

MARA/VARA MONITOR

Published Monthly for Radio Amateurs in the Shenandoah Valley

VARA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a fantastic meeting we had for the month of January! It looks like the move to Tuesday night was the way to go.

For those that were there, they witnessed one of the most unusual experiences in the life of an amateur radio operator: On more than one occasion during the meeting, there was complete and total silence!! You could have heard a pin drop on a plush carpeted floor.

Of course, the VARA club (as of this writing) is still looking for a club president. Any volunteers???

Hoping that this is my last "official" writing for the Monitor, I'd like to thank the club for their support. Our January meeting showed me what our club can do with some effort from everyone. We got our Field Day committee established, decided about our Christmas dinner, had a great turn out and had a lot of fun and laughter in the process.

The "show and tell" program on the homebrew antenna's was really fascinating I'd like to thank Clint - KB4OLM, Richard - KF4QZG, Ray - KE4 HVR and David - AD4TJ. The variety and understanding that they shared kept everyone's interest.

We also had a few visitors that our new meeting night helped arrange. One of our visitors came simply because he was invited by a ham enroute to the meeting. Let's talk it up on the air and let everyone know that our club is open to all. There is an air of enthusiasm that can really be built upon. Good luck to all this year

73
Dan, KE4JSX

MARA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that those that made it to Richmond for the Frostfest enjoyed the day. I saw a lot of hams from the valley, but I missed some of you. It would be interesting to know who would buy some of the stuff that was for sale, but I would really like to know what some of it is, or was.

The big news in amateur radio occurred on December 30, 1999 when the FCC released their new ham radio structure. There was good news for some of us, and others of us were not happy with parts of it. I must admit that it will take some time to get use to the idea of an extra class ticket with only a 5 wpm cw requirement. If you like the new structure or not, remember that ham radio is a hobby. What we get out of it depends on what we put into it, what we learn and how we use it.

By now most of you probably know that there will be no VE exams given in Harrisonburg until a new lead VE is found. I tried to contact all of the extra class VE's in the area to find someone that would be interested in this position. If I have missed someone who would like to fill this opening, please let me know of your interest. The ability to offer a convenient location for new hams to take tests, and for others to upgrade is important if the local ham community is to grow.

At the February meeting, Dick, W3HXH, will tell us about the phased vertical antenna system that he has been working on the past several months. He has made several very good DX contacts, and says that it is working better as he adds more ground radials. Come and learn what a phased vertical antenna system is and why he chose to build one. Bring your questions and comments about the new FCC amateur radio rules. I hope to devote a little time to discuss how they will affect the future of ham radio.

See you at the meeting,

Gerald, KN4FM

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP YET?

PUBLIC SERVICE REPORTS

New Years Eve, on the threshold of Y2K. Hams all up and down the valley eagerly gave up parties and celebrations to answer the call to serve. Below are some reports of the activities by hams in the Shenandoah.

PAGE COUNTY

The Page County ARES group was on standby New Years Eve. The group was working along with Reed Beam, Page County's Deputy Director of Emergency Services.

In working with the Emergency Services Dept. the ARES group had predetermined a number of locations in which to place Amateurs in the event that Y2K would cause us any problems. The three Fire Departments in Page County, Page EOC, and Page Memorial Hospital were the selected sites.

Reed suggested that we try to station an amateur in northern Page County since there is no Fire or Rescue unit there. The Rileyville Church of the Brethren was chosen as that location. Fortunately for us, no power or phone outages occurred. Those participating that night were: Jeff Maiden (KE4ZLH, EC), Paul Ininger (KD4DDI, AEC), Scott Beaver (W4GSB, AEC), Don Essman (KE4SRI, AEC), Bob Watkins (K7ARM), Max Butler (KE4CKM), Charles Roach (KG4ALT), Richard Seal (K4RTS), Lance Truax (N4QIC) Bob Minetta (W3XH), Chad Painter (KE4RMC) Loren Ristola (N4LDR) Larry Moyer (K4LDM), Many thanks go out to these Amateurs for standing by to be deployed that night or to be relief in case they were needed. A special thanks goes to Reed Beam for working with the ARES group and helping us set up our packet station at Page EOC.

Also, thanks goes out to Lynette Smeltzer at Page Memorial, who helped get us a room in which we set up our HF station and also our VHF station. One other spotter who was circling high above Page Co. was Kenny Painter. Kenny was flying his private airplane above Page Co. to spot possible power outages and also was ready to fly for supplies for the Hospital.

