

April 2001

# MARA/VARA MONITOR

Published Monthly for Radio Amateurs in the Shenandoah Valley

## MARA Homebrew Night – April 5

What have you made lately?

Modified a store-bought rig? Built a new antenna? Made a tuna-tin radio from scratch? Built a kit? Spray painted a project box?

It doesn't matter how big or small, how simple or complex. If you did it with your own ten thumbs, bring it to homebrew night and show it off.

The only catch is – you have to actually know what it is and be able to tell us. But hey, showing off is part of ham radio, isn't it?

See you April 5 at Evers!



Scoop up your homebrew stuff & bring it to the meeting April 5!

### KUDOS TO:

...Howard Zehr, N9AHQ, on winning the door prize (an Icom IC-W32A dual band handie-talkie) at the Richmond Frostfest last month.

...Gerry Brunk, K4RBZ, on receiving the coveted (and colorful!) plaque recognizing his achievement on attaining the DX Honor Roll!

Joe Pehan, W4LIG, on his formal retirement. Joe, who can regal any audience with stories of his life in Germany before and during the Second World War, until recently operated a popular tailor shop in Staunton. Now, he joins the ranks of those who can enjoy ham radio without the hindrances of a paying job!

## VARA Meeting at Staunton Church Again

The VARA Club will meet at the Staunton Church of Christ again for April. The location is on Churchville Avenue in Staunton, (US 250 west),

across from the entrance to Gypsy Hill Park. Look for the blue sign out front.

## What does "Sample Copy" Mean?

Check your mailing label. If yours says, "Sample Copy", this is an invitation to join either the Massanutten or Valley Amateur Radio Associations.

We are sending sample copies to the new hams in the valley, to let all know of the many activities going on in ham radio in this area. Come join us!

## Al McNett, N4NOL, SK

Albert McNett, Sr, N4NOL, passed away suddenly March 11. He suffered a massive heart attack while attending church, and resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful.

Al had suffered from a past heart attack and also a stroke, but had recovered both times.

Several hams attended Al's funeral on March 14, held at the Unitarian church on US 33 west of Harrisonburg.

Al was an active member of MARA, and had recently volunteered to serve on the Field Day committee. He was also active on the Virginia Phone Net and well-known in the ham community.

Al is survived by three sons and several grandchildren. Our condolences are offered to Al's family.

## Plan the Work, ... then Work the Plan: Field Day 2001

### *“The Fourth Full Weekend in June...”*

As you can see by the picture, the 2001 Field Day Committee is hard at work planning the big event. Reps from both clubs are putting the finishing touches on plans and assignments.

One thing that must be decided is: in what class should we operate in this year? Historically, we've operated 2A. There are many advantages to 2A, including less competition. However, we may want to explore some other options this year. Bring your opinions to the next club meeting!

And whatever you do, put June 22-24 on your calendars! Field Day is the fourth full weekend of June every year.

Last month's Monitor contained the erroneous statement that Field Day is the last weekend in June. While this may be true most of the time, it is not true all of the time. But what is true all of the time is, Field Day is always the fourth full weekend in June. And it never rains on Field Day, even when it pours!

See you there.



Left: Field Day Committee members hash over the many responsibilities and assignments necessary to make the event a success.

Below: the 2001 Field Day Committee members: *(from left, standing)* Benny Cook N4BCC, David Tanks AD4TJ, Jason Armentrout N4DSL, Clint Campbell KB4OLM, Dale Armentrout N4ATF, Bryan Fordham KG4JOE, Cowles Andrus K4EME, Jeff Rinehart W4PJW. *Kneeling in front* are Bob Steere N1QEQ, and Elsworth Neff, K4LXG. Posthumous member: Al McNett, N4NOL



## New Repeater in Page County: 147.030 (+)

There is a second repeater on the air from the Luray area. In addition to the 146.670 repeater, we now have the 147.030 machine.

The new repeater uses an input frequency up 600 kilohertz. At the present time, no PL tone is required. Give it a try.

