



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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The RANV Holiday Party is Saturday, December 12th at 12 Noon at the O'Brien Civic Center.

This is a major change from previous years. While the site at W1SJ was a nice meeting spot, the basic problem is that it is not handicap accessible, and that has limited participation of some members. Another issue is that many folks just do not desire to drive in the dark. Based on these two issues we will move the party to our normal meeting spot, the O'Brien Civic Center (113 Patchen Rd), and hold it on Saturday afternoon, which will allow plenty of time for folks to congregate, eat, talk and skip out and be home, before it gets dark.

But first things first - we need to know who is coming and what they are bringing so that we can plan the food. To be honest, the number of people who said they are coming is way down. I don't know if this is due to folks being busy that day or everyone is waiting for the last moment.

I'll leave it up to someone else to determine if we want to gussy up the location to make it homier. Probably the easiest thing to do will be to bring table lamps for illumination so that those harsh fluorescents can be shut down. We probably will also need some tables as well.

There has been talk of setting of a radio and operating. That is fine too. The party will run concurrent with the 10 Meter Contest. Maybe 10 meters will open to somewhere! If desired, I can bring a 10 Meter Monoband yagi and 20' support pipe if someone would like to put it up (not me).

Please go to <http://www.ranv.org/surpar15.html> and fill out the survey so we know what you will be bringing.

Use the survey - DO NOT send cards and letters or Emails or leave phone messages.

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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

We have a lunchtime party at a great meeting location. Let's have a record setting turnout!

Officer Elections

Officer Elections were Held, here are the results:

President - Bob KB1FRW
VP/Treasurer – Adam KB1LHB
Secretary Kathi K1WAL.

HF CONDITIONS SO-SO & 10 METER CONTEST COMING UP Mitch W1SJ

If you have been on HF the past six months, you already know that conditions have been fair to midland. Sunspots have been dropping off, and what conditions we do have tend to get wiped by geomagnetic activity.

If you were operating during Field Day, you know that we had a helluva time making contacts due to a nasty little problem called Coronal Mass Ejections (CME). These are particles kicked out by the sun and when they reach the Earth a day later, they set the Earth's geomagnetic field into a tizzy. When the geomagnetic field gets messed up, everyone in the northern latitudes takes a hit. As we are halfway between the equator and the North Pole, we are on the list of areas which get affected.

In the CW Sweepstakes, held on the first weekend of November, such an event took place. For the most part, I was still able to work all the stations I usually do, with a couple of exceptions: Yukon and Alaska. The geomagnetic activity was literally centered over Whitehorse, location of VY1JA (signing VY1AAA in this event). They were only heard in the Pacific Northwest. Worse yet, even Alaska was wiped out. Super station KL7RA (operated by N6TR) was heard in the Western U.S., but hardly at all in the Northeast, except by a few big stations south of here. I tried often to hear him and once, he popped out of the noise, and that was it. Although 10 meters was pretty much a no-show up here, the other bands had enough activity to allow me to make my normal run of just over 1000 QSO's. But I missed a sweep by 2 sections – and that was the first time that has happened in over 20 years.

Worse than this, Rich KL7RA had a heart attack the day before the CW SS and passed away two weeks later on the day before the SS Phone. As far as we know, he was otherwise healthy and only a few years older than I am. He was one of my friends who I got together with in the contest suites at Dayton. Was this caused by CME? Dunno. But it was a very sad contest weekend for all of us.

The phone SS had better conditions and there were plenty of Yukon and Alaska stations to work. The bands were in good shape, although I found that they closed earlier than I was used to. Even 80 meters ran out of gas around 3AM and I found myself shutting down earlier. The good news was that 10 meters was open to places out west, but I choose to stay off

there and concentrate on 20 meters which was open to more places. But at least it was open to somewhere, and the hope is that 3 weeks later, for the 10 Meter Contest, it will be open to somewhere again.

