

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

Howdy, you'all! Another super turnout at the meeting with 35 live warm bodies making their presence known. This is great for summer; 2 consecutive meetings with 35 in attendance.

Field Day is over. We accomplished many of our goals, and everyone had a good time. Several new hams operated and learned more about ham radio, contesting, band conditions, setting up a temporary field communication post, passing information under heavy QRM and QRN, etc. Band conditions were good: double hop on 6 meters allowed us to snag Wyoming and Utah, 20 and 15 were hot, 10 was a consistent performer for the Novice/Techs, and even the satellites cooperated. It seemed that the enthusiasm was a couple of notches higher than last year, even though the lightning and thunder showed up for 1/3 of the time. Who knows what will happen next year? The bands should be in even better shape, we'll have more experienced ops (the ones who were there this year), and we'll have even more fun!

Here's a preview of planned programs:

August 6: "Want a bigger signal on 160 and/or 80 meters? Try the inverted L." AD4TJ

September 3: Tentatively, Jim Junkins from the Rockingham County EOC will speak to us on emergency communications, from a professional viewpoint.

October 1: Tentatively, Jay W4QDC, will tell of his DXpedition to Grenada.

November 5: YOU???? If you have something to present, PLEASE let me know!

December 3: Christmas Banquet at Pano's, 6:30 pm.

See you at the meeting!

David, AD4TJ
MARA President

VARA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello to all VARA Members. As of the time I write this, Field Day 1998 is over. I believe that we had one of the Biggest and Best FD's ever. We not only made a new record number of contacts but the Pot Luck Dinner on Friday evening was attended by a big crowd and there was even some food left over. Then, we had a huge crowd this year to help set up the site, and another crowd to operate the radios, and then even on Sunday there were plenty there to help take down the stations and get everything ready to return home. Having the large number of participants for each part of the event is what really makes it fun and worthwhile!

For anyone that might have missed this event, ... well, we welcome you next year, same time - same place!!!! In spite of our motto, ("*It never rains at Field Day*") late Saturday night and early Sunday morning we did get around 7/10 of an inch of precipitation, but we're going to call it a "Heavy Dew." However, the light show was great -- I even heard some thunder around the valley.

At the last Club Meeting we viewed a video tape of the Field Day event and I hope all there enjoyed seeing what took place on the mountain. I wish to thank all that helped with the Field Day event. I hope that we can continue to do the same next year.

At our next meeting Vince (K2VJ) will give a presentation on tornadoes and weather related topics. I would like to extend an invitation to everyone to give a listen to Vince. We will also have a few more of his Tornado - Wise books (that he wrote and published) to be auctioned off for anyone interested.

So until next month all have a nice and safe time and hope to see you at the next meeting, to be held on August 12.

"73"
Ken Harris
KE4GKD
President VARA

HAMS ON PARADE

The Bridgewater Fireman's Lawn Party and Steam and Gas Parade went off without a hitch this year. This was due in part to the outstanding turnout of ham radio operators whose function was to take traffic off of U.S. 42 and route it around the parade. (And you thought ham radio operators only provided communications!)

Of course, since each ham was equipped with radio, the operators were an extension of the official's eyes and ears, and were ready to report any problems which arose. Fortunately, no problems appeared.

Without the help of the amateur radio operator volunteers, these parades would be very difficult to manage. Town police officers expressed their appreciation for a job well done by the amateurs.

This marks the fourth year that local ham operators have offered their services to the town of Bridgewater in this capacity. Town officials have always been grateful for the job we do.

At the June MARA Meeting, Harry Dannals, W2HD, discussed what amateurs need to do in order to keep the commercial radio and communication concerns from taking our amateur frequencies. This is the very type of public service that Harry stated needs to take place for us to show the public that ham operators do serve volunteer capacities in public service events as well as in emergency situations.

It is only by convincing the public that amateur operators are offering a true service that we will be able to garner the support we need to keep our frequency allocations.

