



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

December 2025

An ARRL Special Service Club

Vol. 35 No. 12

HOLIDAY PARTY THIS SATURDAY

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

The annual RANV Holiday Party will be Saturday, December 20th. We will set up at 11AM, have lunch at noon and clean up at 3. Bring family and/or friends. This is supposed to be a gala event!

RANV will once again provide the deli platter and chocolate cake. Everyone else brings the rest. An on-line signup survey has already gone out. If you haven't already, PLEASE fill that out right away. I need that to plan the number of items to bring. There is nothing quite as annoying as getting these surveys the day before, or not at all, if you are showing up. That as it makes my job harder.

The signup has 4 categories: Drinks, Appetizers, Desserts and Main Dishes. Pick one or several. But please make sure you arrive by 11:45 unless you are bringing dessert. It doesn't make sense to bring a main dish after everyone has finished eating.

Regarding soda: Bring three cold 2-liter bottles, (2 bottles of regular cola and 1 bottle diet). Leave the Orange, Ginger Ale, Pineapple, Root Beer and other weird flavors home. They are not popular and are just left over. Don't bring warm soda and ice, as it makes a mess. This should be sufficient as we will

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Meetings: 2nd 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

hopefully have things like cider, juice, tea, coffee, etc.

We will savor the chocolate cake celebrating our 4th consecutive win in Field Day. Any ideas how to celebrate? Some things to consider about championships: The Yankees won 5 in a row 1949-1953. The Celtics did 8 in a row 1959-1966 and the Canadians did 5 in a row 1956-1960. No one has done anything like that recently. Let's party on!

HAM-CON NEWS

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

HAM-CON is February 28, 8AM-1PM at the Hampton Inn Convention Center and on-line at [HAM-CON.ORG](#).

Right now, we are putting together the program. I have some exciting speakers targeted, but they do need to say, "Yes!" before I can schedule them and let you all know.

I need to hear from everyone else as to what activities they would be excited about. The important thing is to show up. It isn't much of a ham fest if only a few attends. What things excite you? What forum topics, what demonstrations, what? We are a unique show in that we stream inbound and outbound, meaning that anyone, anywhere can attend or even be a speaker. Details about HAM-CON are at [www.ham-con.org](#). The schedule of events will appear in February.

The details of running the business end of a convention are difficult, at best. Inflation is still all around us. It is a bad habit picked up over the last several years, and it continues unabated, even if there is not a good reason to continue it. That means the price we pay for our facility keeps going up and up. At the same time, the attendance is not. I have to do a lot of negotiating to keep the show affordable. We continue to offer special deals to lure more people in. But at the end of the day, we need folks buying tickets. And there is no secret venue we can go to get a much cheaper rate excepting a drafty barn somewhere. This will take hard work and

dedication of everyone in the ham community to support this venture.

So, starting right NOW, get out and sell HAM-CON. And please don't say we will talk it up on the repeater. Have you turned on the radio lately (most haven't). The repeaters (all of them) are pretty much dead. Not much of an audience there. Instead, this will require emails, social media and the old-fashioned phone call to a pal to get people excited about the show. Oh, is anyone reading this actually on social media? Hams are not too social!

Please take this seriously. Ham radio activity is quite low right now. We need to kick it in the side and bring it up. We have a breakfast, a QSO Party, a Convention and a bunch of other activities coming up. We ALL need to start acting like this is our love. The base of the term "amateur" is the Latin, amare, which means to love. We better start doing some serious lovin' out there!

W1AW/1 RETURNS TO VERMONT IN 2026

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

As part as the ARRL "Year of the Club" activities, W1AW takes to the road and will be on the air from across the U.S.

We have arranged for our winter W1AW schedule to run the first week of February. The activity will start 7PM Tuesday night, February 3rd, ending a week later on February 10th. And right smack in the middle of all this is the Vermont QSO Party, Friday night 7PM until Sunday night 7PM, February 6-8.

Operators of W1AW/1 will have to sign up in advance with me and I will pass that information to the ARRL. They will then be directed to a scheduling system where they can choose what bands and modes at what times they want to use for W1AW/1. We can only schedule only ONE band/mode combination at a time. Normally, the modes will be Phone, CW or Digital on 80-10 meters (except 60 meters), but we will also entertain

unique digital modes or even VHF bands. We do encourage operators to set up their schedules to maximum the number of contacts to make W1AW/1 accessible to everyone.

