

## Happy New Year!

Your newsletter editor is back in the U.S., and he is real happy about it, too! Going four months without ham radio is downright painful! Echolink is good, as far as it goes, but nothing beats twisting that tuning dial with your right hand and pushing the mike button with your left!

A special "thank you" is owed to Mike Reno KG4OON, and Bill Jones KE4FM, for handling the printing and mailing of the paper copies while I was busy learning the Flemish language. These two fine gentlemen — professional printers by trade — did a magnificent job of keeping the Valley Hams updated and in the know.

There's a lot of stuff here this month. Thanks to everyone who submitted material and articles.

But keep in mind: you are only reading the stuff that hams TELL ME about! There may be a lot more stuff going on in these here counties that doesn't come to my attention, and thus doesn't appear in these pages.

So keep those cards and letters and emails coming! If you don't let me know about it, who will?

David, KD9LA  
Monitor editor



**President's Messages: Page 2**

**Two New Hams in the Valley: Page 3**

**Broadband Over Power Lines Threatens Local HF Operations: Page 6**

**VE Exam Fee Changes, 2005 Testing Schedule: Page 3**

**New Valley Distance Record on Wi-Fi Network: Page 10**

**Fox Hunting Fun: Page 8**

**MARA Christmas Party Goes Wild! Page 4**

**MARA/VARA Joint Field Day Official Results: Page 7**

**Georgia City Provides Hams Legislative Relief from CC&R Restrictions: Page 7**

**2005 Shenandoah Ham Activities Calendar: Page 11**

**VARA Secretary's Report: Page 12**

**Club Membership Renewal Form: Page 13**

## MARA President's Message

Greetings and Happy New Year to all the Hams out there! I certainly hope that Santa brought everyone that new radio, antenna, or some other toy they wanted for Christmas. It was so good to see everyone at the club Christmas party in December. It is nice to share the camaraderie of all of our club members and their families. And the music provided by Gerald Brunk (K4RBZ) and members of the Eversole Road Quartet entertained us all.

Many of our public service events are behind us, and winter is a time for most of us to spend indoors. Now is the time to fire up the radio, warm up those tubes (ok, transistors for those modern-types), and make some contacts.

Let's also not forget to make sure that our backup power is ready to go, just in case we get one of those major snowstorms that strike the area once in a while.

It's also time to begin to plan for those spring projects that will inevitably take up our time in a few months.

For those that have not done so, it is time to send in your club dues for your annual membership renewal. It makes things easier for everyone to get this taken care of by the next meeting, so we won't have to chase you down! We are also still in need of filling the club Secretary's position. I would appreciate it if someone would volunteer to step up and fill the position. This is all part of service to your club and the community. I would also like some ideas for programs for the club meetings. Please consider passing along your ideas that may be of interest for our members, or better yet, please consider presenting a program.

We are looking forward to the upcoming year with anticipation. Perhaps this will be the year you reach your 50<sup>th</sup> state on low power, contact some distant country, or just join in on a network you haven't participated in before. The New Year is yours to make of what you will.

Bill, KG4UPN

## VARA President's Message

It is a privilege for me to be asked to serve as President for the upcoming year.

I am looking forward to the challenge. I am fortunate to have a great group of officers to work with. I encourage the club members to support each of the officers.

Our officers for the upcoming year are Vice -President Greg Czerniak (W4GRC), Treasurer Jeff Rinehart (W4PJW), Secretary Ray Colvin (KE4HVR) and Program Manager Richard Huttinger (AA4RH) and myself as President.

I want to commend the great job that Billy Hooke did the past year as President.

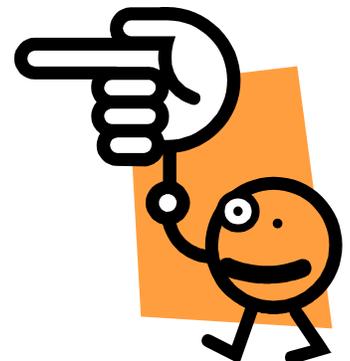
As we go through the year and approach each club event, I look forward to the participation of many club members. Let's make 2005 a really great year for the Valley Amateur Radio Association.

73,  
Marvin Henderson - KF4WDI

## Please, Please, Please, I'm Begging You, PLEASE...

Every year, it's the same story. Lots of hams renew their club dues, but a number of them let it slip their mind. The newsletter editor then purges the mailing list after the February issue, and after missing the March issue, these forgetful hams complain that they didn't get their newsletter. The editor has to manually send them their March issue, and then go to the trouble of putting them back on the mailing list, making double the work.

