

December
2007

The Monitor

Published jointly by the Valley Amateur Radio Association and the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

Joint MARA/VARA Christmas Dinner: Tuesday, December 4

The Valley Amateur Radio Association and the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association will hold a joint Christmas Family Dinner on Tuesday, December 4, 2007, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. This is the date agreed to by both clubs last summer and announced in the printed fall meeting minutes of both clubs.

The MARA club is changing its meeting night, and the VARA club is changing its meeting location, to enable members of the two clubs to get together and enjoy a seasonal holiday meal with each other.

Traditions is a family buffet, all you can eat for one price, including dessert and gratuity. As you walk in, tell the cashier that you are with the ham radio group and she will direct you to the proper meeting room.

There will be no formal program, so members and their families can simply enjoy the fellowship time together.

Directions to the Joint MARA/VARA Christmas Banquet

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

Follow US 33 West just over half a mile to the third traffic light (Sheetz gas station on the corner.)

Turn **RIGHT** at the third light onto Vine Street, and go exactly **2.7 miles**. On the way, you will pass through five (5) traffic lights. The cross streets are: Country Club Road; Old Furnace Road; North Main Street (US11); North Liberty Street; and Virginia Avenue (State Hwy 42).

After crossing straight through the fifth traffic light (Exxon and Rite-Aid on the near corners, BB&T bank on the far corner), immediately turn left into Park View Plaza, behind the BB&T bank. Traditions is in the middle of this small shopping plaza.

If you are coming from Bridgewater or Broadway, take Highway 42 to the north edge of Harrisonburg. Traditions is at the corner of Highway 42 and Mount Clinton Pike, right across from Eastern Mennonite High School's baseball fields, behind the BB&T bank.



WHSV Television Studio Tour Report

The MARA club was treated to a very nice guided tour of the WHSV studios and control rooms on Thursday evening, November 8.

The group changed the normal monthly meeting times to accommodate the station's tour schedule. Normally, the station only conducts tours during normal business hours. However, at special request, the station graciously agreed to open their doors at 5:45 and hold some of their employees onto evening overtime to accommodate the MARA club's request for a special behind-the-scenes tour, specializing in the technical art of modern television broadcasting.



Meeting at the side door of the studio building on North Main Street in Harrisonburg, the group was first ushered into the break room for refreshments, quickly followed by a short and very informative talk in the station's conference room.

Station production and promotions manager Jeremy Harman, assisted by Ryan Bonos, started off the evening by explaining the station's conversion to digital programming. He described the multiple signals being distributed via the station's new frequency allocation, including a High-Definition digital version of the analog Channel 3 content, along with specialty signals covering Winchester, Valley Public Service, and several other signals. He described in detail the programming options being broadcast 24-hours per day within WHSV's assigned digital frequency band. He also explained WHSV's relationship to the larger, nationally-prominent Gray's Broadcasting Service. Finally, he answered a number of questions about digital versus analog broadcasting, and the upcoming changes in local broadcasting mandated by the FCC's March 2009 deadline for conversion.



Following the informative talk, the tour next moved to the viewing windows and spent a few minutes watching the main news studio where the 6:00 pm newscast was in progress. The group got to watch Val Thomson and Jamie Curott and other on-air talent, live, on camera and under the lights, delivering the newscast.

The tour next moved to windows overlooking the studio control booth, where Mr. Harman explained the operation of the various video and audio mixers, controls, and switchers. It was explained that practically all programming on WHSV is now broadcast directly from hard-drive disk storage. The station makes little or no use of video tape anymore.

Next stop was the Master Control Room, where all programming, including the supplemental station content on the additional "channels" was controlled. Mr. Harman fielded questions about backup power, backup content, scheduling, and other technical information from the tour group.

Finally, the group moved into the news room, where we received a nice view of George Hirschmann recording the weather shorts for each part of the valley. Mr. Harman gave some interesting trivia about the lights, studio construction, and the history of the studio layout and operation.

The tour lasted over an hour, and was greatly enjoyed by all who came. MARA wishes to thank Val Thomson for serving as primary contact for the tour, Ryan Bonos for scheduling and arranging the tour, and Jeremy Harman for conducting and supervising the tour, along with WHSV station management for approving the after-hours event.





Joint MARA/VARA Field Day Results Are Now Official: We're Number One in Virginia – Again!

The results are official. The joint VARA/MARA Field Day operation scored #1 in the state of Virginia in our class again this year.

Our score of **6,988 points** was earned with **1,899 QSO's**. This placed us third in the entire Roanoke Division (which includes Virginia, North and South Carolina, and West Virginia).

Overall, world-wide, we placed #34 in our category (2A).

