

# MARA/VARA MONITOR

Published Monthly for Radio Amateurs in the Shenandoah Valley

## Page County ARES Net Moves to 146.670 (-)

Effective July 15th, the Page County ARES Net will move to the Page County 146.670 repeater. The move is being made to avoid tying up the entire Outback Repeater Linked System on Sunday evenings.

"We just couldn't see the need to be tying up all those repeaters all over West Virginia, Maryland, and southern Pennsylvania," said Paul Ininger, KD4DDI, Net Control Operator. "Most of the announcements and business for the net is limited to Page County. By making this change, we are freeing up considerable air time in other parts of the region."

The new repeater is located halfway up the mountain behind Luray, and requires PL tone of 114 hz. The input frequency is down 600 KHz from the output frequency of 146.670 MHz. Because of the location and lower elevation, some stations outside Page County might have a problem checking in. However, the machine has solid and complete coverage of Page county, the primary target of the net.

### VARA Moves Again!

The Valley Amateur Radio Association will hold it's August 7th meeting at the **Shoney's** in Staunton, on Route 250 just east of the Interstate 81 interchange.

## George McCulloch, WA3WIP, SK

George McCulloch, WA3WIP, died sometime Saturday evening June 14 or early Sunday morning, June 15, in his home in Florida. George was a former resident of the valley (Luray area), and was active on the local ham bands. For years, he served as Emergency Communications Coordinator (EC) for Page County, before retiring to Florida. George's wife had passed away a few years earlier. A life-long smoker, George had suffered from lung cancer for some time. He knew the end was

coming, and wanted to spend whatever time he had left with Sara Jane, his beagle. At least he got his wish. A Masonic service was held in Luray Wednesday evening, June 18 followed by the funeral the next morning. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the American Red Cross, or the Page United Methodist Church in Luray.

*Information provided by  
Rick, KN3C*

There's a lot going on this month. We couldn't find room in this issue for the calendar, so check the schedule of ham activities on the MARA web page!

## Hams Tell 'Em Where to Go! — Bridgewater Lawn Party Report

It's hard to believe that the month of July is almost over. One of the sure sign's of that is the Bridgewater Lawn Party. Year after year, the town of Bridgewater asks the local amateur community for assistance with traffic direction and communication assistance.

Many local ham's were on hand to help with detouring traffic around the town for both the Friday and Saturday evening parades. Other than being very warm, we had a good time as usual, and were amazed at just how many people suddenly lived on certain streets. (Ha)

**I would like to give special thanks to Dale and Jason (N4ATF & N4DSL) Gayle (KU4XN) Bob (KG4CHL) Steve (KF4ZWK) Phyllis & Dick (N4VZC & KC3AN) Ellsworth (K4LXG) and Ray (K4NRA) for their willingness to help.**

Afterward we enjoyed fresh squeezed lemonade and country ham sandwiches and funnel cakes. (Yum Yum) And if that's not enough to encourage you to help next year, well then how about just good fellowship among fellow Ham,s and seeing old friends that you haven't seen in years. A good time was had by all.

*Doug Alder, N4DUG*

## Fox Hunters Foiled in Augusta County!

No 2-Legged Foxes Found in Augusta County !

That's right, the fox out-foxed the hunters on the night of July 12, the night of the Augusta County ARES Fox Hunt.

For approximately 90 minutes, eight (8) hams or teams of hams participated in the hunt, with Net Control( myself ) relaying all coordinates for everyone to record to help them in their quest for the elusive fox.

Last foxhunt's winners, the father-son team of KD5KA Chuck and KG4IWA Benjamin, came within 1 mile of the fox, but couldn't pinpoint my location, which was the parking lot at Ingleside. They went to the Food Lion parking lot in Verona, but that was as close as they could get.

Several hams had good bearings on me, so I was surprised that I couldn't be physically located. 35 watts into a 5/8 wavelength vertical seemed to

confuse the readings somewhat, so the hunters need to attenuate the received signal enough to give accurate readings to pinpoint the fox.

Join us next month when KF4QZG Richard will be the fox. See if YOU can " bag a fox! ". The date for that will be August 9th at 8 pm on 146.490 simplex. Get those small beams and doppler units out and come join in the hunt!

*David Tanks AD4TJ  
EC for Augusta County*

### A QUICK NOTE FROM THE CHIEF

I would like to thank you for sending me the MARA/VARA Monitor. I have been reading this newsletter for several years and find every issue very interesting. Additionally, I would like to thank all of the amateurs for their dedication and hard work. Thanks again,

*Robbie Symons, Chief,  
Rockingham County  
Fire & Rescue*

## "Solar Glass Stops More Than Just the Sun!" — KE4FM

Ah, experience can sometimes be a cruel teacher!

