

# The M.A.R.A./V.A.R.A. Monitor

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

## MARA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to Gary KE4DFH, for the great program on the bombing in Kenya! It showed how vulnerable the US Embassy there was to being bombed. It also was an eye-opener as to how far behind the rescue teams from other countries involved in the effort were to the one from the US.

March's program will be a video on HCJB, the short-wave station in Quito, Ecuador, where the Quad antenna was born. April, of course, is Homebrew Night. Bring in your contraptions you've created over the winter and Show-and-Tell all about them, whether it be an antenna, radio, amplifier, etc. We want to see it!

Congratulations to our most recent members: Steven KF4ZWK, and Adam KF4ZJF, were voted in. Welcome!!

Plans for Field Day have already begun, the 1st step being the organizing of a committee. Within 15 seconds after asking for volunteers, the 3 spots were filled! The 3 lucky hams are: Sandy K4PZC, David KF4SVR, and myself. I hope everyone plans to at least visit the F.D. site June 26-27, if not stay and help set-up, operate, and tear-down. It's good practice for emergency operations. We have operating positions for all classes of hams; our use of an Extra-Class call allows even Novice-Techs to operate any position, whether it be HF SSB, HF CW, Nov/Tech SSB/CW, or VHF/UHF. Of course, only Novice/ Techs can operate the Novice/Tech position; 10 meters should keep that station hopping with activity. The VHF/UHF guys may get more QSO's than they know what to do with, if 6 meters opens up. Remember last year when Wyoming and Utah were worked? Ducting could make 2 meters sound like 10 while it lasts. And if our Satellite operators can make Field Day, they'll have 4 new birds to work. And if we can swing it, we'll have an HF digital station going, which means more opportunities for operating, and points collecting. Make your plans to attend now!

See you at the March 4 meeting!!

*David Tanks, AD4TJ  
MARA President*

## LAST ISSUE!

If you have not already renewed your club membership for 1999, please do so today. This is the last issue of the *Monitor* to be sent to 1998 members. Unless you renew by March 10, you may not receive another *Monitor* for quite a while. Use the renewal form inside the back cover of this issue and renew today!

### From the Veep

## VARA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

February Meeting: The meeting was called to Order at 7:30pm at Gavid's Restaurant. There were 21 members and 4 guest present. There was \$24.00 collected for the 50/50 drawing, \$12.00 of it was won by Ray Pitsenbarger, (KE4NNV).

There was no secretary's report for last month as there was a problem getting it into the computer and it was not bought to the meeting.

Karen our former secretary for 1998 has had her baby, a girl.

Still working on getting our Yaesu 101 radio checked out, also we need a chairman for Field Day. It should be fairly easy as you'd be working with MARA's Chairperson.  
PLEASE SOMEONE HELP.

Meeting was closed at 755 pm. Again a short meeting.

*Dick Waldmuller, WB8GIF  
Vice President*

## Will This Affect You?

# GLOBAL POSITION SYSTEM DOWNTIME

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Civilian and military ships and planes could feel the effect of a Pentagon plan to disrupt its satellite navigation over North Carolina next week.

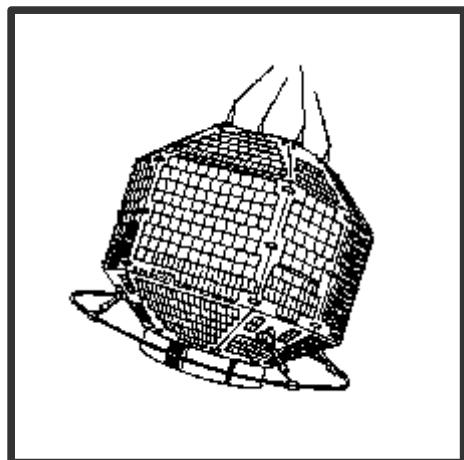
The Defense Department will hold tests to prepare for potential loss of the Global Positioning System-a military-run network which provides longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates for ships and planes with appropriate receivers.

The tests and accompanying disruptions could affect the civilian ships, aircraft, and other users that depend on the 24-hour network to help guide them. The Federal Aviation Administration and the Coast Guard issued notices Friday, cautioning pilots and ship operators against relying on GPS signals during certain four-hour periods from Monday through Saturday the first week of March.

However, a spokesman for the U.S. Atlantic Command, which is running the test, told The Washington Post he expected "only minimal impact" on most civilian users, especially those that are land-based. Affected areas will vary greatly according to altitude. For ships, it will involve a circular region within a radius of 40 miles centered about 120 miles east of Wilmington, N.C. For planes cruising at 40,000 feet, the affected area expands to a radius of 350 miles and reaches as far south as Vero Beach, Fla., and as far north as Sea Isle, N.J.

