

# The MARA-VARA *Monitor*

SEPTEMBER 1996 -- Volume 96:09

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This is the web page version of the MARA/VARA *Monitor*.

The *Monitor* is published monthly by the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc.,  
(a non-profit organization under the IRS regulations),  
for radio amateurs in the central Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

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## PUBLIC SERVICE ROUNDUP

- September 1: Tour de Valley Century Ride in Waynesboro
  - September 28-29: Johnny Appleseed Ride in Timberville
  - October 12: MS Walk in Harrisonburg
  - October 12-13: Simulated Emergency Test
  - October 19: HF Jamboree on the Air
  - October 25-27: Bike Virginia Fall Foliage Festival Ride in Augusta County)
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## W4XD Scores High in International DX Contest!

The W4XD contest machine did it again! Racking up 102,672 points in the 1996 ARRL International DX Contest, W4XD established 276 contacts, 124 multipliers, putting the contest effort in fifth place in the Division. Congratulations!

*Info from QST*

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## K4HMC, SK

Some of the old-timers in the valley may be familiar with Adolph More, K4HMC. Adolph, who was 88, became a silent key on June 16th, at his home in Vero Beach, Florida. Born in Havana, Cuba in 1908, he resided in Mount Jackson for a number of years before retiring to Florida.

*Info provided by Bob, W3MMC*

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## PUBLIC SERVICE -- Bike Virginia Fall Foliage Festival: October 25-27, 1996

The Bike Virginia Fall Foliage Festival is scheduled for October 25-27 this year. This will be the sixth annual

ride in the Shenandoah Valley. For the past five years, Bike Virginia has toured the western part of Augusta County, starting and ending in Staunton. This year, the tour will feature the eastern part of the county.

Radio amateurs in the valley have provided volunteer communications for this event, and have proven invaluable in assisting with emergency situations, as well as helping keep the organizers apprised of the progress of the riders.

Kate Collins Middle School will be the registration headquarters for the ride. The route will wend its way from Waynesboro up to Grand Caverns Regional Park for lunch on Saturday, where the festival will hold music, and children's activities, including a Bike Rodeo for riders under 14 years of age.

On Sunday, most cyclists will be touring the Stuarts Draft area while the adventuresome will try climbing part of the Blue Ridge Parkway and cycling through Sherando before joining the others for brunch in Stuarts Draft.

This event provides an opportunity for hams to participate in valuable public service from the comfort of their cars, from the fresh air of a bicycle, on foot, or sitting behind the registration desk acting as net control. Those hams who have participated in the past received free shirts, free lunches, and other premiums for their participation, in addition to gaining experience useful in ARES activities.

More will be published about this ride in next month's Monitor. In the meantime, mark your calendar for October 25, 26, and 27.

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## **Ham Radio Still Serving in Times of Disaster**

Lest you think that ham radio has faded into the background in emergency communication service, rest assured that amateurs figured prominently in the relief efforts of numerous disasters and emergencies in the past few weeks. Major ham radio news sources such as Westlink, WorldRadio, and others have carried numerous stories of the valuable assistance provided by amateur band communications, including the TWA Flight 800 plane crash, the ValuJet crash in Florida, the Great Alaskan Wildfire, Hurricane Bertha in North Carolina, floods in Tennessee and New England, and the forest fires in Alaska, Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming. Ham radio also has helped track down interference to police and emergency communications in at least two major cities, has rescued two wilderness groups stranded in bad weather, and assisted in the rescue of a yacht in distress in the Caribbean, all in the last month! This does not count the many Skywarn and ARES activations as a result of the summer storm season.

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## **PUBLIC SERVICE -- Bridgewater Parade Report**

Bridgewater, Parades, and Radio Amateurs... these have had a lot in common over the last several years. Amateurs have been doing fantastic public service work in support of the Bridgewater Fire Department and Rescue Squad. This demonstrates that ham radio is not just a hobby (as special interest groups which want our frequencies would have the public believe) but a valuable service to the citizens of our communities.

Mark, WA4E, requested amateur help to provide communication coordination and traffic control at the parades on July 19th and 20th. The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association voted to take this on as a club project. Fourteen amateurs responded and help work the parades. They are, in no particular order:

- K4LXG Ellsworth,
- W3MMC Bob,
- KF4BFB Walt,
- KF4BFC Bob 7,
- KE4PHQ Richard,
- KD4OXP Bridgewater Bill,
- KE4CKM Max,
- KF4BFF Enos,
- KF4BFL Wilton,
- N4ALS Glen,
- KE4SSF Stin,
- KE4FM Kitty-Kat Bill,
- AD4TJ David,
- KD4OXU, Ray

. KD4VPE, Tim, got mixed up on the times and arrived too late Saturday, but deserves a thanks for the effort.

Hardee's (spelled Hardley's) seemed to be the early watering hole and communications center before the parades started. Next, it was off to the plush police station (where several hams got lost in the huge restroom!) to see Commander Mark (WA4E) for their assignments.

Once on their posts, the amateurs seemed to enjoy the challenge of trying to keep the traffic from sneaking into places they were not supposed to go. Ellsworth and Richard really had fun in the many lanes around their posts. They had several foot pursuits of motorists who got through! Bridgewater Bill stated that he didn't know that over 300 people must live in a 2-block section of Green Street, including many residents whose cars carried stickers from places as far away as Broadway!