Bill Jones, KE4FM, found out the hard way that through-the-glass antennas cannot be used on automobiles equipped with solar glass.

Solar glass is a special type of glass intended to stop UV and certain wavelengths of infrared rays. And here is the surprise! Solar glass is not the same as

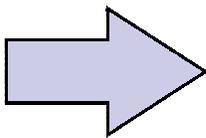
tinted glass. Solar glass may or may not be tinted!

Solar glass has a special metal coating integrated within the glass pane itself. The metal in the glass is supposed to keep the interior of your car a little cooler in the hot summer sun. But alas, by blocking such radiation, the solar glass also blocks the transmission of the waves needed to make the capacitance-coupled through-the-

glass antenna's work.

In a July 3 letter from Aaron Logan, Technical Customer Support rep for Larsen Antennas, Bill was told that when installed on cars equipped with solar glass, through-the-glass radio antennas "will not operate as intended". Period.

Ergo, read this issue's For Sale ads for Bill's antenna!



## MARA & VARA Joint Club Meeting: Picnic in September!

Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG, has invited the MARA and VARA clubs to join together for a joint covered-disk picnic-style meal on Tuesday evening, September 4th, at the transmitter site of WSVA.

More details and directions will appear in next month's Monitor.

Ellsworth is the chief engineer (again) for the station, and has access to the transmitting facilities and tower.

Mark your calendars now. Remember, this is the September meeting, not the August meeting. Both clubs will hold their respective club meetings at the

restaurants in August, and then join together for the picnic in September.

The primary date for the picnic is Tuesday September 4th. However, in the event of rain or a storm, the date will be moved to Thursday, September 6th.

## VARA President's Message

### FIELD DAY 2001

Well friends, if you're like me you are waiting in sweet anticipation to see how we did this past Field Day. 3A was a new step for the clubs. Unfortunately, we won't know where we placed for several months. Bottom line, we had a great time operating and working together on top of the mountain. I guess we could call this a "mountain top experience."

By the way, it didn't rain on Field Day. Of course before the start of Field Day we did have several different types of weather. We had sunshine, rain, fog, warm, and cool. I guess it is true what they say. "If you don't like the weather, wait a minute."

I want to thank all those who pitched in to make Field Day an awesome event. The committee needs to be commended as do those vital volunteers who went up to the mountain before Field Day and cut the grass, brought up wood, set up trailers and so on. I don't know where we would be without the help of our advance team. I also want to thank all those who volunteered their equipment, operated, and helped out in so many ways. Thank you all for a job well done.

### WE HAVE ANOTHER NEW MEETING PLACE

The club tried Kathy's for two months, but it didn't work out. So we have moved our meeting place once again. Thanks to Ray, KE4HVR, who did a little advanced foot work, we will now meet at Shoney's (off I-81, exit 222, Richmond Road). They have a room for us to use and plenty of food. So let's have a good turn out on the first Tuesday of August (the 7th) and enjoy our time together. Remember, the "eating meeting" starts around 6:00 PM and the "official meeting" begins at 7:30 PM.

Let me address one issue. Some are reluctant to meet at a restaurant because they feel guilty for not purchasing a meal. The truth is, not everybody can afford to go out and eat. But keep this in mind. **You don't have to come to eat.** Just be there for the 7:30 PM meeting. You are under no obligation and should not feel guilty. Besides, there are enough who do come to eat to make it worthwhile for Shoney's to provide us with a room. So come on out and support the club.

### SPECIAL EVENT - NATURAL CHIMNEYS

Under the leadership of **Richard, (KF4QZG) the special events committee (Bennie, N4BCC, Ray, KE4HVR, Jeff, W4PJW and Greg, W4GRC)** met at Shoney's and finalized the equipment list. The event will take place on Saturday, August 18th from 6:00 AM until 11:59 PM. Set up for the event will take place on Friday around 1:00 PM. Anyone wishing to operate from either club simply has to show up at Natural Chimneys Regional Park on Saturday. Our special event station (W4MUS) will celebrate 180 years of Jousting. Richard has made an excellent certificate for the event. Thanks Richard for taking the lead on this one.

### ODDS AND ENDS

Plans are in the making to have a club picnic this September. At our August meeting we will determine the location. There have been several good suggestions so stayed tuned. This year is really moving fast. It is time to think about our annual Christmas party. Nancy (KE4PHP), Joan (KF4CWR), and Lonnie (N4WIV) have agreed to find a place to hold our Christ-

mas Party. Now I said they agreed, but really they were appointed by a special commission established by your president. Remember, delegate, and then delegate some more!

It won't be long and we will be involved in Bike Virginia's Fall Tour. This is an annual event, and as in the times past we will need help on Saturday and Sunday. It is not too soon to start thinking about helping on both Saturday and Sunday, or on one day or the other. Do we have a volunteer to take the lead and help get us prepared for Bike Virginia? If so see Greg.

