

December 2019

THE MONITOR

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

CHRISTMAS BANQUETS

Tuesday December 3 — VARA: Golden Corral in Waynesboro at 5:00 p.m. (!)

The Valley Amateur Radio Association, Inc., will hold its Annual Christmas Banquet on

Tuesday, December 3 at the Golden Corral in Waynesboro, starting at 5:00 p.m.



NOTE THE TIME AND PLACE CHANGE!

If you want to participate in the Yankee Gift Exchange, bring a wrapped present (gag or regular) suggested cost between \$5 and \$10. Participation is entirely optional.



Thursday December 5 — MARA: Wood Grill

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., will hold its Annual Christmas Banquet on **Thursday, December 5** 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. We have reserved both rooms. Families and visitors are welcome and cordially invited.



PAGE VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

PVARC Meeting – Thursday, December 12: Tactical Walls

The Page Valley Amateur Radio Club will hold its December club meeting on December 12 starting at 7:00 p.m. at the TacticalWalls location.

PVARC wishes to announce to all readers of the Monitor that the club meeting time, date, and place continues to be 7:00 p.m. on the second (2nd) Thursday of each month, at TacticalWalls at 611 Williams Avenue in Shenandoah, Virginia.



PVARC President's Message



The Page Valley Amateur Radio Club held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, November 14th. We conducted the usual business of running a club including officers reports, etc. We attempted to hash out some old business including discussions about club activities both past and future, ways to boost meeting attendance and increase membership, as well as progress on the club's soon-to-be new website k4pmh.org.

Other club business included discussing the current terms for our officers and board and our upcoming elections at our January 9, 2020 meeting. We will be looking for nominations for all positions save for one boardmember-at-large at the December 12 meeting.

I would like to invite all area amateur radio operators or anyone else interested in ham radio to join us at one of our meetings. We are a small group that ranges in age, experience and interests within the hobby and would love to have anyone interested to join us.

We meet every second Thursday of the month at 7PM at TacticalWalls in Shenandoah Va.

Hope to see you there!

Will Raukhages, N4WIL
PVARC President

HAM RADIO LICENSE EXAMS

Next Exam Session: December 7, 2019: Woodman Life Building in Dayton VA

The next VE session will be held on Saturday morning, December 7, starting at 9:00 a.m., at the Woodman Life building in Dayton, Virginia, at 3045 John Wayland Highway (Virginia Route 42), about a mile south of the Harrisonburg Walmart. Candidates should bring a picture ID and one additional form of identification showing their current address.



VE Exam Session Schedule for 2020

2020 Volunteer Exam sessions are scheduled for March 7, June 6, September 5, and December 5, 2020.

Become an Accredited Volunteer Examiner

If you are interested in becoming an accredited ARRL Volunteer Examiner, contact Gayle Shull at 540-828-2132 or email gshu74@gmail.com



NOVEMBER MONITOR CORRECTIONS

Ken Anderson W4JQT, was inadvertently omitted from the list of hams who assisted with the Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival on page 11 of the November issue of the Monitor.

The original minutes from the VARA October meeting indicated that Dave Thomas W3D0 was elected as a Board Member at large, replacing Wayne Bowyer, N4EYZ. Upon review of the prior year's minutes, it was discovered that Wayne Bowyer was elected to a two-year term as Board Member in October 2018, taking office in January 2019. Ray LaFalce had elected as Board Member at the October 2018 meeting to replace Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, who resigned his position as Board Member (with one year remaining in his two-year term) to run for Vice-President. Thus, Ray LaFalce was the Board Member rotating off the Board, not Wayne Bowyer. Wayne's 2-year term will expire in December of 2020, and Dave Thomas' 2-year term will expire in December of 2021. VARA thanks Ray LaFalce for his service on the Board, and for serving the last year of Jeff's term.

WA3YTE STATION FOR SALE

MANY PRICES REDUCED! Back in the 1970's, my Uncle Charles (Chuck) Lasher (WA3YTE) was my originally "Elmer" into the amateur radio hobby. His original station was a matching transmitter and receiver made by Hammerlund. Although I was not permitted to mess with the transmitter, I remember him setting up the receiver for me to turn the dial, tuning in amateur conversations on 40 meters. I also would listen to the stations transmitting Morse code, and he made quite an effort to try to teach me CW. It was my time spent in his shack where I was bitten by the ham radio bug that still affects me to this day. Since that time, he sold the Hammerlund equipment and he's made several upgrades purchasing up-to-date equipment. When he downsized several years ago, he took down his military style crank-up tower and his five-element cubicle quad HF antenna. He offered the tower to me and it's what I'm currently using. He sold the cubicle quad at that time to another ham in northeastern PA who I believe is currently using it.

