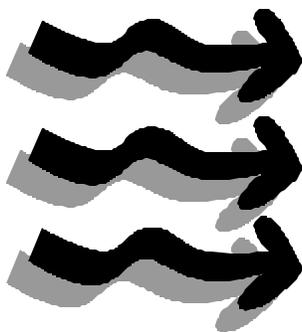


Published jointly by the Valley Amateur Radio Association and the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association,  
Dedicated to serving those interested in Amateur Radio in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley

## AUGUSTA EOC TOUR



### September Meeting: MARA and VARA – Thursday September 4

Remember, the September meeting of both MARA and VARA will be held jointly, on Thursday, September 4, 2003.

There will be no formal dinner prior to the meeting. However, hams are encouraged to “get on the air” and make contact with other hams and eat together at the restaurant of your choice. Verona features several dining establishments: Country Cupboard, Kathy's, Burger King, Wendys, Ciro's Pizza, China City, Dairy Queen, Subway, etc.

The meeting will begin promptly at 7:30 pm, in the front foyer of the Augusta County Government Center in Verona.

The meeting will feature a short PowerPoint presentation, followed by a guided tour of the Augusta County Emergency Command Center, focusing on the communications systems.

Visitors are welcome.

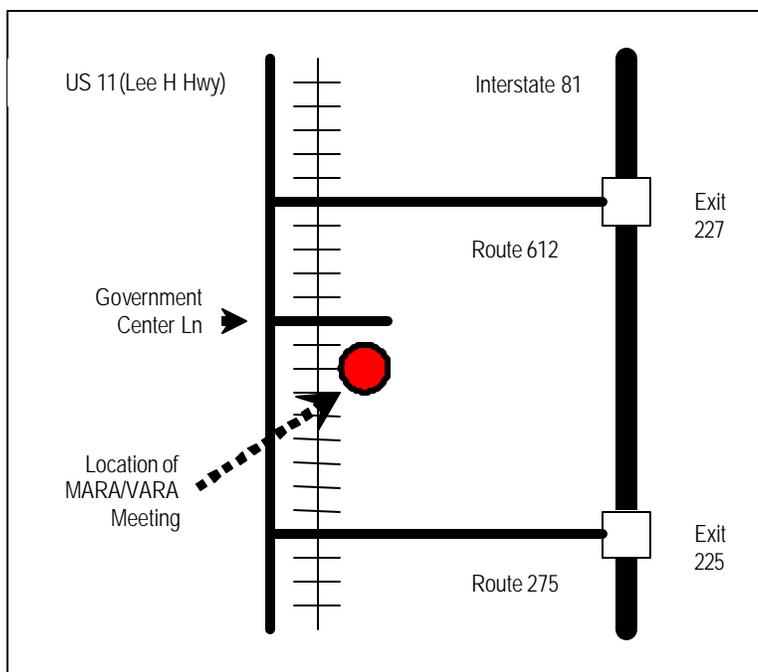
Directions are given below.

## Directions to Augusta County Government Center

From Harrisonburg, Bridgewater, and other points north, take Interstate 81 South, to Exit 277 (Verona).

Bear right at the end of the exit ramp and go West on State Road 612, approximately 1-1/2 mile. Cross the railroad and turn LEFT at the traffic light for U.S. 11 (Lee Highway). Go south on U. S. 11 for approximately 1 mile to the traffic light for Government Center Lane. Turn left, cross the railroad again, and turn right into the parking lot. The center is the building with the green roof.

From Staunton, Waynesboro, and points south, take Interstate 81 north to exit 225. At the end of the exit ramp, turn left (west) on Route 275 (Woodrow Wilson Parkway). Go approximately 1 mile to the traffic light at U.S. 11 (Lee Highway). Turn left (north on U. S. 11), and go 1-1/2 miles to the traffic light at Government Center Lane. Turn right, cross the railroad tracks again, and turn right into the parking lot. The center is the building with the green roof.



## VE Exam Session Report — “Thank You” for the Help

Winter is approaching so get out the manuals and get that upgrade out of the way. A little study each day and before you know it you will be ready for the test. So make good use of the extra time the colder days offer (no grass to mow) and join all your friends on the frequencies you will get with an upgrade.

The test session on 08-09-03 was attended by only one person to upgrade and they were successful in earning a General ticket.

A hearty “Thanks” to those helping:  
JASON ARMENTROUT N4DSL  
CHARLES VOGAN KD5KA  
KENNETH HIGH K4KLH  
ROBERT VANFOSSEN K4DJG  
CHARLES NEFF K4LXG  
RAY RITCHIE K4NRA

Our next test will be offered October 11 2003, so hoping to see you there.

