

July 2001

# MARA/VARA MONITOR

Published Monthly for Radio Amateurs in the Shenandoah Valley

## Field Day Preliminary Report

As of press time, the official score from Field Day had not yet been calculated. However, Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, did some back-of-the-envelope cipherin' and the news is good.

According to Jeff, we likely scored somewhere just above 8,630 points this year. This compares to 8,396 points last year.

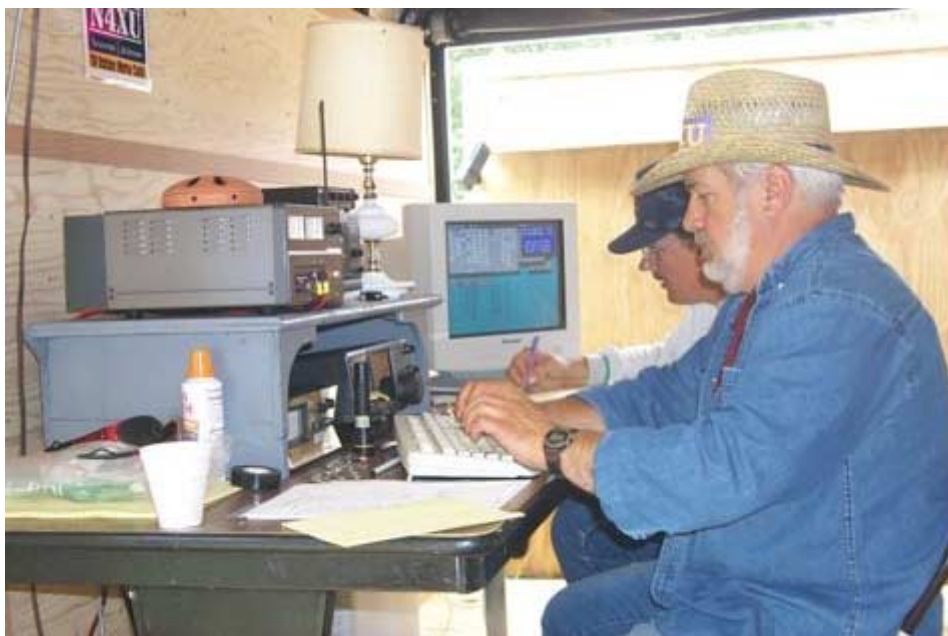
The 8,630 point total, if earned in class 3A last year, would have put us at 15th in the nation. It is too early to tell where we will rank this year.

The increase in points is probably due to the addition of the digital station. That station alone added 428 points to our score.

The preliminary QSO count is as follows:

- Phone Station: 968 contacts
- Digital Station: 214 contacts
- CW station: 1031 contacts
- Novice/Tech station: 233 contacts
- VHF (incl satellite): 151 contacts

Scoring is quite complicated, with 2 points earned for each CW contact, 1 point for each voice contact, 2 points for digital contact, and bonus points and multipliers galore. The 8,630 is a conservative estimate, and the final score will probably be a little bit higher. More details about field day results will appear in next month's *Monitor*.



## Is Your Calendar Marked? The Bob's Knob Picnic: August 19th

If you didn't do it last month, do it now!

Mark your calendar for the 10th annual picnic to raise funds for the maintenance and upkeep of the 146.625 MHz repeater, the Big Mountain Repeater Association. Proceeds (donations, actually) are needed to provide required insurance coverage and other costs necessary to make repairs on the repeater and external power supply. The upcoming project is antenna replacement due to severe mountaintop weather conditions.

As always, attendance and food are completely free. (Donations gladly accepted.)

As in previous years, hamburgers, hot dogs, iron-kettle-cooked beans, and the usual pink lemonade and iced tea will be the main attractions. Guests should bring a covered dish salad and/or dessert and a folding lawn chair or two. Cups, plates utensils, condiments, and the main dishes will all be provided.

Badminton, horseshoes, and maybe even volleyball will keep the kids occupied, no matter what their age. A long walk around the property should also allow spotting deer, ground hogs, the famous albino grouse, squirrel, and rabbits. If you wish, bring a 2-liter bottle of your favorite soft drink with you.

Don't forget: a picnic working party is needed for Saturday morning, starting around 9 am, to carry 8 or 10 tables from the Bergton Fair Grounds, and another gang to haul them back on Tuesday evening. Help will also be needed at the serving tables, and doing the cooking.