Officials said there were no reports of civilian safety problems during previous tests held over North Carolina and Nevada. During the tests, military crews will be evaluated on their ability to identify that GPS systems are not working and on finding other means of navigation.

*From AMSAT Listserver*



# ANOTHER HAM SATELLITE

Do you have a dual-band VHF/UHF radio on packet? Do you have one of the new hybrid VHF/UHF/HF radios which can work SSB on VHF and UHF?

If so, then you can work several existing ham satellites. And if the current collection of birds isn't enough for you, a new satellite is planned to launch in the fall. Sponsored by Weber State University in Utah, JAWSAT is scheduled to launch in September and will have 437 MHz FM analog/digital down and 145 MHz FM analog/digital up.

# HAM VERSION OF NORTHSTAR - AND IT'S FREE

General Motors is getting lots of advertising mileage (no pun intended) from its ads for Cadillac NorthStar. Northstar is an automatic location system which uses the GPS signals to pinpoint the location of the car at all times. The driver's location can appear on the map displayed on a screen in the car, or transmitted to law enforcement authorities if the car is stolen.

Hams have had a type of "Northstar" system for years, albeit not under that particular name. The ham version of Northstar is called APRS, Amateur Position Reporting System.

What's more, the ham system let's you not only track and report your own position, but that of dozens or thousands of other hams. Further, it also lets you exchange short text messages with other users. In effect, this is digital messaging and text paging at its finest! ***And it is free to hams!***

All you need (in addition to your radio and computer), is a TNC and a GPS receiver. To receive and plot the positions of other hams, you don't even need the GPS receiver -- a simple VHF radio, traditional packet TNC and a computer will suffice.

For travelers, as long as you are in the APRS coverage area, you have nationwide tracking and 2-way messaging capability. East of the Mississippi: 82% of population and 52% of the land area is currently covered by APRS. And more APRS digipeaters are appearing on the air each week. And it's free!

All it takes for an APRS digipeater is a TNC and a radio on 144.39. And even base stations can join the network. If you have an available high antenna and TNC, we could sure use you on 144.39 as an additional digipeater. Come join us. For more info see <http://www.aprs.org> or [www.aprs.net](http://www.aprs.net) on the Internet.

*Bob Bruninga,  
WB4APR*

## **LOOKING TO GET ON PACKET? OR SEEKING A GOOD, CHEAP LOGGING COMPUTER?**

My employer, Erie Insurance Group is upgrading a good portion of their PCs. The following P.C.s are being offered to the highest bidder:

- 9 386 & 486 desktop PC.s
- 7 Keyboards
- 5 Dot Matrix printers
- 5 Powercords

If anyone is interested, you may contact John Burner, Erie Insurance Group at 540-943-7000 or 1-800-542-2250. The units are being sold as is. They were all in working condition when removed from service.

*John Lasher  
N3GLZ*

## **NEWS FROM SAM, KF4EKV**

As some of you know, Sam Pickering, an active member of VARA and a scoutmaster active in ham radio, suffered an unfortunately condition similar to a stroke which has literally “taken him out” of our midst. The following message was provided to Ray Colvin. Sam would certainly appreciate a card or note. We all hope that Sam’s recuperation will progress quickly and we’ll find him on the air soon.

“This is Sam's wife, Margaret, typing for Sam. Just thought I'd let you know that Sam has started in the program at Woodrow Wilson Rehab in Fishersville. I've been trying to get him in there and have had a lot of help with the doctors and a friend on the disabilities board in Waynesboro. They did evals all week this week and should start the nitty gritty next week. They want him to live there in their SHREW unit but there isn't any room for another month. Guess they have to wait for someone to graduate out first. He's in out patient for now which is better for him, he needs to build back up to the demands of being on the go all day. Right now the only exercise he gets is changing channels on the tv by remote control.

## **VARA WEBSITE AT NEW LOCATION**

Buck, N3RIQ, informs us that the VARA web pages are back on the Internet, this time at: <http://www.hamsnet.net/w4mus>.

Also, Buck says that any ham desiring free email or web space for personal web pages can contact hamsnet for free megabytes on the web. Contact Buck at:  
[dmowbray@vaix.net](mailto:dmowbray@vaix.net).

### NOAA Weather Radio

## **N.W.S. RADIO CHANGES**

Shenandoah Valley residents are scheduled for an improvement in their NOAA weather radio broadcasts! As most hams know, the National Weather Service operates a 24-hour-a-day broadcast service providing continuous weather information, such as hourly condition summaries, river flood stages, severe weather warnings, and general forecasts. The local broadcasts can be found on 162.400 MHz, FM. The transmitter for this service is presently located near Moorefield, West Virginia. This location makes reception of these broadcasts fairly difficult in many areas of the valley.

