



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

June • 2015

An ARRL Special Service Club

Vol. 25 • No. 6

RANV FIELD DAY FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE

Mitch W1SJ

While we're busy with Field Day, another activity will be going on – The Field Day Fundraiser. This year, we have partnered up with COTS, the Committee on Temporary Shelter. The setup is similar to bike rides and walks where donors pledge a certain amount of money per mile or kilometer traveled. In our case donors will pledge a few pennies per QSO we make at the RANV Field Day. So if a donor pledges 1 cent per QSO, and we make 4500 QSO's, that's a pledge of \$45. The standard pledge amounts are 1-5 cents per QSO, or any other amount of the donor's choosing regardless of QSO's made.

We have two main tasks. First, we obviously have to make the QSO's, which, based on history, we are fairly good at. Second, we have to let people know about the program and give them the information so they can make a pledge. Along those lines, COTS and I will be doing some publicity for this in the media. In addition we also would like to have everyone make this activity known to their acquaintances to allow them the opportunity to help out. No one should sell or coax others to take part – nobody likes that – especially me! Instead, simply provide the information about this to others and let them decide if they want to get involved. We do not have any fundraising goals, so this should be a fun and friendly conversation with everyone.

If this works (a big "IF"), it is a win-win situation for all. We get some publicity for Field Day and provide that extra "oomph" to push for more QSO's while raising money for a good cause.

As far as Field Day, nothing will change except that we will strive to report hourly QSO totals on our web site so that pledges and others can follow along on their computer or smart phones!

COTS is an organization which provides shelter and housing for those who are homeless or marginally housed. They run a few facilities whereby homeless people can get a roof over their head for the night. Over the years, I've known of a few hams who have been in this situation. And we have the perfect slogan for the occasion: "We live in a Temporary Shelter for only 1 day during Field Day - They live in a Temporary Shelter year round."

A pledge form can be found at www.ranv.org/cotsform.doc. Print up a few and help spread the word! And then, get on and make many contacts during Field Day!

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Meetings: 2nd Tuesday • 7:00 PM
113 Patchen Road, South
Burlington

The O'Brien Civic Center

Repeater: 145.150, PL 100; WB1QR

New Hams, Mentoring:
RANVMentor@gmail.com

VHF QSO PARTY JUNE 13-14th **Mitch W1SJ**

The ARRL VHF QSO Party, the premier VHF/UHF operating event, will take place Saturday-Sunday, June 13-14th. Things get underway at 2PM Saturday afternoon. June is often the peak of Sporadic E season and lots of stations can be worked - IF the band opens. But you won't know that unless you get on. Look for activity at 50.125 MHz and up on 6 meters. If there are no large openings, 2 meter activity can be found around 144.200 MHz. You might find FM activity on 146.55 MHz, too. VHF activity can be fleeting. Don't just listen for 5 minutes and give up if you don't hear anything. Instead, leave the radio on the aforementioned calling frequencies for a long period of time - you'll hear something after a while.

I plan to be up on Mt. Equinox in Southern Vermont. I generally will point the yagi north at the top of the hour, so that is a good time to call. If you have an outside antenna, or a high powered mobile, there's a good chance I'll hear you, so give it a try. Otherwise, consider driving to a high spot to really explore what you can hear on VHF. Mt. Philo and Mt. Mansfield are two popular hilltops to try in our area, but even some smaller hills in our area will enhance reception.

PUBLIC SERVICE DOUBLEHEADER **Mitch W1SJ**

Memorial Day weekend is when we hold our public service doubleheader with the support for the Essex Memorial Parade on Saturday and the Vermont City Marathon on Sunday.

Saturday's parade was greeted with brisk, clear skies, which warmed into a beautiful day. Over the years, hams have helped other volunteers as parade marshals. This year it was mostly the hams who did this job. For those who have never done this job, it is the closest thing to herding cats. Imagine trying to get marching bands, school kids, farm tractors, fire engines, horses, fife & drum corps, Champ and even the Governor lined up in organized fashion and you get an idea of the task at hand. While this is going on, deletions and additions are called into the reviewing stand at the Five Corners so that the emcee knows who to announce.

The Parade went off without a hitch this year. Spectators were treated to high speed CW blaring from the top of the RANV Float while I terrorized Shriners in mini-cars and other parade marchers in the RANV go-kart.

Thanks to Ed W1OKH and Dave W1HRG for work to fix long standing problems on the 146.85 repeater. The crew this year consisted of AA1SU K3BH KB1FRW KB1IVE KB1YGP N1LXI N1WCK N1WQS W1DEB W1SJ and W4YFJ.