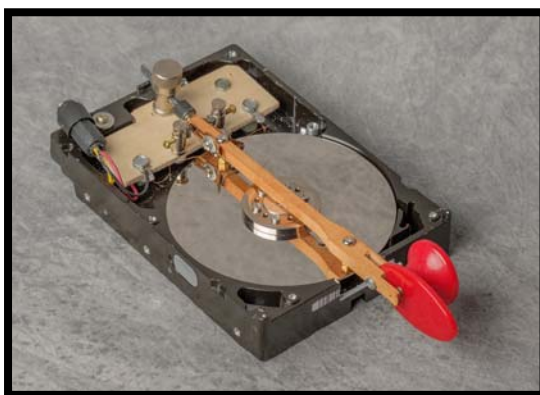
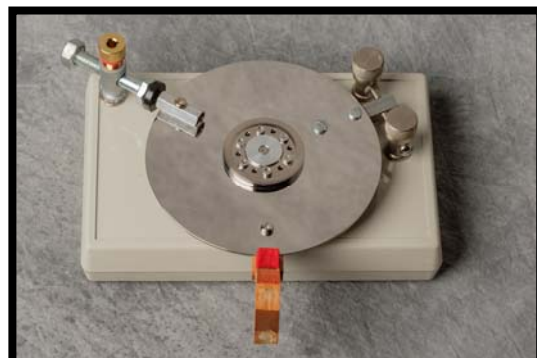
A couple of months ago, Chuck fell at his home and broke his wrist and several ribs. His doctors made it clear that his health had deteriorated enough that he should no longer live alone. He is now living in an assisted living facility and has adjusted nicely to his new living arrangements. His home is now for sale and I have agreed to help him sell off his equipment. The following is a list of his equipment along with negotiable asking prices. The equipment is available for viewing at my home just north of Waynesboro. If interested, please contact me on my cell phone at 540-451-0184.

John Lasher N3GLZ

- Kenwood TS-940S Top-of-the-line (for its day) HF transceiver: Now asking \$725
- Kenwood MC-60 Desk Microphone: Now \$50.00
- Yaesu FT-897D HF/VHF/UHF/6m transceiver, with hand microphone and headphone adapter: Now \$775
- Kenwood TS-2000 HF Rig (still a current model) with Tigertronics Matching Signalink and Cable: Now \$850 for the package.
- Kenwood SP-41 External Station Speaker: \$25
- Kenwood TH-251A 2-meter handheld transceiver with drop-in rapid charger, but needs battery: \$25
- Uniden BC-145XL Analog Scanner—16 channels: \$25
- Uniden BC-140 10-channel Analog Scanner: \$25
- Midland CB Radio: \$20 OBO
- Handheld Bearcat Scanner, 200 Channel analog — needs battery: \$25
- Astron RS-20M 20-amp 12VDC power Supply: \$120
- Vibroplex Bug — Chrome, Morse key: \$125
- Straight Key: \$30
- Mini-keyer with plug and cord: \$30 OBO
- Telex headphone-mic headset with cords: \$25 OBO
- Italy RM LA-250 VHF Linear Amplifier for 2-meters, up to 50 watts input, 200 watts output, new: \$399
- Nissei Power/SWR meter (VHF/UHF): \$30
- Antenna Switch, 3 position: \$40
- Cushcraft ARX-2 VHF 2-meter Ringo Ranger: \$40
- Homemade J-pole dual-band antenna: \$25 OBO
- Hexacon Soldering Iron station with variable heat: \$35
- LED Power Supply, Various antenna mast mounting hardware, and various coax jumpers: Reasonable offers welcome.

K4LXY: DISK DRIVES INTO KEYS

Howard Zehr, K4LXY, of Timberville, and one of our local Professional Tinkerkerer-Extraordinaires, has shared photos of his recycling activities. Howard has designed and created several operational Morse keys made from old computer hard drives. As you can see from the example at the lower right, even the parts from inside the disk drive can be salvaged and put to good use. While they may not be as glossy as a new chrome-plated Bencher iambic set, they certainly are functional and innovative. Hats off to homebrewers, especially ones that recycle, reuse and redeploy.



WRAV ANNUAL MEETING

Waynesboro Repeater Association of Virginia Meeting: Dec 7 at 9:30 a.m.

The Annual meeting of the Waynesboro Repeater Association will be held In the Kitchen Basement Meeting Room of the Augusta County Public Library 1759 Jefferson Highway, Fishersville, VA at 9:30 AM on SATURDAY December 7, 2019. All local amateurs are cordially invited to attend. Talk-in on 147.075 (+600) (tone 131.8)

Directions: Exit I-64 at Fishersville and go South on Tinkling Springs road to US 250. Turn West (left) and then Left at the next light. Enter the library at the doors on the US 250 side. Turn left inside and walk all the way to the far end and down the stairs, turn right and the meeting will be in the first room on the left. You may have to park in the rear of the building. See you there.

73 Gordon WA4FJC



K9JEP: SOTA MOUNTAIN GOAT AWARD

On November 17, Eric Pults K9JEP and Bradley Boyd, W4BVB activated two summits, just east of Monterey in Highland County Virginia, in the Summits on the Air (SOTA) program.

This activation is noteworthy, because this activation brought Eric K9JEP up past the 1,000 point threshold to qualify for his Mountain Goat Award. This is no small feat.

For those not familiar with the SOTA program, it involves hiking to high points of the local topography and making radio contacts. Higher spots earn more points and the most one can earn from an activation is 12. The highest Summits are worth 10 points and there is a 2 point bonus for activation in the colder months. Lower summits are of correspondingly lower point values. This should give you an idea of the dedication and perseverance required to rack up 1,000 points to earn the Mountain Goat Award.

Other Local hams active in SOTA include Lenny Vincent N4LXP, Bradley Boyd W4BVB, Fred Castello KF4FC, John Chevalaz KB2LOZ, Wayne Bowyer N4EYZ, Tom Benson WA4ESI, Jason Armentrout N4DSL, Jeff Rinehart W4PJW, Rick Adams KJ4IND, along with lots of others. But Eric is the first we know of to gain the Mountain Goat award level.

Eric would like to give a HUGE thank you to everyone who provided contacts, and those that wish they could have.

