

November
2007

The Monitor

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VARA Meeting November 6 at Shoneys

The Valley Amateur Radio Association will hold its monthly meeting at Shoneys on November 6th. Dinner starts at 6:00 pm, meeting at 7:00 pm.

MARA Meeting DATE Change, TIME Change, and LOCATION Change

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association will hold its November meeting on the *second* Thursday of the month: **November 8**.

The meeting will start with a tour of the **WHSV TV-3 Studios** on Court Square in Harrisonburg. Members should **meet at the WHSV side door at 5:45 pm** promptly. The tour will start a few minutes before 6:00 pm.

The tour will conclude around 7:00 pm, followed by the traditional dinner over at Tradition's Restaurant on Mt. Clinton Pike at Highway 42.

All amateurs and guests are invited to both the tour and the dinner.

Directions to the TV Studio Tour

From Interstate 81, take Exit 247 (US 33) WEST towards downtown Harrisonburg. (Away from the mall!)

Follow US 33 West to Court Square (recognizable by the huge courthouse directly in front of you!). Turn left onto US 11 North, and go 1 block to the studio building.

Parking is available in the city parking garage. Turn right just after the studio and the garage is on your left.

The front door of the studios will be locked. Meet the hams congregating at the side door. Meet at 5:45 promptly. Once we go inside, don't be left out!



VARA President's Message

Can you believe it? It is already November! Where does the time go? On a personal note, I am still back in June. I guess that means it is almost time for Field Day. You may be wondering at this point if your president really has anything to say. Indeed, I do.

I would like to pay a brief tribute to our outgoing Vice President, Jeff Rinehart (W4PJW). Jeff has been my right hand man during the past year, and I will miss him serving as club vice president. Jeff has worked very hard to support the club and has been instrumental in getting some important work done. Jeff helped work on the by-laws that were finally adopted. Not only that, Jeff as a member of the Field Day Committee was a key player in the planning and setting up of the Field Day event last June. As a matter of fact, Jeff goes up to the mountain at least a week in advance to make sure things get done. And if you wonder what happens to the equipment when Field Day is over, well, Jeff is even kind enough to store the VARA equipment at his home in Churchville.

I really cannot say enough! Over the past several years Jeff has been instrumental in organizing our part in the Fall Foliage Festival that takes place every October. This year Jeff has helped with several special events as well. One was at Sherando Lake last spring, and the other was just recently held at milepost zero for the Blue Ridge Bonanza. In mentioning these things, I am only scratching the surface of Jeff's service and commitment to VARA. In fact, his most important job has been to keep the president on track. Thank you Jeff for all you have done and continue to do for VARA.

Considering what Jeff has accomplished for the club, our new Vice President, Scott has his work cut out for him. I can tell you that Scott has jumped right in! I look forward to working with Scott in 2008. And rest assured, being the vice president is not a cakewalk. The president is a very mean taskmaster! Just ask the secretary, Ray, KE4HVR. I make him walk in the park everyday to keep in shape!

The only change in our officers this year is that of vice president. I will remain your president in 2008, Doug will continue as treasurer and Ray will continue to be our secretary. I want to warn you now that I will not serve as president next year. Two years is enough time to serve as president. I will need a break and so will you! What we need is new blood.

At our next meeting we need to address two items. Since we are joining MARA for their Christmas party, we need to decide if we want to meet on the first Tuesday of December. The second item has to do with our

Christmas "traditional gift exchange." Let me explain the problem. On December 6th VARA and MARA will meet at Traditions in Harrisonburg for a joint Christmas dinner. The problem is that Traditions closes early, so it might not be possible to have our gift exchange as planned with MARA. Several members have suggested we do our "gift exchange" at our December or January meeting. Either is fine with me.



In mid October, David Tanks (AD4TJ), Darrell (KI4LLA), who works at AMC, and myself met with John Craig to discuss AMC's needs in case a mass **causality** emergency arises. AMC has purchased a communications van (empty at this time). Darrell has purchased some equipment for vhf and hf, and AMC is in the process of building a command center. We saw the plans which include space for amateur radio operators. We discussed antennas, computers, phone lines, Internet connections, and equipment for vhf, uhf, packet, and hf.

When the command center is finished, VARA has been invited to take a tour of the facilities, and AMC may even provide us with dinner. Wow! How can we pass that up?

Last, but not least, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped with the Fall Bike Festival. Jeff has an article on the event in this newsletter, so I will not steal his thunder, except to tell you that I am proud of the job you did.

In closing, I also want to thank Ray for serving as our club secretary and Doug for serving as our club treasurer. I want to thank all for making the president look good. And that is not an easy task.

See you at the next meeting on Tuesday, November 6th at Shoney's.

Greg, W4GRC

W3MMC: KB6VAA's Public Service Report — MMT-100 Run Event

Here is a brief run-down of the MMT-100, forwarded by Bob W3MMC.

The annual MMT-100 run was held in Fort Valley Virginia with 144 runners taking part and many more people providing support.

Part of that support group was the ham radio community providing communications from the aid stations back to the start/finish line. Net control was established at the start/finish line at the Skyline Ranch Resort campground near Front Royal. We had eleven operators taking part and putting in a lot of hours.

The race started Saturday morning and continued non-stop until the afternoon on Sunday. I could have used more operators to cover all the aid stations, but due to a hamfest, a bike ride near D.C., and another one at Berryville, amateur radio operators were in short supply.

Those that did help out put in some long hours – working one station in the morning and then coming back later that evening and working another seven to eight hours. One individual ham put in 17 hours. All of this was very much appreciated by the MMT-100 organizers.

Of the 144 runners that started out, 94 finished the full 100 miles! A fellow named Karl Meltzer was the first one across the finish line with a time of 20 hours and 11 minutes! This is a very grueling run over rocky mountain trails, frequent changes in altitude, changes in temperature, rain, and wind. The race continues throughout the night and on into the next day. Weather on the whole was good, but it did get cool and windy during the night.

We made use of three repeaters, KD4DDI on 146.670 in Page County, W3MMC on 146.625 in New Market, and W4RKC 146.820 in Winchester. We appreciate the owners and operators of those machines letting us use them for the weekend.

Also, my thanks go to the following operators: Wayne Frye KD4WIE, Ed Koller KG4QVR, Mike Henry KI4SNE, Jason Spangler KA3SIQ, Paul Brown KD4UPD, Tom Chase N3GLF, Mal Sarna W1DSH, Jim Freeman K3CSA, Esther Miller KK4AD, Valerie Meyer W8VAL, and Larry Miller KB6VAA.

