

January 2006

The Monitor

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

VARA President's New Year Message

As we enter into a new year, it is always good to reflect on the year that has passed. I feel like 2005 was an overall successful year for VARA. We had many activities including the MS-Walk, Waynesboro Riverfest, County Emergency Ham Radio Demonstration, Field Day, Great Eastern Endurance Race, and the Shenandoah Festival Bike Ride (not Race). We had a great set of officers with Greg (W4GRC), Jeff (W4PJW), Ray (KE4HVR) and Richard (AA4RH). Thanks gentlemen for a job well done !!

Several new members joined the club in 2006 and we welcome each one. The fellowship was great at most of our meetings, especially at our December Christmas party. It was nice to have some of the spouses at the meeting. I still cannot figure out how Dave Tanks hung onto the duct tape.

I am looking forward to 2006. We have an excellent set of officers for the year. Mike Solomon (KJ4RM) will be Vice-President, Ray Colvin (KE4HVR) will be Secretary. Doug Tippet (N8ESW) will be Treasurer, and Richard Huttinger (AA4RH) will be Program Manager. I encourage each one to give these officers their full support. As we think of the future, our "Quote of the Month" comes from a man that I admired immensely, President Ronald Reagan. In thinking about the future, Reagan said; "If you're afraid of the future, then get out of the way, stand aside. The people of this country are ready to move again."

*Marvin Henderson
KF4WDI
VARA President*

MARA Vice-President's New Year Message

The January 5 meeting of VARA will again be held at **Traditions Restaurant**. This is on the corner of Highway 42 at the Mount Clinton Pike, in north Harrisonburg.

They have agreed to let us pay at the door as we enter. Use the main entrance and identify yourself as being with the Amateur Radio group. The price will be their regular price — however they won't allow the senior discount when we use the banquet room. Proceed to the banquet room for seating and use the main dining room buffet for obtaining your food.

Our new president, Dick, W3HSH, has arranged programs for the first three meetings this year. They are:

January 5: Gayle, KU4XN, will tell us about his involvement with amateur radio. I'm not sure what all this will include, but come and find out!

February 2: A couple years ago Jerry, K4RBZ, gave a presentation on working DX. He will be giving this again for those that missed it or have joined our ranks since then. If you are interested in DX, don't miss this one.

March 2: This month's topic will be "A Ham Abroad: Amateur Radio from a Foreign Perspective" presented by Hugh, K3EC. I hope I got the title correct, but you'll have to attend the meeting to find out for sure.

Home Brew night will also come up in April, so get to work on your projects. If you have a topic that you would like to present, let me know, I'd like to add you to the list.

*Gerald Nauman
KN4FM
MARA Vice-President*

James Stamper, Jr. — KG4LDY, SK

It is with a heavy heart that we must report the passing of James Stamper, Jr, KG4LDY, MARA member and resident of Woodstock, Virginia.

Around 1 am on December 7th, Jim awoke with chest pains. Since his wife had taken some benadryl before bed and she was drowsy, he drove himself to the emergency room nearby.

As the ER crew began to check him out, he suffered a massive heart attack and they tried to revive him for an hour without success. It was quite sudden and a tremendous shock to the many, many friends he had.

His funeral was held Saturday, December 10, at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Woodstock, followed by burial in Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Middletown, Virginia.

James was born August 12, 1935, in Lexington, KY, and was a graduate of the University of Kentucky, and the Virginia Theological Seminary. He was an Army veteran, and

worked on missile guidance systems for Raytheon and Sperry Rand. He was ordained a minister of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, and served as Deacon. He was also deputy director of Total Action Against Poverty in Roanoke, and the State Agency on Aging in Richmond. He was rector of Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Woodstock and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Mt. Jackson until his retirement.

Hams will remember James as the organizer of the Shenandoah County Amateur Radio group, and a member of the Shenandoah Valley Radio Amateur Club in Winchester in addition to the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association in Harrisonburg.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanne Mikell Kline Stamper, and two sisters. The family has requested that memorial donations be made to the Salvation Army.