## Local Traffic Net: Nightly at 8:30 pm Local Time

Chester, KG4EYX, serves as Net Control for a nightly traffic net. This net will feed traffic into and out of the NTS (National Traffic System), and

serve as a "watering hole" for local hams to get together. The net meets every evening at 8:30 pm on the 147.030 Page County repeater.

## CQ, CQ, Calling All Hams: April 24th March of Dimes Walk!

CQ's are one way of getting our attention, and now that I hopefully have yours, please continue on. As Public Service Coordinator for the MARA club, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that it is once again time to begin thinking about upcoming Public Service Events.

The first such event will be the MARCH OF DIMES walk in Harrisonburg on April 28. I would appreciate hearing from as many of you as possible. Last year's volunteers had a great time and were very

much appreciated by the event's sponsors and coordinators. The walk will once again begin and end I believe at K-mart. If you would like to help, you may contact me on one of the Monday night nets, by e-mail, by phone or you can tell me at the next club meeting. Thanks in advance for your help.

Doug Alder, N4DUG  
540-867-9719

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*"Ham operators have to justify their occupation of such valuable radio spectrum. Serving the public is the very best way to "pay" for the air space that you are allocated."*

— Riley  
Hollingsworth,  
FCC

## A Parade! A Parade! — Memorial Day Parade May 26

On Saturday, May 26, the town of Shenandoah is having a Memorial Day parade. Ham radio operators have been asked to provide communications support for this event, too. Jeff Maiden, KE4ZLH,

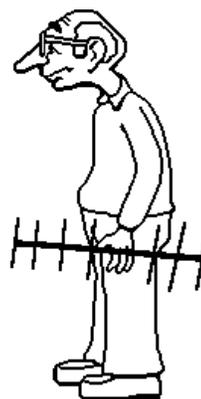
is serving as the organizer of this effort. If you can lend a hand (and a handie talkie), Jeff could use a couple of helpers for this event. Call him at 540-652-8061.

## Public Service, Augusta County Style

Lest anyone get the impression that Page County and Rockingham County have a lock on public service...

Augusta County hams are needed to help with the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Walk in Waynesboro on Sunday, April 22. The walk will start at 2:00 pm, but hams need to be on station at least an hour earlier.

Ken Harris, KE4GKD, is serving as the coordinator for this event. Call Ken at 540-885-1818.



## VARA President's Column

The next meeting of the VARA is Tuesday, April 3rd at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting will once again be held at Staunton Church of Christ, 333 Churchville Avenue (Route 250 West, across from Gypsy Hill Park).

Hopefully this will be our last meeting at the church and then we will be able to return to our "eating meeting" format. In the meantime please be patient as we try to line up a new place to meet.

The club voted to set up a special events station in August at the Natural Chimneys Regional Park. Each year a jousting tournament is held in the park. Richard Huttinger (KF4QZG) will provide the club with details.

Ken, KE4GKD has agreed to coordinate the up and coming MS Walk in Waynesboro. Please contact Ken and tell him you can help on Sunday, April 22nd. The MS Walk will start at 2:00 p.m. and we will need to be on site about an hour before the start time. Ken will need at least six volunteers.

I also want to thank Elsworth, K4LXG for sharing his knowledge on the dangers of lightning and how to protect and properly ground our towers, our homes and radio shacks.

From the ARRL please note the new rules for Field Day:

### NEW FIELD DAY RULES FOR 2001 DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE FUN

Field Day 2001 will run from 1800 UTC June 23 to 2100 UTC June 24--as always, the fourth full weekend in June. Typically a club or group event, Field Day is the most popular operating activity of the year--and one of the most enjoyable for hams of all skill levels. A few rules changes this year affect bonus points for Field Day scores.

\* The non-traditional mode bonus has been expanded from 100 to 300 points for doing three separate demonstration modes.

\* Packet is back and will be counted as one of the three demonstration modes, but to claim packet credit, you must

set up a portable digipeater system. Existing, permanent packet networks do not qualify for this bonus.

