



# RADIO AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

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## HAM-CON 2023

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

HAM-CON, the ARRL Vermont Convention will be Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 8AM-1:30 PM at the Hampton Inn Convention Center, off of I-89 Exit 16 in Colchester.

We would love to get everyone back to meeting LIVE at the convention again. If you are within 2-3 hours of travel, please do consider joining us live. This would include everyone in Vermont, Northern New York and much of New Hampshire. If you cannot travel for some reason, please do consider JOINING US ONLINE! Simply buy an advanced sale ticket (only \$6) which will allow you join in and take part in all our forums and even view the forums afterwards. Information and tickets can be found at [ham-con.org](http://ham-con.org)

Our theme for HAM-CON 2023 is “Getting On The Air” There are many facets to amateur radio, but the most popular and endearing activity is getting on the air and contacting other hams. Our lineup of forums and activities will emphasize just that.

If you are going to get on the air, you might as well be great at your craft! “Be The Best Operator You Can Be” with W1SJ will detail all the fine points of making all those QSO’s. And, you don’t have to sit at home in your basement to get on the air. “Get Out

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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)

and Operate” with K1BIF will show how we make contacts from parks, summits, farms and even boats! And if that is not enough for you, “Operate From Anywhere Remotely” with W1VE will detail how you can access a ham shack anywhere on the planet from the comforts of home. There is nothing like working the world while driving on a long trip. “Operating an HF Mobile Station” with AB1OC will cover how to setup, build and operate an HF mobile station capable of working anyone. Experienced operators will tell you that there is a rhythm to making many contacts, much like a dance. K8ZT will describe this for us in “The Rhythm of the QSO”. Some hams take their operating very seriously as they compete in contests. We’ll explore the World Radio Team Championship, the Olympics of ham radio in “The WRTC Competitive Experience” with N9RV. We’ll also have the 2023 running of the ARRL Forum and find out the latest from our national organization. And finally, how well do you know your ham radio trivia? Join us for the Millionaire Game Show where we will ask such questions and you may just win a cool (fake) million dollars!

Add to the above the flea market, Tech table, DMR table, W1V special event station, demonstrations and VE session and we have one heck of a show. Be sure to buy your ticket early and be there! Again, look us up at [ham-con.org](http://ham-con.org) for all the details on HAM-CON 2023, February 25th .

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## Other HAM-CON Events

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

Be sure to attend HAM-CON 2023! We really need to get the attendance back up. We also need to get the flea market back into shape after two years of on-line and hybrid activities. Be sure to buy your tickets in advance, or just show up and pay then, but be sure to attend the show. Also – if your membership has or is about to expire, please take care of that on-line. We will take renewals at the HAM-CON entry table, later in the day when the crowds simmer down.

Here are some events which have not been overly promoted and we hope you find the time to check them out:

**RANV Flea Market Table.** Bring your stuff for sale to the RANV flea market table and we’ll try to sell it for you while you enjoy the convention! There are a few rules. The service is for RANV members (incentive to join!), no boat anchors, printers, monitors, etc, and we do have a limit, but are willing to waive that if you have nice stuff. Contact K1BIF and he will get you the manifest form to fill out.

**W1V Special Event Station.** Right as you come into the convention, we will have the W1V special event station. This is a remote operation through the Internet to KK1L’s station. The purpose of the station is to show off remote ham radio operation. We would like as many visitors as possible to spend up to 20 minutes working the world. A prize will be awarded to the operator making the furthest contact.

**Technical Table.** Mike N1FBZ is back with his monitor and he will be able to tell you how well your radio is performing and make basic checks. There won’t be the facilities for major repairs, but he should have a good idea of what issues you may be having.

**DMR Table.** Are you confused about how to program your DMR radio? (Like most of us!) We’ll have the experts on hand to help you out.

**VE Session.** The VE Session will be at 1:30. Please click on the link on the HAM-CON web and preregister for the session. Due to tight timing, walk-ins and latecomers will not be tested.

**Door Prizes.** We will have both on-line and live door prize drawings. The on-line door prize drawing will take place on Friday before the event. This is a good reason to buy your ticket ahead of time. The gift certificates will be E-mailed directly to you. There will also be some door prizes given away at the Millionaire Game Show after 12:30, so be sure to pop in to see if you won.

**Hundreds of Hams.** The biggest reason why folks attend hamfests? To visit with other hams! But this doesn’t work so well if you: a. go to the dump, b. plow your driveway, or c. hide out in your

basement. Get out and stop by and say hello to everyone. A good QSO on the radio or in person is always better than staying home!

See you at the show. No excuses – just show!

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### Northern Vermont Winter Breakfast

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

A wild group of 21 hams got together for the first Winter Breakfast held in 3 years. We all had to take a hiatus due to you-know-what, but that is hopefully all behind us. JP's again served up a great Breakfast or Lunch combo, albeit at higher prices than we saw the last time. I got there right at the start at 9AM and the room was already full. These guys are simply not late for the dinner bell! Reminds me of my cats.

