

# The Monitor

Published jointly by the Valley Amateur Radio Association and the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association,  
Dedicated to serving those interested in Amateur Radio in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley



**MARA Members:  
Bring a Gift!**

## Christmas Dinners! MARA December 5; VARA December 17

MARA's Christmas Dinner will be held on the normal club meeting night: the first Thursday of the month, which is December 5. The meal will begin at 6:30 which is normal, and there won't be a formal business meeting. Reservations are not required, but the meeting room will only hold the first 50 persons to show up. Members are encouraged to invite spouses, family members, and guests. Once the 50-person maximum has been reached, additional arrivals will be seated in the main restaurant seating area.

VARA's Christmas Dinner will be held on December 17, at the Western Sizzlin' restaurant. Notice that this is a change from the regular meeting location. The Christmas Dinner will take the place of the December meeting. Reservations ARE required for the VARA event. Contact Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, at colvingr@rica.net or phone 540-886-1559 if you plan to attend. Like the MARA dinner, guests, spouses, and family members are invited to this event.

## Club Officers for 2003 Named

### VARA Club Officers

President: Benny Cook, N4BCC  
Vice President: Ken Harris, KE4GKD  
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR  
Treasurer: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW

### MARA Club Officers

President: Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG  
Vice President: Chuck Vogan, KD5KA  
Secretary: Todd Harrison, K4TMH  
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC  
Board (exp 03): Jason Armentrout, N4DSL  
Board (exp 04): Richard Haxton, KC3AN

## "Thanks" from Sam Pickering, KF4EKV

Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, received an email from Margaret, XYL of Sam Pickering, KF4EKV. Sam was voted a lifetime member of VARA last month for his courage and bravery in saving lives from a fire (see last month's Monitor), and also for his courage and fortitude under severe medical problems. Margaret read Sam the article in the Monitor reporting his life-time membership award. It made his day! She went on to say that their son, David Pickering, KF4JCY, will be home from college shortly and might be able to bring his dad to a meeting. The entire ham community is glad to learn that Sam is still kickin', as they say. Hang in there, Sam!

## Dues Now Due!

It is time to renew your club membership! Please don't wait until the new year! Please!

### Just Due It!

It is very difficult on the newsletter editor when you delay. It's a lot of work to remove you from all the mailing lists, rosters, address books, etc., then add you back when you finally get around to writing your check!

### For if you Due Not...

Not renewing on time is one of the best ways to get on the really, really, bad side of the newsletter editor. The editor is thinking of teaming up with the Opinionated One to do a story on the secret sex lives of those members who don't renew on time! Sort of a combination Mike Wallace, Judge Judy, and America's Funniest Home Videos, but with YOUR name instead of Monica Lewinski or Princess Diana's butler.

### So Due It Now!

The message should be clear! Renew now. Today. Right now. While you are thinking about it. Don't wait. Immediately. Turn to the back inside cover of this issue, fill it out, write a check, and, like the Nike ad, "Just Do It." Thanks.

## VE Examinations—December 14

VE exams will be held in Dayton Virginia at the Woodmen of the World building (on State Route 42) on Saturday, December 14. Sign in starts about 9:00 am, and the tests will be given as soon as everyone has their paperwork ready to go.

If you are a recently-licensed ham and would like to become a volunteer examiner, contact our local VE coordinator, Gayle Shull, KU4XN, at GSKUXN@msn.com, or telephone 540-828-2132

## Ozzie Dillon, KD4RD, Voted Lifetime Member of VARA

Ozzie Dillon, KD4RD, joins the ranks of three other highly-distinguished hams in the Staunton-Augusta County area as a life member of VARA.

Ozzie has been having some health problems recently. If you want to send him a card to let him know you are thinking about him, here is his address:

Recognized for outstanding achievement and contribution to the local ham community, Ozzie was voted a life member at the November VARA club meeting.

Ozzie Dillon, KD4RD,  
Baldwin Park  
21 Woodlee Rd Apt. 220  
Staunton, VA 24401  
Phone 885-7852

The other life members include Joe Moomaw W4XD, Sam Pickering KF4EKV, and Ken Harris, KE4GKD.

## Are You Ready? Can You Really Communicate?

Every ham in the valley should be prepared to respond in an emergency. You need to have your "jump kit" packed and ready to go.

If you call yourself an emergency communicator, you probably should have the NTS message format committed to memory. It's not that hard. Ten minutes of study will do it, followed by a minute review every month.

One of the more important items you need is a pad of NTS message forms. Regardless of whether or not you are called upon to pass NTS traffic, you still need to know the layout of the NTS message format.

Even if your memory is failing, there is still no excuse for not keeping a pad of NTS forms in your jump kit. At the very least, tear out the following page of this issue of the Monitor for reference.

The National Traffic System has developed a standardized layout for all of the data likely to be needed about a message: — its intended recipient, their location, how to get in touch with them, how urgent the message is, and other data for handling the message.

