



# Radio Amateur News & Views

The Official Journal of the Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont

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## GEOCACHING and FOX HUNTING The July 12th RANV Event at Mills Riverside Park

The July meeting will be our annual Geocaching and Fox hunting meeting. We have reserved the pavilion at Mills Riverside Park on Route 15 in Jericho. This is near the Jericho-Underhill town line just before the turn off to Pleasant Valley Road.

We will be there at the park just before 5:00 to set up grills and will then burn burgers and dogs for the assembled multitudes. RANV will supply the ice, beverages, burgers, dogs, and buns. Please feel free to bring a covered dish of whatever to share.

After 6:00, Mitch W1SJ will do an overview of Geocaching and of Fox hunting. We will then make up teams of geocachers paired with fox hunters and off they will go to find the hidden transmitters on which will be located the coordinates to use to find the geocaches.

This will be a public event and we also plan to set up an 88-foot doublet and a 100-watt HF transceiver to show off our hobby as well as provide some further operating experience for attendees. Hopefully the band propagation will cooperate.

In order that we can accurately order food for the event, we would appreciate an E-mail or phone call indicating that you will be there for the dinner part of the meeting. Contact Brain at 899-4527 or n1bq@wulfden.org.

## COMING UP!

With Field Day behind us, that's the first of the Big Three RANV events this summer. There is the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting/picnic in Jericho and the August 6<sup>th</sup> picnic in St. Albans. Be sure you can get to at least one of these!

There are a few other ham radio activities of note this summer. Next weekend, July 9-10<sup>th</sup> is the IARU HF Championship. This is a shortened summertime DX contest, running from 8 AM Saturday to 8 AM Sunday.

On the very next weekend after that, July 16-17<sup>th</sup> is the CQ Worldwide VHF Contest. This runs from 2 PM Saturday until 5 PM Sunday and only 6 and 2 meters are used. Find yourself a high spot and be competitive on the two bands!

Still looking for Public Service Events? Try the Iron Man in Lake Placid on Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. It is a long, long day, in some of the toughest terrain there is. Contact KA2MHR on the Plattsburgh repeater for details.

## RANV PICNIC August 6<sup>th</sup>

Next month, our normal monthly meeting will be replaced by the RANV Summer Picnic. It will take place on Saturday August 6<sup>th</sup> and will be held at Kill Kare State Park in St. Albans. Festivities get underway starting at 11 AM and run all afternoon.

RANV will supply park admission, soda and charcoal. You supply the rest! For those who are new to the picnic, major activities include eating and talking. There is also antenna stringing, working DX, calling CQ, yakking on the repeater and perhaps even some interesting modes like PSK-31. We'll even have a Fox Hunt or two. There is also swimming, hiking, boating, volleyball and fishing. Eating appears to be the hands-down favorite!

Be sure to bring family and friends, food to eat and appropriate sporting goods DO NOT bring pets! Unfortunately, the park doesn't allow them, and it is too hot to leave a pet in the car. See you at the picnic!

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# OUR LAST RANV MEETING

by Carl ABIDD, Sec'y

The June meeting was called to order at 7:09 with 17 members and guests present. It was discovered that no one was chosen at the last meeting to supply the snacks, so once again it was Bob KB1FRW to the rescue. The next meeting needing snacks will be September, and Paul AA1SU was volunteered.

There were 2 guests present, John KB1MAQ and Leslie KC9CDJ. John became our newest RANV member.

Paul, AA1SU announced that Governor Douglas signed a proclamation designating June 20-26<sup>th</sup> as Amateur Radio Week in Vermont

Mitch W1SJ reported that the hardline on the WB1GQR repeater has sustained some physical damage. There was a motion made by Paul AA1AU and seconded by Paul K1PJM to allow the expenditure of up to \$500 to replace it. The motion passed.

The next meeting will be at Mills Riverside Park in Underhill. It will be a Foxhunt and Geocache event. Food will be provided.. Chris WT1L, seconded by Paul AA1SU, made a motion to spend \$75 for food. The motion passed.

There was some discussion on what money was needed for Field Day. Needed items are food, fuel, facilities and truck rental. Bob, W4YFJ made a motion that was seconded by Bob, KB1LAX that up to \$600 could be spent. The motion passed.