The Vermont QSO Party this year will be something very special. Operators will have the option of using both their callsign and W1AW/1 (following the group schedule). This will be like doubling the number of Vermont stations on the air! The contacts and multipliers you make as W1AW/1 will be scored and added to the score under your own callsign. And we will give bonuses for outside Vermont stations working the W1AW/1 operations. It will be a blast!

Let me know if you are interested in being a W1AW/1 operator. You do need to be an ARRL member to use W1AW/1. Operator lists and schedule will come together in January. we got some modest results using a flashlight.

RANV DUES ARE DUE

Last year, RANV switched to an annual membership profile, relieving us of having to deal with dues and membership renewals throughout the year. During the month of December is our renewal season, with all memberships expiring December 31.

We have also combined RANV membership with the special HAM-CON RANV ticket of \$5 which permits regular or early entry. This is a savings of \$3 over the \$8 regular advance sale ticket. But, if you like to come to the show early or want to sell, the early advance sale ticket is \$16. That's a big savings. In addition, RANV members can use the RANV Sales Table to sell their stuff while they attend the show. We have been promoting this special outside the club, with the idea of picking up new members who have been sitting on the fence. You must buy the HAM-CON RANV ticket before the end of the year!

Sales have all been combined on Paypal. Simply click and pay. It saves us a lot of busywork. Yes,

you can pay at the Party, but it is easier to pay on line. The payment links are on the RANV web.

As this is being written, 46 members (about half) have renewed. Thank you! For everyone else, please take care of this over the next two weeks. While we always accept membership and dues, we would rather this all takes place THIS month. Membership changes require changes to databases and address lists (old fashioned software).

Chittenden County Region FM Simplex Net Zachary [K1ZK](#)

The December 2025 Chittenden County region 2m FM simplex net will be on Tuesday, December 16 at 6:30pm EST. All amateur radio stations are welcome to join on 146.55 MHz FM simplex.

73 de [K1ZK](#)

A two-day winter field trip in Vermont's North East Kingdom

Peter Lawson, [N1KJ](#)

Peter Lawson, N1KJ, and Matthias Bannach, AC1RI, got together in late November to activate parks and summits in the North East Kingdom. This contribution describes their experience.

Peter had renewed his interest in CW, and over the summer had started putting together a kit for QRP that he could use for both Parks On The Air (POTA) and Summits On The Air (SOTA). Taking inspiration from Thomas Witherspoon, K4SWL, he bought an MTR3B V4 Mountain Topper (QRP transceiver) and assembled a 40m End-Fed Half-Wavelength (EFHW) antenna. He also bought a roll of Stealth Antenna wire (26 gauge) and a Rig Expert AA-660 Zoom antenna analyzer. After much trial and error, he had a working rig. But that process took so long that when he was eventually ready to go on the air, not only had the leaves fallen

off the trees but there was already snow on the ground.

Matthias Bannach, AC1RI, had been traveling that summer activating parks in Oregon and California with FT8 using an ICOM 705 with a wireless interface to an iPad running SDR-Control for Icom. He had made many hundreds of contacts and was keen to do more in the North East Kingdom.

On November 24th and 25th the two of them headed to Bald Mountain in Willoughby State Forest and nearby Brighton State Park.

Day 1: Bald Mountain / Willoughby State Forest (US-5561)

The trail up Bald Mountain rises 1463 ft in 2 miles. At the top there is a lookout tower and a hut, and despite heavy snow in the previous days, it looked like a good goal because the hut would offer some shelter from the wind and cold.

That day it was well below freezing. They both carried daypacks with their radio gear. They also carried various guy lines and an extendable pole for cleaning a swimming pool - to support Matthias's 15-m dipole antenna. Peter had an arborist throw line and 12oz throw weight for his EFHW antenna.

Peter had bought a new pair of snow pants that were slightly oversized and were slowly slipping from his waist the whole way up the trail. The snow was only ankle deep, but it was very steep going, so that by the time they reached the top, Peter was drenched in sweat underneath his down jacket.

The antennas went up first. Peter, who only intended to operate POTA, climbed two thirds of the half-way up the tower to find a support for his wire antenna. Matthias strapped his antenna to the cabin and they then spent some time outdoors tuning the antennas while their hands started to freeze. It was no warmer inside. They opened the window a crack and attached the radios to the antennas and spread their gear on the table.

