

THE MARA/VARA MONITOR

Published monthly by the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., of Harrisonburg, Virginia for radio amateurs in the Shenandoah Valley.

MARA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello again. Thanks to all (32) who turned out for March's meeting to hear Bill's (W4IMS) presentation on the new RF Exposure Regulations. I hope he cleared up some mysteries for you as to how to evaluate your station for compliance. If it's still not totally clear maybe a short article in the newsletter will fill in the blanks for you. Thanks again to Bill for working on this subject for us.

Remember that April is Homebrew Night; bring in your project, homebrew or kit, and show us and explain your item to us. It always makes for an interesting night to see what creative juices have been flowing during the long winter months!

Thanks to John N3GLZ for filling in the final spot on the Field Day committee, joining Sandy K4PZC (ex-KE4PZC) and Walt KF4BFB. Let's all work together to make this another enjoyable and successful Field Day event. The purpose of Field Day, again, is to come together as a group and prepare for an emergency situation by practicing getting our gear and resources together, and cooperating with each other to make it all happen safely. After everything is in place, then we can enjoy the fruits of our efforts by playing radio for 24 hours. I hope you have cleared your calendar for June 27 and 28!

Don't forget about the Trader's Net on the 3rd Monday night of each month right after the ARES net on the 147.315 repeater at about 8:30 pm or so. I goofed this past 3rd Monday: I didn't realize it was the 3rd Monday already so I didn't make an announcement about it, so nobody came! I'll try to be more on the ball, fellows. And also, on the other Monday nights I am running Code practice for anyone interested, on the same repeater. I am running about 2 to 3 words per minute usually, so it is perfect for someone who knows most of the characters. Come join in, and see how you do!

Hope to see you all at the April meeting.
David AD4TJ
MARA President

VARA PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Hello to all. At the time of this reading we will be into Spring. I for one am looking forward to the warmer weather.

It was nice to see everyone at the last Club Meeting. We did have several that were unable to attend either because they were sick or had a job change and the hours did not suit to attend. The Club would also like to express our sympathy to Karen and Doug Zirk for the passing of Karen's Grandfather.

We had a nice presentation on the new RF Exposure Rules given by Ray (KE4HVR) and he had a nice handout. If anyone missed the meeting and would like to get a handout, I think Ray will have a few extra.

We will have two new members to vote on at the next meeting and I am sure we will make them welcome.

Again let's all remember that Field Day 1998 is just around the corner and we sure could use some help as to operators for all stations. We could also use help with the planning and the setting up and taking down of the stations. Anyone interested please let the Field Day Committee Members know so we can get the ball rolling.

I would also like to mention that Buck (N3RIQ) has made a change in the VARA Home Page. You can now list items for sale, trade or want on the WWW Board. When Buck first came up with this idea he had a few problems but now has all going as planned so give it a try and lets hope it is a success. The address is as follows: <http://www.qsl.net/w4mus>. Give it a try and enjoy.

There is going to be a March of Dimes Walk in the Stuarts Draft Area of the county on May 2nd. I sure could use a few Amateurs to help with this event. The walk starts at 9:30 AM and should be over with by noon so anyone that would like to help please let me know. The walk will go on if it rains or snows!!!!

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting which will be on April 8th at Gavid's Family Grill in Staunton. So until next time take care.

73
Ken Harris KE4GKD
VARA President

FREE -- FREE -- FREE

Code practice on Monday nights, 8:20 pm-ish. Tune in on your scanner or 2-meter rig, 147.315 MHz or contact David Tanks, AD4TJ, for more information. This is a great opportunity for those hams interested in upgrading!

PREPARE YE, PREPARE YE!

Summer thunderstorms are coming! Is your station prepared?

Now is a good time to check those ground rods, grounding clamps, and ground wires. Use a wire brush to brighten the places where wires connect with clamps and rods.

Be sure to keep your antennas **grounded** when they are not in use or when thunderstorms are in the area. Avoid the common but misguided practice of disconnecting the feedline from the radio and just letting it hang in the air (or like one ham in Florida, placing the end of the cable in a glass jar!).

Yes, disconnect it from the radio, but don't leave it hanging -- **ground it!** The static charge builds up on your antenna from the wind. This charge needs a path to the ground! If you don't ground your feedline, you create a huge capacitor storing a heavy charge. If that charge happens to be the opposite charge from a buildup in the clouds overhead, you are actually attracting a lightning bolt!

