

So much news! So little space!

Apologies to the famous Mae West for lifting her quote. With the holidays and all, your editor's time is even shorter than the articles this month. Thus, this month's Monitor has packed a lot of news stories into the "Briefs" section on page 5. We hope the Sierra Club and other environmental groups are pleased with the reduced usage of trees. Enjoy!

AO-40 Satellite Not Lost After All...

A backcountry guide was leading a party of hunters through the wilderness when one of the hunters mentioned that he didn't believe the guide knew where he was going. "Let's face it," the hunter said, "We're lost." "No," objected the guide, "We're not lost. We're right here. It's the trail that's lost."

News stories reporting that the new Phase III-D satellite is lost are also premature. The latest word from AM-SAT is that Ian, ZL1AOX, has succeeded in loading IPS software and a minimal operational package into AO-40. As a consequence, AO-40 is now sending telemetry (A blocks) that will enable an analysis of the status of the spacecraft.

A first (quick) look has revealed that some temperature sensors and possibly some current sensors have been lost by whatever incident caused the telemetry transmissions to stop. However, the power situation, in particular the battery voltages, look nominal.

We will now start a detailed analysis of the situation; the command stations will continue to follow a conservative philosophy with the

primary target of not causing any additional damage along with retaining as much evidence as possible for the analysis of the incident.

Furthermore, command stations will now try to uplink the entire operational software package, which in particular should establish positive control over the power generation system. From there on, the communications capabilities

of the spacecraft will be explored. The 2-meter transmitter is considered off limits for

the time being (in case that it may have been damaged and thus might have the potential to cause the IHU to crash). The risk is too large before the Warte-Orbits and Command-Assist programs have been updated to reflect the actual capabilities of the satellite available after the incident.

In summary, we can state that the command stations have now regained control over AO-40. During the next few days we hope to learn to what extent the satellite was damaged and to what extent this will impact mission targets.



Congratulations to Local Hams

David Tanks, AD4TJ, has won first place in the state in last summer's ARRL VHF Sprint. With over 64,000 points, Dave was well ahead of the other Virginia stations. David consistently scores in the upper echelons of ham radio contests. Way to go, David.

Chuck Vogan, KD4KA, of Weyers Cave, was one of only forty (40) — yep, that's right, only forty — hams in the nation to be selected for registration for ARRL's new On-Line Emergency Communications Training program. Chuck saw the announcement on line, and immediately signed up, proving the benefit of "being connected" to the Internet.

Gerry Brunk, K4RBZ, has been notified that he has made the DXCC Honor Roll! Wow, what an honor! Gerry has over 340 countries confirmed! As you notice, practically all DXCC honor roll members have gray hair. Wonder why? Just ask Shirley, Gerry's XYL. Of course, talking to 340 different countries (including islands, Dxpeditons, etc.) is hard enough, but getting them confirmed is even harder! Hat's off to Gerry for this major accomplishment!



Local VE Exams — Going Strong and Getting Stronger

As the year draws to an end we look at the past days and are amazed at the short time since the beginning of a new millennium. I always look back and wonder where the time has gone, what have I done with the whole year? I then realize it has truly been a buisy year.

With the excellent growing season of the past summer we had all the grass mowing we wanted, family, home maintenance, [work] and all the different functions to participate in it kept us on the go. Our field day was a lot of fun and a big success with the participation of a lot of hams. We are looking forward to a bigger and better field day this coming year with the help of the newly licensed hams.

I would like to thank all the people that made the test sessions a success. These session of November 4th was conducted by Todd K4TMH, Greg W4GRC, Ronnie KS4SP, Eugene WA4NUF, Glendon N4ALS, Norman KA4EEN, Gerald KN4FM, Matthew KD4UPL, Charles KD5KA, — and a thank you to Ray K4NRA for his help and encouragement. That session resulted in 13 exam elements being given, with ten of them passed. The local ham community continues to grow, thanks to your dedication.

The next test will be offered Feb. 3rd. Thanks to all the members of MARA for their support . Looking forward to another good year.

Gayle Shull, KU4XN

VE Examiner's Manual Now Available

Would you like to be a Volunteer Examiner? The ARRL VE manual is now on-line and available.

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/vemmanual/index.html>

This manual is in the PDF format, making it quick and easy to download. What's more, the manual downloads have been broken into chapters, making it even quicker and easier. Any ham holding a General or higher class of license is eligible to become a VE. Check on the ARRL website for more information, or contact Gayle Shull, KU4XN at (540) 828-2132.

