

May  
2008

# The Monitor

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

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## **MARA Meeting: Wood Grill at 6:30 pm, Thursday May 1**

In case you missed it last month, the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association is now meeting at the Wood Grill Buffet Restaurant on Reservoir Street in Harrisonburg. This is across the street from the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Rescue Squad building and the Sheetz Gas station, half a block from CostCo. We are reprinting the directions in case you weren't able to come last month. See page 10 for important information about the restaurant, and page 11 for directions.

The dinner will start at 6:30 pm, followed by a business meeting at 7:30 pm.

Everyone is required to purchase something, so the restaurant can claim everyone as a "customer" for insurance purposes. However, if you don't want the scrumptious buffet, you can get just a drink, or just a drink with one serving of dessert.

Tell the waitress if you qualify for the senior discount.

After the business meeting, we will hear from Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, who will give an interesting program on ham radio in Swards' Folly.

## **VARA Meeting: Shoneys at 6:00 pm, Tuesday May 6**

The Valley Amateur Radio Association will meet back at the Shoney's Restaurant for the May 6 meeting. This is located just north of US 250, east of the intersection with Interstate 81, in Staunton (Brands Flat, actually).

The dinner begins at 6:00 pm. You can order off the menu, or enjoy the buffet.

The business meeting begins at 7:00 pm, followed by the program. This month, Jeff Rinehart W4PJW will give an interesting program on his visit to the MARA club. No, not the one you're thinking about. This one is located in a city called "Palmer", and the "M" stands for Mantuska.



## VARA President's Message

Hello fellow hams! Your president does not have a lot to report this month, so I have enclosed a brief article on my Field Day experience in 2006 with a newly purchased Tent Camper. I hope you will enjoy it. See you in May at Shoney's.

### THE GREAT ESCAPE – FIELD DAY 2006 AND BEYOND

The following events describe our first vacation with a pop-up camper. We have named our camper, Camperella. Maybe we should change her name to "Camp Umbrella." You'll understand why as you read on. Since Lonnie and I have been married we have camped in a tent. First we camped in a two-man mountain tent while traveling on a motorcycle. When we started traveling more in the fall we decided it would be nice to have a larger tent. Our largest camping tent was an eight by ten. It was big enough to turn around in without running into each other.

Now tents have advantages and disadvantages. They are light and cheap. And therein lies the problem. When it is raining, the rain enters the tent. When it is cold, the cold enters the tent. In a tent you sleep on the floor unless you are willing to sleep on cots (and pack them), and as everyone knows, or at least should know cots are not very comfortable. To further complicate things, when one grows older it is a lot harder to crawl in and out of a tent, not to mention getting dressed. So, this brings us to our first adventure in a pop-up.

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006, after much hemming and hawing, we decided to look at the various types of tent campers. Of course Lonnie wanted the largest one and I wanted the cheapest. We compromised somewhere in the middle. Thus, on Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> we purchased our first (and maybe last) tent camper and brought it home.

The first challenge was leaning all the in and outs of tent campers. Our camper has a water tank, refrigerator, stove, water heaters, electric and ac. We had to learn how to make all these contraptions work on either 120 volts ac, 12 volts dc, or propane gas. On top of that, we had to learn how to open and close our new pop-up properly. There is a learning curve, believe me.

The second challenge was backing the camper into the garage after getting home. My garage is not very wide, only about nine feet or so. My new camper is seven and one half feet wide. That meant there was very little room for error. As beginners luck would have it, I managed to back it into the garage on the very first try, a feat that will probably never be repeated again in my lifetime.

The week of June 19<sup>th</sup> was a busy one at church with Vacation Bible School. We decided to take a vacation,

and get some rest, plus get to know the ins and outs of pop-up camping. Lonnie was busy trying to decide on what to store in the camper. I spent my time trying to figure out how to pull the camper and increase my gas mileage at the same time (yeah, sure).

Well anyway, Friday came and it was off to the big adventure (sort of). We had to put water in the reservoir because our first few days of camping would find us away from a water source to hook up to. Before we even left the driveway, it began to rain. Now rain is a good thing. In fact, we who live in the Shenandoah Valley are in desperate need of rain. My only question is this: why does it have to rain on the day I am leaving for vacation? In any event, we had a rain delay.