We were very visible to the public at the Bridgewater event. The magnetic ARES communications signs on the vehicles indicating we are amateur radio operators helped advertise who we are at these events. If you do not have a magnetic sign, try to obtain one as soon as possible.

If you were unable to make the parades this year, you are welcome and invited to help out next year. Further, there are several more public service events coming up in the next few weeks that will give you the opportunity to "pull your weight" in occupying what is rapidly becoming a very valuable national resource: wireless spectrum frequencies.

The Bridgewater event is one of the more interesting and entertaining events we help with. It helps sharpen our skills not only in communication but in other areas where we might be of assistance in a national emergency.

Kudos go to the following amateurs who gave up their valuable time for this public service event:

Friday Evening's Parade

**KF4SVR David
K4LXG Elsworth
K4NRA Ray
N4ALS Glen
KF4YGO Doug
KN4FM Gerald
KF4BFL Wilton
N4FGY Puff
KB2TBL Daniel
KF4BFF Enos**

Saturday Evening's Parade

**KF4SVR David
K4LXG Elsworth
K4NRA Ray
N4ALS Glen
W3MMC Bob
KF4WWM Kevin
AD4TJ David
KD4FKT Joe
KF4WDI Marvin
KE4GKD Kenny
KD4JVA Gayle
W4IMS Bill**

*Information submitted by
Ray Ritchie, K4NRA*

FOR SALE

For Sale: Kenwood TS-820S with desk mike, \$400 or best offer. Also for sale: a Bergen Transit with tripod and leveling stick. Contact Roy Trump, KE4UFN, at 540-248-0827.

FREE SKYWARN CLASSES

One of the many ways hams can serve their community is to assist the National Weather Service. Skywarn is an organization of volunteers who help the NWS warn the public about severe weather.

Being over 50 miles from the Shenandoah Valley, the NWS meteorologists rely on remote reports to collect data on storms and other dangerous conditions.

The National Weather Service is currently seeking volunteers to become trained Skywarn weather observers. Volunteers will complete a basic training class, after which they can report severe weather and offer observations on snowfall, rain, hail, and other conditions as needed.

All volunteers must complete the Basic Training class. The next Basic Training class (Basic I) will be held on **Saturday, September 19**, at the Weather Service Forecast Office (WSFO) in Sterling, Virginia (not far from Dulles Airport), starting at 12:00 Noon and running until 3:00 pm.

Once you are a registered Skywarn Volunteer, you can also take additional classes covering special weather situations. There will be a **Flood/Flash Flood** class on **Wednesday, September 23**, at WSFO Sterling, starting at 7:00 pm and running until 9:00 pm. There is a **Basics II** class on **Thursday, September 24**, from 7:00 pm until 9:30 pm, also at WSFO Sterling.

Other classes planned for the fall season include one on Winter Storms. All classes are free. For more information, or to register for one of the classes, simply telephone 703-260-0107 8am to 5pm weekdays or email melody.hall@noaa.gov .

PUBLIC SERVICE ON A SMALL SCALE

Local Ham Provides Rectifier; Restores Water Service at Campground

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

A local amateur had the opportunity to assist a number of campers recently, once again showing that ham radio operators are public-spirited citizens.

The saga began on a hot day a couple of weeks ago. The location was the Elizabeth Furnace campground in the George Washington National Forest. Vic, W3TDU, a ham from Naples, Florida, was serving as campground host, overseeing the recreation of over 50 campers, all of whom relied on the operation of an electronically-controlled water filtration system.

Without warning the filtration system failed, drying up the spigots and faucets for the campers, putting them in a very inconvenient situation. The nearest alternate supply of water was almost six miles away. Imagine brushing your teeth, washing dishes, or even fixing lemonade with the nearest water being six miles away!

