

The *KEY*

The Newsletter of the Contoocook Valley Radio Club

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August, 1997

1997 ARRL Field Day **Dale Clement, AF1T**

Members and friends of the Contoocook Valley Radio Club transformed a large field in Henniker into an impressive Field Day encampment during the June 27-29 weekend.

We had a record turnout which included at least 23 licensed operators and 11 ARES members. Participants' call signs were: WA1UKV, K1JY, N1IIC, N5FGO, K1PDY, N1QGM, N1KTP, N1GJE, K1PDY, K1DBL, N1KXT, W1XV, N1XXW, N1KPT, N1OAI, AF1T, N1FOJ, W1GTA, N1TX, N1PHV, N1KPZ, N1QYS, N1PHZ, and WA1VKO.

Plenty of food kept everyone going. Larry, N1PHV, had his army field kitchen set up.

A pleasant and dry Friday allowed us to erect an antenna farm consisting of a G5RV dipole for 80 meters, a pair of phased 1/4-wavelength verticals for 40 meters, a full-sized 3-element monobander on a 40-foot tower for 20 meters, a 4-element yagi at 30 feet for 15 meters, a 3-element yagi at 30 feet for 10 meters, a 6-element

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Henniker Old Home **Days** **August 8-9**

Henniker Old Home Days will be Friday and Saturday, August 8 and 9. This year the CVRC will be setting a display table, as well as providing communications for a mountain-bike race and parade.

The table will feature working HF and VHF stations, amateur radio promotional materials, information about our club, and a raffle. The winner of the raffle will receive a Cape Cod getaway—tickets are \$20 apiece and only 100 will be sold! We will staff the table on Friday from 4:30 PM till crowds thin out, and on Saturday from 7:30 AM till crowds thin out.

The mountain bike race starts at 8:00 AM Saturday with communications beginning at 7:30. We will start assisting with the line-up for the parade at 10:00 AM. Dick, N1KPT, will be providing base station support and relay. Parking is available at N1KPT's QTH at 48 Main Street. Additional club members are needed for Parade support, and for staffing the club table Saturday afternoon and evening. Please call Dale, AF1T, at 428-3840 if you're able to help.

CVRC Meetings

Join us on August 12 for another mystery presenter. Cal and Nancy are keeping this secret so well that even the editor of *The KEY* doesn't know who it is. You can be sure, though, that a good time will be had by all!

CVRC meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month. The Rag-Chew begins at 7:00 PM; the program at 7:30; and a business meeting follows the program and refreshments. Members and nonmembers alike are welcomed. Talk-in is on the K1BKE 146.895 -600 kHz repeater.

The KEY is published every other month at the beginning of the even numbered months. The deadline for articles and submissions is the fourth Tuesday (coinciding with the usual business meeting schedule) of the preceding month.

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yagi on N1PHV's army truck for 6 meters, an Isopole and 4 element yagi for 2 meters, and a 10 meter vertical for the RS-12 satellite. Assorted campers, tents, and screen houses provided shelter. Humidity and temperature increased throughout the weekend, but the traditional rain held off during the entire period.

We agreed to dedicate each radio station/antenna combination to one band only. It was felt that this would optimize operating efficiency, allow versatility for both phone and CW, simplify log-keeping, prevent mix-ups when swapping coaxial cable cables to various antennas, and reduce tune-up time when changing bands. We chose to operate class 4A, allowing up to four transmitters on the air simultaneously (These four do not include the bonus stations—VHF, satellite, Novice/Technician, packet, etc.).

The group racked up 800 bonus-points for using 100% emergency power, obtaining media publicity, originating a message to the ARRL Section Manager, completing satellite QSOs, making several natural power QSOs (on 6 meters with a solar-panel power source), accurately copying the W1AW FD message, completing packet radio QSOs, and making a number of VHF QSOs (mostly on 6 meters).

Our experience confirmed the effectiveness of the dedicated-band approach—we totaled 1882 two-way contacts, of which 331 were CW or packet. With a multiplier of 2 for CW, 2 for the 150 watt level, and various bonus-points, our claimed score is 5226. This may rank as one of our best efforts. It should be noted that conditions on the higher bands (15, 10, and 6 meters) weren't very good until the end on Sunday afternoon.