VE Test Fee Goes to \$10 January 1st

The headline says it all. The FCC dropped the cap on the license fee, allowing VE's to recoup their expenses. Starting January 1, 2001, all ARRL VE sessions will cost \$10 per person.



MARA President's Message

I hope everyone enjoyed the MARA Christmas banquet, mix up and all. I know I was scrambling there for a while, but things finally settled down a bit.

My apologies to those that wanted oysters, the waiters were to take the orders for them but that got missed in all of the confusion. Hopefully the next time things will go better.

I also forgot to announce what the door prize for the guest was. Cheryl Heatwole, XYL of Glenn, N4ALS, won a \$20 gift certi-

cate to the Golden Corral. The club also gave David Fordham, the newsletter editor, a \$30 gift certificate to Applebee's in appreciation for all of the time and effort that he puts into this publication.

This month's program will be brought to us by Ellsworth, K4LXG. He has had several interesting presentations in the past and this one should be of interest to anyone that has an outdoor antenna. Several months ago he attended a seminar on grounding and lightning protections, and he will be

telling us about some things that we should know and do to protect our equipment. I know it is hard to believe, but spring is coming (hopefully) and that usually brings thunderstorms. Now is the time to get prepared.

If you can't make it to Ever's Restaurant for the meal at 6:30 pm, join us at 7:30 for the program. Tell the hostess that you are with the radio club and she will direct you to the meeting room.

Gerald, KN4FM



VARA President's Message

Another year has come and gone. Y2K, the threat of last year is but a memory. The year 2001 really does bring us into the 21st Century. I wonder, what will Amateur Radio be like in the 21st Century?

Maybe a better question to ponder is this. What will our club be like in the 21st Century?

Good question, but to answer the question there are some things to consider, and goals to be established. So allow me to discuss what I see as part of our agenda for the year 2001.

Mission Statement: No doubt you are familiar with the term "mission statement." You find them everywhere. McDonald's has one, DuPont has one, many churches have mission statements. I think V.A.R.A. needs one to guide us into the 21st century. So one of the things I want to accomplish this year is to write a mission statement. I will ask you for your help and input.

Web Site: Another goal I have as your president for this year is to update and move the current web site. Right now the web site is way out of date and I can't make any changes to it. It has

been suggested that we pull the plug on our current web site and start fresh. As a matter of fact, I am looking for a volunteer to take on building us a new web site and finding space somewhere on the Internet for us. I have started playing around with a web page, but I am not an expert. Could use some help! And by the way, I think our new web site should have our new mission statement posted on it!

Amateur Radio Classes: I would like to see us hold classes in the Staunton area this year to help the people in the valley get their radio license. The more the merrier. Do I have a volunteer or two who would be willing to teach a class? I know where we can hold the training sessions. I know somebody who has a connection to a church building and we could use the fellowship hall as a classroom. It won't even cost us anything! So, let's do it.

On top of the items mentioned in the previous paragraphs, we will still need volunteers to head the various committees. Field Day is right around the corner (I know it is Winter, but you know how time flies) and we will need volunteers to help put it all together.

And of course we have other coming events on our agenda like the Bike VA program.

V.A.R.A. has a lot to do this year, but I know you're up to the task as always. We can be proud of our club for its past support in the community. We all know however that we can't live on past accomplishments. So let's press on into the 21st century together and make the Valley Amateur Radio Association the best it can be. All it will take is a little work, a little dreaming, and desire on our part.

So how about it? Are you ready to volunteer? Are you willing to help on a committee? I need your support. the club needs your support.

In conclusion I want to thank all those who made the year 2000 successful. You made the president look good (in spite of himself). The truth is, I can't do anything without your help and support.

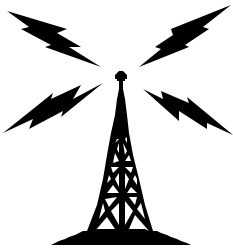
Thank you for all you've done. So, let's roll up our sleeves and get busy as we enter the new century.

73, Greg, W4GRC (your president).

Rockingham County EOC Director Gives Kudos to Hams...

Below is a letter received by Dale Showalter, N4DAI, Rockingham County Amateur Radio Emergency Service Coordinator, from Captain Jim Junkins, Director of the Rockingham County Emergency Communications and Operations Center.

An integral part of this center will be amateur radio....



