The MARA-VARA *Monitor*

MARCH 1997 -- Volume 97:03

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.

VARA President's Message

Hello to all and I would like to thank everyone for the fine turn out to the February meeting. We took care of a lot of business and I would like to thank everyone for volunteering to serve on the different committees that we formed.

I would like to encourage all the members and guests to attend the March meeting. We will have a report from the Education Committee and a short but interesting Show and Tell, so to speak. If anyone has a suggestion or anything they would like to present or be presented at a club meeting please let me know (Pat KD4WWF) or contact Ray Colvin (KE4HVR)

I would like to thank David Tanks, AD4TJ, president of the MARA club, for the information he gave on the Newsletter and the possibilities of sending it to the members of both clubs who have E-Mail and hope it will save both club's some money. "Thanks again David"

Well again Bob (N4ICT) had three (yes "THREE"!) helpings of Ice Cream and he is on a diet. What a way to go Bob!!!

We will be voting on three new club members at our next meeting, so let's turn out and welcome them by a positive showing. Lets keep our calendar open for FIELD DAY 1997 on June 28th. & 29th. It is a good time to operate on all the bands and have a good time with all. Put the best part is "IT NEVER RAINS ON FIELD DAY"

I would like to remind everyone of our new meeting place which is at Gavid's Family Grill located at 906 Greenville Ave. Staunton (Rt. #11 South - Business) We get there around 6 or so and eat and then the Meeting starts at 7:30 so come on by and let's have a good time together. I would like to thank the owners of Gavid's for the use of their Meeting Room.

Until next month - 73
Pat Smiley - KD4WWF

MARA President's Message

We had a great turnout for our February meeting (31 hams!), the best we have had in a long time. If you have not yet filled out the memebers' questionnaire, please dig out your November issue of the Monitor and take the time to give your club officers you ideas and input on how we can serve you better.

The March meeting program will be a practical one on how you can use CATV hardline in your shack. Al, N3JB and I will be doing the honors, and this time we will have actual live demonstrations, not just talk.

The March meeting may be our last at the South Main Golden Corral. Be sure you have renewed your membership so you will receive next month's Monitor with its announcement of where we will be meeting in April! See you on March 6th!

David Tanks, AD4TJ

IS THIS YOUR LAST ISSUE?

This is the last issue of the Monitor for those club members who have not renewed their membership for 1997. If you have not already done so, mail your check to your treasurer today!

MONITOR NOW AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY

Beginning with this issue, the Monitor is available via E-Mail for those club members who have an email account. This article contains important information for members who wish to receive the Monitor via the Internet.

For our members (VARA and MARA) who have Internet electronic mail access, you can make arrangements with the newsletter editor (David Fordham, KD9LA) to receive the Monitor via your email account, at no cost to you (above your normal membership dues and the cost of your email service).

If you elect to receive the Monitor electronically, you will no longer receive a paper copy via the U.S. Postal Service. But since e-mail traditionally is delivered overnight, and since e-mail does not have to be printed, collated, stapled, sealed, hand-labelled, and carried to the Post Office, you will probably receive your Monitor several days before the paper copies would have arrived. In fact, the email copies will be dispatched to the Internet at the same time the paper original is delivered to the printer! Typically this is the last Thursday of each month, a full week earlier than regular mail.

There are two ways of getting the Monitor electronically. Both ways require you to have access to an Internet E-mail provider. (Locally, Internet e-mail can be obtained from GTE, Shentel, CFW, AOL, GEnie, CompuServe, and Juno, as well as a couple of other private sources.)

The first way to get the Monitor via email involves sending the Monitor in the form of a plain ASCII text message. The text of the current issue of the newsletter will be sent to your E-Mail account, and you can simply read it the way you would any E-mail message. Of course, a 10-page Monitor newsletter is going to be a very lengthy email message! And since it is sent in plain ASCII text, you will lose all of the "special effects" (large headings, bold text, italics, centering, hightlight boxes, and pictures). But at least you would get the main body of text, including articles, announcements, and other important text information.

The second way to get the I electronically requires you to have an E-Mail program capable of handling binary attachments. Many common email programs (such as AOL and Microsoft Network) have this capability. In addition, you also must have a Word Processor program capable of reading Word-for-Windows version 6.0 documents. Again, the lastest version of the three major word processors (CorelOffice, Microsoft Office, and Lotus Suites) have this capability.

Under the second method, you would get short one-line email message, and attached to that message would be a large binary file. The binary file would be the actual Word-for-Windows document file containing the current issue of the Monitor. In other words, you would get the Monitor just as it appears on paper: bold, italics, centered text, headings, pictures, the whole nine yards. You would "detach" or extract the binary file from the mail message (using your email program's extract feature), and save it to your hard drive. You then would use your word processing program to open the document, view it, or even print it on your printer.

(If you do not have a word processor capable of reading Word-for-Windows 6.0 documents, but you are running Windows 3.1 or Windows95, you can obtain a free viewer from Microsoft which will enable you to view and print Word documents. Contact the newsletter editor for more details on this option!)

