

December 2006

The Monitor

Published jointly by the Valley Amateur Radio Association and the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

MARA Christmas Dinner: Thursday, December 7 at Traditions

Bring the family!

Dinner will start at **6:00 pm** (the usual time) in the back meeting room of **Traditions Restaurant** (the usual place). Tell the hostess you are with the Ham Radio Group when you enter.

The primary program will be the mingling and fellowship with other hams and their families. HOWEVER, a rumor has been circulating that a particularly jolly old visitor will be paying a visit from the North Pole (no, not Bergton, the North Pole!) and he's planning to have a little something for ALL the kids (from 1 to 92, actually). But you have to be in attendance to collect your "gift"!

No reservations or advance notice is necessary, simply come on out and enjoy the dinner and fellowship. Visitors and guests are welcome! (The jolly old elf has a magical bag that expands to fit the crowd that shows up! Everyone, young and old, male and female, will leave with something!) It's going to be fun! See you there!

Directions to Traditions: From I-81, take Exit 247 (Harrisonburg, US 33), go WEST on Hwy 33 (Market Street) to the THIRD traffic light (Sheets gas station on the corner) and turn RIGHT onto Vine Street. Follow Vine street several miles, going through four (4) traffic signals, until you cross the railroad. After crossing the railroad, you will reach the fifth traffic signal. Traditions Restaurant is in the shopping center on the left corner immediately past the fifth traffic light. (Corner of Route 42 and Mount Clinton Pike, across from EMU).



VARA Christmas Dinner: Tuesday December 12 at Ryans

VARA members should pay particular attention to the **special date, special time, and special location** of the VARA Christmas dinner.

The VARA group will meet at **Ryan's Steakhouse** in their back meeting room, at **6:30 pm**, on Tuesday, **December 12**. Note that this is the **SECOND** Tuesday, not the first Tuesday.

Unlike MARA, the VARA group forgot to arrange a visit from the jolly old elf, and thus every VARA member (and guest) is asked to bring a white-elephant gift. (If you don't know what a white-elephant gift is, see Wikipedia.com and do a search on "White elephant gift"! Do not label your gift as to who it is from, or who it is to!

Directions: From I-81, take Exit 221 (Staunton, Highway 250). Go west on Hwy 250 approximately 1 mile. Ryans is on the left, up on the hill above the Augusta County fire station just past Wal-Mart.



2006 VARA President's Message

What a joyful time of year it is! Christmas season has arrived and it is a time for family, reflections and thinking about the upcoming year. My favorite part of Christmas is going Christmas caroling and watching the many versions of Charles Dickens' "The Christmas Carol". As we prepare for the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, it is appropriate that we look back as well as look ahead.

Many thanks to Jeff Rinehart, Richard Hutter and Mike Solomon for putting together the VARA 30th anniversary presentation at our November club meeting. It was wonderful to see so many attend this celebration. We had many successful events that we helped with in 2006. These include the Waynesboro MS-Walk, Waynesboro Riverfest, Field Day, Bridgewater Lawn Party, Great Eastern Endurance Run and the Shenandoah Fall Foliage Festival Bike Ride.

Looking ahead to 2007, we have many of the same activities to look forward to, plus a special event. In May, we are planning on having a special events station at Sherando Lake as part of the Virginia 400th Celebration.

In conclusion, I have enjoyed my two years as president. I feel like that overall the club has been successful. I look forward to supporting our new group of officers. For my last "Quote of the Month", I would like to repeat one that I had used before and find to be very helpful in my everyday life. The Apostle Paul in his letter to Titus wrote; "Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives (NIV)."

FCC Changes to Amateur Rules Effective Friday, December 15

The new changes to the ham radio rules outlined in FCC R&O 04-140 will become effective Friday morning, December 15.

The R&O greatly expands the phone bands on 80, 40, and 15 meters, and makes several other

changes in the rules which will be welcomed by most, but not all, hams.