\* You may earn a 100-point bonus if an invited local government official or representative of one of the agencies that ARES serves in an emergency visits your Field Day site. To earn this bonus, the invited official must actually visit the site, not just be invited.

\* The message-handling bonus has been changed. You may now earn 10 points per message, up to 100 points total, for origination, relay, and delivery of formal NTS messages. In the past, only messages received and relayed were counted. The Field Day participation message to the Section Manager or Section Emergency Coordinator under rule 7.3.5 does not also qualify for bonus points under these rules.

This marks the last year that the extra Novice/Tech Plus station will exist in its current form. The Novice/Tech station is a non-counting transmitter, and its QSOs count for QSO point

credit. The ARRL Membership Services Committee is considering several options to encourage participation by newly licensed hams.

The ARRL Contest Branch has compiled a 24-page Field Day 2001 Information packet, <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/O1fdpack.pdf>. This document is available in hard-copy format by sending an SASE with four units of postage to Field Day Package, ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111. In addition to the dated Field Day pins that have proven so popular the past few years, the League now offers 2001 Field Day T-shirts. Pins are just \$5, and the T-shirts are \$9.95. For ordering information, visit the ARRL Products Catalog, <http://www.arrl.org/catalog>, or call toll-free 888-277-5289. The Contest Branch no longer handles orders for these items.

That's it folks! Looking forward to seeing each of you at our April meeting.

*73, Greg, W4GRC*

## MARA President's Column

Another one of our members passed away in March. Albert (Al) McNett Sr., N4NOL, became a silent key. I don't recall ever hearing Al on two meters, but he seemed to make it to all of the meetings. We will miss you, Al.

I want to thank Bob, N1OEO, Elsworth, K4LXG and Bryan, KG4JOE for volunteering for the Field Day Committee. Each year the MARA and VARA clubs go up on the mountain for this event, and each year we all have a good time, thanks to the work the committee does. I'm sure this year will not be any

different and that the event will be well-planned and organized.

I also want to thank Charles Vogan, KD5KA, for his review of the ARRL Emergency Communications Course he took on the web. That seems to be a very convenient way to take a course. You can work on it when it suits you. I noticed that the third offering for this course opened on March 12. This is a very popular and worthwhile subject.

This month's meeting is Homebrew night. Bring that project

you worked on during the past year and tells us about it.

What kind of things should you bring? Any radio related item is welcome. If you assembled a radio kit, or built an accessory or put together a jump kit to take to that next emergency, or an antenna of some sort, bring it to the meeting. No full size 3 element 75 meter beams, please!

But on second thought, if you finally built that 75 meter beam, bring pictures!

This seems to always be an interesting meeting, so let's see how many projects we can have to show and talk about.

I hope to see each of you at the meeting on April 5. Dinner is at 6:30 pm at Ever's Restaurant on Rt.11 north of Mt. Crawford. If you can't make it for the meal, the meeting starts at 7:30. Tell the hostess that you are there for the meeting and they will direct you to our room.

*Gerald, KN4FM*

## Digital Packet ARES Net — — April 19 ... 8:00 pm

Our first ARES Packet Net was such an interesting experience, we're going to do it again.

For those who missed it the first time, here is your chance to get out your dusty packet equipment, figure out again how to use it, and join us in an ARES Packet Net. We will meet on Thursday night, April 19th at 8 pm on the KB4OLM Packet Cluster.

Log on to the cluster( DXHBG on 145.75, or KB4OLM direct on 145.67), then type CONFER to get into the CONFERENCE mode; from then on, everything you type will be seen by all others in the CONFERENCE mode.

Be patient; if you go out of turn, it will slow things down greatly. Only respond to Net Control when requested.

The reason for a Packet ARES Net? To get everyone used to running packet during a Net; in a real emergency, there will be some sensitive traffic that the Emergency Managers/EOC Centers won't want given out on a voice channel.

For some practice before the net, check out the Rockingham County ARES BBS on 145.73, and see what's available there.