If you were at the February MARA or VARA meeting and you put your e-mail address on the sign-up sheet, you should by now have already received a test copy of this issue of the Monitor. Actually, you will receive two test copies, one using the plain ASCII method, and the other using the Attachment method.

If you wish to continue receiving the Monitor by way of E-mail, you must advise the newsletter editor which method you prefer. If the newsletter editor does not hear from you with your preference, you will revert back to the paper-copy only next month.

If you were not at the February club meeting, signing up for E-mail delivery is simple. If you have an email account, just notify the newsletter editor of your email address and which of the two methods of receipt (ASCII or attachment) you prefer. Be sure to include your name and callsign so he can verify your membership... sometimes it's hard to tell who XRT454@aol.com really is! That's all there is to it!

The editor's e-mail address is: fordhadr@jmu.edu.

Speedy Reading!

Blue Ridge Community College Walk for Scholars

Saturday morning, November 2, 1996, ham radio once again served the community by providing communications support for the BRCC Walk-For-Scholars. By 9:00 am, amateurs had filled their positions around the walk course, circumnavigating the college campus in Weyers Cave. Oh, yes, we actually had met even earlier to get our instructions.

The weather was a little nippy, so the vehicle was a welcome location from which to operate. No unusual events occurred, making the event all the more fun. Over 100 people (and even some dogs) participated in helping raise money for deserving college students.

Those helping included:

- Paul (KD4DDI) and his XYL, manning Checkpoint #1,
- Dave (KD4EQA) on Checkpoint #2,
- Enos (KF4BFF) on Checkpoint #3, and

- Norman (KA4EEN) working net control inside looking out to see who was looking in.

All went well, and all walkers and hams had an enjoyable time. Thanks again to all who helped.

Norman Benner,
KA4EEN

1997 Field Day Planning Meeting

The Joint MARA/VARA Field Day Committee will hold an open forum to get input for the 1997 Field Day plans. The forum will be held on Tuesday evening, March 18th, at the Weyers Cave Volunteer Fire Department station house, on Route 276, just 2 blocks north of the traffic signal at Route 256. All club members (from both clubs) are welcome and invited to attend. The committee members will be the ones making the decisions and developing the plans for this year's event, but before they do, they would like to hear your comments, suggestions, complaints, and other input. If you can't make the meeting but still have some comments, be sure to contact Jeff Rinehart, WB4PJW, at 337-7337 (Churchville in the evenings) or 434-0062 (Harrisonburg during the day), or send a packet message to WB4PJW on the KB4OLM DX cluster.

K4LXG Uses HF to Keep In Touch

Dateline: Lakeland, Florida, a scant hour's drive from DisneyWorld, down the road a piece from the famous Bok Singing Tower, and just minutes away from Mount Dora, the highest point in the state of Florida at 327 feet above mean sea level --- operating from this winter paradise among the orange groves and palm trees was K4LXG, AKA Elsworth. Using a dipole antenna, our hero was able to make nightly contacts on, you guessed it, the 75-meter phone band. Paul (WV3J), Dick (W4HXH), Jay (W4QDC), Jeff (WB4PJW) and the illustrious John (KC4RRY) all were able to enjoy nice open paths to the Sunshine State to keep tabs on the frolicking traveler. The highlight of the entire week was a phone patch, courtesy of Gerry (K4RBZ) to Elsworth's XYL. (Now who would go to Florida in the winter and leave their wife behind in the snow?!) Once again, ham radio provides much needed communication!

FCC Resuming Vanity Processing

Vanity call sign processing under Gate 2 of the FCC program is back in operation. The FCC's Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, facility has now apparently solved their computer problems and recently processed vanity applications received from December 1st, 1996, through February 5th, of this year. In all, slightly over 2400 applications were processed. Unfortunately, only half of the applicants managed to successfully snag one of their call sign choices.

The FCC says that it issued 1344 vanity calls from this batch. Another 1000 applications ended up in the dreaded work in process stack for special handling. Vanity call sign applications continue to arrive at the FCC. Gate 1 opened last May, Gate 1A opened in July and Gate 2 opened in September. There is still no word on when the FCC plans to open Gate 3.

(Via FCC, ARRL)

Digital System Information Now On-Line and Kept Up-to-Date

...No Longer in ARRL Repeater Directory

The Tucson Amateur Packet Radio Corporation (TAPR), with the support of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), will begin providing a new on-line service containing the information on digital systems that until now has been printed in the annual ARRL Repeater Directory.

Information on digital systems will no longer be published in the the ARRL Repeater Directory, starting with the 1997-1998 edition, permitting the publication to better focus on its primary use as a guide to voice repeaters for traveling Amateurs.

In planning the 1997-98 edition, the ARRL concluded that the Repeater Directory was no longer the most effective medium for digital system information. Discussions involving various regional digital groups that provide data to the digital section of the Repeater Directory led to the conclusion that TAPR was the logical group to take on the task of a new North American Digital System Directory.

