

August 2019

THE MONITOR

Published Monthly for Shenandoah Valley Amateur Radio Operators — Members of MARA, VARA, and PVARC



MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW FOR YOUR FAVORITE PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS!

August 3 (Saturday) – Highland County Mountain Mama Road Bike Ride

September 1 (Sunday) – Shenandoah 100 Bike Race

September 7 (Saturday) – Valley Veterans Ride for Heroes

October 4-6 (Friday to Sunday) – Grindstone 100 Footrace

October 5-6 (Saturday & Sunday) – Washington Trail Riders Bike Ride

October 6 (Sunday morning) – Camp Still Meadows Horse Ride Charity Event

October 19-20 (Saturday & Sunday) – Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival

AUGUST CLUB MEETINGS

Thursday August 1 – MARA Meeting: Wood Grill

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., will hold its normal monthly meeting on Thursday, **August 1** at the normal location: the **Wood Grill** at **1711 Reservoir Street in Harrisonburg**. Dinner starts shortly before 6:30 p.m. the business meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.. All hams and visitors are invited and encouraged to attend.



Tuesday August 6 – VARA Meeting: Hometown Grill and Buffet

The Valley Amateur Radio Association, Inc., will hold its normal monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 6 at the Hometown Grill and Buffet just north of Highway 250, 1 block east of I-81's Exit 219 in Staunton. The meal begins at 6:00 pm, the business meeting starts at 7:00 pm.,



Thursday August 8 – PVARC Meeting: Tactical Walls

The Page Valley Amateur Radio Club normal monthly meeting is Thursday August 8 at the usual location, Tactical Walls, in Shenandoah. The address is 611 Williams Avenue, Shenandoah VA 22849. Tactical Walls is a manufacturing facility with a nice meeting room that is just east of highway 340 in Shenandoah. Turn east off 340, go about one block and drive through the gate in the fence and around to the door on the right.



PUBLIC SERVICE REPORT

Bridgewater Lawn Party Parade Communications: Ham Radio to the Rescue

I sincerely thank and appreciate the great help and dedication of the local hams who volunteered for the two evenings of the parades July 19th and 20th—especially with the extremely high temperatures during this time!

The Bridgewater Police had high praises and were greatly impressed with the traffic control from these ham operators. It made their jobs much easier.

Bradley Boyd **W4BVB**



Fred Castello **KF4FC**



Bryan Daniels **K4RMY**



Scott Long **KJ4SIT**



Glenn Mingo **KJ4VVP**



Gerald Nauman **KN4FM**



Andrew Pearson **N4RCE**



Chris Shirkey **KI4BAQ**



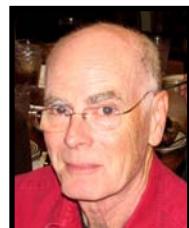
Herb Slade **AA2BF**



Bob Steere **N1QEQ**



Ellsworth Neff **K4LXG**



An interesting thing happened during the event. For about an hour during the parade, the Bridgewater Police Officer at Station 2 was unable to communicate with the police officer near but not at station 3 because of unavailability of a hand-held police radio unit. Scott KJ4SIT was sent down to the second officer and hams thus relayed information for the police. The problem was trying to decide when to stop traffic one way and allow it to go the other way on the detour as tractors were lining up for the parade in order to keep traffic moving both ways. Eventually the police officers were able to get the problem resolved and were able to talk direct. But this shows one more way that "When All Else Fails, Ham Radio" can come to the rescue.

PUBLIC SERVICE REPORT

Elkton Field Day Parade Communications Support

Thanks to everyone who helped with the 2019 Elkton Field Day Parade.

Group Picture; Gary-K6OZ, Bradley-W4BVB, Mark-N4YSA, Bob-KI4VFP and Paul-KK4IRS.

Everything went very well thanks to all the great help, and after the Parade everyone got one of the world famous Jr.OUAM chicken dinners.

Mark Hensley-N4YSA



BERRYVILLE HAMFEST: SUNDAY AUGUST 4

The 2019 Berryville Hamfest is always held on the First Sunday of August each year, at the Clarke County Ruritan Fairgrounds at 890 West Main Street in Berryville, Virginia.

Gates open at 6:00 a.m. The Vendor buildings open at 8:00 a.m.

Donation is \$10.00 and a tailgating space is another \$10.00. Youth under 16 are free..

Country ham-and-egg breakfast starting at 7:00 a.m. Ruritan's famouns chicken and beef bargeque starting at 11:00 a.m.

To reach the hamfest, take Interstate 81 north to Winchester, get off at Highway 7 , Exit 315. On the exit ramp, bear left at the fork to take State Highway 7 EAST towards Berryville. Go approximately 7.2 miles, and at the intersection of Hwy 7 and Hwy 78, bear right at a fork onto Berryville's West Main Street. (There is a funeral home in the center of the fork.) Go about a half mile and you will see the fairgrounds on the north (left) side of the road.