More information on the MMT-100, including information on next year's run, can be found at <http://www.vhtrc.org/mmt/> The date for next year's run is May 17. If you can help out, we'd certainly appreciate it.

Larry Miller, KB6VAA



KF4WDI: Public Service Report — Great Eastern Endurance Run

The VARA club provided communications for the Great Eastern Endurance Run on September 29, 2007.

With a picture perfect day before them, 90 runners left Sherando Lake for a 31 mile run (50K) and 63 runners started the 62 mile run (100K). The runners used a course through roads and trails around Sherando Lake, Big Levels and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Communications were provided on the 146.850 repeater.

We had four aid stations going at different times during the day. These were at Sherando Lake, Slacks Overlook (on Blue Ridge Parkway), Kennedy Ridge Trail (Big Levels) and Bald Mountain (near Parkway).

Helping with the event this were Gordon Batey (WA4FJC), Steve Davis (KI4CGI), Greg Czerniak (W4GRC), Jeff Rinehart (W4PJW) and Marvin Henderson (KF4WDI).

Thanks to all the operators who came out & helped.

W4PJW: Public Service Report – Fall Foliage Festival Ride

Wow. 5:00 am on Saturday came really early this year.

The bikers were scheduled to depart at 8:00 am.

The hams were all gathering at 6:15 at Shoney's to get the day started. For some, like Bob K4DJG from New Market, who helped on Sunday, the day started even earlier. We had 13 or 14 at Shoney's on Saturday morning and about 9 on Sunday. That coffee sure did help get us jump-started both days.

After breakfast, those who had come early proceeded over to Shelburne School, where everything was to start. Jeff W4PJW and Gordon WA4FJC headed to Towers Ruritan Hall near Mt. Solon, to set up the net control trailer for Saturday. Ray KE4HVR got assignments made and started up temporary net control at Shelburne both days.

The weather was warm and sunny both days, (although on Friday we were wondering whether the weather would clear).

Several of the bikers pitch tents (about 30 tents) along the running track at the school, though most stay in local motels. Saturday afternoon it got quite windy but that didn't slow down the riders much. Sunday it got pretty warm for bike riding but everyone enjoyed the beautiful scenery.

We only had to SAG 3 bikers on Saturday and 4 on Sunday. Some had just run out of steam, others had mechanical problems. As for accidents, there was only one young boy who got minor scrapes from a "close encounter" with the pavement.

A special thanks is due WA4FJC and Billy KG4JOF for doing the net control on Saturday and to Ray KE4HVR who took care of it all by himself all day Sunday.

This year it seemed we had a lot more help than usual and that made it easier for everyone.

On Saturday, the following hams participated: W4PJW KE4HVR WA4FJC W4GRC AD4TJ KI4GSU KI4VLD AA4RH K4EME KD9LA KG4JOF K4PJJ KJ4RM K4PZC KU4XN K4RMY KG4MWI KD4UPL KG4KUR KI4QQZ N4XU N4BCC KE4SSF and N4XBP.

On Sunday it was: W4PJW KE4HVR KI4GSU KI4VLD KJ4RM K4EME KI4CGI and Fran KF4ZXO K4DJG KI4FZV KG4KUR KE4SSF and KI4QQZ.

We had 24 hams total participating on Saturday and 17 on Sunday. Across the weekend, there were 29 different hams actively involved.

Once again, we thank N4RAG and KE4CKJ for the use of the 147.225 and 147.045 machines.

The hams always appreciate the free long-sleeved (and very comfortable!) cotton T-shirts, and the really good food provided.

I just received an update from Barbara Wright, the organizer

of the ride and she says there were 558 registered this year. The number of bike riders has continued to decline slowly over the years. About 10 years ago, we were regularly having 900 to 1100 riders every year. Some surmise that the decline is due to the rising fuel prices but it may also be that they are just getting tired of the same routes and lunch stops. Therefore, the organizers of the ride are looking at alternative routes and lunch stops and also planning to do some advertising. Up to this point, advertising has been mainly by word of mouth and internet.

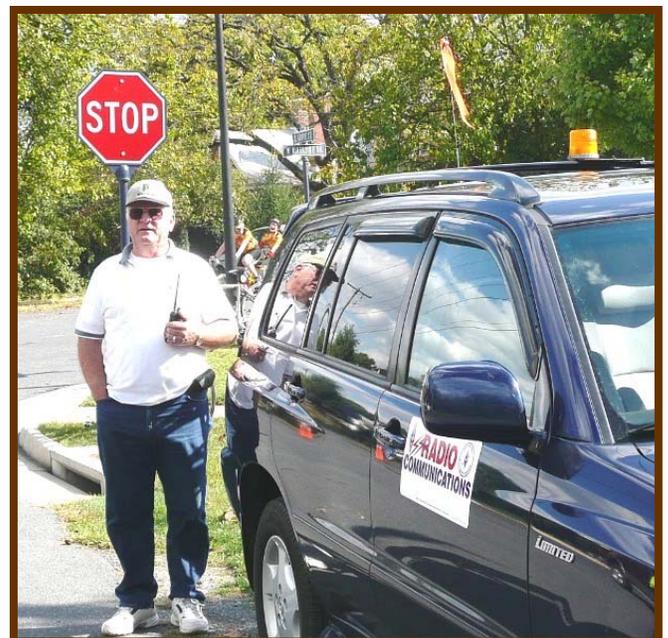
Apparently word is getting out about this ride because every year we have riders show up from surprisingly long distances. This year a man who was in the states on business from **Germany** rode with us.

Here is a partial breakdown of participants: VA 234, MD 91, NC 39, PA 37, DC 28, Washington State 2, Minnesota 1, and the man from Germany.

47% of the riders were new 1st time riders with us this year. We had 112 sign up for the 100 mile ride and 29 signed up for the country dirt road ride on Sunday.

If you missed the bike ride activity this year, be sure to set aside mid October for another bike event next year. Also check out their website at <http://www.shenandoahbike.org/>

Jeff Rinhart, W4PJW



Gayle, KU4XN, monitoring safety at an intersection, with W4PJW's vehicle and magnetic sign in the foreground.