In September the two clubs (M.A.R.A. and V.A.R.A.) may come together and meet for a covered dish dinner and then take a tour of the facilities of WSV in Harrisonburg. More information will be forthcoming. The dinner and tour will either be on our meeting night or on the meeting night of M.A.R.A. (1st Thursday of the month).

Well that's it for this issue.  
73,

*Greg, W4GRC*

## Tip-a-Canoe, and Helbert, Too! — Kudos to KC4UZG

Congratulations to Eli Helbert, KC4UZG. Eli reports on the World's Cup, Sort, Spain, which is the world championship of canoe and kayaking competitions.

This year, however, instead of reporting ON the winners, he was reporting AS a winner! Again!

Eli is now the two-time defending champion in the Open Canoe Freestyle, in the canoe rodeo competition. Eli won the honor by beating Olympic paddlers and slalom champions. Quoting the reports:

"Eli Helbert, dancing in his boat to the music, paddled out into the hole for his final defense of his World Champion-

ship title. Eli's boat came within inches of clearing the water and landed again in a spin. Eli went for another big end and celebrated his victory relishing the cheers of his friends and supporters as he paddled to shore."

We have to wonder, did his HT get wet? Keep up the good work, Eli.



## MARA President's Message

For those that did not make the last meeting, you missed a very good presentation by Jason, N4DSL, on the use of the newer digital modes.

It is interesting how we think only the "old" guys can teach or explain things about amateur radio, but Jason is one of the young guys, both in age and as a ham. Thanks Jason, I for one learn something and hope to get up and running using at least one of these modes in the near future.

This month's meeting should be interesting. I don't know what the presentation will be! Nobody had any ideas or suggestions, so come prepared to discuss anything you like or ask any questions you have and hope someone can answer them.

If you were at the last meeting you heard about the old and new county emergency communications bus. There will probably be something to hear about or discuss concerning them.

The September meeting will be a joint picnic with the VARA club at the WSVa station on Rt. 33 west of Harrisonburg. Ellsworth, K4LXG, is hosting the event and will have tours of the WSVa transmitters. The meeting date has been changed to September 4, with a rain date of September 6.

Hope to see everyone at Ever's Restaurant on August 4 at 6:30 pm for dinner, or 7:30 for the meeting.

*Gerald, KN4FM*

"This month's meeting should be interesting! I don't know what the presentation will be!"

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## For Sale – 2m antenna

Larsen KG144-UD-PL thru-the-glass antenna, 2 meter version. New, never installed, however it is not factory packaged. Found out they are not recommended for Solar Glass windows. Cost \$75 and will accept most any reasonable offer. Bill Jones, KE4FM phone 289-9801 or email [wwjones@gte.net](mailto:wwjones@gte.net).

## For Sale – Tower System and Beam

- YAESU Rotator G-800S
- YAESU Thrust Bearing GS-050
- WILSON - System Three Triband Beam (10, 15, 20)
- 48 foot Tower (six 8' sections)- Rohn-Spaulding "Strato-Tower" (free standing)

All are "on the ground" in Harrisonburg, ready for pick up. Prices negotiable - offers welcomed.

Glen N4ALS  
703-392-5486 (Manassas Park, VA)

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## 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.

## Problems with Autopatch?

The 145.130 repeater provides autopatch service to the local telephone area of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, by subscription. On a recent occasion, background noise (on the called-party's end of the phone connection) interfered with proper operation of the VOX circuitry. This may have been an isolated incident but if it recurs, the VOX sensitivity might need adjusting. What do you think? If you have experienced this or any other problems with the autopatch, please advise David immediately so that action can be taken to adjust the settings on the box.

## Bob's Knob Picnic to Feature Albino Grouse Hunt!

If you haven't done it, 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 squirrel, and rabbits. If you wish, bring a 2-liter bottle of your favorite soft drink with you.

This year's special event will be an albino grouse hunt. If you catch one of these rare birds (found only in the Bergton/Criders valley) you get to keep it! In fact, you will be **required** to keep it! Come and enjoy the fun!

Also, a tailgating area will be available, free of charge, but the only rule is, if you bring it and it doesn't sell, you have to take it away!

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*

## Jousting Tournament Special Event: August 18

One of the longest continuously-running entertainment events in the nation is the annual jousting tournament held every August at Natural Chimneys Regional Park, in Augusta County just west of the town of Mount Solon.

This event features men and women engaging in the old-time (medieval) art of jousting. Yes, that's right. They get on horses and, dressed in armor, they compete to see who possess the highest level of skill at horsemanship, sword-handling, lance handling, maneuverability, and defense, as well as costuming, mannerisms, and other expressions of related skill.