Once the rain stopped, I was able to complete filling the tank, and perform my final checks on the camper and car. Now, at last the adventure could begin. Our first trip took us to the George Washington National Forest in Western Virginia, only 25 miles from Staunton by air. We would set up camp at around the 3900-foot level of an area known as "Reddish Knob." As you know my fellow amateur radio operators, the area I am describing is where we have our field day activities.

The trip up was uneventful. In other words, I did not crash the car or camper. Once getting to our destination we made one little mistake. We set up in an area with too much sunshine. It was hot! Not to be detoured, we found another site, put everything away and moved into the shade. After doing so, the sun disappeared for three days and all it did was rain. When I say rain, I mean lots of it. Flash flooding and all that stuff. So here we are on our first camping trip and it rains for three days.

Just as an addendum, those of you who do participate in Field Day know that it never rains. I played radio while Lonnie and our retriever Endy sat in the pop-up camper looking for leaks. They didn't find any! Ah, now that's an improvement over a tent.

As the rain continued to fall, my radio friends ask me if I can have a talk with God and ask Him to turn off the spigot for a while. I reply that God is probably paying me back for not being in church on Sunday. Then it occurs to me to ask my friends if they have been praying for rain? They reply, "Yes." Thus I conclude that God is simply answering their prayers. They need to be more time specific the next time they ask God for rain!

When it was time for Field Day to end, all those who participated took down radio antennas disconnected the various pieces of radio equipment and prepared to go home. Except, it kept raining. Because of this little problem, Lonnie and I had to take our camper down in the rain and hook it up to the Yukon. Quack, quack!

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We decided to go home, clean up and get a good nights sleep before heading out on Monday morning for another camping spot. Of course it continued to rain. When we got home from the field day site we had to park and unload in the rain. At this point, I am beginning to ask myself if having a camper is really a good idea. It seems to attract rain. Since we were experiencing drought conditions until we bought the camper, I began to wonder if maybe I had purchased a "rain maker?" Why can't you see the possibilities? I can see the handlines now. "Need rain? Call Greg and watch the wonders of his rain making machine." Maybe I can make a little money on the side! Even retire and travel around the country helping relieve droughts and put out forest fires.

Excuse me for digressing. Anyway, Lonnie and I are tired and cold. We repack and get ready to head to a campground called "Babcock State Park" on Monday morning. It is located in the mountains of West Virginia. Well, surprise of all surprises, it rains most of Sunday night and Monday after mid-night. We do however get a bit of a break, and it stops long enough for us to pack the car, hook up and leave Staunton. About 25 miles down the road we find rain, or maybe it found us.

We arrive at Babcock State Park, set up and waited for it to rain. We did not have to wait long. As a result, we are nestled inside our camper enjoying the sound of raindrops on our roof (which in a heavy rain sounds like jack hammers). Endy our Golden Retriever is only ten months old and beginning to wonder why humans want to go camping in the first place. After all, to her the camper is not much bigger than a kennel. And I am sure she would ask if she could the following, "Why does it always rain when you camp?"

It is now Tuesday morning, the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, and guess what? Yes, it is raining. In fact, it has been raining since last night. Actually it has been raining for five days, that is, the sum total of our vacation so far. The National Weather Service is telling us to expect a 100 percent chance of liquid sunshine today. You know, I remember seeing the sun once when I was much younger. It looked very bright.

The retriever thinks there is some sort of conspiracy going on. Every time I promise her we will go for a hike or walk it rains harder. Endeavour has been very patient and is really well behaved for only being 10 months old. Now back to the rain. This morning we jumped into the car and headed to the restrooms. You can only imagine what it is like to have a full

bladder and listen to rain falling everywhere. In these difficult times, we sometimes forget to count our blessings. At least we are dry inside the camper. We have heat, water, electric, and a little room in which to turn around in. It is best however to move one at a time so as to not run into each other. It is only 8:13 a.m. I can't wait to see what the rest of the day brings.

Babcock State Park is located in a beautiful spot. It has hiking trails, a gristmill, a waterfall (actually lots of them today, but usually only one), nice camping spots, and a lake(or maybe several today). There is Rhododendron everywhere. We missed the peak by about a month. I bet they look really nice in the sunshine.

Something very strange happened at around noon. It stopped raining. With much tumult, we wondered what this could mean. By three o'clock the sun was shining. In celebration we bowed down on our knees and gave thanks to God. Rushing about, we began to remove items from the camper, such as rugs, wet towels from whipping the dog off, and opened up the windows. The Yukon became like a giant dryer as items were spread out on its warm exterior. Alas, with two days left of vacation things are indeed looking better.

