

October 2003

# 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



## Bike Virginia – October 18-20 (now it's the Fall Foliage Bike Festival)

Any ham who has worked this event will tell you: "This one is fun!" A relaxing opportunity to spend a weekend in your car or truck, cruising a scenic route through spectacular fall foliage, – ready to respond to problems and emergency situations, in constant contact with net

control and other hams – what more could you ask for in a public service event? It takes a lot of hams to handle this event. We provide an extra layer of safety for several hundred bicyclists. For detailed information, see page 8 of this issue.

## A Live One! Hurricane Isabel – ARES & RACES Activity Report

Thanks to the weather, local hams got to use their emergency communication skills in a live callup situation.

At 8 pm Thursday night the Augusta County ARES/RACES net swung into action.

All 3 EOC centers were manned by amateurs, along with 4 schools in Augusta County used as emergency shelters, and 4 fire stations.

Check-ins were taken, with a total of 33 hams participating.

No major problems were encountered, other than a power supply burning up when the generator at Beverly Manor Middle School kicked in when the power was lost, and at another school it was discovered that the outlets only had 60 volts when the generator was running, so the operator there

had to resort to battery power. Also, Bob N4RWR had to evacuate his post at the Wilson Fire Station south of Waynesboro because of high water.

Communications were dependable, with the 146.850 repeater never losing power; but if it had, the owner ( KA4RCL ) was standing by to start its generator. If necessary we could have gone to simplex. We had a liason to the Rockingham County operation via N4DSL's 443.150 repeater. We also had a MARS liason KE4ASC on frequency.

Many thanks to all who participated, who stood by in case they were needed, and those who were there for moral support. Thanks again to all for a great job!

David Tanks AD4TJ Emergency Radio Officer for Augusta County

## Appreciation to Those Who Helped

Many Thanks to those hams who turned out during the storm:

### Augusta County Hams Receiving and Fulfilling Active Duty Assignments:

David Tanks AD4TJ	Augusta County EOC basement	EOC-1
Billy Hook KG4JOF	Augusta County EOC lunch room	EOC-2
Ray Colvin KE4HVR	Staunton EOC	Staunton EOC
Mike Reno KG4OON	Waynesboro EOC	Waynesboro EOC
Gordon Batey WA4FJC	Clymore Ele.	Shelter 1
Kenny Harris KE4GKD	Beverly Manor Middle	Shelter 2
Doug Edwards KA4NWK	Churchville Ele.	Shelter 3
Jeff Rinehart W4PJW	Churchville Ele.	Shelter 3
Marvin Henderson KF4WDI	Stuarts Draft Ele.	Shelter 4
Tim Bird KE4BVP	Deerfield Fire Station	Deerfield Fire Station
Buddy Padgett KI4BR	Dooms Fire Station	Dooms Fire Station
Jesse Hancock W4PQK	Middlebrook Fire Station	Middlebrook Fire Station
Bob Ryder N4RWR	Wilson Fire Station	Wilson Fire Station

### Rockingham County Net:

Doug Alder, N4DUG	Matthew Huffman KD4UPL	Roger Williams N4ITE
Richard McGregor, WB7FEY	Richard Haxton KC3AN	John Hensley WD4RXU
Colin Hester, N4ZFK	Phyllis Haxton N4VAC	George Brunk WB4IXG
Gene Sullivan WA4NUF	Norman Benner KA4EEN	David Tanks AD4TJ
Jeff Holsinger W4JVC	Richard Weaver W4HXH	David Fordham KD9LA
Dale Showalter N4DAI	Gerry Brunk K4RBZ	Billy Hooke KG4JOF
Chris Shirkey KI4BAQ	Bob Niemeyer W3MMC	Richard Gunick KG4WNZ
Jason Armentrout N4DSL	Stin Lenkerd KE4SSF	David Hughes KF4SVR
Scott Lowe WA0TPN	Wilton Thomas KF4BFL	Bob Van Fossen K4DJG
Daryl Cline WB4YEX	Carter Ritchie KG4PRP	Roger Sack W4IPD
Bryan Daniels K4RMV	David Padgett KI4BR	Ken Andersen KD4VPE
John Nelson N3JN	Joseph Moshier KF4QPC	Bob Hughes KF4BFC
Ray Ritchie K4NRA	Ralph Churchill W3FME	Richard Pence KF4SIK

## For Sale: Heathkit SB-220 HF Amplifier — Asking \$375

I would like to list for sale a Heathkit SB-220 HF amplifier. Works great: 100%.

