

April
2008

The Monitor

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MARA Meeting Location Change – Meeting Time Change, Too!

As voted at the March club meeting, the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association will hold its April meeting on **Thursday, April 3**, at the **Wood Grill Buffet** on Reservoir Street in Harrisonburg.

The Wood Grill Buffet is directly across the street from the Harrisonburg Rescue Squad Building, which in turn is next door to the Sheetz Gas Station, which in turn is across University Blvd from CostCo.

Directions are given on page 3 of this issue.

Due to the new meeting location, **the meeting time is also changing**. Dinner will now begin at **6:30 pm**. The Wood Grill is unable to accommodate us until **6:30 p.m.**, so please do not show up early and expect to be seated in the meeting room. Dinner will be followed by the meeting at 7 pm, followed by the program.

There are some differences between the Wood Grill Buffet and our previous eating establishments. Every MARA member (and guest) is **urged to read the detail article on page 2** of this issue (next page) before arriving at the meeting to avoid any misunderstandings.

The program this month will be by Hugh Pettis, K3EC, on traffic passing preparedness. If Hugh is still “down in the mouth” from his recent oral surgery, the backup speaker on the same topic will be Bryan Daniels, K4RMY. This program will be the inaugural of our new meeting room, so come check out the acoustics! See you there!

VARA Meeting Location Change – Chinese Gift Exchange & Covered Dish Dinner

The VARA club also will change meeting locations in April.

On Tuesday, April 1st, the VARA club will meet at the **Staunton Church of Christ**.

The April meeting will be a **covered dish dinner**, followed by a very short business meeting, followed by a belated **Chinese Gift Exchange**. As always, spouses are welcome.

If you can't cook, pick up a box of Oreos or Crunch-n-Munch and come anyway! There will be plenty to eat, thanks to those who can turn a mean frying pan or slow-cooker or pot of peas. (Did you hear about the ham who cooks his carrots ... and peas in the same pot?)

Participation in the gift exchange is optional. If you want to be part of the fun, bring a cheap (\$5 to \$10 max) gag gift (or regular gift, for that matter), wrapped but not identified. The rules of the game will be explained at the meeting. Dinner starts at 6:00 pm, followed by the meeting, followed by the gift exchange fun.

Directions to the meeting are on page 4.

MARA Meeting Location Change Details – MARA Members Please Read!

As mentioned on page 1, the MARA club will begin meeting at the Wood Grill Buffet in Harrisonburg on April 3. (Note that this is **NOT** the Wood *Fired* Grill.)

There are some important details that members should be aware of. Please read the following very carefully before arriving at the meeting.

The Wood Grill Buffet does not charge for their meeting room, and unlike Traditions, does not have a minimum number of attendees for the use of the room. They also do not charge \$50 for meetings lasting past 8 pm. However, they do ask that we follow some simple rules.

Due to the dinner rush, they cannot accommodate us before 6:30. They ask that we not show up more than five minutes early and expect to be seated. Plan to arrive at 6:30 sharp for dinner, or as soon thereafter as you like. There is plenty of parking behind the restaurant.

For insurance purposes, everyone who comes into the building must “be a customer”. However, NOT everyone must order the full buffet dinner.

The full buffet dinner includes entrees, meat bar, carving station, grill, hot and cold vegetable bars, seafood bar, salad bar, complimentary baked or sweet potato, bread, and full dessert bar. (The base price for the buffet includes unlimited ice water to drink. You can order tea, coffee, and soft drinks separately.)

The bottom line base price (e.g., what you actually end up paying out of your pocket), **including** tip and taxes, for the full buffet is \$12.34.

If you want to add a soft drink or tea or coffee (unlimited free refills), the total cost is \$14.59. Remember, this *includes* tax and tip.

If you are eligible for the senior discount (e.g., past your 60th birthday), the full buffet is only \$11.08 including tax and tip. If you are a senior and want a soft drink or coffee or tea, the bottom line cost is \$13.33.

Children under 12 pay \$0.50 per year of their age. For example, if you bring an eight year old to the meeting with you, (s)he can eat the full buffet for \$4.00.

But what if you don't want to buy the buffet?

Mr. Jeffris, the General Manager, said that anyone not wishing the full buffet was welcome to attend the meeting, but since insurance rules prohibit non-customers from being seated, he will make a special arrangement and let anyone who wishes to purchase only a drink (coffee, tea, or soft drink) for \$1.95, and a single piece of pie (or other single-serving dessert) with a drink for \$3.00. In this manner, you can be a customer and not have to shell out for an entire dinner.

This is not a company-wide policy, this is a special accommodation Mr. Jeffris is making just for our club!

When you arrive at the restaurant, go directly to the hostess stand, and tell the host or hostess you are with the ham radio club in the meeting room. You should be able to be seated immediately, even if there is a waiting line. We should have our own dedicated wait staff (probably two servers, depending on how many of us buy the full meal). The server will ask about your drink preference, bread, and baked potato preference, after which you are invited to visit the buffet as many times as you like. If you are getting only dessert, you can have your choice of any 1 item. If you are having only a drink, the waitress will bring your drink to your table.

