



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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October Presentation

Bob - KB1WXM will describe how he brought back to life an old Heathkit SB-102 that he bought at Near-Fest. The seller assured Bob that the radio worked, “just fine”. In fact, it did not receive, nor did it transmit. The presentation will follow the process which KB1WXM went through to diagnose and cure the many ailments that crippled the old Heathkit.

OFFICERS!

RANV elections will be at the November 10th meeting. Jim KE1AZ has informed us that he will be stepping down as Vice President and will not seek another term. We will need new candidates to step up to serve as officers. Please take this month to decide who you care to nominate for office. You can nominate anyone you wish (including yourself), as long as the nominee is a real person, a dues-paying RANV member and has consented to run.

It goes without saying that making sure we have 3 strong officers is crucial for the continued success of RANV. There are a lot of challenges facing us – recruiting new club members (and new hams), continuing to present great monthly club meetings, running HAM-CON, Field Day and a repeater and a few other things I’m sure we forgot. The leadership is the spark which keeps the club ignited – so choose well!

Nominations can be made at the October meeting, or by E-mail to at least two club officers by October 25th.

CONTACTS

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

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

Kathi **K1WAL**, Secretary 985-8535
k1wal@arrl.net

Adam **KB1LHB**, Editor
vtlamore@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions to
vtlamore@gmail.com

US Mail: PO Box 9392
South Burlington, VT 05407

Web: www.RANV.org

Reflector:
groups.yahoo.com/group/RANV

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

MAINTAINING YOUR HAM SHACK

Mitch W1SJ

It what might turn out to be a multiple part rambling soliloquy, I present Part 1 of maintaining your ham shack. Keeping your equipment running is important if you want to be on the air regularly to make all those contacts. It is a real drag when stuff doesn't work. This month, we focus on the absolute most important piece of equipment – YOU!

It has become real sad – I go to hamfests and don't see many of the crew I used to see over the years. Where are they? Many simply do not have the health or strength to go to a hamfest or meeting anymore. And others, well, they are likely attending hamfests in the netherworld.

Let's face it – we are poster children for the AARP. The average age of ham operators is something like 60 years – maybe more. At that age, stuff starts breaking down. If the problem is minor, you might still be able to get on the air, if nothing else. But if it is more serious and you are bedridden, ham radio is likely not in the cards.

And for someone like me who is very active, it is more crucial. Operating a contest competitively requires sitting in the chair for many hours at a time – in the SS, I typically run the first 12 hours without a break. If you are not in tip top shape, you just cannot do this. In addition, maintaining the station occasionally requires climbing the tower – something you don't even consider if you cannot move too well. Heck, even a large hamfest like Dayton or Near-Fest requires many miles of walking and standing. And on the few occasions when I couldn't walk in a hamfest due to "equipment" problems, it was the suckiest thing ever!

I'm not going to tell you what to do to make your health perfect. If I knew that information, I'd be earning many of thousands of dollars on the lecture circuit and would not have the time to write this for a club newsletter! The thing which most doctors will tell you about health and longevity is to choose your parents well. Genetics is one of the largest factors in all of this.

But you can do things today to minimize problems later. All too often we see people give tender loving care to an old restored vehicle, while they eat garbage and live poorly. The first thing is to put top priority on maintenance of YOU.

There are obvious things we can do to live better. The big "three" are drugs, drinking and smoking. None of these help you stay healthy – your body would be better off with partaking in something else. Another big one is getting enough quality sleep. As a nocturnal creature, I still wrestle with that one. Oh, and one more – stress. Lots of stress is very bad for health. You can't make stress go away, but you can learn to deal with it better. But sadly, I don't have the golden answer for this. I've found that a failing memory helps – I often forget what got me upset!

Everyone has opinions and what to eat and what not to eat. We are constantly barraged by messages on what foods are "good" and what foods are "bad". Reject those claims. Everyone is different – what is good for one person may be bad for the next. It is very complicated to determine the best things to eat. For starters, lean towards things like fruits, vegetables and fresh meat as opposed to something whipped up in a factory. I've been told that any food with a long list of ingredients, many of which are hard to pronounce, is probably something you might want to minimize. Read those labels! Another thing which helps – eat a variety of different foods. That way if you choose a food which is not good for you, you won't eat as much of it.

Before making a decision on what to eat or not eat, seek the advice of a medical professional who specializes in diet. I was shocked to learn that most MD's complete a single course on diet – that's it! You might want to research non-traditional providers such as Naturopaths, Homeopaths, Herbalists or practitioners of Chinese medicine. Unlike the Western medicine we are used to, these providers treat the whole body as a system, instead of treating a specific disease or ailment. Such a practitioner can "read" your body and prescribe the correct things to put it in balance. The idea is to keep the "engine" properly maintained and running smoothly so that problems do not crop up later. Don't give up your regular doctor, though – keep everyone on board and use each of their specific talents to your advantage.

