

The MARA-VARA *Monitor*

MAY 1997 -- Volume 97:05

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 organizations under the IRS regulations),
for radio amateurs in the central Shenandoah Valley.

MARA AT NEW RESTAURANT

The May meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association will be held at the new Golden Corral restaurant on May 1st. The meal begins around 6:30 pm, and the business meeting will begin at 7:30 pm. The new restaurant is on U.S. 33 East, Market Street, about 1 mile east of the Interstate 81 interchange. The location is just east of the Valley Mall. See you there!

VARA'S NEW CALLSIGN: W4MUS

The Valley Amateur Radio Association has finally been issued a vanity club callsign! After three tries, we finally received the callsign W4MUS. The official trustee of the call is Bob Osterloh, N4ICT.

Submitted by Joe Moomaw, W4XD

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MARA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello again. Not a bad turnout for a no-supper meeting! 17 hams showed up at the Harrisonburg Fire Dept. for the April meeting, which is always Homebrew night. 3 hams brought in projects: Ray KD4OXU, brought in a direction-finder he found at a hamfest; Al N3JB, showed his handiwork on an HF tuner and an Audio mixer he built; and I displayed a 432 Mhz 11 element quagi, a Curtis keyer, and a set of paddles that I made. Wish you were there to show us your projects!

Next month's program will be presented by Al N3JB on how to use an antenna rotator that is a long distance from your shack. Maybe you'll see how you can effectively move your antenna system to a better location so you can take advantage of a higher piece of land for better propagation.

Remember that May 1 is the meeting night. We should be in the new restaurant at that time, if all goes well.

If you have an idea for a program for the club meetings, be sure to let me know. If there is something you would like to present, or would like to see presented at a meeting, I'd like to hear about it! Leave me a packet message on KC4MZN or KB4OLM, or send me e-mail at: ad4tj@juno.com.

Congratulations on 2 new members that were accepted at April's meeting: Oscar Price KB4GUA, and Buck Raley N3YFF.

Well that's all for now, and I hope to see you May 1!

David Tanks AD4TJ
MARA President

VARA PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

I would like to thank everyone that came to the meeting. We had a real good show & tell and good fellowship in spite of the cold.

I would like to thank Ken, KE4GKD for taking over the meeting and a good job, Ken (I had to work). Also thanks to Ken for running the M.S. Walk, he and all those who helped done a great job as usual.

Thanks to Cowles KB4CNI for the show & tell. Cowles did a excellent job and a lot of hard work preparing for the direction finding show & tell, thanks again Cowles.

Also thanks to Joe Meek, KD4FKT and Ken Harris, KE4GKD for the time and work done on the club banner.

Joe Moomaw, W4XD tells me that we have a new club call, W4MUS. Thanks to Joe for the work he had done getting our club call.

Hope to see you all at our next club meeting.

Pat Smiley, KD4WWF
VARA President

147.315 AUTOPATCH NOW FULLY OPERATIONAL

Jay Suter, W4QDC, technical manager of the 147.315 autopatch, reports that the audio level situation on the 147.315 repeater has pretty much been taken care of. The patch is now fully operational and provides local calling interconnect service to the Harrisonburg/Rockingham local calling area for patch subscribers. If you would like more information on this service, contact David R. Fordham, KD9LA, at the address on the cover of this newsletter.

FOUR NEW LICENSEES

The Volunteer Examining team of the central Shenandoah Valley held their normal testing session on Saturday, April 12. Fifteen (15) candidates were served, and 25 examination elements were taken. Fifteen of those elements were passed. The session resulted in three (3) new technician-class licenses and one (1) new technician-plus license.

A hearty "Thank You" to the volunteers who manned this testing session: Randy KN4KB, Joe W4XD, Phil K4NE, Hardy AD4IZ, Charlie WA4ITY, Donna N3UHJ, Matt KD4UPL. The front desk crew also assisted: Ken KE4GKD, Buck N3RIQ, and Doug KE4RMD

The next testing session in the valley will be held on June 14th at Massanutten Vo-Tech Center.