After dinner, the server will bring your tab. You pay on your way out, after the end of the meeting, as you exit the building.

The meeting room can accommodate up to 50 people. Although there is no formal minimum, we would like to get at least 30 to attend every meeting, and Mr. Jeffris expressed hope that most of them would be buffet customers, even if most of us do get the senior discount!

The restaurant is entirely no-smoking.

We have the meeting room until closing, which is 9:30 pm. This should give us ample time for even the most lengthy business meeting and program combination, and still get us out well before closing time.

We hope this will turn out to be a satisfactory long-term relationship.

Directions to the New MARA Meeting Location: Wood Grill Buffet

Remember, the Wood Grill Buffet is NOT the same restaurant as the Wood Fired Grill. Do not get the two mixed up. The MARA meeting will be held at the Wood Grill Buffet on Reservoir Street, The Wood Fired Grill is a completely different restaurant at a completely different location. Don't let the similarity of names confuse you.

Wood Grill Buffet:

From Interstate 81, take Exit 247B, which is US 33 East, towards Elkton and the Valley Mall.

After exiting the interstate, turn RIGHT at the SECOND traffic light, onto University Blvd.

On University Blvd, turn RIGHT again at the THIRD traffic light, onto Reservoir Street. The Wood Grill is on your right, just past the Exxon Station.

From Highway 42, turn EAST on U.S. 33 (West Market Street, heading EAST towards Court Square.) Go around Court Square, following the signs for U.S. 33 East. Three blocks past Court Square, you will see the cemetery on your right. Turn RIGHT at the first traffic light after the cemetery, onto Reservoir Street. Go 1 mile, going past three traffic lights (Cantrell, Wal-Mart, Byrd Avenue). The Wood Grill is just past the third traffic light on your left.

From Keezletown, Elkton, Stanley, Shenandoah, Penn Laird, and other points east, take Highway 33 westbound to the Valley Mall, just inside the Harrisonburg City Limits. Turn LEFT on University Blvd just past Valley Mall (Shell and Blockbuster on the corner). Follow University Blvd to the third traffic light and turn right. The Wood Grill is on your right, just past the Exxon.

For those with GPS units, the address of the Wood Grill is 1711 Reservoir Street, Harrisonburg, 22801

RMH: Hospital Hospitality

A group from the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association met with Patrick Robertson, the Emergency Operations Manager of Rockingham Hospital, on March 26.

The meeting, initiated by Robertson, was primarily to review and clarify the relationship between ham operators and the hospital's emergency plans. Robertson is a former Marine communications specialist and Morse operator, and is familiar with radio principles, capabilities, and limitations..

The meeting was exceptionally productive. Much of the discussion dealt with the role of ham radio in any large-scale event affecting the hospital and surrounding community.

The new hospital facility under construction on Port Republic Road at Reservoir Street will likely eliminate or mitigate some of the problematic situations of the present hospital ham radio station. This was good news.

Participating in the meeting were Robertson, Bob N1QEQ, Gerald KN4FM, Ellsworth K4LXG, Bryan K4RMY, and Dave KD9LA.

VE Session: Saturday April 12

As a reminder, the next VE examination session will be held on Saturday morning, April 12, at the Woodmen of the World building on Highway 42 just north of Dayton, Virginia. Paperwork starts at 9:00 am, and the exams will begin as soon as the paperwork is completed.

If you can help with the exam session, please let Gerald Nauman know. Phone 540-434-0859.

Directions to the April VARA Meeting Location: Staunton Church of Christ

From Interstate 81, take Exit 222, which is US 250. Take US 250 WEST.

Go through Downtown Staunton, following the signs for Highway 250. Carefully follow US 250 as it turns right under the railroad tracks, left on Greenville Avenue, then right again onto New Street. After several blocks on New Street, U.S. 250 will turn left again onto Churchville Avenue. Follow Churchville Avenue around the first sharp bend to the right (about six blocks). You will see the Church of Christ on your right at the traffic light, on the corner of Churchville Avenue and Arlington St.

From Waynesboro, Fishersville, and Stuarts Draft, take Highway US 250 west, past Brands Flats, then follow US 250 west using the directions in the paragraph above.

From Verona and other points on U.S. 11 north of Staunton, take Highway 11 *Business* South into Staunton. Turn right onto Churchville Avenue at the library. Follow Churchville Avenue four blocks, around the sharp right bend, past the Gypsy Hill park entrance. The church is on your right at the traffic light just past the park entrance.

From Buffalo Gap, Deerfield and Meadowbrook, take the Staunton By-Pass to the US 250 exit. Follow the signs to take US 250 EAST approximately 2 miles until you see Gypsy Hill part on your right. The Church will be on your left as you make the sharp right turn at the far corner of the park.

The Staunton Church of Christ is across the street from the Gypsy Hill duck pond and playground. It is 1 block north of the main entrance to Gypsy Hill Park.

For those with GPS units, the address is 333 Churchville Ave, Staunton, 24401

Field Day Committee

VARA has selected their FD committee and it consists of: Benny N4BCC, Greg W4GRC, Jeff W4PJW, and Scott KI4QQZ.