Please, don't be one of those forgetful hams. Please, we beg you, fill out the renewal form right now, while it is on your mind. Put it on your dresser right next to your checkbook, so you'll be on time in renewing your dues this year. And if you don't make the January club meeting, please MAIL your dues the following morning. Your newsletter editor will thank you profusely for saving him the time!



## What's With the "/60" Suffix?

CQ Amateur Radio magazine invites Amateur operators around the world to join in celebrating its 60th anniversary by taking part in an on-air event during the first 60 days of 2005.

CQ's first issue was published in January, 1945. During the "CQ Gang" activity- January 1 until March 1, 2005 – all hams ever associated with CQ as staff members, contributing editors or authors—as well as current subscribers to CQ, CQ VHF and Popular Communications, may sign "/60" after their call signs.

Certificates will be issued for contacts with enough /60 stations to garner a minimum of 60 contact points, based on number of contacts times the number of different position multipliers (eg, editor, columnist etc) worked.

Shortwave listeners also are eligible to earn contact points and certificates.

Endorsements will be issued up to 600 points. CQ club station WW2CQ will be active from various parts of the US during the event.

Separate certificates will be available for working WW2CQ in all call sign districts from which it is active.

Complete rules for the CQ Gang 60th Anniversary activity appear in the December 2004 issue of CQ and on the CQ Web site <<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/CQ60 Award Dec04.pdf>>.

## Congratulations: New Hams: KI4HYK and KI4HYJ!

Congratulations to the four candidates that passed test elements at the VE test session held on December 12.

We have two new Technician class hams in the area: **Kenneth Critzler, KI4HYJ, and Shane Dovel, KI4HYK.**

Also at the session, **Todd, KI4GSS, and Stanley, KI4GSU** passed the code test and are now on their way to upgrading to the General class.

Thanks to the VE's that helped with the test session: Gayle, KU4XN, did his usual good job of running a smooth session, and he was helped by Andrew, AG4XU; Dick, KC3AN; James, KG4LDY; Hugh, K3EC; Norman, KA4EEN; Sandy, K4PZC; Jason, N4DSL; Bob, K4DJG; Jim, W4POI; and Gerald KN4FM. We want to also thank the Woodman of the World for allowing us to use their building for the session.

Gerald Nauman  
KN4FM

## VE Exam Fees Rise to \$14

In case you missed the national announcement, the fee for VE Exams for 2004 will be \$14 per session. The fee entitles the participant to take as many examination elements as desired for that one testing session.

As published in last month's edition of the Monitor, the exams next year are on the second Saturday of even-numbered months, except for December.

### THE VE EXAM DATES FOR 2005 ARE:

- February 12
- April 9
- June 11
- August 13
- October 11
- December 3

## MARA Christmas Party Photos: Thanks to the Paparazzi!





Opposite Page, Top Left: Bob W3MMC in his traditional holiday stocking cap, serving as the maestro in directing the musical rendition of “Christmastime on Bob’s Knob”.

Opposite Page Top Right: John N3JN, and Andrew, AG4XN, enjoying the festivities.

Opposite Page Center: The Eversole Road Quartet, pounding out the melodies. Yes, that’s Gerry K4RBZ, DX Honor Roller, second from left, hitting that F-sharp below low C.

Opposite Page Bottom, from left: Dick KC3AN, Norman KC4EEN, Gerald KN4FM, James KI4FZW, Jason N4DSL, and Ray K4NRA.

This Page Top: A view of the dining room, showing that E.C KG4KUR, Phyllis N4VZC, Bob N1QEQ, David K1DB, and a host of other hams and their families enjoyed the meal and entertainment.



Above: Dick W4HXH, enjoys the fellowship with a ham whose name and call has totally escaped the newsletter editor’s memory at the present time.

## Broadband Over Power Lines In the Valley – The April Bride?

Everyone remembers the April Bride – the one who was shocked on her wedding night: She had been told it was coming, but she had no idea how big it was going to be!

Well, BPL has the potential to have the same effect on local hams, both literally and figuratively.

If you work HF in the Shenandoah Valley, several recent developments are worth noting.

First, the ARRL Letter has been reporting on BPL experiments in New York, Minnesota, North Carolina and several other states. Hams in those areas are trying to force the FCC to terminate all BPL activity. Why? Because of interference.

The BPL signal, being a radio-frequency wave injected onto unshielded power lines, radiates into space and completely covers up HF operation for miles around the area being serviced by the BPL equipment.

Why should this concern hams in the valley?