Now it is close to seven, and the sun is still shining. Around sunset we plan to check out an overlook for possible photographic opportunities. Our Golden Retriever, Endy is very smart and came up with a nifty saying. It goes like this, and I quote, "Campers are like flies, when

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*Continued from page 3*

the rain stops they come out.” I really don’t know where she gets all this homespun wisdom, especially at such a young age.

The remainder of the day is not quite perfect however. I can’t get the ac to turn on. I thought it might be a good idea to test it and make sure it is working. It’s not. I feel that I am missing something. I have checked wires, breakers, and looked for hidden boxes, all to no avail. Yet, that nagging feeling stays with me. I am out of cell phone range so I can’t call an expert and seek advice. Now this is really silly of me because there are several campers here with ac units on top, and some of them are running. But, somehow I can’t seem to ask for help. It must be akin to asking another person for directions. Pride is such a terrible thing.

Okay, so what do you do when you are baffled? Well, you find a really high location and hope you can connect to a cell tower. And that is exactly what I did. I called a friend and I used a lifeline. And guess what? The problem of the non-working ac unit was solved. All it took was locating the hidden power cord. I had forgotten that the ac unit needed to be plugged in. It was not hard-wired. So see, I can swallow my pride when I have to. God would be proud of me!

Things are looking up. A cold front passed through right after I discovered how to plug in the ac unit. By the way, I already know how to turn on the heat so I am ahead of the game. Maybe tomorrow will be a better day. The sky will be blue, and there will be lots of picture taking possibilities. All I can say is keep reading.

Wednesday, and what do you know? Not a cloud in the sky. Looks like I will at least get one day of exploring in. The plan is to explore the area of the New River Gouge. The New River is said to be one of the oldest rivers in the world. Maybe even older than dirt. Lonnie and I decide to search out a couple of waterfalls, but because of the rain, the Sandstone Falls looks more like a rapid. Of course I took some pictures anyway.

After a nice day of roaming around, we settled in for the night. Going back to the Gristmill. We took a walk around Boley Lake, and watched the sunset at one of the overlooks. Tomorrow we must head home. So much for vacation.

As you can see everything worked out after all. At least we now know how to set up and take down the camper. We learned how to use the heater, the ac unit, and the stove. We can even turn on the lights!

73, Greg, W4GRC

## Shenandoah Valley Repeater Group: New Repeaters On The Air

Dale Showalter, one of the partners in the Shenandoah Valley Repeater Group, announces that the group has restored two venerable repeaters to the air recently.

The 145.130 repeater is now up and running from the peak of Massanutten Mountain. This repeater may need a tone of 88 Hz, but if interference is conquered, the tone requirement will be removed. The repeater outputs on 145.130, and uses an input up 600 kHz on 144.530. The repeater sounds great, and covers most of the valley floor, including Rockingham County, most of Page, Shenandoah, and northern Augusta Counties.

The group has also restored operations on 444.600 MHz. This repeater has an output of 444.600, with an input up 5 MHz (449.600), and a PL tone of 151.4 Hz. This repeater is located at the group’s site on Great North Mountain near Bayse.

The group also is working hard to restore the 147.315 repeater to the air from a third location.

All hams in the area are welcome to use both machines. Signal reports from outlying areas will be appreciated.



## Amateur Radio at Pence Middle School

Amateur radio and Pence Middle School now share 10 years of association with local amateur operators teaching students about the merits of ham radio again this year. Over the years, a good number of students have become ham operators and many others have been given a favorable opinion of the importance of amateur radio and its use in society. Hopefully, this opinion by the students will bode well in the future when they become adults with voting powers. And make decisions granting amateur radio the frequencies we use and enjoy.

The operators this year that shared their vast knowledge with the students were:

**K4LXG Ellsworth Neff, K4RBZ Gerry Brunk, N1QEQ Bob Steere, K4RMY Bryan Daniels and a brief appearance by KG4JAZ Nancy Ritchie.**

The students learned about ham language (such as Q codes and phonetics), DX'ing and QSL'ing and listened as contacts were made on HF. Gerry shared his fantastic life time collection of QSL cards. HF conditions were not very favorable this year without the needed sunspots but contacts were made stateside to interesting amateur operators that shared time and knowledge with the kids.