MARA's field day committee members are: Ellsworth K4LXG, David K4DPF, Gerald KN4FM, and Bob N1QEQ. Bob N1QEQ agreed in principle to serve as committee chair this year.

The first FD Committee planning meeting will be held at Burger King in Mt. Crawford at 6pm on Thursday March 27, 2008. Since this is after the Monitor goes to press, but before the Monitor is mailed, we cannot tell what the outcome of this meeting is.

However, tune into the local nets, and find out what went on.

More importantly, you can discover when the next Field Day Committee Meeting will be held. Everyone is invited to attend and take part in the discussions, even if you are not on the committee. Everyone's input is always greatly appreciated!



VARA President's Message

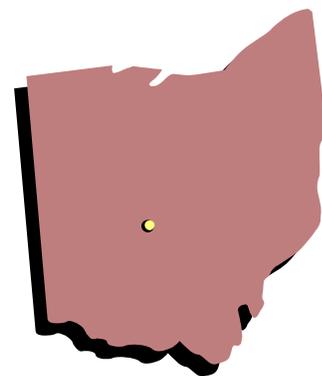
Greetings fellow amateur radio operators. Don't forget that our April 1st meeting will be at Staunton Church of Christ; starting at 6:00 P.M. Staunton Church of Christ is located at 333 Churchville Avenue, across from the Gypsy Hill Playground. The meeting will include a cover dish/carry in meal and a somewhat late "Chinese Gift Exchange." This is our way of having a little fun. Please don't spend over five or ten bucks for a gift. Only those who bring a gift are eligible to receive a gift in return. We will have supper first, then a short meeting, and last but not least the gift exchange. After the meeting I will need a couple of volunteers to help clean up the church fellowship hall.

Question. Have you considered adding a GPS to your radio communication toolbox? I have had a Garmin handheld GPS for several years and use it while hiking, but recently I purchased a GPS for my car while in Melbourne, Florida last January. The GPS is amazing, and I can't believe all the information it contains. Detailed maps include just about every road you can think of. In fact, I was trying to find a Christian camp in Strasburg last February and I would still be looking for it had it not been for my GPS. Thanks to the GPS, it took me right to the main entrance of the camp. The GPS shows main road, secondary roads, dirt roads, you name it. Not only that but the GPS I have has an amazing database. Need someplace to eat? Pick a restaurant and the GPS will get you there. Need fuel? No problem. In fact, if you need to find a dry cleaner in the middle of Staunton, the GPS will find one and take you there. The bottom line is that the GPS is a very handy device.

As far as our hobby is concerned, a GPS can be a lifesaver, whether we are involved in events like the "Bike Rally" in the fall or involved in emergency situations when they arise. I have not endorsed a specific brand. I will leave that up to you, but the price is coming down and I think they are worth the investment.

Last months special program by Jeff (W4PJW) on RTTY and how to get started using today's technology was excellent. Jeff is a great resource for almost anything amateur radio related. From spark gap transmitters (he built the first one) to today's sophisticated transceivers. Thanks Jeff for a great job!

That's it for now, 73, Greg, W4GRC



Going to Dayton This Year?

Be sure to read the Dayton Primer from Jeff, W4PJW, starting on page 8. It has some great information to help you survive, thrive, and enjoy the experience!

Waynesboro Riverfest Public Service

The city of Waynesboro's annual Riverfest festival is on the calendar for April 26 this year.

The VARA club normally provides communications support for this event. It is another low-stress and enjoyable day, with lots to watch while you are on station.

Contact Gordon Batey if you have a handheld 2-meter radio and are interested in participating. Gordon's phone number is 540-248-2732.



Public Service Report: Fourth Annual Bel Monte Race

The Bel Monte Race was held at Sherando Lake on Saturday March 22, 2008.

Per request by race officials, local ham operators provided communications support for this fun event.

We had a great day for the race and the rain held off (except for just a couple sprinkles that wouldn't have gotten you wet in shirt sleeves).

There was one runner that injured his knee and had to be brought back in by one of our volunteers.

There were ten runners that had to drop out of the race for one reason or the other.

The Bel Monte Officials were very well pleased with our help and are looking forward to our assistance again next year.

We had three volunteers from the VARA that helped with the event: Special appreciation is due to **Gordon Batey WA4FJC**, **Scott Newlen KI4QQZ** and **Ray Colvin KE4HVR**. Also thanks to a friend of Gordon's, **Kenny Bassett K4KPB**, who came out and helped with communications too.

Thanks again to all that came out on a pretty Saturday and volunteered their time to help with the race

Ray Colvin KE4HVR

March of Dimes Walk: April 19

Looking for some fun on a nice Saturday morning? April 19 is the Harrisonburg March of Dimes March for Babies. Once again, the MARA club has volunteered to provide communications support for this fun event. Hams receive free T-shirts, a free breakfast, and a free lunch, too. The setup starts at 8:00 am, and the lunch is usually over by noon. Come out with your HT and help provide some radio communications for this low-stress, high-enjoyment event.

Bob, N1QEQ has volunteered as net control for this event. Please give him a call if you can help out. His number is 540-442-1470..



Local Ham's Cousin Aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavor

Neil Buckingham, WA4KKL, has a first cousin named Mike Foreman.

