

March  
2010

# THE MONITOR

*Published Monthly for members of the Amateur Radio Clubs in Virginia's Central Shenandoah Valley*

## **VARA Meeting: Tuesday, March 2 at Shoneys**

The Valley Amateur Radio Association will hold its regular monthly club meeting at Shoney's Restaurant in Staunton at the usual date and time: Tuesday, March 2, starting at 6:00 pm. The restaurant is on Highway 250, 1 block east of I-81.



## **MARA Meeting: Thursday, March 4 at Wood Grill**

The regular monthly meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., will be held on Thursday March 4 at the Wood Grill Buffet on Reservoir Street in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Dinner will begin at 6:30 pm, followed by the business meeting. Chris is working on lining up a program. Spouses, family, and guests are invited and welcome.

## **PVARC Meeting: Friday, March 5, at Brown's Restaurant**

The Page Valley Amateur Radio Club will hold a dinner meeting at Brown's Restaurant in Luray on Friday, March 5. Dinner starts at 6:00 p.m. followed by a brief business meeting. Family and friends are invited.



Why, faith and begorrah,  
Field Day is a' Comin'



## Gordon Batey, WA4FJC, Places First on 80 Meter Frequency Measurement Test

The results of the December 2009 Frequency Measurement Test are published, and our very own Gordon Batey WA4FJC of Verona who turned in an 80-meter signal measurement error of less than 0.183 parts per billion Hertz!



As a comparison... if Gordon were measuring the National Budget Deficit of 1 trillion dollars, Gordon's measurement would be off by less than \$183, or less than the cost of an Icom IC-208H.

Another way of looking at this is to say that if Gordon were

measuring the weight of a Toyota Camry, his measurement would be off less than one-half the weight of a single grain of sand!

Way to go, Gordon!



## Shenandoah County Ham Breakfast

Larry Miller, KB6VAA wants to invite all hams to a breakfast that is held on the third Saturday morning of every month, at the Exxon station at the intersection of I-81 and State Highway 42 (exit 283) in Woodstock Virginia.

## PVARC President's Message

The PVARC meeting for February was cancelled due to S\*\*\* along with most other functions in Page and surrounding counties.

The hams shall persevere. It gives us the chance to stay in the shack and play radio.

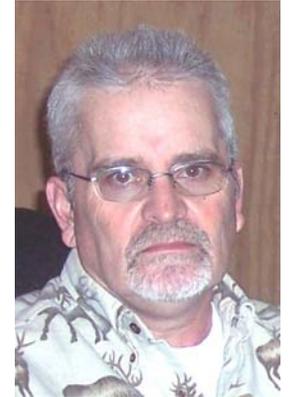
Many from the area had planned to attend the Richmond Hamfest, but did not make it due to the S\*\*\*, myself included. My understanding is that the Frostfest was held, but I have not heard whether the attendance was affected by the S\*\*\*.

The next area hamfest is Vienna (February 28) and I have plans to go.

The next PVARC meeting will be held at Brown's Restaurant in Luray on Friday, March 5 at 6 pm. All are invited: members, non-members, hams, non-hams, spouses, or anyone else who just wants to know what those guys that set in that room by themselves talk about.

This month, while waiting for the S\*\*\* to melt, try something different. If you have never built an antenna, gather up some material and build a 2-meter/440 J-pole. Try PSK31, or RTTY. If you are not a regular on CW, dust off the old key. If you've never worked 6-meter SSB, give it a try. You may be surprised at how well band conditions are improving.

Remember, spring is on the way.



*Mark Hensley, N4YSA  
PVARC President*

## VARA President's Message

February 2, 2010 was a snowy day and the VARA club meeting understandably had a small attendance. Only those of hardy spirit and a little bit "nutsy" dared attempt making the slushy drive over to Shoney's.



As the meeting got underway, everyone was aware that the snow flakes were piling up more and more outside. Regardless, we had a lively group and everyone seemed to enjoy their supper in the snow. Shoney's was duly thankful for our business too.

Ellsworth K4LXG, who is our ARES District Emergency Coordinator, became the impromptu club meeting program. He reviewed some of his "vision" for ARES in District 15, which includes his desire to see a call up system separate from the normal telephone tree that we have relied on in the past.

His point was well taken as we all realize that more and more, when the power goes off, so do most folks' telephones. It seems that we all have these phones with memories, remote handsets and fanciness that makes them depend on electricity to work. It is also not certain what happens if you depend on the Cell providers for service. It's obvious he has a good point and his comments were well received. We are, after all, radio communicators - not telephone communicators.

Ellsworth made it clear that ARES day to day operations, questions and problems should be directed through our local ARES EC who is David Tanks AD4TJ.

