

# ***The Monitor***

*Published jointly by the Valley Amateur Radio Association and the*

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## **Looking for a few Good Men (and maybe a woman or two?)**

The MARA club annual elections are to be held on October 7.

No, we can't afford debates like Kerry and Bush.

No, we can't blame the media for spreading all those lies about the candidates.

No there won't be any hanging chads.

Yes, you still have time to get a candidate on the ballot!

And most important of all, COME TO THE MEETING and vote!

The MARA club is poised to really become fun place to spend the first Thursday of every month. All we need is an enthusiastic group of leadership-types to show us the way.

Come to the meeting October 7. Who knows, if you don't show up, you might be our next program committee chairman!

## **VoIP Now Available on 443.150 Repeater**

The 443.150 repeater now has a VoIP line instead of a Verizon landline.

What is VoIP? It stands for "Voice over Internet Protocol". It is a way of using the Internet to pass packets containing digitized voice telephony in real time, just like a telephone call.

This now allows users to call anywhere in the US and Canada! You are no longer limited to just Rockingham County.

Operation of the patch is still the same, except that you must dial 1+ area code for every number (even local).

Jason, N4DSL, has updated current users speed dials to include the "1-540" prefix.

The reverse autopatch is still active also, however the number to dial in is not local to Harrisonburg.

Jason has also reduced the subscription cost to \$20 a year now that his cost is lowered.

Direct 911 access is also still available, autopatch users will be given the speed dial code for the Rockingham County EOC.

This link is made through a long-haul 2.4ghz "wifi" link from N4DSL's house to the repeater site.

Jason welcomes new subscribers. Give him a call on the repeater for more info.

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*“Apparently,  
Oscar is the only  
living recipient of  
the Hiram Percy  
Maxim award”*

## Oscar, W4YJ, World-Famous Top DXer, Now A Valley Resident

Oscar Short, W4YJ, featured in the October issue of QST, now lives in the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community in Harrisonburg.

Apparently the only living recipient of the Hiram Percy Maxim award, Oscar was once one of the top DXers with 322 countries confirmed.

He was formerly W9RSO, W3JNN, W3YJ, and W8AC. See the article on p. 55 of your October issue of QST for other achievements by Oscar.

Information submitted by  
Gerry Brunk, K4RBZ

## Homebrew Ham Site

Looking for a great, simple, cheap, easy-to-build yagi beam antenna? One that will cost you less than a fill-up at Sheets?

How about an easy-to-use Beverage antenna impedance calculator?

Or an article on how to use a “Big Dish” surplus C-band satellite dish on the ham satellites?

Check out this website, provided by Ray, KE4HVR.

<http://www.fredspinner.com/W0FMS/>

One of the best spots on the site is the homebrew yagi. To the URL above, add the following (wint no spaces, after the “/”): CheapYagi/vjbcy.html

## Can Anyone Help Bill Out?

I have a 5 year old *GE 900 MHz cordless phone w/answering machine*, and seem to have lost the instructions on how to program it. If a club member has a book I can borrow to copy, or make me a copy, e-mail is [wwjones@gte.net](mailto:wwjones@gte.net) — Bill Jones, KE4FM

## Travels with Charlie... uh, make that Bob, E.C., Gayle, Bryan, and...

Congrats to Bob Steere, N1QEQ, who will be touring England and Ireland for two weeks in October. Bob just returned with his XYL Ann from a military unit reunion in San Antonio, Texas. His unit had been stationed near Thionville, France. Texas is a long way from France, Bob.

Also, word has it that E.C. Showalter KG4KUR, was traveling to Florida to check on the status of his winter hideaway. Seems the place has been visited by a few hurricanes, and E.C. needs to go pick up limbs, branches, and an occasional mobile home or two that blew into his yard!

E.C. also was planning to spend some time with his son-in-law at the outer banks.

Also, Gayle Shull Ku4XN, was in Myrtle Beach for a few days, watching the surf kicked up by the Atlantic storms.

Bryan Fordham, KG4JOE, has spent the last six weeks in Sanford, Florida. Bryan says that when he has trouble sleeping, he simply counts the hurricanes coming overhead. He’s up to four now. Three have hit him dead on: Charlie, Frances, and Jeanne, with Ivan a near miss. Sanford is between Daytona Beach and Orlando, on I-4.

And finally, let’s play “where’s Waldo”, and ask: Has anyone seen the elusive Paul Helbert WV3J in the last year? Even his Volvo has been conspicuously absent.

## Augusta County Fox Hunt Won By Jason KG4YLG

Congratulations to Jason Miller, KG4LYG, of Bridgewater, for coming in first place in the Augusta County Fox Hunt last month!