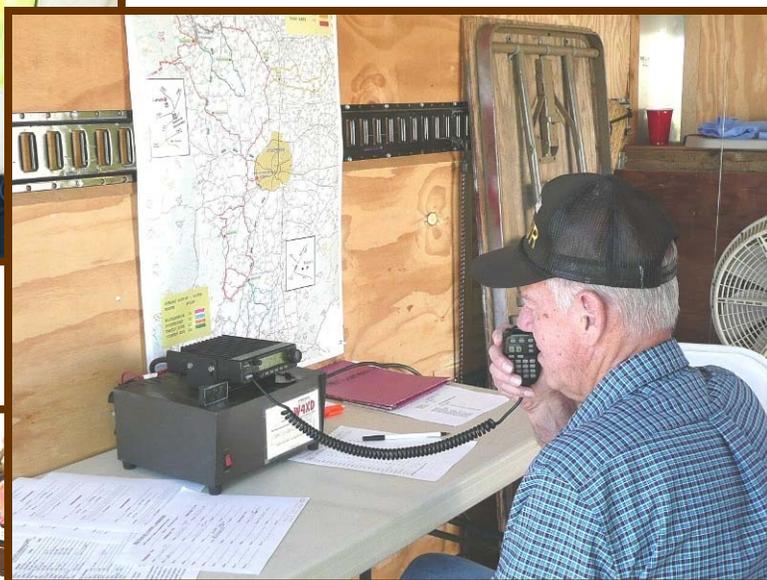
Left: Ray KE4HVR, and E.C. KG4KUR, enjoy lunch.

Below: Ray KE4HVR, Billy KG4JOF, and Gordon WA4FJC manning the net control station inside WA4PJW's communications trailer.



Above: Ray KE4HVR, Gary KI4FZV, and Cowles K4EME

Below: Cowles K4EME and Bob KF4ZXO enjoy a break at Towers Ruritan Lunch Center.



Above: Ray KE4HVR, manning net control station inside the trailer. Notice the map of routes on the wall, along with the tactical callsign "cheat sheet", and assignment page on the desk.



Unless otherwise noted, all photos were provided by W4PJW.



Above: KI4CGI and a QST magazine during a rest break.

Left: Todd Lake Scenery from the highest point on the ride route.

Lower Left: Bicycles in front of Union Church rest

Above: the foliage at the Augusta Stone Church cemetery on US 11 was enjoyed only by riders courageous enough to attempt the Century Ride, which required bicycling a full 100 miles on Saturday. (Photo by KD9LA)

Left: Net control both days was conducted from the communications trailer of W4PJW. Featuring tables, chairs, and the famous One-1-Zero air conditioning (one door ramp down, one side door open, and zero miles per hour), the trailer offered a safe haven for hams focusing on the smooth running of the event.

SkyWarn News: Letter from SkyWarn Program Leader re: Reporting Changes

Spotters,

I am forwarding you a message from Howard Silverman, our Verification Program Leader here at the Baltimore MD/Washington DC Forecast Office. If you have any questions, you can visit the website provided in his letter or just email me.

Thank you very much for donating your time as a spotter.

As always, if you need me to make any changes to your contact information, please let me know.

Thank You,
Nikole Winstead Listemaa
Skywarn Program Leader
National Weather Service
Baltimore MD/Washington DC

FORWARDED MESSAGE:

Dear Skywarn Spotters,

One of the cornerstones of the Skywarn Spotter program is the invaluable information you provide to us during severe weather events. Although technology has come a long way, and we can now discern a lot of information from radar, having trained eyes and ears in the local community to feed us reports to back up our warning operations cannot be replaced.

To that end, we'd like to inform you of a change in our warning program. Previously, when we issued Severe Thunderstorm, Tornado or Flash Flood warnings, they were issued for counties. However, we now issue warnings based solely on the most likely area to be damaged by a severe storm. Once a severe storm is identified, an area is drawn around the strongest part of the storm, and extended out in the direction of movement. That area will surround the communities we feel will be at risk by the storm. The size of the area will vary due to uncertainties in speed, aerial extent, and strength. So, if the thunderstorm is only going to affect the northern part of your county, the warning will only be valid for that part of your county. If you happen to live in

the southern side of the same county, you will be unaffected by the warning. This will cut down on a large amount of false alarm warnings to those who are not in the path of a severe storm.

How does this affect spotters? Since the warnings themselves are more specific, the follow-up event information needs to be more specific as well. Trees down somewhere within a warned county will no longer be good enough for what we need. It is now important exactly where the

downed trees occurred to determine if they fell inside or outside of our warning area - not just inside or outside of the county.

Location has become vital in reporting storm information. From now on, when you report severe weather using your Skywarn ID, please let us know if you are at your home address. If you are home, we will be able to use that pinpoint location to accurately report where the damaging event occurred. If you are not home, we would appreciate it if you could be as precise as possible with your location. For example, are you inside city limits or in the outskirts? What direction and distance from the city? In a neighborhood that is named? Near a major highway

or crossroads? These items can make a difference in assisting us in identifying the location of damage.

If you have a NOAA Weather Radio, there will be no change to your warnings, for now. These are currently locked in to being a county based warning system. As the technology improves, NOAA Weather Radio warnings will also advance to warning by location, and not by county.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. And, once again, thank you for volunteering to be as Skywarn spotter. More information on this subject can be found on our internet site at : <http://www.weather.gov/sbwarnings/>

Sincerely,

Howard Silverman
Storm Verification/Office Performance Program Leader
NWS Baltimore MD/Washington DC



KU4XN: VE Testing Report

Thanks to the hams who graciously gave up their Saturday on October 13 to help with the VE testing session:

ROBERT EDMUNDS KF4ZXO
 GERALD NAUMAN KN4FM
 JIM LEHMAN W4POL
 MICHAEL MCKAY W4AZR
 HUGH PETTIS K4EC

We had seven people testing, and gave exams for all classes of license. And here's the best part: **They were all successful!**

We issued three Technician licenses, three General licenses, and one Extra license.

Thirteen tests were given.

The next exam session will be Saturday, December 8.

We had numerous good comments and words of appreciation for the VE's donating their time to offer this important public service for the community.

If anyone needs a study manual for any class of license, contact me. I try to keep a supply on hand and if I do not have the manual you want, I can get a copy at discounted prices within a couple of days.

Gayle Shull, KU4XN

For Sale: Two (2) Nice Yaesu FT-890 160-10m Compact HF Rigs

Tripp Denton has two nice Yaesu HF rigs for sale. One is an FT-890, and the other is an FT-890AT, which is the 890 with an on-board automatic antenna tuner.