Keep in mind, you don't have to be a "mountain goat" to participate in the Summits On The Air program. You don't even have to leave your home. There is a separate category for "chasers" that sit in the climate controlled comfort of their shack and provide those all important contacts. See the link below for information, and I encourage everyone to peruse the rest of the site then sign up to join the fun!

73 Bradley W4BVB

<http://www.sota.org.uk>



LOCAL CONTEST RESULTS

2019 ARRL International DX SSB Contest: W4ZAO is #1 for 8 Years in a Row

John Keller, W4ZAO, for the 8th year in a row, has come out on top in Virginia in the Single Operator, Low Power, Assisted, All Band category! Also, he was 1st in the Roanoke Division, 5th USA, 6th US/VE, and 9th World! Fantastic! He made 467 contacts with 223 multipliers, for a score of 311,085 points.

David Fordham, KD9LA, also operated in the Single Operator, Low Power, Non-Assisted, All Band category, making 225 contacts with 125 multipliers, for a score of 82,125 points. He came in 2nd VA, 6th in the Roanoke Division, 20th USA, 21st US/VE, and 36th in the world.

Congratulations to both for these hams for extremely good efforts!

— David Tanks, AD4TJ



MARA-VARA FIELD DAY RESULTS

Second in VA, 15th Nationwide, Class 3A

It is now official.

The MARA-VARA Field Day operation for June 2019, placed second in Virginia, just behind the Lynchburg Amateur Radio Club. The 3A-category operation made 1,855 2-way contacts, for a score (including bonus points) of 8,004 points, comparing favorably with Lynchburg's 9364 points. The operation placed 3rd in the Roanoke division, and 15th in the United States.



And once again, a big “thank you” to the MARA-VARA Field Day Committee and all the volunteers which made this good showing possible.

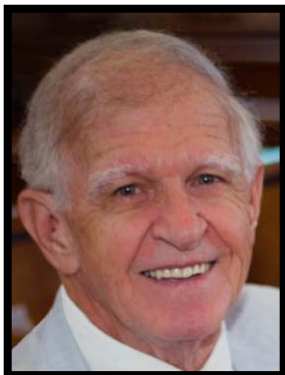
SMILE.AMAZON.COM CONTRIBUTIONS

Attention MARA, VARA, and PVARC members. When ordering items from Amazon.com, do NOT go to the Amazon.com URL... rather, go to **Smile.Azazon.Com** to browse and place your order. **Smile.Amazon.Com** is exactly like Amazon.com, you even use your normal Amazon.Com account ID and password. The first time you log on to **Smile.Amazon.Com**, you will be asked what non-profit organization you would like to support. For VARA, search for “Valley Amateur Radio Association”, and select the one in Staunton, Virginia. For MARA, search for “Massanutten Amateur Radio Association”, and for PVARC, search for “Page Valley Amateur Radio Club”. Click on the “SELECT” button beside the club listing. You are all set. Any time you want to order from Amazon, go to **Smiles.Amazon.Com**, and the club will receive 1% of your purchase price. It does NOT add to the price you pay, Amazon covers the 1% out of their profit, and at the end of each month writes a check to the club you selected. Help out your club treasury by setting this up, then making all your Amazon purchases at **Smile.Amazon.com**

FEATURED HAM: K4LXG

Editor's note: Beginning with this issue, the Monitor will feature a monthly local ham, allowing the newer radio amateurs to get to know some of the interesting individuals whose names are generally revered for their accumulated knowledge, expertise or experiences. We start with the one of the grand old gentlemen of local ham radio, K4LXG.

Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG, Rockingham County, South of Mount Crawford



It was a dark and stormy night, way back in March, 1939, when Charles Ellsworth Neff was born at his grandmother's house in Nokesville, Virginia, just a few miles south of Warrenton.

The oldest of three children of Wilmer and Pauline Neff, he moved in 1941 with the family to Harwood Park, Maryland where his dad worked for Bendix radio as a radar technician during World War II.

It is notable that Ellsworth's dad is the one who installed the radios in Amelia Earhart's aircraft before she left on her fateful journey, almost two years before Ellsworth was born.

One of Ellsworth's most vivid memories is of his neighbor, James Irwin, who was a ham radio operator. Of course, James could not operate since there was a war going on, and the government had silenced all amateur operations. James was in the military and stationed overseas most of the time. But Ellsworth remembers being awed by the room full of ham equipment in James' house.

James' wife was a concert pianist, and Ellsworth picked up his love of music from sitting in his front yard listening to her play. One day as Ellsworth watched, a black automobile pulled up to her house, and two sharply-dressed military men got out of the car and went in the house. Ellsworth remembers hearing his neighbor screaming and sobbing in grief at the news of her husband's death as a casualty of the war.

A year or two later, Ellsworth was sitting in front of his own family's radio set when news of President Franklin Roosevelt's death was announced. Wilmer put a microphone on the family's radio set, and Ellsworth remembers playing "radio announcer", using the radio's speaker as a public-address-type system.

After the war, Bendix cut back on their radar workforce. Wilmer moved his family to Bridgewater, Virginia, where Ellsworth's Uncle Ray was going to Bridgewater College. The family lived over a restaurant for a year, then moved to a pre-Civil War house on the North River near the dam on West Bank Street.