*submitted by
Randy Smith, KN4KB*

VARA HOME PAGE MOVES

Following in the footsteps of the packet radio systems which served as their ancestors, Internet stations are following the tradition of moving so fast that the average ham cannot keep up with them. The VARA Home Page announced in last month's issue of the Monitor has already moved. Its new URL is:

<http://ham.nws.net/~n3riq/vara/>

If you cannot reach it via that URL, try: <http://www.repeater.net/~n3riq> and follow the links.

Buck, the creator and maintainer of the VARA web page, would like to thank Corey for the gracious donation of web server space. If you are trustee of a repeater and would like to have a web page on the Internet giving information about your repeater site, stop by Corey's URL: <http://www.repeater.net>

147.225 REPEATER TO GET GENERATOR BACKUP

The N4RAG repeater site on Laird's Knob will shortly have full long-term emergency power capability. This repeater is one of the few two-meter machines with such broad coverage as to be of primary importance during disaster and emergency situations. Although a specific date has not been set, the generators should be

installed and operational shortly.

*Information submitted by
Buck Mowbray, N3RIQ*

CLUB PRESIDENTS TO MEMBERS: "PLEASE COMPLETE THE SURVEY!"

Do you have friends who did not renew their club membership? There are almost fifty (50) former members of the Valley and Massanutten Amateur Radio Associations who have not renewed their membership for 1997. Do you have a clue as to why some of these hams decided not to rejoin? Is the club not meeting their needs? Is there nothing in the newsletter which appeals to them? Did a member of the club (or an officer, or someone else) do something which they did not like, or which offended them?

If so, your officers would like to know. While some things may be unavoidable, there may be some things which we can do to make the club more responsive, more useful, more helpful, or just plain more fun if we know what it is the members want. Won't you take a few minutes and complete the enclosed survey on page 11 of this issue? It will give us valuable feedback on what the clubs can do to help the hams in the valley.

FIELD DAY COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

Plans for the 1997 Field Day are proceeding on schedule. The combined effort (VARA and MARA together) will again operate two simultaneous transmitters in category 2A. There will be two primary stations (one phone and one CW) with five peripheral stations. The primary phone station will be under the direction of Charlie, WA4ITY, and Bob, N4ICT. The primary CW station will be under the direction of Neal, N4XU (ex-WF3L), and Jeff, WB4PJW. The peripheral stations will consist of (a) a Novice/Tech station under the direction of Joe, KD4FKT and Sandy, KE4PZC; (b) a VHF/UHF station under the direction of Clint, KB4OLM; (c) a satellite (OSCAR) station under the direction of David, KB4LCI; (d) a packet station under the direction of James, KF4BFM; (e) and a natural power station under the direction of Matt, KD4UPL.

The Field Day committee is looking for a volunteer with a video camcorder to take frequent shots of the field day activities. The shots would begin before setup on Friday, and continue with occasional "takes" up through take-down on Sunday afternoon. Also needed is a volunteer with access to video editing equipment to edit the tapes into a 30-35 minute tape suitable for club meeting programs and distribution to prospective hams, ham classes, and other interested parties. If you know of anyone who might be interested in filming, editing, or producing such a tape, please advise the Field Day Committee.

Speaking of prospective hams, this year's Field Day is featuring a challenge to all regular FD participants! Are you up to a challenge? Well, here it is --- BRING A NON-HAM OR A PROSPECTIVE HAM up to the mountain for Field Day! Let someone else in on the fun!

If you can't find a non-ham or a prospective ham to bring to field day, well, at least bring a ham who has never operated field day before! And if you can't bring a non-ham, prospective ham, or a ham who has never operated field day before, then bring a ham who has operated field day but has not operated field day with the MARA/VARA combined effort!

The next Field Day Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 13th, at 7:00 pm at the Weyers Cave Volunteer Fire Department building. To get to the committee meeting, take Interstate 81 to Exit 235 (Weyers Cave and Grottoes). Take Route 256 east 1 mile to Weyers Cave to the traffic light (all three colors on that

light!), turn left at the light, and the fire department is three blocks down on your right. Everyone is welcome and invited whether or not you are a member of MARA or VARA.

MARA/VARA Field Day Committee

SKED NEEDED "ON-LINE" INSTEAD OF "ON-AIR"

My brother Andy, from Jacksonville, Florida has added video conferencing to his computer and can't find anyone to set up a schedule with to try it out. Do you know of anyone so equipped that could give him a test? Maybe while you are at it, you might encourage him to get his ticket! He is away a lot through the week but home most weekends. His e-mail is: ajones2485@aol.com and he has an 800 phone number that someone could call him on to set up a test. Thanks.