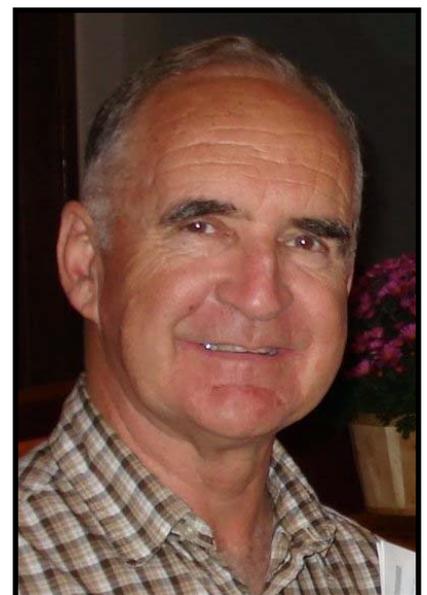
Get a copy of the latest ham radio magazine or check out the ARRL's website for more details of the changes to the rules.

Featured Ham of the Month



Last month's featured ham of the month (left) was none other than Norman Benner, KA4EEN, longtime net manager for the Rockingham County ARES net, famous Pineville resident, and proud grandfather of James McDowell IV KI4FZY.

This month's featured ham (right) is a long-time resident of the suburbs of New Hope, Virginia. He is a real "hard drivin' man", who "just keeps on truckin'". He and his wife have a way of "framing" things that has made them famous in the northeastern part of Augusta County. And in case you didn't know it, this icon of ham radio is also serving his community as the President of the very active and award-winning (no-joke!) New Hope Ruritan Club. Who is he?



Great Article on Limiting RFI in the Home and Shack

Thanks to Don Landes WX4C, for providing a super link to a fantastically good PDF article on how to deal with Radio Frequency Interference in your shack, and in your home. Check it out!

<http://www.yccc.org/Articles/W1HIS/CommonModeChokesW1HIS2006Apr06.pdf>



Rockingham County: Simulated Emergency Test — December 9 — 1:00 to 3:00 pm

Rockingham County ARES/RACES is having a mini-Simulated Emergency Test on Dec. 9th from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. During this SET we will be testing communication on several local 2m repeaters and simplex. We will need operators stationed at the following locations:

Broadway High School
Spotswood High School
Tuner Ashby High School
Elkton Middle School
South River Elementary School

We hope to have at least one person at each of these locations.

Also, we would like these operators to pass one item of traffic to the ECC or receive one item of traffic from the the ECC. We also hope to be passing traffic with Augusta County from the ECC. If you are willing to participate, please respond to this email with the location from which you would like to operate and if you would like to send or receive traffic.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to help out in this activity.

Bryan Daniels, K4RMY
 Rockingham Co. ARES EC

It's Official! Field Day Results Again Put MARA/VARA First in Virginia in our Class!

The ARRL released the official Field Day scores last month, and once again, as usual, the combined joint MARA/VARA Field Day operation took First Place in the state of Virginia in our class (2A).

This is getting to be a regular performance.

Scoring 8,436 points, with 2541 QSO's, the group beat every other 2A operation in the state, and was second only behind the NC Cape Fear Amateur Radio Society in the entire Roanoke Division (which includes Virginia, West Virginia, North, and South Carolina). And for the record, the Cape Fear group scored only a paltry 350 more points than we did!

Our performance once again placed us in the top 20 nationwide — out of 484 (yes, you read right, 484!) entries in the 2A class!

Being in the top 4% of the country is something to brag about, especially since our FD operation is organized to be fun first, preparedness second, and the points & competition come a distant third.

Thanks again to the 2006 Field Day Committee and all the hams who helped put the MARA and VARA clubs "on the map"!

Full results are in QST or on the web at:

<http://www.arrl.org/contests/results/2006/fd.pdf>

LOCAL VALLEY HAMS PROVIDING PUBLIC SERVICE

James McDowell KI4FZY Assists Wounded Soldier in Iraq

James McDowell, KI4FZY, a student at Augusta County's Fort Defiance High School and active member of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, was tuning around 20 meters on the evening of November 9, when he heard a call asking for assistance.

The call was coming from an amateur station at a Field Hospital in Iraq. The station was using an American callsign with an Iraqi prefix.

James responded, and had a nice QSO with a U.S. soldier who had been wounded in action.