Students found CW very interesting and had fun sending and trying to receive simple words in code. They listened to code transmissions on the HF radio at various speeds and to amateur TV and other digital communications.

Finally, local 2 meter repeaters were used with Bob W3MMC standing by to talk to students via third party traffic when they overcame their mike fright. Bob enjoyed talking to the youngsters and they enjoyed his humor.

Thanks to all who helped make this school lesson memorable.

Ray Ritchie, K4NRA



## Instant Weather Updates: HRECC Weather Station Now Available

The weather station at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center is now operational. You can view the weather station data on the internet by clicking on the following link:

<http://snipurl.com/hrecc>

If that link doesn't work, try the long version:

<http://weather.weatherbug.com/VA/Harrisonburg-weather/local-observations.html?zcode=z6169>

This web page is a "snapshot" of the weather data and will update every 15-30 seconds depending on your internet connection speed. If you would like to see faster updates (depending on your internet connection speed), you can install the Weatherbug software on your computer by clicking on the following link...

<http://ww2.weatherbug.com/downloadclient.asp?zcode=z6169>

If you already have the Weatherbug program installed on your computer, you can change your location to the HRECC weather station by...

1. Start the Weatherbug program and click on "CHANGE LOCATION".
2. Type in "22802" and click on "GO".
3. From the option B list, select "HARRISONBURG-ROCKINGHAM EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER".
4. Click on "SET LOCATION"

Your default location will be set to the HRECC weather station. You should see updates about every 5 seconds.

Please feel free to share this information with anyone who may find local Harrisonburg-Rockingham weather data useful.

Jim Junkins  
Director  
Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center



## Field Day Committee

The 2008 Field Day Committee is presently made up of: Benny Cook N4BCC, Greg Czerniak W4GRC, Jeff Rinehart W4PJW, Scott Newlens KI4QQZ, David Firestone K4DPF, Gerald Nauman, KN4FM, and Bob Steere N1QEQ. Bob N1QEQ agreed in principle to serve as committee chair this year.

The Committee has held two meetings so far, and reports that plans are on schedule. While the site has been essentially vandalized again by off-road vehicles, there isn't a viable alternative.

Many thanks to those serving in this capacity.



## Field Day Site Scouting Report

On the road in from 924 before the sharp turn, it appears some trees have been "marked". Also on the road past the old site, it looks like either the Forest Service or "Tree Poachers" have been cutting down a lot of trees. Also at the FD site there is evidence of tree cutting, in addition to a number of trees toppled over on their own. The area adjacent to where we had the Food Tents and Welcome Center is larger than last year (surprise, surprise), obviously a large mud patch. There is a big pile of trees/brush approximately at the entrance where we had the CW station, in addition there is a fairly prominent single-track path close by the CW location. Some food for thought - maybe we should think about re-locating the Welcome Center to the right side just as we come over the last hump in the road - this may displace some camping units, but we should at least give it some serious consideration. Just my observations - something for the FD Committee to ponder about.

Report by Neal, N4XU

*Left top: the upper camper and WiFi side of the meadow, looking towards the CW station location.*

*Left bottom: On the road, just past the old Field Day site*

*Below: Cut trees on the road near the old Field Day site.*







Above: New mud hole adjacent to the Welcome Center location



Above: In front of the original VHF site.... Yuck!

Below: Near the CW site: now a brush pile.



## Public Service Report: Waynesboro Riverfest

Area ham operators assisted with communications support for the Waynesboro Riverfest 2008 event in Waynesboro on Saturday, April 26, 2008.