During a thunderstorm, follow two rules: (1) make sure everything connected to anything outside is grounded via heavy wire or cable, and (2) make sure that any electrical charge coming into the shack seeking a ground *does not have to pass through some of your precious equipment on its way!*

Due to final exam week (which takes up a lot of your newsletter editor's time), the deadline for the May issue of the Monitor is **Monday, April 20th**.

MARA APRIL MEETING: HOMEBREW MONTH!

Very few hams read *Cosmopolitan* magazine, but in a recent article in that publication, Dr. Joyce Brothers was quoted as saying, "for some reason, men seem to enjoy showing off their equipment."

Well, get ready! The opportunity to show off your equipment is here! Of course, we're talking about the *April MARA meeting!*

Yes, that's right. All real men enjoy showing off their equipment, especially if they built it themselves! So bring your favorite piece of home brew gear and show it off! Ladies are certainly included in this activity, too! The theme for this activity always seems to be, "I'll show you mine if you show me yours!"

So bring your stuff (radios, tuners, test equipment, amplifiers, antennas, receivers, anything! ... well, *almost* anything!) and show it to the rest of us. Be prepared to tell us about how you built it, too!

See you there!

MONEY FOR SCHOOL

Do you know either a young ham of note or an outstanding student who is interested in a college scholarship? Then check out:
<http://garc.gsfc.nasa.gov/~simsat/sscholarship.html>

*Sincerely,
Pat WD8LAQ*

COME OUT AND PLAY RADIO!

May 2nd: Stuarts Draft March of Dimes Walk!

Contact Ken Harris (KE4GKD) at 885-1818 if you can help!

BIG MOUNTAIN BACK ON THE AIR

The Big Mountain Repeater 146.625 is back on the air after being down for approximately ten days.

The last ice storm that took care of repeaters on Elliot's Knob and hit the Skyline Drive hard, also did a number on the 146.625 antenna.

Frank, KE4RMB, who worked on the repair project, stated that he had never seen ice that thick on Big Mountain before.

We have replaced the old Diamond antenna with a new one, replaced the feed line and tweaked the equipment, and we should have approximately the same coverage that we have always had. Early mobile reports in the tri-county area were very encouraging.

If anyone would like to make a donation to the repeater fund, contributions can be sent to KE4FM at PO Box 6, Penn Laird, VA 22846 earmarked to the Big Mountain Repeater Association.

The repeater always has been, and we hope always will be, open to the public ham community.

*Bill, KE4FM,
Repeater Licensee*

NEW THIRD HARMONIC

For all the hams in this area, the newsletter editor is amazed that there aren't more harmonics being announced. In four years, here is the first announcement:

Joe Moowaw, W4XD, is the proud grandfather (by daughter Jean and son Art) of a new baby girl, born January 27. Her name is Skyla Lanae Williams. Joe can't wait till she's old enough to work a keyer!

Congrats to Joe and Skyla's parents!

Info via Ray Colvin

UPGRADING VARA TRADING

Hello ... just to let everyone know that we have a solid trader board on the VARA page now. You can go to it two ways 1) <http://www.qsl.net/w4mus> , or 2) <http://www.qsl.net/w4mus/wwwboard> The 2nd one is a direct link to it. It is instant posting so if you post a item it will be right there within seconds.

Let me know how it goes.

There is a rules page you can look at to sort of get a idea what to do and what NOT to do. Please post Sale/Want/Trade or you can just put questions that you are having up and see if you can get a response or maybe some help. But please read the RULES page and FAQ'S page if you aren't familiar with it.

Thanks alot and 73

*N3RIQ
Buck*

GREENBANK: MAY 9th

Joe Meek, KD4FKT, reports that the annual trip to the Greenbank National Radio Astronomy Observatory is now scheduled for Saturday, May 9th. All hams and others interested in radio are invited and welcome to attend. The cost is free!

The group is planning to meet at the Staunton Holiday Inn parking lot around 8:00 am. Remember, the Staunton Holiday Inn used to be the Sheraton, and is located at Exit 223 off I-81.

The group will carpool over to the observatory in West Virginia. The highlight of the tour will be the newest "almost finished" 300+' diameter dish.

So put May 9th on your calendar! See you then.