As usual, Bob's Knob hats will be presented to the table working party, and Bob's Knob aprons to the cooks and servers! Pitching in is always so much fun, advance registration is being taken for volunteering to help! Sign up during the Sunday and Monday ARES nets or telephone Bob at 540-852-3289.

A 50/50 drawing will be held this year. The usual donation bucket will be at the sign-in table.

Directions to the picnic are easy: From Broadway, take route 259 (Brocks' Gap Road) west about 14 miles to the flashing yellow-light sign. Turn left onto route 820 (Bergton Road), go past the Bergton Grocery and turn right, staying on 820 (Crab Run Road). Go about 2 miles, cross a metal rail bridge, and turn left onto a gravel road (Mongold Hollow Road). Go 1/2 mile and turn left again onto route 822, Arbuckle Road. Turn right at the 3rd mailbox, onto Bob's Knob Blvd, and drive up to the picnic site.

Talk in on the 146.625 repeater until you get to Fulks Run, then switch to 146.550 simplex.

See you There,  
– Bob, W3MMC

## Skywarn Classes Added

The National Weather Service has added several dates to their Skywarn Training Schedule.

If you would like to become an official Skywarn volunteer, you should attend the Skywarn Basics I course, offered at the Sterling Weather Forecast Office near Dulles Airport on Wednesday evening, August 1st, from 7 to 10 pm.

If you are already a Skywarn volunteer, you may wish to attend the Basics II course scheduled for July 11, from 7 to 9 pm, or the special Hurricane course on August 23rd. You must have completed Basics I to attend either of these courses.

See the MARA web page for more information and registration directions.

## Volunteer Examiner Report – Test Session June 2nd

Thanks to the hams who helped with the June 2 test session. To give up a Saturday morning sleep is real dedication. This session we had a full staff.

Thanks to:

- **Richard Haxton KC3AN,**
- **Robert Vanfossen K4DLG,**
- **Chuck Vogan KD5KA,**
- **Ray Ritchie K4NRA,**
- **Norman Benner KA4EEN,**
- **Ellsworth Neff K4LXG,**
- **Gerald Nauman KN4FM,**
- **Jason Armentrout N4DSL.**

If you have any suggestions as to the scheduling of VE's let me have your suggestions.

Code exam changes take effect as of July 1. Character speed will be 15 , spacing 5 WPM , Farnsworth. The test itself will be fill in the blanks with seven of ten correct or twenty five consecutive characters. No more multiple choice questions on the code test!

The VECs have sent an email stating that all persons coming for a test must have the required identity. This must be strictly adhered to. The VE manual has the requirements for this, so let us review this requirement.

Again thanks.

*Gayle Shull,  
KU4XN*

**Remember the next  
VE test date,  
August 4.**

## MARA President's Message

Many thanks to the Field Day committee for all the hard work they did planning and organizing this year's event. I hope everyone made it to the top of the mountain at least for a short time to see what all was going on up there. Each year it seems that it is a little bit bigger than the previous year. This year the Digital Station was added to the mix. Next year there will be more changes, as the Novice/Tech station will be a thing of the past. I wonder what will replace it. Thanks are also due to Clint, KB4OLM, and the rest of the Field Day committee for their presentation at the June meeting.

This month's presentation will be by Jason, N4DSL. He will tell us how to get involved in the newer digital modes. As you will recall at the last meeting, I gave each of you an assignment. You were

to go to Field Day and get the live demo at the Digital Station. At the meeting, Jason will fill in the details about the equipment you need and how to hook it all up, and where to get the software and how to use it. In case you missed it, the July issue of QST reported that an EME (Earth-Moon-Earth) contact has been made on 144 MHz using single Yagis, less than 150 watts and UA43, one of the newest (I think) digital modes. This is an indication of the potential of these modes, even though it took 6 1/2 hours over a three day period to complete the contact!

Let's have a good turn out for Jason's presentation. Hope to see you at Ever's Restaurant at 6:30 pm for the meal, or 7:30 for the meeting. Tell the hostess that you are there for the Ham radio club, and they will direct you to our meeting room.

*Gerald, KN4FM*

## VARA President's Message

Ooops, it didn't arrive in time to make this issue.