Even better, make some copies, and keep one at your operating position in the shack, one in your jump kit, one in your car, and one at any other place you might need to use your radio for emergency traffic.

This layout is very useful for ALL messages being passed, not just NTS traffic.

## NTS Message Format

The information you need to pass a message is as follows:

**NUMBER** - Every message should have a number. In a real emergency, many different communicators will be originating messages. To avoid confusion, you might want to begin your numbering with a numeral other than one, but don't make it long or complicated. Some hams use their birthday day-of-the-month as a prefix. For example, if you were born on the 17th of May, your first message in a given emergency would be numbered "1701".

**PRECEDENCE** - Every radiogram has a precedence, and it is normally "Routine" (R). Other precedences are "Priority" (P), "Welfare" (W), and "Emergency". Emergency is never abbreviated, the others are.

**R** - Routine, for non-welfare, non-priority, non-emergency msgs.  
**W** - Welfare, for incoming our outgoing health and welfare traffic.  
**P** - Priority, for messages having a specific time limit, official messages not in the emergency category, press dispatches and emergency traffic not of the utmost in urgency, and notice of death or injury in a disaster area

**EMERGENCY** - (always spelled out) - indicates a message having life-or-death urgency to any person or group of persons which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities.

**HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS**. Optional. Directions to handle a message in a specific way. Most messages do not contain handling instructions. The common instructions are as follows:

**HXA number** - Collect long-distance phone delivery authorized by addressee within *number* miles. If no number, authorization is unlimited.

**HXB number** - Cancel message if not delivered within *number* hours of filing time; reply to originating station when cancelled.

**HXC** - Report day and time of delivery to originating station.

**HXD** - Report to originating station the identity of station from which received, plus date, time, and method of delivery.

**HXE** - Delivering station get reply from addressee, originate a reply message back.

**HXF number** - Hold delivery until *number* (date) or (time).

**HXG** - Delivery by mail or landline toll call not required. If toll or other expense involved, cancel message and reply to originating station.

The HX prosign will be inserted in the message preamble before the station of origin, i.e.: NR 207 R HXA50 W1AW 12... ---- If more than one HX prosign is used, they may be combined if no numbers are to be inserted; otherwise the HX should be repeated. On phone, be sure to use phonetics for the letter or letters following the HX prosign, to ensure accuracy.

**STATION OF ORIGIN** - Is the call sign of the radio station from which the message was first sent by Amateur Radio, and is included so that handling stations will be able to communicate with the originator if

something interferes with the prompt handling or delivery of the message.

**CHECK** - Is the number of words and numeral groups in the text of the message itself. Handling stations should agree on the check before the message is considered handled. "123 South Avenue" would count as a check of 3.

**PLACE OF ORIGIN** - On NTS radiograms, this is normally the name of the town from which the message started. In an emergency, it might be more beneficial to also show the office, function, or official title of the originator of the message. But be sure to **always** show the town at the very least. For example, "1701 R HXC 12 FIRE STATION BROADWAY VIRGINIA..."

**FILING TIME** - Is the time the message was first sent by radio. Standard practice is to use Universal Coordinated Time (UTC). In a localized emergency where local time is more useful, you must always specify the word "Local". For example, "1701 R HXC 12 DAYTON VA 1835 LOCAL ..." This part of the preamble is optional with the originating station, but highly recommended in emergencies.

**FILING DATE** - The month and the day (not the year) that the message was sent by the originating radio station.

**ADDRESS** - Is the complete name, street and number, city and state to whom the radiogram is going--stress this when accepting a radiogram. The phone number should be part of the address. In transmitting the message by CW, the signal AA is used to separate parts of the address, and the address is followed by BT or "break" before the text is started. Addresses with the words east, west, etc, should be spelled out in full. Don't use suffixes "th," "nd" etc (example: 19 W 19th St should be 19 West 19 St.) In an emergency, use the address field to specify all other delivery instructions not covered by HX directions. For example: "Deliver to Shelter Manager or his Assistant".

**MESSAGE ITSELF** - Consists of the words in the message. The text follows the address and is set off from the signature by another BT. Standard practice is to write five words on a line, then start a new line. This makes it easy to calculate the check number.

**SIGNATURE** - Is usually the name of the person originating the message. The signature follows the BT or "break" at the end of the text. The abbreviation "sig" is not transmitted. After the signature, say "end" or transmit AR. If more is to follow, say "more." On CW, use the prosign B. If there's no more, say "no more." On CW use the prosign "N."

**Other Conventions**: Use the word "X-RAY" to serve as a period. Count the Xray as one word in the check. For example, a message: "Arrived Safely Xray See You Soon" would count as a check of 6.

## Formal Message Form – NTS Format

Number	Precedence	HX	Station of Origin	Check	Place of Origin	Time Filed	Date Filed

MESSAGE TO:

Telephone Number:


Received from: (Station, date, time)

Relayed to: (Station, Date, Time)

Delivered to Recipient: (Name, date, time)

Reply or Comments:

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Precedence: (R)outine; (W)elfare, (P)riority, or Emergency.