I look forward to seeing a bit better weather and a greater number attending our March 2 meeting at Shoneys.

*Jeff W4PJW,  
President VARA*

## MARA President's Message

Greetings to all! I'm not sure about you but I have had enough snow to last me for a long time, at least for this winter. In spite of the weather, there have been excellent turnouts for our MARA meetings for both January and February which shows the dedication of our club members. I appreciate it and thank you. Remember, spring is just around the corner! Hi Hi!



One thing needed is help with the meeting programs. Chris Shirkey, KI4BAQ, being the club Vice President is automatically the Program Coordinator and I know that he would appreciate others assisting him with finding programs for our meetings. It does not have to be ham-related. I was going to sing and dance at the next meeting but since the meeting is officially over during the program segment, that would not be enough to keep anyone there after the meeting. As disappointed as you all are, maybe later in the year?

I look forward to this year's meetings and activities. We have a strong and active club of which I am proud to be a member and am honored to be your president. I want all to know that it is a "2-way street" between you members and I so please let me know of anything you may have to contribute. I like to talk with members and not at them.

I try to often attend other club meetings in District 15 my being the District EC. I visited the VARA meeting in Staunton this month (February) under the capable presidency of Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, and turned out to be the program for the meeting when the person with the program could not attend. I was not expecting this but I gave a presentation on what I do as DEC of the 4 counties of District 15. At least they didn't storm out of the meeting. Hi. I enjoyed very much being there. I plan to attend the club meeting for Rockbridge County in Lexington next month.

Keep safe and warm!

*Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG  
MARA President*

## News from the Bergton Suburbs: Mickey Mouse Club is Alive and Kickin'!



In a live telephone interview conducted on February 24, the Monitor editor verified with certainty that Bob Niemeyer, W3MMC, is still alive and doing okay up on Bob's Knob. He has been able to contract with someone to clear his driveway of the thigh-deep snow, and has a jeep that will negotiate the Bergton dirt roads to get groceries and other necessities (although toilet paper for his outhouse may not be among them!). He indicated that his radios are broken, and he is getting by on a "loaner" provided by E.C. Showalter, KG4KUR, while E.C. is in Florida soaking up the rays. If you get a chance, give Bob a call — sometimes he's on 146.625, but you can generally reach him by telephone ... if the stars are aligned just right.



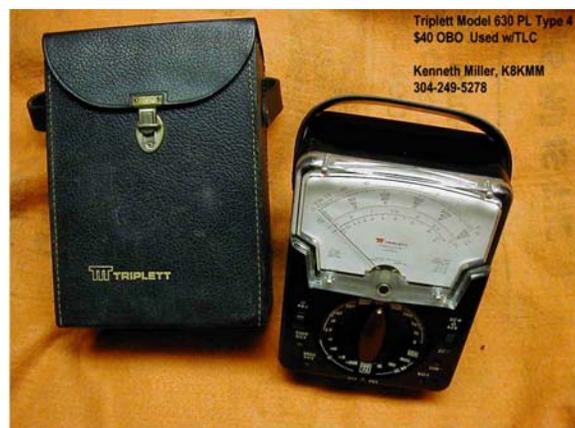
## For Sale by K8KMM: Oldies But Goodies!

Ken Miller, K8KMM, is parting with some really old, um, antique, equipment for a song.

He has a genuine Triplite Model 630 Multimeter for sale for only \$40.00. (Your newsletter editor can vouch for this model — he has one from his father-in-law's estate, and he won't part with his at any cost — it's his favorite meter. Although it requires an unusual battery, the Battery Store in Harrisonburg was able to order one for just a couple of dollars!)

Ken also has a Lambda Power Supply, model LA 200-03MB, which is a variable DC supply, 0-34 volts, 0-20 Vt regulated and fully adjustable taps. It includes the roll base, since this boat anchor is a solid piece of equipment. Another \$40 takes it.

Give Ken a call at 304-249-5278, or email him at [k8kmmwv@yahoo.com](mailto:k8kmmwv@yahoo.com)



LAMBDA model 200-03BM  
0-34 Volt DC 0-20 V Regulated  
Fully Adjustable taps



## WX4C: Report from Snow and Ice Land!

Hope all is well in the Shenandoah Valley. All is well here in the Northwest.

I have made seven (7) trips to Alaska so far. The low temperature – so far – has been -46 degrees F! This is COLD!

There is not but about three to four hours of daylight this time of year up here. I'm sure looking forward to spring and summer when it becomes the land of the midnight Sun.

We will be getting a new Kenworth next month and will start running APRS at that time. Tell all I said, hello.

*Don Landes, WX4C*



## Printing a Web Page – The Right Way!

Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, Web Explorer Extraordinaire, has provided us with a very useful link.

