RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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NEXT RANV MEETING - July 11TH

CHALLENGES BUT FIELD DAY PRESSES ON

Mitch W1SJ

It was a Murphy year for Field Day. I'm talking about Murphy, as in Murphy's Laws – when anything can't possibly go wrong – it does.

We started early this year when someone noticed that construction crews literally chewed up most of the north field and replaced it with a silly access road and executive swimming pool right where CW used to be. That site is not usable so we spent a month looking for a new Field Day site. Not so easy! We have pretty demanding requirements for what we consider an acceptable site. It needs to be large, oriented North-South and have ample trees for wire antennas. Oh, and don't forget that we have to have vehicular access – no one is going to carry the towers across a long stretch of field. After a month of searching we found hardly anything and ended up back where we started, but moved 500 feet further down the road. That started the engineering phase of the event – planning where everything would end up. There is a lot to be said for familiarity!

A second problem started to become apparent. Our crew was getting decimated by other activities. Several had to go to weddings. It seems like there is a law that weddings must be in late June. And, IMHO, wedding receptions are not a wise use of resources. As marriages only have a 50% chance of success, wouldn't it be wiser to have the wedding reception after 10 years, when it is more likely to succeed? That would free up a lot of our operators for Field Day, although wedding planners wouldn't like it. But I digress.

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Meetings: 2nd Tuesday • 7:00 PM
Wheeler House
1100 Dorset Street
South Burlington

Repeater: 145.150, PL 100; WB1GQR

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RANVMentor@gmail.com

Picture courtesy of KB1WXM

So we had to figure out how to make do with less personnel. It's an old story that many companies go through. But we had a plan which looked like it would work.

It doesn't come as any surprise that it has not stopped raining for more than a day or two since March. The ground is saturated. And our Field Day site started to resemble a mud puddle. It very much resembled the new Hamvention site! We had something like 3-4 vehicles get stuck in the mud plus a few close calls. It felt like we were erecting Field Day in the Okefenokee Swamp.

Picture courtesy of KB1WXM

The weather forecast was not good: Rain, rain and more rain. We started setting up Friday afternoon and tried to be optimistic. We got our answer quick enough. While attaching the 20 meter CW Yagi to the tower, it started raining. No, raining would be the wrong term. It was more like someone dousing us with a fire hose. And since we couldn't just drop the Yagi and run away, we got wet – much wetter than if we attended a water park.

We had 45 minutes to wait out the storm and dry off. Fortunately, the weather cooperated after that and setup was fairly tame.

Picture courtesy of KB1WXM

Saturday did not start out well. I couldn't get the computer network running on the phone station. I couldn't get it running the night before, either. A few of us screwed around with it for 45 minutes and I said, "Hell with it – we'll run single computer". Meanwhile 20 meters seemed pretty dead – it was going to be a long weekend.

We finally got everything going and started up at 2PM. Over on 20 meters phone, things became alive. I had 210 QSO's in the log after the first hour – not too shabby (my record is 212). The second hour wasn't too shabby either. Things were looking up. Or were they? After my shift, I went over to the other side of the site and found Doug **AB1T** wandering around. "Doug, what are you doing out of the tent!?" He indicated that the computers had gone down. I found Paul and Linn staring at a monitor and scratching their heads. I told them to get Doug back on the air, and paper log if they couldn't get the computers running. Fortunately, they got him back on shortly after, but not before losing 40 minutes of operating time or about 60 CW QSO's.