During the 1949 flood, the family was awakened by the sound of water rising in the house and the compressing air that caused a hissing and bubbling around the windows and doors. When the

water got two feet deep on the first floor, his father decided to abandon the house to get in a huge pecan tree in the backyard. "We were located at the deepest and swiftest water flow as the water took a "shortcut" from Dry River to North River through our property. A building floating by (we were told later from Stokesville) hit our house and shifted our house on its foundation. Our house had 8 fireplaces feeding 2 huge chimneys which held the house in place."

Ellsworth and his two brothers and little sister (who was only 3 years old) spent 10 hours in that tree. Rescuers attempted a rescue but the water was so swift it was impossible.

Afterward, there was a foot or so of mud in the house and the family couldn't live there for physical and health reasons. They spent the next six weeks living in the homes of friends who kindly offered shelter and food until the house was clean and dried out. They had to take the typhoid fever shots for the next three weeks.

The flood destroyed all the family's archives and keepsakes, including the old family photographs.

(This would not be the only time that a flood washed away part of Ellsworth's life: another flood in 1977 and a third in 1985 finally convinced him to move to higher ground.)

In 1950, Ellsworth watched with fascination as WSVA erected their television towers west of Harrisonburg. He met Mac Foley, who was chief engineer at the time. Mac showed the young boy the control room, with all its various lights, meters, switches, and knobs. Mesmerized by the sight, Ellsworth decided then and there he wanted to go into broadcasting. When he asked Mac for a job as an announcer, Mac laughed at the 11 year old kid and probably said something to the effect of, "stay in school and we'll see".

Over the next few years, Ellsworth taught himself radio in his spare time. In 1954, he passed his amateur radio test and obtained his first ham license. He continued to pester Mac Foley for a job.

After graduating from Turner Ashby High School in 1957, Mac gave him a part time job as camera operator. He became a weekend announcer and film editor. Back in those days, almost all television was live, but commercials were on film and Ellsworth's job was splicing short takes together to create local commercials.

Mac told him the he'd hire him full time, but he would first have to obtain his First Class Radiotelephone License. Using the study guides, in August 1960, Ellsworth went to the FCC offices, and ob-

Featured Ham: Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG (*continued*)

tained his licenses. The Third-Class was for announcers, the Second-Class was for 2-way radio, and the First-Class license was for full broadcast engineers. Ellsworth got all three.

True to his word, Mac hired Ellsworth as engineer, and as Sunday morning's announcer, for the dial-up Church Service broadcasts.

Mac died a couple of years later, but Ellsworth had established a good reputation among valley broadcasters. Channel 3's transmitter site was on Big Mountain. As station engineer, Ellsworth had to be on-site at the transmitter when the station was on the air. He worked two 21-hour days each week. He worked with Tom Jones (W4OWV and W3HMB, SK) and Buddy Lowe (K4AVW, SK) both of whom were active in the local amateur radio community.

The group of hams took a Gonset Communicator 2-meter ham radio to the mountain. When he wasn't busy maintaining the station equipment, Ellsworth spent many idle hours in the "doghouse" at the base of the tower working stations in Pennsylvania, down to Roanoke, and over to Washington D. C. He served as AM, FM, and TV engineer with WSVa and Channel 3 from 1960 to 1974.

Ellsworth took a second job with Warren Braun's consulting engineering Company in Harrisonburg. Mr. Braun was the prior general manager at WSVa before starting his firm. Ellsworth was the second person hired by Braun. Braun later changed the name of his company to Comsonics, Inc., and built a nice facility on Port Republic Road in Harrisonburg.. Ellsworth worked for Braun for 6 years as Manager of Research and Development.

In 1974, the TV station was sold, and split away from WSVa AM and FM Radio. Ellsworth continued with the radio side of the station. In 1992, the station began using remote monitoring and control but Ellsworth stayed on as Chief Engineer. Even after his formal retirement in 2009, Verstandig Broadcasting continues to hire his services occasionally for their five radio stations.

Ellsworth started his own company, Broadcast Technologies, Inc., and began serving as an independent contractor providing technical services to broadcasters all over the nation. He worked with over forty (maybe more) broadcast stations, overseeing their construction and startup, including tower installation, antenna design, transmitter configurations, and other consulting services.

In all, he has worked in 19 states, including Texas, California, Alaska, Wyoming, and Arizona. He relates that he was once paid \$10,000 just to adjust a multiplexer.... at the very top of the Empire State Building in New York City.

In 1986, another flood inundated Bridgewater again, destroying most of Ellsworth's possessions. Included in the loss was his cherished collection of QSL cards, his amateur radio logs, and his certificates. He was able to salvage his Heathkit Apache radio, his Na-

tional NC-300, and DX100, as well as his SX-10 sideband adapter for the Apache, all of which are now in storage in his garage, south of Mt. Crawford.

In his many years as a ham, he has mentored and elmered many local amateurs, including Mark Payne WA4E (former police chief of Bridgewater) and the venerable Clayton Towers, K4RHQ.

He has served as officer and on the Board of Directors of the Valley Amateur Radio Association and also the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association. He is the incoming Vice-President of VARA. He is also active with the Virginia Fone Net, and was awarded Lifetime membership in the VFN.

In addition to his love of radio, Ellsworth never lost his love of music, gained while listening to his neighbor's piano playing. His pride and joy is his Theater Organ, which even though being electronic instead of pipes, still takes up significant room in his house. He is a member of the American Theater Organ Society.

Ellsworth is a private pilot, not only of fixed-wing aircraft, but he also has his helicopter license.

He is a member of the Valley Aerospace Team, a high-powered rocketry hobby club.