Brian N1BQ brought the members up to date on efforts to incorporate the club. There was an informal meeting with our attorney, Jeff W1RL where he explained the needed changes to the Bylaws. The changes are not major, but changes were needed to receive favorable review from the state.

Brian N1BQ did a presentation on our new battery analyzer. It is a PC controlled device. Plug it into a computer, hook it up to a battery, make a few settings in the software and watch the discharge curve form before your eyes. This can be used to evaluate rechargeable batteries and keep track of their aging. We did find out that it had a few limitations on how much of a load can be placed on the battery. The ana-

# THE PREZ SEZ

by Brian N1BQ, President

Another Field Day is under our belts and we are all hopefully the wiser for the experience. I personally observed a lot of interesting behaviors amongst the various local contingents, all of which I contacted on multiple occasions over the course of the weekend. This area is graced with an abundance of clubs and good solid Field Day efforts. Locally, we had the main RANV effort, W1NVT, at Redmond Road, then RANV "East", my QRP group, N1QS in Underhill, the Udder Club, W1MOO in South Burlington, BARC, W1KOO in Burlington, and STARC, K2KI, in Cambridge. Add to that the two CVARCs, W1BD in the Barre area and W2UXC across the lake in Plattsburgh and we had quite a bit of activity. This scenario had plenty of opportunity for hams to be able to go to multiple sites and experience different takes on Field Day.

Jeff W1RL has filed the articles of incorporation with the State of Vermont. So, RANV is now an "INC." He has identified those aspects of the Bylaws that need to be clarified to meet the state's requirements and we already have been through several drafts of the needed amendments to the bylaws. Digressing slightly here, what many of our more recent members do not know

lyzer is available for members to borrow. Contact Brian N1BQ for details and to get on the sign out list.

The last presentation was by Mitch W1SJ. It was to be on Field Day operation, but turned into a discussion on what was needed at the site. He did mention some goals to improve on the score and to learn more about field operations. The Phone and CW groups are in contest mode, while GOTA is more laid back, with people there to help first time people and those with little or no operating experience. The meeting finished up around 8:30 and a lot got accomplished!

Last month's trivia question had no takers. The answer was a speed test between CW and IM. If you missed it, CW won hands down. The trivia question will take a break for the summer.

is that RANV's very existence was in reaction to (*and consequently reflected in its original bylaws*) the political machinations that went on in another radio club in the early 1990's. What we are doing now is not changing the spirit under which RANV was founded but simply rewording the bylaws to meet the needs of the State and the Federal government in our application for "non-profit tax-exempt status." We hope to present the bylaws for vote at the September meeting and in that vein we plan to have early versions of the proposed revisions available online in July.

The move to incorporation is desirable from several standpoints. To a limited extent, it protects club officers and individual members from liability if something goes wrong. More important is that with 501c3 status we become eligible for any number of discounts, grants, and other freebees available to public service amateur radio groups. So, when the time comes to vote on the bylaws revisions keep this in mind.

August will be coming soon and that means it will be time for our annual picnic on August 6<sup>th</sup>, the first Saturday of the month. There will be no agenda, good food, operating and good times.

## Contacting RANV

In Person: Meeting, July 12, 5pm,  
Mills Riverside Park, Jericho  
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By Mail: PO Box 9392,  
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Please send submissions for the newsletter to the editor, W1SJ.

# HAM RADIO YELLOW JOURNALISM

*Editorial by Mitch WISJ*

News reporting, I learned in school, is supposed to be factual, unbiased and uncolored. Now, I'll get plenty of agreement that the news media in this country is often suspect and sometimes downright awful. I recently saw an example of awful reporting last month in the Dayton Daily News. Dayton is the capital of Ham Radio. Hamvention draws 20,000 visitors and contributes millions to the local economy. Based on this size and influence, coverage on Hamvention in the local media is heavy.

Reporter Mara Lee of the Dayton Daily News saw fit to not report the news as it occurred, but lower herself and her paper to the lowest form of reporting, in my opinion. The title said it all, "Radioheads Signal in on Hara Arena." What the hell is a Radiohead? It gives the impression of someone who smokes grass while CQing. Out of the 20,000 visitors to Hamvention, there are certainly folks in the fringe. Yes, those different folks, we all know and love, who have towers coming out of their hats, flashing lights in their glasses and 160 meters in their backpack are there. We all appreciate the show, but the overwhelming majority do not dress this way. Ms. Lee combed Hamvention looking for everyone who was different. We hear about the fellow who is a member of the *International Order of Krazies*, we see a large picture of WB6MLC with 12 bands on his belt and an antenna and resonator emerging behind his head, comments on the style of clothing worn and finally, a discussion about Gay amateurs. Any ham will tell you that amateur radio is one of the most color-blind and gender-blind groups anywhere in the world. But with all this noise level, distinctly missing from this article was any discussion about what amateur radio is, the good amateur operators do or how to get involved in amateur radio. It was an article clearly to sell papers to the masses.