For starters, Gordon Batey WA4FJC calls our attention to an article in the Waynesboro News Virginian newspaper on Monday, November 22. This article reports that a Huntsville, Alabama company called IBEC (International Broadband Electric Communications)

has been running tests in the Nelson County area of Lovingsston since July of 2004 for customers of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative. Beginning in the Spring of 2005, the service is expected to be available in the Afton area, among others.

The article mentions that the project is being underwritten by federal money “designed to help web surfers hop on the broadband bandwagon”. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development Office is making loans to companies like IBEC.

The News-Virginian article was also noticed by Mike Solomon KJ4RM. Could this affect HF operations in Waynesboro, Staunton, Verona, Craigsville, Stuarts Draft and other areas within 10 miles of SVEC power lines? After all, Afton IS on top of a mountain, remember?

The article also reports that the federal Rural Utility Service has an application from IBEC to offer the service in Augusta County, too. However, a major target in Augusta County would be the customers of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.

SVEC’s president and CEO Doug Wine says that SVEC has signed on to offer **satellite-based** internet service to its customers, and is taking a “wait and see” approach to BPL. (The relationship, if

any, between Doug Wine and local amateur radio operator Jack Wine KC4OVC is presently unknown.)

SVEC also has power lines in Rockingham and Shenandoah Counties. So if BPL is put on SVEC lines, hams in the valley would be “surrounded”.

Then, on December 9, the Central Virginia Electric Coop went public with BPL, making a press release (provided to the Monitor by Bill Fawcett WB4PWP) announcing “Electric Cooperative Unveils Nations First Rural Broadband Over Powerline Service”.

While it can be questioned whether this really is the nation’s “first”, there can be no doubt that CVEC intends to fully deploy the service.

To make matters worse, our tax dollars are supporting this effort. Hilda Legg and Curtis Anderson, described as the “top two officials” from the Rural Utility Service, were the featured speakers at CVEC’s barbecue luncheon at the unveiling ceremony in Nelson County.

The press release also announced that Scott Lee, the IBEC CEO, has plans “in the near future” to deploy “next generation BPL equipment” across (get this!) **all 14 counties served by CVEC!**

The press release gives a website offering more information: [www.forcvec.com/bplcoop/](http://www.forcvec.com/bplcoop/)

But wait, there’s more! Is there a correlation of the early December full-deployment of BPL in Nelson County, and the complaint of Cowles Andrus, K4EME? Cowles reported on December 8: “Last night I was tuning the HF radio and noticed new broad band noise ... a lot even up in 10, 15 and 20 meter bands. It sounded like digital type noise.”

Is this noise BPL? Cowles was ready to give CVEC and IBEC the benefit of the doubt and blame his neighbors’ Christmas lights, but time will tell for sure.

So what can you do? Plenty!

In a case in Arizona where the hams were on the ball, the FCC required the BPL providers to work with the local ham club to ensure the deployment does not adversely affect HF operations.

So, if you operate HF, even occasionally, now is the time to start listening for interference. Let’s bring our reports to the club meetings, and compare notes. Perhaps if we band together, we can have an effect.

It is too soon to tell, but being on the ball could be our only chance at retaining HF operations here in the valley.

## Valley Field Day Results: Not Bad, – But Could Be Better

Well, the results have been tabulated, and the scores have been verified. Now they have been posted to the ARRL website (as of October 26).

Field Day 2004, a fun event for hams in the Valley! How did the joint MARA/VARA operation do?

Not as good as in years past. We scored 8,254 points.

For our category (2A), that placed us number one in Virginia. Hooray!

But we placed number two in the Roanoke Division (which includes Virginia,

West Virginia, and both Carolinas). Boooo! We got beat out by W4KQ in North Carolina (get this!) by a measly 148 points! Dang! We needed only 75 more QSO's to have beaten them!

Overall, out of 2,248 total entries for Field Day, we scored number 76, putting us in the **top 3%** of all stations in the country! This compares with last year when we were number 45 overall, in the top 2%.

We just gotta get that phone station educated on the technique of making more contacts so they can whip

the pants off the CW station!

Okay, so now you are saying to yourself, “yes, but Field Day isn't supposed to be a real CONTEST! It's supposed to be FUN.”

And it definitely IS fun, lots of fun. But we can't let our superior operating status slide. We have an image to uphold! For years, we've been the best in both the state **and** the division! Let's reclaim that title!

Anyway, it was a really good time. The weather was cooperative, no one got hurt, most of the equipment

made it through without getting bused, and best of all, the ladies provided a marvelous meal again on Friday night. There was great fellowship, but you know the rest of the story?