The ARRL Ten Meter Contest will start Friday, December 11th, starting at 7PM. At that time the band will be closed (unless there is a sporadic E opening). That is the best time for everyone locally to get on and work each other, as there will be little QRM. Activities then pick up Saturday morning. IF there is an opening into Europe, that will get underway after sunrise (7AM) or later. If the band is in rough shape, look for the best openings between noon and 2PM. Otherwise, stateside starts to roll in after 10AM and continues past 4PM. The whole thing repeats again on Sunday, with the contest ending 7PM Sunday night. Bad conditions on Saturday will not necessarily repeat on Sunday and vice-versa, so be sure to set aside activity for both days. Because the band will not be its best, it is recommended to have a good antenna. A monoband yagi for 10 meters is not all that big and will work at a relatively low height of 25 feet or more. So, you might consider a temporary lashup for the weekend.

The RANV holiday party will run on the Saturday of the contest. This would be a good time to get in some multiop activity. There has been talk of some of the guys bringing radios, so perhaps we will get in some operating time.

4U70UN on Satellite

October 24, 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations in 1945. As part of the celebration, members of the United Nations Amateur Radio Club, 4U1UN sought to activate the station as 4U70UN. The club station had not been on the air for several years. 4U is considered a DXCC entity. As such, when it is active, many try to work this new country.

About 2 week prior to the event, I received a call from Henry, KT1J asking if I'd like to join the crew. There were to be 8 invited guests and several club members allowed special permission to operate. I jumped at the chance! First, I've never been to New York City and second, the chance to operate from the UN was a once in a life time opportunity.

As plans were being made, I proposed operating satellite and terrestrial VHF/UHF. The club organizers, James, K2QI; Mohammed, KA2RTD and Phillip, G6CBR thought it would be a great addition to the HF operation.

The next several weeks were a flurry of activity. We were going to be allowed to operate on the grounds of the UN, but in the Garden that is at ground level North of the main UN building near the East River. I began to survey the site in Google Earth and could see that there would be some significant blockage due to the high rise buildings nearby. We refer to it as an 'Urban Jungle'. We also were informed that our hours of operation would be limited to between 10AM and 6PM local time on Saturday and Sunday, October 24th and 25th. With this information, I began to look at possible satellite passes.

Meanwhile, the list of operators was finalized. Doug, KR2Q missed our group photo and Mohammed, KA2RTD was the photographer.



As you can imagine, Security is quite tight at the UN. Operators were cleared and credentials issued early on. Equipment was another matter. You can't just drive up to the UN, park a vehicle and unload in front. Initially, we were going to have to hand carry everything in through Security when we arrived on site Saturday. Fortunately the club organizers were able to secure time on Friday afternoon where the HF equipment was unloaded and secured inside. At the last minute, we also were allowed to unload the satellite equipment on a service road outside on First Avenue Saturday morning.

Checking through Security on Saturday morning was uneventful. I was carrying a Butternut Vertical that Security wanted to scan. Imagine me feeding a 10 foot section of antenna, load coils and all, through an X-Ray machine. I wish I could have taken a picture...