One of the purposes of ham radio is provide the nation with a supply of skilled technicians. Vic was able to use his electronics training to troubleshoot the problem: a burned-out rectifier in the 30-amp, 12-volt power supply of the filtration unit.

Vic issued a call to all local amateurs, asking for help in locating a replacement rectifier. Enter the local ham, Bob W3MMC, in Bergton. Bob not only was able to provide the rectifier, he also assisted in the replacement effort.

The campers were soon enjoying clear, clean water again. And once more, amateur radio operators prove that the hobby does more than merely provide enjoyment and entertainment.

Thanks to these two hams for the service they provided to the campers, and the U.S. Forest Service.

FALL PUBLIC SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

SEPTEMBER 6 TOUR DE VALLEY CENTURY RIDE

Well folks, it's that time of year again. The Milepost Zero Bike Club is planning their annual Tour de Valley Century, and has asked the Ham community to provide communications. The all day event is Sunday September 6. This is the Tenth Anniversary of the event; they are advertising it heavily and expect 25% more riders than in past years.

Check out their web page:
<http://cfw.com/~ringgold/mpzero.htm>

Therefore, they need even more help. If you can give even part of the day, please let me know. This is a fun event, and the club takes care of us.

Please respond via email to either myself or to Bill Bearden, kc4tqf (mailto:KC4TQF@juno.com) -- or catch one of us on the air on 147.075.

Thanks!
Terry Henderson, KT4UO
<http://personal.cfw.com/~kt4uo>
kt4uo@cfw.com

SEPTEMBER 12 EMHS VARSITY TRACK MEET

Norman, KA4EEN, is coordinating the communications support for the regional High School Varsity Meet to be held at Eastern Mennonite High School on September 12. This is a Saturday event involving school teams from counties all over the western Virginia area. Hams are needed to man the various events for a few minutes at a time, to report scoring, and provide immediate communications if an accident occurs at one of the track and field race events.

OCTOBER 3-4 JOHNNY APPLESEED HORSE RIDE

This is not a race, but a fun ride, held north of Timberville. Hams have historically provided communications support at the various way stations along the route of the ride. After the accident involving "Superman" star Christopher Reeve, we are all aware of the possibilities of emergencies at horse events. This is a fun opportunity for you to bring the family to enjoy the equestrian atmosphere, as well as providing a

couple of hours of service in a fun and congenial environment.

OCTOBER 17 MS WALK - HARRISONBURG

The Multiple Sclerosis Society's annual fund-raiser is always a fun event for hams who prefer a slower pace and less-stressful atmosphere. Support communications for this public service event is usually limited to safety issues rather than accidents. The past few years have seen several instances where the ham communicators reported a situation which could have turned out to be dangerous for the walkers, as well as reporting tired walkers who need assistance. The MS Society has always been very gracious to the hams, providing them freebies such as T-Shirts, food, and drinks in return for their service.

OCTOBER 17-18 BIKE VIRGINIA RIDE

One of the most popular public service events, this ride covers a good portion of the valley, giving the participants a good dose of the spectacular fall foliage. Hams generally drive their cars along with the bicyclists, or park at waypoints along the ride route. At least one ham usually rides "bicycle mobile" along with the riders. Hams report accidents and cyclists needing assistance (such as flat tires or mechanical problems) back to the ride headquarters so that assistance can be dispatched. Hams also communicate "sag" service, where riders become too tired and fatigued to finish the ride. The ride organizers usually provide hams with free T-Shirts, free food, and drinks for their service. The event is usually headquartered in Augusta County, although the actual route can cover portions of Rockingham County, too.

OCTOBER 17 HAM RADIO EXAMS

If you hold a General class license or higher, you can serve as a volunteer examiner to help other people join the ranks of radio amateurs. The exams are held on the third Saturday of even numbered months at the Massanutten Vo-Tech Center in Harrisonburg. For information, contact Buck Mowbray at 540-289-5580.