While combat and personal victory are a part of the event, most of the competition involves non-violent skill-testing activity. For example, who can gallop his horse and use his lance to spear a tiny ring swinging on a string from a tree? Who can do so the fastest? Who can do so the most number of times in succession without missing?? Who has the best looking suit

of armor? Whose horse can jump the highest obstacle without breaking the rider's rhythm of swordplay? Each of the competitions provides loads of entertainment. Competitors come from all over the country.

This year, VARA has made arrangements to operate a special event ham radio station at the tournament. Through the efforts of Richard Huttinger, KF4QZG, the tournament sponsors and park officials are providing a location with commercial power connections. VARA has invited MARA to join them in this endeavor.

The power pole is located almost directly in front of the natural chimney stone formation, at the edge of a grassy meadow. It is just to the west of the primary picnic pavilion shelter, and south of the rock formation. It is north of the campground, and several hundred yards east of the jousting tournament competition field. There will be plenty of passersby, since almost all jousting competitors and the entire audi-

ence will have to pass that way to get from the parking lots and campground to the tournament field!

Richard is going to need at least three hams to man the station at all times, (in 1-2 hour shifts, of course), continuously for the entire 18 hour operating period, which is planned to start at 6:00 am on Saturday, August 18 and run until midnight. One ham will operate, one will log, and the third will answer questions from the public and tell them about ham radio. Additional hams might be useful during the daytime hours, since a crowd will likely develop.

Hams participating in the station will be admitted to the park free of charge, and a limited number will be allowed to camp at the station site. Admittance will be based on your official amateur radio callsign license plates, or alternatively a copy of your license. If you are interested in being involved in this special event, contact Richard at 540-942-3914.

## What's Your Opinion? ... (This Page Should've Intentionally Been Left Blank)

*Note: the following does not necessarily reflect the position of MARA or VARA — or anyone else, for that matter.... — Ed.*

This is an opinion piece. Yes, I know. Opinions are just like HT's. Every ham has one. Smart hams recognize their's isn't perfect, but every ham still thinks his is better than all the others. And nobody is interested in anyone else's, except perhaps to be polite ("Wow, willya look at that! I've never seen 752 buttons on an HT before") or maybe to reassure themselves that their's *really is* better than the other fellow's ("Ha! At least I don't have to use a needle, tweezers and six pages of the manual just to change my squelch setting!!")

But let's get back to this here article. This is an opinion piece. The *Monitor* needs a monthly opinion piece. Let's face it. With all due respect to David, KD9LA (who does a wonderful job by the way) no one actually really *reads* the Monitor. They may glance at the headlines or look at the pictures ("Hee-hee, the copier actually made ol' whats-his-face look better than he does in real life!"), But this isn't *Playboy*. Nobody even *pretends* to read the articles. In fact, to be honest, some hams don't even bother reading the headlines or looking at the pictures, either.

This sad fact was brought to my attention on the repeater the other day. A good friend — a ham who I know for a fact keeps his membership current — suddenly asked me, "So, did the club do a Field Day this year?"

Huh? Say what? Did we do a Field Day? *Did we do a Field Day?*

"Yeah, a Field Day. You know, where P-J-W and Y-E-T and ol' Jumpin' Zebra Colts take their big portable Hiltons and make like Moses going up to the mountaintop and ..."

Hold it. Time out. I have to admit, anyone who knows my friend realizes that here is one guy whose coils are a few turns short of resonance. But heck, even Moomaw and Neimeyer aren't old enough to remember who Jumpin' Zebra Colts is! Nope, my friend's tubes are cold. His plate voltage isn't just low, it's off!

But it got me to thinking. What can we do to encourage hams to actually *read* the *Monitor*? What do the professional publications do to boost readership? Why, they put in something so dumb, so ridiculous, so controversial, that everybody gets in the habit of reading the entire publication just so they can find the stupid columns they can disagree with and rant and rave about.

Look at the Washington Post. The name Condit ring a bell? Or pick up a Daily News-Leader from Staunton and look for the clown on the editorial page who signs his name "F.P." Or look in the Harrisonburg News-Record for anything about the bypass or the Elkton police department. Nobody in their right mind would take seriously a single word in those pieces, but everybody reads the stuff, right? So why not put something outrageous like that in the *Monitor*?

I propose that we start a monthly opinion section where hams can write in for the sole purpose of riling up other hams and starting arguments. And since Daryl's already got the jump on me when it comes to email, I'll go ahead and volunteer to write the hardcopy *Monitor* piece for the first few months.