Type "LT" to list traffic; maybe there will be some traffic there you can pass.

Many thanks to Clint KB4OLM for the use of the Packet Cluster during these practices, and for making it available for use during the REAL THING!, whenever it may occur.

*David Tanks, AD4TJ, Emergency Coordinator for Augusta County*

## For Sale: Kenwood 440 SAT — — Make Offer

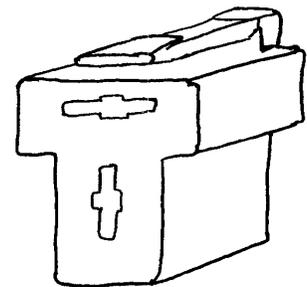
Grant Riggle, W3IFE, has moved into Sunnyside Home and can no longer operate. He has the following for sale: Kenwood 440SAT, it has not been used for about 1 year, needs the battery replaced. Includes powerpack, head set, microphone with built in preamp, wire for antenna, and maybe a few other things. Make offer. Call Grant at 568-8347.

## For Sale: Complete Heathkit HF Station — — \$125

For Sale to Good Home!

- Heathkit HW-100 Good electrical condition, Dial slips a bit — puts out 100w 80m-20m & 80w 15m-10m. With hand mike
- SB-600 matching AC power supply and external speaker
- Original manual (poor condition, but with mod history)
- Heathkit Keyer modified to accept external paddle (has built in paddle, photocopied sections of manual)
- Radio Shack SWR meter/ FS meter
- RCA - PL 259 adapter (for HW-100)
- RCA - Mono Phono plug cable (keyer to HW-100)

What you need: Coax Jumpers, Dummy Load, Antenna, and appropriate license! I worked 30+ countries with this rig!! Great for someone looking to get on HF for the first time! Sold as a bundle \$125 — Kelly McDonald W4KPM 867-5512



AMP 250 series Lance connector

## Now Available: Power Connectors for Modern VFH/UHF Gear

David, KD9LA, has been royally frustrated trying to find the plastic "T" power connectors that are common on many of today's VHF and UHF radios. After many hours (literally) of investigation, phone calls, and Internet searches, he discovered that these connectors are AMP type 250 series Lance Connectors. For the power side of the connection, the housing is part C-172130, and the electrical connection is Faston tab part 170258-1, or 170032-2, depending on wire gauge. These connectors are a special run, available only in order lots of 10,000 or more, and are not available from any of the six dealers listed by AMP. However, a cooperative service tech at Hawk Electronics was able to find a set of leftovers in a bottom desk drawer. David now has a couple of

extras of these, if anyone needs them. They are \$1.50 each, including the electrical tabs. — In the calls to several ham radio stores, it was reported that Vanco makes a similar connector, but for a higher price (\$2.99). Also, according to Rick at AES, the Vanco connector spacing is widened (due to the slight mis-fit) and becomes loose after a few connection/disconnection cycles. So if you are looking for some extra power-side connectors (the connector providing the power from the battery or power supply), contact David, KD9LA, at 540-234-0448.

## Update: Sam Pickering, KF4EKV

What if one of your friends were suddenly stricken with cancer, and then on top, were to suffer a series of major strokes. What if your friend were no longer able to communicate normally, but could still recognize and understand what was going on around them?

That is exactly what has happened to one of VARA's own.

Sam Pickering, KF4EKV, is leading a very lonely life at home. He is rarely able to get out of the house, in spite of being in the prime years of early middle-age.

On good days, Sam is able to talk, but very slowly.

David, KD9LA, talked to him on the phone as this issue was going to press. David could understand almost every word Sam spoke.

Sam currently doesn't have a radio. He gave his HT's to his son David, who is away at college in West Virginia. But Sam might be able to talk on the air (on his good days) once in a while, if he had a two-meter rig.

Unfortunately, buying a radio is low on the family's priority list. Sam's family is getting by on

nothing more than social security right now, and while Medicare and VA benefits cover Sam's own medical expenses, his family is having to do without basic necessities such as health insurance for the children.

