

September
2010

THE MONITOR

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

MARA Program Thursday, September 2: Getting Started on HF

MARA's monthly meeting will be held September 2 at the Wood Grill in Harrisonburg. Dinner starts at 6:30, Business meeting at 7:30, followed by the program. This month's program is by KD9LA, and is designed for those hams who have been thinking about getting on the shortwave (worldwide, HF) bands, but didn't know where to start. Before attending, all MARA members and visitors are asked to read the special announcement on page 2 of this issue.

PVARC Dinner Meeting: Friday, September 3 at Browns Restaurant

The Page Valley Amateur Radio Club will hold its bi-monthly dinner meeting on Friday evening, September 3, at 6:00 p.m. Families are welcome and invited.

VARA Program Tuesday, September 7: Buying Used Amplifiers

The regular monthly meeting of the Valley Amateur Radio Association will be held Tuesday, September 7, at Shoney's Restaurant at Highway 250 at I-81 in Staunton. President Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, reports that Scott Newlen, KI4QQZ, will preside at this meeting. Al Bonck advises that the program for this month will be "Buying Used Amplifiers."

VARA Picnic — September 11 at Gypsy Hill Park

The annual VARA Picnic will be held on Saturday September 11th in Gypsy Hill Park at the pavilion near the Armory and Golf Club House (same location as last year).

Bring a covered dish, drinks and a lawn chair. We will eat at 12:00 Noon but come early and chat with the valley hams. All hams are welcome.

MARA Members Please Read

Important Reminder to all MARA Members

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association has been very fortunate to be allowed to use the meeting room at the Wood Grill in Harrisonburg. This room, while small for our growing group, is nevertheless the very best “digs” we can find. The food is terrific, the selection is outstanding, the prices are excellent, the service is usually very good. And they give us priority over other organizations and parties when it comes to scheduling the meeting room.

In a nutshell: *WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE THIS ROOM!*

But we may be in some danger of having to find another place. Why?

As per our arrangement with Wood Grill, we have to honor their insurance rules.

One of the main rules mandated by their insurance company is, “No one is allowed on Wood Grill premises except for people having official business with Wood Grill.” This means that EVERYONE who attends the MARA meeting MUST somehow be a bonafide customer of the restaurant.

The Wood Grill management **LIKES** our radio club and wants to maintain our relationship. **They are not trying to gouge us for money. To the contrary, they are bending over backwards for us. To accommodate those MARA members who do not (or for any reason can not) purchase the full buffet they have made a special concession just for our club.** Wood Grill is allowing those members who do not wish to purchase the buffet meal to purchase only a dessert and drink — for a *fraction* of the cost that all other customers must pay to enter the restaurant. This is a special arrangement they are making just for MARA members. Normally, for all other organizations, they require everyone to purchase the full buffet.

It has recently come to the attention of MARA officers, Wood Grill management, and even several other members, that some MARA members are attending the meeting and not making a purchase.

The most recent person observed was not a visitor, either, it was a long time member.

Please, please, we beg you, don't jeopardize our meeting location by attending the meeting without notifying the waitress that you are at least, the very least, having a dessert and drink. We don't think it is too much to ask that you follow the establishment's insurance rules so that we may continue to enjoy such a comfortable location for our monthly get-together. Thank you.

PVARC President's Message

Greetings from the Page Valley Amateur Radio Club.

This month's letter finds us still without a meeting room at Page Memorial Hospital. If you recall it was accidentally driven into by an automobile. But as soon as the repairs are complete we will move our meeting back to the PMH day room.

The Page County ARES weekly net will soon begin to rotate weekly between the 146.670-N4PJI machine and the 146.625-KQ4D machine, to which the mayor of Fleeburg KQ4D-Phil Rinica has given his approval.

And speaking of VHF/UHF, in Page County and all amateur radio repeaters for that matter, if we all make a special effort to answer a call, make a call or just jump in and say hello.

