

July 2007

The Monitor

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Newsletter's New Look is Temporary -- Maybe

Once again, the newsletter editor is on the road – this time in Longmont, Colorado, sitting in a Springhill Suites hotel room. For the past 8 days he has been north and west of Denver, attending a professional conference.

Alas, the hotel computer lacks a proper PDF writer, the Microsoft Publisher software, a high-speed internet line, and all of the other amenities necessary to put out the Monitor. Hence, the editor is resorting to the good old-fashioned way of doing a newsletter: Microsoft Word.

One unfortunate by-product of not having Publisher: the editor is finding it one whole heap heckuva lot easier to cut and paste emails into Word, compared to Publisher! Perhaps the Word format might be worth reconsidering after all? What do you think? Drop the editor a quick email and let him know if you like the look of this issue.

K4DPF: Paddle Lost and Found

Dave Firestone, K4DPF, thought he had lost his Bencher paddle at Field Day. He appreciates everyone who helped him look for it, and wants to spread the word that the paddle has been found and returned to its home safe and sound. We won't divulge where it was found, but we are glad to hear that it was never in any real danger.

N4DBX: Information Wanted on Local EchoLink Links

N4 DBX, Ken at this email address gkbridenjr@juno.com is looking for information locally on ECHOLINK. Can anyone help? – Request forwarded by Bob Steere, N1QEQ

Field Day Report -- 2007

Well, another Field Day has come and gone. Doesn't it seem like they come closer together anymore? We sure had a good time and the weather was beautiful too. This may have been our 30 year anniversary of FD on the mountain – seems like Neil WA4KKL and I did the first one by ourselves in 1976 and then the VARA Club made it an official activity in 1977. Does anyone have any records or pictures from way back then to help confirm this??

Several of us were up there way ahead of time again this year. N4BCC, K4DJG, W4PJW, KD4FKT, WA0TPN, N1QEQ, WA4KKL, KB4OLM and KI4TOJ were the first ones on the mountain this year – some arriving as early as Thursday afternoon June 14th. Perhaps it's good that we were there early as I heard there was a small group from Northern Virginia up on Reddish Knob running FD. I bet they heard us loud and clear but I don't think they bothered us at all.

For anyone who hasn't heard already, there were two Timber Rattler sightings this year. One of them was right in our camp near N1QEQ's camper. It scurried off back into the woods when a couple of the folks up there pestered it (from a safe distance). The other one was discovered by KB4OLM and AA4RH as they hiked along a dirt road a bit east of the camp. This is the first time I remember a rattlesnake being in the camp. There were some discovered down at the old site several years ago in a culvert under the road but they never wandered into the camp. But we did have a bear who grabbed a trash bag from a tree right behind KD4FKT and KO4EA's camper. (Yogi Bear?)

Most of you know that Clint KB4OLM has been a long-time serious contester on both HF and VHF. He has some nice awards for contacting lots of grid squares. He has VUCC on 6, 2, 220, 440 and on HF DXCC too. For years, he has heard all these groups from the eastern shore and northern Virginia setting up stations from a place called "Flagpole" but he had never been there. This year, during that week preceeding FD, Clint got to make his first trip to Flagpole and sees clearly why it is such a sought-after location for VHF contesting - clear un-obstructed view to the horizon, 360 degrees.

A great big "thank you" goes out to the FD committee again this year. (N4BCC KI4TOH N8ESW K4RMY N1QEQ). A lot of work goes into getting it all organized. A special thank you to Norman KA4EEN and Doris and to Neil WA4KKL and Peggy for making the Welcome Center and Friday evening meal operate so smoothly. Everything at FD seemed to come together flawlessly and even Bryan's apprehension about the tower at the VHF station turned out ok. During the dismantling process, a special effort was put forth to get all the equipment sent in the direction of the proper MARA/VARA storage facilities so that things don't get so mixed together. Somewhere there were supposed to be lights for the operating stations but no one seemed to be able to locate them, so there are still some glitches to be worked out. All in all, it was great to have the two clubs working together to make such a large-scale event a success. It's not always easy to have two groups involved, but we seem to be working through all that nicely year after year.

Our scores this year were way down in all of the stations. Perhaps this was due to band conditions?? Band conditions didn't seem to be a factor however, as K4RBZ racked up qso's with a rate exceeding 100 per hour on the phone station. Perhaps Gerry can be encouraged to give us all a "class" on how to get a good run going during FD. K4RMY says that one reason the VHF station didn't do as well as they had hoped was because no significant 6 meter opening came along. N4XU noted that the CW station was down some but "we were breaking-in a few new CW operators". I noted that AD4TJ had a CW QSO rate of 71 per hour going for a while - that is equal to 140/hr on phone. Those of us who have been carrying the load on CW will be able to share that responsibility next year with some of the newer recruits. GO JAMES !!! (Did anyone notice that the CW station had "heat"?)