Includes the softkey modification to allow keying by modern rigs. Also has a new fan motor and blade. I have new capacitors here in a box but have not installed them. They

go with the unit. This unit uses the 500 Z tubes and tunes up on all bands but 160 meters. Asking \$375 and will work out shipping or transportation with the buyer.

Contact Vic Alger, KE4LKQ, at ke4lkq@shentel.net, or telephone (Broadway) 896-2548.



K4LXG



KD5KA



Brad Pitt



K4PZC



KG4UPN

## MARA Nominating Committee Report

The MARA Nominating Committee was selected at the August meeting, and consisted of David Fordham KD9LA, Gerry Brunk K4RBZ, and Andrew Barbour AG4XN.

The committee solicited input from the membership at large, and met on August 28 at the Mt. Crawford Burger King for almost an hour.

The Committee first reviewed the club By-Laws and discussed the goals, objectives, and personality of the club as an organization. The entire membership roster was reviewed, and a list of over 20 potential candidates was compiled.

The committee next discussed the pros and cons of "new blood", "traditions and staying the course",

energy, dynamism, ideas and directions the club might pursue. The committee then compared these with the expressed wishes of those MARA members who contributed input and suggestions.

The committee felt it is in the best interest of the club to present a slate of only one candidate for each office. Remember, competitive nominations from the floor are welcome at the election meeting. If the nominating committee were to present a competitive slate too, there is the risk that members might be hesitant to make floor nominations. Or, the number of candidates might become unwieldy.

The committee deliberated long and hard to de-

velop a list of candidates who, if elected, would best serve the club and its membership (and indeed ham radio in the valley), confronting challenges, developing ideas, and listening to the will of the membership.

A rank ordered list of possible candidates for each position was developed. The committee was unanimous and enthusiastic about the choices ultimately selected.

The first-choice candidate for each office was contacted privately and asked (without pressure) if they would be interested in serving. In all five cases, the first choice candidate answered in the affirmative.

The slate consists of the incumbent President

(Ellsworth Neff K4LXG), the incumbent Vice-President (Chuck Vogan KD4KA), the incumbent Secretary (Todd Harrison K4TMH), and the incumbent Treasurer (K4PZC), all to serve in their current offices for another year. The committee added the name of Bill Karle KG4UPN as Director at Large for a two-year term 2004-2005.

To this list of candidates will be added the names of any nominations made from the floor at the October meeting, and the members attending that meeting will then elect the new officers for the coming year. (Incumbent director Richard Haxton KC3AN's 2-year term will expire at the end of 2004.)

## Joint MARA-VARA Club Meeting Group Photo



**Noses, left to right:** Bill Karle KG4UPN, Andrew Barbour AG4XN, ???, Jason Armentrout N4DSL, Bob Van Fossen K4DJG, Valorie Hancock KB8ZIS, John Lasher N3GLZ, Jeff Rinehart W4PIW (*kneeling*), Lenny Vincent N4LXP, Jess Hancock W4PQK, Cowles Andrus K4EME, Wilton Thomas KF4BFL (*kneeling*), Benny Cook N4BCC, John Nelson N3JN, Ellsworth Neff K4LXG, Gordon Batey W4FJC, Elwood Shrader KB4DJN, Ray Colvin KE4HVR, Chris Shirkey KI4BAQ (*kneeling*), Chuck Vogan KD5KA, Richard Haxton KC3AN, Billy Hooke KG4JOF, Jill Ritchie (*kneeling*), Hugh Pettis K3EC, Marvin Henderson KF4WDI, Bob Hughes KF4BFC, David Burgess K1DB, Gayle Shull KU4XN, Clint Campbell KB4OLM, Ray Ritchie K4NRA, Gail Shull KG4JBF, Kaye Cook KF4CZL, Nancy Colvin KE4PHP, Al Bonck N3JB. -- Photos by David Fordham KD9LA.