## H'burg Ham Classes Cancelled

The ham radio classes announced in last month's Monitor have been cancelled. Only three (3) persons showed up, and not all of them were interested in attending the full series of classes.

## Youth Net: Wednesday Nights 7:30 pm

Tune into the 147.075 repeater on Wednesday nights at 7:30 pm. There is a gathering of young hams. The net is officially affiliated with the League of Young Radio Amateurs (LYRA), but you don't have to be a member of LYRA to join the net. LYRA defines "young" radio amateurs as anyone under the age of 22. However, this net is open to all hams, whether 8 or 88 years old. There are several 15-year-old hams who regularly check in, along with 11 year olds, and even one 9-year-old ham, along with "old" hams of 17 and 19 and 20. QTH locations range from Richmond to Crozet, Stuarts Draft to Keezletown. Tune in and see what the younger generation is up to.

## The Gardener Did It! — Thanks to the Crew who Prepared the Field Day Site!

Thanks to Benny Cook, Ray Colvin, Ray Pitsenbarger, and Kenny Harris for their work in preparing the Field Day Location.

Cutting, weed-whacking, mowing, leveling, raking, seeding, and other labor resulted in a beautiful lawn.

The site was perfect for family camping and Field Day activities.

Thanks guys!

*(Picture taken by Kenny Harris.)*



## Water, Water, Everywhere ...

As this issue was going to press, the Runions Creek area of Rockingham county was digging out of the mud. The area suffered a devastating flood resulting from a thunderstorm Friday evening, June 22nd. While ham radio wasn't needed for the local event, hams were called upon to help in Texas and Louisiana. Don Landes, WX4C, provided this picture of floodwaters in Houston. You are looking at an Interstate Highway, not a canal!



## Have You Kerchunked Your Repeater Today?

Kerchunk: Either a verb or a noun, but usually a verb. From the German "kerchunken: to kerchunk a repeater".

A good kerchunk tells you many things:

1. Your transmitter is working.
2. Your receiver is working.
3. Your antenna is working.
4. The repeater is there.
5. The repeater receiver is working.
6. The repeater transmitter is working.
7. The repeater antenna(s) is/are working.
8. The call of the repeater.

"I love the smell of kerchunk in the morning."

Sometimes my kerchunk is answered by a responding and equally anonymous kerchunk. But it seems my kerchunk is always of a higher quality than his kerchunk.

MFJ will soon market a Kerchunk Detector which will print out each month the date, time and call for each and every kerchunk. This will result in the local governments charging 25 cents tax per kerchunk.

National Kerchunk Day will be established by the FCC next year. On this day ONLY kerchunking will be allowed on repeaters. Anyone actually engaging in a conversa-

tion will lose his kerchunking privileges for a period not to exceed 90 days.

When I operate on six meters, I sometimes kerchunk my neighbor's TV.

Recently, kerchunkers have been heard on 20 and 75 meters. Is this a trend?

The ARRL will soon issue a new award, KAS.

Have you kerchunked YOUR repeater today?

*Submitted by  
Don Landes*

## Found in Augusta County: Rare 2-legged Fox on Afton Mountain!

Join us on July 12  
for the next  
Augusta County  
Fox Hunt!

No, this is not some unique undiscovered category of the fox family! This was the first Augusta County ARES Fox Hunt, and the fox was myself, AD4TJ, David, EC for the county.

I operated the Thursday night net from an undisclosed location, and anyone who chose to was to attempt to either physically locate me or, with the help of beam headings or compass bearings that I repeated for all to hear, pinpoint my location as closely as possible.

Four (4) individuals and/or groups gave bearings and attempted to find me.

Well, after about 50 minutes of transmitting and repeating coordinates, I was discovered by the father/son team of **Chuck Vogan KD5KA and Benjamin KG4IWA**.

They used their HT and body shielding to get in the vicinity, then the newly-acquired Fox-Finder from QST April 2001 was very good at pin-pointing my exact location( which was at The Inn on Afton Mountain ).

Congratulations on a good job, guys!

Plan on joining us on July 12th, 8 pm, on 146.490, for another hunt. See if you can "bag a fox"!

*David AD4TJ  
EC for Augusta County*



## N4DSL Offers FD Pictures & Video – Seeks Feedback, More Pics

Hello Fellow Hams, just wanted to let you know that I have the field day pictures taken by WB4YEX with my digital camera on my web site at <http://www.keezletown.com>.

