



RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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THE MID-WINTER BREAKFAST

Saturday, January 27 at 9AM

For January, we replace our normal monthly meeting with our mid-Winter breakfast. All hams and friends and family are invited to join us on Saturday, January 27th at 9AM at JP's Deli, 39 River Road in Essex Junction. Order whatever you like off the menu which can be viewed at jprestaurantanddeli.com/menu. After we are done eating (around 10AM) we traditionally engage in a group discussion about ham radio.

Hams eating and talking. You can't beat that! Be sure to join us on January 27th!

VERMONT QSO PARTY

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

Calling All Vermont Hams!

The 66th Vermont QSO Party will take place during the first full weekend of February 2024. It will begin at 0000 UTC Saturday, February 3rd and will end at 2400 UTC Sunday February 4th, which is a 48-hour period. In local time, this corresponds to a start time of 7:00 PM EST FRIDAY night February 2nd and an end time of 7PM SUNDAY night, February 4th. Details are at <http://www.ranv.org/vtqso.html>

There are 3 ways to play:

- 1. Get on the air from home.** Find a clear spot and call CQ. Folks are looking for Vermont QSO's. With 10 and 15 meters coming back, there are plenty of places to make contacts. Let me know when you plan to be on and I'll post the information to the Vermont QSO Party site.
- 2. Operate at W1NVT.** I will open the station up for guest operators. This year, I will have a second station running which will allow multiple operators and multiple modes. I'm looking to fill 2-hour slots between noon and 6PM on Saturday and Sunday. This is a great opportunity for an operator with little to no experience. We won't have the massive QRM that exists during Field Day. As this is the Vermont contest, everyone will be looking for YOU and it will be easy to work everyone. Let me know the time and date you are interested in.
- 3. Go Mobile.** Many Vermont QSO Party participants are looking to work all of the Vermont counties. Consider going on a Vermont county expedition, especially to rare counties like Grand Isle,

Franklin, Orleans, Essex and Orange. Note that this takes a bit more skill to successfully pull off as you will have a limited antenna. Also, the winter weather often poses a challenge. If you are interested in this, I can give you some tips on how to be more successful at making contacts.

You can certainly do a combination of these methods for even more fun. Contact me at w1sj@arrl.net. Be sure to set aside time on the first weekend of February to operate in the Vermont QSO Party.

HAM-CON 2024

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

HAM-CON, the Vermont ARRL Convention will be Saturday, February 24th starting at 8AM at the Hampton Inn Conference Center. Advance sale tickets will be available on-line soon and will also be available in person at the Winter Breakfast on January 27th. These are the only methods to purchase advance tickets. The advance ticket price is \$7 for general admission and \$14 for early and vendor admission. We also have a \$25 price for one early admission and table reservation.

Currently, we are working on the programming and logistics to run the event. We will start having meetings via Zoom every Tuesday at 7PM starting January 23rd. If you would like to be part of the planning process, please let me know and I will include you in the invite.

We have a number of things to take care of and need several people to take on jobs to replace those who are not returning. This would include advertising and promotion, the lining up of door prizes, managing the flea market, running the RANV sales table, running the VE session and a few others, which I'm sure I've missed. I am working on the program to fill the forum slots and need everyone's input as to what we want to include this year. We also have an increasing amount of tech to support the forums, ham station and other activities. We will be very busy, and having a lot of fun. Mostly. So please help out by volunteering to do some of these jobs and also to provide input.

The most important job for everyone is to get the word out and have people attend this thing. We pay a rather high price to use our wonderful facility and that means we need folks to buy tickets and attend. Ham radio activity has been centered around only a few people lately and we really need to up the game to support all of our activities and ham radio in general. So, call up all of your ham friends (or friends who might be prospective hams) and get them to the show!

RTTY ROUNDUP

Stepping 100 Years Backward in Technology

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

For the first weekend of the month, I decided to operate in the RTTY Roundup. Why?

Well, cause it's there! I missed out last year, as we decided to go on a cruise to the Caribbean, so the schedule this year was open to have fun.