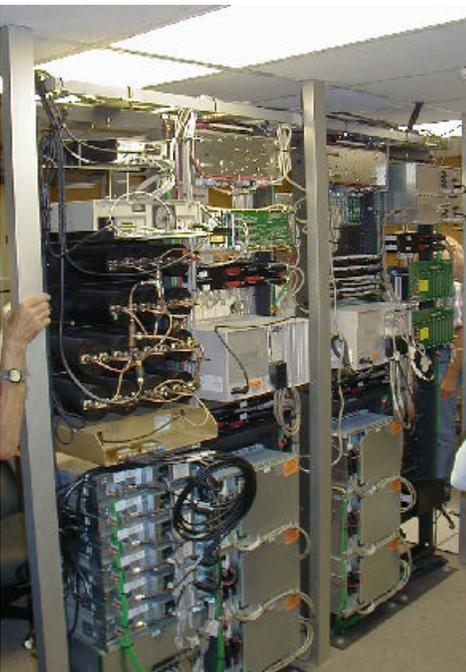
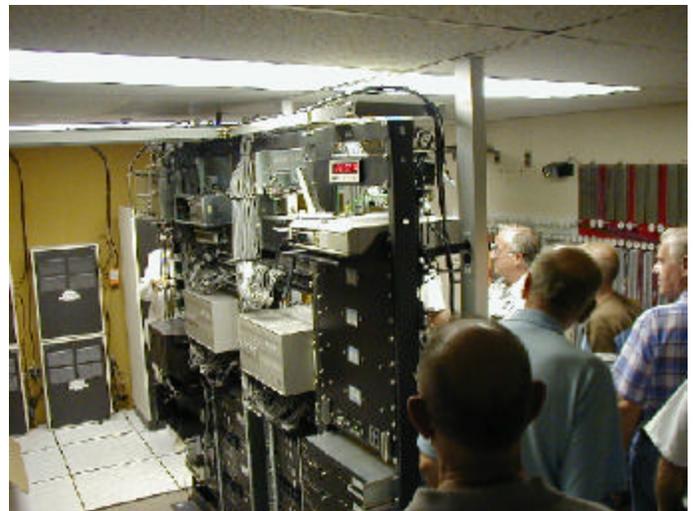
## Local Radio Amateurs Enjoy Tour of Augusta County EOC Center

Members of MARA and VARA were treated to a “behind the scenes” tour of the Augusta County Emergency Operations Center on September 4.

In place of the normal club meetings, both organizations met in the parking lot of the Augusta County Government Center in Verona, and were admitted after hours to the board room, where Donna Good, director of emergency communications, and her assistant, gave an informative presentation covering the history of the national 911 emergency phone number.

The presentation also included numerous facts about the Augusta County communications center, and highlighted the expected increase in calls once the cellular telephone system is equipped for the FCC’s E-911 mandate and the center begins fielding calls from Interstate 81 travelers.

After the presentation, the club members took a tour of the actual dispatcher’s consoles, where Donna demonstrated the capabilities of the county’s mapping, dispatching, and call handling systems.



Upper left: Donna Good demonstrates the capabilities of the computerized 911 dispatching console, including its advanced mapping and routing features.

Upper right: The radio room containing the county's primary repeater systems.

Lower Right: The radio room features a PL-259 plug on the end of the coax feed leading from the 2m ham radio antenna on the county's communications tower.

Lower Left: the duplexers on the county's 450 MHz radios.



## The Opinionated One: Tool Time — A “Fasten”-ating Discovery

Back in the good old days, we had nails, screws, and hex head bolts. Then along came some fool named Phillips, and suddenly everybody needed not one, but **two** screwdrivers. Then a guy named Allen had to outdo Phillips and he invented the Allen wrench. Others got into the act, and now all heck has broken loose in the world of fasteners and hand tools.

A few years ago when I was living in Florida, I helped my friend Fleming Beddewder take down an SK's tri-band beam. An elderly ham, Hack Moore, served as our ground crew while Flem and I climbed the 150-foot tower.