Handling Instructions: **HXA:** A collect long-distance phone call is authorized for up to [number] miles; **HXB:** Cancel this message if not delivered with [number] hours of filing time and notify originating station when cancelled. **HXC:** Report date and time of delivery to originating station; **HXD:** Report to originating station the date, time and method of delivery, along with station from which received; **HXE:** Delivering station is to get a reply from the addressee, and initiate a reply message back to station of origin.; **HXF:** Hold delivery until (date) or (time). **HXG:** Delivery by toll phone call or mail is not required. If any expense is involved, cancel this message and reply to originating station about cancellation.

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## Is the NTS Format Really Necessary?

The NTS format is used when there is a possibility that a message will need to be RELAYED.

If the originating and delivering ham stations are in direct contact with each other (using a repeater, simplex or any other direct communication), sometimes a message can be passed quicker simply by cutting straight to the text of the message.

This is especially true if the originator and recipients of the message are sitting right beside the operating hams!

But if there is a chance one or more relays will be needed, the NTS format is strongly recommended to ensure accuracy. If the message must be relayed through two or three intermediate stations, the NTS format almost becomes a necessity!

When you are relaying traffic, whether or not it is under an emergency situation, remember that no relay station is ever authorized to change a message.

You should not change anything in the message. The message number, precedence, filing time, the filing date, the station of origin, the check, the text of the message it-

self, — all should be relayed exactly as you received it.

Any time you are receiving a message, write it down! Even if the message is very short, WRITE IT DOWN!

This is why you should always have pens, pencils, and paper in your jump kit! And why a pad of NTS message forms is so useful.

When you receive a message, write the time you received it in the margin of the paper (or in the space designated for "receipt" if you are using the formal NTS form).

When you forward or relay the message, you can then write down the time you passed it on, along with the station to whom you passed the message. Many emergency communicators also write a big "X" across the message once it is handled so that they don't accidentally send the same message twice.

If you are delivering a message to its intended recipient, write the time you delivered it (and the person to whom you spoke) on the message, with the note "Delivered". Again, many emergency

communicators also write a big X across the message to show it has been delivered.

The handled messages with the X on them should never be thrown away until after the emergency is completely over and things have returned to normal. (Some hams keep them for years!) Many times during an emergency, you might need to refer to the messages you have handled for one reason or another.

So rather than throwing them away, put them in an out-of-the-way place once they have been handled or delivered. You don't want to complicate your operating position by having lots of dead messages all over the place.

The NTS format is a guideline intended to facilitate effective and efficient communication. The format is not to hinder or delay communication. Depending on the emergency, there might not be time to use the NTS format. However, under most circumstances, using the NTS format will be the easiest and best way to ensure timely, accurate delivery.

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## MARA President's Message

Greetings to all!

I do not know where the year has gone. As we approach the holidays, I am reminded that it seems like just a few months ago that we celebrated the holidays.

I think back to the past year and reflect on my many blessings: God's blessings, friends, good health, a good spouse, healthy children and grandchildren, the birth of my 2nd granddaughter on September 17th, a country (in spite of its faults but not deserving of the way it is treated) where we have the privilege of conversing with old friends and making new friends around the world by way of ham radio.

There are many places in the world where we would not be able to be radio hams. Just think, we may not have known each other if it were not for our great hobby, ham radio.

It has been a good year and I hope that you can look back as I have and count your blessings. I hope next year to be as good if not better for us all.

I am looking forward to the MARA Christmas party at Ever's Restaurant at Mt. Crawford, Va. at 6:30 PM on December 5th, our normal meeting night.

Remember to bring a gift consisting of something useful to a ham (but not junk) which will be exchanged. The spouses can join us by bringing something to exchange among themselves if they so desire. Please join us!

A most joyous holiday season and a happy, prosperous and safe new year to you and yours!

Ellsworth K4LXG



## Help for Local Packet System Users

If you are like most local hams, you have packet capability sitting somewhere in your shack. But you don't use it every day.

If an emergency strikes and you need to use the digital packet mode, you might not

be able to remember all the commands, syntax, or parameters to use the systems quickly and effectively.

The KB40LM packet cluster has some "Help" files to guide you. So does the HBRGBB Emergency Digital

Bulletin Board system. **But in an emergency, you can't tie up the frequency downloading those files!**

Those files are now in PDF format available on the Internet at the MARA web page below.

Download those files right now and print a hardcopy to keep in a notebook in your shack or jump kit!

Do it early! Don't wait for an emergency!

Go To: <http://cob2.jmu.edu/MARA/Reference.htm> and select the "Packet Cluster Commands" and "HBRGBB" items.