Field Day 2005 is only six months away! Let's give it the old “what for” again. Maybe, just maybe, we'll have a new callsign, and “Dubya Four Xray Denmark” will be emanating from the mountain again! Charlie are you reading this? And remember, Joe may be watching us! Let's do him proud!

Neal Layman, N4XU

## Georgia Community Eliminates CC&R Restrictions on Hams

The ARRL Letter, Volume 23, Number 48, on December 11, reports that the city of Acworth, Georgia, has added language to its Residential Development Standards that will prevent restrictive Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions from interfering with the ability of hams to erect antennas on their property.

CC&R's are considered by the FCC to be private contracts and not subject to the provisions of FCC regulation PRB-1 . (PRB-1 is the federal pre-emption overruling any state or local ordinance which unduly restricts hams from erecting antennas.)

PRB-1 gives hams relief from state and local government restrictions, but a hams who

purchases a home carrying CC&R's (even unknowingly) has had no legal recourse. – Until now, that is.

The city of Acworth, a bedroom community located 35 miles northwest of Atlanta, is one of the nation's fastest-growing communities. The city will not approve any new development which contains CC&R provisions restricting

ham radio antennas.

The provision applies only to new residential development occurring after the ordinance's date of adoption, and does not affect existing CC&Rs. But the city's action is a step in the right direction.

### Hams Still Under the Weather

Best wishes for Dan Beidler's (KE4JSX) continued recovery from pituitary surgery last month.

And best wishes for Bill Shott's recuperation from his hospital visit. For those of you who haven't heard, Bill had a little misunderstanding between himself and an extension ladder, and the ladder came out on top, literally! Last word we got was that he was on his way back to normal, but the going was slow! Bill can attest that gravity isn't just a good idea... it's the law!

## Tally Ho! The Hunt is On!

Fox Hunting, in ham radio circles, is the art of finding a hidden transmitter.

Numerous fox hunts have taken place in Augusta county over the past few weeks, including a real-life hunt where hams needed to find a stuck microphone which was jamming a major area repeater.

David, AD4TJ, started holding fox hunts a few months ago to liven up the monthly Augusta County ARES Nets. Bob, N4JGO, was the fox several times, and the activity gained in popularity.

There was a suggestion to hold the hunts on Sunday afternoons rather than late Thursday evenings. Interest has continued to grow, and more and more hams are joining in the fun.

Brian N4IRT, and Joe KD4FKT, were the foxes last month, and had a very unique transmitter. It was a 50 milliwatt transmitter driving a half-wave dipole vertical antenna. The best part was, the whole apparatus was up in the air 300 feet above ground level suspended underneath a set of tethered helium balloons! You could see it before you found it, — if you were in a convertible, that is! Of course, none of the hams were.

On the opposite page is an image of the route used by Cowles, K4EME, on his way

to winning the hunt. Except for a bumpy start in which he turned the wrong way down the street, he made very good progress. Cowles was using a GPS to keep track of his location at all times, and the dots on the map were printed from a file of the coordinates taken every few seconds.

From the start of the hunt to the time Cowles found the fox was less than 40 minutes. Not bad for a 21-mile hunt! Cowles believes he could have shaved at least 15 minutes off the time if he'd not taken the wrong turn towards Franks Mill!

Of course, Cowles had an advantage: live practice using his Doppler RDF system! The previous Saturday, there had been a stuck microphone jamming the 147.750 repeater for several hours. Gordon, WA4FJC, started hunting, and as others found out what was going on, they also joined in.

Cowles, K4EME, was out playing with his new Doppler RDF unit, and after finding out about the problem, he joined the hunt.

Richard AA4RH was using a map to plot the bearings and coordinate the hunt on the 146.85 repeater. Cowles ended up being the first one to locate what he thought was the offending transmitter location. But it put him in a ticklish situation. All

indications pointed to this one house, but it had no visible antennas outside. Was it really the right place?

Cowles walked up to the door and knocked. It turned out the house was owned by a ham who kept his antennas in his attic... his neighbors would never know he was a ham unless he told them! He had no idea his mike was stuck, and quickly corrected the problem. With a very red face, he was very apologetic about the trouble.

That real-world hunt gave Cowles the experience with Doppler which allowed him to be the first hunter finding the balloon transmitter the next Saturday.

Another hunt was held on December 5. Benny, N4BCC, and Jess W4PQK, were foxes on that warm and sunny afternoon. The hunt began at 2:00 pm and the results were as follows:

Brad KG4YLE won the hunt at 3:15 pm. Cowles K4EME came in a quick second at 3:16. Jason KG4YLG came in third at 3:19, followed by Bob at 3:23. Others who found the fox were: Gary KI4FZV, Gordon WA4FJC and his family, and John KI4FDG. It is to be noted that Gary and John are graduates of the recent ham classes in Verona.