Last year there were over 1500 hams in attendance, with 239 tailgaters, making this one of the larger hamfests in the area. See <https://svarc.us/hamfest/>

VARA PICNIC — AUGUST 24



The Valley Amateur Radio Association will hold it's annual FAMILY PICNIC at the Gypsy Hill Park reserved pavilion (the usual location, beside the golf-cart rental shed) on Saturday, August 24. As in years past, everyone is encouraged to bring a covered dish, a dessert, and lemonade or soft drinks of your choice (no alcohol) . The club will provide the meat, condiments, ice, plates, cups, utensils and napkins . The coordinator for this event is Ray Colvin, KE4HVR. If you plan to attend, contact Ray for guidance on what is needed so that we don't end up with twelve dishes of baked beans. Ray's email is colvingr@gmail.com

NAQP RTTY CONTEST RESULTS

Four hams formed a team (the Shenandoah Valley Wireless) and combined our individual efforts for the North American QSO Party RTTY Weekend. Here are our unofficial scores from the contest:

Jeff Rinehart W4PJW was the high scorer for the team with 39,648 points, 354 QSOs, 112 Multipliers, during 9.33 hours of operating.

Butch Washer N5SMQ had 11,904 points, 192 QSOs, 62 Multipliers, during 5 hours of operating.

Sandy Mullins K4PZC had 10,664 points, 172 QSOs, 62 Multipliers, during 9.33 hours of operating.

David Tanks AD4TJ had 28,050 points, 255 QSOs, 110 Multipliers, during 6.67 hours of operating.

The combined team effort comes out to 90,266 points! Not bad for a team of only four hams

Check out www.3830scores.com to see all the scores reported to them.

Submitted by

David Tanks. AD4TJ

Manager for the Shenandoah

Valley Wireless contest club/team

RARE ON-LINE SKYWARN WEBINAR

Tuesday, August 13 at 6 pm — Advance Registration Required



As you may know, David Fordham KD9LA inquired about the possibility of a SkyWarn class being held in the Shenandoah Valley. There are more than 25 individuals interested in becoming certified as formal Skywarn Volunteer observers, assuming the class is held on a Saturday. Upon contacting the weather service, however, David was informed by the LWX Weather Bureau office that the possibility of having a Saturday class is next to zero. **HOWEVER....**

Thanks to the efforts of Bradley Boyd, W4BVB, the National Weather Service **WILL** be holding a **VERY RARE** Skywarn ON-LINE class. It is scheduled for Tuesday evening, August 13.

What is so rare about this class?

Most on-line Skywarn classes are intended as refreshers to update existing trained Skywarn volunteers. This class, however, is an on-line meeting or Webinar, not a simple on-line “course” or video

The bottom line: If you register and attend this webinar, you will receive an official Skywarn ID number and be a full Skywarn Weather Spotter.

Webinars are a little more complicated than simply watching a video. A webinar allows two-way communication between the students and the instructor. Thus, to participate in the webinar, you must register in advance. You will need a computer with a decent internet connection, as well as a set of headphones and you also probably want a microphone. A webcam should not be needed.

The webinar is scheduled for Tuesday evening, August 13, starting at 6:00 p.m. and running until 8:00 p.m. If the severe weather occurs on that evening, the meteorologists will have to attend to other duties, so the “rain date” for the webinar is the next night, August 14.

NOTE: ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. The class is FREE. The number of participants is limited, so register early. The class is open to residents of Augusta, Highland, Nelson, Albemarle, Rockingham, Greene, Page, Shenandoah, and other counties served by the Washington-Baltimore LWX weather station. This includes residents of the cities of Staunton, Waynesboro, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, and others in the LWX forecast area.

See the next page for instructions on how to register for this and become a trained Skywarn Volunteer without having to travel to attend an in-person class.

SKYWARN WEBINAR

Registration Instructions – Here's How!

Registration is a THREE-STEP PROCESS.

To start, first go to the LWX Skywarn webpage found at: <https://www.weather.gov/lwx/skywarn> and scroll down to the table of Basic Classes. Click on the link for the “Basic” class for Tuesday, 08/13/19.

This link takes you to the non-NOAA website “Eventbrite” which is managing the registration. You can now do STEP ONE: Click on the green Register button on the right side of the Eventbrite page, and pretend you are “ordering tickets” for the event by next clicking “Check Out”. You will be taken to a page to enter your Skywarn volunteer data, such as your name, address, GPS coordinates, county, etc. Remember, the class is FREE, you do NOT have to enter a credit card number, but do have to enter the information required of SkyWarn members. (Think of this page as your membership application.)

After filling in your information, click “Complete Registration”. Now that you have provided the National Weather Service with your information as a volunteer, you are ready to move on to STEP TWO, which is reserving your spot in the Webinar.

STEP TWO: Go back to the LWX Skywarn page at <https://www.weather.gov/lwx/skywarn> and this time, click on the webinar link appearing in the text on the LEFT side of the webpage: . That link takes you to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2272389668186959363>

Once you are there, click on the blue REGISTER button. Enter your information for the Tuesday, August 13 webinar to reserve your “seat” in the session.

STEP THREE: Go back tp and do the same for the “Rain Date” session of August 14. That’s it!

Within a few minutes, you should receive an email with directions on how to “Log In” to the webinar on the night of the course. A few minutes before 6 on August 13, refer to those instructions and voila!



OFFICIAL
SKYWARN
Storm Spotter

MARA/VARA FIELD DAY RESULTS

The joint MARA/VARA Field Day operation was another resounding success. (Are we surprised?)