Bob #1 (from Bob's Knob fame) always sent his motorists down the street to the next amateur to bug them with questions! Bob #7 said it was exciting to direct traffic in the middle of an intersection, especially when most motorists would approach without signaling their intentions. He must have guessed correctly most of the time since he is not yet a Silent Key.

Walt said he was an old hand at traffic control, but don't tell this to Mark! The longevity awards go to Bob #1 and Kitty-Kat Bill (KE4FM) who brag that they have been doing the Bridgewater Parades longer than most of us hams have been alive! In fact, to hear them tell it, they have been doing the Bridgewater parades longer than Bridgewater has even had parades!

If you missed out on the fun, we are already taking names for next year! Mark, WA4E, extends his deepest appreciation for all the amateur help, as it frees up his law enforcement officers for more important work. I, also, wish to thank everyone who helped. By the way, Mark, buy a battery for your Yaesu next year!

*Ray Ritchie, KD4OXU*

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## **PUBLIC SERVICE -- Bridgewater Parade Service Pays Off for MARA Hams ...**

A special thanks is due to Mark Payne, WA4E, for approaching the town of Bridgewater and obtaining a donation of \$300 to the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association. This is in appreciation for the efforts extended by amateurs over the past years in support of the Bridgewater parades, assisting with traffic control, and essential communications. Mark wishes to convey his personal thanks and states that he and the town

will need help again next year. The town is being very generous, knowing full well that we hams would provide our services for free. So, if you see some town officials, be sure to take time to thank them for the generous donation. It will be put to good use.

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**MORE PUBLIC SERVICE:  
JOHNNY APPLESEED RIDE: SEPT 28-29**

The Johnny Appleseed Charity Horse Ride will be held September 28-29, on Route 613, Wine's Farm, in Timberville starting at 8:00 am. The proceeds from this ride are given to the Center of Therapeutic Riding for disabled children and young adults. You will need a mobile 2-meter radio, or a good hand-held unit. You can choose to work one or both days, or a partial day if you don't have time for a full day. You will be able to get out into the mountains and enjoy the scenery, the horses, and the riders. If you can help, please contact Norman Benner, KA4EEN on the 146.625 repeater, or call Ray Ritchie, KD4OXU, at 540-896-2913.

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**STILL MORE PUBLIC SERVICE:  
HARRISONBURG MS WALK: OCTOBER 12**

The Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Fall Walk will be held on Saturday, October 12th, at James Madison University. This event will begin at 7:30 am. The proceeds from this walk will go to help those suffering from the MS disease, a truly devastating disease hitting a surprising number of young adults. You need not actually walk in this event, as many communicators ride vehicles or bicycles or man stationery checkpoints. Last year, hams help avert a possible tragedy involving two young women, so our help is valuable. Again, contact Norman or Ray if you can assist with this event.

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**AND STILL MORE PUBLIC SERVICE -- Help Needed in Waynesboro on September 1...**

In case this newsletter reaches you before the first of September (it will be close!), here is another opportunity for public service using your ham radio!

Terry Henderson, who is now KR4UO (formerly KE4SSD), has asked for assistance with the local Waynesboro Bike Ride known as the Tour de Valley Century. This is a 100-mile bike ride requiring a fair number of ham operators to facilitate effective communication. The ride takes place on Sunday, September 1st. Operators will need to meet in Waynesboro at around 7 am, and the event will last until around 4 or 5 pm.

The ride organizers treat hams real well, according to Terry, providing all kinds of premiums and freebies. If you can help, and this announcement reaches you before September 1st, please call Terry at 540-943-0668.

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## **AND STILL MORE PUBLIC SERVICE:**

### **Jamboree On The Air ...Promoting HF Radio to the Next Generation**

This year's Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) will be held on October 19. This is a Saturday event intended to introduce young people, specifically Boy Scouts, to the excitement of the HF radio spectrum. Most of today's no-code techs are content to operate on the 2-meter or 6-meter band. JOTA is designed to introduce the benefits of getting a higher class license. Scouts all over the world will be visiting ham shacks to talk to one another courtesy of hams who take the time to invite them to serve as guest operators.

Locally, Sam Pickering ((KF4EKV)of VARA will be hosting a JOTA effort in Waynesboro, but Sam needs a General, Advanced, or Extra class ham to help out by setting up a field HF station. If you are available for an hour or two on October 19, please give Sam a call.

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### **GPS NEWS -- D.o.D. to Eliminate Degradation of GPS Signals**

According to a recent announcement by the White House (released on March 29, 1996), the Department of Defense plans to eliminate the degradation of the Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite system signals by the end of the decade.

The current GPS technology allows pinpointing terrestrial locations (latitude, longitude, and altitude) to within about 5 feet, but since the inception of the GPS service, the Department of Defense has deliberately degraded the signal in such a manner as to limit the precision to about 150-300 feet. The degradation has been necessary due to national security concerns.

But the widespread use of the GPS system, coupled with the tremendous positive economic impact the system can have on maritime, aviation, land mobile, and other interests, has provided the impetus for the administration to authorize the elimination of the degradation of the signal.