The rigs cover 160-10m, and have a general coverage receiver. Modes: SSB, CW, AM, and FM Power output: 100 watts, 25 watts on AM. Also includes IF Shift, IF Notch filter. Asking \$400, (which is the going rate on-line, and being local, you won't pay shipping!) but will accept a good offer.



Kudos to KI4GSU and KI4VLD

Below is a letter received by Barbara, organizer of the Fall Foliage Ride, complimenting a couple of ham radio operators, Stan and Shirley. Stan and Shirley (KI4GSU and KI4VLD, are new members of VARA. Letter forwarded from Barbara to W4PJW...

....My husband and I rode the century last year on our tandem, and this year on our single bikes. This was my first century ever on my own bike, and I really appreciated the thought you all put into the route - I appreciated all the options to "change my mind" and shorten the route if I needed to! The rest stops were very well placed. And I liked the fact that for most of the route we were with all the other riders. The route was even more well-marked than last year. The SAG drivers and rest stop volunteers were really great. In particular, one of the SAG drivers, Stan, went above and beyond. We were the very last ones, still having about 10-15 miles to go at the route closing time of 4, and we told him we had plenty of food and tools/supplies we needed and not to worry about us, but he just said he was out enjoying the beautiful day and didn't mind at all. So he went ahead to each of the major intersections, waited for us to get there, called encouragement out the window to us, and so we went for the last 10-15 miles. At that point, that encouragement really helped me! ...Thanks for providing such beautiful routes and such great support! — Sara

Rockingham County Emergency Net Control Stations

For more information on Rockingham County ARES, or to volunteer as net control, check into the net, or contact Bryan Daniels, K4RMY, at k4rmy@comcast.net. This list is also available at: <http://rockingham-ares.org>

November 5: James McDowell IV KI4FZY
November 12: Hugh Pettis K3EC
November 19: Bryan Daniels K4RMY
November 26: Vic Alger K4XTT

December 3: Ray Ritchie K4NRA
December 10: E.C. Showalter KG4KUR
December 17: Norman Benner KA4EEN
December 24: No net (Christmas Eve)
December 31: No net (New Years Eve)

The net meets every Monday night at 8:00 pm

The first Monday of every month, the net is on 146.550 simplex. All other Mondays, the net is on the 147.225 repeater, PL 131.8, +.600 transmit offset.

The Opinionated One: A Proposal for Restructuring Part 97 Radio Service

Having been a ham almost 35 years, I have seen 'em come and go. I've been there *and* done that. In my lifetime, ham radio has changed more than the voice-menus at Visa's 1-800 customer service number.

Like a lot of other outspoken, opinionated, bigoted ignorant dogmatic hams you find on the bands these days, I too have a not-so-humble opinion about how to improve the amateur radio service.

And like their half-baked lame-brained ideas, mine, too, says that in order to remain relevant and breathe life into the hobby, we need to change the FCC rules – yet again.

I'm not talking about regulation by bandwidth, reinstating the Code, or changing the thrust of the testing questions. No, I mean we need to change the *entire approach* to the way the Part 97 service is organized.

Take a close look at ham radio today. It is not a single radio service. It is an entire *collection* of radio services! CW, APRS, DXing, ATV, satellite, AX.25 packet, Echolink, moonbounce, local repeaters, national traffic nets, contesters — Hey, just like the Olympics, ham radio is full of many different and varied activities.

And because of the complexity of today's technology, operating procedures, and jargon, no one person can possibly be familiar with, let alone proficient in, all of them!

Most of us do good just to manage one or two. So why in heck make new hams take a test covering *all* the various facets?

I propose we restructure the license classes to be realistic. I propose we restructure the classes to correspond with the different *activities* found in the Part 97 service.

We should require licensing and testing based on what you plan to do with ham radio once you get your callsign. Here are the five classes of Part 97 licenses we would have if I were in charge of things:

CLASS "A" HAMS – These are known today as "the EmComm Guys". Class "A" hams live, breathe, eat, sleep, and make love to emergency communication. Class "A" hams thrive on hanging around people who have epaulet flaps on their shirts.

There aren't very many of these in the valley right now, but there are way, way, way too many of them in Richmond, Fairfax County, and Tidewater.

The Class A ham's idea of a perfect day is one spent sitting in a metal folding chair in

the Prince William County EOC center for nine straight hours listening to an overweight mustachioed fire captain labor through 2,850 Powerpoint slides touting the heavenly virtues of the Incident Command System.

Every Class A ham keeps a handie-talkie on his belt that can't even be removed surgically. These guys know the station location, code names, and truck numbers of all three thousand fire companies within a twelve-county radius, and can identify all 36,000 designated HazMat substances by number, but they don't know their kids names. Some of them can't even remember whether they are still married. Not that it matters.

The Class A ham's idea of a perfect Christmas gift would be a light bar for his car.

These hams dream dreams of one day being allowed to design their own three-day mobilization drill. Given a choice between attending a sixteen-hour training class and saving their own life, they'll choose the training class every time, because, hey, if you aren't trained, you're just in the way, right?

These hams believe there is no nobler cause than to be called up to support a real emergency. Even if it's only to help Company 13 get Mrs. Haversham's calico kitty out of the sycamore tree, these hams are right there in the thick of things, scanner on the dash, "jump-kit" in hand, official picture ID badge swinging from their pocket-protector, berating Mrs. Haversham about the absolute necessity of strict adherence to the Incident Command System protocol.

To these guys, the Congressional report on Hurricane Katrina is what the New Testament is to Pat Robertson. Class "A" hams range in age from the zealous crew-cut 16-year-old who just finished his EMT training, to the 39-year old captain-emeritus of the volunteer rescue squad. You don't find many Class A hams over the age of 40. Most of them die young with ulcers and high-blood pressure from worrying that the FCC will take spectrum away from the amateur service because all the other hams are "squandering the precious national resource" on useless activities.

In order to qualify as a Class "A" ham, one must swear an oath of allegiance to the principle that any ham who has been

licensed more than a month and hasn't yet completed all ICS-400-level NIMS certifications should be taken out and shot. These hams believe any activity not involving people with the numerals "9-1-1" stenciled on their car's quarterpanel is not worth doing. The Class A ham's motto is: "If you don't have an official government-issued picture ID badge, then get off the air."