Thanks to Bob Van Fossen, K4DJG, and Steve Larrabee W2HHT for information used in this article.

James Thompson, KE4LKP, Under the Weather

I talked with Jerry Moats WD4ITN this evening and he told me Jim Thompson had a malignant tumor on his bladder, was operated on and is at home now. He goes for more tests soon to see if it has spread.

I think most of you know Jim from our Friday lunches or by talking with him on the radio on his trips from Monterey with the CAT Van.

He is also a member of VARA.

Lets keep Jim in our prayers.

Ray KD4HVR

William Dodge, N4ZSG Under the Weather, Makes Donation to VARA

William Dodge, N4ZSG, a former VARA member, is presently undergoing treatment at Augusta Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (across from AMC).

Mr. Dodge has generously donated his personal MFJ-422 Electronic Keyer Bencher Paddle to VARA. He intends for the Club to sell the keyer and deposit the funds in the Club treasury.

If you have an interest in the keyer and would like to help the Club expand the treasury get in touch with Richard AA4RH and make an offer. A new keyer is currently \$159.99 and used ones go for about \$75.00 at hamfests.

Mr. Dodge is well enough to receive visitors. So if you know Mr. Dodge and would like to say "hello" and thank him for his donation to the Club, please stop in and see him. Patients are usually available for visits during the afternoon (1:30 - 4:00) It might be wise to call the main desk (885-8424) first to make sure he is available.

Richard Huttinger, AA4RH

December VE Examination Results

A great big end-of-year THANK YOU to the hams who assisted with the December Volunteer Examiner Ham Radio Testing Session held in Dayton.

- Don Landes, WX4C
- Richard Haxton, KC3AN
- Gerald Nauman, KN4Fm
- Michael McKay W4AZR
- Norman Benner, KA4EEN
- John Spillman, KI4CB
- Gayle Shull, KU4XN

Welcome to New Hams

As a result of the December VE session, we now have three new hams. Please join me in welcoming the following residents of Staunton to the ranks of Valley ham radio :

- Hollis Jordan, KI4MSL
- Willam N. Simmons, KI4MSK
- Scott Martin, KI4MSJ

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!



2006 Volunteer Examination Schedule

VE Exams are held the second Saturday of every EVEN numbered month. The exception for 2006 will be in June. The dates are:

- February 11
- April 8
- June 1
- August 12
- October 14
- December 9

New Technician Examination Question Pool Takes Effect July 1

A revised Technician Class Question Pool will take effect for all Tech license exams on and after July 1, 2006. (The last Valley VE exam using the old pool will be the June 1 exam.)

Hams will notice a major change in the format of the new questions when they are made available to the public in January. The new pool includes significant efforts to present the pool in a more friendly and understandable fashion for beginners, while maintaining the appropriate emphasis on safety, rules, and operating procedures.

In addition to the Technician Class pool update released

to the public in January and taking effect July 1, 2005, the other element question pools will be updated as follows:

The General Class pool revision will be released to the public December 1, 2006, and will become effective with exams administered after July 1, 2007.

The Extra Class pool revision will be released to the public on December 1, 2007, and will become effective for exams administered after July 1, 2008.

All question pools are available free online at:

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec.pools.htm>

ARRL Says BPL Resolution Little More than “an Illusion”

In what may be a sign of the cooperation (or more accurately, the lack thereof) with the ham community by the providers of “Broadband internet access over power lines” (better known as BPL), the following article from the electronic version of the ARRL letter reports that neither the BPL provider, nor the sponsoring municipality, are doing anything to mitigate the harmful interference that BPL is causing to hams in the northern Virginia area. Worse still, it appears that the FCC is ignoring its own rules about responding to interference to licensed services, and is not enforcing the rules.

NEWINGTON, CT, Dec 19, 2005- In a strongly worded letter to the FCC, the League has once again asked the Commission to shut down the Manassas, Virginia, BPL system because it's still causing harmful interference to Amateur Radio and otherwise does not comply with FCC Part 15 rules. Today's letter from ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay was in response to a November 30 letter from Spectrum Enforcement Division Chief Joseph Casey, who suggested further cooperation between the complaining radio amateurs and the city-owned BPL system. Imlay said it's no longer productive to hold more meetings and discussions about ongoing interference while "this hopelessly flawed BPL system" is allowed to continue operating.

