



# RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

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An ARRL Special Service Club

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## RANV HOLIDAY PARTY

**Saturday, December 21st 11AM-3PM**

Holy Family Parish Hall, 30 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction. Join us for our gala Holiday bash this Saturday. The event is open to RANV members, families, friends and hams from the local area. Food will be a collaborative effort – there will be a whole bunch of stuff for everyone. Most have signed up to bring items via our on-line survey. If you are planning at this late date to attend, contact W1SJ and let him know when you are arriving and what you plan to bring.

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## RANV DUES ARE DUE

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

December is the renewal month for RANV membership. All memberships expire on December 31st.

If you are a RANV member and have just paid dues for 2025, thank you! If you are currently a member and have not renewed, please do so! If you are not sure, go to <https://www.ranv.org/dues.html> and check. RANV activities, including meetings, the repeaters, the picnic, the holiday party and Field Day are free and open to all regardless of

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Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday • 7:00 PM  
Holy Family Parrish Hall  
30 Lincoln Street  
Essex Junction, Vt

Repeater: 145.150, PL 100; WB1GQR

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

membership status. We plan to keep things open for all. But we do need support from a critical mass of members to keep club operations going. RANV membership will give you access to the special HAM-CON pricing, access to the RANV Flea Market table and the newsletter will be delivered to your in box each month.

So far, only HALF the membership has renewed. This is not good. Like any organization, we have fixed expenses to deal with and we always want to be able to fund the best ham radio activities around.

Membership dues are \$20 per year for a regular membership or \$25 per year for a family membership. A regular membership ends up being \$1.67 a month - you don't find anything that inexpensive! Renewing is simple: just go to <https://www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html> and use the form to access Paypal. If you cannot use this method, you can also renew at the holiday party if you plan to attend.

We hope to see more of you at RANV activities throughout the year!

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## HAM-CON TICKETS

**HAM-CON will be Saturday, February 22nd at the Hampton Inn, Colchester.**

We have a special deal for RANV members. Buy a ticket for \$5 which will allow access at any time or access to the on-line activities if you want to stay home. Ticket price at the door is \$12 regular or \$18 for early admission. It's a great deal, BUT... You have to pay the RANV dues for 2025 and buy your ticket by December 31st. If you are attending the Holiday Party, tickets will be on sale there. Otherwise, you can buy these special tickets on Paypal. Details will be sent to the membership after the party.

Be sure to get cheap tickets so that you have more money to buy goodies at the show!

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## CONTESTING WITHOUT THE RADIO

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

After 50+ years of partaking in the drug called contesting, I still managed to devote 5 out of 7 weekends contesting this fall and a total of 114 hours operating over that time. January and February will also be busy contesting months. It's no wonder that I don't even want to look at a radio after February.

Before diving into the main point of this article, I'll pose some comments on the recent 10-Meter Contest. You did get on, didn't you? I'll be honest – we are at the peak of the sunspot cycle and it doesn't get better than this! There were massive pileups of Europeans all morning followed by massive pileups of stateside all afternoon. Someone using 100 watts to dipole could have easily landed hundreds of QSO's. In a month and a half, the Vermont QSO Party will be upon us. With the great conditions, it promises to be a tremendous time on all of the high HF bands. But in a few short years, you won't be able buy a QSO on 10 meters. Get on while it is hot!

The weekend before Thanksgiving, I participated in a contest in a very different way. I joined the multi-operator crew at K1TTT as a remote operator. Dave K1TTT has built a tremendous multi-op station. There are 6 separate stations, many yagis on towers up to 180 feet tall and Beverages crisscrossing the countryside. I was there some 20 years ago and it is quite impressive. But this is located in Peru, in Massachusetts, some 12 miles east of Pittsfield. It is a 200+ mile 3½ hour trip from here over some very snaky roads in the Berkshires. At an elevation of nearly 2000 feet, it always seems to snow on the weekends of the CQ Worldwide in November and the ARRL DX in February. But the station is fully remotable, meaning that the long drive is optional. While there is a crew who do some of the operating on site, another group remotes in from all over.