The PVARC artillery division (antenna spud guns) is growing in leaps and bounds. It now includes KJ4HFU-Bob Forrest and KJ4HFO-Gene Frazier. Maybe before winter we can have a shooting competition.

I hope to see you all at the PVARC meeting at Brown's Restaurant in Luray on Friday September 3 at 6:30pm for the "Eatin meetin"

Mark Hensley, N4YSA

PVARC's Field Day Operation is on YouTube! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvDQA2ZsFso>



Reminders from August Issue — in case you were too busy to read it!

OLD NEWS



NEW REPEATER

A new repeater is on the air, located 3 miles north of Hudson's Cross Roads, transmitting on frequency of **146.715** with a **minus offset** and a PLL tone of **146.2**. It is open to all hams.

ELLIOTTS KNOB REPEATERS

The **Elliott's Knob repeaters** are back in operation. The **147.045** Repeater has a **plus offset** and a tone of **131.8**. The **444.100** Repeater has a **plus offset** and a tone of **131.8**. The **224.300** Repeater is down for maintenance as of August 1, but when it comes up, it will have a **minus offset** and a tone of **131.8**.

KD4OXQ'S WEBSITE

KD4OZQ's website, intended as a repository of information for Rockingham County hams, especially ARES and RACES members, is located at:
<http://www.kd4oxq.info>

FIELD DAY SCORE

The joint **MARA/VARA Field Day** operation's final official score was 6,032 points,

Lack of Interest in the Blue Ridge Bonanza MilePost Zero Special Event

Gordon Batey WA4FJC reports that there was a lack of interest in the **Blue Ridge Bonanza Mile-Post Zero special event** this year. This event involves stations set up along the Blue Ridge Parkway, and will be held on **September 18-19** this year. Local hams have participated in the past, but alas, it appears that hams are just too busy with public service events this year.





VE Testing Session “Thanks”

Thanks to the following who gave their time to help with the VE testing session on August 14:

Robert Van Fossen K4DJG

Gerald Nauman KN4FM

Richard Haxton KC3AN

Mike McKay W4AZR

Bob Hume W4TMV

Jim Lehman W4POL

Ellsworth Neff K4LXG

Bryan Daniels K4RMY

Hugh Pettis K3EC

Gayle Shull KU4XN

Our next test session will be October 9, 2010.
Usual time: starting at 9:00 am at the Woodmen of the World Building on Highway 42 north of Dayton VA and south of Harrisonburg.

Gayle Shull

KB30 to the Rescue — Again!

For the second time in two months, Paul Boisen, KB30, has used ham radio for a stranded motorist rescue.

He reports on the August 16 event:

I came upon a motorist near the top of Shenandoah mountain at 630 this morning (august 16).

He had been towing a trailer with his truck when he broke down an hour before. So he dug a bright yellow shirt out of his suitcase and had been directing traffic around his vehicle since.

I tried raising someone on our Harrisonburg repeater, and got no response.

I then switched to the Spruce Knob repeater where I raised N8KG near Clarksburg WV and KD8MYM near Moorefield WV, both of whom were happy to help.

They each asked me to stand by while they drove toward cell phone coverage. In the meantime I had a discussion with a third HAM who had a go at diagnosing the problem with the truck.

KD8MYM won the race to a cell phone tower, and relayed a message to Tennessee.

Whenever I see a vehicle pulled over on the mountain I make a point of offering my communications superpowers, but often they are just changing drivers and I startle them. It was nice this morning to help the gentleman out and get a big "Thank You!"

Paul Boisen KB30



Sympathy to AA4RH on his Loss

Richard (AA4RH) Huttinger's mother passed away on Monday, August 23rd. Eileen Lodge Huttinger, 83, was a resident of Summit Square Retirement Community in Waynesboro.

Triple Play Public Service Event: October 1, 2, and 3

The first weekend in Oct. is just around the corner and it is Triple Play time again.