The foxes were located near the new school being built in the Woodrow Wilson com-

plex in Fishersville, using an HT (which is typical for fox hunts — low power!) with about 5 watts. But to add some challenge, they used a 4-element quad — pointed east towards the mountains! This provided a reflection to confuse the hunters! (Thanks to Benny N4BCC for this devious idea!)

They saw Cowles high-tailing it down the road and immediately unkeyed the transmitter and waited 30-45 seconds before transmitting again — otherwise his Doppler would have told him he was passing by! Aren't they mean?!

After four or five successful hunters were on site, another impromptu "local" fox hunt was held using a 25-milliwatt transmitter on another frequency (other than the regular 146.490 MHz channel). The catch here was: this flea-powered transmitter was disguised in an old orange juice container laying nearby on some trash cans! All the participants thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon!

If you are available next time, think about joining the hunt. In the meantime, check out:

<http://www.qsl.net/wrav/fox.htm>

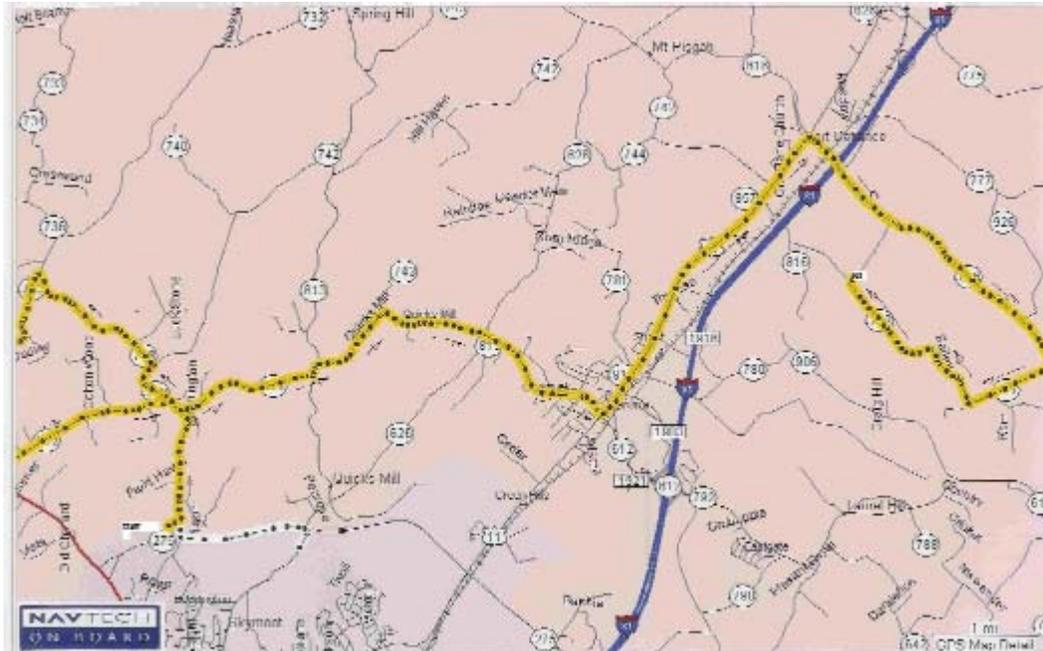
Especially, check out the links at the bottom of that page! Have fun!

Info and pics submitted by Jess W4PQK, Cowles K4EME, and Ray KE4HVR.



Above: Fox hunters kneeling, left to right: David KR4VL, John N3GLZ, Joe KD4FKT. Standing left to right: Brad KG4YLE, Neil, Ray KE4HVR, Jason KG4YLG, David AD4TJ, Benny N4BCC, Bob N4JGO, Clint KB4OLM, Brian N4IRT, and Jess W4PQK.

Top right: Brad KG4YLE. Lower right: Benny N4BCC and Jess W4PQK.  
Below: Ray KE4HVR, Cowles K4EME, and Joe KD4FKT.



Left: A map of the route taken by Cowles, K4EME, in finding the fox, which was suspended beneath a set of helium balloons about 300 feet in the air.

Below: an example of a roof-mounted RDF antenna array. Although not necessarily pretty, this homebrew unit works great!



## Microwave Applications 101: Stretching Things A Bit! 56 Miles, To Be Exact!

Saturday, November 20, Bob Van Fossen K4DJG, and Jason Armentrout N4DSL, broke the previous long-distance record for solid computer connections over an 802.11 wireless microwave link across the Shenandoah Valley.