Hi Dale,

I just received my copy of the Monitor via email. Please pass my kudos onto the clubs and editors for a great forum. It's also great to hear of the VARA/MARA club's success at the Field Day. #1 in VA and division and #12 in the nation. WOW! Good to know the superb abilities of the amateur radio folks in our area.

I wanted to fill you in on some of the happenings in emergency services and communications in our area during the past year. We continue to trudge along with the plans of the consolidated emergency communications center. All possible parties have expressed interest and commitment to the project. The financial and administrative wheels are finally starting to turn a little faster. An integral part of this center will of course be amateur radio. When that time comes, your expertise will certainly be enlisted.

The new mobile command bus is well on it's way. Just today I discussed the issue of radios and specifically ARES inclusion in the project. If you are not

familiar with the "new" vehicle, it is a used JMU tour-style bus. Lots of room for people and storage. We even have a restroom for those long events. The time is growing near to plan radio installations, so be thinking about what type of equipment ARES would like in the bus. I anticipate that we will be able to install a couple of radios for the sole use of ARES instead of having to "bring your own." Although we have more room, the command bus is of course a mini everything. Please feel free to give me your thoughts on the necessities of ARES and the essentials for installation.

And lastly, a training topic. I have been performing a street naming and addressing class to the public safety personnel of the Rockingham County. The 1 - 1.5 hour class provides the background of the Street naming/addressing project, street naming nomenclature and most importantly, how to effectively use the addresses (yes, there really is a good rhyme and reason to them) and using the map books produced by the County. I will offer this class for ARES and/or the MARA club at any venue you deem suitable. I

can do it at a MARA meeting or will be glad to set up a special class at the EOC. It may be preferable to perform it at the EOC as we have lots of new technologies in the center (digitized mapping, automated computer aided dispatch, and reverse 9-1-1, emergency services call-out communicator), and will be happy to provide a quick tour of the center in conjunction with the class. I might even be able to throw in some refreshments.

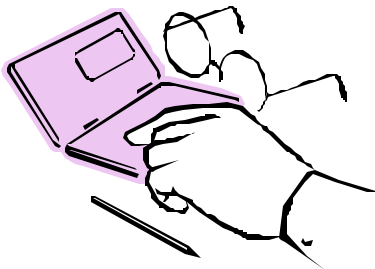
Well, that's about it for now. As always feel free to contact me for any questions, information or needs. Although we haven't had the need to utilize ARES much this year it is very comforting to know this group of truly dedicated volunteers are available at a moments notice. The best to you, ARES and your families.

Feel free to pass this document onto any of your peers.

Best Regards,

Jim Junkins
Communications Captain
Harrisonburg-Rockingham EOC

Don't Delay Another Minute!



Every March, the newsletter editor receives a number of inquiries about, "Why didn't I receive my Monitor this month?"

The answer usually can be traced to the fact that the ham in question didn't renew his or her dues in the club of his choice.

Or, alternatively, he or she renewed so darn late that the word didn't reach the newsletter editor before the mailing deadline.

Save the editor some time this year. Renew today. Don't delay. This issue has a handy renewal form. Simply complete it and mail it with your check to

the appropriate treasurer.

If you don't, you will probably receive only one (1) more issue of the Monitor. Since we no longer use bulk mail, we don't send out the complimentary copies anymore.

So, renew promptly.

BRIEFS

The **International Space Station ham radio operation** has commenced. The ARISS team has already made contacts with an Illinois school group, and reports have been received that the beacon on 145.800 is readable with nothing more than an HT. Information on the ARISS ham operation is at <http://ariss.gsfc.nasa.gov/>.

Ray Colvin writes: The VARA Christmas Party was held at Gavid's in Staunton on Dec. 5th. We had forty people attending and some brought a friend along. Gavid's closed the restaurant to the public and we had it all to ourselves. The food and fellowship was great and we all had a good time. Those who didn't get there missed a great time of jokes, laughter, fellowship and good FOOD. Hope everyone can make it next year.

Word has it that **Joe Pehan, W4LIG**, has closed shop and relocated his ham radio operation to his home. Not to mention his tailoring business, too!

The **FCC** has begun processing new ham applications within minutes of receiving them electronically from the ARRL. According to the ARRL Letter, batches sent electronically to the FCC result in licenses being issued less than an hour later. (Of course, the big holdup is still the U.S. mail from the testing session to the ARRL VEC, which can sometimes take several days.)

Virginia ARES and RACES will hold a special training session in Charlottesville on February 10th. The snow date is February 17th. Registration is now being accepted at: <http://www.aresva.org>. Tony Amato, the section Emergency Communications Coordinator has vowed that all training sessions in Virginia will continue to be free of charge.