This new database system will describe systems used by amateur radio stations involved in digital communications in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The Digital System Directory will be based on information provided by regional, state, and local organizations as well as individuals in a nearly real-time format. This should allow information to be maintained and updated more frequently than in a yearly publication. TAPR will also work with participating organizations to make this information available on TAPR's yearly CD-ROM as well as some future publications for local/regional groups to distribute.

The system has over 80 participating groups submitting data and currently has around 3000 entries in the system (all just in the last 30 days). The NADSD updates itself every 3 hours -- taking the data uploaded by the various groups/people and it creates new web pages based on any changes. Add to this javAPRS, and the system can map all the data in the system that has LAT/LON defined and see their locations. While the project is very new and has a ways to go in the next few years as it improves, it shows the capability of providing data in a more useable format than a printed guide that is updated only once a year. Digital systems, by their nature, change. The item that will be added next year, will be to define interconnections between systems in the database, so that these interconnects can be displayed within javAPRS. The ability to see networks or BBS routing will be very unique (and cool).

For further information on the project and how to get involved, check http://www.tapr.org/directory or send e-mail to Carl Estey, wa0cqg@tapr.org

ARRL Letter

Contest Weekend Prop Forecast

From the ARRL Letter, here are some ARRL International DX Contest CW weekend path projections from the eastern United States:

- To Europe, check 80 meters from 2330 to 0730 UTC, 40 from 2230 to 0230 UTC and 0730 to 0930 UTC, and 20 from 1530 to 1830 UTC.

- To Africa, check 80 meters from 0000 to 0330 UTC, 40 from 2330 to 0300 UTC and 20 from 1830 to 2130 UTC. There is a chance for a 15 meter opening around 1900 UTC.

- To South America, check 80 meters from 0000 to 1000 UTC, 40 from 2330 to 1100 UTC, and 20 from 1500 to 0000 UTC, with the best 20 meter conditions toward the end of the period. Check 15 meters from 1700 to 2030 UTC, and 10 meters has a chance for some propagation around 1900 to 2100 UTC.

- To the South Pacific check 80 meters from 1000 to 1330 UTC, 40 from 0930 to 1400 UTC, 20 around 1530 UTC and 15 around 2200 to 2300 UTC.

- To East Asia check 80 from 0830 to 1400 UTC, 40 from 0830 to 1500 UTC and 20 from 2130 to 0000 UTC.

Amateur Radio Self-Study Package Now Available

Kenwood's ham radio self-study program for the Technician class license, "Make a Personal Connection," now is available at Amateur Radio dealers. The package includes EZ-PASS, a PC Windows-based training program, as well as a study manual that supports the software with information on operating rules and regulations and electronics theory. In addition, the kit contains the How to Get on the Air Guide--a ham radio primer--as well as Amateur Radio frequency charts. (The package also includes an ARRL membership application.)

"Make A Personal Connection" is available for Windows 95 and DOS. Minimum system requirements are a 386DX/33 and 8 MB of RAM. For more information, check out Kenwood's Web page at http://www.kenwood.net.

New Russian Ham Satellite?

Rumors of an imminent launch of RS-16 continue to circulate, however no definite information on a specific launch date is available at this time. Once launched, the expected orbital altitude is 500 - 600 kilometers with an orbital inclination of 97.2 degrees. We do know that the following frequencies will be used by RS-16:

- Uplink = 145.915 - 145.948 MHz
- Downlink = 29.415 - 29.448 MHz
- Beacons = 29.408 , 29.451 MHz
- Pwr 29 MHz Down = 1.2 W /4 W

- Beacon 1 = 435.504 MHz
- Beacon 2 = 435.548 MHz
- Pwr 435 MHz Beacons = 1.6 W

Furnished by Andy, RK3KPK,
operator of the RS3A RS satellite command station
via Amsat News Service

Using your SoundBlaster-16 as a Digital Signal Processor

Look at sbfft12.zip on your favorite DOS software repository. You feed the audio from your speaker into the SoundBlaster and see the frequency spectrum displayed spectrogram style on your screen. If you see (and hear!) an unwanted carrier or heterodyne in the passband you just drag the mouse across a band of freqs containing the carrier, hit the F key and voila! The carrier is *GONE*. You can interactively define bandpass, bandstop, high-pass, and low-pass filters with the mouse and you can use up to 6 of them simultaneously. Listening to a freq with 3 cw stations in the passband? Grab the mouse and chop out the two you don't want. It works really well.