And also, congratulations to Bradley Anderson, KG4LYE, of Dayton, for coming in second place!

The fox, Bob McCracken, N4JGO, was well-hidden by the start of the hunt, at 7:00 pm sharp. He was discovered a scant 53 minutes later, about a mile from the 340-east KOA campground, sitting on Bald

Rock Road.

David "Wrong Way" Tanks, AD4TJ, was hunting too, but forgot which way the signal was entering his two-element quad!! Thus, he was following what he thought was the fox's trail, only to discover too late that he was getting further and further away!

The winner of this hunt took home the grand prize: a Leeds and Northrup attenuator. Congratulations to these two fine (and relatively new!) hams

*David  
"Wrong-Way"  
Tanks forgot which  
way the signal was  
entering his  
Quad..."*

## For Sale: Tri-Band Beam – Great Condition, Excellent Price

Having sold our home here at 108 Grandview Dr., I have taken the tower down and have a nice HYGAIN EXPLORER 14, THREE BAND BEAM (10,15, 20 mtrs) for sale at a good price.

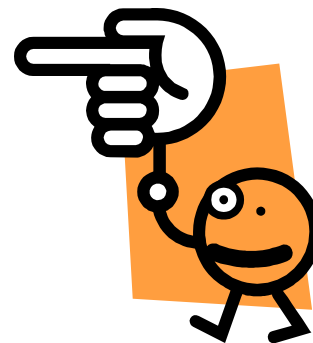
It is in excellent condition with no rust, as stainless steel hardware was used.

And even better, it has been taken apart and color coded for easy quick assembly.

Longest length to transport is 16 ft.  
Weight of assembled beam is 50 lbs.  
Wind load is 7.5 sq. ft. It has approximately 8 db gain on all three bands.

Here is the best part: I'm asking \$125.00.

Jay Suter, W4QDC, call local to Harrisonburg: 434-7750 or 810 7750 cell.



## Report on the August VE Test Session — Next Session October 19

First, let's thank those who helped out with the August test session. Appreciation is expressed to:

- **Richard Haxton KC3AN**
- **Hugh Pettis K3EC**
- **Douglas Tippet N8ESW**
- **Gerald Nauman KN4FM**
- **James Lehman W4POL**
- **Jason Armentrout**

Second, let's congratulate the following new hams:

Todd A. Jenkins,  
95 Jenkins Lane  
Grottoes, VS 24441

Stanley W. Thomas  
798 Sugarloaf Road  
Staunton, VA 24401

Robert Tyler Wilson  
300 S. Wayne Ave Apt 3242  
Waynesboro VA 22980

And finally, remember the next test session is coming up on Saturday, October 19. If you can help, it sure would be appreciated. Please let me know if I can count on you. Thanks again for all the support and assistance with the VE program.

Gayle Shull,  
KU4XN

## Thanks to Hams Who Helped with Bike Shenandoah

Many thanks to **E.C. Showalter (KG4KUR)**, **Phyllis Haxton, (N4VZC)**, and **Dick Haxton (KC3AN)** for their help with the Bike Shenandoah event. We managed to keep track of 63 riders.

If you have never participated in one of these events, you are missing out on a day loaded with fun. It's a great way to spend the day working with the radio, putting ham radio in front of the public, and doing something good for a worthy cause, all in one.

See articles below for two more fun events coming up in October. The weather is usually good, the scenery is gorgeous, and the service you provide helps our hobby.

## Public Service Opportunity: October 10 – Camp Still Meadows

*“Let me know as soon as possible, since the next club meeting will be too late to give the organizers an answer if we are not able to help.”*

The next public service event is on October 10. It is a fund-raising event for Camp Stillmeadows, a camp for disabled children.

This is the event which used to be called the “Johnny Appleseed Ride”. It involves horses, not bicycles. The riders wind their way up and around Little North Mountain, up to Great North Mountain, and back again to a farm outside Timberville.

We need someone to take charge of this event, and 4 or 5 helpers to do the radio tasks. Net control will stay at the ride headquarters. The other stations will either be rovers, riding cars up and down the route, or monitors, parking at one intersection to serve as contact points for problems.

You get a free Breakfast and Lunch. If you are willing to be in charge of organizing radio

communications for this event, please let me know as soon as possible. The next club meeting will be too late to give the event organizers an answer if we are or are not able to help. Call me at 434-0859 if you can help.

Gerald Nauman  
KN4FM

## Public Service Opportunity: October 16-17 – Fall Foliage Ride

This is one of the most fun events of the entire year!