THE BIG MOUNTAIN REPEATER ASSOCIATION'S

Annual Picnic

Also known as

THE BOB'S KNOB BASH

The 7th Annual Bob's Knob picnic and Repeater Benefit will be held on
Sunday, August 16th, 1998
(Rain Date the following week.)

Directions: From I-81, take Exit 257 – follow Route 259 WEST through Broadway, turning left at the traffic light (follow 259 West!). Continue on about 14 miles past Broadway until you reach the Route 820 (Bergton Road) turn-off (there is a flashing yellow light just before the intersection). Turn left onto Bergton Road, go THROUGH downtown Bergton, and turn right onto Crab Run Road. Follow Crab Run Road until it intersects with Mongold Hollow Road. Turn left onto Mongold Hollow Road (gravel), and go approximately one-half a mile to Arbuckle Road. Turn left onto Arbuckle Road, Bob's lane will be the 4th mailbox on the right.

There will be hot dogs, hamburgers, iced tea, lemonade, plates, napkins, cups, and silverware, all furnished. You are to bring a covered disk (with food in it, please) or a dessert, enough for yourself and your guests, as well as a couple of 2-liter bottles of your favorite non-alcoholic beverage. Various other items (such as buns, ice, potato chips, and specialty items) may be donated by some of the folks attending – if you'd like to volunteer to donate, please call Bob on the 146.625 repeater, or phone 540-852-3289.

Special note: Again this year, the big pot of beans will be slow-cooking over the open fire. And there will be dedicated Bean Stirrers at the ready!

The Picnic is FREE. We will have a bucket or two asking for contributions for the Big Mountain Repeater Fund, with all proceeds going to maintenance of the repeater equipment, Forest Service fees, and other expenses of the 146.625 machine. Please note that this repeater operation has been financed completely by the users for over 20 years – this is a community-based repeater, open to all. If you would like to make a monetary contribution by mail, send it to the treasurer, Mark Payne, WA4E, 200 Holly Hill Drive, Bridgewater, VA, 22812.

Bring Grandpa, Grandma, the kids, everyone! Plenty of room to romp on the Knob. Folding chairs for you and your guests would be nice. You can walk in the woods, play badminton, horseshoes, or just plain relax under the shade trees. Parking is at a premium, so if you can drive the compact car, or can carpool (there is a Park-n-Ride lot at Exit 257 on I-81, and another at the corner of Bergton Road and Route 259), that would help. There will be an informal tail-gating session so you can buy, swap, sell, or trade if you want. And don't forget to register yourself, your spouse, your kids, your mom & dad, and even your pets at the Chinese pagoda when you enter!

Talk-In will be on 146.550 simplex, available after you pass Fulks Run on State Road 259. See you there!

FIELD DAY REPORTS

Who said "It never rains on Field Day!"?

Whoever they were, they were dead wrong this time. Well, I guess to be truthful, we really didn't get so much rain as we did thunder and lightning. But a storm is a storm, isn't it?

Some brave(?) souls operated the Phone station straight through, while Neal N4XU shut down the CW station so his new radio (and himself, too) wouldn't get fried.

Even with the CW station not operating almost a third of the 24 hour period, the overall score was the best ever recorded by the joint MARA/VARA Field Day adventure. The guys at the Phone station did 20% better than last year (1031 contacts compared to 859 last year). The VHF/UHF guys did almost as well as last year, coming 3 contacts shy of last year's 179 QSO's; the CW station was just behind last year also, with only 21 QSO's needed to match the 859 HF contacts made last year.

But where we really shone was the spectacular effort at the Novice/Tech station: 505 QSO's this year, a whopping 54% improvement over last year's effort!! Of course it helped that 10 meters was open for most of the time, but credit is certainly due to the persistence of the operators to milk the most contacts out of the band as possible. Thanks to all who operated for your efforts.