Bill Jones, KE4FM

Special Opportunity!

TRIP TO GREENBANK MAY 10

The third bi-annual trip to Greenbank(National Radio Astronomy Observatory) in Greenbank, W.Va. has been confirmed for May 10. This is a trip that was started by a ham that retired from Greenbank. We have gone to Greenbank to check on the progress of the rebuilding of the worlds largest radio dish and to tour the facility. We also get to see some of the most beautiful scenery on the way over. Spring will just about be in full bloom in W.Va. There will probably be a group starting from Charlottesville about 7:00 am and will meet with a group of Valley people, near Staunton about 8:00 am and carpool on over to Greenbank arriving around 10:30 am. Anyone and everyone invited. You don't have to be a ham to attend. This is a great trip for the family. Lunch is available at the facility. This has been a great learning experience and we always have good fellowship. Remember the date is Sat. May 10. Hope to see you there. Talk it up on the repeaters and make announcements on your nets.

submitted by

Joe Meek KD4FKT

NET CONTROL OPS NEEDED

Norman Benner, KA4EEN, Net Manager, still needs ARES net control operators for the Rockingham County ARES net which meets on the 147.315 repeater every Monday (except for the first Monday of each month on which it meets on 146.550 simplex). If you can serve as Net Control for one night during May or June, please call Norman at 289-5801, or check into the net on a Monday night and let him know you are interested. This is excellent preparation for emergency communications service.

TRADERS NET A "GO"!

The Central Shenandoah Valley Trader's Net is held monthly on the third Monday of each month on the 147.315 repeater, right after the 8:00 pm ARES Net. The next Trader's Net will be held on May 19th. On the April net, 50% of the items listed were sold before the end of the net! "Now that's results!" Tune in to buy, sell, or trade ham equipment!

PUBLIC SERVICE ROUNDUP

Although this issue may not reach you in time to enable you to help, radio amateurs are assisting with the annual March of Dimes walk to be held in Harrisonburg on Saturday, April 26th. Hams will be meeting at Price Club at 8:30 am for their assignments.

ATTENTION ALL VARA CLUB MEMBERS From the Education Committee

If anyone has an idea or a project they would like to show the club at one of our regular club meetings at Gavid's please feel free to do so. We would like to have something educational to give a show and tell on each month. This does not have to be ham related, just something you think the club would be interested in. You can call any of the committee members with your ideas. Ray Colvin KE4HVR 886-1559, Bill Jordan KE4LKS 886-1751, Bill Bearden KC4TQF 337- 5179.

*Ray Colvin,
VARA Education Chairman*

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

In case you haven't heard, the Monitor is now available via E-Mail, free of charge, to all current members of the Valley and Massanutten Amateur Radio Associations.

There are two e-mail formats available. The first format, called "Full Edition", is sent as a binary attachment to a standard e-mail message. The binary attachment contains a Word For Windows95 (version 6.0) document file. The file contains the entire newsletter, complete with columns, bold and italics, and other formatting. Members who receive the full edition can view and print a hardcopy of the newsletter using a public-domain Microsoft Word viewer (available from the newsletter editor and many other sources) or any of the current commercial-level word-processing software packages.

The second format is called "ASCII edition". In this edition, the text of the newsletter is converted into ASCII (alphabetic and numeric characters only, no formatting or graphics) and sent as the text of a standard Internet email message.

The last I heard, subscribers to JUNO can only receive the ASCII edition since JUNO does not support attachments. Subscribers to most other E- mail systems (AOL, GTE, RICA, Shentel, Sprint, etc.) can receive either edition. If you have a viewer or commercial-quality word-processing program, you probably would

prefer to receive the full edition. If you don't, you probably prefer the ASCII edition.

Most members on email are receiving the ASCII version, which means they need a paper copy too to receive the tables, pictures, maps, and other non-ASCII data in each issue of the Monitor. At the current time, the number of members receiving the full edition is so small as to prevent us from realizing savings in mailing. Therefore, we are mailing (via U.S. Bulk Mail) the Monitor (hardcopy, paper edition) to all current members, including those receiving the Full Edition via email.