Together they reliably established high-speed computer-to-computer file transfers across a distance of 56 miles!

The northeastern end of the link, manned by Jason, was on Hogback Mountain Overlook on Skyline Drive, north-east of Luray.

The other end of the link was on Reddish Knob, where Bob set up his end of the path.

The 802.11 Wi-Fi channels occupy a part of the radio spectrum which overlaps a goodly portion of the ham microwave band at 2.4 GHz. So, if you are careful doing

your homework, hams can use the equipment in ways which exceed the non-licensed Part 15 FCC certification of the out-of-the box 802.11 gear.

Previous distance records of 34 miles had used standard off-the shelf 802.11 equipment and directional antennas. However, throughput speed (the speed with which the computers can actually transfer data from one end of the link to the other) was considerably slower than standard 802.11 networks. Why?

The reason for the lower throughput is traceable to the way in which 802.11 links operate. These networks use packet radio. The operation is exactly like the AX.25 ham radio packet systems (think "DX Cluster") except that the packet formatting is a little different. Well, a lot different.

As with ham packet radio, the transmitting station will "retry" to send a packet if it doesn't get positive acknowledgement that the receiver received the packet within a given time frame. On the 802.11 gear, that time period is optimized for packets traveling at the speed of light across distances of up to 150 feet.

But when you use this gear over distances measured in miles instead of feet, it takes much longer for the signal to make the trip. Thus, by the time the receiver has received a packet and gets around to sending its acknowledgement (ack), the transmitter has given up and is busy re-sending the packet.

The repeated retries further clog the channel, preventing even more acks from getting through. As a result of this vicious-circle congestion, the throughput rate drops.

There is 5.4 microseconds of delay time needed for every mile of distance on the link. When using off-the-shelf consumer 802.11 gear, throughput speed drops like a rock after about 10 miles.

To overcome the problem, Jason and Bob tried out some new equipment that provides for an adjustable acknowledgement/retry time parameter.

In other words, the new gear lets you program it so that it

will wait a little longer before it assumes a packet was lost.

With this new equipment properly configured for the the 56-mile path, they were getting a very reliable 2.4 megabits per second throughput rate on a test FTP file transfer. Pretty darn good, huh?

They were using 24 dbi parabolic dishes for antennas on each end. The accompanying photo shows the antenna set up on its tripod mount at Jason's Hogback Mountain Overlook end of the link.

Jason and Bob were using amplifiers pumping out 800 milliwatts. Milliwatts covering 56 miles? Right. With microwaves, you don't want to cook yourself.

Signal strength was -68 dbm, which is very respectable, especially given the distance.

They transferred a 110 megabyte file in 443.5 seconds.

The elevation of Reddish Knob is 4400 feet above sea level. The Hogback Mountain station was located at 3350 feet ASL.

The new equipment can be used at Field Day to allow us to receive full cable modem speeds on the Internet connection instead of the limited speed experienced last year.



## Hmmm. What Is There To Do?

Okay, so you decided you'll renew your membership for one more year... after all, it's still pretty cheap compared to most things these days. All right. Now what? What else is there to do besides the monthly club meetings, the ARES nets, and reading the Monitor? Well, let's go down the list. Get out your calendar and pencil.

**January:** This is a good month to stay inside where it's warm. Write a check for your club dues and put it in an envelope. If you don't make the January club meeting, then MAIL THAT ENVELOPE! Make a new year's resolution to check into the ARES net at least twice a month. Begin by checking into the first net in January. There is the ARRL RTTY roundup the 8th and 9th. If you are looking to work all 50 states SSB, try the North American QSO party on the 15th and 16th. The VHF Sweepstakes is the 22nd and 23rd, and the CQ 160m CW contest is the 29th-30th.

**February:** Another good month for indoor activities. There is the Richmond Frostfest on the 20th this year. If you want to get started on the 10meter band, how about the 10-10 SSB contest on the 5th and 6th? The CQ RTTY WPX contest is the 12th and 13th, the ARRL DX Contest CW weekend is the 19th and 20th, and the CQ 160m phone contest is the 26th-27th. Unless you are already an extra-class, why not try your hand at upgrading at the VE Exam session on the second Saturday, the 12th? And no matter what class of license you hold, February is a great month to call Gayle on the phone at 828-2132 and find out how easy it is to get accredited as a Volunteer Examiner so every once in a while, when the urge hits you, you can help out the guys who give the tests.