Ham operators provide communications support for up to 600 or more bicyclists. This is a family affair, and the bikers range in age from 4 to over 80. All are enjoying the cool fall weather, and the indescribably-beautiful fall foliage of the western valley.

The ride involves a number of different routes, from the easy and short 3-mile variety handled by 6-year-olds with training wheels, all the way up to the strenuous 150-mile two-day affair meant to challenge even the most avid competitive biker.

Ham operators set up a control point. All day long, other hams are in their cars, riding the route along with the bikers, watching for problems, and radioing the location of the last biker on a route. This allows the organizers to know when a route can be considered officially “completed”.

Occasionally, we also have to report an accident, a cow in the road, a dog chasing the bikes, or a medical situation. Hams have proven over and over again they are an indispensable resource for the safety and security of the riders.

This year, the ride will be held on October 16th & 17th. The starting location for both days will be at the Shelborne School just off Grubert St. in Staunton.

On Saturday net control will set up at Sangerville Towers just north of Natural Chimneys. On Sunday net control will be set up at the Middlebrook Fire Station.

There will be a free lunch both days and free shirts for all hams that help. Mobile radios will be needed for both days. HT's are useless.

Be sure your radio works! We've had problems in the

past with faulty mikes, bad coax, and loose antennas.

This event is a joint MARA/VARA event. Hams from both clubs are welcome both days!

**Please contact Billy Hooke KG4JOF** and let him know if you can help one day or both. A trailer would be a great help if anyone has one or knows where we can find one.

**Also he needs to know your shirt size.**

You can contact Billy at: [KG4JOF@arrl.net](mailto:KG4JOF@arrl.net)

Phone: 887-2317 or on the 146.850 repeater.

## The Opinionated One: Software Radios! Finally We're Catching On!

I've read several stories in ham magazines lately about software radios. It's about time!

Hams have been behind the 8-ball with this one. The entire rest of the world has gone software crazy, doing everything on their computers (even making phone calls, for crying out loud!), and here we hams are still using these big heavy dedicated boxes, including separate power supplies, amplifiers, and little buttons and knobs, instead of clicking a mouse.

I say, let's get on the bandwagon!

For those of you who still think that software is the stuff hanging in your XYL's closet (stuff that hasn't been worn since the second kid came along...), let me enlighten you on what the ham radio hobby will be like once software radios catch on.

First of all, forget these heavy boxes with Styrofoam. Your new radio will come on a CD. It will arrive from HRO in an envelope, with the jewel case cracked from the Mouser Electronics catalog that was put on top of it in your mailbox.

Forget this business about unpacking your radio, plugging it in, and making a contact with BJ9TL before you even read the instruction manual. Noooo. Here's how it will work.

You just pop the CD in your computer and without you doing a thing, you will get a pretty blue "Install-shield" screen.

You will be walked through a configuration dialog so that the installation routine can optimize your new radio.

"Enter your callsign". Hey,

pretty nifty. You enter the callsign and click Next.

"Will you be using your radio for CW or Phone?" There is a radio button for CW and a radio button for Phone. Can you select both? No. Hmm. So you select phone and click Next.

You get a list of the DXCC countries, and are told: "Highlight the countries you will be communicating with, and press Next" Okay, no problem, you start clicking and after about 15 countries, suddenly you get a box that says, "Too many parameters have been selected." You click Help and the help wizard takes five minutes to create its index, and then after spending twenty minutes searching through the help files, you learn that you can only select 15 countries in the version of the radio you purchased. However, for another \$200, you can upgrade to the deluxe version that will let you select unlimited countries.

(If you log onto the users group that you will learn about four months from now, you will find a workaround that will let you select 120 countries with your current version. But that is then, this is now...)

So you select your 15 favorite countries and click Next.

"Select your antenna from the list". You click on the drop-down menu arrow, and get a menu which lets you select from "long-wire", "ARX-2B", "Cushcraft vertical (all models)", and "Yaesu AT-100D". Your antenna is a beverage. You click Help, and the box tells you that you have the wrong version for a beverage antenna,

for \$300 you can upgrade to a version that you can use with a beverage antenna. You make a mental note to put up a long wire antenna and sell your beverage at the next Berryville hamfest, and you select "Long Wire" from the menu and click Next.

This type of thing continues. You look at the clock and realize you've been installing for six hours.

Suddenly, you see a screen that says "Finish". You click on Finish and the screen turns blue and says, "Install Shield has encountered a problem and needs to close. Any data you have entered will be lost." The only choice you have is to click "Okay", even though you honestly don't think it is okay.

So you restart and go through the process again,

You get to the finish screen, and hold your breath and press "Finish". This time it works.