"These meetings have not produced any solution to the interference problem but have, instead, created the illusion that

the problem is being addressed," Imlay wrote. Complaints from Manassas radio amateurs of interference from the BPL system date back to early 2004. "This system should have been taken off the air long ago, pending reconfiguration or re-engineering of it," he added, "and the only operating that it should be doing is for purposes of interference testing."

Communication Technologies (COMTek) operates the BPL system over the municipally owned electric power grid using Main.net equipment on frequencies between 4 MHz and 30 MHz. The League said the FCC has not discharged its "most fundamental obligation" to prevent or resolve interference issues involving the Manassas system, which, the League charged, only remains operating "because the Commission, for political reasons, has consistently refused to enforce its rules with respect to BPL," continuing a "dialogue" with the victims of the BPL interference is "an avoidance tactic" that neither the League nor its members in Manassas will tolerate. "The only solution at this late date is to order that the Manassas system, which is an unlicensed system of RF devices permitted to operate only on a non-interference basis, cease operation, save for interference testing," Imlay declared.

The Part 15 BPL rules the FCC adopted in October 2004 require a BPL operator informed of harmful interference to "investigate the reported interference and resolve confirmed harmful interference . . . within a reasonable period," Imlay

pointed out. "No reasoned examination of this case could produce a finding that this rule has been complied with in Manassas," he added.

Imlay says that at a December 13 meeting, COMTek and the City of Manassas "openly acknowledged the interference to amateur stations" but claimed that until a month or so earlier, they had been unable to "notch" amateur allocations because they didn't yet have the equipment to do so.

"This explains why, after COMTek and Manassas claimed earlier that they had notched certain amateur bands the complaining amateurs continued to notice unabated interference when they would operate mobile within the area," the League asserted. "By the admission of COMTek, the capability of reducing interference in this system does not exist."

Previous meetings between the complaining radio amateurs and the BPL operator "produced no measurable results," Imlay contended, referring to the response of Donald Blasdel, W4HJL, to Casey on December 9. At one point in the system, interference was reported at S9 plus 40 dB on typical ham gear. "That level precludes virtually all Amateur Radio communications," he asserted.

Imlay further took the opportunity to again point out that the Manassas BPL system is out of compliance with §15.615(a) because its operator failed to provide full information to the public BPL database by the November 19 deadline.

"ARRL again requests that the

BPL facility at Manassas, Virginia, be instructed to shut down immediately," the League's letter concluded, "and that it not resume operation unless the entire facility is shown to be in full compliance with Commission rules regarding radiated emissions; with the non-interference requirement of Section 15.5 of the Commission's rules; and not in any case until thirty days subsequent to full compliance with Section 15.615(a) of the rules."

The new BPL "Interference Resolution Web Site" provided by the United Power Line Council (UPLC) and the United Telecom Council (UTC) opened in mid-October.

Field tests conducted by Manassas radio amateurs established that the city's BPL system "was an interference generator at distances of hundreds of feet from the modems on overhead power lines," the ARRL told the FCC October 13. "It was also, incidentally, determined that the system was susceptible to interference from nearby radio transmitters operating between 4 and 20 MHz," the League added.

Manassas formally inaugurated its citywide deployment of the high-speed Internet BPL system in early October, touting it as the first large-scale commercial BPL deployment in North America." The city receives a portion of BPL subscriber revenues to offset its costs of installing and maintaining the system.

*From the ARRL Letter,
Submitted by N1QEJ*

Vanity Callsign Processing to Resume After Four Month Interruption

The FCC has announced that routine processing of Amateur Radio vanity call sign applications will resume Wednesday, January 4, 2006.

The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) suspended vanity processing in September as an indirect result of its hurricane-related extensions of certain regulatory and filing deadlines. The Commission said licensees or applicants

needing relief beyond the initial extension periods should follow the process for submitting waiver requests provided in §1.925 of the Commission's rules.