## Wanted: A Legal Copy of Microsoft Office 97 with PowerPoint!

Richard Huttinger AA4RH would like to buy a legal copy of Microsoft Office Suite 97, the Professional Edition, which includes PowerPoint. He is negotiable with price. If you have a legal copy of the MS Office CD which

includes PowerPoint, contact Richard as soon as possible. Richard can be reached via email at: AA4RH@yahoo.com, or by telephone at: 540-942-3914.



## Upcoming Skywarn Classes – Be A Weather Watcher ... and Reporter!

Basics I Class, the prerequisite for all other classes, and the primary class to qualify you as a Skywarn Volunteer, will be held on Saturday, December 7, from 9 am to noon, at Stafford. Register by emailing k3ep@arrl.net.

Another Basics I class is scheduled for Monday, February 10, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm just over the mountain in Orange County.

Register with David Starner at nparec@vt.edu, or telephone 540-672-2660.

Basics II is a continuation of Basics I, and is the recommended refresher course if you took Basics I more than five years ago! A Basics II class will also be held Saturday December 7, in Stafford VA, from 1 pm to 3 pm. You can take both

Basics I and II the same day if you wish. Register with k3ep@arrl.net

The Winter Storms class covers how to describe and measure snow, snowfall, snow accumulation, and differentiate the different types of snow and ice to be more informative about the precipitation you are reporting. A Winter Storms class is sched-

uled for Tuesday, December 3, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm in the Cumberland (MD) EOC center. To register, call 301-777-7112.

Another Winter Storms class is scheduled for Monday, January 13, at the Sterling (Dulles Airport) Weather Office, from 7 to 9 pm. To register, call Melody at 703-260-0107, extension 400.

## Zed-Queue-Willy Under the Weather

Just as this issue was going to press, we heard rumors that Leon Rosenberger, W4ZQW, had suffered a stroke, but was home from the hospital. Best wishes to Leon/Rosie for a speedy recovery!





## The Opinionated One: Special Interest Groups Among Hams in the Valley

Computer aficionados know about SIG's, or Special Interest Groups. An SIG is a collection of like-minded individuals who get together periodically, either in person or electronically, to talk about their common interest. On the Internet, you find SIG's devoted to Linux (whatever that is), cats, golf, home-schooling, and lots of other diverse subjects.

What most people don't know is that we have a number of special interest groups right here among our local ham radio operators! Most of these groups are open to "outsiders", but unless you enjoy their particular special interest, prepare to be bored out of your skull. For those of you who DO happen to share their interests, however, it is my privilege to introduce you to some of the good fellows who inhabit these strange and hidden habitats.

**THE QUEUE ARE PEE GROUP:** One of the least obscure of the local SIG's is known as the QRP group. KD5KA and K4LXG are typical of this motley crew. Every so often (they SAY they get together once a month, but no one knows for sure!) this group reportedly sneaks out of their houses and congregates in a little outback wooden workshop way down a dirt road in Weyers Cave. They make radios out of empty tuna cans, old milk bottles, and pieces of discarded '67 Chevy carburetors. Using microscopes, tweezers, and 120-pound spools of solder, they put together radios whose signals couldn't be heard by the dish at Greenbank even if it was aimed right at their antenna. W3MMC generates more RF energy just by combing his hair! (And remember that in this context, the term "hair" is singular: Bob only has one!) The QRP bunch doesn't care whether the radios ever actually work. They get together mainly to swap stories about their motorcycles!

**THE CAMPERS:** Epitomized by W4PJW, N4ATF, KE4GKD, and others, this group spends almost as much money on recreational vehicles, trailers, and other portable lodging facilities as the average ham does repairing his Kenwood radio. Well, okay, maybe that's an exaggeration, but hey, they DO spend a fair amount of money on camping equipment. When you step inside one of these vehicles, you discover that they are made by stuffing a Motel 6 room into the back of a Waffle House, and putting the whole thing on wheels! About twice a year, the camping group burns a lot of gas-oline hauling these contraptions up a mountain to spend the night and talk about how to best fix their camping vehicles. They trade the names of catalogs and dealers who sell parts to repair the things, as well as techniques and workarounds for fixing the stuff that goes wrong: bad hot water heaters, leaky water tanks, unlight-able stoves, drippy ceilings, cracked table mounts, and of course, overheated pickup trucks and SUV's which just can't take the abuse of hauling a 40-ton trailer up to Loft Mountain Campground twice a year.

**THE NIGHT OWLS:** This group of hams comes on the air each evening about midnight. They can usually be found on the 225 repeater or one of its sister link machines, but have been known to pop up anywhere. Just like contesters, who say the same thing

over and over for every contact ("5-9 Virginia, good luck in the contest, CQ CQ Contest..."), the conversation of the night owls is exactly the same, every night. It goes something like this: "So how's it goin'?" "Fine. You?" "Tired." "Me, too." "Really tired." "Me, too." "Yep, I know." "Heard from Don lately?" "Nope." "Me neither." "Heard him last week, though." "Really?" "Yep." "Mmmm, guess he's still around, then." "Yep." "Done anything lately?" "Nope." "Me neither." The rare ham that is up at that hour of night might conclude that these aren't hams at all — you can often listen for hours without ever hearing a callsign — but rather are circuits inside the repeater intended to test the transmitter late at night when no one else is around to use the frequency.