GAYLE KU4XN

## Two-Legged Fox Found in Augusta County!

On August 14th a 2-legged fox was found in Augusta County, in the parking lot of a local church.

The hunters were told to begin looking for this particular fox at 7:30 pm, and half an hour later one of them had found the creature.

He was holed up in a big metal box, supported by 4 circles of rubber, and the strangest thing of all was he was talking on a ham radio! Very strange behavior for a fox! Several other hunters were looking for him, and by 9:11 pm or so, they too, saw the 2-legged talking fox.

If you haven't figured it out by now, I am talking about the ARES Net/Fox Hunt activity for Augusta County.

Rumor has it that there will be another 2-legged talking fox in our area on Sept. 11 at 7:15 pm, on the Augusta County ARES simplex freq of 146.490.

So, all you fox hunters out there, get your gear ready, and come on out and do some hunting. Bob N4JGO has volunteered to be "It" this time; I don't know what he has in store, so it may be very interesting!

David AD4TJ  
Emergency Radio Operator (ERO) for Augusta County

## MARA Nominating Committee Seeks Member Input

The MARA Nominating Committee, made up of Andrew Barbour AG4XN, David Fordham KD9LA, and Gerry Brunk K4RBZ, met on August 28 for over an hour discussing a potential slate of 2004 officers.

MARA Officers are elected at the October meeting each year, and serve to guide and inspire the club for the following 12 months. The officers determine the direction, personality, and activities of the club. The

committee feels strongly the officer slate should reflect the member's desires, ideas, and culture. If you would like to offer input, please contact a member of the committee: K4RBZ at 434-0440, AG4XN at 337-1608, or KD9LA at 234-0448.

The Committee plans to present the slate at the October meeting. At that meeting, additional nominations may be made from the floor.

## Public Service Events – Assistance Needed

There are two Public Service events planned this month. If you would like to help, please let me know. You can reach me at 434-0859, or kn4fm@arrl.net, or on the Monday night nets. If all else fails, just show up and give us a hand.

**Sept. 6:** EMHS Cross Country Invitational. The location of this event has been moved. Due to the course location and layout, we will PROBABLY not be needed this year. But please check with the Monday night nets for an update in case we are needed. I understand that volunteers are needed to be marshals. If you would like to help, I'll pass your name to the contact person.

**Sept 27:** Bike Shenandoah. This is NOT the same as Bike Virginia, which is held in October. This event is a fund raising event for the Mennonite Central Committee (they do a lot of relief work overseas), the local Mennonite Mission Board and another charity or two, I'm not sure what they are at this time. The event consists of a 100 mile, 100 km, and a 30 mile ride. They would like to have our help with keeping tabs on everybody and providing emergency communications if needed. This is an entire day event. There are four rest stops (two open all day and two open only until approximately noon). There are also two sags that could use hams if we have enough help. The starting and ending locations as well as out meeting place is EMHS. There will be a dinner provided that evening for those that participate. Contact me if you would like more information.

## When You're Hot, You're HOT: Herb Slade AA2BF

My new QTH is 9825 N. 70th St., Apt. 213, Scottsdale, AZ 85253. I arrived here with my car in tow behind a UHaul, on July 10, and didn't see sub-100 daytime temps for the first three weeks!

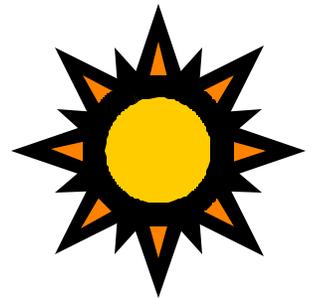
If we can adapt to this, we will be fine at any time in AZ! The local radio station noted we were going to have a cooler day last week, with a high of only 103!

A few days before, it reached 117! But the humidity is low, so it isn't as oppressive as you might think. We are careful to drink plenty of water all the time.

I have not raised anyone on the local repeaters yet. I have only succeeded in "hitting" one, actually, so I think they have instituted tone access that my 1998 Repeater Book doesn't know about. I will have to ask when I catch someone over the one repeater I can get to respond.

Being in an apartment, I don't anticipate any HF activity for the near future, although I may try a stealth vertical wire, end fed, by throwing something high in a tree outside our second-floor balcony.

73, Herb Slade, AA2BF  
hslade@cox.net



## FREE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Serving as Net Control Operator is great experience, and good preparation for emergency communications! Volunteer to run a Monday-night Rockingham ARES Net! Call Norman Benner, KA4EEN, at 289-5801. The Net Control script is now on the MARA club's Reference web page.