Taking place on the fourth full weekend of June, the event was well attended, but as usual, there was a dearth of operators during the middle of the night. CW operators as always, are highly valued. Nine non-ham visitors operated the GOTA (“Get On The Air”) station, plus one ham who had not been on the air for more than a year operated to give additional bonus points. The GOTA station made a total of 73 contacts.

The preliminary score submitted by the scorekeeper Sandy Mullins, K4PZC, was **8,004 points**.

This included bonus points for having a GOTA station, holding the event in a public location, conducting 100% of the operation on emergency power not connected to the power grid, making QSOs on a natural power source (solar or wind), formal messages sent and received, including messages to the Section Manager, and copying the W1AW Field Day Bulletin, having the Field Day site visited by a public official and representative of a served public service agency, having youth participation, holding an educational activity, establishing a social media presence, having a safety officer on-site during the entire operation, submitting the log electronically, maintaining a ham radio public information table, and having media publicity in the Daily News-Leader, Daily News-Record, News-Virginian, and coverage by WSVA radio.

The lack of sunspot activity was evident in looking at the band-by-band contact breakdown:

BAND	CW QSOs	DIGITAL QSOs	PHONE QSOs
80m	289	47	73
40m	409	259	112
20m	191	38	293
15m	1	5	0
6m	1	42	6
2m			14
70cm			2
GOTA			73
TOTAL	891	391	573

Thanks again to FD committee chairman John Keller, W4ZAO, and all the members of the Field Day Committee for putting together a fantastic event, offering a fun event, and upholding our tradition of “a good time was had by all”.

BALD KNOB REPEATER TEST

With the upcoming Public Service Events taking place in the George Washington National Forest, it is critical to have solid reliable communication in some of the ravines, hollers, and gorges where radio signals are difficult to come by. Communication might mean the difference between life and death.

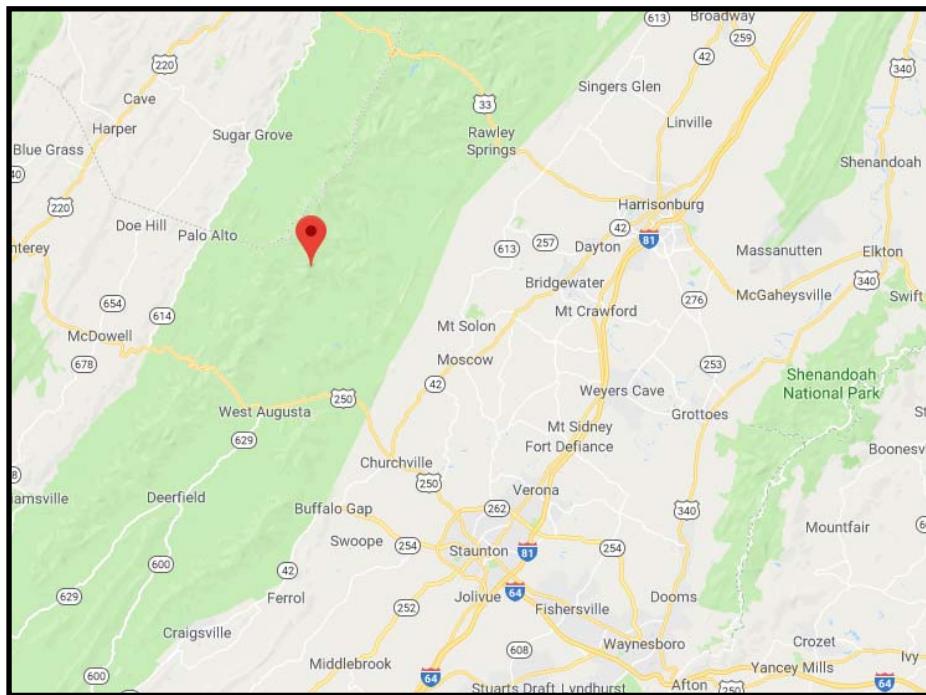
To assist with this, the MARA Board, approved by the membership, is allowing the deployment of the 147.315 repeater equipment as a temporary “portable” repeater.

David Fordham, KD9LA, and John Chevalaz KB2LOZ, are working on gaining access to Little Bald Knob to see if that location is feasible for use during the events. Coordination efforts have been underway since late June with Paula Woody, the Interference Officer of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Greenbank. Paula is also handling the approval process with the Sugar Grove Naval Listening Post (yes it is still active, although the support base closed), which must also approve the operation.

Once permission is gained to operate in the National Quiet Zone, arrangements will be pursued with the Forest Service for site access for both testing and operation during the public service events.

Although the operation will be temporary, lasting only one day for the Shenandoah 100 Bike Race, and two days for the Grindstone 100, the repeater coordination bodies (both SERA and TMARC) will be notified of the temporary operation. Full coordination is not being pursued since the repeater will be on the air only temporarily.

The orange pin on the map below shows the location of Little Bald Knob in relation to the cities of Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Waynesboro. It is hoped that this location will provide coverage in locations and at aid stations which previously were difficult to communicate with. The tests will tell.



UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

August 3 (Saturday) – Highland County Mountain Mama Bike Challenge

What: A Bicycle Ride, with several routes: 25, 50, 62, 75, and 100 mile options on paved and gravel roads, starting in Highland County Virginia, and including areas of Pendleton and Pocohontas Counties West Virginia. The ride course climbs 9 mountains, with cumulative 10,000 feet of elevation rise and fall.

