



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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An ARRL Special Service Club

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NEXT MEETING: Tuesday July 13th

CHECKING RADIOS WITH A SERVICE MONITOR

The July 13th RANV Meeting – IN PERSON!

Our July meeting will be in person in a new place. We will meet at Veteran's Memorial Park in South Burlington at the shelter in front of the Cairns Area. This is just north of the intersection of Swift Street and Dorset Street.

Mike, N1FBZ will give a short demonstration of the features of HP8920 Communications Test Set. This device can be used to test and troubleshoot both receivers and transmitters. It can determine power output, frequency, deviation, tone deviation, receiver sensitivity, receiver selectivity and a variety of other useful measurements. With the discussion complete, we will then be able to test out HT's and mobile radios on site.

The site is outdoors, so dress for the weather, whatever that may be! See you in person at the meeting!

FIELD DAY 2021 – INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Mitch **W1SJ**

Field Day 2021. Wow, what a blow out. When you are well prepared and the propagation really shines, it is a tremendous event. We were well prepared – well, sort of – more on that later. And the conditions were primo.

In fact, the conditions were too good at the beginning. Both phone and CW stations had big pileups for the first hour, which slowed the rate somewhat. But the endless stream of callers kept coming and the rates stayed at ridiculous levels for many hours. How ridiculous? On phone, we held a steady 180 rate (that's 3 per minute) for a sustained 3 hours! The rate

CONTACTS

Bob **KB1FRW**, President
mcamp@gmavt.net

Jim **KE1AZ**, VP/Treasurer
jhefferon@smcvt.edu

Duane **WL7CVD**, Secretary
dsalaskasep@ak.net

George **KC1JGM**, Editor
gmayvt1@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions to gmayvt1@gmail.com

US Mail: PO Box 9392
South Burlington, VT 05407

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

stayed above 100 per hour until after midnight. And then we switched to 80 meters and ran the rates right back up again. And while 15 meters did not open for any useful rates, to end with a bang, 20 meters opened for short skip and the rates approached 200 for the LAST HOUR. Phone ended up with 2800 QSO's, just shy of the high water mark of 2830 set back in 2011, 10 years ago. That was a truly magical year where we put nearly 500 QSO's in the log on 6 METERS, and set a new 2A point total record. Not to be outdone, CW set a new record of 1736 QSO's, squashing the 2011 number of 1657.

We will end up just shy of 5000 QSO's and 16,000 points. Final numbers are not set yet as I have 2 accountants and a corporate lawyer reviewing the GOTA point totals. Yes, it is that complicated! Did we win it? Hard to say because everyone made more contacts this year. However major issues with the GOTA station resulted in a significant drop in expected points and that might be enough to put others over our score.

And what about the GOTA station? We had major changes in equipment and strategy and with careful planning, it all blew up in our face. For our new members, there exists Murphy's Law, which supersedes all planning and, all other laws. We changed the GOTA radio from an Elecraft K3 (not available) to an Icom IC-718. I knew that the Icom did not have as good a receiver, but that still would work for us. What no one counted on was that the Icom had a dirty transmitter – either by design or perhaps this particular unit was dirty. Every time the Icom transmitted, it wiped out the CW station on the same band, 220 feet away. OK, no problem, we'll keep GOTA on a different band. But in the evening hours, CW uses 2 bands – one for running and one for searching. And this didn't leave much in the way of options for GOTA. Finally, we used a backup radio, a Kenwood TS-450 brought by K1KR, but it didn't have any microphone hookup. The headset and dongle from the backup phone station was used, and GOTA got back on the air for some needed phone contacts. But that headset and dongle had to be used back at phone, so we tried to get the Kenwood on FT8, later in the evening, but that didn't work out. Finally, on Sunday morning, we had the GOTA operators use the second phone radio using the big monobander on 20 meters. That worked great! But, as the rates started to tumble on 40 meters, phone had to take back 20 meters, and GOTA was switched to the slower 40 meters. We finally put them back on the Kenwood over at GOTA to finish up on 20 meters. Oh, and phone had to promote (steal) one GOTA operator to help over there. Are you following all of this? Normally we make 1000 points on GOTA with a bonus around 900. We had hoped to increase this with some digital operation. We ended up with around 900 points with a bonus of around 500, or a deficit of 500 points from what we can normally produce. That's a major hit.

No one saw this problem coming. Fortunately, we had enough facilities to back things up, and we were able to not get totally wiped out. But it did hurt the score and frustrated everyone. In the future, new radios used at Field Day will have to go through some more rigorous testing.

We had a smaller crew this year – 16 instead of our normal 25+. Some have lost interest; some have had medical issues and some are still worried about COVID. Our problem is that we have not replaced lost participants with new ones. By God, we've tried. I've sent personal invitations to our new RANV members – nothing. We've invited members of other clubs – nothing. Even Linn tried to bring in help from MA, which would have been great – but family issues squashed that.

But the smaller squad worked like a very cohesive unit. We got the towers up just a little bit behind schedule and safely. We managed to fill holes in a rather shaky phone operator schedule, and dredged up enough GOTA operators to keep that station on the air, when it was working. We need to be cognizant about the fact that "A" category Field Day groups in the field are dwindling, and most operations concern themselves more with food than antennas. There were only 5 Field Day groups in Vermont, and we were the only one in the Burlington area. Our average age is 62.6 – that's getting a wee bit up there, especially when we have to haul around antenna launchers weighing in at 185 pounds. Where are the young bucks to help out us out?