Class A hams share common terminology, including such basic terms as "NIMS-compliant", "initial responder transition protocol", and "pre-designated scalable interdisciplinary organizationally-flexible modular logistical resource deployment framework".

The exam for a Class A ham license will have four parts to it. The first is a single multiple choice question asking why ham radio exists (the correct answer is "emergency communication"). The second will ask how many hours you've spent in the local county EOC center's training room in the last year, and the correct answer is any number greater than 2000. The third will be an essay question asking you to describe, in a hundred pages or less, the Incident Command System's implementation in your county. The last part will require you to draw the organization chart from the Secretary of Homeland Security, all the way down to Growler, the K-9 body-sniffing German shepherd, and label each block on the chart with its relationship to the NIMS.

Class A hams believe they are the only "real" hams.

CLASS "B" HAMS – These are known today variously as "DX'ers", "Contesters", "County Hunters" and a lot of names that can't be printed in public.

Class "B" hams can't find time to check into the weekly ARES net run by Class "A" hams, but yet they will sit in a broken swivel chair for 36 straight hours three weekends a month, repeating "CQ Contest" till they are so hoarse they can't go to work for three days. The Class B ham quits his job so he'll have a chance to break the pile-up to Edgerton Forest Atoll.

Class B hams know which island is inhabited by 7T3RB, as well as the proper beam heading and his QSL route. But they have to look up the number to dial 9-1-1. A Class B ham will patiently wait nine years

Continued...

on a QSL card for a contact with the St. Charlemagne Reef DXpedition, but he won't wait five seconds for two elderly ragchewers to say goodbye to each other before they get off his favorite ragchew net's frequency.

Morse code is to these hams what the "right to bear arms" is to the NRA – some things are still essential to freedom, patriotism, and life as we know it on planet earth. They'll give up their iambic keyer when you pry their cold dead fingers off it.

Class B hams drive huge pickup trucks with antennas on the bumper that look like vertical sewer pipes. A typical Class B ham spent more money on his tower, beams, rotator, and coax switches than the Air Force did developing the Stealth bomber. He has more invested in his rig and amplifier than the gross national product of half the countries in Africa – combined. If his XYL ever finds out how much he really spends on ham radio, both she and her divorce lawyer will be able to afford palaces on the French Riviera.

And after investing all that money in huge expensive equipment, the real Class B ham gets his jollies by contacting a ham in the next state by using a home-built QRP rig made of two rubber bands, a 5T6C transistor, an ice cube, and a dab of clear fingernail polish – all built inside a hollowed-out screw that came out of his bifocals. He's built more radios than Oprah's tried diets.

The Class B ham knows more about current DXpeditions than a major-league baseball pitcher knows about steroids. He monitors the local DX cluster more closely than People magazine monitors Paris Hilton. Yet he can't remember whether he has kids or not.

These hams dream dreams of working Cliff County Idaho, South Seagull Reef, and Grid Square YU89kk – all during the first ten minutes of the Fall Sweepstakes! ... on a double-length modified beverage antenna.

Ham Class B is the only class that has an age restriction. In order to be a Class B ham, you must be at least sixty years old. Any younger, and you don't know how to tune a tank circuit, don't remember the panel layout of a Gonset Communicator, and couldn't replace the finals in an SB-220 if your life depended on it – all fundamental and essential skills from a Class B ham's perspective.

Class "B" hams share common terminology, such as "tetrode", "double-zepp", "300-Z", "BCNU", "hi-hi", and "lid".

To qualify as a Class B ham, you must swear

an oath of allegiance to the principle that anyone who transmits without first listening up 10 kHz should be taken out and shot. Class B hams are oblivious to all activity on the ham radio bands that wasn't already in widespread use during the Nixon administration. Their motto is, "if you aren't using the F2 layer, get off the air." They believe that if it doesn't require a roller inductor, it isn't worth doing. Unlike the Class "A" hams who want all hams to be Class A hams, the Class B hams believe there are already too many hams – at least in the U.S., and wish there were more hams in places like Libya, Cambodia, North Korea, and on the eastern slope of Kerguelen Island.

The Class "B" exam will have five parts to it. The first will require the candidate to name the entire Drake, Collins, Heath, and Hallicrafters radio line-ups from 1931 to 1968. The second will be a hands-on exercise requiring the construction of a combination wavemeter and SWR bridge using nothing more than two blades of grass, an Altoids Mints tin, a paperclip, and a Q5-7B triode from a 1951 Ceylonese submarine sonar set. The third will ask for the QSL routes of the last 50 DXpeditions to islands measuring less than 1/10th acre in size at low tide. The fourth will be a 40 WPM Morse code test requiring 30 minutes of solid copy, followed by a multiple choice test on the meaning of at least 170 Q-signals. The last will require a simulated exchange between a Class B ham and someone who accidentally keyed a mike on the DX station's transmit frequency.

Class "B" hams think they are the only "real" hams.

CLASS "C" HAMS – These are known as "digital hams", "RTTY folks", "the new mode guys", "APRS jockeys", and most commonly, "Nerds".

These hams have fifty transmitters in their shack but they don't own a microphone. They connect their rigs up to computers and use keyboards, sound cards, and homebrew digital interfaces to communicate with each other. They are oblivious to all ham activity that requires human intervention. If it can't be captured and saved to a disk file, it isn't worth doing. Their motto is, "000101001101100".

Class C hams come in all ages. You can find Class C hams who are eleven years old, and you can find Class C hams who

are eighty-eight years old. Usually the elderly Class C hams are retired computer repair technicians, while the younger ones haven't been outdoors since their mother brought them home from the hospital. They all button the top button of their shirts, squint through their plastic frame glasses, and can read a page of hexadecimal quicker than Al Sharpton can read a Los Angeles police brutality report.

Class C hams are not married. In fact, they've never been on a date. And they won't ever be on a date, either, as long as they are Class C hams. The reason they don't have kids is, they don't know how to make kids. And don't care, either. They figure if they want kids, they'll write an ActiveX control or dynamic link library and let the compiler do the work.

These hams have more patch cables in their shack than an issue of Readers Digest has prescription drug ads. These guys dream dreams about RCA jacks, mini-USB ports, RS-232 connectors, serial interface boards, level converters, Category 7 cabling, and protocol translators. Their idea of a perfect Christmas gift is anything that runs on Linux.

Class C hams share common terminology, such as "OSI", "TNC", "DVD", "NAT", "XML", "EDO", "QoS", "WPA" and other TLA's.