Who: **Butch Washer, N5SMQ**, is the coordinator, his email is n5smqw4@gmail.com

Where: Hams meet at the Highland County Public School, downtown Monterey for assignments.



When: August 3, Hams meet at 7:00 a.m. for assignments. The ride starts at 8 a.m. and lasts most of the day.

Why: Hams provide communication for aid stations, SAG vehicles and emergencies. Cell phone coverage is spotty and unreliable for most of the area of this event.

How: Hams need an outside rooftop antenna with a 25-watt (minimum) mobile radio programmed with the following frequencies: 147.180+ Tone of 100.0 Hz, main repeater; 147.345+ No tone required, backup repeater; 146.52 simplex to be used only for special situations.

Notes: Many local hams have already notified Butch of their availability. Monterey is approximately an hour and a half from Harisonburg via Route 42 and U.S. 250, and just under 1 hour drive from Churchville, but allow a bit more time for the traffic associated with the event. Expect to use a full tank of gas in your vehicle, but the summer scenery is worth it.

September 1 (Sunday) – Shenandoah 100 Bike Race

What: A 100-mile bicycle race on trails and unpaved forest roads in the mountains of the George Washington National Forest in western Augusta County and southwestern Rockingham County.



Who: **John Lasher N3GLZ**, is the coordinator, his email is n3glz@comcast.net or n3glz@arrl.net

Where: Starting line, Finish line, and Race Headquarters will be at the Stokesville Campground (where MARA/VAR Field Day was held).

When: Sunday September 1 Individual ham duty hours are very flexible

Why: Hams provide communication for aid stations, SAG vehicles and emergencies. Cell phone coverage is non-existent in the area of this event.

How: Hams need a portable station setup, or an outside vehicle antenna with a 25-watt (minimum) mobile radio. Repeater frequencies will be determined based on coverage.

Notes: This event recently suffered a fatality in a wilderness area without cell phone access, proving the essential nature of ham radio coverage. Hams can volunteer for an hour or two, or more, or all day. Your assignment is flexible and can be tailored to your availability times. For new hams, this event is a great introduction to emergency radio operations.

UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

September 7 (Saturday) – Valley Veterans Ride for Heroes

What: A fund-raiser for Boulder Crest, a R&R center for injured military combat veterans, this event is a bicycle ride featuring three routes, the longest one 63 miles, the shorter ones truncated versions of the long one. All routes are on paved roads in Augusta & Rockingham Counties, from Hermitage to Bridgewater and back.

Who: Coordinator being sought, For now, contact David Fordham, KD9LA via email at kd9la@arr.net

Where: Race begins at Stable Craft Brewery in Hermitage, but hams can receive assignments over the air, so traveling to Hermitage is not required.

When: September 7, starting at 8 a.m. Ham duty hours are very flexible. Ride is usually over by mid-afternoon for all but the sweep operations.

Why: Hams serve as SAG Vehicles, provide communications for aid stations and most importantly, to keep all officials informed of the status of the bikers and aid stations. Cell phone coverage is good for most of the route, the event organizers prefer the “broadcast” nature of ham radio so that all officials have full situational awareness.

How: Hams need an outside rooftop antenna with a 25-watt (minimum) mobile radio programmed with the following frequencies: 145.130– Tone of 131.8, main repeater. 146.850– Tone of 131.8, secondary repeater, 145.29– digital repeater for semi-confidential transmissions. A Yaesu Fusion-capable radio is beneficial but definitely not required.

Notes: Hams generally find this to be a fun, low-stress event, but it has had accidents in past years requiring summoning of emergency services, ambulance talk-in, and other important duties.



UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

October 4-6 (Friday to Sunday) – Grindstone 100 Footrace

Who: Coordinator is Gordon Batey, WA4FJC, email gpbatey@compuserve.com

What: A 100-mile footrace on wilderness trails in the George Washington National Forest of western Augusta and southwestern Rockingham Counties.

Where: Race begins and ends at the Boy Scout Camp in Swoope, southwest of Churchville. The course goes up to the peaks of Elliott's Knob, down to Dowell's Draft at Dry Branch Gap, up to Lookout Mountain, down to North River Gap, up to Little Bald Knob, up to Reddish Knob, down to Briery Branch Gap, then reverses and retraces the route back to Swoope.

When: Race starts October 4 Friday night at 6 p.m and all runners must return or be pulled from the course by 8 a.m. Sunday morning October 6. Ham duty hours are flexible, but most hams usually spend 3 to 6 hours on station, with a few intrepid individuals volunteering for up to 18 hours or more.

Why: Hams are positioned at aid stations and provide communications about the welfare and status of runners as they traverse this grueling and dangerous course, especially through hours of darkness. Cell phone coverage is non-existent almost everywhere on the course, so hams provide the only emergency communications to summon rescue. Every year sees numerous accidents, falls, and injuries, and dozens of participants drop out along the course.

How: Hams require a completely self-contained station with a 50-watt portable radio, programmed with local repeater and simplex frequencies, and a good gain antenna, preferably with a mast or other mount high above ground level. Dual-band radios are helpful. Portable cross-band repeater capability coupled with hand-held units are also useful.