The GPS system currently maintains a constellation of 24 satellites. Although several of the current satellites are off line due to malfunctions and reprogramming requirements, the Department of Defense plans to launch replacements to restore the fleet to a minimum of 24 operational satellites by the end of the year. The newer satellites will contain additional technology allowing the system to support even more capabilities in the future.

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### **Thanks...**

Thanks to Kwik Kopy and Bill Jones this month for printing the Monitor at special rates. Also, thanks to Debbie, KB4WPE, for the special assistance in maintaining the mailing list and printing the labels. Also, thanks to the Fordham kids (Allen, Bryan, Cathryn, and Dianna) for the help every month in collating, stapling, folding, and labeling, and bundling the Monitor copies in preparation for bulk mailing.

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## Virginia Beach Hamfest: September 21-22

The Roanoke Division ARRL Convention will be held September 21-22 at the Virginia Beach Pavilion. Doors open Saturday and Sunday at 9:00 am. Free parking Talk-in is on 146.970 MHz. Admission is \$5 in advance, \$6 at the door, with children under 12 free. (The tickets are good for both days for one price.) Contact Manny Steiner, K4DOR, at 804-HAM-FEST.

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## Big Mountain Repeater Association Picnic Report

The 4th annual Big Mountain Repeater/Bob's Knob picnic was held "on the Knob" on Sunday, August 18th, with approximately 150 amateurs, their families and friends in attendance. Hams from the Shenandoah Valley and other parts of Virginia attended, as did folks from West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

The weather couldn't have been better, although the morning was a bit cloudy, but by the 1 PM "feeding frenzy" hour, things brightened up in more ways than one.

Two new items added to the picnic this year were a tailgate section and a 50/50 drawing. A lot of amateurs found bargains they could not resist in the tailgate area. The 50/50 drawing was won by KE4RMB, Frank Worley.

The "Wildwood" Country/Western band entertained us with a very well received program of vocal and band selections. A swarm of wasps tried to join the group while they were warming up and this added to the pre-program excitement. Two amateurs, Mark Payne, WA4E and Harold Cupp, KC4KTC, are members of the group.

Bob, our host, W3MMC wants to thank all the hams who helped in setting up and removal of the tables and other facilities. It was a joint effort by a lot of fine folks and a special thanks to all of the ladies who pitched in to make the tables look better after we men "plunked" the items down in random fashion.

A few that worked especially long and hard were Frank, KE4RMB; James, KF4BFM; Ellsworth, K4LXG and of course, Neal Layman, WF3L, who handled the talk-in and the 50/50 and sold badges and sold bumper stickers and whatever else we asked.

A few extra "thank you's" are due to the cooks: Frank KE4RMB, James KF4BFM, Bob #9 WA4WRE, Carla (XYL of KE4RMB). Carla served as the head bean-taster and did a fantastic job at the serving table as Maitre D' Extraordinaire. Also, the XYL of N8XGH received many rave comments (but, alas, no tips) on her outstanding service at the food tables.

Also, thanks to the picnic table crew, made up of most of the cook crew, plus Ray KD4OXU, David KD4EQA, and Wilton, KF4BFL. Thanks also to Paul KD4DDI for the hamburger buns, and Rusty N4YET for the hot dog rolls.

Television coverage was provided thanks to Patty Hsu of TV-3 news. Ray KD4OXU provided the volleyball entertainment. And, of course, no listing would be complete without mention of the canine guests, Sam and Precious, who, surprisingly, behaved themselves rather admirably considering the conditions.

Bob, W3MMC received an award which was a "Thank-You" certificate, for all the hard work he has done in the past and the hospitality he shows....and his effort in making the Big Mountain/Bob's Knob picnic the "Best ham radio picnic in the world".

## **LOCAL OLD TIMERS! -- Almost 40 Years Ago...**

Richard Weaver, W3HXH, found a newspaper clipping from a 1960 issue of the Harrisonburg Daily News-Record naming the Harrisonburg Amateur Radio Club officers for 1960, the club's third year of operation. The meetings at that time were held at the WSVB radio studios. For that year, the president was Richard S. Weaver, vice-president James Landram, secretary Elroy W. Kauffman, treasurer Thomas Jones, and activities manager Ira T. Lowe. You need to be a real old-timer to appreciate this list!

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## **LATE BREAKING NEWS**

### **FCC to Open Vanity Callsign Program Gate 2 on September 23**

The FCC, in a public notice released August 22, 1996, has announced the opening of Gate 2 of the Vanity Callsign System. Gate 2 opens on September 23, 1996.

Gate 2 allows Extra class hams to request a vanity callsign of their choice, as long as the call has been unassigned for at least two years, and the call matches the region of your current mailing address.

Gate 2 also allows holders of club licenses to request a vanity callsign.

Vanity calls are requested by submitting Form 610-V to the FCC. The commission is finalizing plans to allow Form 610-V to be submitted electronically, but will continue to accept paper forms for the indefinite future.

A fee of \$30 is required to be submitted with the Form 610-V. Also, if you plan to pay by credit card, you must submit FCC Form 159 with your Form 610-V. The commission asks that you not send cash. Your application package should not be sent to Gettysburg, but rather to the FCC, Amateur Vanity Call Sign System, PO Box 358924, Pittsburgh, PA, 15251-5924.