But it's not as simple as just writing down an opinion. There is already too much of that. That type of garbage is already found in your email box. If you want more of that kind of junk, tune into

any of the local repeaters after 9 pm. Nope, to boost readership, the opinion piece has to be done right... like a gourmet meal intended to give you indigestion. Here are a few rules to follow:

Rule Number One, it has to be something that everybody disagrees with. You have to take a position that clearly is unquestionably, totally, completely false. For example, David KD9LA is quite vocal about Kenwood, and often says that buying a Kenwood is like buying a Lottery Ticket, except that your chance of getting your money's worth is a lot better with the Lottery Ticket. This would *never* go over well in an opinion piece, because it's not false. Everybody who has bought a Kenwood radio in the last 10 years knows now that they would've been better off buying a chance at the Big Game. They'd be on the air just as much. And they probably would've saved time too, since once the Saturday night drawing is over, you throw the Lottery Ticket away and you're done with it, whereas with a new Kenwood, you have to box it up and ship it back four or five times before you finally get wise and have someone take it to a hamfest for you and dump it for \$75 on some unsuspecting gray-haired Extra-class ham from tidewater who remembers way back when Kenwood was a good name and thinks it still is because he hasn't bought a new Kenwood since Carter was president.

Rule Number Two: the opinion has to relate to ham radio. This rule is hard to follow, since practically all opinions held by ham's have nothing to do with ham radio. The world economy, global warming, the government conspiracy to keep Food Lion from selling handguns — these are all the source of flaky and ridiculous opinions (just the kind we're looking for), but they don't have anything to do with ham radio. They belong in the News Leader or News Record or News Whatever, but not in the *Monitor*.

Rule Number Three: It has to be something that hams feel passionately about. The code-or-no-code argument provided a nice birthing ground for passion, ... until it became known that letting Morseless hams operate a radio wasn't really the cause of those 75-meter QSO's that sound like the Jerry Springer show. Nope, we have to look somewhere else for passion now. Hmmmm. Anybody around here give money to that Phase 3-D satellite thingy? (You know the one I'm talking about... the satellite that's pretending it's a new Kenwood!) Of course, come to think about it, MARA is considering becoming the owner of a communications van... Man-o-man! Talk about something that's going to inspire passion! It doesn't get any better than this! We'll soon be bringing our hard hats, bullet-proof vests, and dairy boots to the club meetings! Think about it!

Rule Number Four: make sure the readers understand you are poking fun, and not something else. For instance, if you're not laughing at this piece by now, you are probably the person whose name and call will be featured prominently in my article next month. (But then, upon second thought, saying bad things about a local ham around here just might cause me to violate Rule Number One!)

Of course, David KD9LA is a nice guy, and will probably cut out most of what I say anyway. But I figure there are readers out there that want their money's worth. They didn't pay club dues just so they could go to a noisy restaurant and eat greasy vegetables off of pastel-colored Melmac. They paid their dues because the magazine stand in their bathroom needs something in it. So I'll do my part to make sure the *Monitor* is the most appropriate publication to keep next to their john! Look for my article next month. And to find it, be sure to **read the whole dangd issue!**

*Submitted by the ham radio's version of F.P.*

## New Hams in the Valley

Congratulations to the following hams who join our ranks in the central Shenandoah Valley!

KG4GRI Don Roby, Swoope  
 KG4GZH Danny Clatterbaugh, Swoope  
 KG4HMU Charles Andes, Broadway  
 KG4IJA Antonio Martinez, Harrisonburg  
 KG4JOF William Hooke, Verona  
 KG4KKU Dawn Dean, Harrisonburg  
 KG4LRC Steven Sites, Harrisonburg  
 KG4MWI Terry Kielbasa, New Market  
 KG4MZY Richard Long, West Augusta  
 KG4NAA Charles Neff Jr., Waynesboro  
 KG4NYA Anna Cupp, Mt. Crawford

And congratulations to the following, who either have moved into the area, or otherwise modified their licenses recently:

W2FIB Don Howell, Edinburg  
 W4IIV Steve Grant, Waynesboro  
 KB5FPO Carolyn Wilson, Waynesboro  
 KB5FPN Herschel Wilson, Waynesboro  
 KF2SS Ed Tobias, Waynesboro  
 WA1YOA Ralph Thomas, Waynesboro  
 W4BKP Charles Menk, Waynesboro  
 KR4DH Ausby Aleshire, Waynesboro  
 W4ZEE Ron Burch, Waynesboro  
 AA4TC Larry Heatwole, Harrisonburg  
 K2VXO David Utter, Harrisonburg  
 KD4AGM LaDawn Knicely, Bridgewater  
 K4PAH Patricia Hensley, Elkton

## Up Comes Down, Down Goes Up, Up Finds Down, Down Goes Up, Up Stays Up

The explanation is simple. The 147.045 repeater UP on Elliot's Knob went DOWN. Since the repeater was DOWN, a team went UP to the location at the top of the mountain, west of Staunton. The team that went UP the mountain found out that the repeater antenna was DOWN, broken by high winds and bad weather. While most of the team stayed DOWN on the safe ground, Durwood went UP the tower to replace the antenna. The good news is that the repeater is now UP and appears to be staying UP, even though Durwood came DOWN safely.