You might want to bookmark <http://pdfmyurl.com>. This is a very useful website that lets you “print” a website – any website – by first converting it to a PDF file.

This is a good utility for taking a snapshot of, or “archiving”, websites that you want to keep, but which don't “save” cleanly due to imbedded graphics, frame problems, etc. – Thanks, Ray.



## W4PJW: Valves Wanted!

I am looking for the following tubes to try and fix my Drake TR4CW. I am especially in need of a 12AV6, but any of the rest would be appreciated also. Will pay a fair price, and I can pick up whenever convenient: **12AV6, 6EJ7, 6BZ6, 12BA6, 6JB6, 13DE7, 6GX6.**

*Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW,  
email [W4PJW@arrl.net](mailto:W4PJW@arrl.net)  
Phone 540-337-7337 or 540-294-0976*

## VE Exam Session: April 10

Don't forget: The February VE Session will be held Saturday, April 10, at the Woodmen of the World building on Highway 42 just north of Dayton, Virginia. Sign-in starts at 9 am.



## Ham Radio Cruise-In: May 1st

Cruise to Charlottesville and receive a "Certificate of Participation" just for showing up. No mobile rig required; however, special certificates will be awarded to the most innovative mobile station shown in a car, truck, RV, motorcycle and bicycle; as well as a certificate for the ham traveling the longest distance.

**Saturday, 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. — May 1, 2010**

**(Rain or Shine, the event will go on with shelter available)**

**Darden Towe Park - Charlottesville**

**(A Half-Mile North on Route 20 from Route 250 East of Charlottesville)**

**Talk-In will be on 146.760 Repeater with WA4TFZ**

**No Tone Required**

**Talk-Around on site will be on 146.550 simplex**

**Query: Jim Crosby, K4JEC, 434-823-2277**

Come to Charlottesville and participate in a showcase of mobile amateur radio equipment. Pack a picnic lunch and spend a fun day in the park with your fellow hams from all over Virginia. To save time on your arrival, let us know you are coming by completing the pre-registration form on our website. Pre-registration is not required for participation but will be appreciated for planning purposes. There will be no entry or registration fee.

Check our website: [albemarleradio.org](http://albemarleradio.org) for specific and last minute details.

Mail to: AARC, P. O. Box 6833 Charlottesville, VA 22906

Email to: [k4jec@arrl.net](mailto:k4jec@arrl.net)



## List of Past Local Group Ham Events

At the February MARA meeting, a request was made for a year-long calendar of the events that local ham radio operators typically engage in as a group. This will give some evidence of how many hams might be available for the various public service events, since many hams participate in contests, attend local and regional hamfests, and are otherwise already tied up with activities on public service weekends.

The following was put together by a survey of the last 2 years issues of the Monitor, listing those events for which there was a report of a group activity submitted to the editor. The list does not include ARES training meetings, drills, or nets.

**There is certain to be at least one or two events, maybe more, not shown on this list.**

### January:

ARRL RTTY Roundup  
ARRL VHF Sweepstakes

### February:

VE Exams  
Richmond Frostfest  
CQ WW WPX RTTY Contest  
ARRL International DX Contest CW  
School Club Roundup

### March:

CQ WW WPX Contest phone weekend  
Sherando Bel Monte Public Service Event  
ARRL International DX contest Phone  
Virginia QSO Party

### April:

VE Exams  
Field Day Committee Planning Meetings  
Waynesboro MS Walk Public Service Event  
Harrisonburg MS Walk Public Service Event  
H'burg March of Dimes WalkAmerica Public Service Event  
Waynesboro Riverfest Public Service Event  
Sherry Anderson walk (new for 2010?) Public Service  
Event

### May:

Hagerstown Hamfest  
Staunton March of Dimes Walk for Babies Public Service  
MMT Mountain Run Public Service Event  
CQWW WPX CW Contest  
Dayton Ohio Hamfest  
Field Trips to NRAO Greenbank  
Field Day Site Preparation activities

### June:

VE Exams  
ARRL VHF QSO Party  
Manassas Hamfest  
Field Day Camping activities  
Field Day

### July:

Various Fourth of July family and group activities  
Bridgewater Lawn Party Public Service Event

### August:

VE Exams  
Roanoke/Salem Hamfest  
Berryville Hamfest  
Blue Ridge Extreme Public Service Event

### September:

ARRL VHF QSO Contest  
Virginia Beach Hamfest  
VARA (and sometimes MARA) club family picnics  
Shenandoah-100 Bike Ride Public Service Event  
Great Eastern Endurance Run Public Service Event  
Bike Shenandoah Public Service Event  
Blue Ridge Bonanza Milepost Zero Public Service Event  
CQ RTTY Contest