He was a licensed Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), and delivered no less than six (6) babies, including his own son. As a charter member of the Bridgewater Rescue Squad, he was honored by being awarded Lifetime Membership. He is also a lifetime member of the Bridgewater Fire Company and served as fire chief and president of the company.

He is the audio and video coordinator for Bridgewater Church of the Brethren. He handles the lighting, setup, scheduling, and training of assistants for Sunday services, funerals, meetings, and other events where the church is used. Along with his wife Jeanne, he is a deacon there, and assists in the delivery and pickup of recorded media to shut-ins and others who are unable to attend the services.

He was awarded the Good Neighbor "Volunteer of the Year" in 1988 by James Madison University.

In 2006, Ellsworth was honored by being the 9th recipient of the J. Jerry Freeman Excellence in Engineering Award by the Virginia Association of Broadcasters.

Ellsworth's first wife Nellie died of asthma, as did his second wife Sandra. He has been married to his third wife Jeanne for 19 years. He has three sons, a stepson and daughter, eight grandchildren, and three great-granddaughters.

He is still an active ham, you can catch him on the VFN, or as occasionally net control of the Monday Rockingham ARES net

SOLAR PROGNOSTICATION

Are We Headed for a Solar Grand Minimum?

According to a paper accepted for publication in the prestigious science journal *Nature*, the sun might be entering a “Grand Solar Minimum, similar to the Maunder Minimum which coincided with the “Little Ice Age”.

Highly-respected solar scientist, Professor Dr. Valentina Zharkova, holds Bachelors and Masters of Science degrees in Applied Mathematics and Physics, a Ph.D. in Astrophysics, and a Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics/Solar Theory. She is a Senior Royal Society Fellow, and lead researcher at the Solar Division of the Main Astronomical Observatory in Kiev, Ukraine.

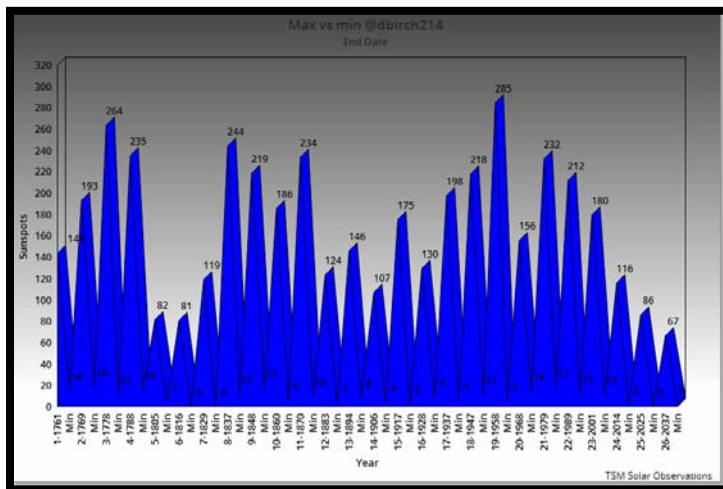
She has analyzed the smoothed sunspot numbers in each cycle since records were first kept in 1761.

The graph shown below illustrates a pattern revealing a fairly consistent decline in both maxima and minima sunspot numbers across every 11-year cycle since 1958’s cycle 19. The noticeable trend shows that an expected recovery due around 1996 did not occur, and indeed, since then the sunspots have dissipated

even more, to their lowest levels since records were started over 2-1/2 centuries ago.

The more detailed graph below of the last four cycles shows continued weakening, even when past data shows they should have been rising.

While Zharkova emphasizes that no one can predict the future, especially with such a short observational period, she says that the next solar cycle or two will be critical in telling what the ol’ Sun is up to. The paper has been peer-reviewed, along with her mathematical calculations, data, and statistical analysis

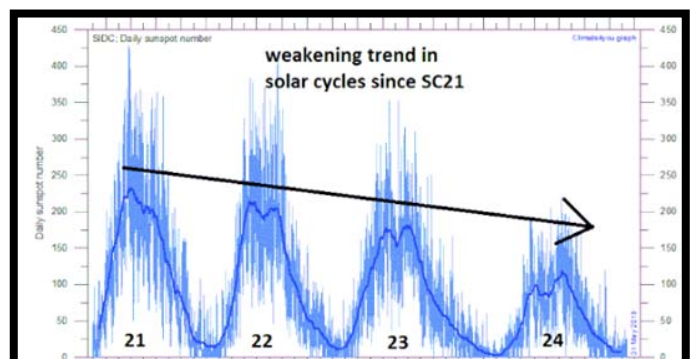


For a popular-press summary of her article, check out:

<https://watchers.news/2019/07/01/valentina-zharkova-on-the-upcoming-grand-solar-minimum/>

Her results are consistent with several other analyses. Another article on the web is:

<https://www.planetxnews.org/the-sun-is-entering-a-deep-solar-minimum/>



MARA TREASURER'S REPORT

October 21, 2019 to November 20, 2019

Opening Balance October 21, 2019		<u>\$ 1,961.31</u>
Income:		
October 50/50	21.00	
November 50/50	19.50	
Dues	30.00	
Sale of Gift Cards	\$200.00	
	Total Income:	<u>\$270.50</u>
Expenses:		
Electric October	\$ 22.73	
	Total Expenses:	<u>\$ 22.73</u>
Ending Balance November 20, 2019		<u>\$ 2,208.58</u>

Submitted by Gerald Nauman, KN4FM
MARA Treasurer

CLUB DUES ARE DUE



No, no, no! Don't just send in your money!

Use the renewal forms at the end of this issue!