If you look at all categories, all entries, we placed #117 world-wide, out of well over two thousand stations. **This puts us in the top 5% of the entire 2007 Field Day operation!** Not bad for a group just out having fun!

Thanks to Neal Layman, N4XU for this information, as well as the statistical table below showing our rankings in the last 11 years.



Eleven Years of Excellence in Field Day Operation!

Thanks to Neal N4XU, for providing the analysis below summarizing the joint MARA/VARA Field Day performance across the last 11 years!

11-year Statistics MARA/VARA FD								
Year	Call	Operating Class	Score	Place Virginia	Place Roanoke	Overall in Class	Total Logs All Classes	Worldwide All Classes
1997	N4XU	2A	6766	1	1	20	↓	↓
1998	N4XU	2A	7764	1	1	15	↓	↓
1999	N4XU	2A	6975	2	2	10	↓	↓
2000	N4XU	2A	8396	1	1	12	↓	↓
2001	N4XU	3A	9148	1	1	9	2064	59th
2002	N4XU	3A	9046	1	1	12	2100	69th
2003	N4XU	3A	8904	1	1	10	2085	45th
2004	N4XU	2A	8254	1	2	22	2250	76th
2005	W4XD	2A	8320	1	2	21	2202	78th
2006	W4XD	2A	8436	1	2	20	2184	75th
2007	W4XD	2A	6988	1	3	34	2333	117 th

Compiled by N4XU

Waynesboro Repeater Association Annual Meeting

The Waynesboro Repeater Association of Virginia held its annual meeting at the Waynesboro Public Library on October 29.

This is the group that sponsors, operates, and maintains the 147.075 repeater on Bear Den Mountain.

The group elected officers for the new year and heard reports on the new equipment recently installed and upgraded on the mountain. The group also discussed ways of raising critically-needed funds necessary to support what is arguably one of the best repeaters covering the valley.

W4PNT
Repeater
147.075 mhz

The 147.075 repeater offers autopatch capabilities to members of the association. It also offers Echolink internet access to local hams, allowing long-distance access on 2-meters. An HT is all that is required to work rare DX from Staunton, Waynesboro, Fishersville, and other points

in Augusta County. Hams in Rockingham County can also easily work the repeater with a modest mobile rig or home station, or even an HT with an external antenna.

The repeater is one of the few in the valley that does not utilize PL tone access. The repeater covers most of the valley, along with a major portion of Albemarle and Nelson counties, including Charlottesville, and can even work into Richmond and points beyond.

If you are interested in joining the association, check out the web page: <http://www.qsl.net/wrav/index1.htm> or contact Gordon Batey, W4FJC, association treasurer, at 540-248-2732.



Volunteer Exam Session: Saturday, December 8

Gayle Shull KU4XN would like to announce that the next VE session will be held at the usual spot on Saturday, December 8. If you are interested or know of someone interested in upgrading, or sitting for a ham radio license exam, let them know to show up at the Woodmen of the World building on Highway 42 just north of Dayton (just south of the Wal-Mart Supercenter on South High Street) at 9:00 am on December 8.

Gayle is always interested in helping hams upgrade. He is also interested in helping any ham become a volunteer examiner. Contact Gayle at 540-828-2132 to get more information.



Club Dues Renewal Time

It's that time of year again. Use the handy renewal form on the last page of this issue to renew your club dues.

Not to name names, but a couple of local hams can attest to the problems encountered by not renewing on time. The club treasurers are in "renewal mode" during December and January, and by February, they send the newsletter editor a list of paid members for the new year.

Once that list is received and processed, both the treasurer and editor come out of "renewal mode", and late renewals often get delayed processing. So please, renew now while you are thinking about it.



Local ARRL Position Open: Rockingham County E.C. Needed

Appreciation is due to Bryan Daniels, K4RMY, for his excellent service as the Emergency Coordinator for Rockingham County. Bryan's term officially expired October 31.

The EC position is an ARRL appointment. The E.C. works closely with the official RACES Radio Communications Officer, who is ham radio's official liaison to local government in an emergency.

While the RACES Radio Communications Officer is responsible for government interface with ham radio, it is the ARRL E.C. who organizes and supervises the weekly ARES/RACES nets. The E.C. also can take initiative in working with other, non-governmental agencies which might need amateur radio assistance during an emergency.

The E.C. and Radio Officer work together to help convey to hams the need for training in the standards, protocols, and procedures to be used in an emergency.

Serving as E.C. is a great way to learn about the behind-the-scenes workings of emergency communications support. If you are interested in being appointed as an E.C., or want to learn more about the opportunity, just contact Bryan at 540-433-5520 or email him at K4RMY@arrl.net.