I'll leave complaints to the local Dayton ham population. I'm sure there are at least a few others who saw the article who were not pleased with it. From time to time, I've seen uncomplimentary coverage of amateur radio in our area and I let editors know right away that they are misreporting the news. One local paper is notorious for editing calendar submissions to the point where the information is not conveyed correctly. If you ever notice poor journalism about amateur radio, make sure to make your opinions known. It probably won't have an immediate affect, but you never know.

# QUICKIE FOX HUNT

*by Mitch WISJ*

The world's fastest Fox Hunt was held in June. Co-foxes Carl AB1DD and Brian WB2JIX played to a small contingent of hunters: John K1CJM and co-pilot Robert W1RFM and me and my trusty sidekick, Debbie W1DEB. I only had an hour to spend Fox Hunting as I had to drive to New York that night.

The hunt started on time, and sped along, with my urging to Carl to increase transmission time so I wouldn't be hunting all night. I got a good reading toward the end of I-189 and promptly headed down there at 6:08. Along I-189 the signal maxed out and I knew Carl was probably in or around WCAX, where he works. At 6:23, we found a sign welcoming Fox Hunters, but no fox! A minute later, and in the next parking lot over, there were the Foxes and John! I had made a quick 15-minute bee-line to the Fox, but he got there first. That is because he only had to come up from Pine Street. He likely put 2 and 2 together and figured out Carl was at WCAX also. In a Fox Hunt, starting location is everything!

So there you have it. The glorious June **RANV** Fox Hunt was all done within 30 minutes. The timing (*for me*) was perfect!

The August hunt will feature new Foxes John and Robert, and possibly other members of the clan. Due to scheduling concerns, it is tentatively scheduled for August 25<sup>th</sup>, the fourth Friday of August.

Increasing Friday night traffic (*safety concern*) and decreasing participation is causing me to think that a time change is in order. I have been giving some thought to moving the hunts to Sunday morning when traffic is very light and we don't have to worry about it getting dark. Fox Hunters: let me know what you think about this proposed change.

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# ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL FIELD DAY

*by Brian N1BQ*

The Northern Vermont QRP Society (*NVQS*), which by virtue of its membership could be called **RANV** "East," operated Field Day under its call N1QS from N1BQ's QTH in Underhill Center. Running class 2A Battery with a GOTA tent, they operated QRP (*5 watts or less*) with 13 hams: N1BQ, W1SLR, VE2EQL, W1DEC, W1DFU, KC9CDJ, K1JCM, KB1KVW, W1RFM, KB1KXF, W4YFJ, VE2SZN, KB1GXE.

A grand time was had by all. The facilities consisted of two A3S triband beams, a 6-meter beam and a VHF/UHF vertical mounted on an AB-577 tower. This was supplemented by a 176-center ladder line fed doublet for the lower bands. The rigs were an IC-703's and FT-817's.

Performance under rather difficult conditions was on a par with prior years with around 350 contacts. One gem in the rough of the miserable conditions was that through the urgings of N1BQ we got a good number of VHF/UHF CW contacts going for the surrounding local groups and us. Sunday morning we had a visit by Paul AA1SU, ARRL Vermont Section Manager, and Tom Frenay, K1KI, ARRL New England Division Director.

# FIELD DAY 2005 RESULTS

## WE BE TESTED!

by Mitch WISJ

So, the overriding question this Field Day was, "how do we top last year's spectacular effort?" Last year had it all: good propagation, big points, tremendous participation and great media coverage. Each year we go into Field Day with the idea that we will get better. Of course, most of the items listed above are really beyond our control anyway.

Things were not looking up, initially. Propagation throughout June was awful. Due to personal, work and other commitments, less Field Day participants would be available for our effort. But this didn't deter us as we went about doing some redesign of the CW and GOTA antennas and stations to fix some nagging problems.