Hams can submit a prioritized list of up to 25 callsigns. The first assignable call on the list will be assigned to the new license. It is suggested that you consult the latest FCC license database (available on the Internet) to avoid requesting active calls.

Note that Gate 2 pertains only to club stations and Extra-class hams. Advanced class operators will be eligible when Gate 3 opens, and others will be eligible at Gate 4. No dates have been announced for those gates as of the present time. If the FCC receives an application for a vanity callsign prior to the proper opening gate, the application will be dismissed; it will not be held for future processing.

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## **FCC: Don't Bother Asking For These Callsigns**

The FCC has revised its list of unavailable callsigns. Amateurs will not be able to obtain the following callsign groups, regardless of license class, gate, or any other factor:

- KA2AA-KA9ZZ
- KC4AAA-KC4AAF
- KC4USA-KC4USZ
- KG4AA-KG4ZZ
- KC6AA-KC6ZZ
- KL9KAA-KL9KHZ
- KX6AA-KX6ZZ
- any callsign having SOS or QRA-QUZ as the suffix,
- any callsign having the letters AM-AZ as the prefix,
- any 2x3 call having the letter X as the first letter of the suffix,
- any 2x3 call having the letters AF, KF, NF, or WF as the prefix with the letters EMA as the suffix,
- any 2x3 callsign having the letters NA-NZ as the prefix,
- any 2x1, 2x2 or 2x3 call having the letters KP, NP, or WP as the prefix with the numeral 0, 6, 7, 8, or 9,
- any callsign that a prior recipient has found offensive,
- any 1x1 callsign.

*From the August 16 ARRL Letter*

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## **Curtains for PRB-1?**

Acting in response to what he says are nearly 45,000 complaints to the FCC every year, U.S. Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wisconsin) has introduced Senate bill S-2025, which would give state, county, city, and other local governments the ability to regulate interference from CB radios "when that interference results from a violation of FCC rules." According to Feingold, "it is not fair that citizens should be hamstrung by an outdated Federal preemption (PRB-1) of laws which the Federal government has admitted it no longer has the resources to enforce." *From the August 16 ARRL Letter*

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## **VARA's KT4UO: You may be addicted to the Internet if...**

- You find yourself typing "com" or "org" after every period.
- When you turn off your modem, you get this awful empty feeling like you just pulled the plug on a loved one.
- All your friends have an "@" in their names.
- You can't call your mother because she doesn't have a modem.
- You move into a new house and Netscape before you landscape.
- You refer to "going to the bathroom" as "downloading".
- You tell the cab driver you live at "http://123.elm.street/bluetrim/house.html"
- Your spouse makes a new rule that you cannot bring your laptop to bed.
- You ask a plumber how much it would cost to replace the chair in front of your computer desk with a toilet.
- You start tilting your head sideways to smile ... : )
- You turn your computer on, and it turns your spouse off.
- Your spouse reads something that says communication in marriage is important, so you buy another computer and install a second phone line so the two of you can chat.

- Your dog has his own home page.

Terry Henderson, KT4UO  
75361.3613@compuserve.com

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## Latest Non-Vanity Callsigns

The latest callsigns, issued as of August 1, 1996, in the fourth call district were AE4WV (extra), KT4UJ (advanced), and KF4LDT (all other classes). In the eighth call district, the corresponding calls were AA8XS, KG8YE, and KC8ENT. Only the first call district and the third call district are still issuing 1x3 callsigns. In all other regions, all 1x3 calls have been exhausted, so new Technician and General class licenses are being issued 2x3 calls.

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## X Band? Ku Band? C Band? What is the Frequency, Kenneth?

*(How many of you remember Dan Rather's rather embarrassing situation some years back?)*

Do you know the frequency of X-band radar units? How about the C-band satellite television? Or the Ku band digital satellite services?

Especially in the microwave region, there is a set of letter designations used to identify parts of the RF spectrum. The lettering system was devised during World War II to confuse spies, and it has been confusing people ever since. Although there is slight disagreement among authorities as to the exact boundaries between the bands, the table below provides an approximate designation of the lettered bands.

- H Band -- 1 MHz to 25 MHz
- T Band -- 25 MHz to 50 MHz
- V Band -- 50 MHz to 200 MHz
- U Band -- 200 MHz to 1 GHz
- L Band -- 1 GHz to 2 GHz
- S Band -- 2 GHz to 4 GHz
- C Band -- 4 GHz to 8 GHz
- X Band -- 8 GHz to 12.4 GHz
- Ku Band -- 12.4 GHz to 18 GHz
- K Band -- 18 GHz to 26.5 GHz
- Ka Band -- 26.5 GHz to 40 GHz

In addition to the ham bands in the H, T, V, and U bands, amateurs also have allocations just below the L band (902 MHz), in the L band (1240-1300 MHz), the S band (2300-2310 and 2390-2450 MHz), the C Band (3300-3500 and 5650-5925 MHz), the X band (10.0-10.5 GHz), and the K Band (24.0-24.25 GHz). Yes, you can operate a radar transceiver in the X and K radar bands!