We were halfway up when I paused to wipe my face with a dripping handkerchief. “Dang, the sun's hot! It's at least a hundred!” I complain to Flem, wringing a quart of sweat out of my soaked hanky, down onto Hack.

“Hurry up, you guys!” yelled Hack, shading his eyes from the sun. “It's starting to rain!” Hack's brain has an SWR of at least 20:1.

Anyway, we finally reach the top of the tower, get the gin pole mounted, and start to undo the bolts on the beam. I reach in my toolbag and bring out the 3/4" crescent wench, but it was too small to fit the bolt head. I tried the 13/16ths wrench, but it was too large. “Hey, do you have a 25/32nds wrench in your bag?” I asked Flem.

“Yep, here it is.”

“Well, shoot, this one doesn't fit either.”

“What? Here, give me that, you stupid elbow,” snapped Flem. “It's gotta fit.” He tried for a couple of minutes, and then started muttering some strange words I'd never heard before.

“What do those words mean,” I asked.

“Do you go to church?”

“Yeah, 'most every Sunday.”

“Then you don't want to know.”

To make a long story short, Flem couldn't get any of the wrenches to fit either.

“Here,” he growled. “Take the vise-grips and hold the nut, and I'll use the pliers on the bolt. In two minutes, we'll be done.”

Ten minutes later, Flem was gritting his teeth and his face was turning bright purple. “Maybe we should name this nut Gypsy Rose Lee,” I offered.

“Why?” asked Flem.

“Because it's completely stripped now.”

“What?! And the bolt still hasn't budged?” Flem used a few more new words.

After two hours, we finally got one of the bolts loose. “Good. Now we only have nine more to go.” Two hours of standing on the rungs of a hot tower in the Florida summer sun was getting to me. I convinced Flem to let me go to the hardware store for a 51/64ths wrench. “I'll climb down and have a cold one with Hack,” he said. “Hurry back.”

When I told the hardware store man what we needed,

he laughed for three full minutes.

“Man, what you need is a metric wrench set,” he finally giggled, wiping the tears from his eyes.

“Metric wrenches? What are those?”

“Everything's going metric. It's what we get for letting a peanut farmer from Georgia work on a nuclear submarine. Don't you read the papers? Anyway, here's your metric wrench set, here's your credit card, and here's your copy of the receipt.”

“*Ninety-six dollars for a set of six wrenches?!!*” I shouted.

“They're metric,” explained the hardware man. “They're supposed to cost 3.949 times the price of the U.S. ones.”

Back at the tower, the work went quickly. But when we finished, I couldn't find room in my toolbox for the 6 new wrenches.

Since then, I've noticed all kinds of mayhem in the fastener world. It's not enough we have to buy metric wrenches *and* Allen wrenches — now we even have to buy *metric Allen* wrenches! Back in 1975, my toolbox was a little red thing the size of Michael Jordan's shoe box. Now, it's a huge red thing the size of Michael Jordan's car! It has 250 drawers, each divided into more sections than a Sunday edition of the Post.

I recently went to replace the battery in my digital multimeter. I ruined three miniature Phillips head screwdrivers

before I finally decided to put the thing under a magnifying glass and find out why the screws were being so stubborn.

“Holy bleeping bleep of a bleep bleep,” I yelled. “These Phillips head screws have six points instead of four!”

“Don't use those words while the kids are still living at home,” said Deb, walking into the room drying a serving plate.

“I'm sorry. Flem taught them to me, and he won't tell me what they mean.”

“Well I won't tell you, either,” said Deb. “We go to church, remember?”

After several hours of research (including a trip to the hardware store to give the man another three-minute laughing fit) I learn that the six-pointed screw heads are something called “Torx” heads.

(Ironically, the term “Torx head” sounds an awful lot like some of the words Flem used that day on the tower.)

To make matters worse, Torx heads come in different sizes, too! I had to buy a whole **set** of Torx screwdrivers. To add insult to injury, they were even more expensive than my set of metric Allen wrenches!

One day last month, I'm trying to open a lightning arrestor casing, and I find a torx screw with a little stob down in the hole. The torx screwdriver won't go into the hole.