## Virginia Beach Hamfest: September 20-21

The dates and location for the 2003 Virginia Beach Hamfest have *finally* been finalized.

It will take place on the weekend of 20-21 September, at Virginia Wesleyan College, conveniently just off Rt. 64 at the Northampton Blvd exit.

The College Center is a beautiful facility of over 26,000 square feet.

We had to make a couple of changes to our normal hours of operation schedule due to our being at the College, those being a load in time of 8AM-12 noon for vendors, with doors opening to the public at Noon.

We will, however, stay open until 6PM on Saturday. Sunday will be the normal 9AM-3PM show hours.

We already have commitment for attendance of Communications Headquarters, T.C. Morgan, MFJ and our loyal friend Sam (the gadget

man), as some of the major vendors. Table price, again, will be only \$30.

Sorry, this year we won't be able to have Tailgating. It's our first time in this new facility and we have to get ourselves established with credibility before we try to expand our horizons.

Also, this year's Virginia Beach Hamfest will accommodate the American Radio Relay League as their Virginia State Division Convention. Our Roanoke Division Director Dennis Bodson, and Vice Director, Les Shattuck will be available for you to speak with, and to head up an informative ARRL forum. Come out and talk to your ARRL representatives.

The QSL Bureau has also confirmed their representation for the checking of your QSL cards.

Once again, we're staying at the lower ticket price of only \$5, and

yes, parking will be free! For those of you traveling into the area, there are plenty of close-by hotel/motels within 5-10 minutes of the show and less than 20 minutes to the beach itself. Remember, this time in September is still a beautiful time for late night walks in the sand.

I can't forget to mention some of the other great attractions we have in this area - the USS WISCONSIN, the Virginia Air and Space Museum *with operating amateur radio satellite station*, the Marine Science Museum, Nauticus, and the list is endless.

Great dealers and manufacturers, door prizes, free parking and lots of things to do for a fun-filled weekend for you and the family in Virginia Beach. What more could a Ham ask for? Please visit our website, [WWW.VAHAMFEST.COM](http://WWW.VAHAMFEST.COM) for ticket and table information, and other Virginia Beach Hamfest information, and feel free to contact us at

hamfest@exis.net with any inquiries.

Recommended Area Hotels are as follows:

Best Western  
5718 Northampton Blvd.  
Virginia Beach, VA 23455  
(757) 363-2500

Days Inn at the Norfolk Airport  
5708 Northampton Blvd.  
Virginia Beach, VA 23455  
(757) 460-2205

Holiday Inn Norfolk Airport  
1570 N. Military Hwy.  
Norfolk, VA 23502  
(757) 213-2231

Lake Wright Quality and Sleep Inn  
6280 Northampton Blvd.  
Norfolk, VA 23502  
(800) 228-5157

Hope to see you all there!

Lynn Lilla, W9DJQ  
President, Virginia Beach Hamfest

## CAN YOU READ THIS NOW? GOOD!

Several hams have noticed the larger type font now being used in the Monitor. This is for those MARA and VARA members who are advancing in years, and who've had trouble reading the microscopic .00021 pitch font used in previous issues. Comments on the Monitor and its production are always welcome.

## MARA President's Message

Hello to everyone. I hope everyone is enjoying the break from the wet weather. It is really summer now but as time moves so quickly, it is going to be cooler before we know it. Time to get busy and overhaul/rework/install/put up those antennas before the colder weather and snow arrives. I have to re-erect my G5RV HF antenna as it came down when the parachute cord I used to support it wore in two from tree branches rubbing against it. Af-

ter working with broadcast antennas all day, I do not particularly want to come home and do the same thing on a smaller scale. But so far it has not erected itself. As I mentioned in The Monitor last month, our new house will be completed after the first of the year. I plan to erect a tower and the antenna farm before it is completed so maybe I can have an "antenna/tower erecting party" before long (hint, hint). I may not go to the trouble to put the G5RV back up

here where I live now as I think about it. — I do wish to thank all of you for the great attendance at the club meetings and for your support over the almost two years that I have been your club president. You all are a fine group of people and I, more than anything, value my friendship with all of you. We have a great club and I am proud to be a member.

73,  
Ellsworth, K4LXG

## WN4JMU Station Status

The WN4JMU weather station on 145.51 MHz was knocked off the air by lightning sometime around the first week of August.

This station is located at the base of an 80-foot tower on the CISAT campus, just east of I-81.

Lightning hit the plastic anemometer and wind vane at the 80-foot level, but apparently did not touch the antennas at the 75-foot level. The TNC, radio transceiver, and electronics at the base of the tower were unharmed, but the fuses blew, taking the station off the air.

