



# RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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An ARRL Special Service Club

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## NEXT MEETING – DMR DIGITAL VOICE MODE JUNE 12<sup>TH</sup> 7 PM

Chris **KI1P** will do a presentation on the new DMR Digital Voice Mode and the Vermont and New England Digital Network.

## FIELD DAY 2018 *Mitch W1SJ*

It's Field Day time again – only a mere 3 weeks away!

Some of us are excited to plan and implement this – as always. However, from a few folks I'm already hearing the refrain, "Oh – we got to do all that work for Field Day again – it's the same old each year..."

Here is a sad fact that I hear about at ham gatherings. Many Field Day groups across the land are pretty lame. No one wants to do the planning or the setup work. Participants are getting old (and lazy). Field Day operations have become nothing more than a picnic with an inefficient station which makes few QSO's.

Do we want this for RANV? I don't. And I know many of us don't. And as far as the "same as last year lament", consider that Murphy's Laws work full time to mess up any plan we might have. Last year it was construction and monsoon rains, and before that was dead propagation. There is always a challenge presented to us.

The mission for our group is that we need the help of everyone. There are less people and those people are getting older and cannot do as much. Dealing with an aging group is a challenge but it teaches us life lessons. We learn to work smarter instead of harder. And we have been very good at that. So please, make room in your schedule to help out at Field

## CONTACTS

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US Mail: PO Box 9392  
South Burlington, VT 05407

Web: [www.RANV.org](http://www.RANV.org)

Reflector: [RANV@groups.io](mailto:RANV@groups.io)

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

Repeater: 145.150, PL 100; WB1GQR

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New Hams, Mentoring:  
[RANVMentor@gmail.com](mailto:RANVMentor@gmail.com)

VT State Parks On The Air:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/292829457810746/>

Online Dues Payment:  
[www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html](http://www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html)

Day, whether for a short period or the full weekend. It is amateur radio all rolled up into one activity!

RANV has one of the most successful Field Day operations in the land. We have finished in the top 5 for the last 14 years and in the top 10 for the last 23 years. And someone just alerted me to a new category they came up with – QSO's per transmitter. Last year we had 4671 QSO's in 2A, for a Q/T of 2335. This is higher than anyone – including all of the groups in the top 10 of all categories. Wow! Other groups have noticed the performance we strive towards each year. Let's not disappoint!

As for details, we plan to set up in the same place as last year. With the construction gone, it would be possible to shift back to some of the previous area, but the former CW location is now a pond. Since we have specific spacing requirements, this will not work out. Therefore we will use last year's configuration. The big problem last year was heavy rains made the field muddy. Hopefully we will get a break on the weather. But if it does rain a lot, don't drive in the field unless you have 4-wheel drive and a winch!

While we did very well last year, two big blunders besmirched an otherwise perfect execution. The CW station was not grounded per our spec, and RF crashed the computers. The phone station did not have a balun in the tuner, causing the 80/40 meter antenna to be less than efficient. These mistakes will not be made again, and hopefully no other mistakes will be made either.

As you read this, we are recruiting participants for Field Day, for setup, takedown, site maintenance and operating. Please fill out the survey promptly so we can plan our manpower. Let's have another fun and successful Field Day!

## PARADE AND MARATHON ACTIVITIES

*Mitch W1SJ*

What if they held a Parade and then a Marathon, and nothing much happened? That is what happened this year. Both events were very, very quiet from a communications standpoint, something which thrills the event planners.

The Essex Memorial Parade was held on Saturday morning with on and off light rain. The home town Essex High School marching band was a major disappointment as they immediately threw in the towel and went home. Right next to them, The Vergennes High School marching band whipped out rain slickers and continued on. Over in Division 10 we had to line up the politicians, which is just slightly more difficult than lining up cats. The Governor was a last minute addition, as he showed up with one of his race cars. All of these changes were called into Glenn at the reviewing stand, keeping the officials up to date. Otherwise, the 13 divisions of the Parade continued down the 1-mile route without incident.

Thanks to [AA1SU](#), [K3BH](#), [KB1FRW](#), [KB1YGP](#), [KB1ZEB](#), [N1WCK](#), [N1WQS](#), [W1DEB](#) and [W1SJ](#) who handled the communications.



*VCM – Beltline Station photo courtesy of KB1WXM*

The next day, Sunday, turned out to be a real beauty for the 30<sup>th</sup> running of the Vermont City Marathon. New this year, water was supplied in large tanks called “Water Monsters”, relieving the crew to worry about having enough water bottles on hand. There were a few supply snafus, but these were relatively minor. The cooler temperatures and a steady breeze off the lake kept medical calls to a minimum. By the time the main part of the running pack had reached 20 miles, our net was dead quiet. And we noticed the same thing on the medical frequency, race official's frequency and fire department frequency. With the nice cool weather, there was little need for emergency services. There wasn't much to do! Next time, I'll be sure to bring a book to read. The race director was tickled pink to have a marathon run by the numbers, given some major excitement we have had over the last few years.