**March:** This is a busy month for hams. The ARRL DX Contest Phone weekend is the 5th and 6th, the Vienna Winterfest is on the 13th, the Virginia QSO party is the 19th to 21st, and the CQ WW WPX contest is the 26th-27th. The Field Day committee is generally organized by this time, and they welcome "drop-ins" at their meeting at the Mt. Crawford Burger King. You don't have to be on the committee, just stop in and listen. You'll learn a lot about what goes into Field Day planning. And if you didn't do it in February, call Gayle and get your Volunteer Examiner certification this month.

**April:** MARA always holds a home-brew show-and-tell night, and this is a great meeting to bring your unwanted stuff to try to sell or trade. The Harrisonburg March of Dimes walk, the Waynesboro Multiple Sclerosis walk, and the Waynesboro Riverfest festival always need hams to provide safety coverage of their routes, making April one of the busiest public service months. There is another VE exam session on the second Saturday of April, which is the 9th. The Baltimore (Timonium) Hamboree is on the 2nd and 3rd. The Raleigh hamfest and the York (PA) hamfest, are both scheduled for the 17th if you've got an urge to travel. If you want to stay home, April is the month to wire-brush and re-tighten your grounding system, before the summer thunderstorms start firing up.

**May:** The month starts off with the Hagerstown hamfest the 1st. The CQ WW WPX CW contest is the 29th-29th. In between is the Dayton Ohio Hamvention the 20th and 21st this year. Hey, if you've never been to Dayton, you need to go at least once in your life. It is unlike anything else you've ever been to. Also, this is

typically the month where VARA gets invited to visit the Greenbank Radio Astronomy Telescope for a "behind the scenes" tour. And there is usually a last-minute request for a public service event this month, too.

**June:** The Winston-Salem hamfest is scheduled for the 11th. There is another VE test session also on the 11th. But the real attraction in June is Field Day. If you want to show off your riding mower prowess, come help out with the mowing and preparation of the Field Day site sometime in the middle of the month. Plan now to take the family camping there during the week before Field Day. Remember, FD is the fourth full weekend of June. Ask your boss now for the time off, so you can enjoy the whole experience!

**July:** The Bridgewater Lawn Party counts on hams to help with traffic control for their parade, and they always make a nice donation to the clubs for our trouble. There is usually a hamfest in Roanoke/Salem, and the summer CQ VHF contest is a good excuse to go back up to the cool air of the mountains this month. And you need to double-check your grounding system!

**August:** The Berryville hamfest, a wonderful low-key event popular with hams in this area, is always the first Sunday in August. There is another VE testing session on the second Saturday, the 13th. The Bob's Knob Bash used to be held this month, but since Bob retired, the clubs try to hold a picnic or other family activity either in August or September. If you work 440 and above, the ARRL UHF contest is the 6th and 7th this year. And the Shelby hamfest in North Carolina is usually held either late in August or early September. Shelby is a miniature version of the Dayton Hamvention, so if you missed Dayton, plan to travel to Shelby.

**September:** The fall season is packed full of public service events. The EMHS Cross-Country sporting event needs ham operators to provide communication, a fun Saturday morning activity. The Camp Still Meadows horse ride, formerly the Johnny Appleseed ride, also is held this month and relies completely on ham radio for safety and status reports. There is also the "Bike Shenandoah" ride always asking for ham help, but most of the time there are not enough hams to go around, so the Winchester club does their best to pick up our slack. The weather is turning a little cooler, making the Virginia Beach hamfest very pleasant. Another VHF contest this month, and the CQ RTTY contest the 25th-26th provide a last chance to go camping in the mountains before it turns really cold.

**October:** Another VE session on the 11th. Have you upgraded yet? Can you help out as a VE yet? Don't forget the CQ WW SSB DX contest this month. The Fall Foliage Bike Ride, formerly Bike Virginia, is a two-day event providing one of the most fun public service activities of the entire year. Also, October is the month when Ray Ritchie invites hams to speak to his middle school science class on ham radio.

**November:** Things are winding down, but there is still the ARRL CW Sweepstakes the 5th and 6th, the SSB Sweepstakes the 19th and 20th, and the CQ WW DX CW contest, too.

**December.** You and your family are invited to the Christmas banquet usually held the first week of the month. The ARRL 160m contest is the 2nd and 3rd, the last VE session of the year is also on the 3rd, and the 10 meter contest is the 10th and 11th.

## VARA Secretary's Report – December 7 Meeting

### VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

Dec 7, 2004

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Kathy's in Verona on Dec 7, 2004. The President Billy Hooke KG4JOF opened the meeting at 7:30pm. There were 22 members present and 3 guests, Robert Wilson K14GST, Gary Van Fossen K14FZV and Bob Van Fossen K4DJG. Welcome to our visitors, and we would like to see all of you back next month.