“What the bleepin' bleepity bleep bleep,” I said. “Why

would someone put a metal protrusion down in the hole of a torx screw?"

"Didn't I tell you about those words," Deb called from the kitchen. "Go give the hardware store man another laugh and buy another two hundred dollars worth of tools, but don't say those words out loud anymore."

I find out the sabotaged torx

screws are called "Security Torx" screws! They use a different set of screwdrivers! This was getting absolutely ridiculous!

Then last Sunday, while trying to undo my coax switch, I discovered something called a "Posi-drive" screw head. This is essentially a double-Phillips, with four little slots diagonally inside four bigger slots. Torx, secu-

rity torx, Posi-drives! Where will it all end?

I get on the Internet to find out where it all ends. Guess what? It doesn't! There are dozens of different fasteners, each requiring specialty tools! What a bleeping bleep of a bleep.

While I'm online, just for fun I do a Google search on one of Flem's words. Wowiee!!

My mouth dropped open! "Hey, Deb, did you know that when a male armadillo eats too much fiber during the mating season, he and the female ..."

"Stop! Stop! I don't want to hear it!" yells Deb, sticking her fingers in her ears.

"Forget Flem and his bad words. And start getting dressed or we'll be late for church."

## MARA Program for October: Get Wired — K3EC

The October MARA program will feature a very interesting presentation on wire antennas by Hugh Pettis, K3EC.

Hugh recently moved to the valley and brings some old-timer experience and fanatical enthusiasm to the ham radio scene in the Shenandoah.

Huge began his career in communications as an AP

relief wire operator in World War II. Licensed as W7MVA in 1948, he subsequently held calls of W3QCW, K4FZE and W4WX in the United States, as well as G5AFO (England) and SV0WF (Greece) abroad.

A career communications specialist with the CIA — initially as a high-speed CW operator — he held positions of increasing responsibility in the

planning, operation, and supervision of major U. S. Government telecommunications networks and facilities.

In these contexts, he was associated with the Departments of State and Defense overseas, as well as the National Communications System in Washington, DC.

Hugh retired from the CIA in

1977, and was subsequently associated with the Smithsonian Institute (NN3SI), and the University of Maryland at College Park as an academic editor and tutor.

Hugh recently moved to the valley, and is interested in starting a ham radio operation in the retirement community in Parkview.

## String 'Em Along: Wild, Weird, But Wonderful Antennas

By Hugh Pettis, K3EC  
(ex-W7MVA, ex-W3QCW, ex-YA1K, ex-etc., ex-etc., ex-etc.)

Here is a preview of some of the Wire Antennas to be covered in the October MARA program:

**The Triumph of my longest aerial EVER:** Telephone Twisted Pair strung down an alley for daytime reception of Houston on a crystal set — Galveston Texas 1939.

### **Perhaps the World's Longest Windom Feedline:**

Hanging an 80m off-center-fed Hertz dipole atop a mountain ridge above a fire camp and running one thousand (yep, that's 1000) feet of #16 copperweld single-wire feeder downhill for a gangbusters' 30-watt ARC-5/ARR-7 CW station — Elk River, Idaho, 1949.

### **The Shortest (and almost the most lethal) of them all:**

Hanging a 10m dipole between two 10' 2x4's on a frigid dark winters night — Moscow, Idaho, 1953.

**The highest and potentially the most deadly:** Stringing an invisible wire (100' of #28 enameled copper) across two wings of a 10-story apartment building on a dark and stormy night — Bethesda Maryland, 1955.

### **A bizarre Make-Do for an ad hoc telecommunications array:**

Planning, plotting, and putting up a 450' Vee-beam antenna for a 2,000 mile HF path — Kabul Afghanistan, 1957.

## Fall Foliage Bike Festival (formerly Bike Virginia) – October 18-19

**The premier communications exercise** for all radio amateurs in the central Shenandoah Valley is here again October 18 - 20. Each year approximately 25-35 radio operators are involved in this training exercise. Members and non-members from the Valley Amateur Radio Association and Massanutten Amateur Radio Association combine to provide sag support and emergency communications capabilities for approximately 1000 bike riders. We will need your help again!