"The Bureau will consider additional relief related to the hurricanes on a case-by-case basis," the FCC said December 19 in a public notice.

Earlier this year, the FCC announced it would extend

filing and regulatory deadlines for licensees in parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas and Florida directly affected by hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. During the extension periods, the WTB temporarily suspended certain automated licensing functions. These included dismissing applications that are returned and not amended on a timely basis, changing the status of a call sign from

active to expired if a license is not renewed within the two-year grace period for Amateur Radio licensees, and issuing vanity call signs.

In September, the FCC said it had to suspend routine vanity call sign processing because the extensions included the two-year grace period and could conceivably affect the vanity program.

From the ARRL Letter

News Flash: SK's Flatbed Trailer Stolen...

Local hams in the Shenandoah Valley are asked to please be on the lookout for the blue flatbed trailer owned by Kenny Harris, KE4GKD (SK) stolen from the yard of his daughter.

It is blue, about 5x10 feet, with angle-iron sides about 15-inches tall, with a wood floor and a hand-crank winch on the front.

The left fender has a saw-cut in it.

The trailer was stolen from the yard of Kenny's step-daughter on Bull Run Road

near Staunton sometime on the night of Christmas Eve. Chances are good that Santa had nothing to do with the theft.

The license plate has assuredly been removed by the thieves, but hams who have been to Field Day in the past few years will readily recognize the trailer when they see it.

If you spot this trailer or one you think might be it, please contact the Staunton police department.

On-Line Manuals

Looking for some alternate sources for on-line radio manuals, including service manuals?

Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, tells us about the following website, apparently located in Russia, which reportedly holds dozens, perhaps hundreds of manuals in English, in PDF, BMP, and ZIP formats.

http://www.cqham.ru/sch_eng.html

Public Input Sought on Communications Interoperability for Public Safety

The Department of Homeland Security has invited the General Public (which includes you!) to comment on the department's program to coordinate public safety communications and interoperability (known as SAFECOM). Comment deadline is February 17.

As ham radio operators, we might want to learn a little more about this important expenditure of our tax money. It involves billions of dollars, and could have a major impact on hams' ability to support public safety agencies in the future.

(I don't have any idea why ARES and VA-RACES haven't picked up on this yet... —editor) Information provided by K5YFW

http://www.gcn.com/vol1_no1/daily-updates/37808-1.html

VARA to Discuss Possible Donation to Katrina Hams

At the January VARA meeting, Richard Huttinger AA4RH, would like to discuss the possibility of the club perhaps making a donation to the hams affected by Hurricane Katrina. The donation would be made through the ARRL's Ham Aid program, intended to support the financial loss by those hams who were affected by the hurricane directly, as well as those supporting communications after the disaster. Be sure to come to the meeting and let your views be heard.

Ham Radio Balloon Launches Now Announced On-Line

Most hams are unaware of this, but almost every month, a ham somewhere in the U.S. releases a balloon carrying a ham radio transmitter! These transmitters almost always contain a GPS locator which transmits the balloon's position on 2-meter packet frequencies. As the balloon gets higher, it's like tracking a satellite or hearing a distant mountaintop station. Several of these balloons have passed over or near the Shenandoah Valley!

How can you find out when such a launch is going to take place? Check the following URL periodically. This site lists all known launches for the entire country.

<http://snipurl.com/I59g>

The letter in the last phrase is an "L", not a numeral "1".

Transfer Large Files to Friends Without Filling Their In-Box!

Digital cameras make it easy to snap pictures or to create videos. And we all like to share our favorites with family or friends. But let's not forget proper etiquette. Sending large files (over 1 megabyte) via e-mail is a big no-no. Even with broadband, they take a long time to download. And they bog down our in-boxes. You can burn CDs or DVDs and send them via the postal service. But who wants to wait for that?

I recommend you try Dropload to transfer large files. Once you sign up, you can upload any file that's 100 megabytes or less. The recipient will receive an e-mail notification to download the file within seven days.