### October:

VE exams  
CQ WW DX Phone Contest  
Jamboree on the Air Public Service Event  
Camp Still Meadows Horse Ride Public Service Event  
Grindstone 100 Mountain Footrace Public Service Event  
Shenandoah 500 Motorbike Ride Public Service Event  
Fall Foliage Bike Ride Weekend Public Service Event

### November:

ARRL November Sweepstakes CW weekend  
ARLL November Sweepstakes Phone weekend  
CQ WWDX CW Contest  
Thanksgiving

### December:

ARRL 160 meter Contest  
VE Exams  
Christmas Banquets

## Hospital Politely Declines Ham Help

Always on the lookout for an opportunity to train, drill, and practice, hams offered to provide route coverage communication during the relocation of patients, staff, and material from the old Rockingham Memorial Hospital to their new digs out on Reservoir Street. However, after consideration, the hospital leadership politely declined the offer, saying that they believe they had the move under control, and wished to concentrate solely on the logistics of the move itself, and they felt their communications capabilities were sufficient.

## Volunteer Examiner Session Report

We started the year off with a big bang.

There were 11 candidates for exams in the February testing session, which is one of the largest groups we've ever had.

Six candidates passed the Technician test, four passed the General test, and one upgraded to Extra. One of the persons passing the Tech also passed General.

Congratulations to everyone.

Thanks to the VE's who helped with this session:

**Mike McKay W4AZR,  
Kevin Ward K4BDR,  
Bob Van Fossen K4DJG,  
Ellsworth Neff K4LXG,  
Jim Lehman W4POL, and  
Ray Ritchie K4NRA**

The next testing session will be on April 10, and we hope to have another great turnout then, too.

*Gerald Nauman, KN4FM*

## Rockingham County ARES March Training Meeting Cancelled

As this issue was going to press, we received word that the Rockingham County ARES meeting for March 13 has been cancelled. In its place will be a Spring ARES Training drill committee meeting which will prepare an upcoming drill for coordination with the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center.

The weekly nets, however, continue to go on. The net meets every Monday night at 8:00 pm local time. The first Monday of the month finds the net on 146.550 simplex. All other Mondays, the net meets on the 147.225 repeater, which uses a +0.600 MHz transmit offset, and requires a CTCSS (PL) tone of 131.8.

The net control station assignments are:

<b>March 1</b>	<b>Ellsworth Neff W4LXG</b>
<b>March 8</b>	<b>Gerry Brunk K4RBZ</b>
<b>March 15</b>	<b>Ray Ritchie K4NRA</b>
<b>March 22</b>	<b>Gerald Nauman KN4FM</b>
<b>March 29</b>	<b>Norman Benner KA4EEN</b>

The net control call script is published on page 9 of the January 2010 issue of the Monitor, available for downloading from the MARA webpage.

It can also be found on the Rockingham County ARES Website: <http://www.rockingham-ares.org>

## Carl Clements Re-Elected as SM

Incumbent Section Manager Carl Clements W4CAC, was re-elected for another term as ARRL Section Manager for the Virginia Section. Joseph Safranek, K4JJS, continues as Section Emergency Coordinator.



## Harry Dannals W2HD Recognized as QCWA President Emeritus

Harry Dannals, W2HD – who led the ARRL as President from 1972-1982 and was named ARRL President Emeritus in 1984 – has been named President Emeritus of the Quarter Century Wireless Association (QCWA).

Dannals, a former member of MARA in the Shenandoah Valley, also served as President of QCWA from 1989-1994; he is the only person to ever serve as President to both organizations. In addition to his work with the QCWA and ARRL, Dannals is a Fellow in the Radio Club of America (RCA), a member of the Society of Wireless Pioneers (SOWP), the Old Old Timers Club (OOTC) and the Veteran Wireless Operators Association (VWOA). In 2002, he was inducted into the CQ Magazine Amateur Radio Hall of Fame.

"I was pleased to learn that the QCWA's leadership has conferred upon Harry Dannals this very well-deserved accolade," said ARRL President Kay Craigie, N3KN. "As the only person to have served as President of the ARRL and the QCWA, he is unique among amateurs."

*ARRL Letter Feb 5, 2010*

## MARA HomeBrew Month Coming!

April is Homebrew and Trader's month for MARA.

Hurry up and finish that homebrew project, no matter how big or small, and bring it to the April meeting for "Show and Tell".

Tower owners always play the game "Who has the biggest".

Here is your chance to play, "I'll show you mine if you show me yours!"

April 1st is no April Fool! Bring your project and show it off. And don't forget to also bring your surplus gear, and turn it into a little cash.

## March's Augusta County ARES Net To Be Held on 223.500!

The March 11 Augusta County ARES net will be held on 223.500 MHz Simplex!