The NWS has known about the spotty coverage for some time, and has been working on a plan to provide improved reception. The fruits of their efforts may be just around the corner.

According to Barbara McNaught Watson, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the NWS Sterling, Virginia, one of two alternative transmitter sites will probably be on the air within a year or so.

The first alternative, the one which holds the most promise for clear reception practically everywhere in Rockingham and Augusta counties, is a location on Buck's Elbow mountain, about six miles west of Waynesboro. This site has already been approved for an NWS transmitter site, and the Albemarle Radio club is reportedly working with the NWS on the operational details of getting this transmitter on the air. Problems yet to be overcome, however, include MOA's with the local governments, and, of course, approval from the National Radio Astronomy Observatory. (The site lies within the radio quiet zone and therefore must undergo significant testing before it can become operational.)

The second site involves relocating the current Moorefield transmitter to a position close to Franklin, WV. As Barbara writes, “Another possibility to help Rockingham, Augusta and Highland Counties is moving the Moorefield radio. Right now, the State of Maryland is also getting ready to purchase a transmitter for a mountain near Frostburg, Maryland. This transmitter would provide needed coverage to Western Maryland and portions of West Virginia. It would allow us to move the Moorefield radio to a more optimum position to help areas that currently do not receive any radio signal. One possible location would be near Franklin, WV in Pendleton County. This location, along with Charlottesville, I believe would provide much better coverage for the southern Shenandoah Valley.”

There is no deadline, or even a specific timetable for placing these new radio transmitters on the air. However, the NWS assures us that work is actively progressing.

## **SCIENTISTS SHATTER LIMIT ON WIRELESS TRANSMISSIONS**

Lucent Technologies has developed a fundamentally new technology that the company claims can boost the capacity of fixed wireless links by as much as 10 to 20 times, without increasing the bandwidth. Its called BLAST, and BLAST may even be applicable to ham radio use.

Sometimes taking another look at what is already understood can be valuable. That's what the Murray Hill, New Jersey, technology company did and BLAST was born by revisiting a 50 year old mathematical theory. According to Lucent, the central idea behind BLAST is to exploit, rather than mitigate, multipath effects. Lucent says that helps achieve very high bandwidth efficiency a lot higher when you treat multipath as an ally instead of an adversary.

Researchers say it's possible to have several transmissions occupying the same frequency with each transmission having its own, essentially co-located, transmitting antenna. At the receiving end, multiple antennas are again used and there's a special computerized signal processing algorithm in use.

The algorithm separates the mutually interfering transmissions from each other. As a result, Lucent says the capacity of a given frequency band increases proportionally to the number of antennas.

BLAST may be several years away from being available and even longer in amateur radio. Still, it could mean increased efficiency in packet radio backbone links and intertied digital voice repeater circuits. BLAST may also encourage experimentation in completely new modes of amateur radio communications. The benefits could include greater throughput for emergency, health and welfare and public service communications.

A BLAST prototype has been built to test the theory. The device uses an array of eight transmitting and twelve receiving antennas. During its first weeks of operation, it achieved unprecedented wireless capacity of over ten times the capacity of today's competing systems.

If you'd like more information about BLAST, you can find it at the Lucent Bell Lab's website.

<http://www.bell-labs.com/projects/blast/>

and

<http://www.bell-labs.com/news/1998/september/9/1.html>

(Via CGC Communicator and Lucent Technology Website)

*Good News!*

## **HUMAN EXPOSURE TO RF: No Cancer Link Found**

Do people living near high powered broadcast transmitters develop cancer at a higher rate than the rest of us? According one scientific report, cancer among residents of the Lookout Mountain area west of Denver Colorado was not higher statistically for the decade from 1985 to 1995 than would have been expected based on the ages and numbers of men and women who live there.

The report was commissioned by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. It's statistical analysis can be found at:

[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/cdphe\\_dir/release/061698.htm](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cdphe_dir/release/061698.htm)  
1

(Published news report)

## **MORSE DISAPPEARING FROM THE HIGH SEAS**

Morse code will disappear from the high seas as of March 1st, 1999. This is the date when all passenger ships and cargo ships over 300 gross tons will no longer be permitted to use Morse code for distress calls.

The International Maritime Organization says that Morse is being phased out because of the need of years of training and practice for operators to use it. The IMO says that if something happened to the radio operator it is unlikely that anyone else on board a ship would be able to use Morse Code to call for help. Thus there is the need for a more accessible SOS system. Other reasons for the phase out of CW include reception problems, uncertainty about the accuracy of message being received using Morse and the airwave congestion.

Wired magazine reports that the use of the Morse code in Maritime communications will be taken over by a network of geostationary communications satellites. Larger cargo ships and passenger liners will also be required to carry satellite emergency position indicating radio beacon transmitters. Using these in conjunction with orbital search and rescue satellites can bring aid a lot more quickly to a stricken vessel than listening in the noise for an SOS signal in Morse code.