They started operating about mid-day. Chemical hand-warmers were stuffed in their socks. They had a thermos of tea and some sandwiches. The reverse-

beacon network (RBN) found Peter as soon as he started keying CQ, by which time Matthias was already logging FT8 contacts. The RBN lets the entire POTA community know on what frequency to find Peter, and he had pile-ups after every QSO. His CW skills were so rusty that at times he couldn't even key "73" or his own callsign without a few extra dots and dashes. There was much swearing on his part. He had headphones on, so Matthias heard all his swearing but none of the CW traffic and none of the pileups. Matthias was sitting back watching his contacts automatically accumulate and scroll on the screen of his iPad.

When Peter passed the threshold of 10 contacts on 20-m necessary to "activate" the park, He was ready to head back down the mountain. By that time Matthias had logged 29 contacts on FT8 on 15-m and was also ready to leave. The antennas came down very quickly and after a quick hike down the mountain, they were done for the day.

Lessons from Day 1:

1. Put chemical foot warmers on the top of the feet; on the bottom they may bunch up and potentially cause blisters when hiking.
2. Use band-pass filters or some strategy to avoid interference between operators.
3. Make sure the antennas are pre-tuned to avoid needing to tune them in the cold.
4. The counterpoise matters. Plan to have a length of coax going out the window to the antenna tuner.
5. Bring some dry clothing to change into after the climb.
6. Get suspenders for the snow pants (from the Pick and Shovel in Newport, of course).

Day 2: Brighton State Park (US-3104)

Brighton State Park near Island Pond, VT, is closed in the wintertime. The entrance to the park is open, but there are no facilities off-season and no camping allowed. Matthias and Peter drove on the snow-covered entry road up to Sumac, a lean-to overlooking Spectacle Pond, and were delighted to find that a picnic table had been stored within the lean-to. Perfect!

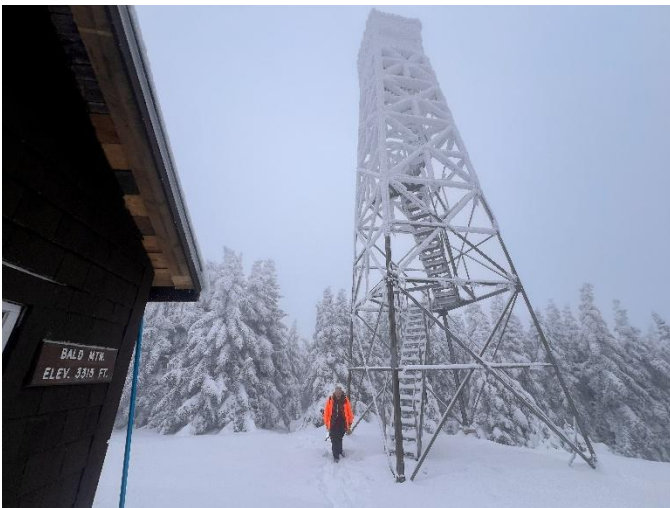
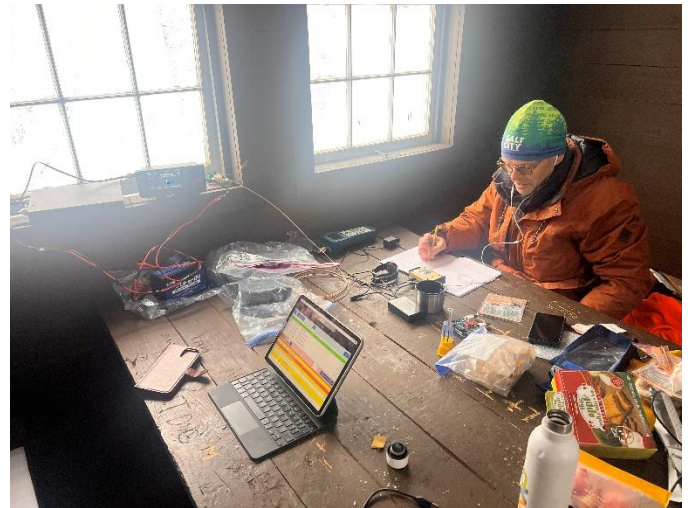
Matthias mounted his 15-m antenna onto a speaker stand and attached guy ropes to nearby trees. His

antenna tuner, ICOM 705 and battery were set up at the base of the speaker stand. Peter's EFHW antenna went up as high as the line could be launched. Matthias set up his iPad on the end of the picnic table and Peter sat down and assembled his Mountain Topper and miniature morse keyer. It was pleasantly warm compared to the day before. It was much more relaxed, and there was much less swearing from the CW operator. When they were done Matthias logged 38 contacts on FT8 on 15-m and Peter 13 contacts on CW on 20-m.