The US Navy considers everything above 300 MHz to be "microwaves", but the rest of the world does not use the word "microwaves" until 1.0 GHz.

What's on the microwave bands? Well, the GPS system operates between 1220 and 1575 MHz. NASA's

space communication system operates around 2100 MHz. Wireless cable TV systems (community distribution circuits) operate around 2400 MHz, sharing the ham band. Microwave ovens use 2450 MHz, just at the edge of the ham band. The full-size TVRO dishes receive satellite signals around 4 GHz (the C band), although some of the newer digital satellite TV services use the Ku band around 12 GHz. The microwave relay towers used by the phone companies' point-to-point relays operate around 6 GHz. Police radar units utilize 10.525 GHz (the X band) and 24.1 GHz (the K band). Military, air traffic control, and meteorological radar is spread throughout several bands.

*Thanks to Bob Nielsen, W6SWE  
and Dan Schultz, N8FGV*

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## **No General Coverage Receiver? WWV Signals Are Available by LandLine**

The telephone numbers for the National Bureau of Standards WWV and WWVH 24-hour master clock time and signal calibration service are: (303) 499-7111, or from Hawaii, (808) 335-4363, or (900) 410-TIME.

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## **Heathkit Parts Available ... Well, Maybe**

If you are a Heathkit aficionado, the ARRL Lab's Mike Tracy, KC1SX, has uncovered a possible source of surplus Heathkit parts that Heath sold off a number of years ago. It's a company called Spectrum Electronics, located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Although they are primarily a specialty repair business, if you have the manual to your equipment and know the specific part number you want, they may be able to provide it. They will not look up part numbers for you, however, so be sure to have the part number when you call.

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## **Ham Radio Awareness Day: September 21**

Amateur Radio Awareness Day is September 21. This is an annual ham radio event sponsored by the national radio associations and publications to interest the general public in local ham radio activities and spread the word about ham radio and its readiness to assist the community. Press kits and other aids are available to help promote ham radio in your community. Contact the ARRL's public relations office by calling Jennifer Gagne, N1TDY, Monday through Friday, at (860) 594-0328, from 9 am to 4:30 pm eastern time.

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## **DX NEWS FROM THE WEST VIRGINIA BRANCH -- CY0AA QSL Route**

David Gordon, KB8LCI, reports that the new QSL address for the CY0AA contacts on 2 meters and 6 meters has changed. The new address is Michael Smith, 271 Smith Road (Geary), Waterville, Sunbury County, NB Canada E2V 3V6.. Your QSL request travels to Canada on a standard 32-cent postage stamp. Include a self-addressed envelope with a U.S. Green Stamp. According to Dave, it works!

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## **SPACE ... THE FINAL FRONTIER Mir's UHF Repeater Now Open for Business...**

You may already have all the equipment you need to work through a space station. The Russian station Mir now has a standard 440 MHz voice repeater available for general amateur use.

The repeater uses the callsign RR0DL, and receives on an uplink of 447.750, and retransmits on the downlink of 437.950. Most standard FM UHF ham rigs can operate this split pair very easily.

The repeater is a regular FM voice repeater, but initial reports indicate that you need at least 25 watts and a pretty good antenna to make the trip. If you have a steerable 440 beam and a 50-watt or better rig, you should have no problem, especially if the space station is oriented with its antennas pointing towards Earth.

The repeater requires a PL tone of 141.3 Hz. It is a good idea to check the repeater's voice recorder beacon on 437.925 MHz. That beacon will announce that MIR is within receiving range of your station.

MIR moves very fast across the sky, so make your contacts as short as possible. Also, since this is an orbiting platform, Doppler shift might require you to change your input and output frequencies by as much as 5 kHz for optimum results. Tune up 2.5 or 5 kHz when the space station is moving towards you, and tune down by the same amount when the station is moving away from you.

At an altitude of over 130 miles, RR0DL has the best wide-area coverage of any repeater you'll ever work!

RR0DL is one of the few repeaters which offers a QSL card for contacts made through it. DF0VR in Germany is the QSL manager. His address is good in any recent callbook or directory.

There are plans to also activate a 9600-baud packet digipeater on the Soviet space station, using an uplink of 435.775 with a downlink of 437.975, but no date for that operation commencement is available at this time.

Also, U.S. astronaut Shannon Lucid is still making 2-meter voice contacts on 145.55 MHz simplex. If the QRM is too bad, she sometimes moves to split operation, listening on an uplink of 145.800 and transmitting on a downlink of 145.200. Lucid recently made a contact with a mobile station in Florida who was running only 15 watts into a 5/8-wave roof-mounted vertical.

QSL route for live voice contacts with the space station crew (using the callsign R0MIR) should go to N6JLH.

There are numerous tracking programs available in the public domain which can enable you to track MIR and find out when it will be "visible" to your antennas. Any of the local hams active in satellite work can help you. Some who have been known to be able to predict satellite passes are KD9LA, AD4TJ, KE4LKQ, and KB8LCI.