Since the purpose of the station is to transmit wind data for collection, we will be keeping the station off the air until a replacement anemometer can be acquired and installed.

Also, the WN4JMU auto-patch has been suffering from static in the audio line. This has been traced to

ground-hog-induced damage to the feedline. The feedline has been replaced and audio quality restored.

An alternate antenna mounting location and metal conduit is being considered to more permanently fix the situation.

## For Sale By Oscar KB4GUA

Oscar is selling a LOT of equipment, all listed on the VARA Swap Shop page. Check 'em out!

Yaesu 1000D Top-of-the-line HF rig, used only 96 hours! \$1500

Azden PCS 6000H 2-m mobile rig: \$150

Kenwood TM231 2m mobile rig \$150 OBO

Kentwood TR7950 2m mobile rig: FREE with purchase of either of the above rigs!

Kenwood TH78 dual-bander handheld \$175

MFJ-989 Antenna Tuner, 3kw PEP, antenna switch, SWR meter, roller inductor, never used: \$100

Pakratt PK232 multi-

mode controller (TNC, RTTY, Amtor, etc.) \$50

Micromatic (Heath) Memory Keyer SA5010, used very little, \$15

Straight Key: \$5

Contact Oscar at 540-946-8586.

## VARA Secretary's Report – July 1 Meeting

The **V**alley **A**mateur **R**adio **A**ssociation met at Shoney's in Staunton on July 1, 2003. The President Benny Cook N4BCC opened the meeting at 7:30pm. There were 25 members present and 8 guests, Bob VanFossen K4DJG, John Bottemiller N4SYH, John Lasher N3GLZ, Carol Landes N4JKX, Don Landes WX4C, Ellsworth Neff K4LXG, Jeanne Neff, Ron Birch W4ZEE. Welcome to our visitors, and we would like to see all of you back next month.

The 50/50 was won by Joe Pehan W4LIG, congratulations Joe! Did you tell Maria about this?

Benny reported that all went well at Field Day 2003 and it looks like we may be close to our 2002 F. D. Points. The final score was not in at our August meeting.

Alby McCutchen AD4KZ brought to our attention at our June meeting that the three local Libraries do not have license study material for new hams and suggested that the club purchase a book for each of the three local libraries. Bill Karle KG4UPN contacted the ARRL for the club and brought back information on purchasing Ham Radio license study guides for prospective hams. The cost of a set of books, CD's and tapes was \$200. The Club voted to purchase a set of books and place them in the Augusta County Library in Fishersville. With the computerized system of the local Libraries the books can also be checked out from the Staunton or Waynesboro Library.

### **TOUR coming up!**

Andrew Barbour AG4XN has talked with the Augusta County EOC and has a tour

set up for the MARA regular Thursday meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September and ask the VARA to join them. Thanks Andrew!  
**NOTE: This will take place of our regular VARA Meeting in September.**

Since our Club is out growing the room at Shoney's we have a committee of three, Richard Huttinger, Benny Cook and Al Bonck that are looking for a new location. The committee has contacted Ryans but they want everyone that attends to buy a meal. We have some members that prefer to only come for the meeting so this presents a problem. Hopefully we can find a place soon because we are outgrowing Shoney's.

Billy Hooke KG4JOF has the swap shop page completed and Bob McCracken N4JGO has linked it to the VARA 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 at: KG4JOF@arrl.net Also if you have a digital camera or scanner and can send a picture of the item, that would help it sell. Check it out from the VARA Web Site at: <http://www.qsl.net/w4mus/>

Butch Washer N5SMQ is the EC for Highland County and Jerry Moats WD4ITN is his assistant. Their ARES Net will be on the Monterey repeater 147.180+ and tone of 100.0 at 8:30pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. They would like to welcome everyone that can get into the repeater to check into the Net.

**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

### **On the sick list:**

Dan James W4DLJ is getting around without his walker part of the time and said it may not be long before he can join us for the Friday lunches.

Lonnie Czerniak N4WIV, Greg's (W4GRC) wife, took her first short 31 mile motorcycle ride since her operation. Greg said she got tired but enjoyed the ride.

Lets keep these folks 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 will be held on 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 Benny N4BCC, Alby AD4KZ or Richard AA4RH. We need to get some young people interested in ham radio. Listen for any hints that someone may like to learn what ham radio is all about.