**THE MOBILE HF'ERS:** K4DJG, WD4LIG, and KC4HYO are examples of this group. Bob has an antenna on his pickup truck so big that he had to apply for a zoning exception to park it at his house. I know hams who have self-supporting Rohn HDX towers that are half the size of what Ed or Joe have mounted on their bumpers. Mobile HF'ers have a second 360 HP engine in their vehicle just to power the alternator that runs the radio equipment. I was driving by the home of one of these hams one morning last month, and his wife was outside putting a frozen rib roast in the trunk of his car. "What are you doing?" I asked. "Oh, he has one of those remote-head HF rigs in his car," she replied, "The radio box in the trunk gets so hot, that roast will be well done by the time he gets home tonight."

**THE APRS GUYS:** APRS stands for Automatic Position Reporting System, and believe it or not, has actually been trademarked by a ham named Bruninga. You have to get to know the APRS bunch before you can appreciate why Bruninga had to trademark his acronym! N4DSL, KE4LKQ, and KN4U are some of the guys in this group. They tie their GPS receivers and ham radios together, so that the ham radio transmits the exact location of the GPS receiver every few minutes. The funny thing is, most of these stations are BASE stations! That's right. They stay in one place. Like, I mean, REALLY in one place. So if you tune in to 144.39 with packet equipment, you will be able to tell whether or not the Laird's Knob APRS Station has rolled down the mountain yet or not.

**THE EXPERIMENTERS:** AD4TJ, K4EME, and N4DSL are among this crowd. No one really understands what they are doing, but they enjoy doing it. As soon as they get something put together and are sure it is working, they take it apart and move on to something else. No one ever hears these guys on the air anymore. They are too busy on the phone to each other trying to get their exotic modes to work right. These guys are cutting edge. One day you will read about one of these hams inventing the transporter you saw on Star Trek! It will use a Folger's can, aluminum welding rod, an Icom dual-bander, and a whole lotta miscellaneous thingies from MFJ. But once it's working, they'll take it apart and move on to something new...

Don't see anything you like? Keep looking and listening. There's a Special Interest Group around here for everybody!

FREQ	LOCATION	CTCSS
145.110	Dunmore, (Pocahontas County, West Virginia)	
145.130	Massanutten Peak, 5 miles east of Harrisonburg ( <i>occasional tone</i> )	88.8
145.190	Moorefield (West Virginia)	118.8
145.210	Linden, VA (3 miles SE of Front Royal)	131.8
145.285	Zions Crossroads, Between Charlottesville and Richmond	
145.330	Farmville northeast of Lynchburg	
145.410	Madison	100.0
145.470	Stuarts Draft (off the air?)	
145.490	Amherst (north of Lynchburg)	136.5
146.625	Big Mountain, 5 miles east of New Market, VA,	131.0
146.670	Luray, Page County ARES	114.8
146.685	Amherst, north Lynchburg (Good coverage!)	100.0
146.700	Staunton city	131.8
146.730	Frederick, MD	
146.745	Berkeley Springs, West Virginia	123.0
146.760	Charlottesville	151.4
146.790	Fairfax, Northern Virginia	
146.805	Covington, VA, west of Lexington ( <i>occasional tone</i> ) almost to Roanoke	118.8
146.820	Winchester, VA	
146.850	Hermitage, 3 miles north of Waynesboro	131.8
146.880	Richmond	
146.895	Bucks Elbow Mountain, 10 miles ENE of Waynesboro, N4RAG system	131.8
146.910	Tyson's Corner, NE of Vienna	
146.925	Charlottesville	151.4
146.985	Roanoke	
147.045	Elliott's Knob, 15 miles west of Staunton	131.8
147.060	Frederick, MD	
147.075	Bear Den Mountain, 7 miles east of Waynesboro	
147.090	Spruce Flat (Marlinton) West Virginia	131.8
147.120	Culpeper, VA	
147.165	Warrenton, VA	
147.180	Monterey, VA	
147.225	Lairds Knob, 5 miles NE of Harrisonburg, N4RAG link system	131.8
147.240	Woodbridge VA	107.2
147.285	Spruce Knob, WV (West Virginia HAMTALK system)	103.5
147.300	Bluemont, 5 miles north of Front Royal VA	146.2
147.315	Harrisonburg, EMU campus	
147.330	Rockbridge, 3 miles east of Buena Vista	
147.345	Franklin, WV	
147.360	Stuarts Draft, 5 miles south of Waynesboro	

## You Might Be Surprised!

How many of these repeaters can you work from your home? ...From your car? ... Or with your HT?

Got a day off for the holidays? If so, take half an hour and see how many of these machines you can work reliably.