The advantage of the E-Mail edition is speed. You receive the E-Mail copy of the Monitor the evening that I send the hardcopy to the printer. Generally this is a full week before you receive the paper copy from the U.S. Mail.

Unfortunately, many club members are changing their e-mail addresses too frequently for me to be able to keep up. Since I volunteered to do the E-Mail editions, I have already processed almost 60 email address changes for the 45 members with email addresses! (One member has had five (5) different email addresses in two months!) And this is just the people who have notified me of their email address changes! I'm sure there are probably others who have changed but not let me know yet. If this trend continues, I'm afraid I won't have the time to maintain the email list. However, I will try to keep up as long as I can.

If you would like to receive an email edition of the Monitor (and don't plan to change your email address any time soon!) you can simply send me an email telling me which edition you prefer: "Full Edition" or "ASCII Edition". Send your message from your preferred email address to me at: fordhadr@jmu.edu

Of course, you need to be "paid-up" member of either the Valley or Massanutten Amateur Radio Associations to receive the E-mail editions!

That's all there is to it! And don't forget; if your email address does change, let me know! I'll try to keep up with the new addresses. If everyone will limit themselves to only one address change per year, I'll probably be able to keep up!

Thanks for the support!

David R. Fordham, KD9LA
Newsletter Editor and Publisher

FOR SALE ITEMS

Jeremy Clark, KE4CAY, has the following items for sale.

Yaesu FT-411 2m handheld, includes PL encode and decode, DTMF keypad, wall charger, 12v adapter, soft carry case, and two (2) rubber-duck antennas, all for \$200.

AmComm 2m synthesized mobile rig, 25 watts out, basic radio (synthesized, not crystal bound) includes microphone, schematic and manual, for \$60.

Drake TR-4 HF rig, good condition (tube type, 5-band), with mike, key, manuals, and power supply, \$250.

Heathkit SB-104 solid state HF rig in working condition, 5-band, includes manual but no mike or key, includes partially assembled power supply, and a spare-parts radio of same model, all for \$150.

Buy either HF rig and receive a G5RV all-band antenna free of charge!

Also for sale, 250 feet of 7/8th inch hardline, make an offer!

Call Jeremy in Mount Crawford at 433-5136 any time (leave a message if he's out).

Rusty Bowman, N4YET, has the following for sale:

Cushcraft R-5 HF 5-band vertical antenna for sale for \$150.

Ten-Tec Paragon HF transceiver. The Paragon was the top-of-the-line in its day, and features 10m-160m all-band coverage (including WARC bands), and a general-coverage receiver. He is asking \$995.

Call Rusty in Harrisonburg at 833-5565 in the evening before 9:00 pm.

Dave Hensley, KD4EQA, is selling the following: a CB radio with antenna, complete with a Harley Hog motorcycle already installed. The price is a little steep for a CB, but the added bonus of the motorcycle makes the deal worth the additional money. Dave is in the process of moving to Augusta County, so if you would like more information on this combination radio/cycle, call Bob Niemeyer, W3MMC, in Bergton, at 852-3261.

Daryl Howdyshell is selling an Astron RS-70A 13.8 Volt DC power supply. This supply runs on 120-volt AC current and can supply 57 amps continuous and 70 amps intermittent. Call Daryl in Staunton at 885-5321 after 4:00 pm.

KE4SSG ESTATE SALE

As the newsletter was being put to bed, Richard Weaver, W3HXX, assistant administrator for the estate of Bob Byrnes, KE4SSG, notified us that Bob's entire collection of ham radio equipment would be put up for sale shortly. This collection includes a Yaesu FT-767GX HF transceiver including 2-meter module and matching speaker SP-767 and table microphone, a Yaesu FT-101EX HF transceiver with speaker, Heathkit HW-101 SSB tube-type HF transceiver with matching outboard HG-10B VFO unit; also a Heathkit SB-303 tube-type HF transceiver, Heathkit power supply for the above transceivers, collection of test equipment, "oodles" of connectors, miscellaneous coaxial cables, scanners, citizens-bands radios, collection of miscellaneous microphones, number of mobile antennas (2-meters, dual banders, etc.), two Radio Shack 2-meter handhelds, a Yaesu 5100 FM dual-bander VHF/UHF mobile radio, coaxial switches, a tri-bander HF beam, dual-bander base antenna, and a multitude of other equipment. This equipment will on display for sale at New Covenant Church on Mount Clinton Pike, west of Eastern Mennonite University, halfway down the hill near Crider's Machine Shop. The date and time of the display will be announced on the Sunday and Monday night ARES nets on the 146.625 and 147.315 repeaters at least a week in advance. For more information, contact Richard Weaver, W3HXX at 867-5600. If you would like to make an advance offer on any of this equipment, contact Richard at the above phone number.