*VCM – North Avenue - photo courtesy of KB1WXM*

Special thanks to Tony [WA2LRE](#) who installed and worked on the remote receiver in New York. With that in place, everyone had a good reliable signal.



VCM Communication Support – photo courtesy of KI6ISG

RANV members **AA1SU**, **KB1FRW**, **KB1OAH**, **KB1RQX**, **KB1VJD**, **KB1WXM**, **KB1YGP**, **KB1YTO**, **KB1ZEB**, **KI6ISG**, **KK1L**, **W1DEB**, **W4YFJ**, **WL7CVD** and **W1SJ** were part of a crew of 28 ham operators providing communications for this event. And **KE1AZ** did not even use a radio, but he burned way more calories than we did, running the Marathon in 4 hours, 34 minutes!



Lake Carmi Activation – KB1FRW & AB1DD – photo courtesy of KI6ISG

## LAKE CARMİ ACTIVATION

*Mitch W1SJ*

This past Saturday, the RANV dream team activated Lake Carmi State Park in Franklin, Vermont. Early morning clouds gave way to a postcard perfect day. Propagation conditions were pretty lame with up/down QSB all over the over the place. Despite that, we put 566 QSO's in the log from 46 states and 9 DXCC countries during the 5+ hour activation.



KB1FRW Launches the Antenna – photo courtesy of KI6ISG



Lake Carmi Activation – KB1WXM & KB1FRW – photo courtesy of KI6ISG

Vermont RANV members in the diaspora were worked, including Kathi **K1WAL** in NC, Brian **WB2JIX** in FL and Doug **N6PRT** in CA (almost). Locally, we also worked Rich **KB1YTO** and Paul **AA1SU**. We used Elecraft K3 stations on 20 and 40 meters running 500 watts to dipoles up 35 feet.

Activators included Carl **AB1DD**, Bob **KB1FRW**, Bob **KB1WXM** Beverly **KI6ISG**, Bob **W4YFJ** and Mitch **W1SJ**.



Lake Carmi Activation – W4YFG – photo courtesy of KB1WXM

Check out this great video of the activation!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNhku\\_3QLmw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNhku_3QLmw)

## ADVENTURES OF A MARATHON NEWBIE

Duane WL7CVD

The pre-race communicators meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup> was filled with operators who had years of experience helping with the Vermont City Marathon. Only two people raised hands admitting this was their first year, myself included. The group also included race organizers, so there was no trouble getting my many questions answered. Mitch **W1SJ** checked my Yaesu radio output and seemed pleased that it produced a solid 5 W with little return. He also noticed the new Diamond 1/4 wave antenna and headphones I bought specifically for the race. (Participation got me to improve my HT capabilities.)

On race day, I got there early and managed to find my assigned spot. It was in Battery Park behind the band stand. The “aid station” was nothing more than a water table staffed with volunteers and a team captain. I checked in with her, and then checked in on my radio. Everything worked fine.

My job was to relay information to net control and assist the captain of my aid station. I notified her when the advisory sign was changed to yellow letting runners know there was increased risk of heat issues (it must have been the humidity factor because temperatures were great for a race). I also advised net control when the first hand-crank bikes went through and when the first runner came through. All routine.

Then I noticed an unattended backpack. I walked around it hoping someone would come up to defend it. Nobody. I asked a few bystanders, nope. Then I decided to call it into net control. Within one or two minutes, uniformed police with a sniffer dog were there examining the pack. The dog raised no alarm, and the police started going through the pack. In short order, some kids came back to the pack and identified it as theirs. The officers checked in with me to verify I had made the radio call. Case closed.

Thankfully, it was an uneventful race. It was fun to watch the racers come by. Race officials nailed the estimate of when the

first runner would pass our station. And then the bell curve of runners came through, some looking a bit ragged but nobody in serious distress. It was fun to watch and fun to listen to the various communication activities our group supported.

## FT8 SHORTCUTS

Paul AA1SU

For those of you operating the new digital mode FT8, I want to show you a couple of shortcuts that you can use to speed up this Slow Mode. As you may or may not know, each transmission in FT8 takes 15 seconds. The first 13 seconds send the same information over and over. In the last 2 seconds, the other station is decoding. For this reason, the whole process of sending and receiving can take as much as 1:15 minutes.

You can speed this up by double-clicking the **[Tx1 Control]**. This toggles your first report to Tx2. In other words you won't be sending your grid square first, you will be sending his signal report first.

The other short cut is to double-click **[Tx4]**. This toggles between sending RRR and RR73 in that message. Sending RR73 forces you to log the QSO, and the other station to send 73 and log his QSO. While he is sending his 73, you can click the TX button to call CQ, or you can double-click on someone else calling CQ. This cuts the process down to 45 or 30 seconds.

Other boxes that you want to check off in the WSJT-X screen are **[Hold TX Freq]**, **[Auto Seq]**, and **[Call 1<sup>st</sup>]**.

Pressing **[F2]** brings you to the set up window where you enter your information. Boxes that should be checked here are **[Show DXCC]** and **[Worked Before Status]**, **[Double-Click on Call Sets Tx Enable]**, and **[Display Distance in Miles]**.

