



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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An ARRL Special Service Club

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September Event

Show and Tell

If you have any projects that you have been working on, please bring them in on a thumb drive and we can view them at the meeting.

For our September meeting we will try out a new location at the Wheeler House at 1100 Dorset Street, just south of the Cairns Arena. This is a brick building which contains several meeting rooms, the South Burlington Community Garden, and the Friends of the Community Library.

PICNIC CARRIES ON DESPITE RAIN

Mitch W1SJ

August 13th brought a gloomy day with rain. The forecast was for periods of showers morning and late afternoon and while thunderstorms were mentioned, they weren't specifically predicted. We decided to go on with the picnic anyway. In recent memory was the time we moved the Holiday Party to avoid the snow and got even more snow for our efforts.

As we had a forecast of a short rainless window late morning, we got over there early and got right to work setting up. Adam put up one shelter, and ran home and got another one while Carl and I strung up a 40 meter dipole. It took less than 15 minutes to get the antenna and station on the air. We were motivated!

We had a small group hanging out under the canopies. On one side, Paul, Chuck, Jonathan and I were making contacts on 20 and then 40 meters. Jonathan actually made his first contacts as a newly minted general. Meanwhile, Adam was putting together radials for a vertical antenna which was not deployed. And then it started raining around noon. The rain came down at a good clip, but the canopies kept us and the equipment dry.

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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

By 1:00, I was getting hungry and started to wonder if the rain would ever stop. It did! We quickly fired up the barbecue and had burgers and dogs grilling away. The afternoon remained rain-free and rather pleasant, with no wind to speak of. By 3:30, we felt we had pushed our luck long and enough and packed everything up. And, in true ham fashion, we sat there for a long time at the picnic table chewing the fat. Finally, after 5, the rains started up again and we quickly dispersed.

Attendees included AA1SU, AB1DD, KB1LHB, KB1RQX, KB1WXM, KB3DQZ + family, W1SJ, W4YFJ, VE2EZN and VE2HKW. Not a bad turnout for a rainy day in the park. Special thanks to Adam for wrangling the shelters, drinks and charcoal.



OUR FIRST NPOTA GROUP ACTIVATION Mitch W1SJ

We all have heard about the National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) program from Bob KB1WXM at HAM-CON and at our July meeting. And while several RANV members, notably, KB1WXM, KB1ZEB, AA1SU and K1ZK have done activations of their own, we finally decided to do a group activation.

One of the big problems with NPOTA is that many activators carry a QRP radio and stick into a park and make a few contacts and that's it. From the chaser end, we see all sorts of spots on the cluster and no signal can be copied. And that's with good antennas. The guys with little dipoles hear even less. I call these tease activations – you get teased into wanting to work a new rare spot, but can't hear the guy to even try.

Our goal was to put on a major activation for the better part of the day with good signals on several bands. We thought about bringing the AB-577 tower and a yagi but rejected that. We wanted this activity to be fun and not strenuous work. We settled on separate dipoles for 20 meters and 40 meters. This would allow us to be on the two money bands simultaneously. I brought the trusty SB-200 and Bob brought his newer Elecraft amp, which gave us a louder 500 watt signal to work

with. We also put up a 6 meter yagi, in case we got an opening.

The nearest National Park area we could activate is an area called Missisquoi and Trout River Natural and Wild River Area, code number WR26. There are many places to activate from, as long as it is within 100 feet of the specified areas of the rivers and of course, not on a public right of way or someone's backyard. A key ingredient is good recon. We had to know exactly where we could set things up. Fortunately, we had Bob who operated from that area previously and knew of some places up there. We also had local hams Dave KB1JME and Jeff W1AEA who directed us to Davis Park in Richford. It was perfect – nice park along the river with ample trees, easy access and a gazebo to set up one of the stations in.



We arrived at 9 on Sunday morning. Bob and Larry were ready to set up a tent for the 20 meter station, but I had them wait. First we needed to site the antennas. It is really important to consider this carefully. As we were running higher power, we didn't want to have the 40 and 20 meter stations killing each other. I opted to put the dipoles at right angles to each other to minimize interaction. The 20 meter dipole was broadside East-West, whereas the low omnidirectional 40 meter dipole was North-South.

Bob and Carl got the 20 meter dipole up while Tim and the other Bob put up the 6 meter yagi on a 35 foot mast. I quickly built a station consisting of the K3, SB-200, tuner and keyer in the tent. I put out the first CQ at 10:30 and it was bedlam shortly after that. The pileups rivaled the W1AW operation! I got to work putting stations in the log, to the tune of 165 QSO's the first hour. Everyone else worked on the 40 meter dipole and station.