**This is not a race** but rather, it is a family ride with participants of various abilities. Each year there are many opportunities for us to hone our skills in passing traffic, participating in a directed net and relaying emergency communications on behalf of the riders. For the past couple of years, we have been fortunate to have successful rides with few serious incidents. Those of us who have been helping with this ride remember years when we weren't so fortunate. Accidents have ranged from minor cuts and scrapes to broken bones and even transports to UVA by Pegasus.

**Our participation involves** slowly driving around the course with the riders and assisting with transportation of broken bikes or incapacitated riders. We provide our radios, automobiles, gasoline and expertise to assure that the ride is safe for the participants. How better could you spend a couple of days than to ride around the beautiful Shenandoah Valley observing nature and "spandex"?? In return, the festival makes a nice donation to the clubs for our assistance. The donation is split between the clubs based on participation – normally 50/50.

If you have helped before, then you know what is expected. If not, then come along for the practice and you will be glad you had the experience. Everyone gets a T-shirt and a meal each day plus a wonderful experience out in "the great outdoors" here in the valley.

**The ride begins** Saturday and Sunday at 8 AM in Staunton. On Saturday, the riders follow back

roads toward Mt. Solon and on north of Route 33 into Rockingham County. On Sunday the riders leave Staunton and ride south toward and beyond Middlebrook. Off road courses are back this year and some riders will be traveling the dirt roads around Todd Lake and Staunton Dam on Saturday. Sunday the off road course is a tough one in the vicinity of Sherando Lake and up to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Someone with a 4 wheel drive will be needed Sunday to take water to a rest stop about half way up the mountain – any volunteers for this??

Vehicle traffic in Staunton will be heavy this year due to a music event downtown. Ricky Scaggs will be one of the performers on Saturday afternoon and Jimmy Fortune will be there Saturday night. If you want information on the concerts go to [www.fortunewilliamsmusicfestival.com](http://www.fortunewilliamsmusicfestival.com)

**Our radio activity** will take place on local wide-coverage repeaters. We normally use 147.225 on Saturday and 147.045 on Sunday. Each of these repeaters has a pl of 131.8. It seems that every year, we have situations where one or two in the group have problems programming their radios. You should be sure you know how to program and operate most of the features of your radio. You should know: 1). How to program in repeaters, offset and tone. 2). How to listen and operate your radio in the "reverse mode". You should be



able to monitor the input to the repeater. 3). How to move from simplex to repeater and change from one memory channel to another.

If you don't **know how** to do these things with your radio, then you should get out the book and learn – if you are like me, you may need to contact someone with a similar rig and get them to interpret the “Japanenglish” for you. It seems I can read the words ok but when I follow the sequence word for word – it doesn't work – anyone else have this trouble?

**Talk in** will be on 146.850 each day. For directions to the start point, either get on 850 or go to the web site at [www.shenandoahbike.org](http://www.shenandoahbike.org). If you live in the Rockingham County area, you may be directed to go to the Towers Ruritan Hall at Mt. Solon (on Saturday) instead of driving all the way to Staunton and then sent back to the north. Some of us meet early at Shoney's in Staunton for breakfast on Saturday and Sunday mornings – about 6 am, therefore talk in won't be active till around 7 am or so.

**We need about 15 hams** with radio-equipped automobiles to help us on Saturday and about 10 to help on Sunday. If you can help any day or part of a day, please let us know as soon as possible so we can start planning assignments. Clint KB4OLM has agreed to provide his communications trailer again this year and will be looking for some help as NCS (net control station). We will need a volunteer or two to assist Clint otherwise someone will be “appointed” to volunteer. Contact Jeff W4PJW at 540 337-7337 [w4pjm@arrl.net](mailto:w4pjm@arrl.net) or Ken KE4GKD at 540 885-1818 [klharris@rica.net](mailto:klharris@rica.net) or Ray KE4HVR at 540 886-1559 [colvingr@rica.net](mailto:colvingr@rica.net)



Additional information, some off-road maps and specific directions to the Bike Festival is available at [www.shenandoahbike.org](http://www.shenandoahbike.org)

Now if you are not an early riser, don't despair – we can use your help even if you can't get started till “noonish” but by that time everyone will be on the main frequency for the day so no need to bother calling on 850 at that point. And if you need to leave early either day, that's ok too – just let us know. Saturday is usually a long day with activities right up till 4 or 5 pm. Sunday usually wraps up about 3 or so.