From there click on FD pics and video on the left hand side of the page.

I have also recorded the video clip on TV3 Sunday and compressed it into Real player format with my video capture card. There is a link to the video clip on the pictures page also.

If you don't have the real player you can download it from <http://www.real.com>. If

you need any help setting it up, let me know.

If anyone has other digital pictures they want to email me please do; I will post them. If you have any hard copy photos, and will let me scan them in, please bring them to the July MARA club meeting with your call on

the back.

Thank for everyone's effort at field day and I really enjoyed it.

I would appreciate any comments on the web site.

*Jason Armentrout  
N4DSL*

## MARA Secretary's Report – June 7 Meeting

MARA - June Meeting - June 7, 2001. Held at Ever's Restaurant w/Pres. Gerald Nauman presiding.

**I. Introductions:** There 28 members and 3 guests present.

### II. Old Business

- a. May Minutes - Motion to accept by Dick Weaver, seconded by Marshal Cooper and approved by vote of membership.

### III. Committee Reports

1. **Treasurer:** Sandy, K4PZC: Balance on hand is \$2814.55.
2. **Public Service:** Doug, N4DUG: Help is needed for traffic control on Saturday and Sunday July 20 and 21 for the Bridgewater Fireman's parade and carnival. Please contact N4DUG.
3. **ARES:** Dale, N4DAI: Dale thanked all for the cards he received during his illness. See following information regarding action taken by the ARRL: - ARRL removed Head of ARES/VA. Also 14 of 16 VEC protested by registered letter with no response from ARRL as of meeting time. ARES/VA is incorporated in VA. Has been functioning without ARRL. The State ID card has been canceled. "ARES" is not copyrighted as stated by ARRL. Lynn Gahagan, AF4CD. reorganized ARES to make it conform to VA requirements. John Knode, former Regional Director, is now Vice President of ARRL on Executive committee. He may bring this up in directors meeting. Dale made it known that ARES/VA will still function with or without the ARRL and that Rockingham County will still function normally within District 15. The Command Bus for Rocking-

ham County is almost ready for service. This Saturday a group is to install the antennas on the roof of the bus which is located at Broadway Metal Works.

4. **ARES Net:** Norman, KA4EEN: Net Control operators are needed. This is an ongoing need.
5. **VE:** Gayle, KU4XN: The test sessions are going well. Volunteers are still needed. There will be no classes for new amateurs at the present time due to lack of interest. Only 3 persons showed up for the classes. Hope to have them rescheduled in the near future.
6. **FIELD DAY:** Need generators. Activity will begin at 2 p.m. on Saturday. Another need is for help to tear down on Sunday.

### IV. New Business

- a. New Members: Received applications for two new members.
- b. 50/50 \$15.00 to Richard Gunick, a guest.
- c. Richard Weaver, W3HXH brought in some books for anyone interested in their contents. Rusty Smith has equipment for sale including push-up poles.

### V Program

Preparation for Field Day. Run down was given by Field Day Chairman describing our desired results for the planned activities of Field Day.

I appreciate very much David, KF4SVR taking the notes for me so I could send in these minutes. Thank you David,

*Phyllis M Haxton, N4VZC, MARA Secretary*

## Are You Listening? ARRL Seeks 80m Bulletin Reception Reports

A change has been made to the 80-meter bulletin antenna system. W1AW is requesting from amateurs who listen to the 80-meter transmissions send in signal reports.

Please note QTH, time of reception, mode, signal strength and quality. Use of the standard RST system is acceptable.

Mail your report on a postcard to W1AW 80-meter reports, 225 Main Street, Newington, Connecticut, 06111. Email reports may be sent to [w1aw@arrl.org](mailto:w1aw@arrl.org).

The complete W1AW Operating Schedule appears in July QST, page 105, or on the web at <http://www.arrl.org/w1aw.html>

## VARA Secretary's Report

The **V**alley **A**mateur **R**adio **A**ssociation met at the new location, Kathy's in Verona June 5, 2001. President Greg Czerniak W4GRC opened the meeting at 7:37 p.m. There were 17 members present and 1 guest Billy Hooke KG4JOF. The 50/50 winner was Cowles Andrus K4EME.