As usual we need lots of help!!

The **Grindstone 100** runs from 1800 Friday evening until about 1000 Sunday morning, continuous, and takes place on various trails in the George Washington National Forest. It starts at Camp Shenandoah in Augusta County, goes to Reddish Knob and a little beyond then back to Camp Shenandoah for the finish of just over 100 miles.

The **KTM 500 motorcycle ride** starts about 0730 Saturday morning and runs until about 1800 Saturday night. Then again from about 0730 Sunday morning until about 1800 Sunday. The ride starts and ends at Natural Chimneys Park and runs various roads and trails in Augusta and Rockingham Counties.

The **Camp Still Meadows horse ride** begins about 0800 on Sunday and ends around 1400 Sunday. The location is on a farm near Cootes Store in Rockingham County.

This year there will be some changes. The net controls for the Grindstone and the KTM 500 will be split. The Grindstone net control will be on Reddish Knob but may be a portable repeater provided by and maintained by hams from the Lynchburg area. The KTM 500 net control will be located on Flag Pole Knob (not the Field Day site).

We will need volunteers to help man various stations along all three events during the course of the weekend. If you are interested in helping out on the Grindstone or KTM 500 or would like more information, please contact Bryan K4RMY (k4rmy@arrl.net). If you can help with the Camp Still Meadows ride please contact Ray K4NRA (k4nra@verizon.net).

These events in the mountains of Augusta and Rockingham give us a great way to test our communication skills and equipment. Hopefully we will never be needed to cover this area in an emergency but we could be. This gives up an opportunity to practice under conditions similar to an emergency call up in the area. Please consider giving even 2-3 hours of your time to one of these events.

Bryan Daniels,
K4RMY,
Rockingham County ARES EC



Mountain Bike 100 Public Service Event: September 5

We could still use help for the Mountain Bike 100 Public Service event on September 5. Note that this is not the Triple Play which falls in October. The Mountain Bike 100 is the first weekend in September. By the time this article appears in the Monitor, it will be right on top of us!

If you can help, please let me know so I can work up a schedule.

Even a couple of hours would sure help out!

We usually get a nice donation to the club for helping with this project.

Gayle Shull, KU4XN
gskuxn@msn.com
Phone 540-828-2132



Bike Shenandoah Public Service Event: September 18

Bike Shenandoah will be held on September 18. This is an annual event that we provide communications for each year. I will need five additional hams to assist with this. Time will vary throughout the day starting at about 8 in the morning and lasting until about 5 in the evening. Nobody other than net control will have to be involved for more than 4 hours. If you would like to help let me know.

Gerald Nauman, KN4FM
genauman@verizon.net



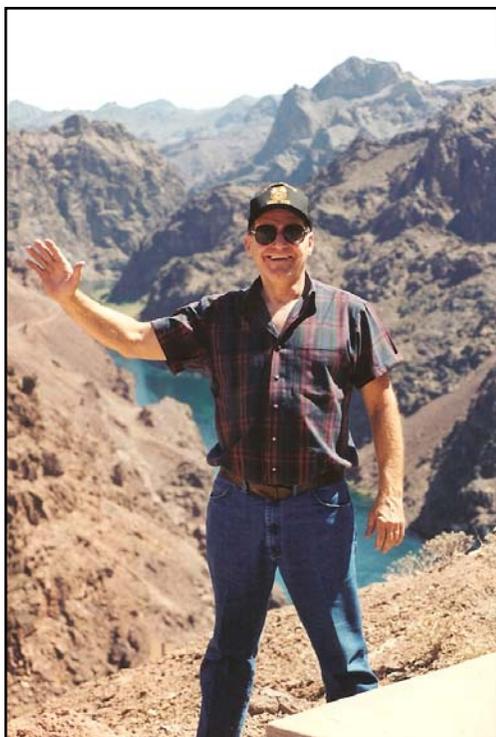
WX4C's Website Pictures – Wow!