Of course, Field Day is more than just a contest. It demonstrates what a group of people with a common purpose can accomplish. Few events provide as much opportunity to practice operating skills, and learn about radios, antennas, propagation, and emergency preparedness. The Field Day experience is cohesive for our club. We hope that you will join us next year during the fourth weekend in June!

ARLD033 DX News

This week's bulletin was made possible with info provided by The 599Rpt, Tedd, KB8NW, the OPDX Bulletin, The Daily DX, the DXNL, 425DXnews and Contest Corral from QST. Thanks to all.

MALAWI, 7Q. Eli, IN3VZE, will be QRV as 7Q7CE on 20, 15 and 10 meters from August 2 to 25. QSL to home call.

OMAN, A4. A45XL is active from Masirah Island, IOTA AS-014. QSL via G4VUO.

PAKISTAN, AP. Pakistani stations will use the special prefix AP50 to celebrate their 50th anniversary of independence. There will be a special certificate available. Listen for details by the operators.

JERSEY, GJ. Juergen, GJ/DF3OL, is active as a QRP station from St. Saviour. He will be here until August 9. QSL to home call.

GRENADA, J3. IV3ZJR, with IV3NVN and IV3TMV are QRV as J38AH and J38AI, respectively, until August 21. They will put emphasis on the newer bands. QSL via IV3TMV.

SVALBARD, JW. Jack, JW0M, is QRV from the Polish Academy of Science. QSL to PO Box 35, 80-325 Gdansk 37, Poland.

ARUBA, P4. Several Germans will activate P40XM from August 1 to 26. Activity will include the Worked All Europe CW Contest. The operators are DL3XM, DL4LQM, DL5LYM and DL8WAA. They may also go to the Netherlands Antilles and St. Maarten. QSL via DL3XM.

MIDWAY ISLAND, KH4. Ted, NH4/NH6YK, is QRV on 10 and 6 meters. He will be here until August 20. QSL to home call.

EASTERN KIRIBATI, T32. T32Z is QRV and has been found on 15 meters around 0230z. QSL via N7YL.

INDIA, VU. Pai, VU2PAI, will be active as VU2PAI/50 until September 30 to commemorate 50 years of India's independence. QSL to home call.

ZIMBABWE, Z2. Cedric, N9YXA, is part of a communications convoy here and will be QRV as Z2/N9YXA from August 3 to 21. He can be found on 40 to 10 meters. Some RTTY operation is planned as well. QSL to home call.

The Big Fox Hunt

Jim Cluett, W1PID

Mike (N1SFL) and I knew absolutely nothing about fox hunting or direction finding. We still don't, and we probably never will.

But we didn't care. The fox hunt sounded like good fun so we decided to give it a try.

We read up on direction finding in The ARRL Handbook. That didn't stop us. We had no special gear (except an open-ended coffee can, a stainless steel salad bowl, an old 3 element beam and some maps). That didn't stop us. We couldn't even find the American Legion Hall in Warner where the fox hunt started. That didn't stop us either. (They finally came out and stood on the street corner and talked us in with a handie.)

"So," I said, after driving around the block several times, "I guess we know who's NOT going to win this fox hunt. Can't even find the starting place after getting directions."

Lindsay (K1JY) was in charge of hiding the fox. He was also helping with the breakfast. My plan was simple enough. Forget the direction finding and just follow Lindsay surreptitiously out to the fox when he turned it on. A sure win. But he slipped out while we were inside finishing coffee. So much for that plan. (But we still had the bag of nails to spread on the parking lot.)

The competition was stiff. Ken (K1MID) had been working on his gear for weeks. He drilled 4 holes (perfectly aligned in a square) in the roof of his Buick. He mounted quarter-wave whips in each hole. The front seat was loaded with gear. I'm not sure what it was; we just got a quick peek. There was a large circuit board next to a mobile rig. Another board with a circle of switches or LEDs dangled from the mirror attached by a group of wires. There was one switch for every major point on the compass. This guy was serious.

Ron (K1PDY) had a whirling, T-shaped coaxial dipole. He spun the thing like the rotors on a helicopter. Cliff (N1GJF) had... well, he had a handie which he hugged close to his chest.

