



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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An ARRL Special Service Club

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NEXT MEETING: Tuesday February 9th

Transceiver Performance for the HF-DX Operator
Speaker Rob Sherwood, NC0B, Sherwood Engineering

Paul [AA1SU](#)

If you have ever visited the Sherwood Engineering website to see how the receiver in your transceiver performs compared to other models, you won't want to miss the February RANV meeting. Join us as Rob Sherwood, NC0B explains how he tests the performance of radios in his shop. What is Close In Dynamic Range, compared to sensitivity? What is the noise floor? Rob will explain this and many other technical questions in this recording of a Zoom meeting that I attended last September.

In addition to the receive side of your transceiver, Rob is now testing the transmitter performance. Rob will go over splatter, CW rise time, transmit composite noise, and other issues. Rob is of the opinion that manufacturers really need to clean up their transmitters now that the receive side is performing so well. In the video, he gives examples of good and bad transmit features of several rigs. In addition, Rob will show why some amplifiers should only be run at half power to be a good neighbor. You may be surprised.

So join us on Tuesday, February 9 for this very informative meeting.

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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-CON - ON-LINE FEBRUARY 27

Mitch W1SJ

HAM-CON is less than 3 weeks away. Have you registered yet? Be sure to go to HAM-CON.ORG and click on the REGISTER button. Currently we have over 100 people registered, from all over the country.

First, an attitude check. I've heard from some who say that an on-line hamfest is silly and they will wait for the next live event. You will wait a long time! The next live hamfest will be in the fall, and that is a big maybe. HAM-CON is now. Second, the biggest reason one goes to a hamfest is to meet fellow hams, socialize and learn new things. We have all of that at HAM-CON. Don't sit on the sidelines – get involved!

Our Flea Market and meeting rooms provide separate spaces where small groups can get together and chat. No, this isn't the 36 people all screaming at each other in a typical Zoom meeting. Instead, this is a lot more intimate and saner. Instead of "walking around" a live show, you will click in and out of breakout rooms to find deals or friends. In addition, there will be live forum sessions, allowing full access where you can ask questions in real time.

We'll have a tremendous program of both live and recorded content. We will get to meet the new ARRL CEO David Minster NA2AA, who will explain the job of the CEO and the intricate details of what goes on at ARRL HQ. We'll also have the ARRL Forum which will feature Director Fred Hopengarten K1VR and new Vice Director Phil Temples K9HI. Discussion topics will include the new FCC fees, loss of 3.4 GHz and anything else which may come up, including one surprise!

Gordon West WB6NOA joins us in the afternoon to show off his library of Ham Radio distress calls. We will all get to hear how ham radio really saves the day! Gordon always gives us a great show! Interested in kit building? We'll have one of the authorities on this subject as Joe Eisenburg K0NEB relates all the tips and tricks in "Kit Building for Success".

How about you military types out there? Tom Perera W1TP, one of the authorities on cryptology, will give a talk on "Spy Radios and CIA Bugs". And we didn't forget about the contesters! Randy Thompson K5ZD, who seems to win just about every contest there is, will present us with "Tips to be a Better Contester". You'll want to jump right into the ARRL DX Contest one week later.

Technicians, we have a few talks for you! Anthony Luscre K8ZT will present "Life Beyond Repeaters" where you will learn about all sorts of other interesting VHF activities. Maybe the digital modes are more to your liking and we have a few of those. Barry Feerman K3EUI will present "Basic Overview of Digital Modes" and Tomas Hood NW7US will talk specifically about the "Olivia Digital Mode"

We also have a few pre-recorded presentations thrown in, just in case you are having Zoom issues or need more content to watch.

Finally, we will wrap up the day with "Ask The Experts" a place where you can bring in all your ham radio questions for answers and explanation from our panel of "experts".

Every Tuesday night we have HAM-CON gatherings to help people navigate Zoom. Be sure to check out one of these meetings so your computer system is ready to give you the maximum enjoyment during the show.

Between the Flea Market, meeting rooms and presentations, it will be a literal 3-Ring Circus. And it's free, and you don't have to travel. Just keep your fridge well stocked with goodies to eat all day!

VERMONT QSO PARTY – INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

Mitch W1SJ

As I write this, the Vermont QSO Party ended only 15 hours ago, so I can't give you specifics at this time. My sense is that we set new records.

Vermont is the first QSO Party of the season, starting 14 hours before Minnesota's bash. And at 7 PM Friday, a bunch of big Vermont signals took to 40 meters and were met by enthusiastic group of operators looking for Vermont. If you tuned across the band there was a big Vermont signal every 5 kHz.

That first hour was magical. I held a 200 rate the first half hour, with 168 the first hour and 116 the second hour, on 40 meters, a band I never seem to do great on. The third hour on 80 meters was pretty good too. But by 10:30, things started to slow up and by 11, not much was left. I whipped out FT8 and ran that until the wee hours, while I tended to more important things, like eating. To be honest, conditions on the low bands were not very good - lot of noise.