Don Landes WX4C, has posted some **great pictures** of his trips back and forth to **Fairbanks Alaska**. Point your browser to the following URL without any spaces, and all on one line:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/wx4cast/AlaskaTrucks?feat=directlink>

Don also has a special webpage put up, with even more news and pictures of his runs to Alaska.

<http://www.wx4c.com>



Impressive 360-degree Views

Gayle Shull KU4XN has shared some great swf user-controllable video files which allow the user to pan up, down, left and right, through a 360-degree (all directions) view of some nature scenes. The effect itself is quite impressive. Point your browser to: <http://www.utah3d.net> and take a look *around*, literally.

Garmin GPS Safety Recall: Fire Hazard



Ray Colvin KE4HVR points out Garmin has recalled 1.25 million GPS units that have batteries that can overheat and cause a fire. Kim Commando's website has the information on which units are involved in the recall:

<http://www.komando.com/dailynews/index.aspx?id=9351>

Fall Foliage Bike Festival October 15-17

Although no one has mentioned it yet, the newsletter editor has discovered that the 2010 Fall Foliage Bike Festival, traditionally one of the biggest public service events of the year, will take place this year on the weekend of October 15-17, so mark your calendars.



It's SEPTEMBER 11 THIS YEAR!

The Virginia Beach hamfest this year will be on a Saturday, and the event is moving back to the Convention Center after several “down” years at one of the small college gymnasiums. There is an impressive line-up of vendors signed up for this years event. Several valley hams are planning to make the 3+ hour trek to the Tidewater area to check it out this year.

Good Reports on N4EYZ's Recovery

You may know that Wayne Bowyer, N4EYZ, experienced a severe medical event in June.

He was initially taken to Augusta Health and then UVA and was in a coma for many days. He is suffering from Gillium-Barre syndrome.

He is now in the CRCR unit at Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg, Virginia.

I was able to visit him there. He was in good spirits considering how long that he has been ill. He cannot move his hands or much of anything else that I could determine. He has a tracheotomy and they are working to get him off of that so that he can receive additional Physical Therapy.

He is able to speak and was glad to see my when I was there. He does tire easily.

He cannot answer the phone (as he cannot hold it). But his mailing address is:

Wayne Bowyer
5th Floor, Room 7
Virginia Baptist Hospital
3300 Rivermont Ave
Lynchburg, VA 24503



I am sure that he would appreciate a card in the mail or a brief visit if you are in the Lynchburg area.

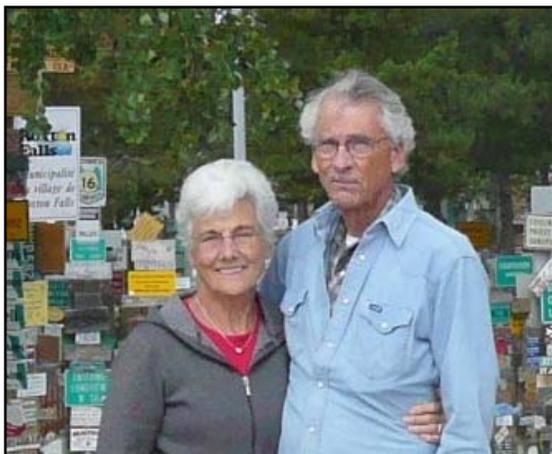
73 Gordon WA4FJC

North Trek: W4PJW, N4PJJ, KC4HYO , ... and Gloria, too!

To track Jeff W4PJW and Patsy N4PJJ, Ed KC4HYO, and Gloria on their Great Yukon Road Trip, go to <http://aprs.fi> and enter W4PJW-14 in the callsign box, and change the duration box to "7 days" to get their GPS trail.

