



# RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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## THE MARCH 12th RANV MEETING

### Mystery and excitement around the first RANV meeting of 2024!

Join us at our first meeting of 2024 on March 12th at 7PM at the Holy Family Parish Hall, 30 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction.

We asked the membership for help in finding us a presentation to do and while there were a couple of suggestions, no one was able to provide anything. So we will have the mystery activity. It will not be a presentation and not be a “sit around and chew the fat” night either. We will all get to participate and we will all have fun. Or else.

Seriously, activities work when they are attended. Going forward, clear your calendar on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Amateur radio is a lot more fun when

1. You are actively doing something and
2. You are doing it with others!

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Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday • 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)

## HAM-CON 2024 – A SUMMARY

Mitch **W1SJ**

It was another great shoow at HAM-CON 2024!  
First the answer to the questions everyone asks.

1. Attendance was DOWN 20% over last year.
2. We were able to pay our bills and even made a small amount of money.

As far as the first (and unfortunately) negative point. Engagement and involvement are down everywhere, even outside of amateur radio. It was even difficult to get help to run things. We did quite a bit more to promote the event and we still didn't even maintain attendance.

As far as the bottom line, I am happy that the steps taken to increase our presales and increase attendance on-line have worked out. As we go forward, we will have to continue to find new and novel ways to continue to keep the show financially viable.

We were small, but we were mighty. When I arrived on site, around 7:30, the Flea Market was already hopping. While there were a couple of complaints of it being too crowded, the general consensus was that it was quite successful. Folks who were selling their wares reported brisk sales.

Forums started up at 8:30 and attendance ran at 20-30 attendees live and on-line. The tech mostly worked well, with a brief power outage affecting one of our speakers at his end. The talk on the Eclipse was the surprise sleeper forum with 31 people packing the room. Our game show, "Weakest Link" was quite entertaining. The 8 contestants, consisting mostly of engineers, field service technicians and programmers got most of the questions wrong and most were anointed as weakest links. But we had a lot of fun. I think. All of the forums can be viewed by attendees on our web site.

The Tech, DMR, Oscilloscope Demo and W1V station all had small crowds around them all day while KI1P did a brisk business showing off his ham van outside in the brisk weather.

A reporter from Channel 22/44 came by and filed an excellent hamfest report which can be seen on our web site. Hopefully that will help get a few folks interested.

Challenges remain to keep this show healthy and viable. We need new blood in the hobby as well as re-energizing the veteran hams. One thing which was very obvious was that many attendees popped in for a half hour, said hello to a few people and zipped out the door. We had a crush of people between 8 and 10AM and then things petered out quickly. I was thinking that we need to start the programming earlier in the morning, but then someone told me we need to run later. We have proven that we cannot run much beyond noon. Our attendees are much like a herd of hungry cats and when the noon hour strikes,

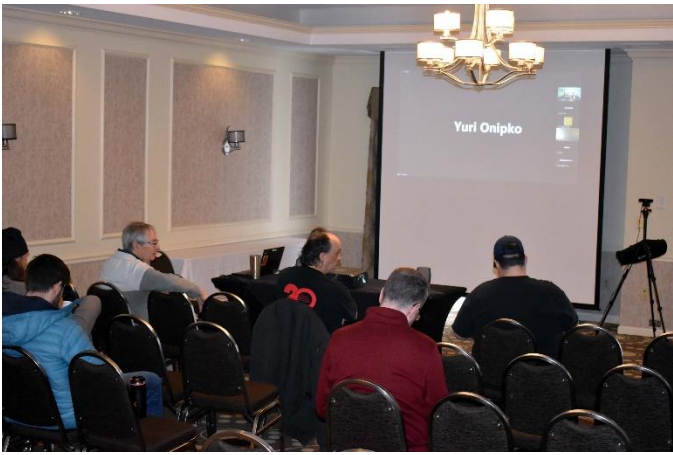
They make a bee-line for the exits and the lunch places. It was suggested that we have cat food available. That will never happen as the hotel does not allow us to serve cat food!

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HAMCON 2024 Photo's

Bob **K1BIF**







**Fox 44 Chanel 22 Newsclip**

Lily Sakaniwa made us look good. Chris Knox's customized van looked absolutely awesome, and his interview went well.