I hope that you find this information useful. FT8 is a fun digital mode. Depending on the band, you can make contacts anytime of the day or night. When I'm operating, I make it a point to work VT stations that show up. So don't be surprised if I call you while you're in the middle of another QSO.

## CONGRATULATIONS - New Licensees and Upgrades

**KC1JHS** Scott Ruel (So. Burlington) GENERAL  
**KM6TKP** Anania Yeghikian (Montreal) TECHNICIAN

Anania is quite an interesting story - he's competing in a collegiate rocket building competition in NM later this month and needed a USA-based call sign to send telemetry data. The two contests are to get a rocket as close to 10,000 or 30,000 feet in the air (closest to peaking at the chosen elevation wins). He's supposed to give us an update after the competition.

## SECRETARY'S MINUTES

Paul AA1SU substituting for Duane WL7CVD

The May 8 meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by President Bob **KB1FRW**. There were 11 Hams and 1 visitor in attendance. The visitor was Steve DeMaroney.

We reminisced about NEAR-Fest and the fierce wind storm that hit the Deerfield Fairgrounds around 10 PM on Friday May 4. Several tents and canopies were upended. Bob **KB1FRW** and Carl **AB1DD** had to jump into action to help out. Carl reported that one particular canopy lifted up in the air and came down around a new pickup truck without scratching it!

After the HamFest, RANV operated VT Parks On the Air and the New England QSO Party from Knight Point State Park. This took place on Sunday, May 6. Operators included Bob **KB1FRW**, Duane **WL7CVD**, Bob **KB1WXM**, Mitch **W1SJ**, and Chad **K1CZA**. Alan **KB1MDC** visited, and offered moral support. All together, the group made 528 contacts!

Field Day is June 23-24. I reported that we have permission to use the field. We need radio operators and people for set up and take down. More details elsewhere in this newsletter.

For the meeting topic, the Bobs, **KB1FRW** & **KB1WXM**, bought along their tennis ball launchers to demonstrate how to hang a dipole. After some brief chatter, we went outside to play. Several shots were fired over the trees with great accuracy. It was a beautiful evening and we all had a good time finishing up chatting about this and that.

There were no snacks this month, but Dave **KC1APK** assures me that he will bring them to the June meeting.

## REMEMBER - RANV GROUP HAS A NEW HOME

Here are the important addresses you need. Feel free to ask me directly if you have any questions, [AB1DD@ARRL.NET](mailto:AB1DD@ARRL.NET).

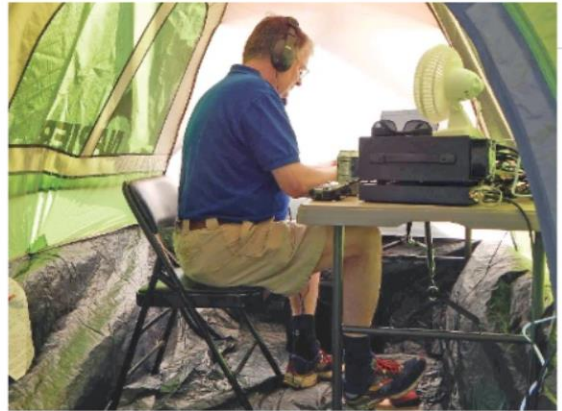
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Unsubscribe: [RANV+unsubscribe@groups.io](mailto:RANV+unsubscribe@groups.io)  
Group Owner: [RANV+owner@groups.io](mailto:RANV+owner@groups.io)

## KB1WXM's ARTICLE IN THE JUNE 2018 QST!

Dave KC1APK

Check out pages 69-70 of the June 2018 edition of QST! Bob KB1WXM introduces the Amateur Radio community to the Vermont Parks on the Air program and describes the steps he took to build a successful program... from conceiving the idea, obtaining permissions, publicizing the events, and planning an activation. Bob highlights the success of several RANV activations with pictures of Paul **AA1SU**, Carl **AB1DD**, and Bob **KB1FRW** activating from Kill Kare, Underhill, and North Hero State Parks.

Congratulations to Bob for a great article!!!



Starting Your Own  
**Parks on the Air**  
Program

A group of hams in Vermont were successful. Follow their lead and see where it gets you!

**Bob Henneberger, KB1WXM**  
As ARRL's National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) program drew to a close at the end of 2016, I began thinking about what to do next. I was already familiar with the SOTA (Summits on the Air) program. In order to realize this project, I would need to secure permission from the

Snippet of the June 2018 edition of QST



## NEWS & VIEWS

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### NEXT MEETING DMR DIGITAL VOICE MODE Presented by Chris Knox - KI1P

Tuesday • JUNE 12<sup>TH</sup> • 7 pm  
Wheeler House, 1100 Dorset Street  
South Burlington, VT

### Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- Steering Wheel: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues 6:30; Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners, Williston
- VE Exams every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday; Red Cross Building 29 Mansfield Ave, Burlington
- Dues due? Pay online at [www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html](http://www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html)