Notes: This is the most challenging, exciting and personally-rewarding public service opportunity of the year. It provides invaluable experience and lessons about survival and wilderness operation, self-contained radio stations, and radio propagation in mountainous areas. The 2-1/2 day nature of the event provides good opportunities for new hams to shadow and relieve Net Control, gaining exposure to all dimensions of a well organized large-scale public service event.



UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

October 5-6 (Saturday & Sunday) – Washington Trail Riders Bike Ride

Who: Coordinator to be designated by MARA.

What: A Motorcycle Ride, across two days, with a recommended route (which is sometimes ignored or modified by individual riders pursuing their own preferences). The recommended route includes paved roads, state highways, gravel and unimproved forest roads, and at least one all-terrain vehicle trail, all located in Augusta, Rockingham, and Pendleton (WV) Counties.

Where: Race begins and ends at Natural Chimneys Regional Park in Mt. Solon both days.

When: Saturday and Sunday, October 5 and 6. Ride start and end times are recommendations and are not adhered to by many riders. Ham duty hours are flexible.



Why: Hams man the lunch and repair stations, and also operate mobile along the route, relaying locations and information relating to emergencies, accidents, and breakdowns. Cell phone coverage is spotty and unreliable in many areas of the route.

How: Hams need a mobile outside antenna and a 25-watt (minimum) mobile radio programmed with local repeater frequencies, to be determined by the communications coordinator.

Notes: Most communication involves breakdowns or locating an overdue rider. Typically this event is low-stress, low-key, giving hams an excuse for a relaxing drive along low-traffic back-roads to enjoy the fall scenery.



October 6 (Sunday morning) – Camp Still Meadows Horse Ride Charity Event

What: A fund-raiser for a camp for disabled children, involving dozens of horseback riders along gravel and unimproved roads in the mountains west of Timberville.

Who: Ray Ritchie K4NRA, is the coordinator, his email is k4nrahah@gmail.com

Where: Ride begins and ends at a farm west of Timberville.

When: Sunday October 6, starting around 8 am, ending by noon.

Why: Hams provide communication for accidents, and riders and horses in distress along the route. Cell phone coverage is spotty and less than reliable at some places along the route.



How: Hams operate either mobile or handheld, using a frequency designated by the coordinator.

Notes: A very low-stress event, seldom experiencing difficulties or emergencies, but hams are providing a safety net in case of a spooked horse, a slip-and-fall accident, or a rider who overestimated their (or their horse's) abilities.

UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

October 19-20 (Saturday & Sunday) – Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival

What: A huge event involving around 800 bicycle riders across eleven different courses, generally in Augusta County, with some excursions into southern Rockingham County.

Who: **Lenny Vincent, N4XLP**, is the coordinator, his email is n4lxp001@gmail.com

Where: There are 11 different routes with various start points. For the most part, the routes are on back-country paved or gravel county roads in Augusta and Rockbridge Counties, with a couple of short jaunts on or across a busy state highway. On Saturday some routes start at St. Pauls Methodist Church in Staunton, Lunch is at Towers Ruritan Hall in Sangersville near Natural Chimneys Park, where the other routes begin and end. On Sunday, lunch and race headquarters is at the Middlebrook Ruritan Building, where most if not all of the routes begin and end.

When: Saturday October 19 and Sunday October 20, starting around 7:00 am both days, usually over by 5 pm. Ham duty hours and assignments are flexible.

Why: Hams provide SAG vehicle support, relay the status of rest stops to race headquarters, and provide communications for accidents and distressed riders and bicycles along the routes. Cell phone coverage is spotty and less than reliable at some places along the route.

How: This large event has many different operating opportunities, depending on your preferences and equipment. Most hams operate from their vehicle, either mobile or parked, using various local repeater frequencies as designated by the coordinator. A 45-watt (minimum) radio is needed, with an outside antenna. A few hams like to operate on foot, manning the aid stations, using a hand-held unit by operating through a cross-band repeater-located in their car.

Notes: This event has something for every ham. You can operate for an hour, two hours, or all day both days if you wish. There are positions and assignments where you can remain parked stationary for your entire shift, either at an aid station or at an intersection along the route. There are other assignments involving riding the route in your vehicle and enjoying the scenery. There are other positions where you provide SAG support with a pickup truck, shuttling riders and their bikes to the race headquarters. Given the two-day nature of the event, there is ample opportunity for new hams to provide relief for Net Control, gaining valuable experience and exposure to all dimensions of a well-organized public service event. Usually, Sunday morning sees the most urgent need for operators.



ROCKINGHAM A.R.E.S. NET NEWS



The Rockingham County ARES Net meets every Monday night at 8:00 p.m. local time, which is a great way of testing your equipment you might need during an emergency.

The net frequencies have recently changed.

On the first Monday of every month, the net will meet on 146.550 simplex. This provides a great way to test signal coverage from your home or other location you might be operating from during an emergency.

In months which have five Mondays, the net will meet on the 147.225 repeater on the fifth Monday. The 147.225 machine is the backup ARES repeater for Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. This repeater uses a PL tone of 131.8 Hz, and uses a positive (+) offset, so you program your radio to transmit on 147.825 and receive on 147.225.

Except for the first and fifth Monday nights each month, the net will otherwise always meet on the 145.130 K4MRA Massanutten Peak repeater. This machine also uses a PL tone of 131.8 Hz, but uses a negative offset, so your radio should transmit on 144.530 while receiving on 145.130.