Sadly, Zoey, the matriarch of our cat family passed over at just over 20 years (that's 97 human years). Saturday, we decided to go cat shopping and drove down to Rutland to visit with a few prospects. Collecting cats is just about as silly as contesting, so don't expect any reasonable justification here. And cat shopping is much like dating – you have high expectations but never know what you will end up with. None of the prospects met our standards, so it was disappointing ride home. But at least, I was able to salvage the rest of the RTTY Roundup. Gee, hams are weird!

Oh, and let me tell you about radioteletype, or RTTY as it is known by, since hardly none of you know much

about it. The mode was invented 101 years ago as a way to connect teleprinters by radio. Teleprinters, like the classic Model 15, were these large motor driven typewriters which made the devil's own noise. Any married ham who brought one of these beasts' home did not stay married for very long. Today, most of the old teleprinters are gone, replaced by computers. But this is certainly not like FT8. You have to carefully tune around the band for stations and there is no error correction. Noise or interference will turn the copy into gobbledegook.

Years ago, I set up the K3 to its data mode to decode RTTY and used a paddle to generate RTTY tones. The K3 has some neat features which allow one to do this. I simply called CQ on the paddle and read back the response on the screen. It was a kluge, but it worked.

A few years ago, I downloaded a program called MMRTTY to automate all aspects of RTTY communications. This program turned out to be even a worse kluge. It is the perfect example of software written without any consideration given towards human engineering. My first attempt with it was a disaster. Try as I might, I couldn't get the program to accurately log and send at the same time. Last time out, I bypassed the logging and simply used the program to send and receive, using a different computer running NA to log and track the contacts. Yes, that means two keyboards and two monitors. It's a lesser kluge but it works. Sort of. They may be a better way to run MMRTTY, but I haven't figured that out yet.

I started operating around 7:30 that night and had a nice tidy run on 20 meters for a while until it died out. Then I moved to 40 and then 80 meters and had good runs approaching 60 an hour, as stations were calling me one right after the other. I suspect that the only active Vermont stations to be had were AA1SU and myself.

FUN ON THE AIR AT END OF 2023

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

There were several ham radio activities during the last hours of 2023. Saturday night was the Stew Perry Top Band Distance Challenge, a 160 meter CW contest which awards points based on distance. Normally, this is a fun 14 hour (sunset to sunrise) event. But with slack 160 meter conditions, the QSO's were slow and rather limited in distance. Instead of staying up until sunrise, I checked out at 2AM, after a rather pitiful Europe run. I decided that sleep was more useful since Sunday night we were planning to be at a New Years' celebration.

The last 24 hours of 2023 was also ARRL Badges On The Air, an event to get all the senior volunteers of the ARRL on the air for the last hours of VOTA. Paul AA1SU as Section Manager was the high value Vermont entry earning everyone 175 points. I am a past Section Manager and I was handing out 100 point QSO's. I had a couple of hours to get on the air and have fun before I had to shut down and get ready for the afternoon and evening activities. I started out with a nice run on 40 meters, followed by an insane run on 20 meters as everyone was looking for VOTA points. Then, I see a spot for AC0W, who is a 225-point Director, so I jumped on that. I popped on just as Bill was finishing up with Rick K5UR, who is a 300-point President of the ARRL. I jumped on and gave both the exchange, resulting in 525 points in one breath. How cool!

From the VOTA leaderboard, AA1SU was first place in Vermont and broke into the top 100, finishing in 77 th place overall. W1NVT, which included Field Day and all of our park activations was at 685 and W1SJ was not far behind at 696. Here is something really interesting -

W1AW/1 was in 8 th place overall and Vermont hams contributed 66% of all of those contacts. Although I didn't really work towards running up my leaderboard standing, If I combined the 15, 000 or so QSO's I made, spread across 4 different call signs, I'd likely be somewhere near the top. Making the QSO's was far more fun than figuring out the scoring!

We hope that everyone in ham radio strives to be more active. Get on the air and have fun. Use it or lose it!

Erik, [NICFO](#)

I'm in Antibes, France for a few months this winter, and wanted to stay active with ham radio during this time. There are several countries that have reciprocal operating agreements with Europe through the CEPT license agreement, which allows us to operate in any of the participating countries by just bringing a copy of our license. So I operate as F/NICFO/P here.