While the dipole was going up, Bob picked up a few contacts on 6 meters. The opening was short, and that's all we got. The 40 meter station got on by noon, which was quite late. High noon is not favorable to 40 meters but it didn't seem to matter. They had a pileup of their own going in short order. Many of the folks we worked were very happy we were on 40 meters

with a good signal as they would not have been able to work us on 20 meters.

Unfortunately, 20 meters ran out of gas quickly. I tried 20 CW for a while and then 17 meters, which produced little. For the rest of the afternoon, 20 was pretty lackluster while 40 meters kept a consistent 50-70 rate.

Towards the later part of the afternoon, we were noticed by the local kids and they were quite interested in what we were doing. We put a few of them on the air – one was really good at it – maybe we can import him for Field Day!

At 5, we pulled down the stations and antennas and packed it all away and left tracks by 5:30. We put 676 QSO's in the log, with 46 states and several provinces and a couple of DX countries. Based on what I can find out, this was one of the largest QSO totals of any one-day activation.

Participants included AB1DD, KB1FRW, KB1THX/Morgan, KB1WXM, KB1ZEB and W1SJ along with visitors W1AEA and KB1MDC. There is talk of doing other activations, possibly down in Woodstock, a location near Deerfield (right after NEAR-FEST) or we may revisit this nice spot in Richford again. It was a load of fun!



W1AW CENTENNIAL CARDS **By Paul N. Gayet AA1SU**

On August 13th, I received an email from the W1 QSL Bureau. It was from my DX Card Sorter Ann Santos WA1S. It was to notify me that I had cards at the Buro, but not enough money in my account to send them to me. The W1 QSL Bureau only takes cash, check, bottles, or PayPal now. In the old day, you had to send them a few SASEs.

However, with fast changing rates, new post office restrictions, and various amounts of cards to send out, it has become much more efficient for them to choose the mailing method. I was not sure that Ann was still my card sorter, as she had moved out of New England a while back. I quickly sent the Bureau a payment via PayPal, and fired off an email to Ann telling her so. I also asked how she was doing.

A few days later, I received a fat Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope, stuffed with two bundles of QSL Cards. One batch was the normal DX Cards that I would normally receive. The other group of cards were all W1AW/P ARRL Centennial Station QSL Cards. I was surprised and pleased to see these, although I had already seen few show up at my friend's house – Mike K3BRJ. As you might guess, I received more than just a few. Way back in early 2014 when I was learning about the ARRL Centennial QSO Party, I checked off a box that I wanted to receive QSL cards for the W1AW/P stations. It had stated that these would be sent out via the Buro at some point in the future, and details were still being worked out. After I worked a few dozen stations, I became terrified that I was going to have to have an enormous amount of credits on hand at the Bureau to cover these cards. Soon, I read that the ARRL had the same concerns and that they would have to send out a sample of all the stations worked to each Ham to cut down on the paperwork.

So, I wondered for a while how they would do this, then forgot about it. Well now I can report how they did it. I worked almost every state twice, a few US Territories and Washington DC. I almost got a Triple Play with just W1AW/P stations, but missed RTTY on 2 states, even though I was right there in the pile-ups for both weeks.

Here is an example of the card. The top front of the card for Kentucky Week 1 has ARRL Centennial Station March 5 – 11, 2014. At the bottom, it says N4GN, Organizer – 29,625 QSOS. In the middle are the call signs of all the operators involved in the fun/chaos. At the upper right, is the state coin of KY. Moving to the back. On the left is a paragraph about the ARRL and the Centennial. On the right is a list of my contacts for that week. In this case, it is 5 contacts. Looking on Log Book of the World (LotW), I see that I worked them 10 times that week, two are unconfirmed – both Data. That leaves 8 confirmed contacts. So as predicted, this is a sampling of all of the contacts for that week. All in all, they are all beautiful cards. The League did a great job!

The Centennial year was a lot of fun for me. In addition to chasing the W1AW/P stations, I was often on the air calling CQ to hand out my 200 points that I was worth as a Section Manager. It made me very popular. I had never really worked the WARC Bands before this. When the year was over, I was 3 contacts shy of WAS on 30 & 17 Meters, and 18 short on 12 Meters. It remains that way today, as I have not been back on the WARC Bands since then. Mitch W1SJ told me this was true for him as well, but he started checking into Nets on those bands to close the gaps.

There are a handful of unconfirmed contacts in my log. This is probably because the other station blew my call, or maybe I thought the station came back to me when really he went back to someone else. I only pestered the League about one blown contact. It was for Hawaii on 30 Meters RTTY. Joe NJ1Q checked the logs, and indeed did give me credit for the contact!

I will bring the cards to the next RANV meeting on Tuesday September 13 to show them off.



NEWS & VIEWS

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NEXT MEETING Show and Tell

Tuesday • September 13th • 7:00pm
Wheeler House, 1100 Dorset Street
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