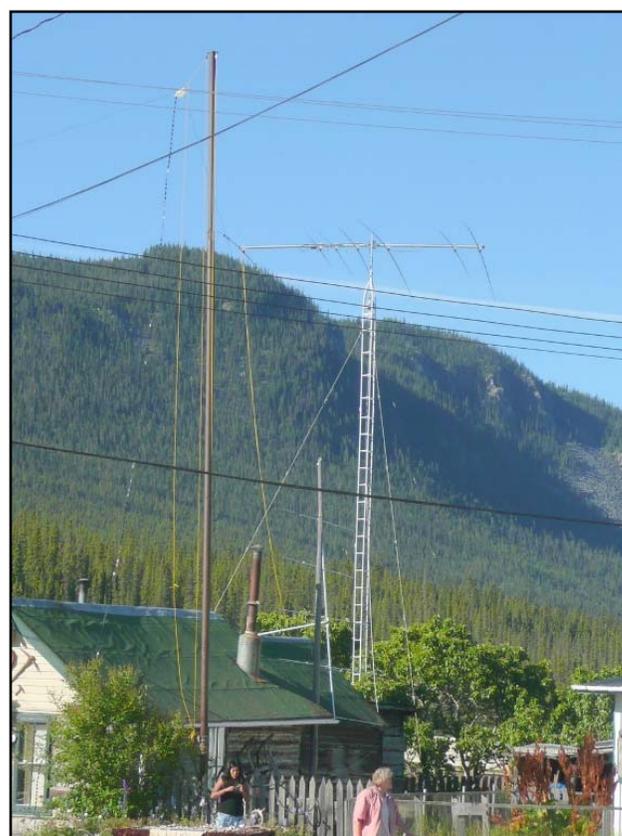


Above and below: The intrepid adventurers stopped at the Sign Forest, a tourist attraction made of thousands of signs from all over North America. Part of their journey involved travelling through territory ravaged by a massive forest fire, below in the distance.





Below right: they encountered a local ham who invited them into his shack.



Above: scene from the White Pass railroad in Skagway Alaska.

KG4JOF Looking for Used HF Rig

I'm looking for a nice condition older HF rig — looking for something better for here in the shack, so I can move the existing rig to the truck. If you know anyone that might have something that fits the bill let me know. Thanks,

Billy Hooke, KG4JOF,
kg4jof@yahoo.com

KI4MSJ Looking for Used VHF/UHF Rig

I'm looking for a nice condition older VHF/UHF rig — on 2-meters and/or 440 MHz. If you know anyone that might have something they'd be willing to sell on time payments or just let me borrow until I can afford to buy one, please let me know. Thanks,

Scott Martin KI4MSJ,
ki4msj@yahoo.com



Herb AA2BF, Jay W4QDC, Canada Too

W4PJW, N4PJJ, KC4HYO, and WX4C aren't the only Shenandoah hams to have trekked to the Maple Leaf country this summer.

Word has it that Herb Slade, AA2BF, has also been visiting Canada this month. Herb sent best wishes from Banff National Park in Alberta, one of the many locations he stopped at on his recent swing across the continent.

And Jay Suter W4QDC and XYL Geneva took a nice tour trip up to the Maritimes of Canada and other points north. O, Canada, O, Canada...

(Below: Picture of Lake Louise in Banff National Park, Alberta, provided by W4PJW).



MARA Treasurer's Report — June 15, 2010 to August 28, 2010

Beginning Balance June 15, 2010 (last report — same as May 28, 2010 report)	\$ 2,957.19
Add: new member dues (1 new member):	\$ 12.00
Donation from Town of Bridgewater	\$ 300.00
August 50/50 donations	\$ 25.00
Less: Purchase of Club Projector	\$ -593.25
Post Office Box Rental	\$ -44.00
Field Day Expenses (various payees)	\$ -317.00
Ending Balance as of August 28, 2010	\$ 2,339.94