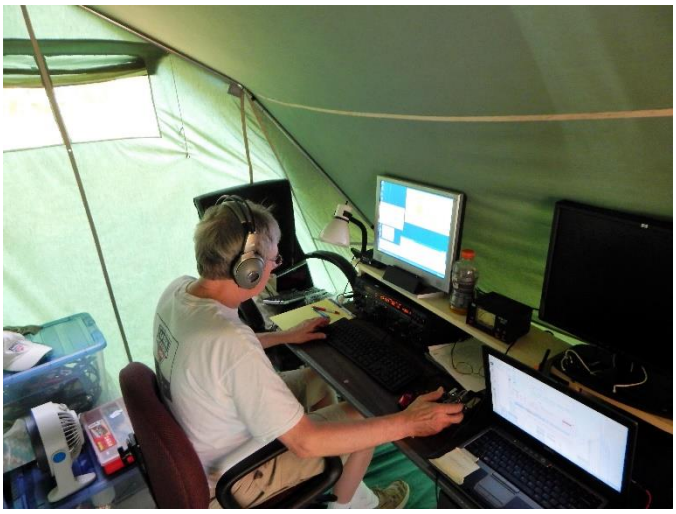
I went over to the satellite station to get ready for a pass, and found the SWR on the UHF antenna to be infinite. We found a problem with the cable and fixed it, and it was – infinite again! OK, we grabbed another cable out of the back and got it installed and got the station on. Three passes went by and although we had a good signal into the respective satellites, our fellow operators were more attuned to swishing their VFOs back and forth but not too good at actually making contacts. Finally, I nabbed two QSO's on the 4th pass.

Picture courtesy of KB1WXM

Things settled down and we were firing on all cylinders. Phone was setting record rates on 20 meters. CW was crawling back out of the hole they got dug into. GOTA was running good rates. Dinner was great. All was well in Field Day land.

Picture courtesy of KB1WXM

But good things do come to an end – they always do. On phone, 20 meters started to run out of gas after 11PM, so we did our usual jump to 80. But we couldn't keep up a reasonable rate. We tried 40 – nada. So we went back to 20 meters to continue there, while I said, "Keep going here – I'll think of something." But we never did figure out why 80 and 40 meter phone was a train wreck. Everything was in order, but the answers to CQ's were not happening much. It wasn't until Monday after Field Day that I found an issue with the tuner – but that is a whole other story.



Picture courtesy of KB1WXM

Meanwhile, CW was catching fire in the morning hours. The combo run and search stations were working well. Rates were holding firm. And the GOTA station did well, despite being limited by available operators. Oh, and little by little, the 6 meter openings resulted in nearly 240 QSO's!

Picture courtesy of KB1WXM

The raw score is something like 4671 QSO's and 14794 points. This is the 3rd highest point total for us. We did 16320 in the magical year of 2011 and very nearly equaled our 2012 score of 14802. How did we do otherwise? We've hit 14000 points 4 times – twice was a first place finish and twice was a second place finish. It really depends on how THEY did. And with the openings on 20, 15, 10 and 6 meters going strong, I'm sure we were bested by at least 1 or 2 groups out in the Southwest. We shall see.

Picture courtesy of KB1WXM

But, despite all the bad stuff thrown our way – we still ran up a very respectable score – and got to brag about it on the Channel 3 and Channel 22/44 news that night!

RANV FIELD DAY VIDEO
Video courtesy of KB1WXM

Checkout the ACTION from Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont (RANV) on ARRL field day, 2017.

First is the tower/Yagi setup for the GOTA/VHF, UHF stations. Then operations from GOTA, CW, Phone and VHF, as well as a demonstration of a crystal radio. Finally, the tear down of the large tent.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qiX-twWpFM

UPCOMING RANV PICNIC AND DOUBLE ACTIVATION
Mitch W1SJ

The RANV Summer Picnic will be on Saturday, August 12th at Kamp Kill Kare State Park. As part of the Vermont Parks on the Air Program we will attempt to put two parks on the air, simultaneously – Kill Kare and Burton Island.

To be able to do this successfully, we will need, at least, a team of 4 people for each activation. One group will stay at Kill Kare, set up the antenna and radio and operate, while the other group will take the ferry to Burton Island and do the same. The activations will use a dipole antenna, so setup time should not run much over 30 minutes. The picnic itself will actually be in two places! Attendees can pick which picnic to attend, or take the ferry to visit both!

To allow for setup and a reasonable operating schedule, we will have to be at the park a bit earlier this year – 10AM. The ferry to the island leaves at 10:30. With this schedule, we hope to have the stations on the air in the 11-11:30 timeframe. The last two ferries are at 5 and 6, which means we will have to stop operating and tear down either at 4:15 or 5:15 – depending on how good the conditions (both weather and propagation) are.

So, put the word out and let's see how many people we can get to help out in this super event. Please contact Bob **KB1WXM** or Mitch **W1SJ** via E-mail to let them know which operation you can do and what your schedule is.