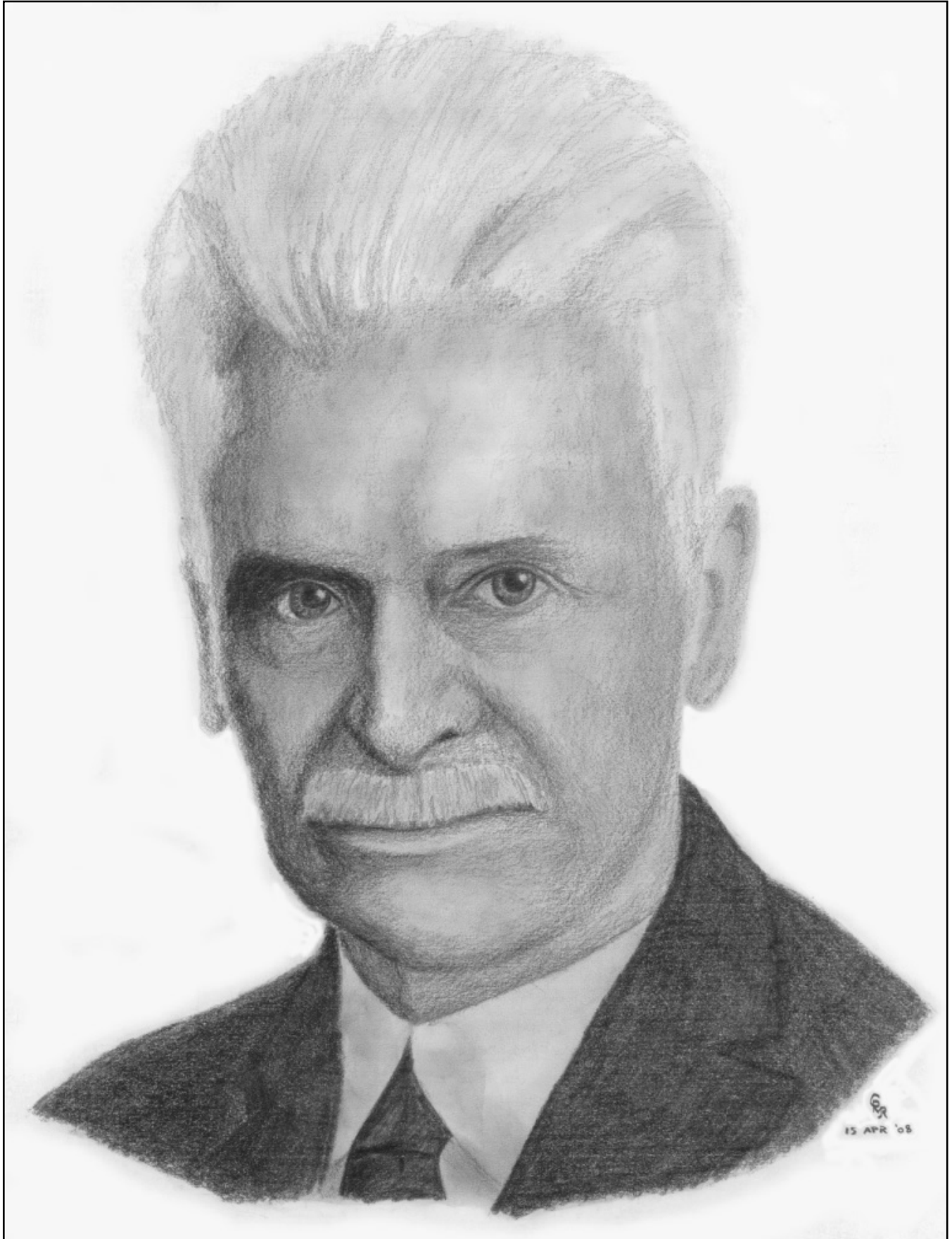
The following spent a few hours out in the bright warm sunshine and a good time was had by all. A big "thank you" goes out to those who helped. We are pleased to report there were no major incidents, and the event went smoothly.

Ray Colvin KE4HVR  
 Greg Czerniak W4GRC  
 Herb Slade AA2BF  
 Mike Solomon KJ4RM  
 Bob McCracken N4JGO  
 John Passarelli KI4TOJ  
 Richard Huttinger AA4RH  
 Frank Green KE4ASC  
 Darrell Little KI4LLA  
 Doug Edwards KA4NWK  
 Gordon Batey WA4FJC

## Rockingham County ARES News

*If you live or work in Rockingham County, you should read the minutes of the Rockingham County ARES group meeting from April 12, published in this issue of the Monitor on page 12. It has important information for all hams in the county.*

*Also, don't forget to complete the ARES form in last month's monitor and send to Bryan!*





## Trivia Quiz

Two trivia questions:

### Question 1: Who is the man pictured at the left?

Hints: he's famous. He's a New England Yankee. He was one of the early inventors of the internal combustion automobile engine. In 1899, his car won the first closed-circuit automobile race in the U.S. His company later manufactured electric automobiles. He also invented a gun silencer and a muffler for car engines, and held patents for these and other engineering marvels of his own making. He later got interested in amateur radio, and he's nationally known in the ham radio community. He's buried in Rose Hill cemetery in Hagerstown, Maryland, near the ancestral relatives of the Monitor's editor.