Submitted by David Fordham, KD9LA, MARA Treasurer

PVARC Secretary's Report – August 6 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 1800 by Mark/N4YSA, President of PVARC. Following introductions, Mark summarized the situation at Page Memorial Hospital which was still undergoing repairs following a “runaway vehicle” accident that resulted in a “new entrance” into our conference room! The local newspaper reported damages in excess of \$100,000 and their spokesman was unsure as to when the repairs would be completed. Contrary to rumors on the net, it was not caused by a club member hurrying to the monthly PVARC meeting. Our club Liaison, Dave/K4DPF will continue to work with the hospital on an alternative meeting room for PVARC. In the meantime, we will meet at Browns Restaurant here in Luray for the next several months.

It was noted that PVARC has been featured in the local newspaper twice in the past few weeks. A very nice picture of Dave/K4DPF & Geoffrey/WD4LYO operating from our Field Day site at Lake Arrowhead appeared in the August 5, 2010 edition of the Page News & Courier; and, a full-page story two weeks before carried an interview of Tony Zukas/W3ELE telling of his activities as part of a WWII aircrew in the Army Air Corps, his later work in television as a cameraman where he came in contact with many notable celebrities and touched briefly on his interest in amateur radio.

Following a brief interlude to allow everyone time to eat and socialize, the “table topic” centered around a discussion on alternating use of the two Page Valley repeaters for the Sunday ARES Net. Mark/N4YSA suggesting that we consider using the KQ4D repeater (146.625 MHz) on those Sundays with even numbered dates; and, the N4PJI repeater (146.670 MHz) on those Sundays with odd numbered dates. He felt that using both repeaters would add redundancy to the ARES network - since they are served by different power grids and are geographically separated, thereby less likely to suffer weather damage or outages simultaneously. He also thought that perhaps more Page County and Rockingham County hams would be able to check into the weekly ARES net, while at the same time becoming more aware of the coverage area of both repeaters – useful information to have in an emergency!

The proposal was favorably received by the members and will be discussed further at the next meeting following discussions between Phil/KQ4D, Paul/N4PJI and Ben/N4SFG – the Page County ARRL EC. Sparky/KD4KL suggested the ARES net control station occasionally test for simplex coverage on 146.52 MHz to simulate a total loss of repeater coverage. This would demonstrate how reduced the coverage area becomes, and how stations could still handle message traffic by relay using existing base and mobile stations in the net. Phil/KQ4D commented on how little usage the repeaters are getting and suggested that everyone should monitor when out driving, or working around the shack, and do a little “rag-chewing” from time to time. The more the repeaters are used, the more comfortable we become with them and their capabilities; and, the more likely we'll monitor and use them under emergency conditions.

There being no other business the “eatin’ meetin’” was adjourned at 1915 and all members were reminded the next meeting would again be held on September 3rd at 1800 here at Browns restaurant.

Submitted by: Sparky Terry/KD4KL, PVARC Secretary

VARA Secretary's Report

As published in the last few issues of the Monitor, VARA has been on Summer Vacation. There was no July or August meeting. Meetings resume in September.



MARA Secretary's Report – August 5 Meeting

Meeting Called to Order at 7:32 PM **Attendance:** 23 present - 28 Members and 5 Guests

Ellsworth (K4LXG) conducted the meeting. Introductions made all around.

Reports:

New Members: None; 1st Reading: None; 2nd Reading: None

Secretary Minutes: It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the minutes as printed in the Monitor.

Treasurer Report: No report.

Groups:

ARES/RACES: Bryan Daniels (K4RMY) reported that ARESs participated in the State Department of Emergency Services emergency communications drill on 7/10/2010 from selected shelters, including JMU. The objective of the drill was to determine whether communications could be established between the shelters and Richmond. After resolving some issues (static on generator and an antenna that wouldn't tune), they were able to put up a wire antenna and make contact with Richmond. It was also noted that JMU will be including us in their emergency plan.