Read the important note on page 18 to find out why!

MARA MEETING MINUTES

MARA Secretary's Report – November 7, 2019 Meeting

General Meeting called to order at Wood Grill, Harrisonburg, by **President Bryan Daniels (K4RMY)** at 7:32 P.M. There were 23 members and 4 guests present. Introductions were made all around

New Member Vote: Skip Stover (WN4SKP) Unanimous. **Congrats, Skip!**

New Member First Reading: Danie Perry (KN4WDD)

The Secretary's Minutes: A correction to the Oct. MARA meeting minutes was noted, viz: **Skip Stover (WN4SKP)'s** First Reading was not reported. **Secretary Herb Slade (AA2BF)** said he would add the correction to the archived Oct. minutes. Approved as corrected.

The Treasurer's Report: approved as printed in the Monitor.

Committee Reports:

ARES: Bryan: SMRH was not able to participate in the net on 60m Oct. 29th. The interhospital net was then moved to 2m repeaters

Repeater Committee: See New Business.

VE Committee: Gayle Shull (KU4XN): The next regular test session will be at 9:00 A.M., December 7, at Woodmen Life, 3045 John Wayland Hwy (Rt 42) in Dayton.

Public Service Committee: The Triple Play (Grindstone 100, Shenandoah 500, and Camp Still Meadows Horse Ride) was Oct. 4, 5, and 6. A number of accidents resulted in injuries in the Shenandoah 500 and with falls on the slippery slopes of the Grindstone 100 due to rain. Details were published in the November Monitor. **Chris Shirkey (K14BAQ)** worked as Net Control at the Camp Still Meadows Horse Ride. He reported that poor propagation interfered with connections with the stations along the course.

Old Business: Bryan: Shall we use **K4MRA** as the callsign for the hospital net? As it is, each operator is using his own callsign, whether he is Net Control or at one of the other hospitals. Discussion that followed was in favor of doing that. **Bryan** raised another question about the use of **WinLink** for transporting data among the hospitals. **Bob Van Fossen (K4DJG)** said he is pretty sure that K4MRA is registered with WinLink.

New Business:

Bryan: There is a Yaesu Fusion repeater on sale until Nov. 25 for \$400 that can replace the old 147.315 repeater presently housed at EMU. Should MARA purchase one? **Andrew Pearson (N4RCE)** moved that we purchased one with club funds. The motion was seconded and passed. **Bryan** also asked where the new repeater be housed. The present housing is leaky and

MARA Secretary's Report – November 7, 2019 Meeting (*continued*)

has no HVAC. This will need further consideration.

Announcements: **Bryan: Treasurer Foster Farone (WF40)** has resigned his post, owing to his new work schedule. **Gerald Nauman (KN4FM)** has agreed to take that position to fill the need before his own election is in force in January.

Next meeting 7:30 P.M. Dec.5, 2019 at Wood Grill, 1711 Reservoir St., Harrisonburg, VA. Dinner at 6:00.

50/50 Drawing: \$19.50 was won by guest* **Danie Perry (KN4WDD)**, with \$19.50 going to the MARA Treasury. **Congrats, Danie!**

(and he had his "First Reading" at this meeting!)

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Program: The showing of the second of two videos on FT8 with Joe Taylor.

Respectfully submitted,

Herb Slade (AA2BF), MARA Secretary

VARA MEETING MINUTES

VARA Secretary's Report – November 5, 2019 Meeting

VARA, Inc. met at the Hometown Grill and Buffet. The meeting was brought to order at 7:04 pm by president David Fordham KD9LA. 42 members and visitors were stuffed in the room!

The usual introductions were made. 4 membership applications were read for the 2nd time and voted on: Norman Dallura KN4YFI, Chris Rothgeb KN4YFJ, Ralph Irons N4RLI, and Kim Irons KG4YYL. Welcome, lady and gents!

The secretary's minutes were accepted as printed in the Monitor.

John Chevalaz KB2LOZ, treasurer, gave his report; voted and accepted.

The 50/50 drawing was held: Clint Campbell KB4OLM won the \$28.00 pot, and donated it back to the club. A 2nd drawing was held and won by Charlie Garner WA4ITY, and a 3rd drawing was won by Kevin Numbers KC8MTV.

Gordon Batey WA4FJC reported on the Grindstone 100: he distributed the t-shirts to those who participated. He also noted that the Waynesboro Repeater Association will hold its annual meeting on December 7, Saturday, at 9:30 am, at the Augusta County Library.

VARA Secretary's Report – November 5, 2019 Meeting (*continued*)

Lenny Vincent N4LXP noted that the Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival had 638 riders on Saturday, but only 3 on Sunday, due to the rain.

Kevin KC8MTV said it was nice to have APRS working on SAG vehicles, and Lenny said that will probably be expanded for next year.

ARES report: David Tanks AD4TJ, EC, noted that the hurricane season will be over in a couple of weeks.

The next ARES net will be November 14 at 8 pm. No one volunteered to be Net Control. He also noted that in November's QST there was a short article on ARES® Connect; the web address is wrong; there should be a /lp before /va, to get you to the proper place to sign up. He also noticed it did not say it was mandatory to sign up, just that you can sign up. The link is <http://arrl.volunteerhub.com/lp/va> David also thanked everyone who helped out with the Public Service events & thanked the coordinators.

The Christmas Banquet was discussed, it will be December 3, 5:30 pm, at the Golden Corral in Waynesboro. We approved doing the Chinese gift exchange as in years past, with a range of \$5 to \$10 set for the value.