The soldier realized that the battles were being covered by American news media, and there was a chance that his family might hear about his casualty status from the media before the official U.S. military notification process could get in touch with them to reassure them he had survived.

To spare his family needless worry, the soldier asked James if he could please telephone his parents, living in Arkansas, and relay a message to them that he was still alive and doing relatively well in spite of his injuries.



James went one better, and used a phone patch connecting the phone line to the ham radio, allowing the soldier talk directly to his family.

Once again, ham radio proves its value in providing quick and efficient communication around the world.

Ray and Nancy Colvin KE4HVR & KE4PHP Assist Stranded Motorists in Augusta County

An evening Ride for Ray KE4HVR and Nancy KE4PHP becomes helpful to stranded motorists.

On Sunday October 29th we had our chance to show what ham radio could do in an emergency situation.

We were riding some mountain roads up by Todd Lake headed for Elkhorn Lake. When we got in sight of the Elkhorn Lake there was a pine tree about 12" in diameter down across the road. We saw seven people and five vehicles down near the Lake, on the other side of the tree. They started waving and coming to meet us by the tree. They had just got out of their vehicles for a bicycle ride when they heard a cracking sound, when they looked around they saw the tree as it fell across the road. They thought they may be able to drag the tree around enough to get their vehicles by but it was too heavy for them.

One of the ladies noticed KE4HVR on the license plate of my vehicle and said "Ham Radio, do you have it in there?" I said, "Sure do, and I will see if I can get you some help to cut the tree out of the road".

I contacted John Fiske KI4QQX (one of our newest Hams) on the 147.075 repeater and asked him to make a phone call for help. He called the Augusta County Sheriff Department who then contacted the Mount Solon Fire Department. In about ten minutes there was help on the way to cut the tree out of the road. The stranded motorists were very grateful that we happened to be riding their way when they were in need of help.

Another time when cell phones didn't work and Ham Radio came to the rescue.

KE4USG: Problems with New Equipment?

I had a learning experience this week...

As I was working the '225 machine, I noticed that I had an unbearable amount of noise on the signal. Also, the folks on the other end of the QSO complained about me fading out. I was in downtown Bridgewater. This is uncommon with that location and this machine.

Over the next two days I checked everything I could think of. I started out by checking my coax connector on the radio and then I looked at each and every inch of the coax itself. I checked to see that the antenna was tight on the base. The base is a brand new (less than two weeks old) lip mount UHF type.



I asked my friends for help and I still did not have any solution to my problem.

As I investigated I found that I could not receive much of anything, including 162.400 from NOAA.

I assured myself again and again as I checked my Diamond antenna as well as the ground wire to my trunk lid. I was looking for a difficult problem to find. This was frustrating!

Finally I decided to remove the antenna from the mount and put it on a magnetic mount for testing purposes. As I unscrewed the antenna from the base I noticed that it felt funny. As I continued to check on it I found that my new lip mount jamb nut was loose and had allowed the UHF connector to turn in the base. This severed the center conductor of my coax and with a little bit of soldering it was as good as new again.

The moral of the story is in this case...just because your parts are new, they may still have failures.

Michael S. Hirsh,
KE4USG

Helen Rosenberger, WA4ODD, SK

It is with great regret that we must announce the death of Helen Dotson Rosenberger, 87, WA4ODD. Helen was the widow of Leon "Rosie" Rosenberger, who passed away in January of 2005. Helen, of 313 Third Street in Shenandoah, died on Sunday, November 26, 2006 at Avante of Harrisonburg where she had been a patient since last August.

She was born January 20, 1919 in Galax, Virginia and was the daughter of the late Charles Summers and Betty Ann Cox Dotson.

She was a self-employed beautician and cosmetologist and was the owner of Helen's Beauty Shop in Shenandoah. She was a member of the Field's United Methodist Church and helped with many of the town's functions. She was a charter member and past president of the

Shenandoah Women's Club, and helped to establish the Shenandoah Community Center and Library.

Helen and her husband Leon were members of the Massanutten and Valley Amateur Radio Groups. They loved to camp, and were active in Civil War reenactments, including New Market and Jackson's March through the Valley.

She married Leon on February 23, 1939.