Thanks to the team that went up and corrected the down.

Below are pictures. On the left, we see Ray, KE4HVR, and Greg W4GRC, trying to figure out how to tie a knot in the rope. The repeater housing case and tower base can also be seen. Notice the rocky ground, which makes for a hard landing for anyone falling off the tower.

In the middle photo, you see Durwood WA4ZBP, Ken KE4GKD, and Ray KE4HVR hard at work at the tower base.

At the right, you see Durwood up on the tower doing the replacement work, while the other three fellows provide ground support such as taking pictures and looking at wildflowers and chasing rabbits.



## Weather 1: Additional NOAA Radio Transmitter on the Air on 162.450 MHz

The National Weather Service has placed a new weather radio transmitter on the air in Albemarle County. The new transmitter is located on Fan Mountain near Charlottesville.

The transmitter was a joint project funded by the NWS and coordinated, located, and installed with the assistance of members of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club (AARC).

The new station is licensed under the callsign of KZZ28. It broadcasts continuous weather information on the frequency of 162.450 MegaHertz.

The broadcast content originates at the Weather Service Forecast Office at Sterling, Virginia near the Dulles Airport. The broadcast content is the same as that found on the Moorefield station, but the new transmitter may provide reception coverage for areas not currently served by the Moorefield transmitter.

In particular, the new station serves Albemarle and Nelson Counties, locations which were blocked from Moorefield by the Blue Ridge.

As a side benefit, however, the new transmitter may provide a stronger signal into some areas around Staunton and Waynesboro, as well as higher areas in Augusta and southern Rockingham Counties. Between the Moorefield and Fan Mountain sites together, the NWS hopes to reach more people in the Valley.

The Weather Service and the ARC team installing the station are soliciting reception reports from the Shenandoah Valley.

They ask that all ham operators who have VHF equipment tune

to the 162.450 MHz channel, and email a reception report to David Damon, K4DND: [dnd@virginia.edu](mailto:dnd@virginia.edu)

Initial reports indicate the new station can be received over some of the valley at very low signal strengths, with signal levels comparable to the Moorefield station. While this is not ideal, it nevertheless provides minimal coverage, and with the new transmitter, some areas might even receive both stations, providing backup in case one transmitter goes down in bad weather.

## Weather 2: Keep Looking Up! Become a Skywarn Volunteer!

During severe weather, the National Weather Service relies on reports from trained observers to gain information not available by their instruments. These observers verify tornadoes, wall clouds, identify frontal boundaries, report hail (which is hard to see on radar!) measure snowfall and rainfall, and verify (or sometimes even debunk) reports of dangerous weather received from untrained observers.

Skywarn nets are activated anytime conditions are ripe for potentially dangerous weather.

Becoming a SkyWarn observer is easy, but there is more to it than merely checking into a net. You must first attend a training session so you will know what to look for, how to report accurately, and where you fit into the system. This initial training is called BASICS I.

After completing BASICS I you are assigned an identifying code so the NWS knows from where your report is coming. You can then check into a Skywarn net with your report anytime the net is activated.

While reports from untrained stations are sometimes accepted on a net, they generally are not logged with the weather service as a formal observation, since untrained reporters, despite the best of intentions, have proven to often provide unreliable or mis-described reports.

If you wish to become even more skillful at describing weather, there are additional classes you can attend. All classes are free of charge, but advance registration is necessary.

Below is the schedule of courses currently being offered by the NWS. Unless otherwise noted, the classes are held at the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Sterling, Virginia, about 90 minutes driving time from Rockingham and Augusta Counties.

To register for a class, simply telephone Melody Paschetag at 703-260-0107, extension 226. Or you can email her at: [melody.paschetag@noaa.gov](mailto:melody.paschetag@noaa.gov)

## Weather 3: Skywarn Class Schedule

### **BASICS I**

August 1st class is already booked solid.  
August 27th (Wednesday) is available, 7:00 to 10:00 pm

### **BASICS II**

September 13th (Thursday) 7:00 to 9:00 pm

### **HURRICANE CLASS**

August 23rd class is already booked solid.  
August 28th (Tuesday) is available, 7:00 to 9:00 pm

## Weather 4: Skywarn Advisory Meeting, Info Session, Open House, and Picnic: Aug 18

There is a lot going on the weekend of August 18 and 19th!

If you are not going to the Special Event at Natural Chimneys or the Bob's Knob Bash in Bergton, consider going to Sterling!