WANTED TO BUY

Rusty Bowman, N4YET is looking to buy a 15-meter monobander, any size, but the bigger the better. He also is interested in obtaining a crank-up tower. Call Rusty in Harrisonburg at 833-5565 in the evenings

before 9:00 pm

Richard Seal, KD4UPF, is looking for a miniature CW keyer, preferably one small enough to be installed in a radio not originally designed to have one installed! If you know of where Richard can get one of these small keyers, give him a call 146.625 or 147.315.

NEW SOLAR CYCLE 23 STATUS FROM THE NATIONAL RADIO OBSERVATORY

GENERAL SUMMARY

It is now becoming quite clear that we have passed old solar cycle 22 and are ramping slowly upward toward the maximum of the present solar cycle 23. We have seen some reports and heard speculation regarding this matter that is somewhat inaccurate. Although the official word still isn't out yet, there is an increasingly abundant amount of evidence suggesting that we are now within solar cycle 23. Some of this evidence follows: Calcium plage emissions are slowly increasing and have been increasing for many months now; the background and daily average x-ray flux values are increasing - they are higher now than they have been since about 1995 when we were still in the decline of cycle 22; the occurrence of new-cycle sunspot regions is increasing and the frequency of old-cycle sunspot formation is decreasing. This latter item is usually considered the clincher.

Unless sunspot formation suddenly dies out for an extended period of time, the sunspot minimum of solar cycle 22 will almost certainly be May of 1996, where the smoothed sunspot number fell to 8.1.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE OF SOLAR CYCLE 23

Solar Cycle 23 is predicted to be a larger than average solar cycle. Current predictions estimate the sunspot number for cycle 23 will probably peak near 160 (+/- 30) with a peak in the 10.7 cm solar radio flux near 205 (+/- 30). There is some excitement that this cycle may be a record breaker. The current champion of sunspot cycles is solar cycle 19 which had a smoothed sunspot number of 201 in November of 1957. This is not likely to occur, but it is a notable possibility. The art of predicting the magnitude of sunspot cycles is still rooted primarily in empirical relationships. We do not yet understand the physical processes involved well enough to derive successful quantitative models of sunspot cycles. For this reason, there is a level of uncertainty that (however small) could result in a record-breaking cycle.

If current projections are correct, the sunspot maximum is currently estimated to peak in March of the year 2000. It must be noted, however, that predicting the month of maximum is even less certain than the sunspot number. The actual month of sunspot maximum could be as early as January 1999 or as late as June, 2001.

Geomagnetic activity is expected to gradually become increasingly disturbed as we move toward the solar maximum of cycle 23. The number of days of disturbed conditions is expected to increase from 1997 through to a peak near the year 2002. Thereafter, activity should begin a gradual decline. This is good news for people interested in watching auroral activity, but it is bad news for people reliant on ionospheric radio communications and satellite health. For people reliant on ionospheric radio communications, there is a bitter-sweet story. Although the frequency of degrading interplanetary disturbances will increase, the large increase in ionizing radiation from sunspot regions will provide ever-improving propagation conditions with bands gradually opening into the higher frequencies of the HF bands. The years from 1999 through 2005 will be the worst in terms of geomagnetic and ionospheric disturbances. And of those, the year 2001 is expected to be significantly disturbed, seconded by the year 1999 and the year 2004.

UP-TO-THE-MINUTE INFORMATION

The advent of the world wide web and easy access to the Internet has opened up a wide assortment of possibilities for amateurs and professionals alike. You can now obtain current (almost realtime) images of the Sun and the solar corona. A good source of information is at the WWW page for the Solar Data Analysis Center (SDAC) at: <http://umbra.gsfc.nasa.gov>

Current predictions and other information can be obtained from the Space Environment Center at: <http://www.sec.noaa.gov>

Information regarding current solar flux and geomagnetic data can also be found at: <http://solar.uleth.ca/solar>

For those nearer to Australia, a great deal of information is available from IPS Radio and Space Services in Australia at: <http://www.ips.oz.au>.