Last year's Field Day was an effort which went together effortlessly. It was like we pushed a button and it all happened the way it was supposed to. That is a rather rare occurrence. Field Day is really a series of problems to test your preparedness and determination.

Think about it. If nothing ever went wrong, there would be no disasters and no reason for a Field Day operation. Our first "test" came mid-week, as our cargo truck vanished. No, it didn't really vanish – we were simply a victim of the law of supply and demand. At the end of the month, everyone is moving (*two of our participants included*). The demand for trucks outstripped the supply and the supplier made the proper business decision to rent our truck for the full rate instead of for the deep discount we get. These things happen all the time. In the not too distant past, we didn't use a truck. We also had to make several trips and have even more stuff now. So, Bob KB1FRW borrowed a flatbed trailer and pickup truck from work and we used that and Mike KB1EQG's truck to move the stuff.

There were more problems and "tests" for us. The TA-33 yagi for CW didn't load up all that well when I initially tested it at the Field Day site. This antenna has been erratic for a few years and I wasn't willing to deal with this problem. Fortunately, both Bob and I have been combing flea markets, picking up HF yagis at deep discounts. I got his TA-33 and we solved that problem.

### FIELD DAY HALL OF FAME

**AB1DD Carl** – GOTA Ctl; equipment; set up; tear down.  
**AA1SU Paul** – CW/Phone op; equipment; bonuses; setup; tear down.  
**AB1T Doug** – CW op.  
**K1KD Grant** – Phone/CW op; equipment; set up; tear down.  
**K2MME Howie** – CW op; set up; tear down.  
**KA1KLJ Matt** – Set up; equipment.  
**KB1FRW Bob** – GOTA op; set up; tear down; equipment.  
**KB1EQG Mike** – Trucking; tear down.  
**KB1IWK Jeff** – GOTA Ctl; VHF op.  
**KB1JDT Johannes** – Field cutting.  
**KB1JOO Kyle** – Setup.  
**KB1LAY Katie** – GOTA op.  
**KB1LIE Jon** – VHF op; tear down  
**KC9CDJ Leslie** – GOTA op.  
**KF1Z Bruce** – GOTA Ctl; VHF op.  
**N1BQ Brian** – Set up.  
**N1VSB Matt** – GOTA op.  
**N1YWB Jeff** – Phone/VHF op; equipment; set up; tear down.  
**W1DEC Dave** – Set up.  
**W1ROV Mike** – Chef  
**W1SJ Mitch** – Chairman; Phone op; equipment; set up; tear down; results  
**W4YFJ Bob** – Set up.  
**WT1L Chris** – Phone/CW op; equipment; set up; tear down.

Thanks to K1HD, K1IBM, N1DTQ, KA1LEX for equipment loan.

It seems like every other year, there is some issue which threatens the entire CW operation. During setup, Grant's TS-850 lost its display. We quickly jumped to the backup Elecraft K2, but the computer's software to interface to that radio was corrupted and needed to be re-loaded. With 10 minutes to go before the start, they got the TS-850 to play. Root cause of problem unknown, but there was a definitive increase in gray hairs (*for those who have hair*).

So, 2:00 came and we were off CQing Field Day! Some great rates were put down in all stations. But by mid-afternoon, CW stopped producing. No responses to CQ's, and tough to get responses to our calls. The radio was putting out power and the antenna was still working, but there were 4 hours of some awful rates. Finally, something kicked in and we were back in business working good rates again, although we were way behind in QSO's. Then, little by little, the big hours we had on 80 meters at night and 20 meters Sunday morning kept chipping away at the deficit. When the dust had settled CW finished 8 QSO's ahead of last year. Great comeback!

Meanwhile the phone station was cranking out 100+ rates, hour after hour. Trust me; these rates were not



**K2MME knows how to relax  
between shifts**

## FIELD DAY 2005 RESULTS... continued

served up on a platter. It was hot, nasty, and often brutal work. Twenty meters was a mass of 3000+ operators, most of whom didn't know how to listen, didn't use phonetics, didn't respond to when called and kept reworking us many times. I would have been glad to whack a few of these folks upside of the head with a stick if there was a way to do this, and especially if it garnered bonus points. We loaded the logs up for 12 hours, but at 2 AM, reality set in: 80 meters went comatose. The noise crept up, the signal strengths waned and the rates plummeted. The next several hours were a blur of long CQ's without answers as our great QSO totals went slipping away.