Again, many thanks to all those who helped out during the year to help prepare for the Y2K bug.

Information by Paul Ininger, KD4DDI

ROCKINGHAM AND AUGUSTA COUNTIES

You come up with a crisis and the radio amateur will find a place to put an antenna.

On Friday December 31st, the Augusta county ARES group with the help of the Augusta county fire department, installed a dual band vertical antenna on the tower behind the Emergency Operations Center.



View of the antenna installation at the Augusta EOC Center in Verona.

NEW YEARS EVE OPERATIONS WILL COUNT AS S.E.T. EXERCISE

Under the direction of AD4TJ, David Tanks, Emergency Coordinator (EC) for the county, a small group, along with the assistance of ACFD Truck 106, put an antenna at the 85ft level on the microwave tower at Aug. EOC. After taking an existing UHF yagi out of service, we gladly took over the hardline that fed this antenna to use for this installation. We added 65ft of RG-214 to the hardline to reach an effective height.

Kenny, KE4GKD, was in charge of splicing and weatherproofing the coax connections. Colin, N4ZFQ, who pulled a marathon Thursday night to finish the bracket for the antenna, was tasked to mount the system to the tower and anchor the feedline on the way down.

Brian, N4IRT, was our engineering department. head and chief photographer. During the process, David was running up and down the steps from inside to check the SWR as the crew made corrections topside.

This sounds like a normal project for a bunch of ham operators but, we added one step.-- a ladder truck. Kenny and I went up in the county's platform truck with everything we would need to complete this task. No climbing or pulling up everything you need on a rope. This was great.

Anyway, the job went quickly and we were gone in about 2 hours. Operating from the EOC should now require only a radio and power supply. The building has two (2) emergency generators and a large UPS. Many thanks to John Craig, EOC director, for providing the antenna for us to install.

This project shows what can happen when people work together towards a goal. I am proud to be a part of ARES/RACES in District 15.

*Colin Hester, N4ZFQ
EC District 15*

By the direction of the SEC, Frank Mackey, operations on New Years Eve may be used as an SET. This will give members who are working towards the ARES ID Badge another "feather in their cap". To follow the guidelines set by the state, those who did not accept an assignment and chose to remain on stand-by, do not qualify. If anyone has questions concerning the ID Badge program, please contact your EC.

To recap the requirements for the badge, you must complete a 6 hour state mandated training session. This can be one of the sessions taught by the state officials or taught locally by approved instructors. Second, you must participate in one Section Emergency Test. SET must involve 3 or more hours of operations. These requirements must be met once EVERY year. I hope this information helps.

*Colin N4ZFQ
DEC15*



KD9LA manning the Y2K preparedness station at the Weyers Cave Volunteer Fire Station in Augusta County

AUGUSTA ARES NET
FEB 10
ON 146.49 SIMPLEX

Test your equipment out for direct communications without the aid of a repeater. All amateurs are welcome to check-in, regardless of location.

WANTED TO BUY: TOWER

Wanted : Rohn 45G or 55G tower, please call Cowles at (540) 434-5965 ext. 242 Monday - Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM or (540) 885-3665 after 8:00 PM. email : candrus@rica.net

FOR SALE: RADIO & HEADSET

Kenwood TR-7850 2m FM Mobile --- Price negotiable. Owner eager to sell.

Also for sale: Aircraft Headset - Telex EBM-1410 Electret mic, 21 dB noise reduction (like new) \$150.

Glen Heatwole, N4ALS Home 833-2323 Work 564-3501 email: glheatwole@juno.com

FOR SALE: 2m AMP

Lunar Electronics 2-meter VHF SSB/FM power amp, 1 to 10 watts in gives 80 (yep, that's eighty!) watts out. Includes built-in switchable receive pre-amp. Perfect for boosting your HT to hit those distant repeaters from your home.

David Fordham, KD9LA, home 540-234-0448, work 540-568-3024, email fordhadr@jmu.edu

PATIENCE...

As this issue goes to press, several factors are conspiring together, all of which might delay the delivery of this month's issue. First, the Harrisonburg Post Office is moving to new location, possibly delaying mail delivery. Second, an approaching ice storm is forecast for the area. And third, your newsletter editor has been out for a week with another bout of pneumonia, requiring a volunteer fill-in to handle the actual distribution. Thanks for your understanding.

AMATEUR RADIO RESTRUCTURING ...OLD NEWS...

By now everyone has probably heard, the Part 97 Radio service is in for some changes.