Captain Mike Foreman was aboard the record-setting shuttle mission which is just ending as this month's Monitor goes to press.

You can Google "Mike Foreman" (yeah, spelled just like George, the man with the grill) and find all kinds of Bio scoop on him. There is an interesting story about how he always had a lifelong dream of becoming an astronaut since he was a little kid, and finally made it. He is also a highly decorated Navy veteran, and has been involved in aerospace his entire career.

Congratulations! Cigars, Anyone?

Billy Hooke, KG4JOF, is the proud father of twin girls, born Wednesday March 12, at 7 am. One weighed 6 lbs 7 oz, and the other was 5 lb and 12 oz. One was completely bald, and the other had long hair. I guess with a few piercings, they'll be ready for college. Congrats to Billy and the proud Mom.

Rockingham County ARES Net Controls

March 31: Bryan Daniels K4RMY

April 7 (*simplex*): Gerald Nauman KN4FM

April 14: David Fordham KD9LA

April 21: Hugh Pettis K3EC

April 28: Norman Benner KA4EEN

May 5 (*simplex*): Ray Ritchie K4NRA

May 12: Gerald Brunk K4RBZ

May 19: E.C. Showalter KG4KUR

May 26: Gayle Shull KU4XN

Remember, this net meets Mondays at 8:00 pm local time. Simplex nets are on 146.550. Other Mondays, the net meets on the 147.225 repeater, which requires a plus offset (+0.600 MHz), and a PL tone of 131.8 Hz.

Net Schedules: Last Month's Monitor

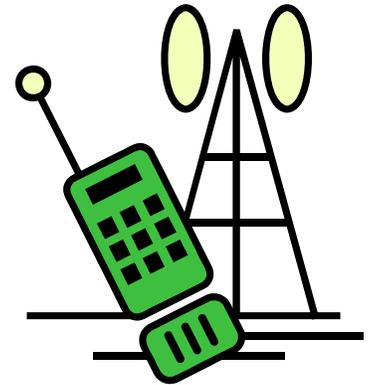
Last month's Monitor had a complete listing of all nets in the valley, including regional and sectional traffic nets. Copies can be obtained online at:

<http://mara.ws>

Click on Reference Material, then click on Back Issues of the Monitor, then click on the March 2008 issue.

Triple Nickel Net Time Change

The Triple Nickel Net which meets on 147.555 is changing the time of its Fourth Thursday Session. The Fourth Thursday of the month the net will meet at 8:30 pm. Local time. Everyone is invited to check into this fun informal net.



147.225 Repeater Under New Management

After many years of gracious service as owner, operator and trustee of the 147.225 repeater, Donnie Mowbray N4RAG is passing the torch.

The machine on Laird's Knob, just north of Massanutten Peak, has been a venerable workhorse of ARES nets, public service events, and general all-around ham activity in the Rockingham County area for years.

A partnership made up of Ken High K4KLH, Phil Rinaca KQ4D, Ray Ritchie K4NRA, and Carter Ritchie KG4PRP, has assumed ownership and management of what has been one of the most reliable repeaters in the area.

Donnie indicated that he has too many irons in the fire, and can no longer devote time to keeping the machine in its premier status.

Ken K4KLH, is providing the callsign for the repeater, and said that the group plans to give the entire system a thorough tune-up to ensure the continued good coverage area, signal quality and reliability.

"We'd like to ask everyone to bear with us for a little bit as we check things out. The machine might be off the air for a couple of days here and there as we go over the various parts and components of the system." He expressed the groups intent to keep the machine as a primary provider of 2-meter communication in Rockingham County.

Thanks to Ken, Ray, Phil, and Carter for investing the time and effort to keep this machine local.

Dayton Hamvention Primer: Words of Wisdom from a Ham Who's Been There and Done That

The Dayton Hamvention is the Mecca of ham radio operators all over the world. Scheduled for **May 16, 17 and 18** this year, the event is held at the Hara Arena in Dayton, Ohio.

Yes, this is a long way away from the valley. You can't drive over and back in a day. In fact, it takes you most of a day just to drive one way. But lots of us go in a caravan, and the journey itself is a lot of fun on top of getting to go to the Hamvention.

You'll need a hotel room. The ones closest to the hamvention are sold out early, but you should be able to find one within easy driving distance. Use Google maps, mapquest, or just talk to one of us that are going for some hints and pointers about where to stay.

Some of us take our spouses along. While they may not be interested in the hamvention itself, they make good company in the evening at dinner and in the hotel room, and the spouses end up having a good time on their own during the day shopping at the outlets not very far from the arena.

We are assembling a caravan again this year. So far we've got eight or nine full cars scheduled. We always leave on Thursday morning, and eat breakfast together in Lexington before heading out I-64. Most of us drive back Sunday afternoon after spending the last few hours at the arena, but a couple are staying over until Monday.

For driving directions to the hamfest go to: <http://hamvention.org/hv2008/accommodations/directions08.htm>

I offer the following information for those who may have never been to the 3-day Dayton Hamvention, or as a review for those who have been. Even seasoned "hamfesters" may find this information useful.