Memorial donations may be made to the Shenandoah Fire Department, 201 Pennsylvania Avenue, or the Shenandoah Rescue Squad, 544 Fourth Street, both in Shenandoah, VA 22849.



December Volunteer Examiner Session Report

Thanks to the Volunteer Examiners who conducted the December 2nd examination session, we now have several new hams and a couple of upgrades.

Morgan Phenix of Stanley passed his General.

William Garber II of Stuarts Draft also passed his General.

Chad Stover, KI4HIQ of Dayton passed his element 3 and is on his way to General.

And Matthew Fender of Troy, Virginia, passed his Technician's.

Thanks to Gerald Nauman KN4FM, Gayle Shull KU4XN, Dick Haxton KC3AN, Hugh Pettis K3EC, Jim Lehman W4POL< and John Spillman KT4CB, for serving as the VE's this session.

Volunteer Exam Dates Announced for 2007

Mark your calendars. The dates for the 2007 VE exams have now been set.

Exams will be held on the second Saturday of every even-numbered month, at the Woodmen of the World building in Dayton, Virginia.

February 10

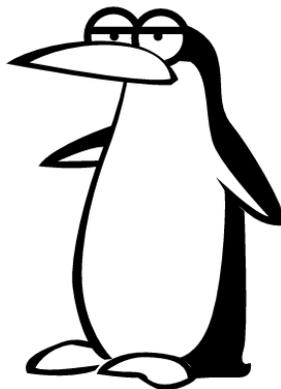
April 14

June 9

August 11

October 13

December 8



Rockingham County ARES/RACES Net Control Operator Schedule

This net meets every Monday night at 8:00 pm local time.

A new slightly-modified Net Control script has been prepared for the Rockingham County ARES Net, so net members (whether or not you are net control!) should be familiar with the new script.

The Net Coordinator, Bryan Daniels, K4RMY, does not need Net Control to send the log of check-ins to him, but rather just email the total number of stations participating, including the Net Control station.

Below is the current listing for Net Control duty. If you are unable to take net control on the date listed, no problem, but you are asked to let Bryan know so he can re-arrange the schedule.

Note there will be no net on Christmas Day.

If you would like to be Net Control operator, email Bryan at k4rmy@adelphia.net

Bryan would also like to invite any net control operator to meet him at the Rockingham County EOC center to run your net from there. Let him know, and he'll meet you at the EOC at 7:30 to give you access and get things set up.

December 4 (simplex): Gayle Shull KU4XN

December 11: Gerald Nauman KN4FM

December 18: Bryan Daniels K4RMY

December 25: Christmas—No Net Meeting

January 1 (simplex): Ray Ritchie K4NRA

January 8: Bryan Daniels K4RMY

January 15: Vic Alger K4XTT

January 22: Jason Armentrout N4DSL

January 29: James McDowell IV KI4FZY

February 5 (simplex): Bryan Daniels K4RMY

February 12: Hugh Pettis K3EC

February 19: Norman Benner KA4EEN

February 26: Gayle Shull KU4XN

VARA Secretary's Report: November 7 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Lynn's Pancake House in Waynesboro on November 7, 2006. The President, Marvin Henderson KF4WDI, opened the meeting at 7:00pm. There were 30 members present and 20 guests, Andrew Barbour AG4XN, Bob VanFossen K4DJG, Patsy Rinehart N4PJJ, Gail Shull KG4JBF, Gayle Shull KU4XN, Leon Harouff WA4TRB, Frances Harouff WA4TCF, Robert Wilson KI4GST, Angle Wilson, Fred Evans N4KYM, Fran David, Jim Newlen KE4CAX, Don Landes WX4C, Carol Landes N4JKX, John Leeth WD4ASE, Jay Huttinger, Neil Buckingham WA4KKL, Peggy Buckingham, Ellsworth Neff N4LXG and Ed Tutwiler WA4TPE. Welcome to our visitors, and we would like to see all of you back next month.

2007 Officers The Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary have agreed to continue their office for 2007. Al Bonck N3JB has accepted the Program Manager office. **We still need someone to step forward for the office of President.** **Please give this office some serious thought before our December meeting/Christmas Party.**

New Members: We voted three new members into the VARA. Mike Stone WDX4US (SWL), Tom Weyrick (no callsign) and Scott Newlen KI4QQZ. Welcome to the VARA!!!!!!