In an effort to keep Skywarn Volunteers apprised of updates in the service, the National Weather Service is holding a special Skywarn Advisory Meeting on August 18th at 9:00 am

at the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Sterling Park.

Immediately following the advisory session will be a covered-dish picnic, from 11 to 3:00 pm.

The meeting and picnic are open to all Skywarn Volunteers, as well as family members and friends interested in joining Skywarn. The NWS is holding an open house of the forecast office in conjunction with this event, so come out and see behind-the-scenes.

Hot dogs, buns, and condiments will be provided. Bring your own cookies, drinks, munchies, or other snacks.

In order to plan for the crowd, the NWS asks that you let John Perry, N1EOD, know if you will be attending, and how many family members or friends you will be bringing. Remember, this event is open to everyone interested in Skywarn, regardless of whether you have completed training or not!

If you are going to attend, be sure to Email John at: N1EOD@aol.com



## The Results Are In: Field Day Score = 8948 points!

Thanks to Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, for compiling the official scores for the 2001 joint MARA/VARA Field Day operation.

According to Jeff, we scored just shy of 9000 points. Our total of 8948 should earn us a good position in the standings for class 3A this year.

Some highlights of the operation are:

There were 1049 total CW contacts, and 1298 phone contacts. Of course, each morse code contact is worth 2 points while a phone contact is worth only one, so the CW operators accounted for 2098 points

compared with the 1298 for phone.

The digital station made 214 contacts, each counting 2 points, for a total of 428 points. It is significant to note that this station placed us in the higher class, but more than paid for itself by the additional points.

We earned bonus points in every category where bonus points could be earned: We were 100% emergency powered, we had media publicity, were set up in a public location, had an information booth, originated a message to our ARRL officials, copied the W1AW FD message, handled at least ten (10) formal NTS mes-

sages, completed a QSO by orbiting satellite, had a natural power station, the site was visited by local government officials, we operated an SSTV station, and APRS position reporting station, and a packet node.

Being an avid CW operator, Jeff points out that CW appeared to be more effective than phone at several times or bands. For example, on 80 meters, the band was obviously open, for the CW station logged 162 QSO's, but the phone station only managed 43. Similarly, on 15 meters, the CW station logged 243 contacts, indicating good openings, while there was only one single phone contact

on 15m for the entire operation. Of course, scheduling might have played a part in the imbalance, too. So if its points we want, we know where to concentrate effort in the future.

But points aren't the only reason for Field Day. Most hams enjoy FD for the fun, the fellowship, the camaraderie, and the enjoyment of being outdoors. For many hams, it is their only time to operate HF and get on the world-wide bands.

Make plans now for next year. Field Day is always the fourth full weekend in June.

## Important Phone Numbers: VDOT and Highway Patrol!

You are sitting in your easy chair monitoring the local repeater. Suddenly, a ham breaks in, asking for someone to call authorities to report a tree down across the highway. Who ya gonna call?

Not Ghostbusters, that's for sure!

Thanks to Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, for providing the following phone numbers:

VDOT (highway problems, road blockages, traffic light malfunctions): Staunton District Office (covers Rockingham, Page, Shenandoah and Augusta Counties) 540-332-9075

VDOT Culpeper District (covers Albemarle, Culpeper, Greene, Orange) 540-829-7537

State Highway Patrol: Culpeper District (covers Rockingham, Page, Shenandoah, and Orange counties): 540-829-7401 or 1-800-572-9965

State Highway Patrol Appomattox District (includes Augusta, Albemarle, Green, Highland, and Bath counties) 804-352-7128 or 1-800-552-0962.

## Rockingham County Considering Donation of Communication Van to Hams

As you may know, Rockingham County operates a Communications Van to serve the Fire, Rescue and other public service agencies. The van provides additional room and equipment for command support, and is used whenever supplemental, remote or portable communications are needed. Using the van removes special incident operations from the county's primary 911 dispatch center.

And when that is not enough, local amateur radio operators step in. Whenever called upon, local hams provide the county with additional, fast, and well-trained communications capabilities.

Hams take a load off of the official communication channels, freeing the official channels for critical traffic, while non-critical traffic flows over onto the ham bands. Hams have supported the county in floods, hurricanes, and blizzards over the past four decades, most notably in Hurricane Fran and the winter floods of 1996.

As you may have heard, Rockingham County recently received funding to purchase and equip a **new** communications van. Local hams, led by our county EC, Dale Showalter N4DAI, have been instrumental in provided guidance and advice on how to equip the new van so as to provide efficient and effective links to the ham auxiliary communication system.

In appreciation for the service of the hams, the county is considering donating the old communications van, including some of its furnishings and contents, to the local amateur community.

The old van is a 1975 converted Ford school bus. It is equipped with generators (one of which might stay with the van), air conditioning, built-in operating positions & desks, and wiring and cabling. The vehicle can support several simultaneous station operations, with room left over.