Break out that old 220-band radio and test it out. Let's see how 220 compares with 2-meters and 440 in propagating around the county.

If you don't have a 220 radio, fire up your scanner. Many scanners will cover the 220 band.

## MARA Website Operational

The MARA website problem has been resolved. The website has lots of good information, including an updated calendar with links to more information on the events listed.

The site also provides contact information for the officers, and shortly will have a new roster of members. But one of the most important resources is the **List of Nets!**

[Http://mara.ws](http://mara.ws)



## Highland County ARES Net

Don't forget the Highland County ARES net meets the first and third Wednesdays of every month at 8:30 p.m. local time. This is 30 minutes later than Augusta, Rockingham, and Page county ARES nets, so don't give up on the net if you don't hear anyone on at 8:00 pm.

The net meets on the 147.180 repeater, which uses a PL tone of 100 Hz and a plus offset.

## The Opinionated One: FAQ's about HF

Over the years, I've noticed that new hams generally have lots of questions, especially about the worldwide shortwave bands. So in this column I'll try to answer a few of the most frequently asked questions about operating on the HF bands.

### Question: What kind of HF radio should I buy?

Answer: It depends. Each of the major radio manufacturers has designed their lineup for a specific kind of ham, so you need to match your radio to your personality. For example, Yaesu designs its radios for people who love puzzles and playing complex games navigating convoluted abstract mental mazes. A friend of mine named Choak Gagney once spent an entire summer trying to figure out the menu structure of his Yaesu FT-100D. He never was able to discover how to change the RF power setting or engage the receiver offset. This reveals the genius of the Yaesu engineers, because Choak holds a Ph.D. in logic. Another example is Kenwood, who designs its radios hams who like to visit medical care providers. Cardiologists, blood-pressure doctors, depression clinics, psychologists, anger-management specialists, and stroke doctors all have a lot of business sent their way by Kenwood, who designs each radio so that something minor but maddening breaks, burns out, comes loose, or just quits working every single time you turn it on. Icom radios are designed with the "hide and seek" enthusiast in mind. Icom radios are designed with different intermittent problems that pop up at random intervals, then quickly disappear during the shipping time to the repair center.

### Question: What is a "Ten-Tec"?

Answer: Ten-Tec is the name of a fictitious radio company, sort of like Bigfoot, Sasquatch, and Nessie are names of fictitious animals. According to the popular legend, thousands and thousands of Ten-Tec radios were made and sold, and tens of thousands of hams swear on a stack of bibles that they own Ten-Tec radios, use Ten-Tec radios, and that Ten-Tec radios are best radios money can buy. But when it boils right down to reality, no independent ham has ever actually heard a Ten-Tec radio on the air.

### Question: What is the best kind of antenna to put up?

Answer: After thousands of hours of scientific research, experimentation, surveys, and other investigative techniques, it can be concluded without doubt that the best kind of antenna to put up is whatever the third one you

put up happens to be. No matter which ham you ask, and no matter what kind of antenna it is, the third HF antenna is always the best. My friend Verman tried a Butternut vertical first, a G5RV second, and finally discovered that a Windom worked much better than the other two. Hack Moore tried a Windom and it didn't work. So he tried a Butternut vertical, and it didn't work either. He finally erected a G5RV and it works great. Ampel McPharty put up a G5RV, then a Windom, and now he uses a dipole and says it works best. Spitz Vommet says he tried a dipole, then a Cushcraft R8, then a Zepp, and swears the Zepp works best. Fleming Kauff put up a Zepp, and when it didn't work worth jack, and he put up a Windom and it didn't work either. Finally he put up a full-wave loop and it worked the world. It is important to note this "third antenna rule" also holds true for when you move. After using his full-wave loop successfully for many years, Flem moved to a new house, and put up an identical loop, and it didn't work! Flem then put up a dipole and it didn't work either. Finally he alligator-clipped his tuner to the rain gutter, and, since it was technically his third antenna at the new place, it works great! No fooling. He's achieved DXCC in less than a month! So whatever kind it happens to be, your third antenna will be the one that work the best. My advice is to just skip the first two, and go straight to the third antenna to start with — like I did.

### Question: What is a "beam"? Should I buy one?

Answer: A beam is an illegible photo-copied instruction booklet put in a box with five dollars worth of aluminum tubing and two dollars worth of stainless steel screws and sold for five hundred dollars. The main rule of beam design is, the more expensive the beam, the more it uses specialty screws not available at the hardware store, and the larger the number of screws that will be missing from the box. But the biggest problem with a beam (in addition to its ridiculous cost) is that it requires a five-hundred dollar rotator (which is designed to stop working in the middle of winter), plus a two-thousand dollar tower (more accurately known as a "lightning magnet"), which in turn requires 75 man-hours of labor to dig the hole for the two cubic-yards of concrete required for the base, which must always be located in the middle of the backyard in the place your wife thinks should be used for the kids swingset. And to be perfectly honest, you're going to need the money for the settlement that will be extorted from you by her divorce attorney anyway. So the bottom-line answer is "No", you're much better off not bothering with a beam.