Anyway, Ruth (N1OAI) passed out the maps

and the operating frequency (145.63). We turned on the rigs in the parking lot. Nothing heard. Nothing! Ron whirled, Ken switched, Mike and I got dizzy pointing our beam continuously in a circle. And Cliff hugged his handie ever closer to his chest. Nothing! So, I said what the heck, and keyed up on frequency. "I got it" shouted Ron. "Me too!" said Cliff. Ken said nothing but he was switching his compass switches madly. "Just me," I spoke into the handie. "How you guys doing?" They didn't think it was funny.

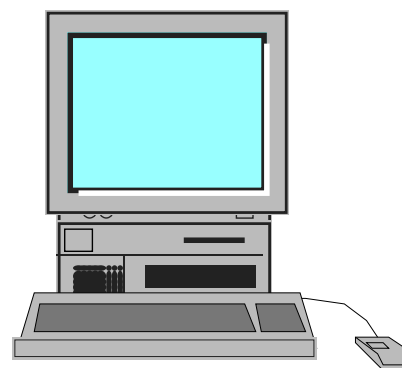
So Mike and I jumped into the camper van and headed for higher ground. Part way up the road to Mt. Kearsarge we started hearing the fox. Mike jumped out straight into the poison ivy and started swinging the beam. We had it! It was definitely either NW or SE. The other guys had it too. (They all came up the same hill... probably chasing me because of the last trick.) So we headed back to the low country and straight for the fox. We drove for a few miles up a dirt road and could barely hear the thing, so we figured we were heading the wrong way.

Then we gave up direction finding altogether and looked at the maps. "Hey, this would be a

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Lessons Learned with a New Ham

Larry Ledlow, N1TX

I will never forget my first QSO. I had obtained Novice license KA3HIY a couple of months before actually having the radios — or the courage — to make my first contact. At Easter my father had given me a wonderful pair of Yaesu FL-101 and FR-101 twins, which he had used as KL7EML. I had almost no furniture in my Maryland ground-floor apartment, not even a table upon which to place my electronic treasures. A couch, a tall teak bookcase, and a queen-sized bed established my comfort repertoire. I finally bought a Hustler 5-band vertical antenna, which I could covertly erect after dark and lay down in the living room before sunrise. I stretched out next to the twins on the ragged rug in the middle of the dining room floor, resting my head in the palm of my left hand while tapping Morse code CQ into the ether on a straight key. Days passed without a single reply. Lord knows what I was doing wrong. Then, one cloudy Saturday in May, I finally heard K-A-3-H-I-Y D-E "Holy s**t!" I said aloud. I scrambled to copy the W2 callsign coming back to me. No luck. My palms were soaked, and my hands were anything but steady. It was hopeless. My excitement so completely overwhelmed me that my marginal competence with code quickly vapor-

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good place to hide a fox," Mike said. So we headed toward Pumpkin Hill. Another 1/2 hour wasted. We were sure to lose. Too many mistakes. So we thought we'd try direction finding again and headed for higher ground.

As we tuned around on the local repeater, it was clear that no one was having any better luck. Ron gave up twirling and left the area (Said he had an appointment). Ken with all his whips couldn't hear the fox from anywhere. Cliff was doing pretty much what we were doing... driving around hoping to get lucky. So Lindsay gave us all a clue. "Waterloo." Darn, we were there just a while ago. We headed back to Waterloo. This time we went farther and the fox got louder.

After a few more miles and a few more turns, we spotted Lindsay. "I'm not the fox," he said. "But you're getting closer." As we continued up the road the signal went full-strength, even with no antenna. We stopped the van. Not in the culvert, not down the well at the farm, but definitely very near. I'd gone up the road one way, Mike had gone the other way. "I found it," said Mike running back to the van. "It's in the cemetery." Sure enough, chained to a granite post at the far corner was a little grey box with a note: "You found the fox."


We packed up our salad bowl, our maps, our coffee can, and we headed home. (Now we'll have to schedule our speaking tour. I mean... we are the 1997 champs, right?) Wonder if they'll invite us next year.

Thanks to the gang at the CVRC for all the hard work and fun!

73, Jim (W1PID)

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ized. Ten minutes and seemingly several lifetimes passed in short order. I had only copied enough to convince myself I had made my first QSO, but I was no longer a virgin operator!