These are good starting points for finding information on the current state of the Sun. For those with a real hunger for REALTIME information, a substantial software package is available for those with Windows 95 computer systems (and soon Windows 3.1 systems) that will haul down a huge amount of critical solar and geophysical information IN REALTIME over the Internet. All you need is a computer that can be connected to the Internet (whether via a modem and an Internet Service Provider, or a direct line). The software effectively turns your computer into a solar, geomagnetic, space and ionospheric "weather" analysis center. The same data is used by professional solar and space weather forecasters. You can observe the progress of solar flares, AS THEY HAPPEN, updated on-screen as frequently as you desire (up to once each minute). You can study the CURRENT state of the ionosphere, obtain current geomagnetic readings from up to 11 magnetic observatories world-wide, set up to 43 audible warnings providing you with exceptional "activity trapping" capabilities, track the current locations, sizes and shapes of active solar regions and coronal holes, and much more. We feel it is ideal for anyone who wants to stay on top of current conditions. Details can be found at: <http://solar.uleth.ca/solar/www/swarm.html>

*From David Gordon, KB4LCI
National Radio Observatory, Greenbank*

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

Be sure to let the newsletter editor know about your new address. Bulk Mail is never forwarded.

SIX METER CONTESTS

Are you on Six Meters? There are two upcoming contests concentrating on the 50 MHz band. The first one is the ARRL Spring Sprint for 50 MHz, on May 17-18. Full details are available in QST.

The second is the Six Meter International Radio Klub (SMIRK) contest from 0000Z June 21 to 2400Z June 22, the weekend before field day. It is for both voice and CW. All voice contacts between the 48 contiguous states must be made above 50.125 MHz; CW below 50.100 or above 50.125 MHz. Only DX contacts are allowed between 50.100 and 50.125. If you use FM, you must operate simplex; no repeater contacts are allowed. Scoring is fairly complicated, and contains bonuses for working stations above 50.200 MHz. For more information, or official scoring rules and official log forms can be obtained from the SMIRK secretary,

OTHER CONTESTS

How about ten meters? The Ten-Ten Spring CW QSO party is scheduled for May 3rd - 4th.

This year's CQ WW WPX CW contest is scheduled for May 24th -25th. Complete rules are in the January, 1997 issue of CQ magazine.

Of course, Field Day is June 28th-29th . The VARA and MARA event will be held up near Flagpole Knob again. The June issue of the Monitor will have directions and a map, so be sure your club membership is current so you will receive that issue!

The International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) HF World Championship, open to all radio amateurs, is schedule for July 12th-13th. Details are in the April issue of QST, page 100.

And the 1997 CQ World-Wide VHF Contest is scheduled for July 12th-13th.

KUDOS TO AD4TJ, N3JB, W4XD!

Several valley hams have won impressive scores in radio contests in the last few months. David Tanks, AD4TJ, and Al Bonck, N3JB, both scored well in the 1996 ARRL 160-Meter contest. Dave racked up 101,762 points with 688 contacts, all the more laudable because he operated on Low Power! Al also did well, with 45,990 points on a solid 312 contacts. Congratulations to these MARA members!

Dave, AD4TJ, also scored 6,560 points on 80 contacts in the ARRL November CW Sweepstakes.

The North Shenandoah DX Association, headquartered up the road a piece in Winchester, scored a very respectable 923,098 points in the 1996 CQ World-Wide WPX CW contest reported in the May 1997 issue of CQ magazine. And VARA's very own Joe Moomaw, W4XD, scored an impressive 166,164 points as a single- op station in that contest.

Station W4XD also scored 54,288 points on 372 contacts in multi-operator operation in the ARRL November CW Sweepstakes.

Are you aware of a valley ham who has participated in a recent contest? Tip off the newsletter editor. Time constraints prohibit the searching of all the contest scores trying to pick out the valley hams.