In spite of the hardships, however, Sam's XYL Margaret, is upbeat. Sam requires full-time care, leaving little time for the fun and games that most our families enjoy. Margaret's love and devotion to her husband bring tears to your eyes.

If you have a few spare minutes

sometime, Sam and Margaret would sure enjoy a phone call. Sam especially misses his "buddies" from the ham club.

Sam lives just outside of Waynesboro. His phone number is 540-949-7794. Or you can drop a card in the mail with your thoughts.

The Pickering's address is: 1521 Eastside Hwy, Waynesboro, VA 22980.

Often, a simple thought on our part means so much to someone else. — Sam, we miss you.

## From the VE-meister: — Address Changes, Anyone ?

At last count, the newsletter editor had counted over 85 hams in the valley who have not updated their mailing address with the FCC. Yep, that's 85 of us with invalid license addresses!

Having received numerous calls concerning change of addresses, I have gotten information for the ways to accomplish this.

If you are an ARRL member you can use the 605 form that we have for test sessions. This must be sent to the ARRL, and they will make the change for you at no charge. The FCC will not accept this form for address change unless it is done at the

time of testing.

The FCC form can be down loaded from your PC. It is a 16 page form used for all radio telecommunication. [plane boat etc.] I hope to have an abbreviated form from the FCC in the near future.

I do have forms 605 form on hand now and by the time you read this I should have the FCC form.

In other news:

Code test change effective June 1st will consist of a 10 question fill in the blank test. You can pass by answering 7 ques-

tions right or 25 continuous character copy correct. The character speed will be changed from 18 wpm to 13 wpm, with message speed remaining at 5 wpm (known as the Farnsworth Method)

The next VE test session is April 14. We again have had a lot of interest. Sign in will start at 9:00 AM, testing will start as soon as we complete sign in and walk ins are welcome. We are again testing at the Woodmen building on Route 42 south of Harrisonburg and just north of Dayton. See you there

*Gayle Shull, KU4XN*

## Autodialer now on order for the Harrisonburg Autopatch

Subscribers to the WN4JMU autopatch will soon be able to call their home (or any other local number they choose) by the touch of a couple of keys.

An autodialer has been ordered for the patch. Each subscriber will be allowed to select up to two different phone numbers

for programming into the patch. By touching a couple of keys on their microphone keypad, the patch will dial the number for them, simplifying the patch operation.

The patch makes calls to the Harrisonburg and Rockingham areas, including Bergton, Grot-

toes, Elkton, and Bridgewater.

Subscribers should receive information in the mail in late April asking for their numbers.

Subscription to the patch is open to all hams in the area (including Augusta and Page counties) who wish to make

personal (non-business) calls to the Harrisonburg and Rockingham county areas.

Subscription is \$15 per year. The patch utilizes the 145.130 N4YET repeater. For more information, contact David Fordham, KD9LA, at 540-568-3024.

## VARA Secretary's Report, March 6, 2001 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association club meeting was held at the Staunton Church of Christ in Staunton on March 6, 2001. President Greg Czerniak W4GRC opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. There were 16 members present and five guests, Jered Weaver KG4EHM Elsworth Neff K4LXG, Jeanne Neff, Colin Hester N4ZFO and Joshua Green.

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

It was reported that the Field Day Committee is making good progress with their plans for Field Day 2001.

The 2001 Field Day Committee of three, Clint KB4OLM, David AD4TJ and Benny N4BCC are asking for anyone who has equipment they are willing to bring to field day to give them a

call and let them know what you have so they can get their list started. This includes radios, coax, antennas, towers, masts, power supplies, connectors, rope, shelters, mowing, set up help and OPERATORS.

We would like to get training classes started for the Technician level then move on to the 5-WPM code class. Anyone interested in helping teach the classes please contact Greg W4GRC, Alby AD4KZ or Richard KF4QZG.

If you have an e-mail address but are not getting the Club Newsletter electronically please send your e-mail address to David Fordham at ford-hadr@jmu.edu so he can put you on the list.