The license exam for Class C will consist of five parts. The first will require writing a program in Javascript that will operate the IntelStar communications satellite fleet during World War III. The second will require invention of a new digital mode capable of transferring data at 50 gigabits per second on a 35-Hz-wide channel using differential inverted accelerated multi-streaming sequential code-division phase-shift keying. The third will require designing an interface to allow transmission of 16 amps of 220-volt house current across a distance of 10 kilometers using the 44 GHz band. The fourth requires decoding, into English narrative plaintext, a 1600-page schematic drawing of Vista's kernel structure, written in Cantonese encrypted with a 512-bit secret key and stored on an 8-inch floppy disk. The last and most difficult part will be a 2-hour timed test requiring the candidate to set the squelch level and PL tone on a modern Yaesu 2-meter handheld transceiver – without the manual!

Class "C" hams believe they are the only "real" hams, because they aren't even aware of the existence of any other hams.

continued...

CLASS “D” HAMS – These are the guys known today as “appliance operators”, “Joe Ham”, and “normal people”. These hams do not draw attention to themselves, and can blend in with the general public fairly easily if they want to. These hams have mag mounts and VHF radios sitting on the front seats of their cars, and can be heard on repeaters during drive time.

Unlike the Class A, B, and C hams, Class “D” hams usually have day jobs. They work for a living. They get in their cars to go to work every morning: they start the engine, back out into the street, turn on the radio, kerchunk the repeater, and then ID “This is Whiskey Eight Decent Timid Dustbunny listening. Anybody around?” They then engage in a mindless ragchew that takes their mind off their commute to the salt mine. Later in the afternoon, they can be heard again on the way home, complaining about their long day at work.

Class D hams are the only hams who ever show up at public service events such as 10k runs, charity walks, lawn parties, and other activities interacting with the general public. Why? Well, the Class A hams are too busy attending training classes. Class “B” hams are spending the weekend contesting or chasing the Swordfish Atoll operation. Class C hams are too busy debugging their beta version. So the Class D ham charges up his HT and reports for duty. He has a great time. Best of all, he meets his neighbors – living breathing beings that the other classes of ham avoid if at all possible.

Class D hams usually have 2-meter base stations, most of which haven’t been turned on since Carol Burnett went off the air. The Class D ham might even have an HF rig somewhere in the house, but it is probably sitting in a corner covered up with old tax forms, hunting magazines, and folders of last year’s credit card statements.

Class D hams all have HT’s. They also have gel-cell batteries and portable antennas *somewhere* in their garage, and they always volunteer to help in an emergency. Unlike Class “A” hams, the Class D hams, however, are humble and recognize that they are not professional emergency responders. They will go wherever they are assigned, and will do their best to help where they can. Most of them have never heard of ICS because they’ve been too busy coaching their kids’ little league games, attending band concerts, co-chairing the cheerleader’s barbecue, or helping paint the playground and therefore couldn’t make the sixteen-week EmComm classes hawked by the Class “A”

Hams. For the most part, Class D hams are between the ages of 35 and 55, but a few of them are old enough to remember way back when a radio amateur could actually contribute to an emergency support effort without having to first earn 650 credit hours of classroom education and then spend a dozen hours per month keeping up with changes in FEMA, HIPPA, DHS, NRP, JIC, NIMS, FERPA, and other alphabet soups of agencies, regulations, standards, and protocols.

They don’t bother with contests, and if they do, they don’t bother to send in the logs, much to the consternation of the Class B hams who are paranoid about having their contact count reduced for non-confirmation. Once in a while, a Class D ham will fill out a QSL card for someone who asks, but most of the time Class D hams don’t even know what a “log entry” is.

Class D hams dream dreams of one day ... taking their family to DisneyWorld. Their idea of the ideal Christmas present is ... anything made by one of their kids.

Unlike Class A, B, or C hams, Class D hams don’t believe they should be the only hams on the planet. Class D hams sometimes sound like they have the IQ of a can of tomato juice. But underneath the idle chatter, they are laid back, having fun and enjoying life. Kinda like cats on a sunny windowsill. They don’t ask for much, just their favorite repeater channel and a full-quieting signal, and occasionally a new speaker-mic.

The Class A hams hate Class D hams with a passion. Class A hams moan and wail and weep and sob and fret that the Part 97 service is going to lose spectrum because of Class D “wasting” the resource.

Class B hams, too, hate Class D hams, complaining that they never learned Morse code, never give out HF contacts and never donated to the DXpedition support funds, and Class D hams are driving the hobby to you-know-where in a handbasket.

Class C hams are too busy creating another protocol algorithm to take much notice of the Class D hams.

So the Class D hams continue plodding along, enjoying ham radio, knowing that as long as the FCC allows all 40-channels of 11 meters, and allows XM radio to

take up spectrum carrying Howard Stern, the government will certainly tolerate the commuter’s drive-time conversations.

Class D hams don’t have special terminology; they speak plain English. Even though they might have passed a test on it at some long-forgotten time ago, today they have no idea about the meaning of terms like “reverse polarity”, “take-off angle”, “tuning the finals”, “IF Shift”, “NTS Traffic format”, “bulletin service”, “mark & space” “callbook order”, or “Wouff Hong”.

The Class D exam will have three parts to it. The first will ask the candidate to correctly spell “repeater”. The second will ask which two colors are commonly used for red and black 12-volt power cords. The third will be a short essay question about “what my family plans to do on vacation next summer”.

Class D makes up the huge majority of the ham radio population, and are therefore by definition, real hams.

CLASS “E” HAMS – Class “E” hams are those who passed their license exam, and were never heard from again. They remain in the FCC license database until the 10-year limit is up, plus an additional two years while the FCC gets around to purging them from the database. If you write to a Class “E” ham’s callbook address, the envelope will come back to you with a note that he moved away six years ago and left no forwarding address. For some strange reason, Class “E” hams make up an astoundingly large portion of the license database. Why? No one knows – because no one can contact them! They are like the Loch Ness monster, Bigfoot, and Rush Limbaugh’s drug cache – they were supposedly seen one time by someone, but no one saw or heard from them again. Class E hams aren’t real hams.

I think if you take a few minutes and ponder my proposal, you will see how much sense it makes. Compared to a lot of other proposals sent to the FCC, I hope you can see the wisdom in this reorganizations, and when the NPRM is released, I hope you’ll let the Commission know what you think!

