Presentation April 14th RANV Meeting

VERMONT DMR NETWORK

Our April RANV meeting will feature Bruce N1JGB who will present details on the Vermont and New England DMR (Digital Mobile Radio) Network. The network consists of 130 connected digital systems across New England, with 14 in Vermont. Bruce will provide details of using DMR, programming radios and accessing the network and will provide a live demonstration of contacting others on the network

Pay attention! Quiz to follow!

The April meeting will be at Zach's Pizza on Williston Road in South Burlington. We will be in the room on the left side, which holds around 60 people, so we'll have room to spread out. We encourage people to show up at 6:00 for what we have traditionally called, "Snax at Zachs". We've missed that over the last couple of years and it will be nice to do that once again. The meeting will start at 7:00. We will also be on Zoom for those folks who want to stay at home. You should already have the Zoom link. It will also appear on the web site just before the meeting.

Quiz time!
1. Where will the next RANV meeting be held?
2. How many of our members weren't paying attention and will end up showing up at the Parish Hall where they will attend a Quilter's event instead? (!!)

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Meetings: 2nd Thursday • 7:00 PM
             Holy Family Parrish Hall
             30 Lincoln Street
             Essex Junction, Vt

Repeater: 145.150, PL 100; WB1GQR

VERMONT QSO PARTY RESULTS
Mitch W1SJ

The results will NOT be presented this month. Instead, we will wait with baited breath for next month.

I could give the usual excuses everyone else gives, such as COVID, and the inability to find employees. None of that is true. Essentially, I was totally involved with setting up HAM-CON throughout February, and just got very lazy in March. The log checking software I use is not perfect, requiring a manual inspection of each of the 300+ logs. So far, I have all the higher scoring logs completed and just need to finish up the rest and write the report. I'll end up finishing everything in 3 months vs. the usual 2 months. This is still a better deal than the ARRL contests (6 months) or NEQP (10 months).

REPEATER LINKING PROJECTS
Mitch W1SJ

In the last month, there has been a flurry of activity re-restablishing VoIP links on the WB1GQR 145.15 repeater. We have had linking on the repeater through the IRLP and Echolink systems going back 20 years. The failure of the UHF link receiver at the repeater a few years ago put a stop to the linking for a while. With that receiver fixed, we have been able to bring back this resource.

The IRLP system consists of an on-line computer at my QTH connected to a UHF radio which links to the mountain. The computer was an ancient PS2 style computer which worked fine years ago, but was not able to keep up with changes in the network. Working with Klaus VE3KR, I obtained a point-of-sale computer, which is basically a stripped down Windows system using a RAM card instead of a disk drive. Using a low energy computer is pretty important. An average tower computer draws 80-100 watts, equating to $8 per month, using the old electric rates. These days, such a computer will easily add over $100 annually to the electric bill. Some have suggested getting a solar panel to power this. But at my QTH, unless I can generate electricity with pine needles and tree sap, it is a lost cause.

The new repurposed computer has Linux installed, running on a memory stick. The electrical draw, including the radio, is only 29 watts – far more efficient than the old setup. The software supports both IRLP and Echolink. Any node on those networks can be connected to or they can connect into our system. For example, Rich KB1YTO, a Florida transplant from Vermont, has been connecting in.

We are currently working on connecting into another network called All Star, using a small Raspberry Pi computer board. Mark K1KR, Rick KC1JAW and Bob KB1FRW have been providing expertise on this project, with Bob currently building the interface. We hope to have this link operating soon.

We remind everyone that the repeater has a second receiver near Burlington. If you are anywhere near, or within sight of the lake, use a 131.8 tone to access this receiver which will work a lot better in these areas.

We will present details on the various linking facilities on the repeater in an upcoming meeting.

WARTIME HAM RADIO IN UKRAINE
Mitch W1SJ

As a ham operator, I'm often asked about what is going on in hot regions of the world, and the current war in Eastern Europe is no exception. Often, when all communications are shut down in an area, ham radio is the only way information gets out. In Ukraine however, except for the occupied areas or areas under direct shelling, information flows freely.