Up-to-the-minute weather conditions in the valley can be found at: <http://keezletown.com>. Note that there is no "www" in this address! This site is maintained by a new valley ham, Jason Armentrout, N4DSL.

The **ARRL RTTY Roundup** and the Japan International DX Contest (CW) are the weekend of January 5-7. See December QST, p 97, and January QST, page 99, for details.

If you hear a **3Y station** calling, work him!

Bouvet, one of the top ten most wanted DX locations, is on the air. Astronaut Chuck Brady, N4BQW, is on the island of Bouvet (3Y) and on the air using the call sign 3YOC. Brady, a group of scientists from South America and a team leader from Norway will be there for three months for scientific studies. This is not a DXpedition, but Brady expects to find some time to operate and has been on 20 meters SSB. QSL via WA4FFW.

The **FCC** turned down the ARRL's request that it enforce PRB-1 provisions to overrule restrictive covenants in land deeds. Such covenants often prohibit antennas. Since such covenants are private contracts, the FCC has declined to force homeowner associations to accommodate ham antennas. However, the ARRL had asked that the FCC do so in the public interest. After being turned down last month, the ARRL has asked the entire commission to review the ruling.

The **cost of an international Reply Coupon (IRC) will increase from \$1.05 to \$1.75** on January 7. A one-ounce letter sent via air mail to anywhere in the world (except Canada and Mexico) will cost 80 cents. A two-ounce air mail letter will cost anywhere from \$1.55 to \$1.70, depending on where it's going. The complete rate schedule is available on the USPS Web site

Looking for up-to-the-minute information on the ham satellites? AMSAT-NA holds a weekly 20-meter net each Sunday on 14.282 MHz. Pre-net operations start at 18:00 UTC, with current ANS bulletins transmitted to the western U.S. at 19:00 UTC and to the eastern U.S. at 19:30 UTC.

Jeff Rinehart W4PJW, sends in a URL for those who want to get on packet radio, but don't have the money for a terminal node controller. If you have a computer with a sound card, there are **numerous free software packages available which enable you to send and receive AX.25 packet radio signals using nothing more than your transmitter and computer's sound card.** Check it out: <http://www.qsl.net/soundcardpacket/>

The National Weather Service is offering two courses in January. The Winter Storms training class is scheduled for Thursday evening, January 11th, and a Flash Flood



day, January 31st. Both courses will run from 7 to 9 pm at the Sterling Weather Center office. Anyone who has completed the Skywarn Basics I course and possesses a Skywarn ID number is eligible to attend. There is no charge for any Skywarn course. Register with the Skywarn web page, by phone at 703-260-0107 ext 226, or contact our local Skywarn coordinator, Bob W3MMC on the 146.625 repeater (PL 131.8).

Registration with the Virginia ARES organization has its benefits. One of these benefits is email notification within minutes of items of interest to the ARES community. Weather bulletins, severe weather alerts, call-ups, activation plans, these and other important communiques are sent via email once you are registered. When registering, don't make the mistake of one nameless ham in the valley who forgot his login and password! Write down the login you use, and your password, and keep them in a safe place! Registration is free and gives the ARES planners an idea of what kind of resources might be available in an emergency. Check out: <http://www.aresva.org>.

The MARA website will be updated around the first of January. Check out the on-line manuals (in PDF format) for the DX cluster, and the ARES packet bulletin board system.

The deadline for the February issue of the Monitor is January 20th.

MARA Secretary's Report – December 7, 2000

The Annual Christmas Banquet for the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association was held at Evers Restaurant on December 7th at 7 p.m. Due to a mixup we were split into two rooms. We had 38 people in one room and 18 in the large room for a total of 58. The only disappointment was the loss of our oysters. After having a delicious holiday dinner we gathered in the large room for a brief meeting.

Gerald Nauman, KN4FN called the meeting to order at 8:25p.m.

The minutes were accepted as read in the November newsletter.

New Members - There were no new member applications

Control Operators - Norman, KA4EEN called for control operators.

VE- Sessions - Gayle KU4XN - There will be another VE Session February 3, 2001

Public Service - Doug N4DUG - No Report

ARES - Dale N4DAI - Gave report on the new web page. [www.aresva.org] Those in ARES are to list their calls on this page and Dale will take care of the rest of the report to ARES for the state. He read most of a letter from Jim Junkins, the ARES contact for Rockingham County. There is a new EOC Center in the works for our county. Also, a mobile command bus is available and is being outfitted.