**K1KD is the picture of concentration at the CW Station**

But now we had a new problem. Our early morning relief had to cancel out. As I nodded off at 5:00, I told Jeff N1YWB to hang tough in there – someone will be by! I really didn't know who, but I did have to sound upbeat! Fortunately the White Knight rode over the hill in the form of Paul AA1SU, who was raring to go on phone at 6:50 after a 4 hour stint on CW. I crawled back to consciousness around 8:00 to find our CW operator Paul in the phone station and could only think something awful had happened. When I saw the rates hovering over 100, on 40 meters, no less, I exclaimed, "Cool!"

and wandered off to find some food. Amazingly, several operators kept that station on 40 meters until noon, holding the 100+ rate. Phone had made a comeback, too, and finished only 32 QSO's behind last year's torrid pace.

We had high hopes for the GOTA station. Some changes were put in place to make the station easier to use. We also had a new bonus to work on: finding 5 people under 18 to make a contact. Things started off well. Leslie KC9CDJ, spending the summer in Vermont, took the first 2 hours and did very well. Katie KB1LAY ran a couple of hours, followed by some PSK-31 contacts. Matt N1VSB got on for an hour after a long absence from amateur radio. Bob KB1FRW managed put in 3 hours between long shifts at work. By midnight, the GOTA QSO totals were about the same as last year.

Unfortunately, no GOTA operators showed up Sunday to keep this station going. A handful of contacts were made, but the total was 100 down from last year. We managed to get 3 youngsters in there to make bonus contacts. Carl AB1DD had a wide grin as he led each kid through the paces to complete a QSO. Despite the promises of operator visits and kids coming by, we fell short in this area. We also were down in VHF contacts, due to lack of operators and lack of people getting on the air. Perhaps the 90-degree heat kept everyone away. Perhaps everyone was at the mall talking on their cell phones.

We did very well with bonuses: 1710 out of a possible 1750, just two kids shy of a sweep! Through the efforts of Paul, we had not one, not two, but THREE elected officials visit our site (*can we bank them for next year?*). We had visits from the Weather Service, passed all sorts of traffic, made a bunch of satellite contacts and operated off of a solar battery.

The point total is 11130, just down a bit from last year's 11360, mostly due to less activity at GOTA and

### FIELD DAY BOX SCORE

80 CW	299	80 SSB	456
40 CW	414	40 SSB	559
20 CW	316	20 SSB	1187
15 CW	21	15 SSB	142
GOTA PSK	20	GOTA Ph	139
VHF CW	10	VHF Ph	55
Sat CW	1	Sat Ph	10
<b>Total CW</b>	<b>1081</b>	<b>Total Ph</b>	<b>2548</b>

**Total QSO's 3649**  
**Bonuses 1710**  
**Total Points 11130**

Last year: 3770 QSO's, 11360 points

VHF. Given the extreme heat and poorer propagation this year, we did really well, nonetheless!

The total participation was 23, down a little from 29 last year. We had around 20 visitors, about the same as previous years. It has been commented that there is a lot of Field Day activity in Northern Vermont for a small population. Don't underestimate the effect of our Field Day group! Brian already calls the N1QS operation in Underhill **RANV** East. And virtually all of the players at W1MOO this year are graduates of **RANV** Field Day University at one time or another. When all taken together, we have cranked out quite a bit of activity in our area!

### FIELD DAY VISITORS

Joe K2KBT, Debbie W1DEB, Alan KB1OF, Carl KC1WH, Richard&Karen, Paul&Eva Rocheleau, Glenn Welch, Kevin Jones, Peg Laughlin, Maggie&Thomas Titus, Tina Kaiser, VT Representative Ira Trombley, VT Representative Pat Brennan, VT Representative Jim Condon, ARRL NE Dir Tom Frenaye K1KI, VT Guard: Vince Benevento  
 NWS: Greg Hanson  
 Williston Observer: David Bishop

**NEXT MEETING:**  
**“Fox Hunting and Geocaching”**  
**Tuesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**Barbecue at 5, Meeting at 6**  
**Mills Riverside Park, Rt. 15 Jericho**

**RANV SUMMER PICNIC**  
**Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**Kill Kare State Park, St. Albans**

**RANV**

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