After 20 minutes of watching the little green bar painstakingly grow across the screen from left (1%) to right (99%), you will see a user license agreement. You must "click to Accept".

Next you must enter your 126-digit software license key, printed on the back of your cracked and mauled jewel case. The key will be printed in a font which makes it totally impossible to distinguish the lowercase letter "L" from the numeral "1", or the letter "O" from the numeral zero, or in some cases, even the lowercase letter "I" from the lowercase "J".

If your CD was made by one of the big ham companies, the key

may even include Cantonese characters, or keys that aren't on your keyboard like "\$" or "æ" or "Ψ".

Okay, so let's say you enter the key. You've been awake for 19 straight hours sitting in front of your computer, but you aren't about to stop now!

You are asked "Do you want to run the Tutorial?" If you click "Yes", you will be told "File Not Found." You click "No". After all, you ARE a ham.

"Congratulations. You have successfully installed your new radio. You must Restart your computer to continue."

You click "Restart", the computer shuts down, and Windows starts in Safe mode, with the blue screen.

"Driver not found".

The next morning, you clean up the mess where you lost your temper the night before. You apologize to the wife and kids for your language. You go to the manufacturers website and in the FAQ, find that your model computer has some unresolvable issues! You have to buy a new computer!

Okay, so you buy a new computer, and when you go to reinstall, you get a screen that says, "Install Shield has detected that you have already installed this software on another computer. Copy protection only allows one installation to be run."

I tell you, anyone who knows anything at all about computers knows that software radios are the only way to go! I can't tell you how happy I am about this new development!

## MARA Secretary's Report – September 2 Meeting

The September meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association was held at Evers Restaurant in Mt. Crawford, the meeting was opened at 7:30 PM by the club president, Bill Karle, KG4UPN of Staunton, and there were 22 members and 2 guests present.

The August secretary's report was accepted as written in the September monitor. Sandy Mullins, K4PZC gave the treasurer's report and it was accepted as read.

Gerald Nauman, KN4FM stated that help is still needed for a bike ride on

Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, the ride will start at EMHS, would like to have eight operators for the ride. On October 10 there will be the Camp Still Meadows horse ride (formerly the Johnny Appleseed ride), the ride will need 5-6 operators, it starts at 8:30 and breakfast and lunch will be provided.

An application for membership was read and will be voted on next month, the applicant is John Spillman, KT4CB of New Market. Also there was a new member voted in, James McDowell, KI4FZY of Mount Sidney.

Norman, KA4EEN told the club he can use all the net operators he can get for the Monday night Rockingham ARES nets, anyone wanting to run the net please volunteer, also Norman noted that the net operators no longer need to send the logs to him, just keep the log for 3 months after running net.

Todd Harrison, K4TMH won the 50 / 50 drawing, I got \$10.00 and \$10.00 went to the club.

The October MARA meeting will include the election of officers, there will be some openings including the secretary

position, as work and personal conflicts will cause me to step down after this year as MARA secretary, it's been great.

The formal meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.

The program was presented by Bill, KG4UPN on emergency preparedness, an excellent program, especially with all the upcoming storms.

Todd Harrison, K4TMH  
MARA Secretary

## VARA Secretary's Report – September 7 Meeting

The **V**alley **A**mateur **R**adio **A**ssociation met at Kathy's in Verona on Sept 7, 2004. The President Billy Hooke KG4JOF opened the meeting at 7:30pm. There were 24 members present and 2 guests, Bob VanFossen K4DJG, David Pickering KF4JCY. Welcome to our visitors, and we would like to see all of you back next month.

Clinton Campbell KB4OLM won the 50/50 drawing. More money for Andrew's piggy bank?

**New Ham:** Robert Wilson KI4GST now has a Technician Class License. Congratulations Robert!

The trailer committee, Richard AA4RH, Dan, KE4JSX, Cowles K4EME and Gordon WA4FJC had a short meeting Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> before the VARA Meeting and reported that they are making progress on the Communications Trailer project.

The Club voted to send a donation of \$100 to fight the BPL project headed our way.

Greg W4GRC brought to our attention the need for antennas and coax at the local Fire Depts. and Rescue Squads. David has talked with some of the officials and will find out more by our next club meeting. Hopefully we can make this happen before long, then in an emergency all we need to take will be a radio and power supply to be on the air.

### ON THE SICK LIST:

**Dan James W4DLJ** is getting around without his walker part of the time and

said he may make lunch before long.

**Lonnie Czerniak N4WIV** had back surgery August 27<sup>th</sup>, now has the staples out and is recovering well at home.