Dropload is free! GO TO: www.dropload.com

.Ray...KE4HVR

Info About 802.11d

No, that isn't a typo. It's 802.11d. "D" you ask? Yes, "D".

Now, if you don't know what 802.11 is, let alone 802.11d, well — don't worry — and don't waste your time reading the rest of this article! There isn't any reason for you to bother learning about 802.11d. (But you might want to read the footnote at the bottom of this article if you are still curious.)

But even if you ARE familiar with 802.11a, 802.11b, 802.11g, 802.11x, and have heard rumors of 802.11n, you still ... um, might not need to bother learning about 802.11d. Why not?

802.11d is not a replacement for ANY of those other standards.

802.11d is a wireless network communications specification for use in countries where systems using other standards in the 802.11 family are not allowed to operate.

The 802.11d specification is similar in most respects to 802.11b.

The main difference is that the configuration can be fine-tuned at the Media Access Control layer (MAC layer) level to comply with the rules of the country or district in which the network is to be used. Rules subject to variation include allowed frequencies, allowed power levels, and allowed signal bandwidth. The specification eliminates the need for designing and manufacturing dozens of different hardware solutions, each for use in a particular jurisdiction. The 802.11d specification is thus well suited for systems that want to provide global roaming. The 802.xx Fast Reference lists related specifications and provides a link to each of them.

This means that 802.11d might, just might, be of interest to hams who are using 802.11 gear to experiment on the ham bands.

If you've read this far, and are interested in learning more about the 802.11d standard, see...

<http://standards.ieee.org/getieee802/download/802.11d-2001.pdf>

Footnote: For those of you who are clueless but still curious, 802.11 is better known as wireless Ethernet, and is fast becoming the wireless connectivity standard for connecting wireless portable devices (such as laptops, PDA's, etc.) to the Internet at public locations, such as hotel lobbies, restaurants, Starbucks cafés, shopping malls, etc. 802.11 comes in different flavors. 802.11g is currently the most popular and operates on the 2.4 GHz band. 802.11b is the original, and is slower than the "g" version, but shares the 2.4 GHz band. 802.11a is faster than "b", but operates on the 5GHz band. 802.11x is a security-related standard. And 802.11n is the forthcoming improvement version, adding still more speed, security, and reliability.

New Ham Wants to Buy Gear

Scott Martin, KI4MSJ, is a new ham in Staunton, just licensed in December, and he is looking for some used gear to get on the air. Specifically, he is in the market for a good HT.

If you have something you'd like to sell, drop him an email at: martin9428@aol.com

His address is 509 Mason Street, Staunton.

Club Dues are Due

The newsletter editor usually makes a big deal about this, but this year, he is mellowing out. He's going to speak softly, and carry a big stick.

You need to renew your dues RIGHT NOW while you are thinking about it.

Use the handy form included with this month's issue. Fill it out, and send it in with your dues check.

The MARA and VARA clubs continue to be one of the best bargains in today's modern world. Your editor is a member of several other ham clubs, and NONE of them have dues as low as MARA and VARA. In fact, the annual dues figure of these two clubs does not even cover the printing and mailing cost of the monthly newsletters to those hams who do not have email addresses.

So "Thanks" are in order to those hams who receive the Monitor by email. You are keeping the dues low for us all.

Calendar of 2006 (so far)

January 3: VARA Club Meeting
 January 5: MARA Club Meeting
 January 7: Winston-Salem (NC) Hamfest
 January 7-8: ARRL RTTY Roundup
 January 7-8: Original QRP Contest
 January 14-15: North American QSO Party CW
 January 21-22: North American QSO Party Phone
 January 21-23 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes
 January 28-29: CQ 160-meter Contest CW

February 2: MARA Club Meeting
 February 4-5: 10-10 10-meter contest
 February 7: VARA Club Meeting
 February 11: VE Exams in Dayton VA
 February 11-12: CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest
 February 13-17: School Club Roundup
 February 19: Richmond Frostfest
 February 18-19: ARRL International DX Contest CW
 February 25-26: CQ 160-meter Contest SSB
 February 25-26: North American QSO Party RTTY
 February 26: Vienna Winterfest

