the WRTC event. The show opened on Thursday with training sessions, but I chose to arrive later that evening.

Over the last year, there was a lot of discussion on whether this show would be any good. The web site was rather poor and often late with providing information. The pre-planning seemed disjointed. The high expense of the show and the area in downtown Hartford, plus the traffic and parking hassles certainly made many of us really think about how this would play out.

I'm happy to report that they nailed it. The show was spectacular and well organized. The traffic and parking were hassle free. I never ran into any traffic both in the morning and afternoon rush hours. I don't know what the exact attendance was, but we do know that they pre-sold 2500 tickets, so it is likely that the attendance was in the 4000 range. This is nowhere near the 25,000 I see at Dayton each year, but this was certainly larger than anything else in the Northeast.

As a Convention, there is little to no Flea Market. There were a handful of tables in the back of the exhibit hall - a Flea Market about the size of HAM-CON. However, with every ham radio manufacturer there, one certainly had plenty to see.

I took the opportunity to have QSL cards checked for my 50 MHz VUCC award. Yes, I am a card checker, but I cannot check my own cards! I also visited Elecraft and the Remote Ham Radio booths to learn more about remote controlling ham stations with K3 transceivers.

Upstairs, seven forum rooms were running simultaneously all through both days of the Convention. I checked out forums on DXing, Remote Control, Digital Modes, Public Relations, Ham History and 160 meters. There seemed to be way too many forums on QRP and youth operating. Regrettably there were few youths at the show, and these forums were poorly attended. The forums on Contesting, WRTC and 160 Meters were huge!

But the best part of the show is meeting people. Vermont was well represented with AA1SU, AB1DD and W4YFJ from our area along with K1LI, KC1BT, KC1YW, W1CL, and W1AD from other parts of Vermont. Mike W1RC brought a boatload of characters from NEAR-FEST to man their table. Picture the Timtron running around with ARRL officials - gotta love it. Our Skype speaker at this year's HAM-CON, John Amodeo, was there to give a talk on promoting Ham Radio on TV. And yes, "Last Man Standing" is coming back next season! One of my buddies, Mike WU1M met up with John. They both worked at Harrison Radio in New York in the good ole days and spend some time reminiscing.

I estimate that I knew or QSO'd with some 25% of the attendees, so I had a lot of folks to talk to when I wasn't in forums. I had a ball, and so did everyone else I asked. If you missed it, you'll just have to wait another 100 years for the next one!

VO-52 DEAD Mitch W1SJ

It was sad day on July 21 when it was reported that the popular VO-52 satellite was declared beyond hope and was decommissioned. The lithium-ion batteries failed July 11 and attempts to keep the satellite working were not successful.

VO-52 was one of my favorite satellites because the 2-meter transmitter was very easy to receive. We completed a Field Day QSO on VO-52 a mere 13 days before it died. The microsatellite was designed in India and lasted 9 years and 49,675 orbits, far exceeding its design life of 1 year.

Secretary's Minutes Kathi K1WAL

The meeting began with announcements. Paul AA1SU encouraged everyone to get one and try to make contacts for the WRTC and made sure everyone understood that we were ITU Zone 8. Mitch was a Team Captain for the setup at a cluster of 4 stations at the Medfield State Hospital site – comments on the appropriateness of the site for this particular crew withheld. See the article Ham Radio Olympics in this issue of the News & Views.

Vermont and New Jersey will be hosting the W1AW Centennial for the week beginning at August 5 at 8:00 pm – be sure to get on the air to work W1AW/1! Operators are still needed, especially for RTTY. See the article W1AW/1 – AGAIN! in this issue.

Mitch recapped some Field Day highlights. As awesome as we are there is always room for improvement.

The August meeting will be on Saturday the 9th for our Annual Summer Picnic at Kill Kare State Park in St. Albans.

Since we did not designate a snackbearer for the September meeting Kathi K1WAL will bring another kitchen experiment.

During the announcements and club business Bob KB1FRW was nervously looking around. Our speaker was running late but showed up right on cue to discuss his book Before We Went Wireless.

Presentation:

We were honored to have Ivor Hughes KC1APL talk to us about his book Before We Went Wireless: David Edward Hughes FRS His Life, Inventions and Discoveries (1829-1900). Carl AB1DD met Ivor at a VE session when he became KC1APL and invited him to a RANV meeting.

Ivor and cowriter David Ellis Evans wrote this account of David Hughes, a Victorian scientist, to set the record straight on his enormous contributions to electrical communications which have been lost to obscurity. Ivor was intrigued that they shared the common surname Hughes and Welch roots but alas they are not related.

David Hughes was a child prodigy with his 2 brothers and a sister playing the harp and fiddle. While still a child his family came to America and settled in Buckingham County in Virginia. As a teenage young David saw a Morse electric telegraph and immediately saw ways to improve it. In 1856 he

patented his first telegraph which included a keyboard and print wheel! He sold the patent rights to American Telegraph Company where they changed it very little. Since his design was so robust there was little technical support required of him so he turned his attention to Europe. He took two of his modified telegraph instruments and went back to England where his machines became the backbone of the European telegraph system.