**Question: Do I need an Amplifier?**

Answer: Yes, definitely. It has nothing to do with whether or not your signal needs amplification, because very few really need to amplify their signal. No, it has to do with the fact that you aren't considered a real HF operator if you don't have a big old tube-type amplifier sitting in your shack. It doesn't matter how many watts it is rated at, because you'll never turn it on anyway (especially after you blow the finals). But it will sit there for years, even decades, proudly proclaiming to the world that you are an HF operator. (It is interesting to note that while 99% of HF amplifiers run on 220-volt power, only 1% of the hams with amplifiers have a 220-volt outlet in their shack! This should tell you something.)

**Question: What is the most important thing to know about putting together a hamshack?**

Answer: Be sure that your shack has plenty of flat, level surfaces. The larger your desk, the better. Put up shelves and ancillary tables, too. These surfaces are necessary to hold the stacks and stacks of folders, financial statements, bank records, bills, receipts, old hunting magazines, plans for the patio you think you'll build someday, warranty booklets on your wife's new dishwasher, the parts list for your riding lawn mower, a half-dozen dirty coffee cups, loose pens and pencils, all kinds of papers and other paraphernalia that HF hams use to cover up their radio equipment. If you are a real HF ham, within six months of setting up your shack, your radios should all be buried beneath four feet of this stuff. Why do you think that 98% of the hams in the Shenandoah Valley haven't made a single HF contact in the last four years? It sure ain't the sunspots, Charlie.

**Question: What is a "software defined radio"?**

Answer: It is exactly the same thing as EME, AMTOR, EchoLink, Slow-scan, satellite, D-Link, QRP, WinLink, and many other strange terms that all function as the "Bermuda Triangle" of ham radio. Seriously, these terms have caused the unexplained disappearance of dozens of local hams — all without a trace. You can go down the checklist: Cowles K4EME got interested in moonbounce, and completely disappeared from the local ham airways. Vic K4XTT got involved in WeFax and has never been heard from since. Jason N4DSL set up an Echolink node and promptly disappeared from the air. Howard N9AHQ and Mike KG4OON both got involved in QRP and nobody has heard a single transmission from either of them in years. Mark WA4E was reportedly getting

into AMTOR, and poof, he completely disappeared, leaving no trace. Just *thinking* about these terms is dangerous. Jim K9GCS simply *mentioned* one day something about possibly getting into satellites, and no one has seen or heard from Jim for almost a decade now. There are dozens more examples. When it comes to making hams disappear, these terms run rings around David Copperfield's Statue of Liberty stunt.

**Question: What is a "Net"?**

Answer: A "net" is the male version of the female's salon hair dryer. It is an obligatory 45-minute period spent each week sitting in a chair, performing mundane tasks like knitting, thumbing through old magazines, clipping your fingernails, doing crossword puzzles or some other completely mindless activity, while listening to the monotonous drone of meaningless chatter. Regardless of how boring and anesthetic, it is considered bad form to fall asleep while participating in a net or sitting under the hair-dryer. (For a real thrill, however try participating in a net WHILE sitting under a salon hair dryer!)

**Question: Should I consider operating HF mobile?**

Answer: Possibly. Many hams find that installing an HF rig (and its associated power cables and antenna system) in a modern automobile or pickup is a rewarding pursuit, especially if you enjoy drilling holes in metal, crawling around upside down in the footwells of your car or truck, and have a well-developed vocabulary of words associated with drunk navy enlisted personnel. But before beginning, be sure you establish a close relationship with a local chiropractor.

**Question: I've heard that working HF can be addictive, and once you get hooked, it's hard to stop. I've heard of hams becoming absolute fanatics about contesting, county-hunting, DXCC chasing, MidCars nets, and other HF pursuits. If this happens to me, is there any way to dis-engage and kick the HF habit?**

Answer: Yes, simply listen to the 75-meter phone band anytime after 5 p.m. That's guaranteed to do the trick. You'll be placing an ad in the next issue of the Monitor for your HF rig. And no matter how much you paid for it, you will price it at "\$300 or best offer". The problem is, so many local hams have listened to 75-meters over the years, it's hard to sell an HF rig anymore.

**Question: Since ham radio is such an enjoyable hobby, why aren't more people getting into it?**

Answer: Come to a ham radio club meeting and the answer will become obvious.