I have been using this software (which is free, by the way) for several months. The interesting thing is that it was not reviewed in last month's QST article on sound card spectrum display software, even though it is much more applicable to ham applications than the rest of the ones they reviewed. There is only one clincher. It only works with a SoundBlaster 16 card or one that is compatible at the register level. If you can't find it anywhere else I have accumulated several DSP programs for sound cards on our FTP server at the Goddard Amateur Radio Club. You can anonymously ftp them from: ftp://garc.gsfc.nasa.gov/pub/dsp

Ron Parise, WA4SIR

Help Needed From APRS and GPS Operators

Hams involved with APRS and GPS are being asked to contribute to a federal study into the benefits of establishing a national differential global positioning system (DGPS) radio beacon service. The US Coast Guard and the US Army Corps of Engineers already provide (or soon will provide) DGPS signals in coastal areas and along navigable waterways. Terrestrial DGPS signals--in the 285 to 325 kHz spectrum-- complement satellite GPS data by increasing their accuracy. Ted Pugh of PB Farradyne Inc, which is studying the benefits and feasibility of setting up an inland DGPS system, wants to hear from the amateur community about its use of GPS and APRS in public safety applications, and how DGPS might help. "We are interested in any public benefit you or your organization might identify for such an undertaking-- especially as it may relate to public safety or public betterment applications," said Pugh in a letter to ARRL HQ. Pugh estimated that nationwide, no-cost DGPS service could be in place by 2001. Comments may be sent to John F. "Ted" Pugh at any of three ids: pugh@farradyne.com, or tpugh@farradyne.com or pught@farradyne.com.

ARRL Letter Vol 16 No. 6

ARRL Members Asked To Comment On License Restructuring Ideas

ARRL members are being invited to add their ideas, comments and recommendations to those of the ARRL WRC-99 Planning Committee, which has suggested sweeping changes to the Amateur Radio licensing structure in the US. On the table for open discussion and debate are proposals that include:

- elimination of the Novice license
- creation of a new Intermediate license to replace the Technician Plus
- expanded HF privileges for Intermediate licensees, including phone on 160, 75 and 15 meters
- a 10-wpm General CW test (with more stringent testing standards for all CW exams)
- expanded phone privileges for General-class and higher licensees

Details of the plan, discussed during the recent ARRL Board of Directors meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, appear in March QST. The Board says it seeks comments from members to ensure that before any plan goes forward, it enjoys broad support from the amateur community. The Board will not act on the issue at least until its July meeting.

Latest Non-Vanity Callsigns

What are the new calls these days? Outside the vanity callsign program, no 1x2 are being issued, and the supply of 1x3 calls has been depleted as well in most call districts.

According to the FCC, as of February 3rd, the latest callsigns assigned from the standard sequence in the fourth call district were AF4AO (extra), KU4BN (advanced) and KF4OSX (all other classes). In the Eighth Call District the corresponding calls were: AA8ZD, KI8AT, and KC8FXZ.

The only call districts with unassigned 1x3 calls are the First district (N1YMY) and the third district (N3YQJ), but as you can see, they are going fast!

Listen Up! Way, Way Up!

Do you enjoy real QRP? Do you like to listen for exotic out-of-this-world stations? Do you have a scanner capable of receiving 200-300 MHz? And perhaps a VHF beam antenna? Then maybe you'd be interested in listening in on the conversations between the space-walking astronauts as they buzz around outside the space shuttles. According to astronaut Ron Parise, WA4SIR, the EVA (extra-vehicular activity) packs use 259.7 MHz to talk to the shuttle, and the shuttle uses 296.8 MHz to talk to the EVA astronauts (full duplex!). If two or more astronauts are out at one time, they may all switch to 279.0 (simplex, or more accurately, half-duplex). The modulation is standard AM. The EVA packs put out about 2 watts; the shuttle about 5 watts. Since the frequency is very, very quiet, you just might be able to pick them up, assuming the open cargo bay is pointed at the earth!

Advanced Class VE'S...

The ARRL has asked the FCC to change its rules to permit Advanced class volunteer examiners to administer the General class license examination. Under current rules, Advanced class VE's can administer only Novice, Technician and Technician Plus examinations. The League's filing says that allowing Advanced class VE's to administer General class examination elements will help to create additional opportunities for upgrading. It would also take some of the mounting pressure off Extra class VE's. The League estimates more than 15,500 additional elements could be administered each year if Advanced class VE's could administer exams up to the General class level.

From Amateur Radio Newsline

Upcoming Shuttle Mission to Carry Ham Radio Again

The STS-83 space shuttle mission will again carry ham radio. The tentative launch date is March 27th. Three hams are scheduled to be aboard the shuttle Columbia. They are: Mission Commander James Halsell, KC5RNI, Payload Commander Janice Voss, KC5BTK, and Donald Thomas, KC5FVF, mission specialist.

The STS-83 flight is scheduled to last 16 days and will carry a SAREX station that is configured for voice and packet. The mission's primary payload is the microgravity science laboratory. The SAREX Working Group has designated the following frequencies during this mission [STS-83].

- FM Voice Downlink: (Worldwide) 145.55 MHz
- FM Voice Uplink: 144.91, 144.93, 144.95, 144.97, and 144.99 MHz
- FM Packet Downlink: 145.55 MHz
- FM Packet Uplink: 144.49 MHz

Notice that the crew will use separate receive and transmit frequencies. DO NOT transmit on the shuttle's DOWNLINK frequency. The DOWNLINK is your receiving frequency. The UPLINK is your transmitting frequency. The crew will not favor any single uplink frequency, so your ability to communicate with SAREX will be the "luck of the draw." Transmit only when the shuttle is within range of your station, and when the shuttle's station is on-the-air.