We have all had similar experiences, and my own particular memories of the early days help me from losing patience with new ticket holders. At nearly 40 and having played with many radio-related hobbies since age 11, I'm beginning to feel like an old geezer. In other words, I'm often cranky about operating competence, style, and technical acuity. Then I remind myself of the story I just related, and within minutes I manage to regain that paltry portion of patience with which I was blessed.

An Elmer's role is fraught with hazards, including accidental electrocution and high blood pressure. No single ham radio activity in recent memory has stretched my patience more than VHF contest roving with Mike Catalanotti N1YHW. Mike and I work together at Codem Systems, and some of you who frequent the Frankestown two-meter repeater have, no doubt, spoken to him. Mike received his license just before Christmas 1996, not long after I received my new vanity callsign N1TX. Having a new ham close at hand and a new call ready for action were exactly the boosts I needed to fire up the rigs after a couple of years of considerable neglect. I was sure Mike's enthusiasm would wane quickly if he settled into the FM repeater scene, so I included him with several of my activities including satellites and the upcoming VHF contest in mid-January.

After some minor discussion, we decided operating as a rover in the contest would be much fun. After all, in January, there are few rovers willing (or silly enough) to brave freezing temperatures and gale-force winds on accessible hilltops. Thanks to antenna help from Dale AF1T and Mike's borrowed six-meter rig, we took our first rover position at the base of Silver Mountain's microwave relay tower between Washington and



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Lempster. We were ready for action on 50, 144, 432, and 1296 MHz (The beauty of my Ford Ranger pickup festooned with antennas will be the subject of an upcoming poem and photo exhibit, and a screenplay is in the works. Working title: Alive! On Six and Above).

Inside the warm truck cab, we were tightly cramped and well tangled in cables. Mike wanted nothing to do with the microphone, so I offered to operate first with him serving as my logger. That choice may seem obvious to the uninitiated, but anyone who's tried logging during a contest knows the task is far from simple. The operator turns knobs and talks, but the logger must listen carefully and write quickly, all while ensuring proper entry of all details, checking for duplicates, and sharpening pencils. At the appointed hour (1800 UTC), the frenzy began with our CQ calls on two meters receiving rapid, consecutive responses. I solely focused on operating the radios and digging callsigns out of the noise, making one exchange and immediately getting ready for the next one.

After about fifteen minutes I looked to scan Mike's log sheet only to see lots of scratch-outs and many callsigns incorrect or missing in the list spanning about a third down the page! Suddenly I realized he didn't know how to log "under fire," and our efforts soon would be for naught unless another tack was chosen. I hate losing momentum in a contest due to distractions. I started to snap at him, but then I reminded myself of my first QSO, took a long deep breath, and set out to

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slow the operating pace so I could help log. Eventually, we worked out an operating rhythm that sustained us for several hours. Although I'm sure we retained quite a few errors in our log, damage control was effective. Mike finally (and nervously) took the microphone, and after about a dozen QSOs he proved his worth as an operator. Our score after the first day's operation was far from record breaking, but it was satisfying.

We recently completed another roving operation in the June VHF QSO Party. Once again, there were several moments Mike's inexperience started to frustrate me. He has a little more contest experience under his belt, but antenna and cable assembly are both relatively new to him. Training my thoughts to be constructive were easier this time. The warm weather helped, and I wasn't burdened with a terrible headache as I had been in January. More important, however, at almost every step of the operation I could see how much improvement Mike demonstrated in his performance under pressure.

I'm sure I could have seriously discouraged him had I completely lost my cool. I think the points in participating in this wonderful hobby are to enjoy yourself and to learn something in the process. It's not always easy to keep that focus, however. I almost always have fun, and at times like these, I continue to learn to control my impatience. The funny thing is, though, even when Mike reaches the old geezer stage, I doubt he'll ever appreciate how much he owes to my very first QSO. But then, maybe he's not supposed to know.

New Hampshire Amateur Radio Listserver

There is a new listserver dedicated to broadcasting Amateur Radio related e-mail messages for services, news and upcoming events from both ARRL Headquarters in Newington, CT as well as those generated by the New Hampshire Field Organization.

This is a closed access list, meaning that the New Hampshire Field Organization will determine the appropriateness of what goes out from this mail list. Anyone with a message that they feel is appropriate for general distribution should forward it to Al Shuman, N1FIK, at ashuman@arrl.org.