To repeat (no pun intended):

The Rockingham County ARES Net Meets Every Monday Night at 8:00 PM local time.

On the first Monday night, use 146.55 simplex.

On the second, third and fourth Monday night, use 145.130 repeater, (-) offset, Tone of 131.8 Hz.

On the fifth Monday night, if any, use 147.225 repeater, (+) offset, Tone of 131.8 Hz.

VIRGINIA STATE-WIDE EMERGENCY HF NET FREQUENCIES

Virginia Department of Emergency Management has designated the following as the preferred frequencies for a state-wide emergency amateur radio net. You might want to keep a note of these frequencies near your HF operating position.

3.947 MHz — Primary Voice Frequency — ODEN A

3.943 MHz — Primary Voice Frequency — ODEN B

7.240 MHz — Secondary Voice Frequency — ODEN A

7.248 MHz — Secondary Voice Frequency — ODEN B

BERGTON-CRIDERS REPEATER

Thanks to the hard work of Larry Harrison, K3JRR, and Bruce Dove, KN4VFO, the hams in the Bergton and Criders area, in the corner of far northwestern Rockingham County, now have access to the 145.130 K4MRA Massanutten Peak Repeater.

The 145.130 repeater is the primary repeater for the Rockingham County ARES organization, and would be monitored and utilized in case of emergency activation of ARES.

Due to signal blockage by terrain such as Burns Knob, Yankey Knob, Great North Mountain, Little North Mountain, and other obstacles, hams in the Bergton and Criders area have suffered from spotty or non-existent reception into the 145.130 repeater. They also have been unable to reach most of the other local repeaters.

This was most unfortunate because the Bergton and Criders area is subject to catastrophic flooding by Germany River and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River due to the huge amount of land comprising their drainage watersheds. Several times in the last three decades the area has been cut-off from communications and transportation as the flooding washed out powerlines, phone lines, roads and bridges into and out of the area.

Larry and Bruce have worked together to install a cross-band repeater on a high hill (or small mountain) near Criders, which will allow them to get into the 145.130 repeater with a good reliable signal.



The repeater consists of a commercial-quality radio with a special heat sink (photo at left) installed by Larry, making it capable of 100% duty cycle required by repeater operation.

The radio is powered by a set of batteries which are recharged by solar panels. The radio operates into a gain antenna on a short mast, in a clearing in the forest.

This repeater should also permit solid signals into and out of the old Bergton School, which is often a stop on the October Washington-Area Trail Riders public service event. Historically, the rest and lunch station at that location has been without communication: the surrounding mountains prevented signals to and from all of the local area repeaters.

If you plan to be in the Criders or Bergton vicinity, contact Larry Harrison by phone at 540-852-3431 or 540-282-2212 for the input frequency and PL Access Tone frequency on the repeater input.



HELPFUL ON-LINE REFERENCES

WSJT Weak Signal Mode Information Website

David Tanks, AD4TJ, offers information on a website giving information about WSJT and related weak-signal modes, including the software download link. Point your URL to:
<https://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/>

Power Line Noise Website

Ray Colvin KE4HVR, offers a youtube video relating to Powerline noise. Check out:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fR6-liMiqVM>

Solar Conditions

Fred Evans N4KWM, offers a website for monitoring solar conditions, including solar flares, potential for aurora, and other phenomena. See: <http://spaceweather.com>

Explanation of A and K Solar Index Numbers – What They Mean

A good explanation of the A and K solar index numbers and how they affect HF radio propagation can be found in the QST article: <https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Technology/tis/info/pdf/0209038.pdf>

Using Two Baofeng UV-5R HT's to create a Temporary Repeater System

Two inexpensive Baofeng HT's can be connected together using a simple audio cable to quickly create a very low power, very inexpensive, temporary repeater. Because of the low power involved, it does not have to be cross-band, and does not require duplexers. Baofeng radios even include capability for the "Roger" beep tone at the end of each transmission, but you must remember to identify the repeater manually. The repeater setup does not even require programming software: the radios can be programmed in a couple of minutes from the keypad. A video stepping through the programming instructions can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KrH86Dzhnc

Cross-Band Repeat on the Yaesu FTM-400DRX

If you have a new Yaesu FTM-400XDR radio, here is a quick two-minute video on how to activate the cross-band repeater function. These instructions are not in the manual, even as of 2019.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNRyVURMcvo>

PVARC MEETING MINUTES

PVARC Secretary's Report – May 2, 2019 Meeting

Page Valley Amateur Radio Club May 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes

The May meeting was an informal get together at Tactical Walls.

No formal business meeting took place

(Thanks to Tim KM4TGC and Carrie KM4wdx for the donation of the use of the facility!)

Seven members were in attendance

Will N4WIL set up the club radio and laptop with two versions of new digital modes. We made some live contacts and discussed applicability to Field Day operations. Very interesting and educational!

Respectfully submitted by

Gary Fischer K6OZ,
PVARC Secretary

PVARC Secretary's Report – June 13, 2019 Meeting

The meeting minutes of the PVARC June 13 meeting were printed on page 10 of the July issue of the Monitor.

PVARC Secretary's Report – July 11, 2019 Meeting

Page Valley Amateur Radio Club July 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes

The July meeting was an informal get together at Tactical Walls.