Whether this will improve, or serve to the detriment of, ham radio as the hobby we have come to know and love, is yet to be seen. But one thing is for sure, nothing is certain except change.

It is absolutely amazing that the hobby itself has undergone such little change in the last decade, considering the unbelievable amount of change which has taken place in *every other communications service* in existence in the same period.

That hams held on for so long with the 1960's structure says something... either the structure was mighty good when it was designed in the 1960s, or the hams were deeply entrenched in their little fiefdom for so long that they let the world pass them by, sorta like granny sitting on the porch. Maybe it's a bit of both.

Change always breeds opportunity. As Darwin said, "survival does not go to the strongest, but rather to the ones who most easily adapt."

Read the changes for yourself, and see what new possibilities are in store for you personally.

Information is available in the current issues of all the popular ham magazines (available at bookstores and even Kroger grocery stores), as well as numerous web sites on the Internet. Start at www.arrl.org.

A revised Amateur Radio question pool that reflects the April 15, 2000, restructuring rules could be out by February 1. Chairman Ray Adams, W4CPA, of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators' Question Pool Committee says the QPC is in "band aid" mode right now and will try to get "something usable into public domain for all three of the new written pools by February 1 or very shortly thereafter."

Adams says that a Technician class syllabus already has been drafted and approved. The various QPC members have been keeping in touch by telephone and e-mail since the FCC announced the restructuring rules December 30. "We will go back over the newly

configured pools, refining them and updating in a methodical manner with the order to be decided by the NCVEC when next in session," Adams said this week. He said the revised question pools will follow the established format.

After April 15, 2000, the FCC will only issue Technician, General, and Amateur Extra class licenses. Novice and Advanced licensees will retain current operating privileges and may renew indefinitely. Applicants desiring HF privileges will only have to pass a 5 WPM Morse code test. Current Amateur Radio study materials remain valid at least until the new rules become effective in April.

The new licensing regime has four examination elements: Element 1, the 5 WPM Morse code test; Element 2, a 35-question Technician test; Element 3, a 35-question General test, and Element 4, a 50-question Amateur Extra test.

Frequently Asked Questions on restructuring are available at

<http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring/faq.html/>. A copy of the entire Report and Order (FCC 99-412) is available at

<http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/wt98-143ro.pdf> or at

http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/1999/db991230/fcc99412.txt

ARRL PURCHASES COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY

The ARRL has purchased the Amateur Radio technical journal Communications Quarterly from CQ Communications and will merge the publication with the League's technical journal QEX. The change becomes effective for subscribers starting with the March/April issue of QEX. The new combined publication initially will serve a joint readership of more than 7000. The magazine will bear the legend, "QEX, incorporating Communications Quarterly."

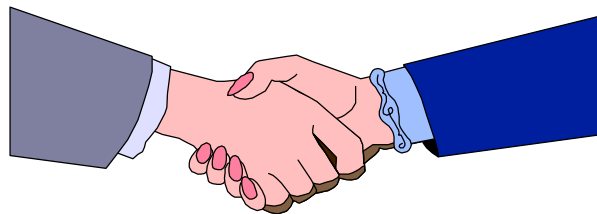
VARA is meeting earlier each month. Accordingly, the *Monitor* will be published earlier to arrive prior to the meeting. There's a domino effect. Articles must now be submitted by the 18th of the month to make the next issue of the *Monitor*.

MARA/VARA FIELD DAY OPERATION PLACES TENTH IN THE NATION

Neal, N4XU, via Jeff W4PJW, forwards the following news from the ARRL:

Field Day 1999 Results posted to ARRL Members Only Site - Massanutten/Valley ARA's placed #10 in the nation in the "2A" classification.

From rough count, it appears there were well over 500 entrants. We were not #1 in Virginia this year - got beat out on "Score Total" by K4RC running QRP - we had 3 times the QSO's, but their QRP gave them the scoring advantage. However, "Not bad" I say - thanks to efforts of all participants, we : done good!" Pass it along!



Calendar

- February 1: VARA Club Meeting
- February 3: MARA Club Meeting
- February 6: North American SSB Sprint
- February 10: Augusta County ARES net
- February 12-13: World-Wide RTTY WPX 'test
- February 13: North American CW Sprint
- February 19-20: ARRL International DX contest (CW weekend)
- February 26-27: CQ WW 160m SSB contest
- February 27: Annandale (VA) Winterfest
- March 2: MARA Club Meeting
- March 4-5: ARRL International DX contest (SSB weekend)
- March 7: VARA Club Meeting
- March 17-19: CQ Spring VHF FM activity
- March 25-26: CQ WW WPX SSB contest

VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

January 3, 2000 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association Club meeting was held at Gavid's Restaurant in Staunton on January 3, 2000. The meeting was opened at 7:30 pm by acting president, Dan Beidler KE4JSX . There were 22 members and guests present.