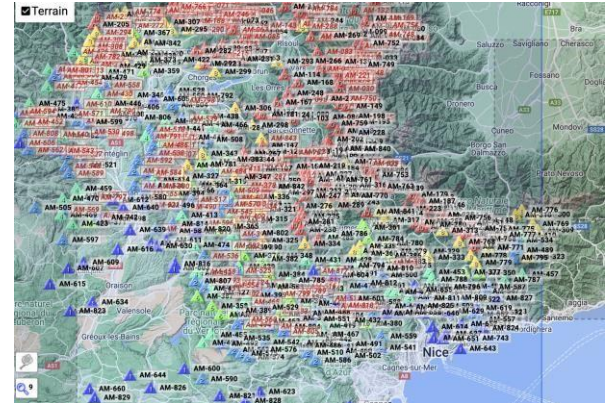
I went to the local ham radio club meeting in November and met some folks. It's interesting how interests in ham radio differ by area — these guys are mostly interested in VHF and above, satellite, and ham TV. Overall, they're a very technical group, and they like cobbling together gear for satellite and TV. A few of them have been pushing the boundaries on distance with TV, trying for the maximum number of kilometers between stations and having a successful QSO. The club also maintains a couple repeaters in the area. Their UHF bandwidth is extremely limited, so they do some interesting crossband repeater inputs/outputs.

This group doesn't do a ton of HF, and almost no contesting. But there are a couple guys who are active on Summits on the Air, so I did a couple hikes and SOTA activations with one ham here. He's very active, doing summit activations almost every weekend, and last year he was the number 3 activator in France.

I brought my FT-891, as well as my FT-817, so I can either operate at low power on HF through UHF, or 100 watts on HF. Usually for SOTA I bring my FT891, despite the extra

weight, because I like being able to have 100 watts at the summit.

There's no snow in the lower Alps, and temps are 40– 50 degrees, so you can hike and do SOTA all winter. There are an enormous number of summits in this region: 752 total summits recognized by SOTA.



Just by coincidence, I learned that Arnie Ziegel, W2HDI, was in Antibes in November, and our stay overlapped by one day. So we had dinner together before he flew back to Vermont.

I haven't yet gotten my antenna set up for HF at my apartment, but plan to do so soon. I'm planning on participating in a French contest on January 27 (REF CW Contest), so I hope to work some of you that weekend!

73,
Erik

Chittenden County Area Monthly 2m FM Simplex Nets

Zack **K1ZK**

With support from Vermont ARES/RACES, hams in the northwest region of Vermont and also upstate NY have been meeting on 146.55 MHz FM on a monthly basis to test equipment and evaluate our ability to maintain VHF simplex communications. The net is informal and the date/time rotates around somewhat so that we can accommodate varying schedules. All are welcome to join!

Thanks to all the participants in the December 2023 Chittenden County 2m FM simplex net: KE2BDO, N1JGB, W1ZN, KD2FKH, NV1Y, K1BIF, and KB1NHQ. K1ZK in Shelburne, VT was NCS running 100w to a Diamond X3200A vertical at 30 feet. The first 2m FM simplex net of 2024 is scheduled for **3pm local time on Sunday, January 21, 2024** on 146.55 MHz. This coincides with the “simplex Sunday” idea so maybe we’ll pick up a few intrepid winter SOTA hikers. The January date also overlaps with the [ARRL January VHF contest](#), so we might hear more activity that weekend.

Mark your calendars and feel free to announce the planned activity on nets, in newsletters, etc.

December RANV Meeting Minutes
George **KC1JGM**,
Bob, **K1BIF**

The RANV Holiday party was well attended and all had an enjoyable afternoon with plenty of good food and conversation.

RANV hit another milestone by winning our category in Field Day by a significant margin for the third time in a row by placing 5th of Field Day groups in the event.

See the picture of our traditional celebratory chocolate cake for dessert.







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NEXT MEETING

HAM Mid-Winter Breakfast

January 27th 2024

9:00am JP's Restaurant

Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

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