The big question was what would 20 meters be like? If the DX isn't there, not much will be worked in the morning. Fortunately, the DX was there, bolstered by the Eurasia DX Contest. This was somewhat challenging as I had to bang out my 6-digit grid square for their exchange. Imagine trying to pass "Fox Nancy Thirty-Four Kilo Mexico" in substandard conditions. I kept at this for a while, and between 10 and 11 we had reasonable conditions to Europe, where even some of the smaller stations were worked.

In the afternoon, the pileups just kept on going, resembling the old, "Shooting fish in a barrel" scenario. It was good to see 20 meters back to its old self.

Sunday brought the new EU-DX Contest, which meant there was more DX on. Fortunately, all I had to send was the ITU zone, "59 – 8", which made things easier.

In the afternoon, I was asked to go to 15 meters, but I didn't feel that the band was strong enough to produce much of a run. But I did put the FT8 station up there and it worked out fine, while I tended to the pileup on 20 meters. But around 3, I noticed a lot more spots on 15 meters so I cautiously went up there. I had a nice short run-on phone, then on CW and when I went back to 15 meters phone, all hell broke loose. After 2 great hours, I dropped back down to 20 meters and it even got more intense. I had a 30-minute period approaching a 200 rate, at the END of the contest. Wow! This was due to the short skip coming in, in addition to the long skip out to the West Coast. Meanwhile I'm seeing spots across 10 meters and even 6 meters, but you never "mess with the pileup", and I stayed put. What a tremendous finish!

We had a good number of big signals on from Vermont this weekend. Gerry W1VE from NH and Ed K1EP from MA remotely put NS1DX (BEN) on from K2LE's super station to the tune of 1900 QSO's. Both Ron KK1L (CHI) and Mike N1JEZ (CAL) put up monster phone numbers, with an assist from some FT8 activity. Bob K1BIF (CHI) had some nice runs on 40 meters, but complained that conditions were otherwise poor.

It's not just phone which makes a QSO Party. The other modes were in play as well. Zach W1JXN (CHI) was virtually everywhere - from 160 to 6 meters and every mode you can think of. Paul AA1SU (CHI) also seemed to be everywhere, but he is only a few thousand feet away and I hear him everywhere! Arnie W1HDI (LAM) had some big runs during the day. Joe K1VMT (LAM) opted for CW only and ran up a big score. Steve W1SFR (RUT), who has been a all-CW operator, tried phone for bit, heard things he didn't want to hear and hightailed back to CW!

The QSO Party wouldn't be the same without our roving mobiles. Kevin KE1VT got together with a couple of other club members and went roving in a big box ambulance. They racked up a few hundred QSO's, from 10 counties, mostly on CW. Kevin reports that riding in the ambulance made him carsick and his rover days are done. Mill K1IB put a few countries on the air in Southern Vermont, all on CW.

Then we have the digital operators. George N1GB (ESS) put rare FN44 on the air on FT8 and FT4. Sadly, no one was able to work rare Essex County since he was only on the "grid square" modes. And the strangest story is from Chris KI1P (WAS). He put 5 FT8 stations on simultaneously to the tune of 1000 QSO's! I'm not sure how he was able to space out 5 antennas to keep the stations out of each other and I'm even less sure what category to even put this in. But it makes for a great effort.

In looking at the outside Vermont scores, there was a real horse race for the 3 maple syrup awards! And I'll be generating many, many certificates. Everyone did good!

I also really enjoyed running into people who I haven't spoken to in a while and having short QSO's in between the pileups. We all had a ball on the air. This is what it is all about!

If you haven't already, be sure to upload your log to the address shown on the Vermont QSO Party Web.

Duane Sherwood, Secretary [WL7CVD](#)

RANV Meeting Minutes January 12, 2021

Regular Meeting

There were about 15 in attendance via Zoom including the three club officers. President Bob, KB1FRW, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Official Business

There were no items of official business.

Announcements

There were announcements about upcoming QSO parties including discussions about logging systems. Ham Con will be coming up soon with several speakers, opportunities to meet and greet in breakout rooms, and vendor areas. Every effort has been made to have it include all the usual features.

Presentations

Bob, KB1FRW, gave presentations on the Nano VNA network analyzer and the Tiny SA spectrum analyzer. Information on these items can be found at:

https://nanovna.com/?page_id=121

<https://www.tinysa.org/wiki/>



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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday • February 9TH • 7:00pm
Via Zoom

Meeting Topic
Transceiver Performance for the HF-DX Operator

Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- Steering Wheel: 3rd Tues 6:30; Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners, Williston
- VE Exams every 2nd Friday; Contact AB1DD@arrl.net for information
- Dues due? Pay online at www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html