March 2: MARA Club Meeting
 March 4-5: ARRL International DX Contest Phone
 March 7: VARA Club Meeting
 March 18: Charleston (WV) Hamfest
 March 18-20: Virginia QSO Party
 March 25-26: Timonium (Baltimore) Hamboree
 March 25-26: CQ WW WPX Contest SSB

April 1-2: QCWA Spring QSO Party
 April 2: Waynesboro MS Walk
 April 4: VARA Club Meeting
 April 6: MARA Club Meeting
 April 8: VE Exams in Dayton VA
 April 22: Harrisonburg March of Dimes Walk (*tentative*)
 April 22: Waynesboro Riverfest
 April 23: York (PA) Hamfest
 April 23: Raleigh (NC) Hamfest
 April 26-30: Waynesboro Tour of Shenandoah Bike Ride
 April 29: Harrisonburg MS Walk

May 2: VARA Club Meeting
 May 4: MARA Club Meeting
 May 6: Hagerstown Hamfest
 May 19-21: Dayton (OH) Hamvention
 May 27-28: CQ WW WPX Contest CW

June 1: MARA Club Meeting
 June 6: VARA Club Meeting
 June 10-12: ARRL June VHF QSO Party
 June 17: National Jousting Tournament, Natural Chimneys
 June 24-25: ARRL Field Day

July 1: New Technician License Exam Question Pool takes effect
 July 6: MARA Club Meeting
 July 8-9: IARU HF World Championships
 July 12-15: Bridgewater Lawn Party
 July 15-16: CQ WW VHF Contest

August 1: VARA Club Meeting
 August 3: MARA Club Meeting
 August 5-6: ARRL UHF Contest
 August 6: Berryville (Winchester) Hamfest
 August 12: VE Exams in Dayton VA
 August 13: Westminster (MD) Hamfest

September 5: VARA Club Meeting
 September 7: MARA Club Meeting
 September 9-11: ARRL September VHF QSO Party
 September 15-16: Virginia Beach Hamfest (*tentative*)
 September 23-24: CQ WW RTTY DX Contest
 September 24: Camp Still Meadows Ride (*tentative*)

October 3: VARA Club Meeting
 October 5: MARA Club Meeting
 October 14: VE Exams in Dayton VA
 October 13-15: Fall Foliage Bike Festival
 October 28-29: CQ WW DX Contest SSB

November 2: MARA Club Meeting
 November 7: VARA Club Meeting
 November 4-6: ARRL November Sweepstakes CW
 November 18-20: ARRL November Sweepstakes Phone
 November 25-26: CQ WW DX Contest CW

December 1-3: ARRL 160-meter Contest
 December 5: VARA Christmas Banquet (*tentative*)
 December 7: MARA Christmas Banquet (*tentative*)
 December 9: VE Exams in Dayton VA
 December 9-10: ARRL 10-meter Contest

Ray's Tool Works

For those who may not be familiar with the functions of all these tools, Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, provides the following handy guide:

DRILL PRESS: A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, splattering it against that freshly painted part you were drying.

WIRE WHEEL: Cleans rust off old bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprint whorls and hard-earned guitar calluses in about the time it takes you to say, "Ouch"

ELECTRIC HAND DRILL: Normally used for spinning steel pop rivets in their holes until you die of old age.

PLIERS: Used to round off bolt heads.

HACKSAW: One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle. It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course the more dismal your future becomes.

WISE-GRIPS: Used to round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH: Used almost entirely for lighting various flammable objects in your garage on fire. Also handy for igniting the grease inside a brake drum you're trying to get the bearing race out of.

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK: Used for lowering a motorcycle to the ground after you have installed your new front disk brake setup, trapping the jack handle firmly under the front fender.

EIGHT-FOOT LONG DOUGLAS FIR 2X4: Used for levering a motorcycle upward off a hydraulic jack.

TWEEZERS: A tool for removing wood 2x4 splinters.

PHONE: Tool for calling your neighbor to see if he has another hydraulic floor jack.