**Ken Harris KE4GKD** had a biopsy on a spot on his lung and the lung tried to collapse. The results of the test was good, it was not cancer. The doctor told him to do absolutely nothing for a few weeks.

Lets keep these folks in our thoughts and prayers.

## Inside Story Headline

The VARA voted to work the Bike Festival again this October so mark your calendars. There are some changes in routes and rest stops this year and also, some of the bikers will be marking the routes. This should take care of some of the confusion we have had with arrows in the wrong place or pointing the wrong direction and even no arrows at some turns in the years past.

**WEATHER WATCH:** This is a good time to check out our equipment and make sure it is in working condition. Have our local repeaters and their correct tones programmed into your radios and HT's. If you are not sure how to program your equipment make a copy of that part of your operators manual and keep it in your go box. Keep your batteries charged and emergency antennas, mast and coax where you can easily get to them and go

set up a temporary station if an emergency situation should arrive.

**New Club Call Sign:** Charlie Garner WA4ITY the Club callsign Trustee, has sent the application back to the FCC for our request by Memoriam for Joe Moomaw's callsign W4XD for the VARA Club callsign. At this time he has not heard anything from them.

**SWAP SHOP: This is for Ham related items only.** You can send a list of items you have for sale, swap or something you would like to buy, to Billy Hooke KG4JOF at: Also a picture of the item would help it sell. Go to VARA Web Site at: <http://www.qsl.net/w4mus/> **if your item has been sold, PLEASE notify Billy so he can take it off the Swap Shop Web page.**

**Highland County ARES Net** will be on the Monterey repeater 147.180+ and tone of 100.0 at 8:30pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. They would like to welcome everyone to check into the Net.

**ADDRESSES!!! Keep your e-mail address up to date.** Please send them to: Billy Hooke KG4JOF, [KG4JOF@arrl.net](mailto:KG4JOF@arrl.net) Jeff Rinehart W4PJW, [jmrinehart@yahoo.com](mailto:jmrinehart@yahoo.com) Ray Colvin KE4HVR, [colvingr@rica.net](mailto:colvingr@rica.net) and David Fordham KD9LA, [ford-hadr@jmu.edu](mailto:ford-hadr@jmu.edu) Also, it's good to keep QRZ updated when call signs and e-mail addresses are changed.

**ARES NET:** David Tanks AD4TJ is looking for Net Controls for the Augusta County ARES Net. The Net will be held on the 146.850 repeater on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at

8:00pm. This repeater has a minus offset and a tone of 131.8 when needed.

**PROGRAMS NEEDED:** Richard AA4RH, Program Chairman, is looking for anyone that would like to do a program for the club. Give him a call and set up a date to present it. It does not have to be HAM related. It could be anything you think the group would find interesting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.

Richard AA4RH presented a short video on BPL and the interference it causes to ham radio signals. Thanks Richard!

Submitted By:  
VARA Secretary

Ray Colvin KE4HVR

## Local Contesters Rack Up The Points...

A great time was had by all who attended the mountaintop VHF contest, the weekend of September 11-12.

Operators included Ray Ritchie, K4NRA; Bryan Daniels K4RMY, Neil Buckingham WA4KKL, and Jason Armentrout N4DSL.

Visitors to the site included Gene KG4JBC, and Ed WA3TFX.

The sun and ionosphere did not cooperate. There were no real band openings to the mountain just west of Bergton.

The group was able to scrape together 13,338 points from 202 contacts. Not bad for a non-open-band weekend.

Not content with such a showing, some of the hams

(specifically Jason N4DSL and Bryan K4RMY) decided to work the CQ WW RTTY contest later in the month. They did a little better, with 670 contacts yielding 588,352 points. All of this on RTTY, no less.

Way to go, guys! Keep up the great work!

# MARA/VARA

c/o David Fordham  
131 Wayside Drive  
Weyers Cave, VA 24486  
Phone: 540-568-3024  
Email: fordhadr@jmu.edu

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## Return Service Requested

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### MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

President: David Fordham KD9LA  
Vice President: Bill Karle KG4UPN  
Secretary: Todd Harrison, K4TMH  
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC  
Board (exp 04): Richard Haxton, KC3AN  
Board (exp 05): John Nelson N3JN

<http://mara.ws>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month  
at Ever's Restaurant on U.S. 11 north  
of the traffic light in Mt. Crawford.

Meal starts at 6:30 pm.

Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

### VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Billy Hooke, KG4JOF  
Vice President: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC  
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR  
Treasurer: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW  
Program Manager: Richard Huttinger, AA4RH

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

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month  
At Kathy's Restaurant on U.S. 11 north of  
the traffic light in Verona.

Meal starts at 6:30 pm.

Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME.**