After an hour of chowing down and chewing the fat, we offered up ham radio announcements and gave everyone the opportunity to tell us what they've been up to. Busy group! Carl sold a bunch of tickets to HAM-CON and we found that a few guys will be away that day. Fortunately, the breakfast was a backup plan for meeting and greeting.

As a good contester, here is the dupe sheet of who was there:

Paul AA1SU, Carl AB1DD  
Bob K1BIF, Mark K1KR,  
Jim KB1LOT, George KC1JGM,  
Ryan KC1KUX, Bill KC1NXH,  
Craig KC1PAH, Ron KK1L  
Erik N1CFO, Ann N1CQC,  
Horace N1HC, Moe N1MHG,  
Jack N1XGB, Jeff N1YD, Eric NJ1S  
Moe W1ETV, Mitch W1SJ,  
Scott W1ZU, Bob W4YFJ



## Vermont QSO Party AT KK1L

Ron [KK1L](#)

I've been recently been getting more active in the Vermont QSO Party. There are a bunch of folks who comment that Vermont is not very well represented during its party. We in Vermont do what we can to whip up the troops so to speak, but we are a small state with not much over 600k folks and 2200 hams. Vermont is just not going to have the QSO volume that you see from QSO parties from larger states.

I ended up operating 5+ hours Friday night, then 14 hours from 8AM until 10 PM Saturday with a dinner break, and finished Sunday with 5+ hours from 1:15 PM until the end at 7 PM. My plan was to be as active on each of the HF modes as I could in the time, I had to both maximize the opportunity for others to work Vermont and as well to maximize the score. I worked to get my two-radio setup functioning again running low power consisting of a K3S and a KX2 driving a Hardrock-50 50-watt amp. I am not fully capable yet of working any band on both radios. Currently I have a single feed triband yagi, a 2 element 40-meter yagi, and a single feed 80/160-meter Inverted V. The 40-meter beam loads up on 17 and 12 meters. However, without band pass filters I am limited because many bands interfere with each other. Not having messed with SO2R in a bit I had to play the interference by ear this weekend. SO2R was most important on FT8/4 where I could run a true automated 2BSIQ (two band synchronous interleaved QSO). I found that both 20 and 10 meters could coexist with 17 or 12 meters.

I started off right on time at 7PM on 40 meters near the announced activity time and frequency of 7.200 MHz. Unfortunately, there were some undesirables who parked there and we ended up scattered about the band. The first hour put 137 QSO's in the log between 40 and 20 meters. I bopped around between phone, CW and digital. By the time I stopped at 12:30 AM, I had 468 QSO's logged.

I started slowly Saturday morning at 7:50 AM on 20-meter phone, and quickly decided to try digital. Great choice! With two radios alternating between

bands, I had a great run working 332 stations in 3 hours on FT4 with the first hour at a solid 130 per hour. WHAT!?! I actually hung out a bit long with the last 30 minutes at only 40 QSO's. The rest of Saturday was not awesome, I bounced around the modes until 3:30 PM. Then 20 meters blew up with 200 QSO's in an hour and 10 minutes. There were a few fits and spurts of short high rates, but it was just kind of steady until I quit for the night just before 9:45 with 1476 QSO's.

I knew Sunday I would be operating much less. Sunday Mass is a priority and my daughter and grandkids were here for the weekend. I had not spent much time Saturday with them, so did not get back on the air until after 1PM and I wanted to focus on CW. I am not awesome with CW, but not terrible. But I am enjoying it more and more. A contest like this is a good one since the pileups are not that large. Fast accurate typing matters more with CW than phone. My fat fingers and mild dyslexia cause calls like WVRJTK to get sent instead of W4JTK (for example). For me Morse goes from my ears to my fingers and THEN brain. I have to press F5 (send their call) before I correct the typing, or I suffer a fury of folks calling because too much dead air. As they say, "Practice, practice, practice!" I felt the best I have ever felt running CW. But all y'all might not agree with that thought if you were on the other side of the QSO with me.

In the last few hours my K3S (new to me) developed the "ERR 12V" issue. Well known as a resistive power connection most likely because this older S/N does not have the gold contact pins. That sidelined the K3S. I ended up moving the KX2 to primary with the max of 60 watts from the Hardrock-50 solid state amp, which worked like a CHAMP even with the 7 second on/off cycle on FT4 for three hours. Earlier I also had some weird issue where the KX2 would stick in TX mode when I was dual CQing on CW. I did not take the time to diagnose it much. Luckily both radios did not go off the air.

Sunday, I had added only a meager 271 QSO's – certainly not like Saturday. I was happy to put Vermont out there along with the rest of the great VT operators. We hope we made you feel



welcomed to the first QSO party of the year. Oh, and thanks to those who might have joined me as I recited the 6 PM Angelus Saturday and Sunday...a pause for the cause so to speak.