SNAP-ON GASKET SCRAPER: Theoretically useful as a sandwich tool for spreading mayonnaise; used mainly for getting dog-do off your boot.

E-Z OUT BOLT AND STUD EXTRACTOR: A tool that snaps off in bolt holes and is ten times harder than any known drill bit.

TIMING LIGHT: A stroboscopic instrument for illuminating grease buildup.

TWO-TON HYDRAULIC ENGINE HOIST: A handy tool for testing the tensile strength of ground straps and brake lines you may have forgotten to disconnect.

CRAFTSMAN 1/2 x 16-INCH SCREWDRIVER: A large motor mount prying tool that inexplicably has an accurately machined screwdriver tip on the end without the handle.

ELECTROLYTE TESTER: A handy tool for transferring sulfuric acid from a car battery to the inside of your toolbox after determining your battery is dead as a doornail, just as you thought.

AVIATION METAL SNIPS: See hacksaw.

TROUBLE LIGHT: The mechanic's own tanning booth. Sometimes called drop light, it is a good source of vitamin D, "the sunshine vitamin," which is not otherwise found under motorcycles at night. Health benefits aside, it's main purpose is to consume 40-watt light bulbs at about the same rate 105-mm howitzer shells might be used during, say, the first few hours of the Battle of the Bulge. More often dark than light, its name is somewhat misleading.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER: Normally used to stab the lids of old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splash oil on your shirt; can also be used, as the name implies, to round off Phillips screw heads.

AIR COMPRESSOR: A machine that takes energy produced in a coal-burning power plant 200 miles away and transforms it into compressed air that travels by hose to a Chicago Pneumatic impact wrench that grips rusty bolts last tightened 40 years ago by someone in Detroit, and rounds them off.

PRY BAR: A tool used to crumple and tear the expensive metal surrounding a clip or bracket you needed to remove in order to replace a 50 cent part.

HOSE CUTTER: A tool used to cut hoses 1/2 inch too short.

HAMMER: Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate expensive parts not far from the object we are trying to hit.

MECHANIC'S KNIFE: Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on boxes containing leather seats and motorcycle jackets.

VARA Secretary's Report – December 6 Meeting

The **V**alley **A**mateur **R**adio **A**ssociation met at Kathy's in Verona on December 6, 2005. The President, Marvin Henderson KF4WDI, opened the meeting at 7:30pm. There were 22 members present and 19 guests, Bob Van Fossen K4DJG & Laura, David Pickering KE4JCY, Don Landes WX4C & Carol N4JKX, Deborah Tippett, Marge Bonck, Andrew Barbour AG4XN, Bill Karle KG4UPN, Vickie Henderson, Patsy Rinehart K4PJJ, Scott Martin, Fran Davis, John Bottemiller N4SYH & Jan, Bryan Bottenmiller, Martha Tanks, Betsy Solomon and Tim Freeze. Welcome to our visitors, and we would like to see all of you back next month.

When the meal and fellowship was finished Marvin welcomed everyone to the December meeting and thanked everyone for a good year in 2005. The meeting was then turned to Greg Czerniak W4GRC who had suggested doing a Chinese Gift Exchange this year at the December Meeting. This was a first for the VARA.

We all enjoyed watching gifts being opened and traded off to someone else if they didn't like what they got. Then came the time when someone got a gift they wanted to keep but it got taken away by someone else. When the last gift was opened this person had a chance to take any gift in the room. Then the first person to pick a gift got to pick his choice from the room. Everyone had a good time laughing at some of the gifts and seeing others as they got their favorite gift taken away in the end.

Thanks to Greg for suggesting this and being in charge of calling out numbers and handing out the gifts. There were some requests to do this again next year. So if you missed out on the fun this year you may have a chance to do it next year.

VARA OFFICERS FOR 2006 ARE:

President: Marvin Henderson
Vice-Pres: Mike Solomon
Treasurer: Doug Tippett
Secretary: Ray Colvin
Programs: Richard Huttinger

ON THE SICK LIST:

Queenie, Clinton's (KB4OLM) wife still has health concerns but is improving.
Denny Morland N4XPW is home from the nursing home and continuing therapy at AMC.