We have already promoted this in QST and other ham radio media, so folks will be looking for us. We hope you can join us in this gala event!

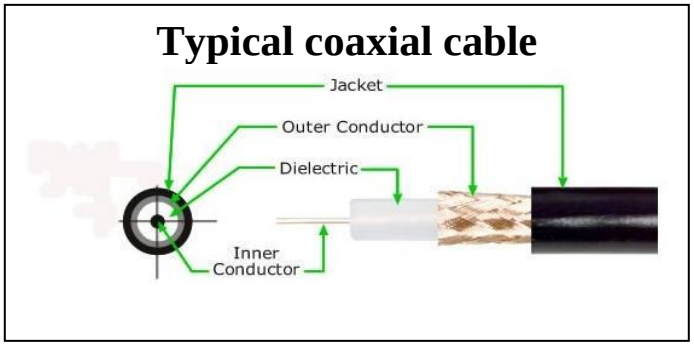
SECRETARY'S MINUTES
Kathi K1WAL

We had 16 in attendance at our June meeting.

The meeting began with a presentation of Crimping (**KB1WXM**) vs Soldering (**KB1FRW**) followed by discussing final details for Field Day and munching snacks provided by Paul **AA1SU** (thank you Paul!)

Since no one volunteered to bring snacks for the July meeting Kathi K1WAL will cook up a new experiment. Be sure to keep an open mind.

Bob **KB1WXM** discussed the merits of crimping while Bob **KB1FRW** covered soldering by putting a PL259 connector on coax. First up was WXM-Bob. Cheryl **KB1VJD** volunteered to demonstrate while following Bob's directions. She put a piece of shrink wrap on the coax first, then WXM-Bob helped measure and trim the jacket of the coax and pull the braid (outer conductor) back. He used a Cablematic tool and a sharp knife to do this.



Cheryl put the connector on making sure it was properly seated with the braid just meeting the edge of the connector. Before crimping WXM-Bob helped her solder the center connector for a better connection. After a little more trimming they shrunk the shrink wrap with a heat gun. WXM-Bob put the wire to his 'test box' and got the happy green lights.

Next up FRW-Bob demonstrated soldering a connector. He used the same steps in preparing the coax. He soldered the center conductor and as it cooled explained that maintaining the proper temperature is important. He trimmed the braid and

could see it through the holes of the PL-259. He then filled the holes with solder flush with the connector. After pulling the sleeve over the connector and screwing it in he was finished.

A short discussion ensued about the advantages and disadvantages of each method. Mike **N1FBZ** commented that silver plated connectors are easier to solder than nickel plated and it is worth the extra cost to go with silver. Paul **AA1SU** commented that if it wiggles it's wrong.
Most in attendance already had their preference. While soldering can take more time, it can often be undone whereas a crimp cannot be un-crimped. But in the long run, both methods are good *when done correctly*.

FEATURED PLATE OF THE MONTH

Picture courtesy of K1WAL

Thanks Betty!
Got a ham plate or Amateur related vanity? Send us a picture and we'll feature it one of the upcoming newsletters.

POP QUIZ – Answers below

Technician Question: T9B08
Why should coax connectors exposed to the weather be sealed against water intrusion?
A. To prevent an increase in feed line loss
B. To prevent interference to telephones
C. To keep the jacket from becoming loose
D. All of these choices are correct

General Question: G9A05
How does the attenuation of coaxial cable change as the frequency of the signal it is carrying increases?
A. Attenuation is independent of frequency
B. Attenuation increases
C. Attenuation decreases
D. Attenuation reaches a maximum at approximately 18 MHz

Extra Question: E9F03
Why is the physical length of a coaxial cable transmission line shorter than its electrical length?
A. Skin effect is less pronounced in the coaxial cable
B. The characteristic impedance is higher in a parallel feed line
C. The surge impedance is higher in a parallel feed line
D. Electrical signals move more slowly in a coaxial cable than in air

Answers: T9B08-A G9A05-B E9F03-D Good Luck!

RANV
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NEWS & VIEWS

INSIDE

NEXT MEETING
Coax Soldering & Crimping
Field Day Planning

Tuesday • July 11th • 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