Another important piece that many of us miss – listen to your body. I've read that Vermonters, in particular, tend to be stoic and ignore warning signs. If an ache or pain or some weird feeling starts to happen – act on it! It usually means that your body is sending you a message that something is about to break down – much like the "idiot lights" on the dashboard. Unfortunately, the message can often be muddy. It may take a good deal of research on-line and several trips to the doctor to nail down what the problem might be. And then, it might not be a big thing. Or it might be – so ignoring it is unwise.

Reading all this doesn't amount to a lot of information. It is more of a way to make all of us put greater focus into taking care of ourselves. Now get to work – I want to see you at the next hamfest or contest!

Secretary's Minutes

Kathi K1WAL

The meeting began with some announcements. An elderly ham who was ready to part with some equipment had contacted Bob KB1FRW to see if anyone was interested in acquiring some more 'stuff'.

We were reminded that NEARFest is coming up quickly – Oct 16-17.

Jim KE1AZ handed out refunds to those who paid for parking at our club picnic in August.

Paul AA1SU will bring the snack for next month's meeting – and he was there to offer!

Next month will be nominations for club officers. Anyone willing to be President, VP/Treasurers, or Secretary are encouraged to speak up!

Presentation

Scott W1ZU gave an overview of the *Summits On The Air* program and shared his SOTA excursions.

SOTA began in England and Wales in 2002 to encourage portable operations in mountainous areas. Japan (JX) has recently come online with SOTA.

Any licensed ham or Short Wave Listener can participate in SOTA. Those who hike up to the summits to call CQ are the Activators. Chasers are those who the Activators make QSOs with.

SOTA is divided into Associations worldwide. At this time there are 106 active SOTA Associations. For our location in northern Vermont we our Association is W1.

Associations are further divided into Regions. Each Association and Region have Mangers. W1 has 13 Regions. Our region is GM which stands for Green Mountain. Within the W1/GM region there are 253 qualifying peaks. For example W1/GM-001 is Mount Mansfield and W1/GM-008 is Mount Ascutney.

There are certain criteria for a summit to qualify for SOTA. It must be a distinct peak and have a prominence of 500 feet. This means the peak or summit has a vertical distance at least 500 feet between it and the lowest contour line. Peaks that are separated by a col (also known as a saddle) that meet the minimum vertical distance are considered as single summits.

Each summit is assigned a point value based on its height above sea level. For example W1/GM-001 is worth 10 points while W1/GM-008 is worth 4 points.

When Scott zips (or sometimes trudges) up a peak to be an Activator there are certain conditions he must adhere to. First, he has to bring all his equipment – radio, antenna, power, cables, connectors, ropes, water, lunch, etc. – with him. He must run off whatever battery or power source he brings up. Permanently installed power sources or fossil fuel generators are not allowed. He must also operate within the Activation Zone, which is an area within 25 vertical meters (or 82 feet) below the summit. This is because it is not always possible to reach the actual summit.

When he makes his first QSO he earns 1 point. After 4 QSOs (to 4 different stations) he earns all the points for that summit. QSOs include callsign, summit designator, and sometimes a signal report. Contacts can be made on any band. When using UHF or VHF simplex frequencies must be used (usually 146.52 or 146.55 locally). An additional seasonal 3 points can be awarded in our Region (W1) for those who climb up

between Dec 1 and March 15. If he goes up with another operator they cannot QSO each other unless one of them is outside of the Activation Zone. Scott has worked other Activators on other summits.

To be a SOTA Chaser on must have a valid license for whatever frequency he is operating on and be outside the Activation Zone. Chasers are often home or mobile stations.

Scott mostly operates CW with his KX-3 and a simple wire antenna. By operating CW on low power he can extend his battery life and lower the weight of his equipment. He often will use www.SOTAwatch.org to spot when and where he plans to be. This is a very useful website for both Activators and Chasers.

After the SOTA expedition contacts are logged into the SOTA Database (www.sotadata.org). Awards are given for those collecting 1000 points. Activators earn the Mountain Goat Award and Chasers earn the Shack Sloth Award.

Scott finished by stressing safety and not exceeding the limits of your physical condition. He gave a list of resources for planning a SOTA trip and showed his backpack and gear.

Several others in RANV have participated on SOTA expeditions as Activators: Larry KB1ZEB, Bob KB1WDM, Charles N1CAI, Bob W4YFJ, Dave KC1APK, and even Kathi K1WAL has been known to huff and puff up a hill! Many others have been Chasers.

For more information about SOTA visit the sota.org website.



NEWS & VIEWS

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NEXT MEETING Process in Restoring a Radio

Tuesday • October 13th • 7:00pm
O'Brien Civic Center • Patchen Rd
South Burlington, VT

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

www.RANV.org