Philip Chien, KC4YER

Electronic License Renewal: ...Fast - Fast - Fast

A new license renewal benefit is now in place for ARRL members. The ARRL VEC says that it will process FCC Form 610 applications for a renewal, address change, name change or call sign change for electronic submission to the FCC. There is no charge for this service but an original, signed Form 610 must be mailed or otherwise delivered to the ARRL VEC. (Sorry, but Faxed in 610's are not acceptable.) What is the benefit to sending your renewal through the ARRL? The electronic submission to the FCC means your new license will be issued about 2-3 days after the ARRL gets your 610, compared to 3-4 weeks for the FCC data entry operation. Questions should be directed to the ARRL VEC at area code (860) 594-0300.

From Amateur Radio Newsline

Some Very Useful Information!

Last year a friend of mine upgraded from GirlFriend 1.0 to Wife 1.0 and found that it is leaves very little system resources available for other applications. This is especially true with the cache resource. He is now noticing that Wife 1.0 is also spawning child processes which are further consuming valuable resources. No mention of this particular phenomenon was included in the product brochure or the documentation, although other users have informed him that this is to be expected due to the nature of the application. Not only that, but Wife 1.0 installs itself such that it is always launched at system initialization, where it can monitor all other system activity. This greatly inhibits performance of other system operations, and serves to slow down what would otherwise be lightning-fast response times on applications such as Fun for Windows.

Anyway, my friend is finding that some applications such as PokerNight 10.3, BeerBash 2.5, and PubNight

7.0 are no longer able to run in the system at all, crashing the system when selected (even though they always worked fine before). During installation, Wife 1.0 provides no option as to the omission of undesired Plug-Ins such as MotherInLaw 55.8 and BrotherInLaw Beta release. Also, Wife 1.0 system performance seems to diminish with each passing day.

Some features he'd like to see in the upcoming wife 2.0:

- A "Don't remind me again" button
- Minimize button
- An install shield feature that allows Wife 2.0 to be installed with the option to uninstall at any time without the loss of all cache and other system resources.
- An option to run the network driver in promiscuous mode which would allow the systems hardware probe feature to be much more useful.

I myself decided to avoid the headaches associated with Wife 1.0 by sticking with Girlfriend 2.0. Even here, however, I found many problems. Apparently you cannot install Girlfriend 2.0 on top of Girlfriend 1.0. You must first completely uninstall Girlfriend 1.0, including the documentation. Other users say this is a long-standing bug that I should have known about. Also, the various versions of Girlfriend have conflicts over shared use of the I/O port. You'd think they would have fixed such a stupid bug by now. To make matters worse, the uninstall program for Girlfriend 1.0 doesn't work very well and leaves undesirable traces of the application in the system. Another problem is that all versions of Girlfriend continually pop up annoying little messages about the advantages of upgrading to Wife 1.0.

*****BUG WARNING*****
Wife 1.0 has an undocumented bug: If you try to install Mistress 1.1 before first completely uninstalling Wife 1.0, Wife 1.0 will delete all MSMoney files before doing the uninstall itself. Then Mistress 1.1 will refuse to install, claiming insufficient resources.

*****BUG WORK-AROUNDS *****
To avoid this bug, try installing Mistress 1.1 on a different system and never run any file transfer applications such as Laplink 6.0. Also, beware of similar shareware applications that have been known to carry viruses that may adversely affect Wife 1.0. Another solution would be to run Mistress 1.0 via a UseNet provider under an anonymous user name. Here again, though, beware of the viruses which can accidentally be downloaded from the UseNet.

Prof. Glenn Smith
smithgt@jmu.edu

Who Had My Call Before Me?

Some vanity call sign holders have become interested in the genealogy of their new call signs and want to know who the former holders were. While the ARRL doesn't have the resources to track down this information those interested might try the FCC's official duplicating contractor, International Transcription Service (ITS). Among other things, ITS can research amateur call signs to determine when they were first issued and to whom. The cost of this service varies depending on the volume and research time involved. Research time is $15 per hour, billed in quarter-hour increments. ITS is located in the FCC's Gettysburg Office. Write ITS Inc, 1270 Fairfield Rd, Suite 24, Gettysburg, PA 17325-7245; tel 717-337-1433; fax 717-337-3409

.--Tom Hogerty, KC1J

FCC Drops Birthdate Info

Effective February 21, 1997, the FCC no longer will distribute date-of-birth information as part of its Amateur Radio license data. The field has been physically removed from the data stream.

ARRL Letter

NEW WATS NUMBER FOR HAM INFO FROM FCC

The FCC has designated a new, toll-free (WATS) number for Amateur Radio license inquiries--including inquiries about vanity and new call signs. The new number, 888-225-5322, will connect callers to the FCC National Call Center, handled by the FCC's Consumer Information Bureau.

HAARP TO AIR TEST TRANSMISSION FOR HAMS

The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) facility in Gakona, Alaska, will transmit a test signal on March 8, 1997, seeking reports from hams and SWLs in the "Lower 48" to determine how well the HAARP transmissions can be heard to the south.