### Question 2: Who is the artist who drew the picture at left?

Hints: he's famous too, but not as widely recognized. He's a local ham, and served as a former officer of MARA. He won the ARRL's "best article of the month" award a few years back for his QST article covering his motorcycle trip across the U.S. with his wife and radios. He's talented in a number of areas, has authored a handy guide to getting started in ham radio, and is pastor of a local church congregation. And as you can see, he's a budding artiste.

For the answers to both questions, turn to page 15.

## Going to Dayton This Year?

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

The group from the valley will be caravan'ing again this year. We'll be leaving Thursday morning, eating breakfast together in Lexington, and going from Dayton from there. Everyone is welcome to join the caravan.

## Rockingham County ARES Net Controls

May 5 (*simplex*): Ray Ritchie K4NRA

May 12: Gerald Brunk K4RBZ

May 19: E.C. Showalter KG4KUR

May 26: Gayle Shull KU4XN

June 2 (*simplex*): Bryan Daniels K4RMY

June 9: James McDowell NN4JM

June 16: Vic Alger K4XTT

June 23: Bryan Daniels K4RMY

June 30: Gerald Nauman KN4FM

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.

## April VE Session Report

Many thanks to the local hams who helped with the April 12 Volunteer Examination Sessions.

**Gerald Nauman KN4FM**

**Hugh Pettis K3EC**

**Michael McKay W4AZR**

**Bob Van Fossen K4DJG**

**Richard Haxton KC3AN**

**Jim Lehman W4POL**

**E.C. Showalter KG4KUR**

**Ellsworth Neff K4LXG**

We had a great session, and everyone left with something! The next test session is scheduled for June 14.

I try to keep on hand a supply of study manuals. So if you or someone you know needs one, let me know.

Also, special thanks to Gerald Nauman for standing in for me in the VE sessions while I was in Florida.

Gayle Shull, KU4XN

VE Coordinator

## Important Information About the New MARA Meeting Location

Starting last month, the MARA club is now 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 if you didn't attend last month's 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.

The April meeting was a success, and everyone enjoyed the dinner and the surroundings.



## 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 is 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**

The Wood Grill is a popular place to eat, so the parking lot may appear crowded. There should be plenty of open parking in the back of the restaurant.

## Some Dates for the Future

See the calendar on page 15 for upcoming events.

Here are some additional longer-range planning dates you may want to put on your calendar:

**July 17-19: Bridgewater Lawn Party**

**August 2: Roanoke (Vinton) Hamfest**

**August 3: Berryville Hamfest**

**August 9: VE Exams in Dayton, Virginia**

**September 20-21: Virginia Beach Hamfest**



## Minutes of Rockingham County ARES Steering Committee – April 12, 2008

The meeting was held on Saturday, April 12, immediately following the Volunteer Examiner Session at the Woodmen of the World Building.

Members present :

**Bryan Daniels K4RMY, Chuck Vogan KD5KA ,Elwood Shrader KB4DJN , Hugh Pettis K3EC , Gerald Nauman KN4FM , Elsworth Neff K4LXG , Bob Van Fossen K4DJG , Gayle Shull KU4XN**

-Traffic handling- suggestions for improvement:

Hugh K3EC agreed to be the formal liaison station to the NTS. Suggestion was made to ask James NN4JM to be liaison with NTS CW net

Suggestion made and approved to use X as Precedence indicator for local practice traffic.

Suggestion made and approved that occasionally there be a message in ARRL format for all members of the net to copy if they wish on frequency as part of the net in order to give everyone who would like practice in copying traffic.

Suggestion made and approved that a report from the previous week's net control station be given to the group in simple message format ( not ARRL Radiogram). This message will include the number of checkins, number and type of traffic passed. This message will be formally taken by Bryan K4RMY ARES EC and then posted to the Monitor once a month as an ARES report

Discussion of techniques of reading messages for copy by other stations:

- watch speed of sending, don't read too fast
- may want to write the message on scratch paper as you are sending it to slow down your speed
- on the receiving end you may wish to tape record the message if have the capability

ARES repeaters:

ARES will plan on using the 145.130 repeater our secondary/alternate repeater; Bryan K4RMY will ask

permission from the trustees of the N4YET repeater for this use. Suggestion made and approved to use 145.130 once every few months for full net to have practice using this repeater.

Reminder that Local ARES call up frequency is 146.55 simplex if the main repeaters are in use.