David AD4TJ Needs HELP with the Augusta County ARES Net. Anyone that is willing to be net control and help David out give him a call. Also David has the forms for the DMV ID cards if you need one.

The main topic of the meeting was Field Day and making the final plans. The Field Day Committees are doing a fine job getting all the information together and seeing to it that everything will be taken care of for the Big Weekend.

As you read this Field Day is over for another year. We hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable time with lots of contacts, fellowship and good food. Also we hope everyone is able to speak after shouting all the... CQ FIELD DAY...CQ FIELD DAY...CQ FIELD DAY calls. Any lingering cramps from keys or keyboards? We would like to get training classes started for the Technician

level. Anyone interested in helping teach the classes please contact Greg W4GRC, Alby AD4KZ or Richard KF4QZG.

Richard KF4QZG, Program Chairman, asks for anyone that would like to do a program to give him a call and get a date set up to present it.

A motion to adjourn the V.A.R.A meeting was made by Benny Cook N4BCC and seconded by Ken Harris KE4GKD. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

**NOTE: Tell a friend about the VARA Club Meetings and invite them to join us this month.**

*Submitted By:  
VARA Secretary  
Ray Colvin KE4HVR*

## Calendar

Information about the events below can be obtained from the MARA website calendar page. Most events have their own websites, and you can link to them from the MARA pages.

July 3 – VARA club meeting  
 July 4 – Firecracker Hamfest, Harrisburg Pennsylvania  
 July 5 – MARA club meeting  
 July 11 – Skywarn Basics II Course, Sterling WFO  
 July 12 – Augusta County Fox Hunt, 146.490 simplex 8 pm  
 July 14-15 – IARU HF World Championship Contest  
 July 14-15 – CQ WW VHF Contest  
 July 21-22 – North American RTTY QSO Party  
 July 28 – ARES Training in Blacksburg, VA  
 July 29 – Baltimore Radio Amateur TV Society (BRATS) Hamfest in Timonium, Maryland  
 August 1 – Skywarn Basics I Course, Sterling WFO  
 August 2 – MARA club meeting  
 August 4 – Ham Radio Exams, Dayton Virginia (VE session)  
 August 4 – Vinton (Roanoke Valley) Hamfest  
 August 4-5 – ARRL UHF Contest  
 August 5 – Winchester (Berryville) Hamfest  
 August 7 – VARA club meeting  
 August 11 – Huntington West Virginia Hamfest  
 August 17-18 – VARA Special Event Station, Jousting Tournament, Natural Chimneys Park  
 August 19 – 10th Annual Bob's Knob Picnic benefit for the Big Mountain Repeater Association, Bergton Virginia  
 August 23 – Skywarn Hurricane Class, Sterling WFO  
 September 1-2 – Shelby (NC) Hamfest  
 September 22-23 – Virginia Beach Hamfest  
 September 29-30 – CQ/RJ RTTY Contest

Local ARES Nets are held at 8:00 pm. Page County ARES on Sunday nights, 146.625 repeater, tone PL 131.8. Rockingham County ARES on Monday nights, 145.130 repeater, except first Monday on 146.550 simplex.

## See What Happens?

A man was walking down the street when he sees a filthy bum, dirty hair, dressed in shabby clothes, unshaven, standing by the street corner. As the man approaches, the bum stops him and asks for a dollar.

"Will you spend it on booze?", the man asks.

"No, I don't drink," the bum replied.

"Will you waste it gambling or playing the lottery?" the man asked.

"No, I don't gamble at all, and I've never played the lottery" the bum replied.

"Are you by chance a ham radio operator? Will you waste it on ham radio equipment?" the man inquired.

"No way! I'm not a ham operator, and I've never spent a penny on ham radio stuff, ever!" the bum exclaimed.

"Okay," said the man. "I'll give you the dollar, but first you have to come home with me and let me show my wife what happens to a man who doesn't drink, doesn't play the lottery, and doesn't spend money on ham radio equipment!"

*Submitted by KB4WPE*

*Pictures in this issue were provided by N4DSL, K4KLH, WX4C, WB4YEX, and KE4HVR.*

*Deadline for the August issue of the Monitor is July 20.*



# MARA/VARA

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

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## Address Service Requested

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### 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:  
MARA  
PO Box 1882  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

### 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 Kathy's Restaurant on U.S. 11 north in Verona. 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