<https://www.mychamplainvalley.com/news/local-news/radio-amateurs-of-northern-vermont-hosts-2024-ham-radio-convention/>

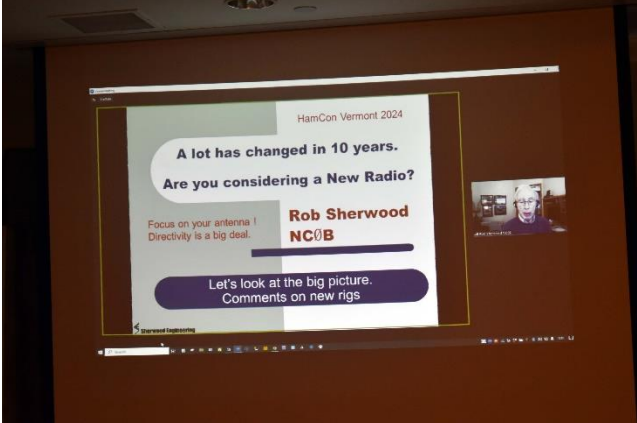


**CONTESTING FROM THE EASY CHAIR**

**Mitch W1SJ**

Over the winter months, I got involved with the K1TTT multiop contest group. These multi-ops are a lot like Field Day, but even more complicated. Years ago, Ron KK1L ran a simple 1-transmitter multiop during some of the CQ Worldwide contests. There are also multi-2 operations, where 2 transmitters are on at the same time. And finally, there are the multi-multi operations where 6 or more stations are running simultaneously.

The problem is that none of these operations are around here. Most are at least 3 hours away, in places like MA, ME or NY. You have to travel to the site for a Friday night start and travel home Sunday night. That can be tedious, especially in the potentially snowy February-March dates of the ARRL DX Contest. But these days, all of these big stations have the facilities for remote operation,



meaning that you turn the computer on and start operating!

There is a bit of preparation needed to download some software, set up the login and configure things. One also has to get comfortable with a different style of operation. On CW, there is generally no paddle. On phone, there is no footswitch. In fact, I had to purchase a boom headset because my existing microphone in the camera would simply not deliver clean echo-free audio. Finally, getting the VOX set up at my computer end and at the radio end does take some time and a steady hand. Things were a bit more complicated for me as these operations all use N1MM logging software, which I am not too familiar with. Sure, I can put a lot of contacts in the log quickly, but doing other things requires a learning curve, and I am still learning!

Operating at a super station is a lot of fun! Instead of a single tribander at 50 feet, I had command of stacked yagis at 100 feet fixed on Europe and rotatable yagis up to 180 feet high. On the low bands, I had numerous half square arrays and beverages at my command. It took some getting used to.

I started out on 20-meter CW Friday night between 7-10PM and had very nice runs into Europe, where it was after midnight their time. Conditions were excellent and 20 meters stayed open all night. I got back on after midnight our time and had pileups. It was a bit challenging because remote operation has something called latency – a slight ½ second delay between when I send a command until when I hear back from the receiver. And there is the latency in my own brain between the time I hear CW and the time I can type it into the computer so I can send back a report. Oh, did I tell you that European contest ops are some of the most impatient folks anywhere? So in the time it would take me to answer, they were calling a second or third time. Ah, the fun one gets to deal with.

Since I was operating remote, there was no need to be in the shack. So I packed up the laptop and transferred over to the Western White House in

Colchester, set up in the easy chair and had some CW runs with the cat perched on my lap (who occasionally typed a key or two on the computer). Hey, now that is the way to operate.

Two weeks later I was at it again in the phone version of the contest. Right off, there was some serious adjustments I had to make. In my world, all call signs I use start with W. But the call sign of the station I was using starts with a K. So, I was often heard saying W...K1TTT. Wait, that's not right! And of course, the station is NOT in Vermont, so I had to train myself to say, "59 Mike Alpha". You don't even TRY to say Massachusetts to foreign stations – they won't get it.

Related to this, more and more of the DXpeditions are moving to a RIB (Rig In Box) format. A few people go to the DX site (usually a remote island), install the antennas and a box containing all of the radios and computers powered by a generator. They then operate from the ship and also bring in remote operators from all over the world. There is no need to house anyone on the island, nor cook food or deal with waste on some very ecologically sensitive real estate. If you read about how horrible operator conditions were on Bouvet (no heat, no hot food), the thought of operating from the comforts of home has a lot going for it.

There's a lot of fun stuff out there. All we need to do is get people engaged.

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## Chittenden County Regional 2m FM Simplex Group Meeting

Zach **K1ZK**

#1)

The next meeting of the Chittenden County regional 2m FM simplex group is set for **8:00 pm on Thursday, March 14, 2024** on 146.55 MHz. March 14 is Pi Day so it should be an easy date to remember!

The 8pm time is right before the 8:30pm meeting of the [North East Weak Signal Group](#) 2m SSB simplex net on 144.250. Don't forget we'll be back on Eastern Daylight Time on March 10.

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

**#2)**

The W1XIV 223.86 repeater is now on the air in Shelburne, Vt. Input is on 222.26 and it takes a 100 Hz tone. Hopefully this will fill the burning need for a 1.25m repeater in our area. Give it a try!

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## NEWS & VIEWS

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### NEXT MEETING

Holy Family Parrish Hall  
Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm

#### Meeting Topic

Mystery and excitement around the first RANV meeting of 2024!

### Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- Steering Wheel: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thur Noon; Guilty Plate Colchester
- 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)