*Information furnished by
Joe Meek, KD4FKT*

MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

January 8, 1998 Meeting

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association held their monthly meeting on January 8, 1998. The meeting was delayed one week due to New Years Day falling on the regular meeting night. The group assembled at 6:30 p.m. at Evers Restaurant in Mt. Crawford, Va. for a buffet meal.

Our president, David, (AD4TJ) opened the business meeting at 7:30. As is the custom, each person present introduced him/herself with name, call sign, and home location. Then the president passed out some literature to club members.

The following committee reports were given:

ARES: Persons were needed to act as net control for some dates in January and all of February. Several members volunteered.

OLD BUSINESS: David, (KD9LA), stated that if anyone wanted an individual copy of the newsletter by Internet they should let him know.

NEW BUSINESS: Rocco contacted John, (WA4KQX), and he has picked up from them some used equipment free to those who need it. David, (KD9LA), also said he had a Commodore computer to give away.

FIELD DAY: It was announced that someone was needed to make satellite contacts for field day. Committee members are needed and Sandy, (KE4PZC) and Walt, (KF4BFB), agreed to serve on the committee.

Announcements were made about the upcoming VHF contest, the Richmond Hamfest, an article in January QST about the new RF regs., the obsolescence of former 610 forms and the need to use the new ones.

David, (AD4TJ), won the 50/50 drawing. The meeting was adjourned and the program for the evening followed.

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

Answers to last month's Trivia quiz: Jay Suter (W4QDC) just finished running a popular DX-pedition to the island of Granada. David Fordham (KD9LA) used to be a singer on a cruise ship (S.S. Emerald Seas of the Eastern Steamship line). Richard Weaver (W4JZC) maintains the official NOAA NWS weather observation station. Joe McIntyre (KE4HVO) is a dentist in Bridgewater. Richard Sedwick (KE4HVQ) of the Women's Health Center and Vic Buckwalter (N3DLB) of the Weyers Cave Family Health Center are medical doctors.

This month's Trivia questions: Which local ham lived through the Holocaust in Nazi Germany? Which local ham is an XYL whose grandfather held the call 9RB less than a decade after the Titanic sank?

MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

March 5, 1998 Meeting

The regular scheduled meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association was held on March 5th, 1998 at Evers Restaurant at Mt. Crawford, Virginia. Those who enjoy-ed the buffet dinner met at 6:15 p.m. The regular meeting began at 7:30 p.m. with our president, David (AD4TJ), presiding. We be-gan with introductions. There were 33 amateurs and one guest present.

ARES coordinator, Norman (KA4EEN) stated he needed persons to be net control for the last of March and the first two weeks of April. He also reminded us of the March of Dimes coming up in late April and there would be a need for help with that.

FIELD DAY is in need of a third person to serve with Sandy (K4PZC) and Walt (KF4BFB). John (N3GLZ) volunteered to serve. It was announced we have to satellite operators and if others are interested they can contact David Gordon (KB4LCI).

OLD BUSINESS: We were told the Virginia tower law has passed the Senate and is now being considered by the House of Delegates.

NEW BUSINESS: David (AD4TJ) presented a letter from Sterling Park asking if we might sponsor a plaque for them. There was no interest.

CONTESTS coming up are as follows:

7-8 Mar - ARRL International DX Phone
21-22 Mar - Virginia QSO
21-22 Mar - Alaska QSO
28-29 Mar - CQ WW WPX Phone

HAMFESTS announced were:

7-8 Mar - Charlotte, NC
5 Apr - Raleigh, NC

The 50/50 was won by Max (KE4CKM) who graciously donated it to the club.

David (AD4TJ) reminded us that next month (April) will be home brew month and asked those who had a project to share to bring it. May will be a video on Field Day.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m. Then followed the program presented by Bill (W4IMS) regarding compliance with FCC guidelines for Human Exposure to Radio frequency Electromagnetic Fields for Amateur Radio Stations. Bill thanked Ray (KD4OXU) for making view graphs for the program and David (KD9LA) for getting the word out so all interested could attend. More information can be gotten from the web site, <http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/kharker/rfsafety>.

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

V.A.R.A. SECRETARY'S REPORT

March 11, 1998 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association (V.A.R.A.) club meeting was held at Gavid's Restaurant in Staunton on March 11, 1998. The meeting was opened at 7:32 p.m. by the club president, Ken Harris (KE4GKD). A round of introductions was made, which amounted to 21 members and guests present.