The MS Walk is coming up Sunday April 22 at 2:00pm in Waynesboro at Ridgeview Park so check your schedules and make plans to help. We will talk more about this at our April meeting.

We voted to have a SPECIAL EVENT STATION at Natural Chimneys Regional Park on August 18, 2001 during the jousting tournament weekend. Your help is needed to design a QSL card and/or certificate for this event. Also for help setting up the station and keeping the station running for the duration of the event. The Event information needs to be sent in time to be published in the August QST Magazine.

David AD4TJ will run the second ARES NET using PACKET on April 19 at 8:00pm. Those of you who operate a packet station are asked to tune to the Packet Cluster and check in.

Reminder for SKYWARN, the 146.850 Repeater will be the primary frequency with 146.520 simplex as a back up frequency.

Richard KF4QZG is our new Program Chairman and asks for anyone that would like to do a program to give him a call and

get a date set up to present it.

A motion to adjourn the V.A.R.A meeting was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:53pm.

Elsworth Neff K4LXG gave a really informative program on grounding of antennas, coax, towers, and the shack. He used a computer to show pictures he had taken from several commercial tower installations showing different methods of grounding they use and gave suggestions for our ham antennas and shack grounding. GOOD JOB Elsworth, thanks for a great program.

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

Submitted By:  
VARA Secretary  
Ray Colvin KE4HVR

## MARA Secretary's Report — — March 1, 2001 Meeting

The meeting opened with introductions. There were 27 present, two of which were requesting membership.

The Secretary's Report was approved as printed in the newsletter.

The Field Day Committee was completed with the addition of one new prospective member. Those on the committee are Charles Elsworth Neff, K4LXG, Robert Steere, N1QEQ, and Bryan Fordham, KG4JOE.

There were no reports from the Treasurer, Public Service, ARES, and Net Control.

The VE Committee, headed by Gayle, KU4XN reported an exam for new amateurs will be held on the second Saturday, April 14, at 9:00a.m. at the Woodman Building on Route 11 near Dayton.

New Members: To be voted upon at the April meeting are Elwood Schrader, KB4DJN and Bryan Fordham, KG4JOE.

Of interest to the club, there will be several DX contests this month. They are as follows:

- March 3&4 - ARRL International Phone Weekend.
- CQ Worldwide on March 24&25.
- Virginia QSO Party, March 15&20

We had a 50/50 which was won by Bill, W4IMS. The amount was \$11.50 for him and same for the club.

The meeting for next month will be Homebrew Night. Bring a ham radio project that you have built [kit, antenna] or surprise us.

For the Program, we had a very interesting talk including handouts by Charles Vogan, KD5KA. It was a report on the ARRL Emergency Communications Course he had taken on the Internet.

*Submitted by:*  
*Phyllis Haxton,*  
*MARA Secretary*

# MARA/VARA

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

## NEWS FOR HAM RADIO OPERATORS IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY!

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### Return Service Requested

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#### MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Gerald Nauman, KN4FM  
Vice President: Steve Tennyson, KF4ZWK  
Secretary: Phyllis Haxton N4VZC  
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC  
Board (exp 01): David Hughes, KF4SVR  
Board (exp. 02): Bob Tennyson KG4CHL

<http://cob.jmu.edu/fordhadr/MARA>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month at Ever's Restaurant on U.S. 11 south of Harrisonburg. Meal starts at 6:30 pm. Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

**Visitors are welcome.**

Dues (\$12 per year) should be mailed to:  
Sandy Mullins, K4PZC  
149 North Street  
Elkton, VA 22827

#### VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC  
Vice President: Richard Huttinger, KF4QZG  
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR  
Treasurer: Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR

<http://www.hamsnet.net/W4MUS>

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month. The April Meeting will be held at Staunton Church of Christ Churchville Avenue. Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

**Visitors are welcome.**

Dues (\$15 per year) should be mailed to:  
Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR  
352 Campbell Street  
Staunton VA 24401