



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

January • 2019

An ARRL Special Service Club

Vol. 29 No. 01

NEXT MEETING JANUARY 8th

The history of the American railroad watch. It will include a brief discussion of how a mechanical watch works as well as a display of vintage railroad watches

HAM BREAKFAST JANUARY 26th

Mitch W1SJ

It's time once again for Vermont's Annual Ham Breakfast, Saturday, January 26th, 9AM - 12 Noon at JP's Deli, 39 River Road, Essex. For those who have never been there, it is simply a large group of hams who get together for breakfast and meeting and talking with other hams. JP's has a variety of breakfast and other food items, and most will agree they serve up good stuff. Most of the dining finishes up at 10, at which time we launch into a group discussion of ham radio topics of the day. It is one of the fun ham radio highlights of the winter. So, join us Saturday morning January 26th for eats and greets!

HAM-CON 2019

Mitch W1SJ

HAM-CON is Saturday, February 23rd. We need everyone to be there to make it another great show!

Right now we are in the planning stages. I am looking for ideas for great presentations, presenters to give these presentations and volunteers to take care of the many jobs we need to cover. The event has been a success due to the talents of many. Let us keep it a success.

Promotion for the show is a job everyone needs to tackle. It just doesn't work to send out E-mails anymore. Instead everyone needs to invite their ham radio pals and get them to the show. Car pool, if it helps! In addition, HAM-CON is one of our greatest recruiting tools. Know someone interested in

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Web: www.RANV.org

Reflector: RANV@groups.io

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

Repeater: 145.150, PL 100; WB1GQR

New Hams, Mentoring:
RANVMentor@gmail.com

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

Online Dues Payment:
www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html

ham radio? Make sure they attend the show. Who knows, they may end up walking away with a collection of equipment!

QSO PARTY FEBRUARY 2-3

Mitch W1SJ

The 61st running of the Vermont QSO Party will be on February 2-3, UTC. That is a start time of 7PM Friday, February 1st and an end time of 7PM Sunday, February 3rd. The goal is simple: get on the air, call CQ and work as many people as you can. While there are a few of us who make a lot of contacts each year, there are still some folks who haven't worked Vermont and think it is rare! Despite the reputation and myth that we are rare DX, we'll keep serving up Vermont in our annual bash.

The rules are simple. Operate for as long as you want on any bands or modes, using any power level (legal, of course) that you want. There are scoring perks for using low power and operating on CW or digital, but unless you are competing, choose whatever modes make you happy. This year we have better integrated FT8 into the rules by allowing stations to partially count grid squares as multipliers. While operating, you are searching for new states, provinces, DX countries, and those rare and elusive Vermont counties. And if the action gets slow, there is always the Minnesota and British Columbia QSO Parties and the Black Sea Contest on Saturday to keep your attention. Operate from home or operate portable, operate from a friend's house, but operate! Full information on the Vermont QSO Party is at ranv.org/vtqso.html. Be sure to read the rules and get your logging software in place before getting on.



Scenes from the RANV Holiday Party Photos courtesy of Bev KI6ISG

RANV TECH NIGHT

Mitch W1SJ

I'm not one to write a "year in review". I feel that the most benefit can be had by looking forward instead of backwards. But we do need to take stock of what we have going in RANV. We still are one of the largest and most successful ham radio clubs in New England. There are very few radio clubs with 100 or more members. But, when one looks at radio clubs as a whole, it is not a pretty picture. Most clubs have declining memberships, declining activities and many are on

life support. We have started to see some of this – declining membership and declining attendance at activities. "We need to create more hams", is the battle cry. We did just that this spring where two classes minted 24 new hams. Of those, one has joined the club and has been active in some activities. The remainder have not been seen or heard from. Clearly, something more is needed. If I knew what that was, it would have been done already.

I have been looking at other successful radio clubs. In many cases, the clubs have separate "Tech Nights", in addition to regular monthly meetings. While meetings are typically a performance – a speaker presents to a group, a Tech Night is a hands-on event. Everyone who attends does something – simply coming to watch or to be a spectator is not cool. I'm sure everyone has ideas on when these should be held, but my suggestion would be NOT on a Monday-Thursday night where there are umpteen other events conflicting. Friday might be a reasonable choice. There are Friday with conflicts – either travel (think, Near-Fest) or, in my case, contests. There are exams on Friday nights, too. However, there are many Fridays when there is nothing going on. I also think Sunday night is probably the quietest night in terms of conflicts. However, folks seem to be reluctant to go out then. For this idea to work, we do have to reach a consensus of a reasonable meeting night and make sure we get the attendance to make it work.

What do we do at a Tech night? Kit building is usually the first thing to come to mind. For a kit to be assembled in a single evening, it would have to be quite simple. However, we could set up a kit build which would run over a 3 night session (meaning over 3 months, if we met once a month. Another idea is programming radios. You have to be a fairly sophisticated programmer to set up a DMR radio. Even an SDR radio like an Elecraft K3 has a steep learning curve. We could dedicate a night to delve into the mysteries of radio programming. Along those same lines we can focus on the HF digital modes (FT8) and have everyone try it out and get good at it. Operating nights would also be a good bet. Right now, there are excellent conditions on 40 and 80 meters in the 7-9 PM window. We would have these Tech night at someone's QTH and everyone can take turns calling CQ and seeing who comes back. This is an excellent way to build operating skills. A specialized version of this would be satellite night. There are many new satellites in orbit right now, begging for QSO's. Very few hams in our area are skilled in this specialized form of communication. I've also seen topics on dealing with surface mount technology and creating PC boards. Certainly, if you are going to attempt to repair or modify equipment, you will have to deal with these nasty little circuits. And finally, for our computer-type friends, we could have sessions on building small computer-based circuitry. These are only a few things I can think of and I'm sure there are many more ideas people can come up with.

The location of Tech Night could be in various places, depending on the topic. Perhaps we can use the Wheeler House for some of the kit building. We could use my shack for some of the operating nights. Perhaps we could be included in at the Friday night "Nerd Night" at Dan's QTH, where there

are plenty of parts and test equipment. Nothing has been planned or discussed up to this point. The purpose of this article is to get the discussion going to come up with a plan which will work for many of us. If we are successful at creating a viable Tech Night, that would go a long way to help build strength in our amateur radio and tech community. A discussion of this has already been set up on the RANV Reflector. Please do weigh in and let us know what you think.

TICKETS FOR HAMCON AT THE BREAKFAST

Carl AB1DD

I will have HAM-CON tickets at the breakfast and club meetings and any other get together.

Advanced sale prices:

\$12.00 for 6AM admission

\$6.00 for regular 8AM admission.

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.

Post: RANV@groups.io
Subscribe: RANV+subscribe@groups.io
Unsubscribe: RANV+unsubscribe@groups.io
Group Owner: RANV+owner@groups.io



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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday • January 8TH • 7 pm

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