### **PROGRAMS NEEDED...**

Richard AA4RH, our 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. It could be anything you think the group would find interesting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm

Ellsworth Neff K4LXG brought in a video tape of a 1,800 ft. tower in Florida that he was hired to go up to videotape phasing problems with some of the antennas. The highest he could go was 1,600 feet due to RF exposure and all stations have to go off for anyone to go higher. Ellsworth lucked out on this tower since it was so tall it had an elevator to ride up. Because of RF he was not allowed to go all the way to the top where the antennas were mounted. The video showed several views looking down from a midway platform and near the top which looked like looking out of an airplane. The orange groves looked like neatly aligned dots and houses looked like building blocks. The cars on the highway looked like the HotWheel toy cars. The 800ft. tower standing next to it looked like an erector set tower. On a clear day you could see for nearly 50 miles. The legs of the tower were 8" solid steel with bolted flanges. There were platforms around the tower at mid-way and near the top for the maintenance workers. Thanks to Ellsworth for sharing the video of his giant tower experience with us.

Submitted By:  
VARA Secretary  
Ray Colvin KE4HVR

## MARA Secretary's Report – August 3 Meeting

The August 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, and there were 30 members and 4 guests present.

The secretary's report for the July meeting was accepted as given in the August issue of the MARA monitor.

Sandy Mullins, K4PZC gave the treasurers report, the clubs balance as of 7/31/03 was \$2102.12, and the report was accepted as given.

Gerald Nauman, KN4FM told the club of two upcoming public service events, on September 6<sup>th</sup> there is the EMHS cross country event, and Bike Shenandoah on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Norman Benner, KA4EEN, mentioned that he could always use more volunteers for the Monday night Rockingham County emergency service net.

Andrew Barbour, AG4XN reminded the club that there will be a tour of the Augusta EOC center in Verona on September 4<sup>th</sup> along with the VARA club which will be the September meeting. The meeting will begin promptly at 7:30 pm, the group will assemble inside the main entrance to the Augusta County Government Center, just south of Verona. The program will include a short presentation by Augusta County Government officials, followed by a guided tour of the new state-of-the-art communications and command center. The meeting will adjourn around 8:30 to 9:00 pm. Visitors and guests are welcome.

Two items were voted on by the club, first was rather or not the MARA club should continue to be a fully affiliated ARRL club, the vote passed 42 to 12, the second vote was for rather the club should apply for a club call sign, the vote passed 50 to 4.

Two new members were voted on, the club welcomed Chris Shirkey, KI4BAQ and Hugh Pettis, K3EC to the MARA club.

Officer elections take place in October, the nominating committee this year will be David, KD9LA, Gerry, K4RBZ, and Andrew, AG4XN.

Todd Harrison, K4TMH won the 50 / 50 drawing, \$17 went to Todd and \$17 went to the club.

The formal meeting was adjourned at 8:28PM.

The program was by Chuck, KD5KA, Chuck gave more information on his QRP activities and equipment, also Chuck reminded the club that the QRP meeting takes place the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday after the MARA club meeting, at 7:00PM at Chuck's home in Weyers Cave.

Todd Harrison, K4TMH  
MARA Secretary

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Sep 4: Joint MARA/VARA Club Meeting
- Sep 6: EMHS Track meet, possible public service event (see pg. 2)
- Sep 6-7: Fall-Fest Columbia Maryland hamfest
- Sep 9: QRP Club Meeting (Weyers Cave)
- Sep 11: Augusta County ARES Fox Hunt, 7:15 pm, 146.49 simplex
- Sep 13-14: York (PA) Hamfest
- Sep 13-15: ARRL VHF QSO Party
- Sep 20-21: Virginia Beach Hamfest
- Sep 22: Fall QPR Homebrewer sprint
- Sep 27: Bike Shenandoah Public Service Event
- Sep 27: CQ-RJ Worldwide RTTY DX Contest

- Oct 2: MARA Club Meeting (Annual Elections meeting)
- Oct 7: VARA Club Meeting
- Oct 11: VE Examination Session, Dayton VA
- Oct 10: 10-10 Day
- Oct 18-19: ARRL EME Contest
- Oct 15: CQ Worldwide SSB DX Contest

- Nov 1-3: ARRL CW DX Sweepstakes
- Nov 15-17: ARRL Phone DX Sweepstakes

Looking for the Net Schedule? Net Schedules can be found on the MARA web pages, at the bottom of the "Schedule of Activities" page.

More information on most of these events can be obtained from the MARA web page. Go to the Schedule page, and click on the link for the event you are interested in.

# 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://mara.ws>

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. (SEE PAGE 1 FOR SPECIAL SEPT MEETING!)

**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 meets the first Tuesday of each month at Shoneys Restaurant on U.S. 250 east in Staunton. Meal starts at 6:30 pm. Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm. (SEE PAGE 1 FOR SPECIAL SEPT MEETING!)

**Visitors are welcome.**

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