This is a universal problem beyond ham radio. I see it all the time in other non-radio groups I am in. Even the Marathons are feeling it with reduced numbers of runners. Vermont City Marathon tells me that the demographic with the biggest hole is millennial men. And that's just the group from which we are trying to fill our ranks. What is the solution? No one knows. We just need keep getting better at what we do to the point where we are efficient enough to run the operation with fewer people.

No matter how the scores end up, we accomplished a tremendous job and I will still say that we are amongst the best in the business!

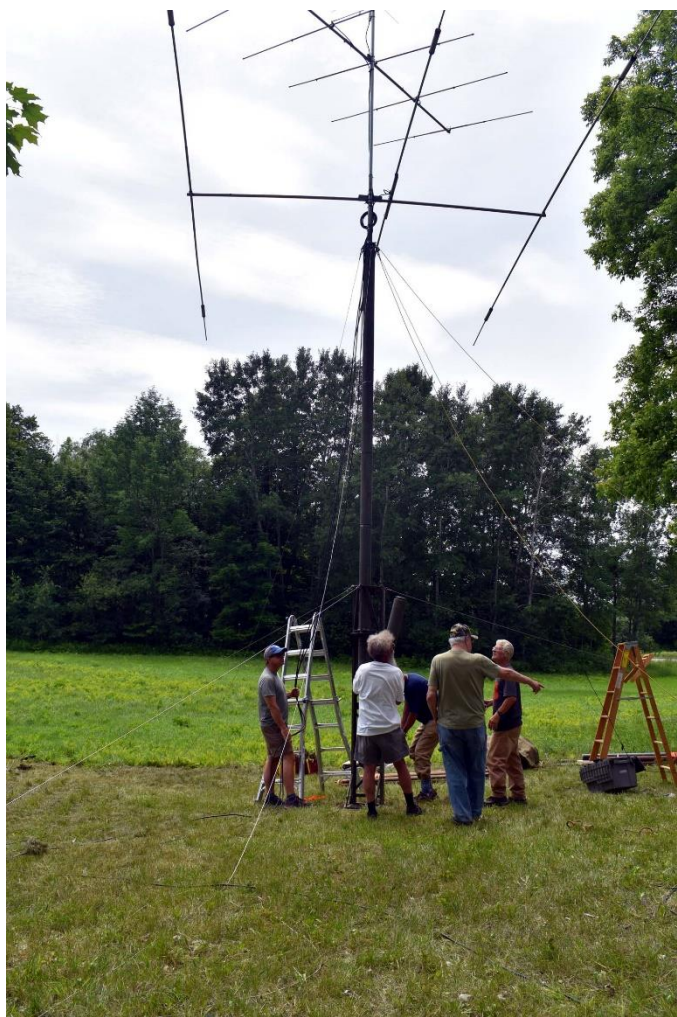
Stay tuned next month for the numbers and details.

Video Link Field Day 2021
Bob K1BIF

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FI6sXaXEcy4&authuser=0>

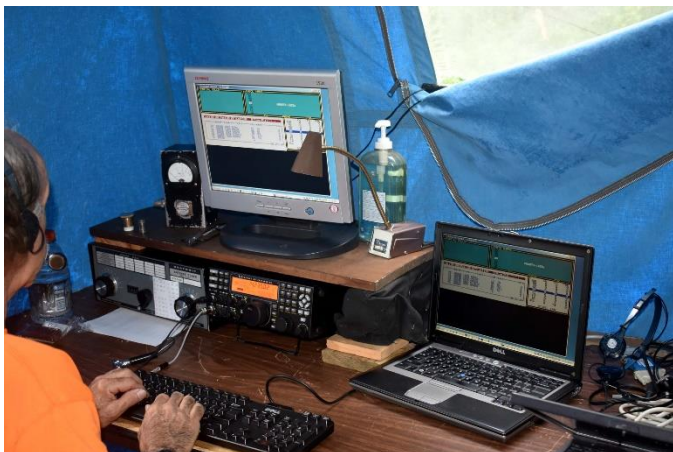
Pictures Field Day 2021

Bob **K1BIF**





Field Day Picture in Williston Observer



RANV Meeting Minutes June 8th, 2021

George, [KC1JGM](#)

There were about 12 members in attendance via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM.

Official Business

No official business was conducted at this meeting.

General Announcements and Discussions

The preparations for field day were discussed in detail.

The annual picnic will be the August meeting.

Plans in place for in person meeting for July.

We hope to be back to “normal” in September.

Presentation

Golden Days of Shortwave Listening

Mitch W1SJ gave an excellent and nostalgic look back at the days of shortwave listening. The audio of the station identifications brought back many memories.

I recall buying a used Zenith Transoceanic with my paper route money in 1969 and bringing it home on my bike. This was my initial interest in radio, scanning the bands at night listening for some distant broadcast.



NEWS&VIEWS

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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday • July 13TH • 7:00pm
Veteran's Memorial Park in South Burlington

Meeting Topic
CHECKING RADIOS WITH A SERVICE MONITOR

Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- Steering Wheel: 3rd Tues 6:30; Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners, Williston
- VE Exams every 2nd Friday; Contact AB1DD@ar1.net for information
- Dues due? Pay online at www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html