January 7, 2020, will be the next business meeting.

John and the dues: reminded us that dues are dues, except for those who helped out a minimum of 4 hours with the SFFBF event, as approved by the club at the February 2019 meeting.

Kevin asked if we are still in the Amazon Smile program. Lenny said yes, we are, and is open not just to VARA members, but ANYONE can have their donations directed to the VARA club. A note should be included in the Monitor to remind all that this is an option available to them and their friends and families. (*editor's note: see the bottom of page 7 of this issue of the Monitor.*)

Dave Thomas, WD30, noted that there will be a free VE session November 16, at Bon Air Methodist Church in Richmond.

Contests: David AD4TJ mentioned that now that we are an ARRL Affiliated Club, that we can participate as the "Valley Amateur Radio Association" in the ARRL contests that include club competition, such as the 160 CW, 10 Meters, RTTY Roundup, the VHF contests (January, June, September), and the International DX contests (CW and SSB). It is open only to VARA members. We would still use "Shenandoah Valley Wireless" for non-ARRL contests, such as the North American QSO parties, and the CQ contests.

A program on Skywarn snow measurement was given by David KD9LA.

With no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Tanks, AD4TJ, VARA, Inc. Secretary

EDITOR'S NOTE: See "VARA Board Member Correction" at the bottom of page 3 of this issue of the Monitor.

PVARC MEETING MINUTES

PVARC Secretary's Report – November 14 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Will Baukhages N4WIL at 7:00 PM at Tactical Walls in Shenandoah. (Thanks to Tim KM4TGC and Carrie KM4WDX for the donation of the use of the facility!)

11 members were in attendance.

The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were approved.

The club wishes to announce to all readers of the Monitor that the club meeting time, date and place continues to be 7PM on the 2nd Thursday of each month at TacticalWalls. We look forward to seeing you on Dec 12th.

Old Business:

The idea of having a field trip to Page Memorial Hospital to view the Emcomm station was discussed and it was resolved that Will N4WIL will attempt to arrange it for a Saturday morning if possible, within the next 2 months.

Discussion of the balloon project that Mark N4YSA presented to the club in a past meeting was continued. Tim KM4TGC suggested a joint balloon project with other clubs.

Further discussion of improving attendance included suggestions for better publicity of the meetings. Will N4WIL volunteered to get the meeting notices into the Page News & Courier. Sending postcards to registered amateurs was also discussed.

Carrie KM4WDX continues to make improvements to the web site.

New Business:

Club officer elections coming up in January were discussed. All positions except Tim KM4TGC's position as Member of the Board At Large are up for re-election. The secretary will send out a request for nominations and volunteers.

Tim KM4TGC suggested including projects in the meetings and showed some 3D printed objects he had made that could be part of electronics projects.

The younger members of the club were encouraged to think about how we might get their peers to engage with the club and the hobby and report back to the club.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM, and was followed by lively ham radio discussions.

Respectfully submitted by Gary Fischer K6OZ, PVARC Secretary (gary.K6OZ@yahoo.com)

MYSTERY SILENT KEYS



November Mystery SK:

**John Spillman,
KT4CB**

Our November Mystery Silent Key Honoree was known as a quiet, kind, and contemplative individual by the local ham community. Slightly eccentric, he lived by himself near the eastern corners of Page and Rockingham Counties. He had graciously taken over editorship and publication responsibility for the ARA/VARA/PVARC Monitor, and put out an artistic and informative newsletter for just under five years before his untimely death on April 26, 2018. He was on his way to a campground in Lake Tahoe California when he lost control of his RV on an isolated Nevada highway. After clipping a guardrail on the right shoulder, he went across both lanes and overturned on the left shoulder. It was not determined whether he died from the accident injuries or had already passed from a heart attack. He is missed.



December Mystery SK:

**Radio Repairman,
Teacher, Veteran,
Weather Reporter,
Music Instructor,
Rotarian, Ham
Operator for 60 yrs**

Our December Mystery Silent Key Honoree was born on November 4 1919, and passed away at home in Bridgewater October 6, 2017 just a few weeks shy of his 98th birthday. He taught in Rockingham County Schools (Clover Hill, Dayton, and John Wayland) for 33 years, was a graduate of the National Radio Institute and Bridgewater College, taught music for 35 years, Sunday School for 40 years, and was a Rotary Club member with 57 years of perfect attendance. For 42 years, he reported daily weather readings from his home station to the local TV and radio stations for their morning broadcasts. He was first licensed in 1957. Poor health in his later years prevented him from much ham activity, but many locals remember him well. Do you know his callsign?



No matter your faith, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your Monitor's Editor.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 2019

- December 1: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
- December 2: Rockingham County ARES Net (146.55 simplex – first Monday)
- December 3: VARA Christmas Banquet: Golden Corral in Waynesboro (5 pm)**
- December 5: MARA Christmas Banquet: Wood Grill Buffet in Harrisonburg (6 pm)**
- December 6-8: ARRL 160-meter Contest
- December 7: VE Exams – Dayton Virginia
- December 7: WRAV Waynesboro Repeater Association Annual Meeting (Fishersville Library 9am)**
- December 7-8: FT8 Roundup
- December 8: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
- December 9: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130 repeater)
- December 12: Augusta County ARES Net (frequency TBA)
- December 12: PVARC Monthly Club Meeting: TacticalWalls in Shenandoah, VA (7 pm)**
- December 14-15: ARRL 10-meter Contest
- December 15: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
- December 16: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130 repeater)
- December 22: ARRL Rookie CW Roundup
- December 22: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
- December 23: Rockingham County ARES Net (145.130 repeater)
- December 25: Christmas
- December 29: Page County ARES Net (146.625)
- December 30: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater – 5th Monday)
- December 31: Straight Key Night (CW)