With nearly 20,000 ham operators, Ukraine is the 6th largest ham entity in Europe and very active in contests. There is often confusion between Russian and Ukrainian call signs. Ukraine is UR-UZ and EM-EO for clubs. Other U's are Russia and some of the other former Soviet countries. The letter after the number indicates the oblast, or the location inside of Ukraine.

At the start of the war, Ukrainian amateurs were ordered off the air. But Ukrainian call signs are heard on the air each day. Ukraine, even before the war, is a rather strange country. The Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine consists of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and they are breakaway areas which do not follow Ukrainian law, even though they use Ukrainian call signs and count as Ukraine for DXCC. These hams are still on the air, mostly on FT8. Over the last couple of weeks, I worked UT3IJ and US0MS. I was about to say, "Slava Ukraine", but realized that I didn't know their politics, and keeping mum would be the best policy. The Donbas region is something like 50-50 in their allegiance toward Ukraine or Russia (depending on who you ask) so things are a bit dicey over there.

I heard two stations on 12 meters just this Tuesday morning. One is halfway between Luhansk and Kharkiv (where much fighting has taken place). This is interesting, because the RF and UAF (the abbreviations used for Russia and Ukraine) are squaring off in this area and all hell will break loose any time now. Another station heard today is listed as being in Zaparozhye, where the large nuclear facility is located, more towards central Ukraine. Either he is choosing to not follow the shutdown, or he is located somewhere else, or is a pirate. The Ukraine FT8 stations generally make a few contacts and then disappear.

If you search the DX cluster for UR-UZ, you will find several stations on each day. Invariably, qrz.com will show "address withheld". However, I know of other places to search for their QTH.

I remember that during the Iraq war, a ham in Kuwait was on one of the digital modes every day sending intelligence to a ham in the U.S., who then forwarded it to the State Department. There could be hams doing this in Ukraine now, but we will not learn about this until it is all over to protect their safety. Indeed, getting on the air can be dangerous. I don't think the Russians listen on 12 or even 20 meters, but just having a large antenna array (like most of these guys have) could be an invitation for a Russian missile. In the first few days of the invasion, missiles took out most of the radio and TV antennas in the occupied areas. Perhaps it is a good time for a dipole in the tree.

There are some shortwave outlets to tune into what is going on. Another good resource is Y24 TV
https://wwitv.com/tv_channels/b7374-Y24-English.htm .
There are translators (some good, some not so good), so you can follow the story. Unfortunately, the on-screen writing is all in the Cyrillic alphabet. We wish everyone the best of luck and hope things can be resolved soon.

RANV minutes for March 10th 2022
Bob K1BIF

RANV meeting. 3/10/2022

Present on-line was: KM4ACK, W1OFE, NJ1F, KJ1V, KB1UGM, Susie, N1WCK,W1EJC

In person: KC1IFK, KC1JGM, N1YD, KB1LOT, KK1L, AB1DD, K1KR, W1SJ, K1BIF,AA1SU

Meeting started at 7:10 pm. We need to find another meeting place fort next month.

Stew introduced our speaker, km4ack, Jason Oleham. Jason gave us a short background to his foray into ham radio. His interest is in the computer- radio connection and emergency communications. That led him to use a raspberry pie with ham radio. He uses the Raspberry Pie for winlink, fldigi, WSJT-X, and JS8CALL (tiny.cc/js8call).

Jason discussed "Build A Pi"; an easy way to install Linux. Web info – YouTube.com/km4ack and raspberrypi.com

The Steering Wheel will be at Zachery's @ 6:30 on 3/17.

Bob, k1bif, secretary

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NEWS&VIEWS

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NEXT MEETING

Thursday •April 14TH • 7:00pm
Zach's Pizza on Williston Road

Meeting Topic:
Bruce N1JGB
VERMONT DMR NETWORK

Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- Steering Wheel: 3rd Tues 6:30; Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners, Williston
- VE Exams every 2nd Friday; Contact AB1DD@arrl.net for information
- Dues due? Pay online at www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html