*From AMSAT News Bulletins*

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## **ARRL Survey Helps Decide Future of Morse Code in the Amateur Service**

Page 49 of the September, 1996 issue of QST magazine has a survey form for hams to register their views on issues which might arise at the World Radiocommunication Conference to be held in 1999. It is expected that the WRC-99 meeting of the International Telecommunications Union will take up several important issues

concerning world-wide ham radio services, including the possibility of dropping the ITU requirement of Morse Code proficiency for HF licenses. This survey is an opportunity for you to let your representatives know how you feel about these issues. If you have not already done so, take the time to complete the survey and mail it in

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## **Latest FCC Action May Be First Step Towards Relief From Restrictive Covenants**

On August 6, the FCC adopted rules to prevent local governments from restricting the rights of homeowners and businesses to install television antennas and satellite dishes. The new regulations might be a first step towards the Commission taking a stand to stop municipalities from restricting most two-way radio antenna systems, including those of licensed amateurs.

The new rules prohibit the enforcement of local laws, rules, private covenants, and homeowner association regulations that in any way interfere with television reception. This includes over-the-air broadcast signals, satellite services, and microwave "wireless cable" retransmission systems. However, communities can still enforce local safety rules even if such regulations hinder reception. An example would be the prohibition of antennas mounted on fire escapes.

Do not look for immediate help on ham radio, though. The August 6 action covers only antennas and satellite dishes intended for reception of television signals. But it does open the door for FCC action on a similar request which has been made by the two-way radio industry. The two-way folks filed a request with the FCC last year asking the Commission to ban all local and private restrictions on communications antennas, a measure which might also apply also to ham antennas.

*Amateur Radio Newsline*

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## **FYI -- Newsletter Editor's Report**

I want to thank all the hams who have made the many kind comments about the Monitor over the past two years. As I enter my third year as editor, I want to re-emphasize that this is your newsletter. The quality of the publication depends primarily on the quality of the material you submit. Thank you to those who have sent in material.

I regret that I do not have the time to do the legwork to hunt down and obtain the news and still have time left over to do the layout and mailing, too. So I must depend on you to get your articles in to me.

I try to print everything I receive. I have had some problems lately with a new computer at work, and a brand new e-mail system at the office, modem problems at home, and a packet station which has been off the air for about six months. However, I now have a new TNC. I plan to be back on packet (as soon as I can find the time to make up a new mic connector cord) so submitting your articles will be even easier.

Now for the bad news -- the cost of printing the Monitor has increased 33% over the last month. I have obtained quotes from six printing/copying shops, and the cheapest two (Kwik Kopy and the university copy center's faculty rates) still are costing over \$0.08 per page where they used to charge about \$0.06. This does not include the collating or stapling charges, either.

Of course, when Roy, KE4UFN, is able to print it for us, the printing cost is zero, but he has been extremely

busy at work lately and has been unable to donate the printing for the last few months.

Even with the increased printing cost, our bulk mail permit has still helped us save money. With a 12-page newsletter (6 sheets, front and back, with my family doing the stapling and collating), printing and sending out 200 newsletters via bulk mail is about \$2 cheaper than sending out 163 newsletters using first class mail.

Where did the numbers come from? There are 163 names on the VARA and MARA combined membership roster, including about a dozen complimentary copies sent to ARRL officials and local emergency service agencies, as per MARA's special service club status.

But we can't send out only 163 newsletters if we use bulk mail. We have to send out 200. To enable us to send out 200, I have added about 500 names to my label database. Each month, I pick and choose 37 of these "non-members" to receive a complimentary copy of the Monitor. The 500 names are hams in the counties of Augusta, Rockingham, Page, Shenandoah, Bath, Highland, and a few from Crozet, Stanardsville, Brandywine, Sugar Grove, and Fort Seibert, and other places where the hams might consider joining one of our clubs. I select the names each month so as to round out a 3-digit ZIP code and get the lowest bulk rate possible.

The cutoff for getting stories to me is generally around the 15th or 20th of each month. It takes me about 2-3 days to type the copy and create the layout, depending on the demands of my job. Roy likes to have at least a week to 10 days to print the copies, and it takes me another day to collate, staple, seal, and address the copies. I have to get the copies to the post office by the Friday morning before the first Thursday of each month in order to meet the requirements of the MARA club by-laws (which require that each member be notified by mail before every club meeting).

From the reports I have received, almost everyone is receiving their newsletter before the first Thursday of the month. If you are not, please notify me.

I will continue to try to control the cost of printing as much as possible. Our bulk mail permit will be up for renewal in another month, and I hope that the clubs will choose to renew.

In the meantime, keep sending in your information. I greatly appreciate all your cooperation. And by the way, the deadline for the October issue of the Monitor is Friday, October 20th. Thanks again for your help.

*David R. Fordham, KD9LA*  
*Newsletter Editor*

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## **FCC's New RF Safety Standards Effective January 1, 1997 Might Affect the Way Some Hams Operate.**

On August 1, the FCC adopted a Report and Order, ET Docket 93-62, titled, "Guidelines for Evaluating the Environmental Effects of Radiofrequency Radiation".

In this document, the Commission adopted the Maximum Permissible Exposure (MPE) limits for electric and magnetic field strength and power densities for transmitters operating at frequencies from 300 kHz to 100 GHz. These MPE limits are based on standards adopted, agreed upon, and promulgated by numerous Federal, private, and industry groups, including the FDA, the EPA, the IEEE and ANSI.