As a chartered corporation, the Massanutten Amateur Radio

Association (MARA) is eligible to serve as a titled owner of the old van.

Owning a vehicle is a great responsibility, involving lots of work. However, the van will provide the hams with a safe and secure environment for supporting emergency communications, operating at field day, simulated emergency tests, various contests and special events.

One hurdle (where to park it when not being used) has already been overcome, and a second (insurance) is being actively investigated as you read this.

The van will be discussed at the upcoming MARA club meeting, and additional details will be provided as soon as they are available.



At left, the 1975 converted school bus serving as the old Rockingham County Communications Van. Above, the interior of the van features several operating positions, along with additional space for conferences, planning, resting, and other operations.

## MARA Secretary's Report: July 5, 2001 Meeting

The MARA Meeting was held Thursday the 5th of July at Evers Restaurant with 34 members and 4 guests for a total of 38 folks present.

### Old Business:

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as written in the newsletter.

We welcomed E.C. Showalter, KG4KUR and Randy Lilly, KA4EMH as our two new members by unanimous vote.

### Committee Reports:

1. Treasurer: Sandy, K4PZC:  
Total monies in treasury:  
\$2766.55

2. Public Service: Doug, N4DUG: Next event will be the Bridgewater Lawn Party. A sheet was circulated for volunteers to sign up. It will be on the 20th and 21st of July.

3. ARES: Dale, N4DAI: The Public Service Communication bus has been completed. Good news.

4. ARES Net: Norman, KA4EEN: Openings for volunteers for Net Control.

5. VE: Gayle, KU4XN: No Report

6. Field Day: No completed report. But good time was had by all who took part. There was an excellent turnout.

### New Business:

1. New Members: No new applications

2. 50/50 Drawing: Ellsworth won the drawing of \$11.50

3. Club Picnic: Motion was made to move September 6 meeting to September 4. The meeting will be a picnic. Rain date will be September 6. It will be held at the radio station WSWA on Rt 33 West. Motion was passed. Any volunteers to help with the picnic?

### Special Events Station:

Motion was made to officially participate with the Staunton Club with a Special Events Sta-

tion at the Jousting Affair to be held at the Chimneys. Information at the August meeting.

### Program:

Digital Modes: Jason, N4DSL.: Jason presented a very interesting program complete with a short video and handouts. He was able to make the digital mode operation understandable. Also he ably answered questions asked of him. Thank you Jason for a very interesting program.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Phyllis Haxton, Secretary*

## VARA Secretary's Report: July 3, 2001 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Kathy's in Verona July 3, 2001. President Greg Czerniak W4GRC opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. There were 16 members present and 1 guest, Billy Hooke KG4JOF of Verona.

NOTE: Our meetings beginning August 7th will be at Shoney's in Staunton. Rt. 250 & I-81.

The 50/50 winner was Richard Huttinger KF4QZG.

A letter from Ed Troutman WA3TFX and his wife Helen KD4WHT of Brandywine, WV was read by Clint KB4OLM. We hope everyone got to meet Ed and Helen. (Ed was the one in the wheel chair). They were there last year for a visit but by camping at the field day site this year they got to see the antennas going up for all the stations and the stations in full operation for Field Day 2001. They said it was a great experience for the both of them and they enjoyed talking and camping with everyone.

The Special Event Station at Natural Chimneys Regional Park will be active from Saturday August 18th at 6:00AM until 12:00MN. We need OPERATORS, LOGGERS and other HAMS to tell the public what Ham Radio is all about and what they do for the community in emergency situations. We need at least three hams present at all times.

Set-up will be Friday evening. We will have more information at our August club meeting.

We have a committee of three for the Christmas Party this year, Nancy KE4PHP, Lonnie N4WIV and Joan KF4CWR.

A suggestion was made by Nancy Colvin KE4PHP and seconded by Al Bonck N3JB to have a picnic this summer on September 15th, maybe on the Blue Ridge Parkway. There will be more on the location in next month's newsletter.

A big round of applause was given to David Fordham KD9LA

for the GREAT JOB he does on our Club Newsletter. Thanks again David!

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.

Field Day contacts are being counted and the scores should be known at this time. They will be posted in the next newsletter if they are not received by the deadline for this printing.

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 meet-

ing was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

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

*Submitted By:  
VARA Secretary  
Ray Colvin KE4HVR*

**LOST: Two lengths of coax, 30' and 40' during field day in the area of the Novice Tech Station. These belong to Gordon Batey WA4FJC and have his name or callsign on them. If these should show up with your equipment please contact Gordon and make arrangements to get them back to him.**

# 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

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month August meeting at Shoneys Restaurant, on US 250 at I-81. 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