Bits and Bytes – Hear and Their – Peaces of Ate – Rumors and Dirt, Etc.

Ray Colvin advises us that the Highland County ARES Net meets at 8:30 pm. The MARA website was wrong.

Ray also advises that the Virginia Fone Net meets at 4:00 pm and 7:30 pm each night.

Shirley lets us know that Denny isn't doing too well. Denny, N4XPW, lost his temper with his roommate at the rehab center and the doctors all think his brain tumor might have had something to do with it. If you get a chance, Denny would probably benefit from a card, letter, or visit.

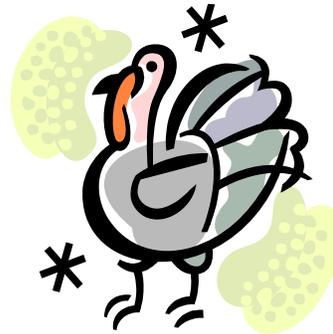
Hugh Pettis K3EC is now settled in his new QTH way down in the deep south: Staunton, that is.. Everyone who knows Hugh knows he's a Rebel at heart.

Word has it that Darrell KI4LLA, had an incident involving a hospital room and a gallstone. Hope everything came out okay, Darrell.

Greg Czerniak W4GRC, graciously helped us maintain our observance of copyright law by advising us that the photo accompanying last month's Monitor article on the Fall Foliage Ride was actually a commercial photographer's shot which was not properly credited. The gorgeous photo of mountain foliage at sunrise should have been accompanied by a citation line stating that the picture was snapped by Greg Czerniak.. Thanks for keeping us straight, Greg.

Bob W3MMC tells us that the 146.625 Big Mountain Repeater is back on the air after a pretty big tune-up and a stint in Rehab.

And speaking of Rehab, everyone is happy that Phyllis Haxton N4VZC is out of it (rehab that is) and is resting at her new home. She wants everyone to know that lying in bed is very much overrated.



Ed Good KC4HYO, former resident of the Valley, was heard on the 147.075 repeater a couple of mornings in early October. Whether the skip was really good or whether Ed is able to hit the repeater regularly from his new QTH will

remain to be seen. Ed re-located to the Tidewater area a few months ago, abandoning a perfectly good tower site here in the valley.

The MARA elections on-line have now accumulated sufficient votes to constitute a quorum. The results will be announced at the November business meeting, which, remember, will take place at Traditions, AFTER the TV station tour on November 8.

Nothing Heard? Has 2-meters been dead lately? The "Minus 2" net meets every night, at 10:00 pm local time on 146.850. Be sure to turn on PL 131.8

The Chinese Gift Exchange at the Christmas Party this year will probably not be such a good idea. Given the huge number of participants between the two clubs, coupled with the fact that the restaurant closes at 8:00 pm, means that we'll do good to open a couple of gifts. Anybody have any suggestions for an alternate activity? (Santa is fresh out of junk... thank heavens!)



MARA Secretary's Report: October 4 Meeting

Introductions made all around

1. Reports

New members- none

a. Secretaries minutes as printed in the Monitor, moved, seconded and approved.

b. Treasurer- present balance: \$1600.64, Moved, seconded and approved.

c. Groups

ARES/RACES— Oct. 1 ARES Net was run from the Harrisonburg/Rockingham ECC on simplex. Seems to be some noise on receive at ECC. Further testing is needed to determine the cause.

VE- Second Saturday - Oct.13th

Public Service- Ray K4NRA - Camp Still Meadows. Oct. 7th 8:00 for breakfast

Jeff W4PJW- Fall Foliage Bike Ride on Oct. 20 and 21

2. Announcements:

Dick W3HXX looking for a 250TH tube

David KB4LCI - Info on the new 800 system. Last site is up at Feedstone . Now doing bit error rate tests on 806-807Mhz to gather performance data for the system. Other testing is going on on various channels. Hopefully testing will be done by mid October.

November meeting of MARA: Program will be a tour of WHSV TV station at 5:50pm. The meeting/dinner will be held at Traditions after the tour. Please note it will be on the Second Thursday, November 8th.

3. Old Business

Nomination of officers:

Pres.- Gene KG4JBC

VP- David KD9LA

Sect- Bryan K4RMY

Treas.-Sandy K4PZC

New Board member- Ray -K4NRA nominated

Ballots will be sent out electronically. For those that don't return via email then a mailed ballot will be sent. Moved, seconded and approved.

Discussion on changes to the bylaws by board for quorum size changes.

Gayle KU4Xn - Coax was bought: 3- 100 foot lengths were put in storage.

Programs: Green Bank NRAO telescope tour is off until spring

4. New Business

David KD9LA - VARA voted to get magnetic Radio Communications signs for the club. Would the club be willing to underwrite the cost? Motion to pay up to 1/2 the cost of the signs if you want to buy a sign. Seconded, discussed, passed.

Jeff W4PJW- Fall Foliage ride in Augusta and Rockingham counties on Oct. 20 and 21. Signup sheet was passed around.

50/50 \$10.00 won by Gerald KN4FM

Motion to adjourn ,seconded and approved.

Submitted by

Bryan Daniels, K4RMY

MARA Secretary

VARA Secretary's Report: October 2 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Shoney's in Staunton October 2, 2007. The President, Greg Czerniak W4GRC, opened the meeting at 7:00pm. There were 29 members present and 7 guests, Bob VanFossen K4DJG, Andrew Barbour AG4XN, Stephen Grant W4IIV, Stan Thomas KI4GSU, Shirley Thomas KI4VLD, patsy Rinehart N4PJJ and David Porterfield.

Welcome to all our visitors, we hope to see you back for next month.

VARA Meeting Place will be at Shoney's in Staunton for November.

New Member Hugh Pettis K3EC, welcome to the VARA!

New Applications Stan Thomas KI4GSU and his wife Shirley KI4VLD.

50/50: was won by Cowles Andrus K4EME, his share was donated to the club. Congratulations to Cowles!

Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival was a big success again this year. Thanks to all hams that came out to help on a pretty weekend. We had lots of bikers that took time to thank us for being there for them. Barbara Wright said to pass her thanks along to all the amateur radio operators that helped with the ride. We had one incident when one of the young riders wrecked his bike and skinned his knee but he was back on course shortly. The leaves were not quite to the peak during this year's ride.