Unlike in a regular contest where I have to be concerned with the proper operation of the radio, amplifier, antennas and computers for logging and

spotting, all of that is eliminated. It's just me and the laptop. There's not even a keyer or paddle – all CW messages are pre-programmed and sent with F-keys or voice is transmitted via a boom headset. You do have to keep your computer, the connection software and the internet all running properly, but that's it. While I have operated using the laptop, this is inconvenient because there is so much to squeeze on the screen, it is hardly readable unless you have a good-sized monitor. The screen has the usual stuff like the N1MM logging window, station log showing all 6 stations, band map, spots, chat window, in addition to the stuff to run the station, including 2 VFO windows, amplifier, antenna selection and rotor. It is a veritable 3-ring circus and one has to manage all that while managing a pileup!

I'd rather operate the CQ Worldwide at a multi-op station since it is not my favorite event. To be honest, I'd rather be handing out rare 59 VT exchanges than the pedestrian 5905 exchange everyone in the Eastern U.S. gives out. And the nice thing about a multi-op is that I don't need to operate for 48 hours – I just pick the time slots. I had a conflict during the phone weekend, so I focused on being involved in the CW weekend in November. I picked out 12 hours when conditions would be good and I would still get to do family stuff over the weekend. I signed up for the first hour on 20 meters to get “acclimated” and followed up with a couple of hours later on. Saturday, I grabbed 3 hours in the morning on 10 meters, and repeated the same schedule for the next day.

I'll be honest, those 3 hours on 10 meters was like being boiled in oil. Normally, I am not affected by contest insanity, but this was intense. The operator on before me was running at 32 words per minute and posting 120+ per hour – on CW! That's not gonna do it for me – I cranked it down to 28, which is still uncomfortable, but, at least doable. The band map was entirely full and the QRM from clicks and pops from adjacent stations was extreme. Oh, and we are talking about EU pileups, where when you go back to one station, all will keep calling. I made a lot of use of the F-key to send AGN? I was running full out with my hair on fire and I might have taken on some brain damage in the process. Are we having fun yet? Somehow, I managed to peak at a 90/hour rate, which is still pretty good

compared to everyone else. And then the nice part, at noon, the next operator came on, I jumped off, and I had lunch with Debbie and spent a leisurely afternoon.

The run on Sunday on 10 meters wasn't as nuts, but it was insane enough. At the end of the contest, the couple of hours I spent on 40 meters was relaxing! The conditions were so good that we hardly had to search & pounce – there were stations calling us all the time. Having stacked yagis certainly helps!

For those who do not have a competitive station (or any station) at home, remoting into a good station is a godsend. You can buy time on stations located all over. But note that stations with big yagis will charge more per minute than stations with dipoles! Or else, you can get involved with a multi-operator crew and use the station during off hours. The only thing is that you are sharing the facility with other operators, and the station may not be available when you would like to be on.

Remote operating has become really large. Many of the big multi-ops utilize remote operators. Even DX Expeditions have some remote operators. Think about it – would you want to sit in a cold igloo surrounded by penguins on some icy rock or operate from the comfort of home. Don't answer that!

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## THE WB1GQR 145.15 REPEATER

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

Activity is starting to pick up on the repeater and it would be a good time to explain how many of the features work so that the system can be more useful to you.

The main part of the repeater is up in Bolton. It transmits on 145.15 MHz and listens down 600 kHz on 144.55MHz. To access it, you need to transmit a 100 Hz tone. For many years, the repeater was one of best covering systems in the Northeast, covering all over Northern Vermont all the way down into New Hampshire. Sadly, a cell service has located on

site, and between the transmitters of the cell site and a broadcast station, these signals are picked up by a dirty metal joint somewhere up there and gets reradiated as wide band noise, making the receiver less sensitive. There is nothing to fix on the repeater. The only solution is to go up there and remove any potential noise producing joint. Besides the extreme difficulty in getting to the site, locating these sources is difficult. The problem comes and goes and we live with it.