This Report and Order ends the blanket exemption which previously had exempted amateur radio installations from having to evaluate their RF exposure potential.

As a result of this action, Part 97 will soon require that hams running more than 50 watts PEP conduct routine RF radiation evaluations to determine if RF fields are sufficient to cause human exposure to RF levels in excess of those specified.

The FCC encouraged the ham community "to develop and disseminate information in the form of tables, charts, and computer analytical tools that relate such variables as operating patterns, emission types, frequencies, power, and distance from antennas" to the exposure limits. The Commission said it intends to provide "straightforward methods for amateur operators to determine potential exposure levels" by the year's end.

FCC Report and Order 96-326 requires that VEC's add five questions to ham exam elements 2, 3A, and 3B, covering additional RF safety concepts. The new questions are concomitant with the FCC's directions covering special installation and operation requirements for radios used in mobile and residential locations transmitting with more than 50 watts of power. The ARRL has filed a petition asking the FCC to delay the additional question requirements until July 1, 1997, to avoid having to change exams in the "middle" of the 3-year examination question-pool lifetime.

ARRL Laboratory Supervisor Ed Hare, KA1CV, said there is no reason for hams to be overly concerned with the report and order, adding that "most amateur stations are already in compliance with the new regulations."

ARRL Executive Secretary David Sumner, K1ZZ, said that in "certain unusual situations where there is uncontrolled exposure" to neighbors and the general public, "amateurs may well have to make changes to how they operate". The ARRL Lab staff and RF Safety Committee are evaluating the new requirements.

The administrative burden for hams will be minimal, and the FCC does not require amateurs to submit any documentation to the FCC. "In essence, the FCC is telling amateurs that if they run more than 50 watts, they need to learn about RF safety, and be able to evaluate how it applies to their operation and installation," according to Sumner. There is already a good supply of information on the RF safety issues covered by the new Report and Order, mainly in the form of books and articles published by the ARRL and other ham publications.

Hams should not over-react to the Report and Order. You can download the entire document by setting your Internet URL to: [http://www.fcc.gov/bureaus/engineering\\_technology/orders/fcc96326.txt](http://www.fcc.gov/bureaus/engineering_technology/orders/fcc96326.txt).

Other resources are available on the ARRL web page at <http://www.arrl.org/news/rfsafety/>.

More news and information will be forthcoming in the major ham radio magazines.

*August 9 issue of the ARRL Letter*

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## **Address Changes Now Critical**

Now that the Monitor is being bulk mailed, it is critical that you notify the newsletter editor of your new address promptly. Unlike first class mail, bulk mail is not forwarded. Neither is it returned to sender, so we have no way of knowing whether or not you get your newsletter. Be sure to let us know if you move or change your mailing address so that you can continue receiving your Monitor uninterrupted.

Also, if you have received a new callsign, or have upgraded, please let your newsletter editor know so that we can tell everyone, and update our mailing list.

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The VARA Treasurer's Report did not arrive in time for this month's issue of the Monitor. Charlie promises to have this month's report in the October issue.

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## **VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT**

### **August 14, 1996 Meeting**

The VARA club meeting was held at Kathy's Restaurant in Staunton on August 14, 1996. The meeting was opened by the club president, Ken Harris (KE4GKD), at 7:42 pm. Present were 24 members.

There was one announced license upgrade. Terry Henderson, formerly KE4SSD, has achieved an Advanced class license. Her new call is KT4UO.

The 50/50 amount this week as \$28. \$14 went to the club and \$14 to Sam Pickering (KF4EKV). Sam donated \$3 of his winnings back to the club.

The secretary's report was accepted as printed in the newsletter. Sam Pickering (KF4IKV) made the motion and Ray Colvin (KE4HVR) seconded.

The treasurer's report was accepted as printed in the newsletter. Dick Waldmuller (WB8GIF) made the motion, and David Pickering (KF4JCY) seconded.

New business:

The Big Mountain Repeater Association's picnic date and times were announced to the club.

The club voted to have a separate Christmas Party this year. The members on this year's Christmas committee are Nancy Colvin (KE4PHP), Betty Ralston (KF4EKU), and June Waldmuller (KC4PKJ). The club voted to not have any entertainment this year.

Bob Osterloh (N4ICT), reminded the club about the Virginia Beach Hamfest on September 21 and 22. He also received two tickets from the Hamfest Association for this yearly event. This is an incentive type offering to get hams from other areas to come down to this Hamfest. The tickets are worth \$6 each, and are good for both days. The club voted to raffle off the tickets, one at a time, at the September club meeting. This raffle will take the place of the normal 50/50 drawing. Another special they offer is a buy-two, get-one-free deal on the tickets sold before September 1st.

Sam Pickering (KF4EKV) still can use help with the Jamboree on the Air. The even is strictly HF, and will take place on 80, 40, 20, 17, 15, 12, and 10 meters This event is not a contest. It is a gathering of many Boy Scouts around the world on the HF Bands. A few amateurs are needed to serve as control operators and to provide assistance in getting the Boy Scouts on the air. The event is scheduled for October 19th.