The 50/50 winner was Al Bonck N3JB, the total was \$23.00 and Al donated his part back to the club. Thanks very much for that Al.

David Tanks AD4TJ, gave a good report on the New Year's ARES watch for the Y2K BUGS, and was happy to report that all was quiet. Amateurs were stationed through out the county and cities ready to respond and the Bug never materilized. I think all were glad it was a very quiet and uneventful evening. Thanks David for doing such a good job getting everyone ready.

V.A.R.A. club still needs a president. We hope someone will step forward at the next meeting on Feb. 8 and take that Position.

We have a new member Fredy Fitzgerald. He is studying for his ticket and is just about ready, so lets make Fredy welcome to the club and Amateur Radio.

I think we are ready for Field Day. We have a committee already and that's good. Thanks to Clent KB4OLM, Richard KF4QZG, and David AD4TJ.

The club voted to have our Christmas Party at Gavid's this year. The owners will close for us to have it and fix the meal we choose. Our committee for the Christmas party is Joan KF4CWR and Nancy KE4PHP. Thanks ladies for helping out with that.

We had an excellent program of show and tell all about antennas, home made beams,j-pole and a lot of good information and ideas. Thanks to Clint KB4OLM, Richard KF4QZG, David AD4TJ and Ray KE4HVR. A job well done by all.

Remember first tuesday of the month is the V. A.R.A club meeting at Gavid's Restaurant.Feb. 8, 2000. We eat at 6:30p.m. the meeting starts at 7:30p.m.

There was a motion to adjourn the V.A.R.A meeting. The motion was accepted and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

*Submitted by:
Smiley KD4WWF
Secretary*

MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

January 5, 2000 Meeting

The January meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association was held at Ever's Restaurant at Mt. Crawford, Virginia. Introduction were made around the room, there were 38 members and guests present.

Kurt Leitzell (no call) was voted in as a new member, and an application for membership by Andrew Barbour (no call) was read.

Dale, N4DAI, ARES Rockingham County Emergency Coordinator, thanked those that helped with on the New Year's Eve exercise. He also passed on appreciation's from Captain Junkins and Chief Symons. Rusty, N4YET, reported on HF net activity from around the state.

Randy Smith had terminated his accreditation as a VE. He has served as the lead VE. There will be no further VE exams in this area until this position is filled.

For the program, Jon Rudy, N0NM, spoke on his experiences as a ham in Africa.

*Submitted by
Gerald Nauman, KN4FM*

NEW ROSTER COMING...

There have been over *three hundred* (300) address and phone number changes since the publication of the last "blue book" -- the roster of hams living in the Shenandoah valley.

A new blue book is planned to be published this coming Spring. Be sure your address is current.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

MARA – the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

Mail with \$12 to: *Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL, 5166 Mt Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22802*

NAME: _____ CALLSIGN: _____

EMAIL: _____ HOME PHONE: _____

ARRL: Yes No ARES: Yes No Skywarn ID: _____

Are you interested in receiving the Monitor electronically in PDF format? Yes No

If your address label is correct, no further information is required. Otherwise, complete the following:

ADDRESS: _____

CITY STATE, ZIP+4: _____

WORK PHONE: (Optional): _____

VARA – the Valley Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

Mail with \$15 to: *Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, 1344 Hankey Mtn Hwy, Churchville, VA 24421*

NAME: _____ CALLSIGN: _____

EMAIL: _____ HOME PHONE: _____

ARRL: Yes No ARES: Yes No Skywarn ID: _____

Are you interested in receiving the Monitor electronically in PDF format? Yes No

If your address label is correct, no further information is required. Otherwise, complete the following:

ADDRESS: _____

CITY STATE, ZIP+4: _____

WORK PHONE: (Optional): _____

Massanutten Amateur Radio Association

Meets the first Thursday of every month at
Evers Restaurant on US 11 south of Harrisonburg,
Virginia

The meal starts at 6:30 pm, meeting at 7:30 pm

Visitors Welcome

Valley Amateur Radio Association

Meets the first Tuesday of every month at
Gavids Restaurant on US 11 south in Staunton,
Virginia.

The meal starts at 6:30 pm, meeting at 7:30 pm

Visitors Welcome

David R. Fordham
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