It appears that ham radio may now be the last place where Morse code is taught for communication purposes.

(Via Internet news report)

## SUNSPOT CYCLE SLOW IN BUILDING

Sun watcher Tad Cook, K7VVV, Seattle, Washington, reports: The geomagnetic field has been very stable over the past week, with many periods when all of the planetary, Boulder and even high-latitude K indices were zero. Average planetary A indices, which are based on the 3-hour K index over 24 hours, were down five points to 4.4. At the beginning of this month, the Boulder K index was zero for 24 hours, resulting in an A index of zero for February 1.

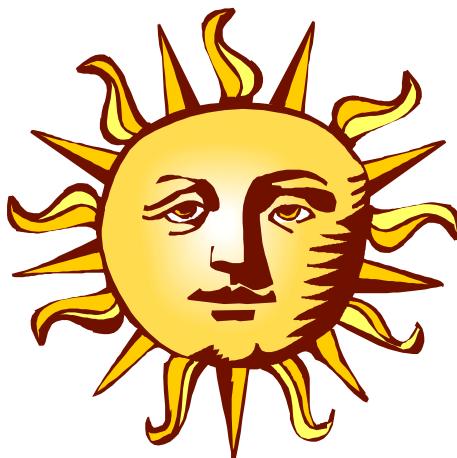
Unfortunately, we not only saw low geomagnetic activity, but declining solar activity as well. The daily sunspot number on January 30 was only 29, and it has not been that low since October 4 when it was 21. Low activity like this means poorer conditions on higher frequencies.

The average daily solar flux for January was 142.4, a drop of almost eight points from December, which was 150.1. It is still a higher average solar flux than any month other than December, 1998, in the current solar cycle.

For the near term, look for better conditions and a rising solar flux. Predicted flux values for February 5-7 are 110, 115 and 115, and the predicted planetary A index for those days is 10, 8 and 8. Expect flux values to rise to around 120 by February 9, 130 by February 11, 140 on the 12th, 150 on the 13th, and remain around 160 February 14-16. Look for unsettled to active geomagnetic conditions around February 9-11.

Sunspot numbers for January 28 through February 3 were 37, 33, 29, 59, 36, 47, and 42, with a mean of 40.4. The 10.7-cm flux was 118.8, 177.7, 118, 114.8, 118, 110, 109 and 108.8, with a mean of 123.9. The estimated planetary A indices were 7, 7, 5, 3, 2, 2, and 5, with a mean of 4.4.

*ARRL Letter*



Ever wonder what they mean?

## HOW TO USE THE SOLAR FLUX NUMBERS

Solar Flux numbers are broadcast *hourly* over WWV on 5, 10, 15, and 20 MHz. But what do they mean in practical terms? How can ham use these numbers?

The general rule of the thumb is 10 and 15M are "open" with a solar flux above 150. When the solar flux hits 170-180 the ionosphere becomes very good for long-distance 10M work.

When it gets above 200, you can hear your own signals echo back to you on 10M. You haven't lived until you've listened to yourself with a 1 second delay ... the result of your 10M signals bouncing around the Earth a few times before making their way back to you. One of those cheap thrills in life you won't forget.

*GL, Paul NA5N  
National Radio Astronomy Observatory  
forwarded by Paul WV3J*

Looking for other hams your age?

## NEW ARRL WEBSITE PROVIDES YOUTH WITH A PLACE TO MEET

A new page on ARRLWeb aims to take advantage of youth interests in computers and the Internet to offer younger hams a place to get together online to arrange on-the-air schedules. Amateur Radio youth groups can just visit the Youth Skeds Database at <http://www.arrl.org/ead/youthskeds/> and make skeds with other schools or young people's groups. The ARRL Educational Activities Department credits Phil Downes, N1IFP, for coming up with the idea. Regardless of age, grade level, school or group affiliation, youngsters worldwide can register at this site. This adds them to the list of groups wishing to get acquainted with others via Amateur Radio.

At the Youth Skeds home page, entering a state (without entering a city) makes it possible to scan a statewide list of groups who have registered. Or you can pinpoint an area by entering a city and state. For more information, contact Mr. Miller at 860-594-0340; or e-mail [dmiller@arrl.org](mailto:dmiller@arrl.org).

*ARRL Letter*

## “DEAL OF THE DECADE?”



### For Sale Complete Ham Radio Station

**Lower Left to Right:** Drake Low Band Speaker, Dentron 2Kw Antenna Tuner, Kenwood TS-520S (6-band tube-type HF transceiver), with digital readout, Kenwood TS700A 2-meter transceiver, Heathkit SB-220 2KW Power Amplifier.