Mike Dillon (KO4EA) reported on the Bike Virginia's Fall Foliage Festival, scheduled for October 26 and 27. Also, volunteers are needed to help out on Friday evening, October 25, to put up signs. The bike route will start at Kate Collins Middle School in Waynesboro, and end up near McGaheysville.

Terry Henderson (KT4UO) reported on the Tour de Valley Century. This bike event is scheduled for

September 1st. The route is a loop and bill being and end in Waynesboro. Volunteers need to be in Waynesboro at 7:00 am Sunday morning.

A committee was formed to update the club's by-laws. The "volunteered and appointed" members of this committee are: Pat Smiley (KD4WWF), Bill Bearden (KC4TQF), and June Pitsenbarger (KF4CWR).

Joe Meeks (KD4FKT) reported on the 145.130 MHz repeater situation as was announced at the last MARA club meeting. The repeater owners removed their equipment that had been housed along with a TV transmitter in one building on Great North Mountain's transmitter site. They have applied and been approved to put their repeater back at the site as an independent station, with their own building. They plan to do so, and with possible phone patch capabilities into Harrisonburg. Also, repeater linking with the 147.315 repeater on net night is also possible.

Old Business:

Mike Dillon (KO4EA) reported on the August 10 test session for Amateur Radio licenses or upgrades. The test session is held at the Massanutten Vo-Tech center every second Saturday of every even-numbered month of the year. There were approximately 10 people taking tests that day. At least three of them passed and received their Tech-plus ticket. There were some attempts at the 13-word-per-minute code test, but unfortunately, they were not successful.

An announcement was made in regards to flowers. Recently, Tiny's (WD4FOZ) mother passed away, and flowers were sent to the burial site by the club. Also, flowers were sent to Ray Pitsenbarger (KE4NNV). He was in the hospital for surgery. The club had voted, sometime in the past, to not have a flower fund. Instead, the club will pass the hat to take donations in order to try and build back the funds used. The hat will be passed at September's meeting.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Joan Pitsenbarger (KF4CWR). June Waldmuller (KC4PKJ) seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

*Submitted by  
Doug Zirk, KE4RMD  
VARA Secretary*

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## **MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT**

### **August 1, 1996 Meeting**

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association held its August meeting on the first at the Golden Corral in Harrisonburg. The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by the president, Dale KD4DAI. Seventeen hams attended this night.

Dick, W3HXX, (formerly W4JZC), reported that the club had \$1002.26 in the account.

Norman, KA4EEN, still needs control operators. Now that the summer is winding down, everyone should find time to help out.

Walt, KF4BFB, said that there are several people interested in the new Novice/Tech class.

Dale is looking for a video tape, "Now You're Talking", that had been shown during the last Novice/Tech class. Someone borrowed it and hasn't returned it. If you have it, or know where it is, the please let him know.

Dale is looking for someone who would be willing to start a code practice session on the air, possibly on 2-meters. There are several people who are interested in upgrading and need the practice.

The membership application of Bob Slaney (Bob #9), WB4WRE, was read and will be voted on at the September meeting.

Dale reminded us that club elections are coming up soon, and he would like to have a nominating committee made up of 2 board members and 2 club members. Paul, WV3J, and Walt, KF4BFB, volunteered to help.

Bob, KF4BFC, was wondering if there isn't some way of having a refresher course on sky and cloud conditions and what to look out for in severe weather, and Dick said that he would look into video tapes that are available from several sources for the club to buy.

Rusty reminded us of the Berryville hamfest August 4th, Gaithersburg on September 8th, and Westminster Maryland at the end of October.

The VHF Contest is September 14-15 this year.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Dale showed a video on contesting called, "Getting Started in Contesting," from CQ Magazine. It told of the various contests, tips on operating, and showed a couple of "big gun" contest stations. Everyone was pumped up ready for the next contest after seeing the tape.

*Respectfully submitted,  
David Tanks, AD4TJ  
MARA Secretary*

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October Monitor Deadline is Friday, October 20th. Please mail your material so as to arrive by Oct. 20th. Thanks.

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**End of this month's issue.**

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**MASSANUTTEN ARA**

President: Dale Showalter, KD4DAI  
Vice-President: Vic Alger, KE4LKQ  
Secretary: David Tanks, AD4TJ  
Treasurer: Richard Weaver, W4JZC  
Board (exp 96): John Nelson, WA4KQX  
Board (exp 97): Bill Edmundson, W4IMS

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## THE VALLEY ARA

President: Kenny Harris, KE4GKD  
Vice-President: Jeff Rinehart, WB4PJW  
Secretary: June Waldmuller, KC4PKJ  
Treasurer: Christy Osterloh, KC4PKK

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The Monitor is published monthly by the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., a non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Service regulations. The Monitor is distributed to all full current members of the MARA and the Valley Amateur Radio Association under reciprocal agreements of the two clubs. All articles, comments, and material for the Monitor should be sent to the Editor, David R. Fordham, KD9LA, Route 1 Box 615, Weyers Cave, VA 24486.

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*This web page was prepared from  
an ASCII version of the Monitor,  
by David R. Fordham, KD9LA*

*It does not necessarily contain all information  
which appeared in the paper copy.*

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