I have been attending Dayton almost yearly since about 1985 and have developed these ideas and practices over time. I'll share them here (as best as I can remember them). Thanks also to K4RBZ, K4DJG & W4QDC for their input.

Dayton is BIG. It covers several acres – you can't appreciate how big it is till you have been there a couple of times. It takes one full day to walk just the flea market, with no loitering. I'm not kidding – just ask someone who has been there. If you stop along the way and look under tables or ask questions etc. it will take more than a day. And that's just the outside part. The first two years that I went to Dayton, I thought the main arena was the only inside part. Somehow, I finally realized that down the hallways off the main arena there were more rooms – lots more – so many that you get lost in the maze. And they are BIG rooms, too! Check out the .pdf map link below and you'll see what I mean.

Ride the Bus from the Salem Mall. The buses make continuous round trips to and from Salem Mall all day every day. You park at the mall and once or twice a day, ride back to the mall to lock your purchases in your vehicle out of sight. The buses can handle large packages and antennas etc. see <http://www.hamvention.org/parking.htm>.

There is no need to remove antennas or radios from your vehicle while parked at Salem Mall. There are safety officers on site and all the other vehicles have antennas and radios everywhere mounted inside and out. A thief would be totally confused trying to decide from which vehicle he would steal stuff.

There is off-site pay parking across the street from the Arena but it costs more than the bus ticket (\$8.00 for 3 days for the bus). Off site, you have to pay to park each day – usually \$10 per day. You end up walking farther to your car at a pay site than at the Salem Mall. **There is NO parking** on the Hamvention grounds. You can leave and return to the Salem mall as needed. Salem Mall itself has been pretty well demolished but the parking lot is still available to us

Dayton has several things you CAN count on: (In no particular order)

Rain – count on it – if the wx is clear all three days, then you got away with one. A spare pair of dry socks might be a good idea. Raincoat – umbrella?? A cheap plastic poncho in a bag is a good thing to have in your pocket. It's miserable walking around after you get wet. Been there done that!!

Sun - it will be sunny some of the time in the flea market area so remember sun screen – I wear a baseball hat and that helps shade the nose – the back of your neck is exposed the most because you are looking down at stuff on tables and the “good” junk is under the tables.

Tickets – you can't get in without your ticket – every time you go from the outside flea market area to the inside vendors, you have to show your ticket. On site, you can have your ticket laminated or purchase the little plastic pouch with a lanyard to hang around your neck. You don't want to take a chance on losing your ticket. Sometimes I take my name tag and push the pin through the ticket and on to my hat – works real well – just point to your cap when the guards want to see it.

Oh, and tickets are cheaper on-line. Buy before you go, the lines to buy tickets are very long!

Crowds – It's always crowded at the inside booths, especially when the weather is bad outside. The busiest day inside is Saturday so that is a good day to concentrate on the outside stuff. Plan to mix up your browse time – when you get stressed from the crowds inside, move outside for a while. If rain appears to be forecast for later in the day then do the outside stuff first. The inside vendors will be there all day. Things begin to slow down about noon on Sunday, but that's about the time a lot of vendors and flea-market people pack up and leave.

Maps of the vendors and tailgate area – you should pick up one when you enter the ticket selling area (big double door entrance just behind where you get off the buses) otherwise you'll be lost all day – mark where you have been so you don't keep looking at the same stuff all the time.

Locating Stuff: **Mark the number of the booth or space where you see something you want to come back to** – you will **NOT** remember where it was later and even if you do, you won't be able to find it again. And if it's a one of a kind something or other, **buy it now** – chances are it will not be there in another 10 minutes. (This has happened to me several times – once I just went one table away and when I turned around, that TNC that I wanted for

\$50 was being handed to the fella behind me.)

For a map of the fleamarket area see

<http://www.hamvention.org/fleamarketmap.pdf> (each small rectangle is another table – lots of em' – they're numbered on the pavement to match the map)

There is a list of vendor's assigned spaces at <http://www.hamvention.org/insideexhibitsmap.pdf>

(most of these numbers are for inside spaces). Make a note of the commercial vendors you want to visit and locate them on your map ahead of time.

Tired feet – everyone gets tired feet – there are many places to sit down and rest. Wear shoes that are broken in, comfortable and provide support. The main arena has plenty of seating and is a good place to have your lunch - trouble is that I seem to get tired when I'm no where near there.

Most of the **flea market** area is paved but there are some gravel sections too - watch for the big tents in the flea market area - good stuff in there. (Of course some junkie too). I've noticed in recent years that some of the “big” vendors indoors also have additional smaller exhibits outside.

PickPockets – yep – happens every year – there is security and police too – they are there for a reason. I suggest that you put your money in a couple different places – maybe in a zipped jacket pocket or front pants pocket. I wear one of those **fanny pack** hip hugger thingies that has its own belt and a zippered bag. Don't wave big bundles of money around - keep a few bills handy but keep the bulk of it out of sight even when paying for something.