The very next morning, some 30 hams got up at the crack of dawn to be on site for the 28th running of the Vermont City Marathon. Many of us were working on this before Sunday, with the repeater install on Wednesday, the ham staff meeting on Thursday and the antenna installation at Net Control on Saturday.

We had a complete interoperability plan at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Burlington Police Department. The center included our Net Control and representatives from the police, fire and marathon. Net Control was on SIX different frequencies, and only one was a ham frequency! While Steve and I ran the net on 145.32 MHz from two different radios, Jay was on the Medical repeater and Burlington Fire Department repeater and simplex. The Medical repeater on 154 MHz was in a trailer parked at Burlington High School, while the Fire Department was on UHF. Normally, medical staff calls in on the Medical net and the information is collected by their Net Control at the High School. He then relays that information to the Fire Department in the Medical tent at the finish line. Or if the Medical net did not work (some coverage or radio issues), alternately the information is passed to the ham network and relayed to the Fire Department. Did you get all that? In reality, the system worked flawlessly, as we had totally redundant communication paths which were in sync with each other.

In addition, Net Control monitored the Official's HT's on 461 MHz and the bus radios on 151 MHz and the phones. One might not have heard much traffic on 145.32 MHz from time to time, but trust me, we were pretty busy.

There was a rash of communications in the early going as we had to make sure that the early aid stations were operational prior to the arrival of the first runners. Then, things got quiet until later in the day when the medical and bus pickup calls picked up. The temperature warmed up quickly, and so did the number of calls for aid from medical, hams and the team of roving bike patrollers. By the end of the day, we got everyone off the course, the roads open and no one was seriously injured. Run Vermont staff was very pleased with another successful running of the Vermont City Marathon.

The Marathon repeater on 145.32 is a "craft" repeater which has coverage specifically designed to cover the Marathon course, using directional antennas. This year, we added a second receiver at the Port Kent, NY ferry dock to pick up stations at the northern end of the course. This allowed us to have HT coverage in areas which the Burlington Police and Fire do not cover well. Thanks to Bob KB1FRW for help in installing the repeater and Tony WA2LRE who installed the remote receiver.

RANV members of the ham radio staff included: K1WAL KB1FRW KB1IVE KB1OAH KB1THX KB1VJD KB1WXM KB1YGP KC1DIJ KK1L N1LXI W1DEB W1SJ W1ZU W4YFJ. Pictures of the event can be seen at <http://www.hamclass.net/ranv/vcmpix15.html>.

FIELD DAY

Mitch W1SJ

Field Day will be held in 3 weeks – June 26-28th. It is time to plan who is doing what to whom.

We are the defending 2A Field Day champions and we've pretty much milked that as much as we could for the last several months. Once Field Day 2015 starts, that designation is pretty much meaningless; we get to prove ourselves all over again.

Some say that we do the same thing year after year. Yes, we do indeed do the same thing – it's called Ham Radio. If you think Field Day each year is a carbon copy of previous years, you are not really tuned in to the situation at hand. Each year we get challenged in different ways. For starters, the personnel is different and the propagation is certainly different. Some years, the propagation is downright challenging, bordering on frustrating. And then we get the unadvertised specials like the radio or computer or software which stops working in the middle of the night. And let's not forget monsoon rains, high winds and storm cells which manage to seek us out. With all the things which could go wrong, boring is most welcome in my book.

Last year, we had all sorts of te.0kjch problems in the CW tent and a team is working on that right now. We have the continuing challenge to come up with enough GOTA and youth operators to keep that station flush with QSO's and bonus points. I'll have my hands full on phone, acting as chief zookeeper, trying in vain to keep the animals on 20 meters from calling CQ on MY frequency. And we have the ultimate battle – keeping the operators fed and the mosquitoes starving. Finding volunteers to handle food has been just about as challenging as finding mosquitoes willing to fast for the weekend.

To start, we need to know who is coming, when they are going to be there and what they plan to do. This is done by filling out the Field Day survey, found at <http://www.ranv.org/surfd15.html>. Don't send bits of E-mail or voice mail or certainly not texts – those get lost. All operating time is pre-scheduled – fill out the survey!

Next, we will discuss jobs and Field Day opportunities at the next RANV meeting on Tuesday, June 9th. Following this, we get together at W1SJ to finalize plans for Field Day on Monday, June 22nd. By the end of this meeting, everyone should know exactly what they are doing and when. We hope.

Friday, June 26th is the antenna setup day. We start at 2PM and work until we are done, usually around 8PM. This is a critical operation and we need as many people to help as we can get. With a lot of folks, the job is fairly smooth.