Bet you didn't think you could reach Lynchburg from here on two meters, did you? Or Amherst, or Richmond, or Vienna? But you might!

Don't just "kerchunk" the repeater. That's rude and bad amateur practice, not to mention illegal. Set up your radio with the proper PL tone, then key up, and listen for the repeater's squelch tail.

Regardless of whether you can hear the repeater or not, don't forget to give your callsign.

If you can hear the repeater, give a quick "CQ, anybody around?" There is no substitute for getting a real live signal report to tell you how well you are (or are not) getting into a distant repeater.

If you can work the repeater, mark down the S-meter reading on the attached repeater list. Then, move on to the next one. You'll end up with a good idea of where you can and can't work on 2 meters.

Your list may come in handy during an emergency which takes some local repeaters off the air.

If you have a favorite callup emergency site, you might want to repeat this exercise from there, too.

Or maybe your office parking lot, or some other contingency operating position.

Knowledge is Power!



## MARA Secretary's Report—November 7, 2002 Meeting

The November meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association was held at Evers Restaurant in Mt. Crawford, the meeting was opened at 7:30PM by the club president, Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG, there were 30 members and guests present.

### Secretary's Report:

The secretary's report was accepted as given in the November MARA monitor from the October meeting.

### Treasurer's Report:

Sandy Mullins, K4PZC gave the treasurer's report with a balance as of November 1 of \$1460.13.

### Public Service:

Doug Alder, N4DUG not present, no report given.

### ARES:

Dale Showalter, N4DAI not present, no report given.

### ARES Net:

Norman Benner, KA4EEN not present, but Ellsworth, K4LXG emphasized on the need for volunteers for the Monday night ARES net.

### VE Exams:

Gayle Shull, KU4XN gave the schedule for the 2003 VE exams, the exams are going to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of every even month at the Woodman of the World building in Dayton.

### New Business:

The MARA Christmas party will be held on December 5<sup>th</sup> at Evers Restaurant in Mt. Crawford at 6:30PM, a numbers of members and guests planning to attend was taken at the meeting, if you plan to attend but were not at the meeting please contact Ellsworth, K4LXG with numbers. Everyone

is encouraged to bring a gift, something from the shack or just a trinket setting around that someone could use in their shack, there will be an exchange of gifts at the meeting.

Ellsworth, K4LXG reported that the proposed swap meet will be postponed until spring of 2003.

Gayle, KU4XN made the motion that the \$300 from the Bridge-water lawn party be split between the appropriate repeater owners / groups, as in the past, the motion was seconded and passed.

50 /50 was won by Bob, N1QEQ, \$17.50 went to the club and Bob gave \$16 of his winnings to the club.

Chuck, KD5KA reported there will be a meeting of the QRP club on Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>.

### New Members:

Terry Kielbasa, KG4MWI application for membership was read, will be voted on at next months meeting. Also two members were added that were MARA members in the past, Neil Buckingham, WA4KKL and Scott Lowe, WA0TPN.

### Program:

A last minute program was given by Gene Rodgers, KG4JBC on refreshing nickel cadmium batteries (Ni-Cad's).

The meeting was closed at 8:18PM.

Todd Harrison, K4TMH  
MARA Secretary

## VARA President's Message

Hello to all again. It was nice to see everyone at the last meeting.

I would like to Welcome Herb Slade (AA2BF) as a new club member to VARA and I know he will be an asset to the club. We will also have two new members to vote on in January and they are Terry Kielbasa (KG4MWI) and Andrew Barbour (KG4GZG) and looking forward to their membership also.

Looks like Benny Cook (N4BCC) will be taking over as the new VARA President. I am looking forward to working with him. I will be the Vice President this year. I know all the other club members will support him as they have supported me for the past year.

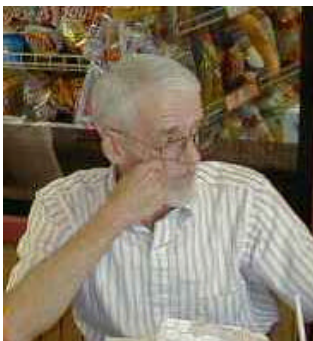
While on that subject I would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all that supported me as President. Without you I could not have done it.

Christmas Party!!! Lets all remember that December's Meeting will be the Christmas Party at Western Sizzlin Restaurant in Waynesboro on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Plan on being there about 6:30 PM and hope to eat around 7 PM. Remember all are welcome so bring your family, friends.

Please let Ray (KE4HVR) know in advance so he can contact the restaurant as to how many they need to plan for. So hope to see you there for some fine food and fellowship at this time of the year.

That's about it for this month and just want to take this time to say that I hope all of you have a "Happy Holiday and a Fantastic New Year" seems like 2002 just got here and then wham bam it is gone. I must be getting old!!