Ray Colvin KE4HVR won the 50/50 drawing. Second time I think!

**New Application:** Gary Van Fossen K14FZV, Gary will be voted on at our January club meeting.

The VARA Officers were voted in with one change from last months voting. Marvin Henderson KF4WDI agreed to take President, Marvin originally took Vice President.

#### 2005 OFFICERS:

**President:** Marvin Henderson KF4WDI  
**Vice President:** Greg Czerniak W4GRC  
**Treasurer:** Jeff Rinehart W4PJW  
**Secretary:** Ray Colvin KE4HVR

**Thanks,** to our past President Billy Hooke KG4JOF for his services during the year 2004. Good job Billy!

**New Lifetime Member:** The VARA voted to give Frank Forsyth WD4LES a Lifetime Membership to the club.

#### ON THE SICK LIST:

**Dan Beidler KE4JSX** Dan had his operation, Doctors said it was successful and he is recovering at home.

**Ken Harris KE4GKD** has gained 10 lbs. And said he could pinch a half inch now.

**Charlie Bennetch N4LNU** has recovered from a hernia operation.

**Lonnie Czerniak N4WIV** had a bone in her heel operated on and is recovering well.

**Lets keep these folks in our thoughts and prayers.**

**The trailer Committee:** Richard AA4RH reported on behalf of the committee that with all the legal work, taxes and insurance to own a trailer it isn't feasible at this time and the Club agreed. Thanks to each person on the committee for a great job and a well thought out report.

**Antenna & Coax Project:** Greg W4GRC and David AD4TJ didn't have a report on the progress of installing antennas at Fire Dept. and Rescue Squad buildings. Hopefully we can make this happen before long, then in an emergency all we need to take will be a radio and power supply to be on the air.

#### SWAP SHOP:

**This is 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 a picture of the item would help it sell. Go to VARA Web Site at: <http://www.qsl.net/w4mus/> **if your item has been sold, PLEASE notify Billy so he can take it off the Web Page.**

**ADDRESSES!!!** Keep your e-mail address up to date. Please send them to: Billy Hooke KG4JOF, [KG4JOF@arrl.net](mailto:KG4JOF@arrl.net) Jeff Rinehart W4PJW, [jmrinehart@yahoo.com](mailto:jmrinehart@yahoo.com) Ray Colvin KE4HVR, [colvingr@adelphia.net](mailto:colvingr@adelphia.net) and David Fordham KD9LA, [fordhadr@jmu.edu](mailto:fordhadr@jmu.edu) Also, it's good to keep QRZ updated when call signs and e-mail addresses are changed.

**ARES NET:** David Tanks AD4TJ is looking for Net Controls for the Augusta County ARES Net. 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.

**PROGRAMS NEEDED:** Richard AA4RH, Program Chairman, is looking for anyone that would like to do a program for the club. Give him a call and set up a date 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 8:04pm.

Submitted By:  
 VARA Secretary  
 Ray Colvin KE4HVR

---

MARA had a Christmas Dinner instead of the usual club meeting in December, and no minutes were taken.

---

# MARA/VARA Membership Renewal Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CALL: \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: E A G T N

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

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

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

CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ Do you want your cell phone number in the Roster? YES / NO

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

Do you want to receive the Monitor via PDF Email? YES / NO / I already Do (circle one)

MEMBER OF ARRL (y/n): \_\_\_\_\_ DO YOU WANT YOUR NAME ON AN ARES "POSSIBLE VOLUNTEER" LIST? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU A REGISTERED MEMBER OF VA-RACES (y/n): \_\_\_\_\_ RACES TRAINED (y/n): \_\_\_\_\_ RACES CERTIFIED? (y/n) \_\_\_\_\_

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

What topics would you like to see presented as a program at a ham club meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion what is the thing you like best about our ham club? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you could change anything about the club, what would it be? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments for the officers? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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

---

## Return Service Requested

---

### MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

President: Bill Karle KG4UPN  
Vice President: Bryan Daniels K4RMY  
Secretary: vacant  
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC  
Board (exp 05): John Nelson N3JN  
Board (exp 06): Richard Weaver W3HXH

<http://mara.ws>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month  
at Ever's Restaurant on U.S. 11, just north  
of the traffic light in Mt. Crawford.

Meal starts at 6:30 pm.  
Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

**Visitors are welcome.**

### VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Marvin Henderson, KF4WDI  
Vice President: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC  
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 Kathy's Restaurant on U.S. 11 north of  
the traffic light in Verona.

Meal starts at 6:30 pm.  
Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

**Visitors are welcome.**