Lessons from Day 2:

1. "73" can be devilishly hard to key at 15 wpm with cold hands and a miniature keyer. Programming a standard response in the MTR3B might save frustration.
2. The speaker mount was a good addition.
3. A lean-to in a State Park can be a wonderful base for activating a park in the winter.
4. Interference was still a problem, despite greater separation of antennas. Suggestions for fixing this would be most welcome.

The two days were a success! Peter and Matthias plan to activate more parks this winter and would be happy to have the company of likeminded hams.





Peter Lawson, N1KJ, and Matthias Bannach, AC1RI

Once in a Lifetime Occurrence!

Ron, [KKIL](#)

Early this November I was travelling in Korea on business to visit one of our suppliers with a customer. At the lunch break our teams were getting to know each other. Ham radio came up as one of my hobbies. I was describing what it was, how exciting it is to make contacts around the world, and that reaching out to Asia from the east coast of the US is pretty rare. There was pretty enthusiastic interest at the table. SeHue Oh, sitting next to me, says “My father is a ham radio”, and proudly added that he helped him put up his antenna on the top of his apartment building in Soule. Well, heck, that is pretty cool. He knew his callsign, HL2ZN. Of

course, I wanted to know if I had worked him or not. I only have my mobile and a work laptop with access restrictions, so getting access to my home desktop was a non-starter. It did not take me too long to figure out I could check my log on QRZ.COM later.

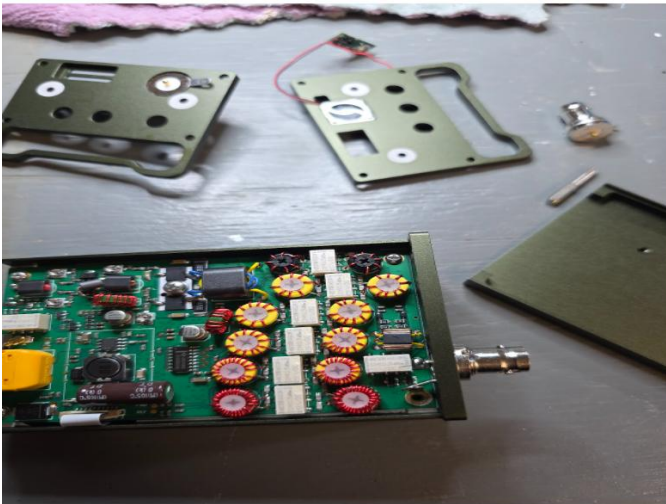
I found that I HAD had a QSO with SeHue’s dad!! WHAAAT! Despite my working in a technical field, it is not all that common to run into other radio operators. Now out of a half dozen Koreans in the room someone was related to one of the 20 Korean hams I contacted in my 32 years in ham radio! Okay, yeah, that is pretty darned special. The next day I filled out a QSL card (which I carry with me when I travel) and made sure to get some pictures. This is wicked super awesome!