During this test, the HAARP facility will transmit on or near 3.4 MHz and 6.99 MHz to give listeners the opportunity to listen for the HAARP facility and to claim a special HAARP QSL card. The test will be conducted beginning at 0430 UTC on March 8 (2330 Eastern Time on March 7).

The format of the test will be to transmit a constant carrier (no modulation) signal followed by a CW message at 10 WPM, according to the following schedule:

```
TIME    FREQ        SIGNAL         ANTENNA POSITION

0430    6.99 MHz  Carrier only    Pointed up
0435    6.99 MHz  CW message      Pointed up
0440    6.99 MHz  Carrier only    Pointed to SE
0445    6.99 MHz  CW message      Pointed to SE
0450    3.4 MHz   Carrier only    Pointed up
0455    3.4 MHz   CW message      Pointed up
```

Reception reports should include signal strength during the constant carrier transmission period along with the text of the CW message.

Complete details on this test and a QSL address will be listed on the HAARP home page at http://server5550.itd.nrl.navy.mil/announce.html.

The HAARP facility--now in the developmental prototype stage--has been undergoing testing since it was completed in late 1994. Multiple transmitters feed multiple antenna elements (there are 48 antenna elements on the site, arranged in eight rows of six columns; however, at this time, only 18 elements are active. The test will use 17 antennas with a net transmitter power of 340 kW). The final configuration could have 180 antenna elements and a combined transmitter power of 3.6 MW. HAARP's stated scientific purpose is to

study "the properties and behavior of the ionosphere, with particular emphasis on being able to understand and use it to enhance communications and surveillance systems for both civilian and defense purposes." HAARP is managed by the US Air Force and the US Navy.

For more information, see "The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program" (QST, Sep 1996, p 33), or check out the HAARP home page, http://server5550.itd.nrl.navy.mil/haarp.html.

Ed Kennedy, K3NS
ARRL Letter Vol 16: 8

Little LEO's Asking for More Ham Spectrum

Terry Henderson, KT4UO, submitted the following regarding the Little LEO system. If you recall, the Little LEOs are low-earth-orbit commercial satellites. The system industry group is asking the FCC for a spectrum allocation, and has suggested several ham bands as possible locations for their service. Details of the LEOs are found in the March QST, but since that issue went to press, the LEO group has asked for more of the ham spectrum, including not only the 2-meter and 440 MHz bands, but now the 220 MHz band as well.

Below is the text of the message from Terry:

Just in case you haven't gotten the word yet ----

See the ARRL Web page - http://www.arrl.org/announce/2m70cm.html#ltr970214. They are asking that you take a moment to E-mail the FCC opposing the little leo's "band sharing" proposals.

Simple, just E-mail to "wrc97@fcc.gov". Subject line should be "Reference No. ISP-96-005 IWG-2A". Body of message can be as simple as "I support the ARRL/AMSAT opposition to the NVNG MSS flexible allocation proposal." Add your own comments, if desired. This is not an FCC proposal, so comment, but don't flame them!

Terry Henderson, KT4UO

Some DX Tidbits

The Island DX News reports W1BIH will be active as PJ9JT from Curacao through March 30th. Activity will have an emphasis on CW, with operations on 160 through 10 meters. QSL via W1AX.

Also, ZS6EZ who serves as the QSL Manager for ZS8RI, reports that a lot of people are losing their QSLs mailed to him because they put "Edward and Marion Island" on their envelopes. ZS8IR's QSL route is via ZS6EZ in South Africa. Whatever you do, never put Edward and Marion Island on the envelope.

And, K8PYD, from the 8th Area QSL Bureau would like to remind everyone with a new vanity call sign to send new SASE envelopes with your new callsigns on them. Also, you should still send an envelope or two with your old callsign on it just in case some cards continue to show up over the next few years at your QSL bureau.

From Amateur Radio Newsline

NIFTY HAM WEB SITES

Bands dead? Got a few minutes before the sked? Is the Net over, but you're still wide awake and don't feel like calling CQ? Flip on your computer, dial your Internet provider, and have a look at some of these nifty ham radio web sites.

Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, has found one of the neatest sites I've seen yet: http://junior.apk.net/~jbarta/idiot/idiot.html

Want to try APRS without spending money? Watch Live APRS action at: http://web.usna.navy.mil/~bruninga/aprs.html

Thwart radio thieves. Add APRS to ANY radio without needing a TNC!: http://www.tapr.org/tapr/html/mic-e.html

Andy Funk, KB7UV, has put up a web page on safety around commercial power lines. While the guidelines were developed primarily for broadcasters, Andy believes that this material might be of interest to Radio Amateurs as well since the powerline contact accident procedures were developed in cooperation with the safety department of Georgia Power. Try: http://www.wagatv.com/eng

Assi Friedman, 4Z7ABA found that MCL has a site with an online catalog. Some people that are into RF design might find it interesting: http://www.minicircuits.com

The Area Repeater Coordination Council which is the VHF and UHF frequency coordination group for Eastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey has just updated their online repeater database: http://www.arcc/inc.org

Jerry Vogt of Hamtronics has announced that his company has a new site on the web with the company's 1997 catalog and other special information. You can check it out at: http://www.hamtronics.com