Suggestion made to put call up procedure in the Monitor. Bryan K4RMY ARES EC will work on this

Suggestion made to contact Mac KZ1A our District EC about meeting with ECs and members from other counties in our district and possibly setting up liaisons with them: Rockingham, Augusta, Highland, Rockbridge Also adding Shenandoah, Page, Green and Albemarle

A committee was establish to work on an emergency drill (SET) for summer or fall: Bryan K4RMY, Hugh K3EC, Ellsworth K4LXG

RMH station operators needed: Gayle KU4XN and Ellsworth K4LXG agreed to join as RMH operators and will need pictures taken in order to get a badge created.

Other items: Suggestion made that on some Simplex nets, those checking in should create a list of stations you can hear and an RS(T) report along with the power of your station. These would be compiled by Bryan K4RMY in a database

A brief discussion of NBEMS Narrow Band Emergency Messaging System and its possible use for passing traffic locally in an emergency.

A suggestion made that an ARES business card be produced that has the ARES procedures repeaters, etc. listed on it. Bryan K4RMY will create one and ask for suggestions at the next MARA meeting.

Minutes provided by Bryan Daniels, K4RMY, Rockingham County EC



## MARA Secretary's Report – April 3 Meeting

Meeting held at Wood Grill on Reservoir Street. Introductions made all around

### 1. Reports:

New members- AJ4FF David Walton 1st reading

- a. Secretary's minutes as printed in the Monitor, moved, seconded and approved.
- b. Treasurer's report - \$ 2,131.59 moved, seconded and approved
- c. Groups

ARES/RACES— Bryan, K4RMY had ARES membership forms for those willing to join Rockingham Co. ARES The 145.130 repeater is back up. K4RMY Bryan will get permission to use for this repeater occasional ARES net and as a backup ARES repeater.

There will be an ARES meeting after the VE session on Sat. April 12th at 10:30 am

RMH update - Bob, N1QEQ- Good contacts with RMH have been established

A committee has met with a representative of RMH about setting up a station at the new facility.

Also we will try to use RMH for simplex operation occasionally and try to man the station once a month for the ARES net.

VE: Gayle, KU4XN reminded everyone of the VE session, April 12th 9:00 am at Woodman of the World building in Dayton. Also a possible VE session July at Fairgrounds . More information to follow. Only 1 hour allotted for session.

d. Public Service- Bob, N1QEQ- March of Dimes 3rd Sat in April 19th 8:30- 9:00 6-8 hams needed to work . Give N1QEQ@aol.com an email if you can work . Should be out by 12:00. Also, send in shirt size to Bob N1QEQ.

### 2. Announcements:

Ray, K4NRA thanked those who helped him at WSPMS to explain what ham radio was.

Reminder by KU4XN of the July Bridgewater parades

Jerry K4RBZ got St Barthelemy and now has all DXCC countries.

KD9LA invited folks to attend the Dayton Ham fest and caravan with the group May 15th.

Richard, AA4RH is looking for ride or someone to ride with him.

Hagerstown Hamfest May 4th

Shelby Hamfest -has not been canceled they are looking for a site.

A local ham provided lots of free goodies for the taking before the presentation.

Winlink 2000 Emmcom, David K4DPF has instructions on how to use the program.

### 3. Old Business

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

Field Day Meeting last Thursday- N1QEQ chair- asking for volunteers-

Tower repair- James, NN4JM has a repair source, aluminum welder for the broken tower segment.

Motion to allow Nelson Cline to repair tower if less than \$100.00 seconded, passed.

### 4. New Business – None

50-50 won by W3HXX \$13.50

Motion to adjourn , seconded and approved.

Hugh K3EC did a presentation on Message handling.

Submitted by

Bryan Daniels, K4RMY

MARA Secretary

## VARA Secretary's Report: April 1 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at the Staunton Church of Christ on April 1, 2008. The President, Greg Czerniak W4GRC, opened the meeting at 7:00pm. There were 20 members present and 6 guests, John Barbour AJ4DZ, Eddie Barbour, Sophia Cliffe KI4OXI, Martha Tanks, Betsy Solomon and Carol Bradford. Welcome to our visitors, we hope to see all of you back for next month.