Better yet, check into the Rockingham County ARES net on Monday nights. The net meets on 146.550 MHz simplex the first Monday of every month at 8:00 pm, and all other Monday nights on the 147.225 repeater at 8:00 pm. The repeater requires PL tone of 131.8 Hz.



MARA Secretary's Report: November 8 Meeting

Meeting called to order by VP David Fordham at 7:45 pm. The date and time for this meeting was changed due to Tradition's schedule, and the tour of the WHSV television station which took place at 5:45 pm at the station studio on North Main Street. Members had been notified of the changes via the November newsletter.

Introductions made all around.

1. Reports

New members- none

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

b. Treasurer- NONE

c. Groups

ARES/RACES— K4RMY - Bryan's term at ARES EC is over. If anyone is interested in becoming the ARES EC for Rockingham Co. please contact Bryan.

Hugh K3EC has said he would be willing to assist in dealing with training for passing traffic. A discussion followed about having this as program for MARA at some time in the near future.

VE- Second Saturday in Dec. - Dec 8th

e. Public Service-

Ray K4NRA - Camp Still Meadows was a success. Oct. 7th there were 90 horses. The largest group to date.

Jeff W4PJW- Fall Foliage Bike Ride on Oct. 20 and 21 was also a success with a large number of hams participating.

2. Announcements: MARA meeting will be the first Tuesday in Dec. not the first Thursday. In other words, the December MARA meeting will be Dec. 4th, the Christmas Banquet.

New Callsigns- New Ham KJ4AAE - Richard Wilson of Port Republic

3. Old Business

Slate of officers was elected unanimously is approved----

Pres.- Gene KG4JBC

VP- David KD9LA

Sect- Bryan K4RMY

Treas.-Sandy K4PZC

New Board member- Ray -K4NRA nominated

4. New Business None

Motion to adjourn, seconded and approved. Adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Submitted by
Bryan Daniels
K4RMY

Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season!

— From your newsletter editor!



Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____ CALLSIGN: _____ CLASS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

CELL PHONE (If you want it in club records for emergency purposes, not the roster!): _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: (print legibly!!) _____

MEMBER ARRL (Y/N) ___ REGISTERED ARES (Y/N) _____ REGISTERED MEMBER VA-RACES (Y/N) ___ RACES TRAINED (Y/N) ___

SKYWARN ID if trained: _____ Are you available for Workday Daytime Emergency Call up? (Y/N)

The club newsletter, the Monitor, is available free of charge monthly to all members of both clubs via email distribution, in PDF format. If you are unable to open PDF files, you can elect to receive the newsletter via printed copy, by U.S. mail, but are informed that printed copies are often delayed by the postal service, and sometimes arrive damaged by the automated postal equipment.

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE MONITOR via US MAIL RATHER THAN EMAIL? Yes / No / I already do and wish to continue

MARA members mail with \$12 to: MARA, PO Box 1882, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

VARA members mail with \$15 to: VARA, Doug Tippett, 2348 Mosley St, Waynesboro, VA 22980

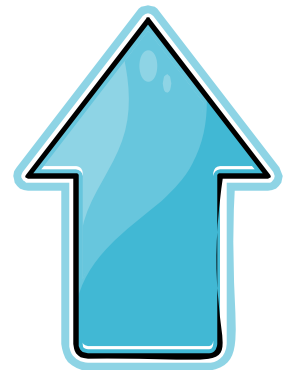
VARA Secretary's Report

The newsletter editor is off again to Belgium. To ensure that everyone was notified of the Christmas Banquet date and time, he published the Monitor a few days earlier than normal. Because of this, the VARA Secretary's Report for the November meeting did not arrive in time for inclusion.

Missing Monitors?

Over the last several months, numerous newsletters have been returned to the editor by the post office, mangled and damaged. Because the mailing labels have been torn off, the editor cannot tell who is missing their Monitor.

If you receive the hardcopy newsletter and ever miss a Monitor issue, notify the editor at the address or phone number shown on the back page of every issue. A replacement will be sent out promptly.



Renew Now!

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 08): Gayle Shull KU4XN
Board (exp 09): Ray Ritchie K4NRA

<http://mara.ws>

The December meeting will be the annual Christmas Family Banquet, held on Tuesday, December 4, at 6:00 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: Scott Newlen, KI4QQZ
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Treasurer: Doug Tippet, N8ESW
Program Manager: Al Bonck N3JB

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

The December meeting will be a joint Christmas Family Banquet with MARA, held on Tuesday, December 4, at 6:00 pm at Traditions Restaurant in Harrisonburg.

Visitors are welcome.

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

Doug Tippet
2348 Mosley St.
Waynesboro VA 22980