**Top Left to Right:** Voltage Monitor, Kenwood SP220 Speaker, Heathkit SB614 Scope, Alliance HD Rotor, Heathkit Wattmeter/Phone Patch and Clock, Heathkit 2-meter Wattmeter, 2-meter Antenna Switch, Kantronics Interface for running CW through a computer.

**Not Shown:** 30-foot Tower; HD Rotor, Stacked 11-element Cushcraft 2-meter beams, 2-meter Vertical Omni Antenna, and 2-meter 7-element Horizontal Antenna, Dipole Antenna, and all cables.

All of above is for sale in its entirety. The deal also includes the custom-built desk with wheels so you can pull the unit out to work on the cables in the rear. All equipment is certified to work properly, and I will be glad to show or demonstrate it before you purchase.

***All goes for \$1200.*** Roger B. Austin, WD8KUW, Route 5, Staunton Virginia, call 540-886-1154.

FROM WEST VIRGINIA

## CALL FOR HELP!

WANTED: A few good packet operators to set up an operating system dedicated to the VDEN on 145.730. Any takers in the Shenandoah Valley or bordering counties in West Virginia?

Also...help in getting an E.C. for Highland County, Virginia.

*David Gordon - KB4LCI,  
E.C. for Pocahontas Co., WV.  
[dgordon@sadira.gb.nrao.edu](mailto:dgordon@sadira.gb.nrao.edu)*

## PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT! MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Saturday April 24<sup>th</sup>**, is the March of Dimes walkathon. Amateur Radio Operators will be needed to provide communications support for this event.

Each year in the past, the March of Dimes has been very appreciative of the assistance we offer. This year's walk will begin at the K-Mart in Harrisonburg. Registration begins at 8:00 am, so hams will be needed beginning around 7:30 am. This is generally no more than half-a-day affair. If you can help, please contact Norman Benner, KA4EEN.

## ELMER NEEDED

Este Fisher, of 7126 Shady Grove Rd, in Rockingham County four miles south of Cross Keys, is looking for an Elmer to help answer some questions he has on the Technician's examination material. Este (pronounced "est-ee") has been studying the manual but before taking the test would feel more comfortable meeting with a ham and talking over some of the questions and answers. If you are willing to help get a new ham licensed and on the air, please call Este at 249-2409.

## VALLEY NET SCHEDULE

### Page County ARES

Sunday March 7: 8:00 pm 146.625 (-)  
Sunday March 14: 8:00 pm 146.625 (-)  
Sunday March 21: 8:00 pm 146.625 (-)  
Sunday March 28: 8:00 pm 146.625 (-)

### Rockingham County ARES

Monday March 2: 8:00 pm 146.55 simplex  
Monday March 8: 8:00 pm 145.13 (-)  
Monday March 15: 8:00 pm 145.13 (-)  
Monday March 22: 8:00 pm 145.13 (-)  
Monday March 29: 8:00 pm 145.13 (-)

### Augusta County ARES

Thursday, March 11: 8:00 pm 147.075 (+)

### Traders Net

Monday March 15: 8:30 pm 145.13 (-)

### Code Practice

Monday March 2: 8:30 pm 145.13 (-)  
Monday March 8: 8:30 pm 145.13 (-)  
Monday March 22: 8:30 pm 145.13 (-)  
Monday March 29: 8:30 pm 145.13 (-)

## OTHER CALENDAR EVENTS

**Mar 4:** **MARA March Meeting**  
**Mar 6-7:** ARRL International DX Contest Phone  
**Mar 10:** **VARA March Meeting**  
**Mar 11:** Augusta County ARES Net (147.075+)  
**March 13:** Culpeper VE team license exams  
**Mar 13-14:** Charlotte NC Hamfest  
**Mar 20-21:** Virginia QSO Party  
**Mar 21:** Charleston WV Hamfest  
**Mar 27-28:** Timonium MD Hamfest

**April 1:** **MARA Homebrew Night (no foolin'!)**  
**April 8:** Augusta County ARES Net (147.075+)  
**April 10:** Richmond VE team license exams  
**April 14:** **VARA April Meeting**  
**April 17:** Harrisonburg VE team license exams  
**April 24:** Chesapeake VA Hamfest  
**April 24:** Harrisonburg March of Dimes walk

**May 2:** Antietam/Hagerstown Hamfest  
**May 14-15:** Dayton OH Hamfest  
**June 6:** Ol' Virginia Manassas Hamfest  
**June 26-27:** Field Day  
**August 1:** Berryville Hamfest

## How to sound like a "RN" in one easy lesson.

# RADIO NERDS

On two and six meters I have noticed a tendency of people making an effort to sound like a real "RN". Since this appears to be the new style in Amateur Radio, I thought I would present this funny guide to radio nerd-dom.