Ken Harris  
KE4GKD



## VARA Secretary's Report – November 5, 2002 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Shoney's in Staunton on November 5, 2002. The President Ken Harris KE4GKD opened the meeting at 7:30pm. There were 19 members present and 5 guests, Bob VanFossen K4DJG, Kay Cook KF4CZL, Marvin Henderson Jr. KF4WDI, Terry Kielbasa KG4MWWI and Andrew Barbour KG4GZG.

The 50/50 was won by Benny Cook N4BCC, congratulations Benny! Did Kay get her share?

### New Officers for 2003 are:

Benny Cook N4BCC as President; Ken Harris KE4GKD as Vice-President; Jeff Rinehart W4PJW as Treasurer; and Ray Colvin KE4HVR as Secretary.

Herb Slade AA2BF was voted into the Club as a new member. Welcome to the VARA Herb!

Terry Kielbasa KG4MWWI and Andrew Barbour KG4GZG turned in applications this month and will be voted on at our January meeting. We will have the Christmas Party in place of our regular monthly meeting in December.

The VARA voted to give Ozro Dillon KD4RD a Lifetime Membership to the club. Ozzie is one of the charter members of the VARA. We now have four Lifetime Members in the VARA, Joe Moomaw W4XD and Ozro Dillon KD4RD, which are Charter Members, Sam Pickering KF4EKV and Ken Harris KE4GKD.

The MS Walk is coming up on Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup> in Waynesboro. Mark your calendar now if you plan to help. We should be there by 1:00pm and the walkers will start at 2:00pm. The walk usually last about two or two and a half hours and is a worthwhile community event.

Billy Hooke KG4JOF volunteered to set up a swap page on his own

Home Page and have Bob McCracken N4JGO link it to the VARA Web Page and David Fordham link it to the MARA Web Page. This will be for Ham related items only. You can send a list of items you have for sale, swap or something you would like to buy, to Billy Hooke KG4JOF. Billy's e-mail address is: KG4JOF@arrl.net Also if you have a digital camera or scanner and can send a picture of the item that would help sell it.

We will let you know when it is up and running.

**ADDRESSES!!!** If your e-mail address or home address is changed for any reason **YOU** need to notify us so we can make the necessary changes so you will continue to get your newsletter. Also you should update your e-mail address in QRZ and Buckmaster. This is where we look if an e-mail is returned to us.

You can send your e-mail address to: Benny, bennycjr@ntelos.net Ken, klharris@rica.net Jeff, jmrinehart@yahoo.com Ray, colvingr@rica.net David, fordhadr@jmu.edu

Thanks to all who helped with Bike Virginia this year. We heard a lot of good comments from Bike VA Management and the bikers. There was only one incident this year, one rider had a sprained wrist but was not transported.

### On the sick list:

Ozzie Dillon KD4RD has been home and seems to be doing a little better. He is not on oxygen full time as before. Dan James W4DLJ is still taking therapy here in town and getting along well at this time.

Joe Pehan W4LIG has had an

operation and is recovering at home. Joe said he is still sore but hopes to be back up and running in the next two weeks. Lets keep these in our thoughts and prayers.

David Tanks 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. The Net has moved to the 146.850 repeater on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 8:00pm. This repeater has a minus offset and a tone of 131.8 when needed. Mark your calendar and check into the net. Remember without YOU there will be NO ARES NET.

We would like to get training classes started for the Technician level. Anyone interested in helping teach the classes please contact Ken KE4GKD, Alby AD4KZ or Richard KF4QZG. We need to get some young people interested in ham radio so listen for any hints that someone may like to learn what it is all about.

Richard KF4QZG, Program Chairman, asks for anyone who would like to do a program at one of our meetings to give him a call and get a date set up to present it. It does not have to

be HAM related, anything you think the group would find interesting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09pm

Clinton Campbell KB4OLM, Richard Huttering AA4RH and David Tanks AD4TJ presented a show and tell on building a battery maintainer from parts lying around the shack. They used a power supply taken from a piece of equipment found at a salvage yard. There was a fuse added at the 120VAC input. Also a fuse at the 13.2VDC output along with a bulb in series with the positive lead to limit the charging current to the battery being charged and the charger if the output would ever be shorted. If the output is shorted the bulb will burn instead of damaging the power supply. All this was mounted in a nice wooden box built by Clinton's Dad.

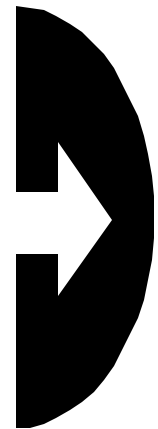
Thanks to Clint, Richard and David for this presentation, good job!

Submitted By:  
VARA Secretary  
Ray Colvin KE4HVR

### HANDY DANDY RENEWAL FORM

Use this form to send in your club dues renewal for 2003. If you are not already a member of the club, you may have to use an application form to apply for club membership. Contact an officer of the club you wish to join for an application.

Please, have pity on your newsletter editor and renew right now while it is on your mind! Don't wait until he has removed you from the mailing list!