A big THANK YOU is due to all the following people (I'm sure I've left someone out):

The Field Day Committee members for organizing everything: **Ken KE4GKD**, Chairman; **Pat KD4WWF**, **Sandy K4PZC**, **John N3GLZ**, **Joe KD4FKT**, and myself **AD4TJ**.

Norman KA4EEN and his wife for setting up and manning the sign-in/welcome/refreshment center.

Clint KB4OLM for bringing half his worldly possessions to make the VHF/UHF position extremely nice.

Charlie WA4ITY for one of the Phone station radio, and tables for the Phone, CW, and Novice/Tech stations (and **Jeff W(B)4PJW** for the other Phone station radio and a Voice keyer).

Neal N4XU for the complete CW station, and the use of his call.

Joe KD4FKT for the Novice/Tech radio and the 10 meter vertical, and the CW beam.

Ken KE4GKD for the CW tower and rotator.

Matthew KD4UPL for the Natural Power equipment and the Phone station trailer.

Elsworth K4LXG for the publicity (2 or 3 or 4 newspapers and about 3 or 4 radio stations), and for getting the Denton truck for the CW station, and for picking up and returning the club's equipment (and thanks to the others who helped load and unload it).

David KF4SVR and **Bob KF4BFC** for the campfire wood.

Sandy K4PZC for computers and his expertise, and for ensuring that a necessity of Field Day (the critically-important Porta-Potti) was present.

Jeremy KE4CAY for climbing the towers to install and remove antennas.

The anonymous ham who, on hearing that a trailer was needed for the Novice/Tech station, announced to Ken that he would pay the rent for one. Thanks!

And, of course, **Jeff W(B)4PJW**, the man ever-present behind the scenes, who takes care of the computerized logs, who copied the ARRL Field Day message and sent it via Packet to our Section Manager for bonus points, and the millions of other little details he takes care of.

And to the others who I'm sure I left out, a big THANK YOU from me and all the members of both clubs.

As attendance stood, last year's Field Day had over 70 people sign in, but for 1998 at least **123** signed in, close to 100% over last year!! And, it could have been even more, as I missed some faces from past years.

Thanks again to all who came, participated, encouraged, visited, etc. Hope to see you next year! It won't rain at next year's Field Day(?!?!?).

73,

David AD4TJ

OFFICIAL FIELD DAY RESULTS

ARRL FIELD DAY 1998
 Call: N4XU Country: U.S.A.
 Mode: SSB/CW/FM Category: Multi Multi

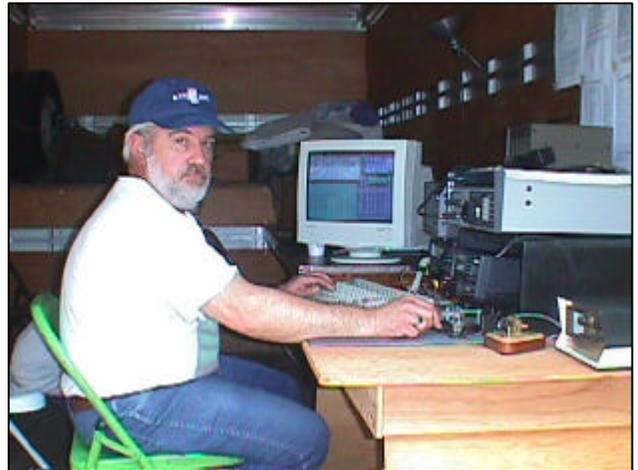
BAND	CW QSO	CW QSO PTS	SSB QSO	SSB QSO PTS
80	0	0	59	118
40	254	1016	266	532
20	357	1428	518	1036
15	221	884	191	382
10	0	0	0	0
6	17	68	120	240
2	1	4	5	10
440	1	4	1	2
NAT	6	24	0	0
NOV	1	4	505	1010
SAT	0	0	51	102