Another learning experience presented itself when the Sheriff's department reported that a satellite had picked up an emergency signal on the 121.5 frequency. The ECC doesn't have anything portable that would pick up 121.5 so Jim Junkins contacted Bryan for assistance. Bryan along with Gayle (KU4XN) was able to pick up the frequency on his HT. The ECC antenna bag that was sent out with them turned out to be empty. Bryan stressed the importance of checking all equipment before heading out and knowing how to tune a wire antenna.

VEC-Session: Gayle (KU4XN) reported that the next test session will be on 8/14/2010. He also announced that Bryan (K4RMY) is now a new VE. Congratulations!

Public Service:

Gayle (KU4XN) reported that the annual Bridgewater Town Picnic/Parade went very well. A vote of thanks was extended to all who worked the event. MARA received a \$300 donation.

The Bike Shenandoah is scheduled for 9/18/2010 and volunteers will be needed for communication support for this year's event.

The Labor Day Mountain Bike Race will be held on 9/5/2010, and communication volunteers will be needed to support four stations during this all day event.

Triple Play is once again scheduled for the first full weekend in October 1st – 3rd. The weekend will include the Grindstone 100, the Shenandoah 500 KTM motorcycle ride and the Camp Still Meadows horse ride. Bryan (K4RMY) announced that we will be using separate net controls for the events and different frequencies to better control and separate the events. Bryan would like to have two volunteers for net control and one PR person during the day and two volunteers for net control to cover the night shift. Bryan will handle the net control schedule but would like someone to volunteer to manage the operator schedule.

Announcements:

John (KI4YNA) announced the start up of a new repeater just north of Hudson's Cross Roads. Larry Miller (KB6VAA) is the trustee. It is on frequency 146.715 with a minus offset and a tone of 146.2. All hams are invited to use the repeater.

The final scores are in for Field Day. Mara finished with a score of 6,042 points. Thanks to the Field Day Committee for all their efforts.

Phil (KQ4D) is the new trustee of the 146.625 repeater at Big Mountain. He encourages everyone to use it.

Old Business:

New Business:

New Call or Upgrades: None reported.

Motion to Adjourn: Made and seconded

50/50 Raffle: \$25.00 total proceeds; split of \$12.50 won by Deeter (KI4STU) and donated back to club.

Program: No program as our scheduled speaker from Voice of America had to cancel at the last minute.

*Submitted by
Sheryl M. Tonini
KJ4DOC*

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 Tippet, N8ESW
 Program Manager: Al Bonck N3JB

<http://w4xd.com>

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month
 at Shoneys in Staunton on Hwy 250 at I-81.

Dinner starts at 6:00 pm,
 the business meeting starts at 7:00 pm

Visitors are welcome

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

Doug Tippet
 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 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.
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 in the Central Shenandoah Valley.

Distribution is in Adobe PDF format via email attachment
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MARA/VARA/PVARC

c/o David Fordham
131 Wayside Drive
Weyers Cave, VA 24486

Phone: 540-568-3024
Email: fordhadr@jmu.edu

Return Service Requested

Upcoming Ham Radio Activities at a Glance

September 2: MARA Club Meeting (Wood Grill) program on HF
September 3: PVARC Meeting (Browns Restaurant—Luray)
September 5: Mountain Bike 100 Public Service (See page 6)
September 7: VARA Club Meeting (Shoneys) program on Amplifiers
September 11: Virginia Beach Hamfest
September 11: VARA Family Picnic (Gypsy Hill Park)
September 18-19: Blue Ridge Bonanza (MilePost Zero) Special Event
September 18: Bike Virginia Public Service (see page 6)

October 1-3: Triple Play Public Service (see page 5)
October 5: VARA October Meeting
October 7: MARA October Meeting
October 8: PVARC October Meeting
October 9: VE Examinations, Dayton Virginia
October 15-17: Fall Foliage Bike Festival
October 24: Mason-Dixon Hamfest (Westminster MD)

MARA

VARA

PVARC