Christmas Party we plan to have our Christmas Party at Ryan's in Staunton on December 12th at 6:30pm. There will be a Chinese Gift Exchange again this year since everyone enjoyed the one last year. Greg Czerniak W4GRC has agreed to conduct it again this year. Just bring a GAG gift costing no more than 5 to 10 dollars and join the fun. It's fun to see who ends up with the silliest prize or the prize you would like to have at the end.

Sam Pickering KF4EKV and his wife, Margaret will be moving to Ohio this month to be with Margaret's Father. Best wishes to you and your family as you get settled in at a new location. Please keep us on your e-Mail list.

VARA in 2007.....We would like to see an increase in attendance so mark your calendars for the 1st Tuesday of each month.

ON THE SICK LIST:

Denny Morland N4XPW fell again, spent a few days in the hospital and was moved to AMC Skilled Nursing. **Dan James W4DLJ** Dan is improving day by day. He has been downstairs on his HF radio and on the VFN. **Frank Forsyth WD4LES** is recovering from bronchitis. **Gordon Batey's WA4FJC son Michael** has returned to work after a long recovery from broken bones in a car wreck. **Lets keep these folks and their families in our thoughts and prayers.**

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: kg4jof@arrl.net Also a picture of the item would help it sell. Go to VARA Web Site at: <http://www.qsl.net/w4xd/> **PLEASE notify Billy when your item is sold.**

ADDRESSES!!! Keep your e-mail address up to date. Please send them to: Marvin Henderson KF4WDI marvista@ntelos.net Doug Tippet N8ESW dtippet@ntelos.net Ray Colvin KE4HVR colvingr@adelphia.net and David Fordham KD9LA ford-hadr@jmu.edu Also, 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 2nd

Thursday of the month at 8:00pm. This repeater has a minus offset and a tone of 131.8 when needed. Fox hunts are also scheduled for some months as weather permits.

PROGRAMS NEEDED: Al Bonck N3JB, our 2007 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. Al's e-Mail address is: margeal@ntelos.net

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm.

Program: Jeff Rinehart W4PJW gave a PowerPoint presentation of the early days of VARA showing some of the Charter Members and early tent days of field day. There were pictures of the 1985 flood in West Virginia and some of the antennas they used. He also talked about some of the search and rescue work the club did in several occasions. Somehow the pictures of the early VARA members don't look the same today, there were some with more hair, some with darker hair and some that have gotten heavier over the years. We all regret the loss of several members in the past few years, but they will always be remembered by their jolly spirits, willingness to help with club events and hard work in the club.

Thanks again Jeff!

Respectfully Submitted
Ray Colvin KE4HVR
VARA Secretary

MARA Secretary's Report: November 2 Meeting

A shortened business meeting was held due to the Skywarn program.

1. Reports

a. Read new member application:

Carol Landes
Michael Hirsch

b. Secretary's report: Minutes approved as printed in Monitor

c. Treasurer 's report balance was \$1288.47

d. Groups

ARES/RACES - Saturday, Dec 9th there will be a mini SET to check communications from several evacuation sites in Rockingham County. 6-7 volunteers are needed

to help man the stations starting around 1:00pm until around 3:00pm at the latest.

VE session - Dec 2nd will be then next test session

2. Announcements:

Dick, W3HXH's birthday
Norman KA4EEN's birthday

MARA Christmas meeting will be held at Traditions starting at 6:00pm on Thursday Dec. 7th, 2006.

145.130 repeater has had a severe mouse infestation. Repairs are being made and it will be back up soon.

3. Old Business

Elections:

The newly elected slate of MARA offices:

President: Eugene Rodgers, KG4JBC, Vice President: Dave Fordham, KD9LA Secretary: Bryan Daniels, K4RMY Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC Director: Gayle Shull, KU4XN. They join Director David Gordon KB4LCI to form the executive committee.