Step One: Use as many "Q" signals as possible. Yes, I know they were invented solely for CW and are totally inappropriate for two meter FM, but they're fun and entertaining. They keep people guessing as to what the blue-blazes you really mean. i.e., "I'm going to QSY to the phone." Can you really change frequencies to the phone? "The QRM at my QTH is QSB, QSL?"

Step Two: Never laugh when you can say "HI HI". Or better yet, laugh first, and then say, HI-HI. Redundancy is part of good RN'ing.

Step Three: Utilize an alternative vocabulary. Use words like "destinated" and "negatory". It's OK to make up your own words here. i.e., "Yeah Tom, I pheebart zatoonix occasionally myself." Always refer to the repeater as a machine, ie: "The Machine", or "This Machine", even though it has no moving parts.

Step Four: Always say "XX4XXX (Insert your own call) *for I.D.*" As mentioned in Step Two, anything that creates redundancy is always encouraged. That's why we have the Department of Redundancy Department. (Please note that you can follow your call with "for identification purposes" instead of "for I.D." While taking longer to say, it is worth more "RN points".)

Step Five: The better the copy on two meter FM, the more you should use phonetics. Names should *always* be spelled phonetically if they are short or common ones. i.e., "My name is Al... Alpha Lima" or "Jack here, Juliet Alpha Charlie Kilo." If at all possible use the less common HF phonetics "A4SM... America Four, Sugar Mexico." And for maximum "RN points", make up unintelligible cutsie phonetics. "Name is Bob, Billibong Oregano Bumperpool."

Step Six: Always give the calls of yourself and everyone who is (or *has ever been*) in the group, whether they are still there or not. While this has been legally unnecessary for years, it is still a great memory test. You may also use "and the group" if you're an "old timer" or just have a bad memory. Extra points for saying everyone's call and then clearing in a silly way "K2PKK, Adios, Amigos, Chow, Chow and Cheerio, Bye-b'dee-bye-bye."

Step Seven: Always, always, always use the repeater, even if you are across the parking lot from the person you're talking to. Extra points are awarded if the person you are talking to is within 75 feet of you and the repeater is more than 30 miles away. And keep your mobile rig set to its highest power, even if you are across the street from the repeater site. Why have 50 watts of power if you don't use it?

Step Eight: If someone asks for a break, always finish your turn, taking as long as possible before turning it over. Whenever possible, pass it around a few times first. This will discourage the breaker, and if it is an emergency, encourage him to switch to another repeater and not bother you again.

Step Nine: Always ask involved questions of the person who is trying to sign out. Never let him get by with just a "yes" or "no"

answer. Make it a question that will take him a long time to answer. i.e., "Before you go, Tom, just a quick one. What is the difference between amplitude compandered side-band and normally-inverted spread-spectrum?"

Step Ten: The less you know on a subject, the more you should speculate about it. The amount of time you spend on the subject should be inversely proportionate to your knowledge of that subject. Time out the repeater, even though you have no clue.

Step Eleven: Always make sure you try to communicate with only a handheld and a rubber duck antenna, preferably from inside a steel building. Also, make sure you work through a repeater that you can hear, but it cannot hear you. This will put out a kind of "RN mating call": "Well, Joe, I hear the repeater just fine. I wonder why it can't hear me?" "I said, I wonder why it can't hear me." "I said..."

Step Twelve: If you hear two amateurs start a conversation, wait until they are thirty seconds into their contact, and then break in to make a call, or better yet, *use the autopatch*. Make sure you keep the repeater tied up for at least three full minutes so it times out. This way, once the two have re-established contact, they won't even remember what they were talking about.

Step Thirteen: You hear someone on the repeater giving directions to a visiting amateur. Even if the directions are good, make sure you break in with your own "alternate route but better way to get there" version. This is most effective with several other "would-be RNs", each giving a different route. By the time the visiting amateur unscrambles all the street names whizzing by in his mind, he should have moved out of the range of the repeater. This keeps you from having to stick around to help the guy get back out of town later.

Step Fourteen: Always end each transmission with "Over", "Roger?", "QSL?", or "Back to you..." Better yet, *use all four!* Otherwise, the repeater unkeying, and the courtesy tone on the repeater, might not be enough indication to your fellow "RN" that it is his turn to talk.

Step Fifteen: Always use the National Calling Frequency for general conversations. The more uninteresting the topic, the longer you should keep it on the calling frequency. Extra points are awarded if you have recently moved from an adjacent frequency for no reason. Make sure when DX is coming in on 52.525 that you hang out there and talk to your friends two miles down the road about the good old CB days!

Step Sixteen: When the band is open, every time static breaks the squelch on the repeater, jump in and berate the "SOB who's kerchunking the repeater". This shows everyone what an efficient policeman you are. Extra points are awarded if there really is a kerchunker, because it will encourage him to continue kerchunking for weeks or months instead of his getting bored and going away.