No formal business meeting took place

(Thanks to Tim KM4TGC and Carrie KM4wdx for the donation of the use of the facility!)

Six members were in attendance

The next meeting will be on August 8 unless some previous discussions about a potluck or similar meeting develop further, and make a change of date. Stay tuned.

Respectfully submitted by

Gary Fischer K6OZ,
PVARC Secretary

MARA MEETING MINUTES

MARA Secretary's Report – July Meeting

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association did not hold a July meeting, since the normal meeting night fell on July 4, the Independence Day Holiday.

MARA TREASURER'S REPORT

MARA Treasurer's Report – June 21, 2019 to July 20, 2019

Opening Balance	<u>\$ 2,908.90</u>
Income:	
Dues	\$ 30.00
Total Income:	<u>\$ 30.00</u>
Expenses: Electric	\$ 23.22
Total Expenses:	<u>\$ 23.22</u>
Balance April 20, 2019	<u>\$ 2,915.68</u>

Submitted by Foster Farone WF4O
MARA Treasurer

VARA MEETING MINUTES

VARA Secretary's Report – July 2, 2019 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association, Inc's July meeting was brought to order at 7:05 pm by president David Fordham KD9LA. 32 hams and visitors were in attendance. The usual introductions were made. Charlie Garner WA4ITY was voted in as a new member. The applications of Pat Smiley KD4WWF and Dave Beebe KN4UEK were read for the first time, and will be voted on at the next meeting. The 50/50 drawing for \$20 was won by Debbie Fordham KB4WPE.

The secretary's report was accepted as printed in the newsletter.

John Chevalaz KB2LOZ gave the treasurer's report; accepted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

ARES: David Tanks AD4TJ asked for a volunteer for Net Control for the next net to be held on the 146.850 repeater on July 11th; Greg Czerniak W4GRC said he would do it. David told the club that there is a hospital coalition that is purchasing ham radio equipment and computers for the hospitals in the valley(Augusta Health, Western State, etc.), and are having it professionally installed. The Waynesboro ECC center purchased equipment recommended by me. There is no equipment at the Augusta County ECC center(there is an antenna there), nor at the Staunton ECC center(there is an antenna installed at the Staunton/Augusta Rescue Squad building, which is not the ECC center, according to Greg; he will give me a contact to talk to about possibly moving that to the ECC center down town). He asked for hams to be willing to be on a list for being available to be stationed at each location, looking for 3 hams to start. He has not heard anymore about the ARES requirements from the ARRL.

Field Day: Fred Castello KF4FC reported that the committee was pleased with the outcome. A round of applause was given in appreciation of the hard work of the committee.

Skywarn classes: David KD9LA was informed that the Skywarn organization no longer offers Saturday classes; only Monday through Thursday night classes. So probably November or so they will offer a class in our area(avoiding our busy Public Service months of September and October).

Public Service: The repeater that we had gotten permission to borrow from the MARA club (147.315 repeater) is sitting on David KD9LA's work bench. He contacted the Forest Service about getting permission to open the gates to go up to Little Bald Knob; they asked if he had talked to the National Radio Astronomy Observatory about permission to use it from that location. He talked to a person there, and they said that the Sugar Grove listening post is still 100% active. If we used low power(10 watts or less) and a directional antenna, then we would not bother them much. But they can detect the 13 th harmonic of our 2 meter transmitters with their

VARA Secretary's Report – July 2, 2019 Meeting (*continued*)

sensitive equipment! She mentioned that they do have problems with mountain-topping amateur radio operations. If they are given advance notice they would work around our planned operating times. If she is given all the specs(antenna gain and directivity if any, feedline loss, transmitter power, latitude/longitude, etc, she could work up the figures and get back to him. Once he has them, then he can talk to the Forest Service again, and hopefully get permission to test the repeater at the desired location on Little Bald Knob.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The annual VARA club picnic is August 24 th at Gypsy Hill Park, Staunton.

The Elkton Field Day parade is July 5 or 6 and is usually handled by the Luray club.

The Bridgewater Lawn Party is July 19 and 20 th . Ellsworth Neff K4LXG is handling the ham side of the event.

Jim Ballew KI4ZM passed away recently.

Frank Prochaska KN4ILH has had a 2nd or 3rd operation on his eye from where his daughter accidentally poked him.

Also Ed Varner N4EDI had to have a 2 nd surgery on his eye for a detached retina.

John Lasher N3GLZ is in charge of the Shenandoah 100 bike race and is looking for more volunteers. He will send out an email soon with more info.

Ray LaFalce K2ULW reported that the 145.290 repeater is working well with the new antenna.

OLD BUSINESS — None

NEW BUSINESS

Al Bonck N3JB was recognized with a plaque for 71 years of ham radio operating; it is only the 2nd time in the valley that it has been given out; Dick Weaver W3HXH(ex-W4JZC) had 70 years before he passed away. Al gave a short speech on his ham life.

Greg made a motion that we make Al Bonck a Lifetime member; the membership voted to recommend that to the Board. The Board will take it up at their next meeting.

PROGRAM:

David KD9LA gave a program on the history of Morse Code.