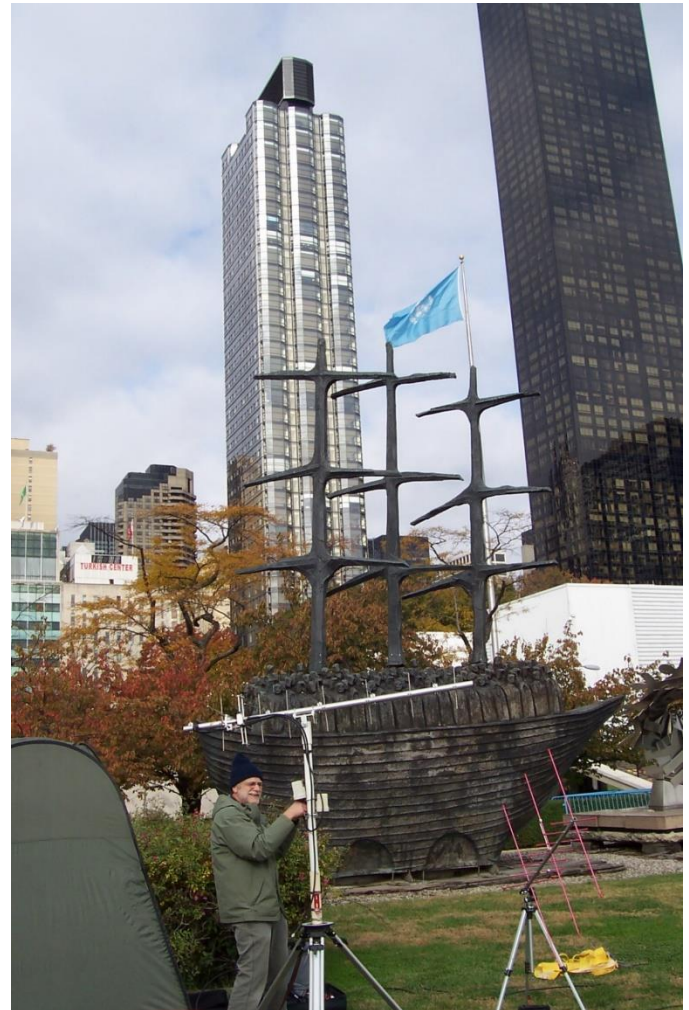
Once through Security, we were escorted out back to the Garden area where we began setting up. Power had been installed for us the previous week. We had multiple 240 VAC drops. The HF crew was planning on 4 stations all running legal limit.

Henry and I set up the Satellite station. It consisted of a Yaesu FT-847, Gulf Alpha dual band yagi, preamps for 2M/70cm and tripod. We had multiple computers and a pair of HT's with an Arrow Antenna as backup.

The two laptops were both configured with satellite tracking software. The first had Nova installed which allows tracking and logging in the same program. The second had SatPC32 for tracking and full Doppler control. It was linked to the FT-847 which made for easy Doppler correction during a pass. With full Doppler correction, we were free to concentrate on pointing the antenna.

Unfortunately, we weren't able to bring any rotors or circularly polarized antennas. We had to adjust for Az/EI and polarity shifts by hand. Henry was "rotor man". He had a pair of headphones so he could hear the bird during a pass and adjust the antenna accordingly.

For a bit of perspective, below is a shot of the satellite setup. This is looking NW. You can see a couple of "obstructions".



On Day one, we missed a very good pass of one satellite as we were setting up for the first time and figuring out the logistics. Throughout the day we did make contacts, both on satellite and 2M. Day one was a learning experience.

One of the stipulations for our operations was that we wouldn't leave anything in the Garden overnight. So at 6PM, we had to tear down all the equipment, pack it up and move it to a secure location inside the UN. The next morning after clearing Security, we could retrieve the equipment and set everything up again.



If the club is interested in the HF operation, I have tons of pictures and audio of the pileups that I could share possibly at a future meeting.

Mike, N1JEZ

On Day two, we knew what to expect. We completed several good passes of FO-29 and worked quite a few operators. This was despite the fact that one pass was to the West of us where we had serious blockage. As the satellite would duck behind a building, we'd lose the downlink. Several times I could hear operators' very weakly remark "where'd they go???" When we regained the downlink, having cleared the obstacle, I would announce that we had cleared a building and that's why we were silent for 30 secs or so. We also continued to make terrestrial contacts on 2M.



We hadn't planned on operating 6M. We had a radio capable of 6M, but no antenna. Yevgeniy, UN7TER to the rescue. He fashioned a quick 6M dipole out of some left over radial wire and we were on the air on 6M. Later in the afternoon, we added 70 cm. Overall, the terrestrial operation went well. We handed out a new country to quite a few happy operators on multiple bands.

On the satellite side, for the limited time we had to operate, along with a bit of RF interference we had due to 4 HF stations running legal limit with a few hundred feet of us and the "Urban Jungle" surroundings that blocked LOS at times, I felt we did very well.

I thoroughly enjoyed the 4U70UN operation. Our hosts, the 4U1UN club members James, K2QI - Mohammed, KA2RTD and Philip, G6CBR were a pleasure to meet and helpful every step of the way.



NEWS & VIEWS

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NEXT MEETING Holiday Party

Saturday • December 12th • 12:00pm
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