BIG MOUNTAIN REPEATER PICNIC: AUGUST 17TH

Bob, W3MMC, would again like to remind everyone that the Annual Big Mountain Repeater Association's Picnic, affectionately known as the Bob's Knob Bash, is schedule for August 17th of this year. All amateurs, their families, and guests are invited; you do not have to be a member of the BMRA to attend.

CALLSIGN UPDATE

The latest callsigns (not in the vanity program) issued by the FCC as of April 1st in the fourth call district were: AF4BV, KU4EV, and KF4QIR. In the eighth call district the calls were: AA8ZU, KI8BQ, and KC8GTE.

UPCOMING HAMFESTS

The Hagerstown, Maryland, hamfest will be held May 4, at the Hagerstown Junior College Community Center. Contact the Antietam Radio Association at PO Box 52, Hagersown, MD 21741 for more information. Or you can phone 301-931-3010.

The Dayton Hamvention will be held May 16- 17-18. Several valley hams are planning to trek to Ohio for this event.

The Manassas Hamfest is scheduled for June 1st and 2nd at the Prince William County Fairgrounds, Take I-66 to Route 234, south on 234 to the fairgrounds. Talk-In on 146.97. For more information contact Lou Blasdel, KB4EFP, at 703-369-2877.

The Charlotte Hamfest will be held on June 8th. For more information, consult the May issue of QST, page 93 or contact your newsletter editor.

SHUTTLE SCHEDULE

For those of you who want to keep up with the Space Shuttles, below is the launch schedule for the remainder of 1997.

- Atlantis STS-84, May 15th (*)
- Discovery STS-85, July 17
- Columbia STS-83 (reflight), June TBA
- Atlantis STS-86, September 18th (*)
- Columbia STS-87 October 9th
- Endeavour STS-88 December 4th
- Discovery STS-89 January 15th 1998 (*)

(*) Discovery and Atlantis are scheduled to dock with the MIR space station.

HAM RAG REFERENCE MATERIAL

RF Interference to Automobiles: The April 1997 issue of CQ Magazine contains an article on page 75 listing information on RF interference to the electronic systems in today's automobiles, including a company-by-company summary of the information available.

Beginner's Guide to the HF Bands: That April issue of CQ also has a great "Beginner's Guide to the HF

Bands" beginning on page 26 which gives a band-by-band analysis of what you can expect on the world-wide shortwave HF bands.

Packet Glossary: The April CQ issue also has a nice "Glossary of Packet Terms" for hams interested in getting into the world of digital packet radiocommunication on the ham bands. The glossary begins on page 86.

Ham Radio Callsign Prefixes: The May issue of CQ lists an alphabetical reference table of all internationally-allocated amateur radio prefixes. Wonder where TU4RE is located? Use this handy table beginning on page 52.

W1AW Schedule: The schedule of W1AW, including bulletin transmissions, and code practice sessions is on page 112 of the May issue of QST.

Reciprocal Operating Agreements: The May issue of QST lists the countries with which the U.S. has reciprocal operating agreements: Pg 53.

1997 Field Day Rules: The official rules governing the 1997 Field Day operations are found on page 109 of the May issue of QST.

Every Ham's Satellite: The last five issues of QST (January to May) have featured a series of articles on the new Phase IIID orbiting satellite, a satellite intended to allow the normal everyday ham the opportunity to work an OSCAR without specialized equipment or expertise.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE ISSUE OF THE MONITOR IS TUESDAY, MAY 20.

MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

April 3, 1997 Meeting

The regular meeting of the MARA club was held on 3 April at the Rockingham Emergency Center on Rock Street, Harrisonburg, Va. The place was changed this time due to Golden Coral being in the process of moving to their new location on East Market Street and the restaurant not being ready for business.

The president, David (AD4TJ), called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m. and asked each person to introduce himself giving call sign and place of residence. There were seventeen persons present.

Committee reports were given as follows:

ARES- Norman (KA4EEN), reported needing someone for net control on 28 April, 12 May and forward into the summer. He also reminded the club of the March of Dimes walk coming up on 26 April and that he presently has enough volunteers if all who indicated a willingness to help reported.

FIELD DAY- It was reported the committee had met once and Field Day will be 28-29 June on top of the Shenandoah Mountain near Reddish Knob, the same site as last year. More will come later.

New business was to present the applications of Oscar L. Price (KB4GUA) and Francis D. (Buck) Raley (N3YFF) for membership. Both were elected by unanimous ballot. We welcome them into the membership.