## MARA Secretary's Report – February 4 Meeting

Attendance: Members: 25 Guests: 6 Total: 31

Introductions made all around.

Ellsworth (K4LXG) conducted the meeting.

Reports:

New Members: 1st reading: Michael Turner (K4MIC) — 2nd reading: William Shell (KG4MGV)

Secretary's minutes: It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the January minutes as printed in the Monitor with one change. Update minutes to reflect 1<sup>st</sup> reading for William Shell (KG4MGV).

Treasurer's report: It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the report reflecting a balance of \$3,297.89 as printed in the Monitor.

Groups:

ARES/RACES: Bryan (K4RMY) provided us with a summary of the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. There were 12-13 members in attendance. Jim Junkins demonstrated 72 and 48 hour bags and how to pack them. Jay Stewart brought in his equipment and showed how he packed his go bag. TSSI, a local Harrisonburg company, has offered 48 hr back packs at a special price for ARES members. Several links for go-bags have been added to the web site. All in all, it was a successful meeting.

VEC Session – the next VE session will be held on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am at the Woodmen of the World building in Dayton.

Public Service – None to report

Announcements: David (KD9LA) reminded everyone of the VA QSO Party scheduled for March 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>. Also, the Raleigh, NC Hamfest is scheduled for April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Old Business: Bob (N1QEQ) reported that RMH has declined our proposed offer to run an emergency communications drill during the move of the patients to the new facility.

Jay (KD4OXQ) demonstrated a new throat mic he had purchased. He was impressed with the clarity and lack of background noise. For more information check out the web site [www.kawamall.com](http://www.kawamall.com).

New Business: Bob (N1QEQ) proposed that we approach the Harrisonburg Education Foundation regarding their Sherry B. Anderson 5K Walk-Run scheduled for April.

The March of Dimes 6 mile walk is scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup>.

It is also time to start thinking about selecting the Field Day Committee. We should have the group in place by March. James (NN4JM) and Bob (N1QEQ) have both volunteered to be committee members.

New Call or Upgrades: None to report.

Motion to adjourn, seconded and approved.

50/50 – \$26.00 total proceeds; \$13.00 split won by Chris Shirkey (KI4BAQ).

Program: Bryan Daniels – ARES Membership Recruitment

Submitted by:  
Sheryl Tonini, KJ4DOC,  
MARA Secretary



## VARA Secretary's Report – February 2 Meeting

VARA met at Shoney's in Staunton Virginia on February 2nd, 2010. We had 12 people show up in the snow. Steven Grant W4IIV won the 50/50. Steven Grant also gave the secretary's report – was approved. Area 15 E.C. Ellsworth Neff gave a great and detailed presentation on ARES. Meeting was adjourned. – Steven Grant, W4IIV

The



## PVARC Secretary's Report – February 5 Meeting

The February meeting of the Page Valley Amateur Radio Association was cancelled due to a major snowstorm.



## MARA Treasurer's Report – January 25, 2010 to February 26, 2010

Beginning Balance January 25, 2010 ( last report)		\$ 3,297.89
Add:		
Membership renewals (11 members since last report)	\$ 132.00	
February meeting 50/50 donations	\$ 13.00	
Less:		
State Corporation Commission—Corporate Charter Renewal	\$ 25.00	
Ending Balance as of February 26, 2010		\$ 3,417.89

*Submitted by David Fordham, KD9LA, MARA Treasurer*

**MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.**

President: Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG  
 Vice President: Chris Shirkey, KI4BAQ  
 Secretary: Sheryl Tonini, KJ4DOC  
 Treasurer: David Fordham, KD9LA  
 Board (exp 2010): Bryan Daniels, K4RMY  
 Board (exp 2011): James McDowell IV, NN4JM

<http://mara.ws>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month  
 at Wood Grill Buffet on Reservoir Street  
 in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

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

**Visitors are always welcome.**

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

MARA  
 PO Box 1882  
 Harrisonburg, VA 22801

**VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION**

President: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW  
 Vice President: Gordon Batey, WA4FJC  
 Secretary: Steve Grant, W4IIV  
 Treasurer: Doug Tippett, N8ESW  
 Program Manager: Al Bonck N3JB

<http://w4xd.com>

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month.

The March meeting will be held at the  
 Shoneys in Staunton on Hwy 250 at I-81.

Dinner begins at 6:00 pm.  
 The business meeting begins at 7:00 pm.