Advance Notice: Far-In-The-Future Items for your Calendar – 2020

Richmond FROSTFEST – Saturday February 1, 2020

Dayton HAMVENTION – May 15-17, 2020

BERRYVILLE Hamfest – Sunday August 2, 2020

In Case You Missed It: The 2020 MARA and VARA Club Officers

VARA 2020 Officers:

President David Fordham, KD9LA
Vice president Ellsworth Neff K4LXG
Secretary David Tanks AD4TJ
Treasurer John Chevalaz KB2LOZ
Board Expiring 2020 Wayne Bowyer N4EYZ
Board Expiring 2021 Dave Thomas WD4O

MARA 2020 Officers:

President Bradley Boyd W4BVB
Vice president Bob Steere N1QEQ
Secretary Chris Shirkey KI4BAQ
Treasurer Gerald Nauman KN4FM
Board Expiring 2020 Andrew Pearson N4RCE
Board Expiring 2021 Don Landes WX4C

ATTENTION! PLEASE READ

IMPORTANT: READ THIS BEFORE RENEWING !!!

All three clubs are in the process of updating their email distribution lists, and their membership rolls.

Many hams have changed their email addresses and/or their phone numbers and have not notified the clubs. If you wish to continue receiving the Monitor, it is imperative that you **FILL OUT COMPLETELY** the appropriate membership renewal form and submit it with your dues. Do not just hand money to your club's treasurer.

Some MARA members may have renewed for two years last December (2018). **THOSE MEMBERS MUST COMPLETE THE ATTACHED RENEWAL FORM**, and circle YES as the response to "Did you renew for two years last year?" at the bottom of the form. No dues payment is necessary for those members who renewed for two years last year, but they **MUST** still fill out and submit the form to continue on the membership rolls.

Some VARA members may receive a dues waiver for participation for four hours or more in the Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival. If this is you, circle YES as the response to "Did you participate..." question. No payment is necessary, but you **MUST** still fill out and submit the renewal form to continue on the membership rolls.

You can either bring your renewal form (and dues payment) to the Christmas Banquet, or the January meeting, or mail it to the PO Box of your respective club(s) as shown at the bottom of the renewal form

For current MARA and VARA members, **dues must be paid by the end of the February meeting** to continue your membership. If you did not renew for 2019, you need to submit a new member application rather than using the renewal form. See your club treasurer or secretary for an application form.

2020 PVARC Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____ CALLSIGN: _____ CLASS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PREFERRED PHONE NUMBER: _____ Prefer Voice or Text? (circle 1 or both) VOICE TEXT

ALTERNATE PHONE: _____ Prefer Voice or Text? (circle 1 or both) VOICE TEXT

EMAIL ADDRESS: (print legibly!!) _____

MEMBER ARRL (Y/N) _____ REGISTERED ARES (Y/N) _____ SKYWARN ID: _____

Are you available for Workday Daytime Emergency Call up? (Y/N) _____ Workday callup phone number: _____

PVARC Members mail with \$15 annual dues to PO Box 245 Luray VA 22835-0245

2020 MARA Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____ CALLSIGN: _____ CLASS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PREFERRED PHONE NUMBER: _____ Prefer Voice or Text? (circle 1 or both) VOICE TEXT

ALTERNATE PHONE: _____ Prefer Voice or Text? (circle 1 or both) VOICE TEXT

EMAIL ADDRESS: (print legibly!!) _____

MEMBER ARRL (Y/N) ___ REGISTERED ARES (Y/N) _____ SKYWARN ID: _____

Are you available for Workday Daytime Emergency Call up? (Y/N) _____ Workday callup phone number: _____

Did you renew for two years last year? YES NO

MARA members mail to MARA, PO Box 1882, Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Unless you renewed for 2 years in December 2018, include \$15 annual dues.

2020 VARA Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____ CALLSIGN: _____ CLASS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PREFERRED PHONE NUMBER: _____ Prefer Voice or Text? (circle 1 or both) VOICE TEXT

ALTERNATE PHONE: _____ Prefer Voice or Text? (circle 1 or both) VOICE TEXT

EMAIL ADDRESS: (print legibly!!) _____

MEMBER ARRL (Y/N) ___ REGISTERED ARES (Y/N) _____ SKYWARN ID: _____

Are you available for Workday Daytime Emergency Call up? (Y/N) _____ Workday callup phone number: _____

Did you participate at least four hours in the 2019 Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival? YES NO

VARA members mail to: VARA, PO Box 2103, Staunton, VA 24402
Unless you participated for four hours in the Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Festival, include \$15 annual dues.

MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

President: Bryan Daniels, K4RMY
Vice President: Bob Steere, N1QEQ
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

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

BUT THE DECEMBER BANQUET WILL BE HELD AT THE GOLDEN CORRAL IN WAYNESBORO.

THE BANQUET begins at 5:00 p.m.

Dress is Casual. Visitors are welcome

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

VARA
PO Box 2103
Staunton, VA 24402

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

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.

The clubs derive their revenue from memberships, The Monitor is not made regularly available on a timely basis to individuals who are not club members, but occasional complimentary current copies are provided to prospective members free of charge.

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