Their was no old business to complete.

The treasurer, Dick (W3HXX) reported no disbursements during the month and after deposits the ending balance was \$1,571.26.

The attendance was down due to meeting at a different location and no meal before. This was show and tell night and several brought things to demonstrate. Among the displays were the following: David (AD4TJ) showed an antenna he had constructed. Al (N3JB) brought an amplifier and Ray (KD4OXU) displayed a hand held direction finder he had purchased at a recent hamfest.

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m. and the next meeting will be held at the Golden Corral, new location on East Market Street, just past the mall on 1 May 1997. We hope everyone can make the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted
Wilton B. Thomas (KF4BFL),
Secretary

(Cartoon)

"I have a cordless telephone, wireless headphones, an infrared remote control, a wireless computer mouse --- but what I really need is a cordless antenna!"

VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

April 9, 1997 Meeting

The V.A..R.A. club meeting was held at Gavid's Restaurant in Staunton on April 9, 1997. The meeting was opened by the club vice-president, Ken Harris (KE4GKD) at 7:30 P.M. Present were 24 members.

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

The club voted on Gary Pitsenbarger (KF4PFR) as a new member of V.A.R.A. Dick Waldmuller (WB8GIF) made the motion to accept him as a new member and Nancy Colvin (KE4PHP) seconded. A vote was taken by the members and Gary was elected in as a member of the club.

The 50/50 drawing was won by Dick Smith (W4KHV). The total amount was \$19 with half going to Dick and half going to the club treasury.

The treasurer's report was accepted as printed in last month's newsletter. Dick Waldmuller (WB8GIF) made the motion to accept and Buck Mowbray (N3RIQ) seconded. A majority vote finalized the acceptance of the treasurer's report.

A correction to last month's secretary's report was made and it was then accepted as printed in last month's newsletter along with the correction. The correction involved a misspelling. Jeff Rinehart (WB4PJW) made the motion to accept and Dick Waldmuller (WB8GIF) seconded. A majority vote finalized the acceptance of the secretary's report.

A letter of thanks from Frank Forsyth (WD4LES) was read to the club. He had been in the hospital and the club had sent him flowers.

Bob Osterloh (N4ICT) announced that he had some radio's for sale. His list includes a Kenwood TH-79A Dual Band handheld (2M/440). It is like new, has hardly been used, and has everything including the charger

for \$375. Also he has an ICOM IC-03AT handheld (220 Mhz). This radio includes the BP8 rechargeable battery. No wall charger is included and the price for this unit is \$175. His last item was an ICOM IC-32AT handheld (2M/440). This radio also includes a rechargeable 1200 ma/H, 5 watt battery, but without the wall charger. The price for this unit is \$250. If anyone is interested, please contact Bob at 885-7785. He can also be reached by sending E-mail to osterloh@rica.net.

Joe Meek (KD4FKT) announced that there will be a trip coming up to Greenbank. There will be a tour of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory and it will take place on May 10 (Saturday). Anyone that is interested please contact Joe.

Joe Meek (KD4FKT) presented to the club some possible signs that could be used for a club banner. After some discussion over various designs of banners with the club's name and appropriate insignias, the club decided on a painted sign style in the 70-120 dollar range.

Ken Harris (KE4GKD) made the announcement about V.A.R.A.'s home page on the Internet. The page is maintained by Buck Mowbray (N3RIQ) and is located at <http://ham.nws.net/~n3riq/vara/>. By omitting "vara/" from the end of this address, Buck's homepage may also be located on the Web.

Jeff Rinehart (WB4PJW) reported on Field Day. The Field Day committee met recently and for the most part, have set up many aspects of the big event. There will be more discussion on Field Day at next month's club meeting.

Cowles Andrus (KB4CNI) gave a presentation on Fox Hunting using radio direction finding equipment, both homemade and store-bought.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Buck Mowbray (N3RIQ). Dick Smith (W4KHV) seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 P.M.

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

The newsletter editor would like to thank everyone who contributed articles this month.

End of this month's issue.

MASSANUTTEN ARA

President: David Tanks, AD4TJ
Vice-President: Walt Lam, KF4BFB
Secretary: Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL
Treasurer: Richard Weaver, W3HXX
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

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