VARA PICNIC: A special thanks to Scott Newlen KI4QQZ for purchasing the food and other supplies for the picnic. Also we want to thank Scott KI4QQZ, Gary KI4FZV and David Tanks AD4TJ for bringing their grills and doing the cooking. Everyone had a great time and somehow hamburgers and hotdogs just taste better when they are cooked outside on the grills. It was a great day for the picnic and a good turn out, we had 41 sharing the fun and fellowship under the shelter in Gypsy Hill Park in Staunton. We had several requests to do this again next year.

Tour of WHSV TV Station in Harrisonburg on November 8th with MARA at 5:50pm then the meeting and meal at Traditions.

Officers for 2008 are:

President	Greg Czerniak	W4GRC
Vice President	Scott Newlen	KI4QQZ
Treasurer	Doug Tippet	N8ESW
Secretary	Ray Colvin	KE4HVR
Program Manager	Al Bonck	N3JB
BOD – Past President	Marvin Henderson	KF4WDI

Magnetic Signs (Amateur Radio Communications): Thanks to Mike Solomon KJ4RM and Greg Czerniak W4GRC for purchasing the signs. They arrived in time for us to use them during for the 2007 Fall Foliage Bike Festival.

2007 Christmas Party will be on December 4, with MARA at Traditions Restaurant on Rt. 42 North of Harrisonburg. We decided to cancel the Chinese Gift Exchange because of the time it would take to work through the large group. We need to be out of the restaurant in time for the employees to clean up before closing time.

CLUB DUES are due in January. If your dues are not paid by our March Club Meeting you will be dropped from the membership. David would appreciate prompt renewals to keep from deleting and reinstating memberships.

ON THE SICK LIST:

Denny Morland N4XPW would appreciate cards and visits from anyone in the valley.

Let's keep Denny and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

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 the VARA Web Site at: <http://www.qsl.net/w4xd/> PLEASE notify Billy when your item is sold.

e-Mail ADDRESSES: Keep your e-mail address up to date. Please send them to:

Greg Czerniak W4GRC grcljc@verizon.net, Doug Tippet N8ESW dtippett@ntelos.net, Ray Colvin KE4HVR colvingr@comcast.net and David Fordham KD9LA fordhadr@jmu.edu.

ALSO, 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 2nd Thursday of the month at 8:00pm. This repeater has a minus offset and a tone of 131.8 when needed. Foxhunts are also scheduled for some months as weather permits.

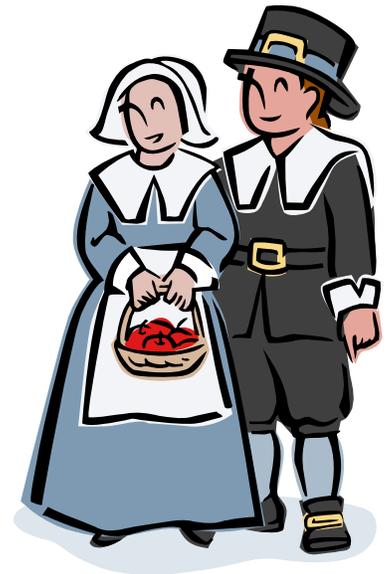
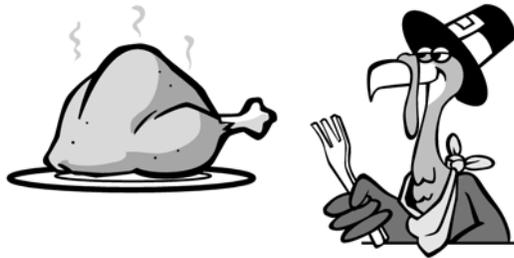
PROGRAMS NEEDED: Al Bonck N3JB, our 2007 Program Chairman, is looking for anyone that would like to do a program for the club. Give him a call and set up a date to present it. It does not have to be HAM related. It could be anything you think the group would find interesting. Al's e-Mail address is: margeal@ntelos.net

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

Al Bonck N3JB and Jess Hancock W4PQK contacted David Porterfield who gave a PowerPoint presentation on high frequency diodes and how they were made at a small company that David owns, (VDI) Virginia Diode Inc. VDI designs and manufactures millimeter-wave diodes, integrated components and systems operating from 18 GHz to over 3 THz. His products are based on a proprietary GaAs Schottky diode technology that enables them to operate at frequencies well beyond the standard commercial microwave and millimeter-wave bands. David's presentation included some of the design and process of making the diodes. These diodes very small and look like a pencil dot on a dime. They are assembled by hand looking through a microscope (can you imagine this?). Then tweezers are used to pick up the completed diode.

Thanks to Al and Jess for contacting David and a big thanks to David Porterfield for a great presentation.

Submitted by
VARA Secretary
Ray Colvin, KE4HVR



Calendar of Important Events

November 3-4: ARRL November Sweepstakes — CW

November 6: VARA Meeting at Shoneys in Staunton

November 8: MARA Meeting at Traditions in Hburg — **note date change!**

November 17-18: ARRL November Sweepstakes SSB

November 24-25: CQ World-Wide DX Contest — CW

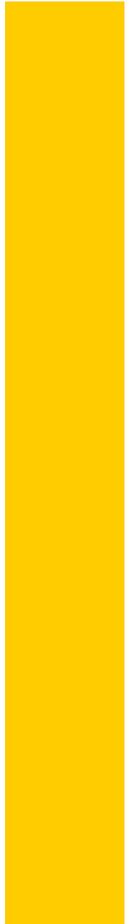
December 4: Joint MARA/VARA Christmas Party at Traditions in Harrisonburg — **note date!**

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: Eugene Rogers KG4JBC
Vice President: David Fordham KD9LA
Secretary: Bryan Daniels K4RMY
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Board (exp 07): David Gordon KB4LCI
Board (exp 08): Gayle Shull KU4XN

<http://mara.ws>

The November meeting will begin with a tour of WHSV Studios at 5:45 pm, followed by dinner and business meeting at 7:00 pm at Traditions Restaurant in Harrisonburg..

Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$12 per year) should be mailed to:

MARA
PO Box 1882
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC
Vice President: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Treasurer: Doug Tippet, N8ESW
Program Manager: Al Bonck N3JB

<http://www.qsl.net/w4xd>

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month. The October meeting will be at Shoneys, off of US 250 at I-81.

Dinner begins at 6:00 pm,
The Business Meeting begins at 7:00 pm

Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$15 per year) should be mailed to:

Doug Tippet
2348 Mosley St.
Waynesboro VA 22980