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

Doug Tippett  
 2348 Mosley St.  
 Waynesboro VA 22980

**PAGE VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**

President: Mark Hensley N4YSA  
 Vice President: Dave Firestone, K4DPF  
 Secretary/Treasurer: Mike "Sparky" Terry, KD4KL  
 Board Member: Morgan Phenix K4RHD  
 Board Member: : Robert Forrest KJ4HFU

**Website to be announced**

PVARC meets the first Friday of each month.  
 Odd-numbered Months  
 at Browns Restaurant in Luray,  
 Even-numbered Months in the Day Room of  
 Page Memorial Hospital.

The business meeting begins at 6:00 pm

**Visitors are welcome.**

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

Sparky Terry  
 PO Box 649  
 Luray VA 22835-0649

The Monitor is published monthly by MARA, Inc.  
 for members of the three amateur radio clubs  
 in the Central Shenandoah Valley.

Distribution is in Adobe PDF format via email attachment  
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Clubs differ in their policies regarding paper copies.  
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Back issues are freely available on the MARA website  
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Since the clubs derive their revenue from memberships,  
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Occasional complimentary current copies are  
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Clubs may also formally decide to provide complimentary copies  
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Contact your respective club officers for more information.

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 1: North American QSO Party  
 March 1: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 146.55 simplex  
 March 2: VARA Club Meeting  
 March 3: Highland County ARES Net, 8:30 pm 147.18 repeater  
 March 4: MARA Club Meeting  
 March 5: Page Valley ARA Club – Dinner meeting  
 March 6-8: ARRL International DX Contest Phone Weekend  
 March 7: Page County ARES Net 8pm 146.67 repeater  
 March 8: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 147.225 repeater  
 March 11: Augusta County ARES Net 8pm on 223.500 MHz simplex  
 March 13-14: Charlotte (NC) Hamfest  
 March 14: Page County ARES Net 8pm 146.67 repeater  
 March 15: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 147.225 repeater  
 March 17: Highland County ARES Net, 8:30 pm 147.18 repeater  
 March 21: Page County ARES Net 8pm 146.67 repeater  
 March 21: 10-10 Mobile QSO Party  
 March 21-22: Russian DX Contest  
 March 22: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 147.225 repeater  
 March 21-23: Virginia QSO Party  
 March 27-28: Baltimore (MD) Hamboree - Timonium Hamfest  
 March 28: Page County ARES Net 8pm 146.67 repeater  
 March 28-29: CQ WPX SSB Contest  
 March 29: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 147.225 repeater

April 1: MARA Homebrew Night – Club Meeting  
 April 2: PVARC Club Meeting at Page Memorial Hospital  
 April 3: Raleigh (NC) Hamfest  
 April 4: Page County ARES Net 8pm 146.67 repeater  
 April 4-6: Montana QSO Party  
 April 5: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 146.55 simplex  
 April 6: VARA Club Meeting  
 April 6: VHF Spring Sprint  
 April 7: Highland County ARES Net, 8:30 pm 147.18 repeater  
 April 8: Augusta County ARES Net, 8:00 pm on 146.85 repeaters  
 April 11: Page County ARES Net 8pm 146.67 repeater  
 April 11: Chesapeake (VA) ARA Springfest Hamfest  
 April 11: EU Spring Sprint - 80,40,20-meters  
 April 12: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 147.225 repeater  
 April 17: Harrisonburg March of Dimes Public Service Event  
 April 18: Page County ARES Net 8pm 146.67 repeater  
 April 19: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 147.225 repeater  
 April 21: Highland County ARES Net, 8:30 pm 147.18 repeater  
 April 24: Harrisonburg Education Foundation public service event  
 April 25: Page County ARES Net 8pm 146.67 repeater  
 April 26: Rockingham County ARES Net 8pm on 147.225 repeater

May 1: Staunton March of Dimes Public Service Event  
 May 1: Ham Radio Cruise-In – Charlottesville  
 May 29-31: CQ WPX CW Contest

June 13: Manassas Hamfest  
 June 26-27: Field Day

## Monitor Mailing List Updated

Heard a complaint about a missing Monitor? Refer the member to the Monitor editor, David Fordham KD9LA at [kd9la@arrl.net](mailto:kd9la@arrl.net)

This month's issue uses the new mailing list, and mistakes always happen.



## Virginia QSO Party March 23

You're invited to a party.

Get on the air and work some other Virginia stations.

Get on HF and give some other deserving hams a Virginia contact.

The purpose of a QSO party is to give an opportunity for hams who need to "work" a state to increase their chances of finding someone on the air from that state.

Each of the 50 states has its own date for a QSO party. By working these parties, a ham can very easily work all 50 states within the course of a year without too much time.

The Virginia QSO party is March 23.

Go to the MARA website <http://mara.ws>, click on the Schedule page, and click on the March 23 entry for the Virginia QSO party.

# MARA/VARA/PVARC

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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**MARA**  
**VARA**  
**PVARC**

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