 Total QSOs 858 + 1716 = 2574

(3432 CW QSO PTS + 3432 SSB QSO PTS) X 2 POWER MULTIPLIER + 800 BONUS = 7,664

Temperatures at the Field Day Site - 98

22 nd .	Low 59.5	High 78.8
23 rd .	Low 56.6	High 74.8
24 th .	Low 61.4	High 77.0
25 th .	Low 63.1	High 73.9
26 th .	Low 67.5	High 79.4
27 th .	Low 57.9	High 73.4
28 th .	Low 58.1	High 72.2



Field Day Photos by John, N3GLZ



VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

July 8, 1998 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association (V.A.R.A.) club meeting was held at Gavid's Restaurant in Staunton on July 8, 1998. The meeting was opened at 7:50 p.m. by the club president, Ken Harris (KE4GKD). A round of introductions was made. There were 17 members and guests present.

There was one new call change. Jeff Rinehart is now W4PJW.

The 50/50 winner was Doug Zirk (KE4RMD). The total amount raised was \$19 with half going to Doug and half going towards the club.

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

It was announced that there was 140 operators as well as guests signed in during the Field Day events. Actual amounts were somewhat higher because not all people signed in.

It was announced that the club's yard sale raised \$385.75.

Clint Cambell (KB4OLM) was voted in as a new member of the Valley Amateur Radio Association.

Daniel Farrew (KB2TBL) and Curtis Crigler (KB8PJI) submitted applications for membership to the club.

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 was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

*Submitted by:
Douglas S. Zirk (KE4RMD)
Secretary*

***The deadline for the
September issue of the Monitor is
Thursday, August 20.***

Sorry, the MARA minutes did not arrive
by the deadline this month.

REMINDERS

The ARRL has developed a proposal for streamlining the ham radio license structure, and seeks for member input and comment. The proposal would reduce the number of classes from six to four, and would involve only two levels of code proficiency (5 WPM and 12 WPM) instead of the present three. The proposal would make the no-code tech the entry level license with VHF and UHF privileges. Current novices would be afforded the privileges of the present general class (including HF) and the general code requirement would be reduced to 5 WPM. Complete details of the proposal can be found at the ARRL web site or in the upcoming QST magazine.

The 147.315 repeater on Massanutten Peak has undergone a frequency change. The repeater is now on 145.130, with an input frequency down 600 khz. The autopatch service for subscribers will soon be restored. The repeater remains open, with no PL tone required.

The Page County ARES net meets each Sunday evening at 8:00 pm on the 146.625 repeater.

The Rockingham County ARES net meets each Monday evening at 8:00 pm. The first Monday of each month, the net meets on 146.550 simplex; the remaining Mondays, the net meets on the 145.130 repeater.

VE Exams will be held on August 15th. Sign-in begins at 9:30 am, and the exams start at 10:00 sharp. Exams are held at the Massanutten Vo-Tech Center on Pleasant Valley Road just off of Route 11, south of Harrisonburg.

There may be a ham radio license course offered to the public this coming fall. There appears to be sufficient interest for conducting the class in the Harrisonburg area. If you know of someone interested in becoming a ham, or in upgrading, have them contact David Tanks at 540-248-1207.

MASSANUTTEN ARA

President: David Tanks, AD4TJ
Vice-President: Walt Lam, KF4BFB
Secretary: Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL
Treasurer: Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL
Board (exp 98): Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
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, W4PJW

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

The *Monitor* is published monthly by the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., a non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Service regulations. The *Monitor* is distributed to all full current members of the Massanutten and the Valley Amateur Radio Associations under reciprocal agreements of the two clubs. Sample copies are sometimes sent to other hams in the Shenandoah Valley to invite them to join the club of their choice. All change of address, articles, comments, and material for the *Monitor* should be sent to the Editor, David R. Fordham, KD9LA, 131 Wayside Drive, Weyers Cave, VA 24486-2421, phone 540-234-0448, email: fordhadr@jmu.edu.

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