Field Day is the 24-hour period from 2PM Saturday until 2PM Sunday. And when it is all over, we collect the logs, pull down the antennas and pack everything away. And in a sense, that is

the hardest job of all, since we are all very tired, but it is a job which still needs to be done carefully.

If you have been on the sidelines for the past years, now is the time to get involved. Field Day is the greatest Ham Radio event there is. Don't miss it!

Secretary's Minutes

K1WAL

Business: Once again we will have a station operating from the Steamship Ticonderoga at the Shelburne Museum for The Museum Ships on the Air with the callsign W1T on June 6-7. By the time this issue of News & Views is published the event will be past. If you couldn't make it you can read all about it here!

Tim KB1THX announced the need for RACES operators for the Gran Fondo Bike Ride on June 13. This ride goes through the 4 gaps (Lincoln, Appalachian, Middlebury, Brandon) in Addison County and will run from morning to mid-afternoon. The NCS will operate out of the Middlebury Bowl. The RACES trailer will on site. Operators will require a mobile 40/50W transceiver. Information on this event is at www.vermontgranfondo.com. If you are interested please contact Tim KB1THX or Kathi K1WAL.

We discussed the VCM and Memorial Day parades and Field Day which is coming up June 26-28 (including set up and take down.)

Since he was tired of lugging around heavy batteries and power supplies Bob KB1WXM showed us a small battery pack he made to use with his KX3 out of 4 Lithium Ion 18650 cells in series (16.5 volts) regulated by a DC to DC converter down to 13.8 volts. The whole thing weighs just under 12 ounces. (He has since used it while on the beach in Maine and operated 3 hours with 1 hour spent calling CQ at 5 watts output. He made a couple of contacts but that's life at 5W.)

Kathi K1WAL will bring snack for the June meeting and threatened more experiments with vegetables.

Presentation: Rob N7QT and Melanie N7BX described their adventures as a two-person DXpedition VK9AN to Christmas Island – the one in the Indian Ocean. Some of us were surprised to learn that there are two places named Christmas Island. One is in the South Pacific (also known as Kiritimati) and the other in the Indian Ocean.

Since Christmas Island is a territory of Australia Rob had to apply to the Australian Communications Media Authority for his station callsign. This included providing a plethora of information such as passports, travel reservations, US FCC license, list of equipment including serial numbers, first born if available, and allow 3-4 months to process.

Their equipment included a CrankIR antenna, K3 rig with a KPA500 500W amplifier, and an SDR radio along with coax and laptop.

Once everything was set up and legal the next step was to get there. It took Rob and Melanie 44.5 hours plus two nights. They had a 2 day layover in Perth, Australia since the flight to Christmas Island only flew 3 times a week. This time was well spent with sleep and some sightseeing. Christmas Island is known mostly for phosphate mining and a large detention center. 70% of the population are Chinese-Australian with the rest Indonesian and Australian (and at least two American tourists)

Preferring a north facing place to stage, they found a villa at Rocky Point that was suitable. With the proper electrical adaptors and permission to set up a portable vertical antenna they were in business!

Not soon after starting they hit a "Japan Wall". Being close to Japan where there are about 1.2 million ham operators they had a hard time working around them trying to reach North America. Rob used his SDR radio running CWskimmer and LP Pan for the K3 to see the callsigns of countries to work the ones he sought. Operating about 8 hours a day (with time to explore the island) for 10 days they made a very respectable 12,828 QSOs: 7572 CW, 1130 RTTY, and 4126 Phone.

Rob shared some of the things that he could have done differently. One was to check with the airline early instead of when at the gate to check the baggage – it's much cheaper that way! Speaking of airlines he mentioned paying attention to e-mails from the airlines that tell of flight cancellation and changes. He also listed bringing more fuses and packing electrical tape instead of having it as a carry one. It seems TSA will confiscate electrical tape although we can be sure Rob and Melanie had no intention of taping up the pilots. We think.

In future they will have a different RTTY setup to get better decoding. Rob recommends FSK instead of SignalLink. For information on FSK see www.w3yy.com and plan on spending about \$33 plus some soldering time. Even so, our club secretary is still happy her SignalLink.

Getting home took longer – 53.5 hours plus 5 nights. Thankfully they didn't suffer during the 3 days and nights they were forced to endure in Tahiti. Rob gave kudos to his buddies Rob KD7H and Mike K4PI who helped with US contacts.



NEWS & VIEWS

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Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- 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

NEXT MEETING The Bob Show Portable Antennas

Tuesday • June 9th • 7:00pm
O'Brien Civic Center • Patchen Rd
South Burlington, VT