Lunch – There are places to buy your lunch - hot dogs, sandwiches etc. - however, as usual, they are over-priced and anything that is good also has an associated really-long line. I always stop at a Subway or food mart of some kind and get a sandwich or two and a bag of chips on the way in each morning. I also get a couple containers of something to drink. I prefer Gator-Aid or water because anything carbonated or with caffeine makes me have to search out the bathroom too often. In 2006 and 2007 the lunch lines appeared to be shorter than usual and the selection of food was adequate. I

chose “off-times” to go by and check out the lines and they weren’t bad. Consequently, in 2007 I chose not to carry a sandwich – I just got some of the over-priced stuff in the food court area.

Bathroom Lines — Oh yes, there are **lines** at the bathroom and you never seem to be close enough to one when you need it and then there is that line. Oops! Almost forgot – there will be porta-potties in the flea market area – lines there too.

Prizes – There are lots of prizes and even the smallest hourly prize at Dayton is Big!! Drop off your ticket stub **first thing** in the main arena (right close to where you pick up your map near the main front entrance but inside the arena main floor). Check out the main prizes on display while you are there. Watch the TV type monitors throughout the arena hallways during the day for your prize winning ticket number to appear.

Messages – You can leave messages and pick up messages for each other at the DARA booth in the main arena near where you drop off your ticket stub. Check the same prize monitors for your callsign with a message waiting. Last year (2007) there was some mix-up on the message thing but it should be fixed now. Plan a place ahead of time to meet your buddies - you will NOT be able to find anyone once you get separated. Set a time and place - mark the map.

Thinking of using **handhelds** to stay in touch with your buddies? Two words: Forget it! 2500 others are doing the same! 440 and 2-meters are totally full band-edge to band-edge and are useless!!! 220????? Probably the same. Cell phones on vibrate – ok!

Shopping List- Make a list of the things you may be interested in before you go – stuff, ideas, parts lists for projects, or questions to ask of vendors.

And don’t just think about ham radio, either. If you have any ideas or needs as relate to **computers – laptops, printers** etc. you can find most anything at Dayton – Memory, weird batteries, cases, cables etc. There are places there that will build you a computer while you wait. There’s Cell phone stuff too. Write down a description of what you may

need before you leave home – style, model, color etc. – you may think you’ll remember what it looks like, but by the time you look a kazillion similar items, you will be totally confused.

Hardware – bolts, nuts screws, specialty fasteners, tools, bits, lights, clamps, fuses, electronic components, hard-to-find stuff, etc. – take a list of what you need. Soldering iron tips – write down the make and model before you leave home. (I always seem to forget that one) Connectors, connectors, connectors – weird ones, regular ones – whatever you couldn’t find anywhere else is at Dayton. If it ever existed, it will be there – now locating it is a different proposition altogether.

Consultation with Experts—Dayton is the place to talk to the “**top dawgs**” in whatever category. The fella who wrote that software you have questions about will be there. I always upgrade my DXBase software here. The guy/gal who designed whatever piece of new innovative equipment or antenna will be there too. They have come to the Hamvention to promote their “stuff” and they want/expect questions and reflections.

Antennas are everywhere. Antenna systems’ add-on’s like phasing of HF verticals, termination systems for Beverages and off-center fed or dipole baluns can be found. A variety of matching devices are available. HF mobile stuff is on display.

New equipment is introduced from the various manufacturers and even some new innovative stuff shows up for the first time here. You’ll find amplifiers and tuners with the cases open where you can peer inside and ask questions of the designers.

There are several exceptions to this line of reasoning – like the major equipment dealers such as Kenwood, Icom and Yaesu - they will have sales people there but not necessarily the designers.

Watch for free hats and/or maps etc. Mr. MFJ himself is always there at the MFJ booth but of course he didn’t design all that stuff himself. He is however, quite knowledgeable and can answer questions.

Forums – Check <http://hamvention.org/hv2008/forums/index.html> before you leave home and write

down time and place etc. These are always good – sometimes informal but usually structured. Lots of good talent presenting on great topics – nice time to rest too. The most popular ones fill up early so sometimes you end up standing or sitting on the floor in the back of the room.

Credit Cards/Checks - Most major vendors accept credit cards. Don't count on anyone accepting your check. Get a receipt and make sure it has an address and phone number on it to call in case of trouble. Have ID available - carry a couple of your QSL cards – they're better than a business card for hams you may meet.

Buggy - also called "carts". One of those things you see in airports that people use to carry luggage on. I have a small one - two wheeled, which folds up when not in use. On my buggy I have a backpack. Inside the backpack is a small soft sided cooler for the sandwiches I brought and the drinks and chips. I put small items inside the backpack all day - it'll be pretty full by evening. I don't usually wear the backpack, but if I buy enough stuff to load down the buggy then I can wear the backpack . You can buy a buggy there at one of the booths but you should get one the first day because they usually sell out of the good ones early on.

Sometimes I wear a jacket in the morning and it goes into the backpack too. I also put some cash in the backpack – just remember where you put it!! I got home one year and found some money which I wish I had remembered, cause I missed a "bargain" for lack of funds – at least I thought I was short on money – of course you'd never do that would you??!!!