**Please come with** a full tank of gas, a working mobile radio (handhelds are about useless) with a good outside antenna (they don't do well in the back seat or trunk). If you have a pickup or bike carrier please have that available as we do a good bit of transporting bicycles and cyclists from place to place. It is nice to have a screwdriver and adjustable wrench along but basically; we do not do roadside repairs. There will be bike repair folks on hand and we don't want to be accused of “taking their business”. And besides, we are there for a safety and communication role – not as mechanics.

Take note that **cell phones are pretty useless** too. If you plan to call home, to check in with the wife or family, you may be a bit frustrated. The bike festival folks try to use cell phones every year for communications, and they have learned that they don't work in the “back woods” where we will be. That's one reason why our assistance is so valuable and necessary.

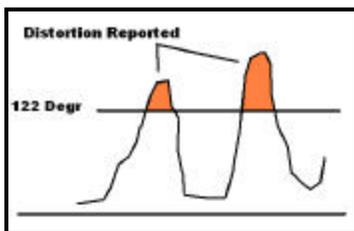
When I told another ham that I am always a bit concerned that we won't have enough help – the fellow replied “well, we had so much fun last year, that I can't imagine getting help would be a problem”. So... Let us know – we look forward to a good learning experience and a couple of enjoyable days.

Visit [www.shenandoahbike.org](http://www.shenandoahbike.org) and click on the “Rides” for an overview of the course each day. Also click on Mtn. Bike Sat and Mtn. Bike Sun.



Don't Lose Your Cool!

The graph below shows the ambient air temperature in KD9LA's trunk during two days in mid September. The maximum outside temperature on both days was 93 degrees, but the temperature inside the trunk where the radio unit is mounted exceeded 141 and 155 degrees respectively. This is above the max spec for any comparable transceiver from Yaesu, Kenwood, or Icom.



## A Case History: "Get Out of the Kitchen" ... or the trunk!

"Mount the radio in the trunk of your car, and use the remote mounting kit to place the control head in a convenient spot near your seat."

That's what the manual said on the Yaesu FT-100D. So, KD9LA followed the advice about mounting, and placed his radio in the trunk of his 1999 Toyota Camry.

As Dave operated on VHF, local hams kept telling him that his audio was occasionally distorted. The problem was very bad on one local repeater, less on others, but almost non-existent on HF.

Upon checking the radio each time, Dave noticed the unit was quite hot. He tried several "fixes", including reduced power, unblocking the ventilation holes on both the upper and lower casing of the radio, tuning the antenna for 1:1 SWR and keeping the fan opening clear. Nothing seemed to work.

Finally, Dave checked the owners manual of the FT-100D. Sure enough, right there on page 2, in black and white, the manual plainly

states "Operating Temperature Range 14 degrees to 122 degrees F."

David put a Hobo temperature recorder in the trunk of his car. Bingo! The temperature graph (left) shows that the trunk's ambient temperature (not the temp of the radio, but the temp of the air in the trunk!) exceeds the operating specification of the radio on hot sunny days. Add onto this the heat from the radio and it's no wonder the transmit audio was distorted.

It's great to know that the radio is not malfunctioning. The Hobo saved Dave at least \$100 in diagnostic charges and shipping had he returned an "in-spec" radio to Yaesu for "repair".

And changing radio brands isn't the answer either. Looking at the manuals on-line, you see that all modern mobile HF radios have operating temperature ranges within a few degrees of the Yaesu's spec. And all are under the recorded ambient temperature of the air in the trunk! And that was in September! Think about August or July!

Bottom line: Stay cool!

## Augusta County ARES: Net on October 9th — Fox Hunt November 2nd

Hams in Augusta County have had two fun fox hunts on Thursday evenings. The hidden transmitter hunts have been great training in lieu of the normal monthly ARES Net.