If you have Internet e-mail capability and would like to subscribe, send a message to arrl-request@bit-net.com with the word "subscribe" in the body of your e-mail message (do not include quotation marks). Do not type the word "subscribe" in the subject block, it will be ignored.

Should you ever want to be removed from the list, sent a message to majordomo@www.bit-net.com with the following command in the body of your e-mail address. "unsubscribe arrl (your e-mail address)" (again do not include the quotation marks). Do not type in the subject block, it will be ignored..

Any comments with respect to this list, the NH ARRL web page, or any other ARRL related issues should be directed to N1FIK at ashuman@arrl.org.

A Field Day Riddle

Q: How many hams does it take to get an ICOM 706 to work on 6 meters?

A: Four, one to twiddle the knobs and three to read the manual.

A lesson learned at K1BKE's field day trying to get N1KTP's rig working.

KB5UAC grateful for ham radio on Mir

ARLS024

In a packet message to Dave Larsen, N6CO, of the MIREX support team, US astronaut Mike Foale, KB5UAC, expressed the gratitude of the Mir crew "for all the good wishes and interest over the world, in our troubles and tribulations." The MIREX support team--Miles Mann, WF1F, and Larsen--has been handling family traffic for Foale via ham radio and attempting to help him with his radio problems (the Mir's transceiver was cutting out on high power because of a circuit overload). Foale singled out for special mention "the few hams who work tirelessly on our behalf" to pass personal messages. Foale said that he and his wife were "extremely grateful to those hams who pass our messages for us." After the Mir's collision with a Progress cargo rocket, Foale said, "it was impossible to get any personal news of our well-being to our families" via the official communication channels. "Ham radio allowed us to fill the gap."

"We are particularly interested in longer contacts, than simple QSO exchanges," Foale said. "It is good to tell people about our life here on Mir, and our problems, but the lives of hams on Earth are also interesting to us, and I hope more hams will take the time to tell us about their QTH and surroundings also," he concluded.

Ham radio has served as a convenient "chat" medium between the US space shuttle Columbia and the troubled Russian Mir space station in recent days. Last weekend, shuttle Commander Jim Halsell, KC5RNI, had two short, direct 2-meter contacts with Foale aboard Mir. The first ship-to-ship SAREX/MIREX contact happened Saturday, July 5, during a Mir/Columbia "conjunction" over the Indian Ocean. The contact lasted less than a minute. A little while later, with both

spacecraft over the Pacific Ocean, another 30-45 second contact took place, according to Will Marchant, KC6ROL, of AMSAT. "The shuttle crew was pretty excited about their contact," he said. But the best QSO was yet to come. On Tuesday, July 8, 1900 UTC, Foale contacted W5RRR, which patched him through NASA's communications circuits to the space shuttle, enabling Foale to speak at length with the Columbia crew. During the ten-minute contact, Foale filled in his fellow astronauts about the situation aboard Mir, where a Progress supply rocket had just successfully been docked.

"We'd like to invite you to visit Mir," Foale said to the shuttle crew, which respectfully declined. Foale said the arrival of the Progress was "almost like Christmas." He said his personal items still in the damaged Spektr module had been replaced, along with a videocassette player. Foale told Halsell the Mir crew enjoys watching American movies when they have the time. He also told his fellow astronauts aboard the Columbia that he had not had a chance to see any of the pictures from the Mars Pathfinder mission as yet. Foale said the Progress carried tea, coffee, chocolate and even fresh food.

Other Columbia-Mir conjunctions will be possible through the mission but whether another contact is attempted depends on the Columbia and Mir work schedules.

On July 10, Foale told N6CO in another packet message that the crew was "extremely busy, trying to crawl through all the bags unloaded from Progress." Foale said the crew will do a training run on July 15 prior to the space walk to attempt to repair the damage and restore power to the space station. Foale will sit out the space walk in the Soyuz vehicle.

Thanks to Philip Chien, KC4YER, Pat Kilroy, WD8LAQ, Frank H. Bauer, KA3HDO, Dave Larsen, N6CO, Matt Bordelon, KC5BTL, and Rosalie White, WA1STO, for their contributions to this bulletin.