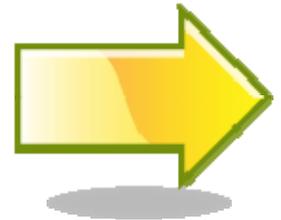
If I buy anything big – like a radio or power supply, it'll probably be in a box and goes under the backpack on the buggy. Most of the vendors would prefer however, to make the sale on site and then ship the item to you from their main store. That way, they don't deplete their "on hand" inventory and you don't have to lug it around all day.

Sometimes, I know that I'm **not** going to spend much money or buy anything bulky on a particular day so I may not take the buggy – just the backpack. It's kind of a personal thing so do what pleases you – I've outlined what I could remember – just have a good time.

And finally:

BUYER BEWARE applies to all purchases – if it's too cheap to be true, there's a reason.

Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW



ARES Registration Time

On the next page is an ARES registration form.

Bryan Daniels, K4RMY, ARES E.C. for Rockingham County, is updating the ARES roster.

Bryan asks that ALL HAMS who wish to register as a potential volunteer emergency communicator who is willing to participate with Rockingham County in an emergency please complete this form and mail it to him at: **2327 Blue Stone Hill Dr, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.**

You do not have to live or work in Rockingham County to enroll with Bryan.

There is no obligation, either. The registration is only to establish a call-up list for contacting you in case there is an emergency (or drill). You elect to participate or not at the time of the callup.

If you don't register, it does not mean you can't help, but it means you might not be called if an incident does occur.

So why take a chance on missing out on the fun. Complete the form and mail it today.



Amateur Radio Emergency Service®

ARES® Registration Form

Name:	
Call Sign:	
Mailing Address:	
City, State, ZIP code:	
e-mail address(es):	
Home phone number:	
Work phone number:	
Cell phone number:	
License Class:	

Check bands and modes that you can operate:

MODE	HF	6 meters	2 meters	222 MHz	440 MHz	Others
SSB						
CW						
FM						
DATA						
PACKET						
Other modes (specify below)						
Mobile Operation						

Can your home station be operated without commercial power? Yes [] No []

Signature _____ Date _____

Contact ARES® and ARRL Section Leaders in your area: <http://www.arrl.org/sections/>.
 Learn about ARRL-sponsored Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Courses:
<http://www.arrl.org/cce/>

FSD-98 (07/04)

MARA Secretary's Report – March 6 Meeting

Introductions made all around

1. Reports: New members- None

- a. Secretary's minutes as printed in the Monitor, moved, seconded and approved.
- b. Treasurer's report - \$ 2,080.09 moved, seconded and approved
- c. Groups

ARES/RACES—Bryan, K4RMY had ARES membership forms for those willing to join Rockingham Co. ARES K4RMY also had some copies of the article "Camille Communique" from the Jan. 1970 QST that were given to him by Hugh K3EC that were made available to those that wanted it. Also a handout on message handling was available to those who wanted it.

Hospital update - N1QEQ- is working with the RMH folks to get a better situation in the EmComm room at RMH.

VE- Feb 9th VE had 4 new Technicians, one new General and one new Extra. Saturday April 12th is the next VE session.

- d. Public Service- March of Dimes April 19th, 9:00 6-8 hams needed to work communications

2. Announcements:

VA QSO Party 1800Z, Mar 15 to 0200Z, Mar 17

Contest - BARTG Spring RTTY Contest 0200Z March 22 to 0200Z March 24

EA PSK31 contest 1600Z Sat -1600Z Sun March 9th

TX5C Clipperton DXpedition March 7-17, 2008

3. Old Business

Gene KG4JBC led a discussion about the new requirements at Traditions for holding meetings. Must have 20 paying or Club will be billed for any less than 20 and club must be out of Traditions by 8:00pm or a \$50 fee will be assessed. David KD9LA discussed information from Wood Grill Buffet. Time for meal 6:30pm with meeting at 7:30, everyone must purchase something even if it is just a cup of coffee. We can stay until 9:30. A motion was made and seconded that we move the MARA club meeting to Wood Grill Buffet for at least the next 4 months. Motion was passed.

Field Day Planning committee- Bob N1QEQ, James NN4JM, Sandy K4PZC, David K4DPF. Bob N1QEQ agreed in principle to be Chairman.

4. New Business

RMH committee to assist with the new RMH EmComm facility- KD9LA , moved, seconded, passed. Ellsworth K4LXG, Bob N1QEQ, Bryan K4RMY and Gerald KN4FM will serve on this committee.

March of Dimes Public Service on April 19th was moved, seconded, passed. N1QEQ in charge.

50-50 won by Dick W3HXX \$9.50. Motion to adjourn ,seconded and approved.

David KD9LA did a presentation on Logbook of the World (LoTW).

Submitted by

Bryan Daniels, K4RMY, MARA Secretary

VARA Secretary's Report: March 4 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Shoney's in Staunton March 4, 2008. The President, Greg Czerniak W4GRC, opened the meeting at 7:00pm. There were 27 members present and 6 guests, Bob Johnson KI4BXQ, John Bobbio KI4TOH, Don Casteel KI4TOG, Sandy Mullins K4PZC, Andrew Barbour AG4XN, Billy Hooke KG4JOF. Welcome to our visitors, we hope to see all of you back for next month.