Hughes had made his fortune and became something of a Gentleman Scientist/Independent R&D guy. Using a borrowed Bell Telephone receiver he improved its performance immensely using an electromagnetic such as he used in his telegraph. He developed the Hughes Induction Balance (metal detector) in 1879 which was used by the mint to determine the alloy content in coins.

To go into detail would take up an entire newsletter! I encourage everyone to get a copy of the book and read for it! It is written in a conversational style that is informative and very entertaining! I was able to get a hardback copy using the points from a credit card! The highlight of the evening was having Ivor autograph my book!

W1AW/1 – AGAIN! Mitch W1SJ

W1AW/1 will be back in Vermont this month for the second and final trip. The activity starts Tuesday August 5th at 8 PM and runs the entire week. On the weekend, we have a picnic and a Hamfest scheduled.

Andy K2LE was supposed to organize this, but he will be traveling for much of July and I will handle the organization for him. The scheduling will be done using N11W's on-line program. We expect that many of the operators from March will be back, but operating a lot less than before. This will be offset by weeklong activity at K2LE's station in Southern Vermont. He is expecting many out of town operators (experienced contesters) to be operating. I will have the schedule system up in about a week or so and operators with accounts on the system will be able to sign up.

If you haven't operated before and would like to operate – either from home or from my station or Andy's station, please let me know in an E-mail. We can use more operators!

We'd like to try a few new things for this outing. First, we need to put on more digital operations (especially RTTY). The RTTY boys are quite vocal, we have found. If you would like to try this mode, start practicing with it now.

In March we provided EME operations and that was very much appreciated. For this operation, I would like to provide VHF operation, especially 6 meters, which is very likely to open up in the summer. There is a great way to do this. Mt. Equinox is an easy trip for anyone in Southern Vermont. From there, with 100 watts to a yagi, the entire Northeast can be worked, even if there is no opening. I know – I've been doing this for the last 20 years. As I'll be busy on HF, we need other folks to attempt this DXpedition.

We hear much talk about SOTA (Summits On The Air) these days. Can we do a SOTA activation as W1AW/1? You bet! My requirement is that you have 100 watts available to a good dipole. Anything less

and you will end up frustrating everyone who cannot hear you. So yes, you'll have to haul some batteries, but the reward is a W1AW/1 pileup from the mountain. Contact me if you want to play.

Finally, since we have a Hamfest and Picnic scheduled, I'd like to be on the air as W1AW/1 from those locations. Setting up a yagi for a few hours of operation is a lot of work. Instead, we will try to remote into K2LE's station from those locations. All that is needed is a good Internet connection (and some luck). Hopefully we'll pull it off.

Start making your plans for Vermont's next big Ham Bash – W1AW/1, starting August 5th.

WRTC: HAM RADIO OLYMPICS Mitch W1SJ

What if you combined a Ham Radio Convention, Field Day and the Olympics into one big activity? It would pretty much look like the Seventh World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC) held 3 weeks ago in Massachusetts.

The concept was simple. Build 59 identical Field Day type stations and have the best 59 contesting teams from all over the world come in to operate them in a "winner takes all" competition. The usual considerations of "you had better propagation" or "his antenna was bigger than mine" were totally eliminated. The antennas and locations were identical – the WRTC team worked on proving this over the last two years. The only consideration was operator skill and the radio equipment brought by the competitors.

My job was on the beam team along with Brian K1LI and a bunch of hams from the Hampden Radio Club out of Springfield, MA. Our job was to put together 4 stations in the Medfield State Hospital cluster. Medfield, closed for over 20 years, was the old insane asylum. One could only wonder why they had us assigned there.

I got up bright and early Wednesday and drove down from Vermont arriving around noon and set to work putting the yagi together. The yagi, a Cycle 24 T-38 has 8 elements – 2 on 20, 2 on 15 and 4 on 10 meters – and takes quite a while to assemble. Brian showed up shortly after and we built the tower and falling derrick winch system together. Ironically, we found that with the 2 of us working together we got things got done a lot faster than with a larger crew. We borrowed some manpower from the other Medfield sites to muscle the tower together and raise it. By 6 PM we had the entire station built – antenna, tower, dipoles, tent and generator. Likewise, two other stations in the cluster were built by other members of the crew. By Thursday afternoon, we finished the 4th station and all four stations were ready to go. In other corners of the state, 60 other stations (there were 5 spares) were also assembled.

But the real fun was back at the Headquarters Hotel, 30 minutes away in Westborough. That is where the 118 competitors, 59 referees and numerous guests and visitors were staying. I got to spend time with some of the best in the business. I met one of the premier contesters from Oregon, Joe Rudi NK7U, someone who I work in virtually every contest. Joe wasn't a contester before 1982. Back then he was an outfielder for the Oakland A's. As a baseball historian buff, it was very easy for me to segue the conversation from contest rates to unique features of various ballparks.