With no other business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
David AD4TJ,
VARA, Inc Secretary



MYSTERY HAMS: SILENT KEYS



July Mystery Ham:

**Marshall
Cooper, Jr.,
N4ZKH, SK**

Local old-timers will remember Marshall Cooper, Jr., of Broadway and Bayse. Born in 1947 in West Virginia, he was named for his father, Marshall Cooper Sr., (KC4YAR). Marshall Junior passed away May 23, 2016 in Winchester at age 68. Owner of a construction company, he was a mason and member of the Masonic Lodge in Mt. Jackson, a member of the Eagles Aerie in New Market, and a member of the Gold Wing Chapter R motorcycle club in Harrisonburg. Along with N4YET, N4DAI, and KS4SP (now KN4U), he was a mover and shaker with the incorporation of the Massanutton Amateur Radio Association in 1992. He was also instrumental in setting up what today is the MARA repeater site on Great North Mountain near Bayse.



August Mystery Ham:

**Host of the
Annual
Big Mountain
Repeater
Picnic**

What better month to recognize this colorful Silent Key than August — a helpful ham known far and wide for hosting the annual fund-raising picnic on the knob bearing his name, raising funds for the Big Mountain Repeater (146.625). Old-timers recall popular features of the event such as the “bean pot” with its canoe paddle stirrer, the “two-seater” waterless comfort station, the flock of “albino grouse”, his faithful companion Sam, and other fond memories. Active in the Bergton volunteer fire department and rescue squad, he monitored the Big Mountain repeater almost continually 24/7 to provide assistance. This ham could always be counted on to “help” new hams learn the details of correct repeater operating procedures. Many experienced hams also received instruction from his “educational” presentations on the air. His assistance with the repeater was so valuable, his callsign lives on, adopted as a vanity call (by Robert Minetta, formerly of Luray who retired to Florida) as a tribute to this famously outspoken but kind and helpful benefactor from Bergton. Do you remember him?



SOMETHING MISSING?

Thanks to everyone who sent material for this month's Monitor. If you sent something that did not appear, please contact David Fordham KD9LA at kd9la@arrl.net.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST 2019

August 1: MARA Monthly Meeting
August 3: Mountain Mama Bike Challenge Public Service Event
August 3: Salem (Roanoke) Hamfest
August 3-4: 10-10 Summer 10-meter contest SSB weekend
August 4: Berryville Hamfest
August 4: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
August 4: North American QSO Party CW weekend
August 5: Rockingham County ARES Net (146.55 simplex)
August 6: VARA Monthly Meeting
August 8: PVARC Monthly Meeting
August 8: Augusta County ARES Net (146.850 or as announced)
August 11: Page Valley ARES Net (146.625)
August 12: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130)
August 17-18: North American QSO Party SSB weekend
August 18: ARRL Rookie Roundup RTTY contest
August 18: Page Valley ARES Net (146.625)
August 19: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130)
August 24-25: Hawaii, Kansas, Ohio QSO Parties
August 25: Page Valley ARES Net (146.625)
August 26: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130)
August 30: Shelby (NC) Hamfest

SEPTEMBER 2019

September 1: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
September 2: Shenandoah 100 Bike Race Public Service Event
September 2: Rockingham County ARES Net (146.55 simplex)
September 3: VARA Monthly Meeting
September 5: MARA Monthly Meeting
September 7: Valley Veterans Ride for Heroes Public Service Event
September 7: Virginia Beach Hamfest
September 8: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
September 9: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130 repeater)
September 12: Augusta County ARES Net (146.850 repeater)
September 14-16: ARRL September VHF Contest
September 14-15: Worked All Europe DX Contest SSB
September 15: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
September 16: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130 repeater)
September 21-22: All Africa International DX Contest
September 22: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
September 23: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130 repeater)
September 28-29: CQWW DX RTTY Contest
September 29: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
September 30: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater – fifth Monday)

MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

President: Bryan Daniels, K4RMY
Vice President: Bob Steere, N1QEQQ
Secretary: Herb Slade, AA2BF
Treasurer: Foster Farone, WF4O
Board (exp 2019): Rick Adams, KJ4IND
Board (exp 2020): Andrew Pearson, N4RCE

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

MARA
PO Box 1882
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

PAGE VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

President: Will Baukhages, N4WIL
Vice President: Gene Frazier, KJ4HFO
Secretary: Gary Fischer, K6OZ
Treasurer: Carrie Matter, KM4WDX
Board Member (exp 2019): B.H. Snellings, KM4CKD
Board Member (exp 2020): Tim Matter, KM4TGC

<http://www.k4pmh.org>

PVARC meets the second Thursday of each month at Tactical Walls, 611 Williams Ave, Shenandoah, Virginia
The meeting begins at 7:00 pm

Visitors are always welcome.

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

PVARC
PO Box 245
Luray VA 22835-0245

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

President: David Fordham, KD9LA
Vice President: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW
Secretary: David Tanks, AD4TJ
Treasurer: John Chevalaz, KB2LOZ
Board Member (exp 2019): Ray LaFalce, L2ULW
Board Member (exp. 2020): Wayne Bowyer, N4EYZ

<http://w4xd.com>

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Hometown Grill and Buffet off Richmond Road in Staunton, Virginia

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:

VARA
PO Box 2103
Staunton, VA 24402

PAGE VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

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

Distribution is in Adobe PDF format via email attachment to all club members in good standing.

Contact the president of your respective club for information on paper copies.

Back issues are freely available on the MARA website starting a few months after publication.

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