VARA Meeting Place for April will be a covered dish meal at the Staunton Church of Christ on Churchville Ave, just across from the entrance to Gypsy Hill Park in Staunton. We will do the Chinese Gift Exchange, bring a gift in the \$5 to \$10 range, just a simple gift or gag gift. It's fun to see what you get then who takes it away and leaves you with what they didn't want. Scott Newlen KI4QQZ volunteered to purchase utensils and other items for the meal at COSTCO.

50/50: Scott Newlen KI4QQZ had the winning ticket. Congratulations to Scott!

Bel Monte Race Thanks to all that came out to help with the race. We had a good day for the race, only sprinkled a bit twice but not enough to get you wet in shirt sleeves. One runner injured his knee and was brought in by one of our volunteers. All together there were ten runners that dropped out of the race. Our help was appreciated by the race officials. Those volunteering were Gordon Batey WA4FJC, Scott Newlen KI4QQZ and Ray Colvin. Also one of Gordon's friends Kenneth Bassett K4KPB came out and helped with the race. We all appreciated his help very much.

Field day: Next Field Day meeting will be at 6pm April 24th at Burger King in Mt. Crawford.

Antenna System for Staunton EOC: David Tanks AD4TJ will talk with Donna Good about the purchase of an antenna system at the Staunton EOC and the funding.

Augusta Co. ARES NET: Was held on 146.490 simplex on March 13th we had a good turnout for the net and good copy on most all check-ins. David Tanks AD4TJ was NCS for the net this Month. Thanks to all the check-ins!

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. The ARES Net will be run on simplex from time to time so listen on the repeater and watch for e-mails to this effect.

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

ON THE SICK LIST:

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

Let's keep Denny 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.gsl.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 colv-ingr@comcast.net and David Fordham KD9LA ford-hadr@jmu.edu.

ALSO, keep QRZ updated when call signs and e-mail addresses are changed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.

Jeff Rinehart W4PJW gave a PowerPoint presentation on RTTY starting from the big old noisy mechanical machines to the new method of computer programs, interfaces and ham radios. He brought in a couple of his older interfaces that he had started out in RTTY with and the cables he uses now to interface his radio and computer. He also brought handouts of diagrams for making up interface cables and other information found on the Internet that will help give a better understanding of how RTTY works. The handout also contained the RTTY contests coming up each month.

Thanks to Jeff for a great presentation..

*Submitted by
VARA Secretary
Ray Colvin KE4HVR*



Based on material submitted by Don Landes WX4C, from Ron K3MI

The Big Dig

After having excavated an archaeological dig to a depth of 10 meters last year, New York scientists found traces of what appeared to be copper wire dating back 175 years and came to the conclusion that New Yorkers already had some kind of electronic telecommunications network long before Bell and Edison.

Not to be outdone by the New Yorkers, in the weeks that followed, California scientists also dug to a depth of 10 meters, and shortly after, announced that they had discovered strands of glass and silica. They took this to mean that Californians apparently were using fiber optics networks more than 175 years ago.

After reading about the New York and California digs, a West Virginia scientific team decided to do their own exploration. They dug to 10 meters and found nothing. They dug to 20 meters and found nothing. They dug to 30 meters and found nothing. Finally, they dug and dug and dug down to 100 meters, and still found absolutely nothing but plain old dirt.

The West Virginians thought about it for a while, and finally concluded that more than 175 years ago, West Virginians had already surpassed New York and California and gone completely wireless.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- April 1: VARA Club Chinese Gift Exchange Meeting – Staunton Church of Christ Fellowship Hall
- April 2: Highland County ARES Net
- April 3: MARA Club Meeting at Wood Grill restaurant in Harrisonburg
- April 7: Rockingham County ARES Net (146.550 simplex)
- April 10: Augusta County ARES Net
- April 12: Raleigh (NC) RARSFest
- April 12: VE Exams (Dayton Virginia)
- April 14: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)
- April 16: Highland County ARES Net
- April 19: March of Dimes - Harrisonburg March for Babies (formerly WalkAmerica) Public Service Event
- April 21: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)
- April 26: Waynesboro Riverfest Public Service Event
- April 28: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)

- May 1: MARA Club Meeting at Wood Grill restaurant in Harrisonburg
- May 3: March of Dimes – Augusta County March for Babies (Staunton) Public Service Event
- May 4: Hagerstown (MD) Hamfest
- May 5: Rockingham County ARES Net (146.550 simplex)
- May 6: VARA Club Meeting
- May 7: Highland County ARES Net
- May 8: Augusta County ARES Net
- May 10: Reidsville (NC) Hamfest
- May 12: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)
- May 16-18: Dayton (OH) Hamvention
- May 19: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)
- May 21: Highland County ARES Net
- May 24: Durham (NC) DurHAMFest
- May 24-25: CQ WW WPX Contest (CW)
- May 26: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)

MARA/VARA

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

Return Service Requested

NEW MEETING LOCATIONS (see page 1)

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>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month
at Wood Grill Buffet in Harrisonburg.

Dinner begins at 6:30 pm,
the business meeting begins at 7:30 pm

Visitors are welcome.

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

MARA
PO Box 1882
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: 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>

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month
See Page 1 for April Meeting Location

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