A special shout out to my top visitors: NX3A (14 Q's), KK4BZ (10 Q's), W9IZ (9 Q's) and NF3R (9 Q's). Folks were certainly out there looking for and making those Vermont contacts!

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## VT QSO PARTY NOTES

Mitch [W1SJ](#)

The 2023 Vermont QSO Party is history. Besides all the QSO's, it is the stories we remember most. Here is what occurred at host station W1NVT.

I started on 20 meters, unlike most stations who started on 40 meters. I wanted to take advantage of the later openings there and was rewarded with a 147 rate. An hour later, I was on 40 meters in the middle of an insane hour of 179 QSO's. But the sad news was that 80 meters simply never showed up. I tried both phone and CW, and it was rough sledding and I bailed quickly. Same story on 80 meters on Saturday night and I didn't even try 160 meters. But 40 meters continued to produce until 1AM.

I made a point to get up early to work stations in the EU-DX Contest. Conditions on 20 meters were lackluster but the second hour on 15 meters was tremendous. I moved back to 20 meters and conditions see-sawed for a couple of hours.

Saturday afternoon was training time as I had 3 brand new operators come aboard. Bill KC1NGH took the 12-2 PM slot. Although he got off to a slow start, he picked up steam and ended up with a 60 rate. Ryan KC1KUW was on 2-4 PM and rocked an 86 rate. Finally, Logan KC1SFJ came on at 4PM and ran a solid 3 hours at 65 per hour, without even a break. And by the way, all these guys did a great job collecting the extra information needed for me to submit logs for the MN and BC QSO Parties. Not only did we get new operators trained in competitive operating, the 7 hours off gave me the

opportunity to get the digital station working and I even had some time to take a nap!

The digital station was my IC-718 into the high dipole. I refer to this radio as the QRM-718 as it is likely one of the dirtiest transmitters ever made. When this radio keyed down, it would wipe out the phone station on 20 meters. Only 12 meters seemed to not bother phone so that's where it stayed. I didn't pay much attention to the digital station, but I noticed that between 5-6 PM we were working a Japanese pileup. Cool!

Saturday night was spent alternating between phone and CW. The NA Sprint was running on CW, and I took the opportunity to pick up CW contacts quickly. Wait, not so quick! Sprint Ops need to get a serial number and name, so I changed the automatic exchange in the computer. Unfortunately, the software was sending the total number of VT QSO contacts I had made, which was something north of 1500. This blew everyone's mind and I got many requests for repeats. I finally simply gave everyone number 11, and they were happy. The other problem is that in the Sprint, you are supposed to QSY after each contact. Since I was not submitting a Sprint log, I held my ground, probably annoying a few guys.

The phone runs ended at midnight so I put the main station on FT8 as I stretched out and catnapped in between the QSO's (FT8 is perfect for this). As I was dozing off, I remembered a post from KC1IFK of his crazy run of JA's on FT4. FT4 is the supercharged version of FT8 – twice as fast. Unfortunately, there are less people on the mode, so the runs generally end quickly. But the bug was planted in my head

Sunday morning was very slow. There was supposed to be the Eurasia contest running, but I never heard anyone operating in it. With really poor rates on both phone and CW, I put the main station on FT4. For a few hours, I was able to hold a steady 65 rate with a single transmitter - certainly better than the 40 rate on phone. I finally got back on phone after 11:30 and held OK rates for the rest of the afternoon while simultaneously running on FT4 on the digital station. One advantage of FT4

besides its speed – the 7 second transmit time matched closely with my CQ repetition rate on phone. By timing the calls, this allowed me to be on 15 meter digital even though it generated noise on 20 meters.

AA1SU came in at 4PM and produced a dizzying 95 rate for two hours. I finished up the last hour, while also chasing some needed multipliers.

While we had fun at the WINVT multi-op, the overall situation did not look great as there were far less Vermont spots on the cluster. We lost our two mobile stations to the cold (-17 degree F) weather. K1VMT now winters in Florida. N1JEZ was not available. Other Vermont stations were spotted, but not all that often. Both KK1L and WINVT spent more time on digital and were not spotted as much. As most of the operating activity is still on phone, the lesser phone activity will unfortunately be noticed. Although digital contacts and logging is a real headache for log checking, it gets other stations on the air, who would not have bothered. Other QSO parties are starting to follow our lead in embracing the digital modes.

I'll check back in a month or so when I have data on who scored what and who ended up with the maple syrup, which is a hotly contested item!

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## NEWS & VIEWS

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### NEXT MEETING

Meetings Resume March 2023  
Holy Family Parrish Hall

### HAM-CON

Saturday, February 25, 8AM-2PM at the Hampton Inn

### Upcoming, Notices, & Misc

- Steering Wheel: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thur Noon; Ninety-Nine Restaurant, Taft Corners, Williston
- VE Exams every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday; Contact [AB1DD@arrl.net](mailto:AB1DD@arrl.net) for information
- Dues due? Pay online at [www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html](http://www.ranv.org/ranvpay.html)