Don Stoner, the famous ham who fought against local restrictions on antennas, has established a web page on restrictive covenants as they pertain to ham radio operations: http://www.gate.net/~donstone/antenna.html

If you are curious about how satellite tracking works, Tom Clark, W3IWI, found a fun Web site that provides a nice visualization of Kepler's 3 laws of orbital mechanics using JAVA aplets. It can be found at: http://observe.ivv.nasa.gov/observe/exhibit/reference/module/orbits/orbit_sim.html

Did you know that the geostationary weather satellites re-transmit time signals on the 468 MHz band? The web site describing the GOES time service transmissions on 468.825 and 468.8375 MHz is: http://www.bldrdoc.gov/timefreq/service/goes.htm .

If someone steals your radio, e-mail the details of the theft to Mark Saunders, KJ7BS. Mark offers a free service to help hams whose gear has been lost or stolen. Check out his lost or stolen ham gear listing at: http://www.dancris.com/~tracker/tracker.html

Rich Colwell, WA3QKX tells us that he has established two list servers on the world wide web dedicated to repeater controller hardware and software. One is for the still very popular ACC Controller while the other covers Link Communications controllers. Joining the ACC Controller List Server (Repeater Controllers) go to URL: http://rrc2@engrng.pitt.edu/~rrc2/acc.html

Want to receive the full MARA/VARA Monitor version (not just the ASCII file) via email, but don't have a fancy word processor on which to view it and print it? John Nelson, WA4KQX, shares the Microsoft website which contains the Word-for-Windows file viewer you need to view the Monitor file. This URL should get you to the page where you pick the Windows 95 version or the Windows 3.1 version of the viewer. The windows 95 version is named "wd95vw71.exe" and is about 2.2 MB. The Windows 3.1 version is named "wrd6view.exe" and is about 1.2 MB: http://www.microsoft.com/word/internet/viewer/

As mentioned in last month's monitor, the NTIA has issued a report suggesting more ham bands. The complete report can be found at: http://www.ntia.doc.gov/osmhome/reports/hfspo/contents.html.

For tracking the space shuttles, United Space Alliance and Marshall Space Flight Center have both released applets. Of course, these applets only work when a shuttle is in orbit, but when one is up, these pages show real-time locations, future ground tracks, etc., and contain other useful mission information. NASA's applet is: http://liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov:81/home/mission/jtrack/welcome.html The one from United Space Alliance is at: www.unitedspacealliance.com

One of the neatest DX web sites is located in Italy, but is only seconds away on the Internet: http://www-dx.deis.unibo.it/htdx/index.html

---

HOAXES On the Net...

Several local hams have recently submitted announcements to the newsletter editor, forwarded from numerous Internet sources, supposedly requesting help for victims of various illnesses and accidents. These requests are asking for everyone in the world to "send an email" to some such organization with the promise that the receiving organization will somehow assist the unfortunate victim, usually by donating money based on the number of emails received.

Your newsletter editor appreciates your thoughtfulness and kindness, and is gratified that local hams are willing to help others in need. (And he especially appreciates your willingness to submit articles!) So why haven't these requests been put in the Monitor? Inevitably, almost all of these requests for mass emailing turn out to be cruel hoaxes, perpetrated by the same kind of people who create computer viruses. Their purpose is to flood some organization with thousands of useless email messages, disrupting their normal operations. Similar hoaxes were distributed in years past asking for post cards. If you receive any such request for mass emailings, you can investigate the validity by checking into any of the various NewsNet servers, or better yet, just ignore the request. If any such requests do turn out to be valid, word is sure to spread. But in the meantime, thank you for your time and trouble, and especially, thank you for trying to help someone in need.

NEWSLETTER INFO:

The deadline for the April issue of the Monitor is Friday, March 21st.

Would you like to see more local articles in the Monitor? Then send them in! Forward your articles, for-sale items, announcements, reminders, comments, editorials, jokes, compliments, and other material to the newsletter editor:

David R. Fordham
131 Wayside Drive

Weyers Cave, VA 24486

What happened to the Route 1 Box 615 address? No, the Newsletter editor hasn't moved! Augusta County has assigned street names, and the Weyers Cave Post Office began using the new street addresses as of February 1st. So send your material to 131 Wayside Drive! OR, you can submit your material to:

E-mail: fordhadr@jmu.edu
Packet: KD9LA@KC4MZN or KD9LA@WAYBBS
Phone: 540-234-0448 or 540-568-3024

VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

February 12, 1997 Meeting

The V.A.R.A. club meeting was held at Gavid's Steakhouse Restaurant in Staunton on February 12, 1997. The meeting was opened by the club president, Pat Smiley (KD4WWF), at 7:30 P.M. Present were 32 members and guests.

Gary Pitsenbarger was a guest at the meeting. Saturday's test session at Massanutten Vo-Tech was canceled due to bad weather but he was able to take his test elsewhere on Sunday. He passed his Tech No-Code test but at the time of this meeting, did not have his call sign. Pat Smiley (KD4WWF) passed the 5 words per minute code and is now a Tech Plus.