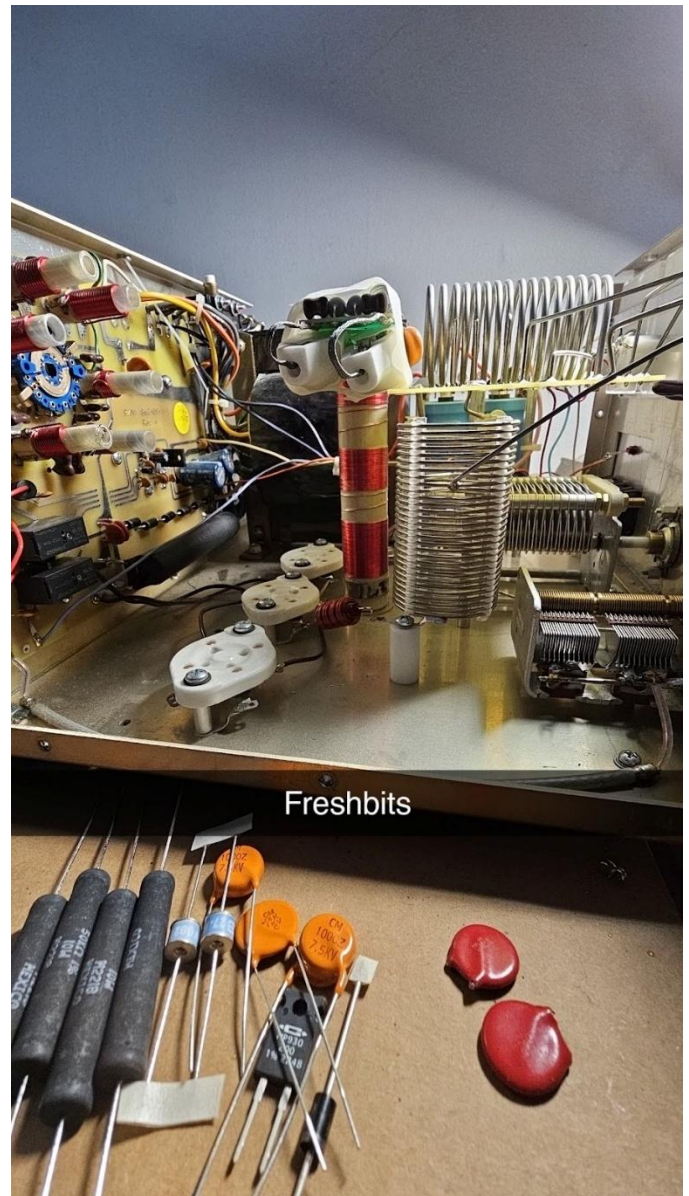
Shop Notes: FX4CR, AL-811, and Looking Ahead to HamCon

Logan, [KC1SFJ](#)

I've been catching up on a few bench projects lately, starting with a cooling upgrade for my FX4CR. I ordered a set of frame rails with an integrated fan directly from Yu, and once they arrived, I disassembled the radio and soldered the fan lead to the main board. In the process, I managed to misplace the screws included with the kit, but an assorted hardware container I picked up at HamCon years ago provided the perfect replacements. After calibrating my 3D printer, I also printed a custom cover that fits neatly over the new frame and improves protection of the screen.



I also wrapped up a long-running rebuild of the AL-811 amplifiers I acquired at a past HamCon. The electrical repairs and internal upgrades had already been completed, but one unit was waiting on a few missing hardware components. Using my box-and-pan brake, I fabricated a new shield, and I machined a replacement rotary control shaft from aluminum round stock. With those pieces installed and a fresh set of matched tubes in place, both amplifiers are now fully restored and back on the air.



Projects like these remind me why HamCon is one of my favorite events of the year. It's not just the swap tables, though every one of us has found that one impossible-to-source part at a vendor's booth, it's also the chance to pick up materials and tools, attend forums, and find inspiration for whatever comes next.

As always, I'm happy to share notes, files, or photos from these projects with anyone interested. What projects are you working on?

Antenna Tuners, The November Meeting

Jeff N1YD

Our November meeting had five members attending, including the presenter K1BIF Bob Henneberger, Blair Wolston K1BKW, George May KC1JGM, Mitch Stern W1SJ, and Jeff Bonn N1YD. Bob described how a tuner makes it possible to transmit into an antenna without a lot of reflected power coming back into the transmitter.

Manual tuners are usually a "pi network" of two variable capacitors and a variable inductor. They often have a meter to show the transmitted and reflected power. The user transmits at low power, and manipulates the two capacitors and the inductor into a combination that gives the least reflected power. MFJ made a wide variety of these tuners for low power to full power applications.

Automatic tuners have a set of capacitors and inductors. The user transmits at low power, presses a "tune" button, and the device automatically selects capacitance and inductance values that give a good match. Bob uses a KAT500, and many newer rigs have some kind of automatic tuner built in.

Tuners can match antennas that are too long or too short. It is usually best to use a tuner with open wire line. There can be enormous losses in coax cable, even when the tuner shows a good match. Years ago, Brian Riley N1BQ showed me his favorite antenna, which he called a "doublet". It was a dipole mounted at a good height, long enough for the lowest band that he was using, fed with ladder line, and connected through a tuner. I was with him when he used it at a Fall Camporee in Branbury State Park. He easily spoke to a ham in Bulgaria, among other places.



Jeff Bonn N1YD



NEWS & VIEWS

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NEXT MEETING

Saturday December 20th
RANV Holiday Party
11:00am – 3:00pm
Holy Family Parish Hall
30 Lincoln St, Essex Junction, VT 05452

Meeting Topic
RANV Holiday Party

Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

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