Gerald showed the group a catalogue of radio equipment. Then he distributed copies of the newsletter to whomever had not received one.

Certificates were distributed by the president as follows:

Certificate to outgoing board members and officers: Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL
Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Steve Tennyson, KF4ZWK

Door prize to guest: Cheryl Heatwole, wife of Glen, N4ALS (\$20.00 gift certificate to Golden Corral)

Certificate to Dave for doing newsletter: David R. Fordham KD9LA

Certificates for encouraging young people
(This was for helping Ray Ritchie, K4NRA with a ham radio presentation at Wilbur Pence Middle School.)
Norman Benner, KA4EEN
Bob Niemeyer, W3MMC
Steve Tennyson KF4ZWK
Gayle Shull, KU4XN

The meeting was closed by our president. Seconded by all.

Respectfully submitted
Phyllis MHaxton

Holy Cow! Look at the Stuff For Sale! Wow! Call John – Quick!

John L. Hochmeister, W9IMI, ex-W4HIK, of 4117 Lee Highway, Weyers Cave, phone 540 234-8781, is selling the following equipment:

Kenwood WTS930 SAT HE with auto timer, TS440 S AT HF with auto tuner, PS 430, 20 amp power supply, MC 60. Desk Mike, AT 130, Ant Tuner, Icom IC 735, HF, IC 28 A 2 meter mobile, 25 WIC O2AT, 2 meter HT, W/bat packs and wall charger, IC 706 MK-II, HE, 6, and 2, Ten-Tec Scout 555,

I0/17120/40M, NB, Mike, Unused Drake L-7, 1.5 kw Wit PS, 115/230 Volt MN 2700, Ant tuner, Diawa CNW5 18, Ant tuner, CNS20, 1.8-60 MHz, 50 Ohm, 2kw SWR Meter Bird #43, SN 103674,50 Ohm, 2-30 MHz 250W, 100-250 MHz 25W200-500 MHz 25 W, 400-1000 MHz 10 W, Ant. Adapter, Vibroplex BUG. SN 160128 Tower and Antenna and Rotor, 63 foot self supporting with 3 band 3 element beam and rotator. In Place.

MARA Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____ CALL _____

EMAIL: _____ HOME PHONE: _____

ARRL MEMBER: Yes No REGISTERED VA ARES : Yes No SKYWARN ID: _____ (If you have one)

Are you interested in receiving the *Monitor* electronically in Adobe PDF format? Yes No I Already Do

If your address on the mailing label is correct, no further info is needed; otherwise complete the following:

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP+4 _____

WORK PHONE (optional): _____

Mail with a \$12 check payable to:

Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., c/o Sandy Mullins K4PZC, 149 North Street, Elkton, VA 22827

VARA Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____ CALL _____

EMAIL: _____ HOME PHONE: _____

ARRL MEMBER: Yes No REGISTERED VA ARES : Yes No SKYWARN ID: _____ (If you have one)

Are you interested in receiving the *Monitor* electronically in Adobe PDF format? Yes No I Already Do

If your address on the mailing label is correct, no further info is needed; otherwise complete the following:

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP+4 _____

WORK PHONE (optional): _____

Mail with a \$15 check payable to:

Valley Amateur Radio Association, c/o Joan Pitsenbarger KF4CWR, 352 Campbell Street, Staunton, VA 24401

MARA/VARA

c/o David Fordham
131 Wayside Drive
Weyers Cave, VA 24486
Phone: 540-568-3024
Email: fordhadr@jmu.edu

Address Service Requested

MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Gerald Nauman, KN4FM
Vice President: Steve Tennyson, KF4ZWK
Secretary: Phyllis Haxton N4VZC
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Board (exp 01): David Hughes, KF4SVR
Board (exp. 02): Bob Tennyson KG4CHL

<http://cob.jmu.edu/fordhadr/MARA>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month at Ever's Restaurant on U.S. 11 south of Harrisonburg. Meal starts at 6:30 pm. Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$12 per year) should be mailed to:
Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
149 North Street
Elkton, VA 22827

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC
Vice President: Richard Huttinger, KF4QZG
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Treasurer: Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR

<http://www.hamsnet.net/W4MUS>

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month At Gavid's Restaurant on U.S. 11 south in Staunton. Meal starts at 6:30 pm. Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$15 per year) should be mailed to:
Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR
352 Campbell Street
Staunton VA 24401