There were no A.R.E.S. or Skywarn reports.

The 50/50 drawing was won by Al Bonck (N3JB). The total amount was $33. $16.50 went to the club's treasury and Al donated his $16.50 to the field day fund. Gavid's Steakhouse also played the 50/50 and bought 5 tickets.

The treasurer's report was accepted as printed in last month's newsletter.

A Flower Fund committee had been formed. This committee of three members will keep track of who is sick, or in the hospital, or who has died. If you know of someone that needs to be reported to one of these committee members, then please call one of them nearest to you. Joe Archambeault (N4TRH) will take care of the Stuarts Draft and Waynesboro area. Brown Snyder (N4ZHV) will cover the Harrisonburg area. Bob (Snout) Osterloh (N4ICT) will cover the Staunton area.

The flower fund "hat" was passed and generated $44 to help build back the treasury.

An Education Committee was formed. Ray Colvin (KE4HVR), Bill Bearden (KC4TQF) and Bill Jordan (KE4LKS) are the committee members, with Ray being the Chairman.

An Executive Committee was formed. Jeff Rinehart (WB4PJW), Bill Shott (W2ZVM), and Dick Waldmuller (WB8GIF) volunteered.

David Tanks (AD4TJ) spoke on the subject of the ever increasing costs of printing and mailing newsletters. As one way to fight these costs, one can send to David Fordham (KD9LA), their E-mail address in order to get the newsletter via E-mail. This method will save money for the clubs and is a faster way for people to get their newsletters. They can view them on the screen or print them at their leisure. David Fordhams' E-mail

address is fordhadr@jmu.edu.

An Audit Committee was formed at the request of the treasurer in order to double check his work. Joan Pitsenbarger (KF4CWR) and June Waldmuller (KC4PKJ) will make up this committee.

Ken Harris (KE4GKD), at the request of the club, bought a tape recorder, for the purpose of taping all of the meetings for the clubs' archive. The cost to the club was $47 which included blank tapes.

Next month the club will vote on Cowles Andrus III (KB4CNI).

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Dick Waldmuller (WB8GIF). Bill Shott (W2ZVM) seconded and the meeting was adjourned around 8 P.M.

Submitted By:
Douglas S. Zirk (KE4RMD)
V.A.R.A. Secretary

MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

February 6, 1997 Meeting

The MARA club held it's regular meeting on February 6, 1997 at the Golden Corral Restaurant in Harrisonburg. The president, David Tanks (AD4TJ) called the meeting to order and as the first order of business presented certficates to James (KF4BFM), Walt (KF4BFB), John (WA4KQX), and Colin (N4ZFQ) for their work in promoting amateur radio by presenting a program for Ray (KD4OXU) at Wilbur Pence Middle School in Dayton. Around one hundred ten students learned more about the value and workings of amateur radio.

Dale (KD4DAI) reported that final approval has been received from the National Forest Service for a repeater site on Great North Mountain. The lease is for ten years with privilege of renewal. Site trustees were also given the privilege of renting space to commercial interests for radio equipment.

Other business was discussed as follows:

Testing is scheduled again for February 8th.

David (KD9LA) presented a study showing how our newsletter would be effected by various costs as printing was now costing more and asked how he should proceed. Paul (WV3J) made a motion and Colin (N4ZFQ) seconded that David (KD9LA) be allowed to use his best judgment in dealing with the matter. This motion was passed.

We were asked to provide E-mail addresses next month and all who wished could get future newsletters by E-mail.

Field Day committee was discussed and appointed as follows: MARA is represented by Colin (N4ZFQ), Paul (WV3J), and James (KF4BFM). The VARA club is represented by Jeff (WB4PJW) and Ken (KE4GKD).

Norman (KA4EEN) announced that he needed net controls for March.

David (AD4TJ) recommended members take a look at CQ-VHF magazine and then gave a program on bouncing signals off the moon. He also requested suggestions for future programs. It was also announced that April will be "Home Brew" month and time to present favorite projects.

Ken (KE4GKD) thanked all those who helped hunt the lost biker recently.

Colin (N4ZFQ) presented Norman (KA4EEN) with a certificate for serving two years as assistant coordinator and also spoke of county plans for ARES.

Our treasurer was absent because of illness but it was reported we had a balance of $103.68 plus some other money in the treasury.

Ken (KE4GKD) won the 50/50 drawing.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m

Respectfully submitted
Wilton B. Thomas (KF4BFL),
MARA Secretary

End of this month's issue.

MASSANUTTEN ARA

President: David Tanks, AD4TJ
Vice-President: Walt Lam, KF4BFB
Secretary: Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL
Treasurer: Richard Weaver, W3HXH
Board (exp 97): Bill Edmundson, W4IMS
Board (exp 98): Sandy Mullins, KE4PZC

THE VALLEY ARA

President: Pat Smiley, KD4WWF
Vice-President: Kenny Harris, KE4GKD
Secretary: Doug Zirk, KE4RMD
Treasurer: Charlie Garner, WA4ITY