4. New Business: None

5. Program: Skywarn Winter Storms by James Brotherton of NOAA.

*Submitted by
Bryan Daniels, K4RMY
MARA Secretary*

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- December 7: MARA Christmas Banquet at Traditions
- December 9: Rockingham County Simulated Emergency Test
- December 9-10: ARRL 10-meter Contest
- December 12: VARA Christmas Banquet at Ryans
- December 15: New FCC rules become effective
- December 25: Christmas Holiday
- December 31: Straight Key Night
- January 2: VARA Monthly Meeting
- January 4: MARA Monthly Meeting
- January 6-7: RTTY Roundup
- January 13-14: North American QSO Party CW
- January 20-21: North American QSO Party Phone
- January 20-22: ARRL VHF Sweepstakes
- February 1: MARA Meeting
- February 3-4: 10-10 International QSO Party
- February 6: VARA Meeting
- February 10: VE Exams in Dayton, VA
- February 10-11: CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest
- February 17-18: ARRL international DX Contest CW
- February 18: Richmond Frostfest
- February 24-25: CQ WW 160-Meter Contest SSB
- February 25: Annandale (Vienna) Hamfest

Kristen McManus to Be KD4UPL's XYL

On Monday, November 27, the Daily-News Record of Harrisonburg ran an announcement of the upcoming marriage of Kristen Leigh McManus of Harrisonburg to Matthew Wayne Huffman.

Matthew is better know to MARA members as KD4UPL.

Kristen is the daughter of James and Gretchen McManus of Hornell, New York, and graduated from EMU.

Matthew holds a degree in Electronic Technology, and owns and operates Huffman Electrical Systems.

- March 1: MARA Meeting
- March 3-4: ARRL International DX Contest Phone
- March 6: VARA Meeting
- March 3-4: ARRL International DX Contest Phone
- March 17-19: Virginia QSO Party

Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____ CALLSIGN: _____ CLASS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

CELL PHONE (If you want it in club records for emergency purposes, not the roster!): _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: (print legibly!!) _____

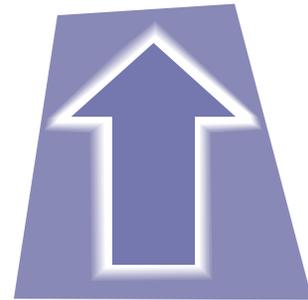
MEMBER ARRL (Y/N) ____ REGISTERED ARES (Y/N) ____ REGISTERED MEMBER VA-RACES (Y/N) ____ RACES TRAINED (Y/N) ____

SKYWARN ID if trained: _____ Are you available for Workday Daytime Emergency Call up? (Y/N)

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE MONITOR via PDF EMAIL? Yes / No / I already do

MARA members mail with \$12 to: MARA, PO Box 1882, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

VARA members mail with \$15 to: VARA, Doug Tippett, 2348 Mosley St, Waynesboro, VA 22980



Yes, it's that time of year again.

So that you won't forget about it, stop right now and go get your checkbook and renew your club dues using the handy form above.



(While you are at it, you might want to remember the trustees and operators who keep the many fine local repeaters on the air, too)

MARA/VARA

c/o David Fordham
131 Wayside Drive
Weyers Cave, VA 24486

Phone: 540-568-3024
Email: fordhadr@jmu.edu

Return Service Requested

MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

President: Eugene Rogers KG4JBC
Vice President: David Fordham KD9LA
Secretary: Bryan Daniels K4RMY
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Board (exp 07): David Gordon KB4LCI
Board (exp 08): Gayle Shull KU4XN

<http://mara.ws>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month
at Traditions Restaurant on Mt Clinton Pike, in
Harrisonburg.

The December meeting is the annual
Christmas meal and starts at 6:00 pm.

Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$12 per year) should be mailed to:

MARA
PO Box 1882
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: *vacant*
Vice President: Mike Solomon KJ4RM
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Treasurer: Doug Tippett, N8ESW
Program Manager: Al Bonck N3JB

<http://www.qsl.net/w4xd>

The VARA Christmas meal will be held
at Ryan's Steakhouse in Staunton.
Meal starts at 6:30 pm

Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$15 per year) should be mailed to:

Doug Tippett
2348 Mosley St.
Waynesboro VA 22980