Lets keep these folks 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 Jeff Rinehart W4PJW jmrinehart@yahoo.com Ray Colvin KE4HVR colvingr@adelphia.net and David Fordham KD9LA [\[hadr@jmu.edu\]\(mailto:hadr@jmu.edu\) Also, it's good to keep QRZ updated when call signs and e-mail addresses are changed.](mailto:ford-</p>
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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: 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 8:15pm.

I hope all of you had a great Christmas remembering the birth of Jesus. And best wishes for a Happy New Year 2006.

Submitted By:
 VARA Secretary
 Ray Colvin KE4HVR

MARA Christmas Banquet minutes were not received in time for publication.

Free to Caller Number One!

Free, absolutely free, for pickup. In fact, I'll even bring it with me to Harrisonburg if you want to meet me in Rockingham County; One 486 Desktop computer, great shape, really great computer for the ham-shack, features 1.44 floppy, CD reader, hard drive, and comes complete with color Monitor, speakers, and keyboard. Call Jeff Rinehart at 540-337-7337 (easy number to remember!) Call Now!

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 _____ 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

CURRENT ABILITIES & CAPABILITIES: Do you have the technical ability, knowledge, experience, know-how and the equipment to reliably operate the following modes or activities: *(circle all that apply)*

HF CW slow-speed	50 Mhz FM	APRS base WX or digipeating
HF CW high-speed (15 wpm up)	50 Mhz – other modes	APRS mobile transmitting
HF SSB	2M FM	Simple GPRS positioning
HF Mobile	2M weak signal, AM, ect.	EME or Meteor Scatter or JT44
HF Portable or QRP	220 FM	Microwave (902 Mhz or above)
NTS HF Message Handling	220 other modes	Satellite Operations (analog)
HF Slow-Scan TV	440 FM	Satellite Operations (digital)
Traditional RTTY	440 weak signal	RDF – Direction Finding
PSK31	440 fast scan television	Ham equipment repairing
Other HF digital modes	Simple Packet	Tower climbing/Ant. Installation
Weather Station & Monitoring	DX cluster or BBS	PIC programming / cir. Design

WHAT TOPICS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON THE CLUB MEETING PROGRAMS? (Circle what you'd like to see!)

HF operating and etiquette	Weather Stations, Weather monitoring and reporting	Innovative Mobile Rig Install
HF Dxing	Skywarn: What's it about?	Microwaves 902 Mhz & up
Contesting Etiquette	Ultra-Simple Antenna Designs	Satellite Operations (analog)
QSL'ing Methods, Hints, Tips	2M weak signals	Sattelite Operations (digital)
Comparisons of Logging Software	220 or 440 operations	RDF – Direction Finding
Mobile, Portable, QRP operations	Fast Scan TV, how to	Emergency Response Kits
NTS HF Message Handling	Simple Packet: how to	Radio: Operate in Emergency
HF Slow-Scan TV: how to	DX cluster / BBS operate	Ham equipment repair
Traditional RTTY: how to	APRS: getting started	Tower / Antenna installation
Other HF digital modes	Simple GPRS introduction	PIC program & design
What's on 50 Mhz	EME or Meteor Scatter	Traders Day, Homebrew Fair
CORES, FRN, ULS: what is it?		

Other: _____

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

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: Dick Weaver W3HXX
Vice President: Gerald Nauman KN4FM
Secretary: Bryan Daniels K4RMY
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Board (exp 06): Jason Armentrout N4DSL
Board (exp 07): David Gordon KB4LCI

<http://mara.ws>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month
The January meeting is at Traditions
Restaurant on Mt Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg.
Meal starts at 6:00 pm.
Business meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

Visitors are welcome.

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

MARA
PO Box 1882
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Marvin Henderson, KF4WDI
Vice President: Mike Solomon KJ4RM
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Treasurer: Doug Tippett, N8ESW
Program Manager: Richard Huttinger, AA4RH

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

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 6:00 pm.
Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

Visitors are welcome.

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

Doug Tippett
2348 Mosley St.
Waynesboro VA 22980