**The April VARA Meeting** began with a covered dish meal then a short business meeting followed by the Chinese Gift Exchange. We had a good turn out for the meeting and everyone had a great time with the gift exchange. There were a variety of gifts and it was fun to watch the expressions on each one as they opened their gift. If the gift was something they didn't want to keep they had a chance to exchange it for a gift someone else had and hope to keep it. Sometimes that worked and sometimes it didn't because someone else may have been watching that special gift and where it went. There were a lot of nice gifts and also some gag gifts to boost the fun.

Thanks to Greg W4GRC for being the MC for the gift exchange and offering us to have it in his Church fellowship hall.

**New Application:** Sophia Cliffe KI4OXI, new ham in the Staunton area.

**VARA MEETING** for May 6<sup>th</sup> will be back at Shoney's in Staunton. Meal at 6:00pm and meeting will start at 7:00pm

**Field day:** Next Field Day meeting will be at 6pm May 29th at Burger King in Mt. Crawford.

**VARA Web Site** <http://www.qsl.net/w4xd> 2008 Members list has been updated. Go to the Web Site and check it out.

If there are any corrections such as: name, call, address or phone number to be made please let Fred N4KYM or Ray KE4HVR know so we can bring it up to date.

**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:** David Tanks AD4TJ is looking for Net Controls for the Augusta County ARES Net. The Net will be held on 146.490 Simplex on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 8:00pm.

**PROGRAMS NEEDED:** Al Bonck N3JB, our 2008 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:grcljc@verizon.net), Doug Tippett N8ESW [dtippett@ntelos.net](mailto:dtippett@ntelos.net), Ray Colvin KE4HVR [colvingr@comcast.net](mailto:colvingr@comcast.net) and David Fordham KD9LA [fordhadr@jmu.edu](mailto:fordhadr@jmu.edu).

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12pm.

Thanks to Greg W4GRC for the use of the Staunton Church of Christ fellowship hall for our April VARA meeting and gift exchange.

*Submitted by  
VARA Secretary  
Ray Colvin KE4HVR*



## Lost...

A pilot is flying a small single engine charter plane with a couple of really important executives on board into the Seattle airport. There is fog so thick that visibility is only 20 feet. As luck would have it, his instruments are out. He circles and circles looking for a landmark through the fog and clouds. After an hour, he is low on fuel and his passengers are getting very nervous.

At last, through a tiny opening in the fog he sees a building with one guy working alone on the fifth floor. The pilot banks in and circles the building, and shouts through the window, "Hey, buddy, where am I?"

The solitary office worker looks up and calmly replies, "Your in an airplane."

The pilot immediately executes a swift 270 degree turn, flies three minutes level, then descends through the fog and puts the plane down right on the middle line of the airport's runway. Just as the plane touches down, the engines cough and sputter and die from lack of fuel. The stunned passengers ask the pilot how he did it.

"Elementary," replies the pilot. "I asked the guy in that building a simple question. The answer he gave me was correct from his view-point, but it was completely, totally useless and did absolutely nothing to help me solve the problem. Therefore, I knew that building had to be the Microsoft Customer Support Office. From there, the airport is exactly five miles away on a course of exactly 87 degrees."

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

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 at Shoneys in Staunton  
 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)

June 2: Rockingham County ARES Net (146.550 simplex)  
 June 3: VARA Club Meeting (location TBA)  
 June 4: Highland County ARES Net  
 June 5: MARA Club Meeting at Wood Grill Restaurant  
 June 8: Manassas Hamfest  
 June 9: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)  
 June 12: Augusta County ARES Net  
 June 14: VE Exams in Dayton, Virginia  
 June 14-15: ARRL June VHF QSO Party  
 June 15: Fredericksburg (MD) Hamfest  
 June 16: Rockingham County ARES Net  
 June 18: Highland County ARES Net  
 June 21-29: MARA/VARA Field Day Family Camp  
 June 23: Rockingham County ARES Net  
 June 28-29: ARRL Field Day  
 June 30: Rockingham County ARES Net

Answer to Trivia Quiz from page 9:

Question 1: Hiram Percy Maxim, W1AW, founder of the ARRL

Question 2: Charles (Chuck) Vogan, KD5KA, drew the picture.

A young boy came home from school and told his father: "We learned in school today that in some parts of Africa, a man doesn't know his wife until after he's married her.

The father pondered a moment, and then said, "well, to be honest, son, that happens in all countries."

# MARA/VARA

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

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## Return Service Requested

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### 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  
The May meeting will be at Shoneys  
in Staunton at I-81 and US 250.

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