In October, the regular net will be held on October 9, on its usual frequency of 146.85 (repeater, down .600, PL tone of 131.8 Hz).

But another fox hunt is tentatively scheduled for Sunday afternoon, November 2nd. No fox has stepped forward yet, but keep posted to the net, and watch for next Month's Monitor!



## VARA Secretary's Report — September 4 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association did not have a regular scheduled meeting for September. Instead we had a joint meeting with MARA at the Augusta County EOC in Verona on Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup>. They had prepared a PowerPoint slide presentation for us and we got a tour of the equipment and operation of the EOC. Those of us that have scanners and listen to the EOC Dispatchers really don't realize what goes on when a call comes in until you are there and see it for yourself. The call you hear going in is not the only call they are handling at the same time. They are handling all the 911 calls and dispatching them out to the various fire departments, police departments and rescue squads of Augusta county. They are watching four monitors, doing their logging on the computer, manning the radios of fire,

police and rescue plus answering the 911 calls as they come in. Donna and her assistant did a great job preparing and presenting the PowerPoint presentation for us. After the presentation and demonstration at one of the EOC stations we were taken to the room where all the electronics, phone line terminals, and computer battery backup is located. They have enough battery backup for the computers to keep them running until the generator starts and goes online. Donna told us the only thing they notice is a flicker from the lights as the generator goes online.

For those of you that do not know, there is a Ham Radio antenna on one of their towers and the coax comes into the electronics room in the back. In the event of an emergency when Hams are needed, all

they need to take to the EOC is their radio and a power supply to get on the air.

One important thing to remember when calling 911 if you are driving is to know where you are so you can give the 911 Dispatcher the correct location. They say so many times they get cell phone calls and the caller has no idea where they are. Then the dispatcher has to ask questions to get a landmark, road sign, highway or other means of finding their location before they can dispatch the proper persons. This could mean the difference in life or death of a person in a life-threatening situation. It would be good for all of us to get in a habit of making

a mental note of where we are especially when driving on the Interstate, it's so easy to be driving and talking but not paying attention to where we actually are. We are thinking about getting to a certain location and that's all.

We thank Ellsworth K4LXG for inviting the VARA to join them for the EOC Tour. Also thanks to Andrew AG4XN for getting the tour set up and doing the footwork and planning for us.

We had around forty present for the tour and everyone enjoyed it very much.

Thanks again to MARA, Ellsworth and Andrew!

Ray Colvin KE4HVR  
Secretary of VARA

## VE Examinations October 11

Are you a volunteer examiner?

If so, we sure could use your help on the VE session on October 11th.

VE Exams are held on the second Saturday of every even numbered month. Registration starts at 9:00 am sharp, and we begin testing as soon as the paperwork is ready.

If you haven't experienced

the good feeling of helping someone become a ham, give Gayle Shull a call and ask him how you can become an accredited VE, at no cost or obligation. The sessions are a lot of fun, and you are performing a valuable community service.

Pass the word. VE Exams on Saturday morning, October 11.

## Calendar

October 2: MARA Club Elections Meeting  
 October 2: Skywarn Basics I Class (Point-of-Rocks MD)  
 October 2: Skywarn Basics I Class (Augusta WV)  
 October 7: VARA Club Meeting  
 October 9: Augusta ARES Net  
 October 10: 10-10 Day 10m QSO Party  
 October 11: VE Exams in Dayton Virginia  
 October 11: Carlisle (PA) Hamfest  
 October 16: Westminster (MD) Hamfest  
 October 18-19: JARTS WW RTTY Contest  
 October 18-19: ARRL EME Contest  
 October 25: CQ WW DX Contest SSB Weekend  
 October 25: VA RACES Training, Hampton VA  
 October 27: Skywarn Basics I Class (Washington DC)

November 1-3: ARRL CW Sweepstakes  
 November 2: Augusta County Fox Hunt  
 November 2: Skywarn Basics II Class (Westminster MD)  
 November 2: Skywarn Winter Storms Class (Westminster MD)  
 November 15-17: ARRL Phone Sweepstakes  
 November 29-30: CQ WW DX Contest CW Weekend

# 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.

**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.

**Visitors are welcome.**

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