One of the tours organized by WRTC (I couldn't go) was to Fenway Park where Joe (who played for the Sox in '82) showed everyone the finer points of playing fly balls off the Green Monster!

Thursday night was opening ceremonies. The festivities got underway with a detachment of Minutemen playing fife & drums. Then all of the competitors filed in, holding signs from their respective 42 countries, to the tune of "Chariots of Fire". It was most impressive!

Friday morning, the teams drew lots to determine where they would be operating from. Later that morning, they came out to the sites to set up their stations. At the site Brian and I were working at, we had royalty assigned to us – Marti Laine OH2BH. If you work DXpeditions, you've worked Marti at some point over the last 30 years and 150 different locations he's been at. Hey, he beat me in the ARRL DX in 2006 when I finished 3rd in the world from St. Martin! For most of Friday, Marti, his teammate Ville OH2MM, his support staff and the referee Nick VE3EY worked on readying the station and facilities, and laying in food supplies for the 24-hour contest

Friday, it was up bright and early to get ready for the contest which started at 8AM. The competitors got their 1x1 call sign assignment in a sealed envelope which was revealed 15 minutes before the start. Once the contest started, there was not much to do except hang around. So, I got on the air from the car and handed out contacts to the competitors. I first worked Marti and Ville as W1R. Across the site was N1A - the German YL's (first ever YL's in WRTC). One of the ops was the XYL of Ralf DL9DRA, who visited a RANV meeting in 2010 when he was on assignment at Huber Suhner. At the north site, the Italian team was signing K1M but they were in last place for most of the contest. It was only after the contest we learned that they had a plan. They weren't vying to win the competition, but instead win the SSB trophy. Since SSB is harder to run up QSO's with low power, they had a lower score, but managed to take the SSB prize. At the west site, 4O1A from Montenegro signed W1M (I kept confusing them with K1M).

I headed out to the cluster out at Miles Standish State Forest to visit some other sites. This location, some 5 miles from Cape Cod was home to 18 stations. You literally drive in the woods, look for a WRTC sign and drive up a dirt path until you either found the station, or fell into a ditch! Official WRTC vehicles had maps and GPS coordinates but I had to use dead reckoning! It was a load of fun visiting not only the competitors, but the site people, most of whom I knew from working them on the air. I also ran into Dave K1ZZ, whose job as Chief Judge was to spend all day Sunday scoring the logs with the rest of the judges.

While driving around, I continued to give out contacts to the competitors. Since most were on CW, I switched to this mode. So, picture me driving down I-495 in and around the weekend Cape Cod traffic, while slapping the paddles on my right thigh at 30 words per minute. I used to think that folks who did this type of operating belonged back at the Medfield Hospital (back when it was open), but here I was not only doing it, but holding a good rate! Distracted driving? Nah, it was quite relaxing, actually.

On the way back I visited the stations at Mansfield Airport, the location I operated from in 2012. One of the stations was the Russian defending champions from the 2010 Moscow WRTC games. They were not

pleased with the planes buzzing around them all day. The site crew built an 8' x 16' sound baffle. The only thing missing was an Icom ad on it!

During the contest, scores were automatically uploaded from the site logging computers into a network so that everyone could keep track of how everyone was doing. There was much talk of favorites and betting on who the winners would be, but I never saw any money change hands! Many mentioned the team of N6MJ and KL9A as the favorites. They opened up a big lead, to the tune of 200 QSO's per hour for 3 hours and never looked back. Their score stood up to the log checker's scrutiny and they came away with the gold. The Slovak and German teams took Silver and Bronze.

Back at HQ late Saturday evening, I did some more operating from the WR1TC station on site, and also via remote to a super station in New York. There were also remote setups to PR1T in Brazil and SM0HQ in Sweden.

Finally, 8AM Sunday arrived and like a coordinated team of carpenter ants, we took down the tower, antennas and station. All the stuff at our station was purchased by Brian and it was loaded onto his trailer. Likewise, all of the 64 stations were sold off in this manner. By 1 PM we were done and back at the HQ Hotel to say goodbye to everyone.

We had a small but dedicated crew from Vermont. In addition to Brian and me, Don KB5VP also helped out at Medfield. Charlie, N1CAI was not only on the Wrentham team, but he worked at HQ in Networking and got the job as the "negotiator" to calm the Russian team when they cursing at the airplanes! As a relatively new ham, he ended up meeting more contesters than any of us! We convoyed back together and in a fitting end to a contest weekend, stopped for lunch at Wendy's where we watched the last 20 minutes of the World Cup game on the big screen!



NEWS & VIEWS

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NEXT MEETING

SATURDAY • August 9th

Kill Kare State Park in St. Albans, VT

Club Picnic

Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- W1AW - AGAIN
- 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