Step Seventeen: Make sure you say the first few words of each transmission twice, especially if it is the same thing each time. Like "roger, roger" or "fine business, fine business". I cannot stress enough, over and over, about encouraging redundancy. Again.

Step Eighteen: If you hear a conversation on a local repeater, break in and ask how each station is receiving you. Of course they will only see the signal of the repeater you are using, but it's that magic moment. Extra points are awarded if you are using a base station, on high power, with the beam aimed at the repeater less than three air miles away.

# MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

January 7, 1999 Meeting

The MARA meeting at Evers Restaurant on Jan. 7 was attended by 28 amateurs and guests. The meeting was called to order by President David Tanks at 7:32 PM. Amateurs and guests introduced themselves

David Fordham, KD9LA, gave a report from the money committee which was established to find ways to distribute some of the club funds into worthy causes to promote amateur radio activities in the local area. The committee proposed to place books in 13 school libraries at approximately \$300. cost. Books suggested were "Ham Radio Made Easy" and "Now You are Talking". Other suggestions from the floor included: placing books also into public libraries, purchasing club equipment such as SWR analyzers that club members could borrow and use, the purchase of equipment for field day operations, to purchase equipment for local fire and rescue units that amateurs could use when it becomes necessary to man those stations in emergencies and a suggestion to let ARES officers use some money for ARES operations.

Walt Lam, KF4BFB, made a motion to have the committee check into the costs of the books and to look into the other suggestions proposed and to report back at future meetings of the MARA. The motion was seconded and passed.

Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG, encouraged hams that have expertise and equipment to share with other hams to make it known as to what services or equipment that have to offer. KD9LA will post a survey in the next newsletter. Please return the survey if you are willing to help others in the amateur community.

The club noted the passing of Gerry Brunk's (K4RBZ) mother. We offer our heartfelt sympathy and prayers.

Dale Showalter, N4DAI, announced that he had additional ARES notebooks available to those hams that wish to actively participate in ARES activities.

Club members are to check into the availability of used gel cell batteries that could be used by club members. Several hams offered to check with local businesses and organizations to see if they would donate used cells to hams.

Reports were given about contests and hamfests. Check your QST magazines for times and dates.

The 50-50 drawing was won by Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG. He won \$13.

Glen Heatwole, N4ALS, asked for names of amateurs with 4 wheel drive vehicles that could be used to transport nurses to local nursing homes in inclement weather.

Applications for new membership was read for Steven Tennyson, KF4ZWK, and Adam Reznik, KF4ZJF. They will be voted on at the next meeting of MARA.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM and David Tanks presented a program on what to do in case of an emergency callup. The talk was very informative as to what procedures to follow, what equipment

should be at hand and what should be in a ready kit for a long stay at an assigned post.

# MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

February 4, 1999 Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association was held at Evers Restaurant at Mt. Crawford, VA on the evening of February 4th.

Those who wished to dine assembled at 6:30 p.m. and all came together at 7:30 p.m. for the business meeting and program. There were 24 members and guests in attendance.

Adam Preznik (KF4ZJF) and Steven Tennyson (KF4ZWK) were accepted into full membership in the association.

Our president David, (AD4TJ) made some announcements of future dates of testing, hamfests, and contests. Dale (N4DAI) brought newly updated maps for the emergency service books.

The 50/50 drawing was held and was won by Rusty (N4YET) who donated his winnings to the club treasury.

Following adjournment, the program was presented by a member of the Fairfax Urban Search & Rescue Team. He showed slides and spoke of their trip to Nairobi, Kenya to assist during the bombing of the embassy there. It was stated there were 247 persons killed, 12 of which were Americans and about 4500 injured with 13 of them being Americans. This was a very interesting program and gave us a lot of insight into the working of these rescue units and especially the experiences they have working in other countries with rescue teams from other nationalities. Our thanks to the presenter.

*Respectfully submitted  
Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL  
MARA Secretary*



## Next month, look for the survey!

We are compiling a list of amateurs with test equipment and expertise who would be willing to assist other amateurs in aligning, tuning, and diagnosing their equipment. The survey will include those with specialty books, or even expertise in a certain area of ham radio.

## VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

*January 13, 1999 Meeting*

The Valley Amateur Radio Association (VARA) club meeting was held at Gavid's restaurant in Staunton on January 13, 1999. The meeting was opened around 7:30 pm by the interim president, Dick Waldmuller (WB8GIF). There were 20 members present at the meeting.

No ARES Report as such as given. However, David Tanks (AD4TJ) advised the club that times would be set up for the brand new Augusta County ARES Net, which is starting the week of January 18<sup>th</sup>. Also, David passed out some handouts to those who would be interested in controlling the net. Stay tuned for further news.