## Membership Renewal Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Call: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: *(print legibly!!)* \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER OF ARRL (y/n): \_\_\_\_ REGISTERED MEMBER OF VA -RACES (y/n): \_\_\_\_ RACES TRAINED (y/n): \_\_\_\_

SKYWARN ID *(if SkyWarn trained)* \_\_\_\_\_ Are you available for Workday Daytime Emergency Callup? (y/n) \_\_\_\_

Do you want to receive the Monitor via PDF Email? Yes/No/I already Do \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT ABILITIES & CAPABILITIES: Do you have the technical ability, knowledge, experience, know-how, and the equipment to **reliably** operate the following modes or activities? Check all that apply.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF CW slow-speed                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50 Mhz FM                | <input type="checkbox"/> APRS, base WX or digipeating             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF CW high-speed (15 wpm and up) | <input type="checkbox"/> 50 MHz — other modes     | <input type="checkbox"/> APRS, mobile transmitting                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF SSB                           | <input type="checkbox"/> 2m FM                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Simple GPRS positioning capability       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF Mobile from vehicle           | <input type="checkbox"/> 2m weak signal, AM, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> EME or Meteor Scatter or JT44            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF Portable or QRP               | <input type="checkbox"/> 220 FM                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Microwave (902 Mhz or higher)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NTS HF Message Handling ability  | <input type="checkbox"/> 220 other modes          | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite Operations (analog modes)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF Slow-Scan TV                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 440 FM                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite Operations (digital modes)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional RTTY                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 440 weak signal          | <input type="checkbox"/> RDF — Direction Finding                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PSK31                            | <input type="checkbox"/> 440 fast scan television | <input type="checkbox"/> Ham equipment diagnosing/light repairing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other HF digital modes           | <input type="checkbox"/> Simple Packet            | <input type="checkbox"/> Tower climbing/antenna installation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weather Station & Monitoring     | <input type="checkbox"/> DX cluster and/or BBS    | <input type="checkbox"/> PIC programming & circuit design         |

Other abilities and capabilities: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT TOPICS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON THE CLUB MEETING PROGRAMS? (check all that apply or add more.)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF operating and Etiquette         | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather Stations, Weather Monitoring & Reporting | <input type="checkbox"/> Innovative Mobile Rig Installations  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF DXing                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Skywarn: What's it all about?                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Microwaves (902 Mhz or higher)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contesting Etiquette               | <input type="checkbox"/> Ultra-Simple Antenna Designs                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite Operations (analog modes)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> QSL'ing methods, hints, tips       | <input type="checkbox"/> 2m weak signals                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite Operations (digital modes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comparisons of Logging Software    | <input type="checkbox"/> 220 or 440 operations                            | <input type="checkbox"/> RDF — Direction Finding              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile, Portable or QRP operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast scan television: How To...                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Response Kits              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NTS HF Message Handling skill      | <input type="checkbox"/> Simple Packet: How To...                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Operations in Emergencies      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HF Slow-Scan TV: How To...         | <input type="checkbox"/> DX cluster and/or BBS                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Ham equipment diagnosing/repairing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional RTTY: How To...        | <input type="checkbox"/> APRS: Getting Started                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Tower climbing/antenna installation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other HF digital modes             | <input type="checkbox"/> Simple GPRS introduction                         | <input type="checkbox"/> PIC programming & circuit design     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What's on 50 Mhz?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> EME or Meteor Scatter                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Traders Day, Homebrew Fair           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CORES, FRN, ULS: What's it mean?   |   |   |

Other interesting subjects for meeting programs: \_\_\_\_\_

**VARA Renewals: mail with \$15 to Jeff Rinehart, 1344 Hankey Mtn Highway, Churchville VA 24421**

**MARA Renewals: mail with \$12 to VARA, PO Box 1882, Harrisonburg, VA 22801**

## 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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Return Service Requested

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### MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

President: Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG  
Vice President: Chuck Vogan, KD5KA  
Secretary: Todd Harrison, K4TMH  
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC  
Board (exp 03): Jason Armentrout, N4DSL  
Board (exp 04): Richard Haxton, KC3AN

<http://cob2.jmu.edu/fordham/MARA/>

MARA Christmas Party December 5  
Evers Restaurant, Harrisonburg  
6:30 pm.

**Visitors are welcome.**

Dues (\$12 per year) should be mailed to:  
MARA  
PO Box 1882  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

### VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Benny Cook, N4BCC  
Vice President: Ken Harris, KE4GKD  
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR  
Treasurer: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW  
Program Manager: Richard Huttinger, AA4RH

<http://www.qsl.net/w4mus>

VARA Christmas Party December 17  
Western Sizzlin, Staunton  
6:30 pm

**Reservations Requested.  
See Article on Page 1.**

Dues (\$15 per year) should be mailed to:  
Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW  
1344 Hankey Mtn Hwy  
Churchville, VA 24421