Ken announced that there will be two applicants to be voted on next month, Rusty Rothgeb (KF4QAV) and Vince Luciani (K2VJ).

Ken read a letter to the club from Karen Zirk (KE4WIE), which announced the recent passing of her grandfather.

Jeff Rinehart (WB4PJW) had an A.R.E.S. announcement. Ken Harris (KE4GKD) has applied for EC of Augusta County. Others are interested also and the final selection date for EC from the applicants is currently unknown.

The total amount raised with the 50/50 raffle was \$26. Rusty Rothgeb (KF4QAV) was the winner of \$13.

The secretary's report was accepted as printed in last month's newsletter. Jeff Rinehart (WB4PJW) gave the treasurer's report and it was accepted as read.

Ken Harris (KE4GKD) read some announcements from Buck Mowbray (N3RIQ). He is working 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday at RICA and will not be able to make many of the future V.A.R.A. meetings. Also he has established a World Wide Web Board (WWW Board) where you can post buy, sell, and/or trade items. V.A.R.A.'s WWW Board is located on V.A.R.A.'s homepage (www.qsl.net/w4mus).

Jeff Rinehart (WB4PJW) received a phone call from Roy Silling (W4WRN), a ham for many years. He is one of the first owners of a repeater in this area which incidentally had been retired (off the air) for more years than many of us have been able to remember. He also is one of the very original owners of the 147.045 machine. He is in need of some organized help to get some of his ice and wind damaged antennas from his tower, so that he can service them. At the date of the meeting, Pat Smiley (KD4WWF) volunteered to head the organization of this event. If you would like to find out more about the help needed or would like to volunteer, please contact Pat.

Ken Harris (KE4GKD) announced that it's time to renew with the ARRL as far as having our club affiliated with them in concerned. Make sure that if you are a ARRL member that you are noted so, in the club's roster.

Ken announced that the 147.045 repeater is back on the air. Other repeaters located along with it on Elliot's Knob hopefully will be operational soon.

Making up the Field Day committee for V.A.R.A. are Pat Smiley (KD4WWF), Joe Meek (KD4FKT) and Ken Harris (KE4GKD). They still need equipment, operators, and also general help to haul the equipment up and down the mountain.

Ken announced that there will be a March of Dimes walk, May 2, in Stuarts Draft. The walk will start at 9:30. Anyone that can help, please contact Ken.

It was anonymously announced that Tiny's (WD4FOZ) birthday is March 12. It also was unofficially noted that he would be 20 years younger on this date than Joan (KF4CWR). Doing the math, this makes him 59 years young. Happy belated Birthday wishes, at the time of the newsletters' mailing can be made to Tiny and "words of encouragement" can be made to Joan. On a slightly more serious note, it was positively announced that Joan has been under the weather and her full and fast recovery back to her normal self is wished by all. Brown Snyder also recently had an operation performed to his leg. A quick get well is wished for him also.

Ray Colvin (KE4HVR) gave a presentation on RF exposure.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Valley Amateur Radio Association (V.A.R.A.). The motion was accepted and the meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

*Submitted by:
Douglas S. Zirk (KE4RMD)
Valley Amateur Radio Association (V.A.R.A) Secretary*

MASSANUTTEN ARA

President: David Tanks, AD4TJ
Vice-President: Walt Lam, KF4BFB
Secretary: Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL
Treasurer: Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL
Board (exp 98): Sandy Mullins, KE4PZC
Board (exp 99): Bob Hughes, KF4BFC

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month at Ever's Restaurant on U.S. 11, south of Harrisonburg. Meal starts at 6:30 pm, Business Meeting starts at 7:30 pm
Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$12/yr) should be mailed to the Treasurer,
Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL, 5166 Mt Clinton Pike,
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

THE VALLEY ARA

President: Ken Harris, KE4GKD
Vice-President: Karen Zirk, KE4WIE
Secretary: Doug Zirk, KE4RMD
Treasurer: Jeff Rinehart, WB4PJW

VARA meets the second Wednesday of each month at Gavid's Restaurant on US Route 11 South in Staunton. The meal begins around 6:30 and the business meeting begins at 7:30.
Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$15/yr) should be mailed to the Treasurer,
Jeff Rinehart, 1344 Hankey Mtn Hwy, Churchville, VA 24421

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