The 50/50 raffle collected \$22. Mrs. Elaine Archambeault, XYL of Joe (n4TRH) was the winner.

Due to the Christmas party and the transition of club officers, there was no Secretary's Report.

Jeff Rinehard (W4PJW) distributed the Treasurer's Report to all club members attending the meeting, and the report was accepted as printed.

There was a motion made to adjourn the meeting of the Valley Amateur Radio Association (VARA). The motion was accepted and the meeting was adjourned around 7:58 pm.

After the meeting, David Tanks, (AD4TJ), passed out a handout concerning the virtues of using 75-ohm hardline in a 50-ohm circuit, and gave a talk about the handout.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
J. Daniel Farrow, KB2TBL  
Secretary*



*Don't fiddle around!*

**Get your 1999 Dues in TODAY!**

## VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

*February 10, 1999 Meeting*

The Valley Amateur Radio Association's club meeting for February was held on Wednesday, February 10, 1999 at Gavid's Restaurant in Staunton. The meeting was opened by Acting President Dick Waldmuller (WB8GIF) at 7:30 pm.

The can went around for anyone interested in buying tickets for the 50/50 drawing. We collected \$24 and Ray Pitsenbarger won the drawing. Ray won \$12. There were no new calls or upgrades for the month of February.

The ARES Report was presented, as usual, by David Tank (AD4TJ). David reported the beginning of the Augusta County ARES Net on the 147.075 (+) repeater every second Thursday of the month, at 8:00 pm local time. He also reported that the first net would take place on Thursday, February 11, 1999. The ARES Report was accepted as presented in the meeting.

There was no SkyWarn Report for this month. Also, there was no Secretary's Report as the Secretary forgot to bring a copy of January's minutes to the meeting, and the report didn't appear in the last month's *Monitor*.

Jeff Rinehart, (W4PJW), passed out a copy of the Treasurer's Report for February, and read over the pertinent areas of the report. Daniel Farrow, (KB2TBL) moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as read, and Nancy (KE4PHP) seconded the motion. The Treasurer's Report was accepted unanimously.

Finally, under old business, it was announced that Karen Zirk (KE4WIE) gave birth to a daughter, and that mother and child are doing fine. Also, our thoughts and prayers are with Rusty (KF4QAV) right now as his grandmother is ill. Also, the Yaesu rig to be sold by the club has still to be checked out but will be offered to any interested club members before it is offered to the general ham community.

Discussion was held about the appointment of a Field Day Committee for VARA. Pat (KD4WWF), Clint (KB4OLM), and Richard (KF4QZG) volunteered to help. We are still looking for a chairman, so anyone that would be willing to jump into this big responsibility, please speak up.

A motion was made by Pat (KD4WWF) to close the meeting, and was seconded by June (KC4PKJ). The meeting was closed at 7:55 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
J. Daniel Farrow, KB2TBL  
Secretary*

# MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Use this handy renewal form for your 1999 Club Dues!

## VARA – The VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Mail with \$15 to: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, 1344 Hankey Mtn Hwy, Churchville, VA 24421

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CALL \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRL: Yes No      ARES: Yes No      SKYWARN ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in receiving the *Monitor* electronically in Adobe PDF format? Yes No

*If your address on the mailing label is correct, no further info is needed; otherwise complete the following:*

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE (optional):\_\_\_\_\_

## MARA – The MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

Mail with \$12 to: Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL, 5166 Mt Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CALL \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRL: Yes No      ARES: Yes No      SKYWARN ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in receiving the *Monitor* electronically in Adobe PDF format? Yes No

*If your address on the mailing label is correct, no further info is needed; otherwise complete the following:*

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE (optional):\_\_\_\_\_

## MASSANUTTEN ARA

President: David Tanks, AD4TJ  
Vice-President: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC  
Secretary: Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL  
Treasurer: Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL  
Board (exp 99): Bob Hughes, KF4BFC  
Board (exp 00): Walt Lam, KF4BFB

<http://cob.jmu.edu/fordhadr/MARA/>

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 22802

## THE VALLEY ARA

President: vacant  
Vice-President: Dick Waldmuller WB8GIF  
Secretary: Daniel Farrow KB2TBL  
Treasurer: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW

<http://www.hamsnet.net/w4mus/>

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 other material for the *Monitor* should be sent to the newsletter editor, David R. Fordham, KD9LA, 131 Wayside Drive, Weyers Cave, VA 24486-2421, phone 540-234-0448, email: [fordhadr@jmu.edu](mailto:fordhadr@jmu.edu).

Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc.  
c/o David R. Fordham  
131 Wayside Drive  
Weyers Cave, VA 24486-2421

NON -PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Harrisonburg VA  
PERMIT NO. 60

**LAST ISSUE**  
**For Members Who Haven't Renewed**  
**Their Membership**