Years ago, we added a remote receiver to the system. We generally refer to it as the “Lakeside Receiver.” The actual location is in Port Kent, New York using a yagi pointing towards Burlington. This receiver also listens on 144.55 MHz, but you will need a 131.8 Hz tone to access it. When using this receiver, you will hear a single “beep” as opposed to the lower double “beep” of the main repeater. It is suggested that you program your radio to have adjacent channels with 145.15 MHz – one transmitting the 100.0 Hz tone and the other transmitting the 131.8 Hz tone. That way you can easily switch between the two receivers. It is recommended you use the Lakeside receiver when you are on this side of the Green Mountains as it generally tends to hear better.

You may have heard conversations with people who are located far away from Vermont. The repeater is often linked into the Greater Adirondack Amateur Radio Association (GARA) Network. This is a network of repeaters which starts in Long Island and follows the spine of New York along I-87 up to our area, and then across Route 11 towards Potsdam. We try to keep the repeater linked into this network, but the system does drop out, so it is hard to know if you are connected or not. On occasion, repeaters from the Northeast FM Repeater Association (NFMRA) can be linked in as well, providing connection to a group of UHF repeaters across Vermont. When using the network, it is imperative that you push the PTT, and then WAIT 2 seconds before speaking. Otherwise, your first words will be cut off. When you transmit, you are going through 3 radio links, the internet and then another 2 links at the far end. All of this takes some finite time. So don’t be in a hurry – pause before saying anything.

Finally, the repeater can also be linked into the IRLP or Echolink systems. We have a couple of people who call into the repeater from distant locations using this method. You might have heard me calling in from Dayton using my phone through Echolink. It works! To call in from afar is fairly easy on a laptop or cell phone – make sure your system is configured properly and then just access WB1GQR-R. To call a distant node from the repeater requires knowing their node number and how to use these networks. That is a more detailed discussion best saved for another time.

Use the repeater! Ham radio is about communicating with others. Thinking about using a radio does not count. Get on and say “Hello!”

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## **AREDN in Vermont**

### **Zach [K1ZK](#)**

Zach K1ZK has two AREDN nodes running at his Shelburne QTH. A 2.4 GHz node on channel -2 with a 120-degree sector antenna is pointed roughly north, and a 5.8 GHz node on channel 173 with a 120-degree sector antenna is pointed roughly south. If you have an AREDN radio or you know a place that might be willing to host a node, try to connect!

For more info, see <https://www.arednmesh.org/>.

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## **November RANV Meeting Minutes**

### **Bob [K1BIF](#)**

#### **RANV meeting 11/12//2024**

Attendance: KC1IFK, W1SJ, K1BIF, KK1L, AA1SU, KB1ZEB, KC1JGM, W4YFJ, KB1UIY  
On line: N1JGB, W1EJC

#### **Meeting began at 7:15**

We did introductions. Mitch suggested bringing 20-25 year olds to try contesting, and invite them to the VT QSO party & field day. We discussed what subjects we need to address for the Hamfest in February.

Next came the voting for officers; the balloting resulted in :

Stew Cory, KC1IFK winning as president,  
George May, KC1JGM as VP/Treasurer  
Jeff Bonn, N1YD as Secretary.

Stew presented information of the World Radio League. They are a “one stop” for hams. They have integrated POTA to their logging. They are developing contest ability in their logbook, including real time leader board for members. There is an Android & Apple app. It will run on Apple, Windows and Linux. WWFF will be integrated. QRZ, Clublog & Eqsl will be integrated in the future. There will be a live streaming app. It will integrate with WSJT in the future.

Meeting ended at 8:45

RANV Christmas party – December 21, 2024  
Ham breakfast at JP’s – January 25, 2025  
Hamfest – February 22, 2025  
Steering wheel is at JP’s at noon Tuesday Nov 19 th

Bob, k1bif, secretary



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### NEXT MEETING

Holy Family Parrish Hall  
Saturday December 20<sup>th</sup> 11:00 – 3:00

**Meeting Topic**  
**RANV Holiday Party**

If the main room is in use, we will use the classroom downstairs

### Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- Steering Wheel: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tue Noon; JP's Essex, Vt
- VE Exams every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday;
- Contact AB1WG for information
- Dues due? Pay online at [www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html](http://www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html)