It worked well to have the stations powered by separate generators this year. Bennie N4BCC had his big generator centrally located between VHF and CW and Sandy K4PZC used his generator for the phone station. Gordon WA4FJC's generator kept the coffee pots going and Bennie's little Honda kept the batteries charged up for the GOTA station. It may take a bit more fuel to do it this way, but it's nice not to have "all your eggs in one basket".

There were 86 who signed the guest book over the course of the weekend and the meal Friday evening was well attended. If you missed that good meal, well, better plan ahead for next year. FD is always the 4th full weekend in June (not necessarily the last week-end).

	Phone	CW	VHF	GOTA
2006	1614	927	130	293
2007	900	720	86	190
% decrease	- 44%	- 22%	- 34%	- 35%

Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW

WA4TFX and WD4WHT: Thanks

Helen "KD4WHT" and I had a great time again, spending a few hours at the Field Day site and sitting by your campfire! Tell everyone at V.A.R.A. and M.A.R.A. I said thanks for the 2007 Field Day Pin and HOT COFFEE on a cool night... 73, Ed "WA3TFX"

Field Day Pictures



A very unwelcome visitor crept into the field day site. This is the first rattlesnake found in the site in over 20 years of Field Day Activity on the mountain.



Some of the most important features of Field Day.



A view of some of the campers at Field Day. The real campers are all inside the campers.



WA4KKL and KD4FKT, mowing in preparation for FD.



Dinner on Friday night.



KI4TOJ in front of his room at the Field Day Hilton.

KU4XN: Bridgewater Parades July 20-21

The local amateur radio operators have once again been asked to help direct traffic for the Bridgewater Annual Lawn Party parades. They will need a dozen or so hams to meet at the police station, in back of the town hall, at 6:00 pm on Friday, July 20, and at 5:00 pm on Saturday, July 21. **Please let Gayle know if you can help, you can contact him on the 147.225 repeater or at: GSKUXN@msn.com**

WA4NUF: Looking for 4-Position MFJ Coax Switch

I'm looking for a new or used MFJ 1704 4 position antenna switch if someone has one they want to part with.

They can e-mail me at wa4nuf@arrl.net or call 289-5906 after 5 PM or cell 820-9071. Thanks a lot.

Gene Sullivan WA4NUF

MARA Secretary's Report – June 7 Meeting

Introductions made all around

1. Reports

New members-None

a. Secretary-Minutes Approved as printed in the Monitor

b. Treasurer- \$2,031.19

c. Groups

ARES/RACES -No Report

VE- large session expected - Sat. June 9th

d. Field Day Committee for MARA

K4RMY-N1QEQ

KU4XN- reported on clean up activities

Equipment pickup June 16th 9:30 Field Day

Gayle had Q&A ARRL license manuals on sale.

e. Public Service

March of Dimes Walk - N1QEQ writeup in Monitor. Thanks to everyone who helped

Bridgewater Lawn party and Fireman's Parade July 20th and 21st

6:00 pm Friday July 20th, 5:00 pm on Saturday July 21st

2. Announcements:

Amateur Radio Missionary Service- 50 year anniversary

K4RBZ Gerry Brunk is serving as President

www.armsfellowship.org

3. Old Business

Greenbank tour- Fall

Family Picnic for the September meeting

4. New Business

Ray K4NRA made a motion to purchase

Coax- 500' 214

Motion seconded, then amended to order \$300.00 worth of cable.

Motion with amendment passed.

Gayle KU4XN will call to see about prices

Submitted by

Bryan Daniels

K4RMY

Program- David KD9LA, on home networks/wireless

VARA Secretary's Report – June 5 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Lynn's Restaurant in Waynesboro on June 5, 2007. The President, Greg Czerniak W4GRC, opened the meeting at 7:00pm. There were 23 members present and 6 guests, Angel Wilson, Bob VanFossen K4DJG, Hugh Pettis K3EC, Martin Coggins K4CRC, Ron Ramsey AB4A and his wife.

Welcome to all our visitors, we hope to see you back for next month.

50/50: was won by Al Bonck N3JB, congratulations to Al!

New Member: Rodrick Passarelli K14VLB. Welcome to the VARA!

Field Day 2007: Benny N4BCC reported that the Field Day committee has completed their planning and ready to go.

They need operators and loggers to man the stations for this two-day event. There will be control operators there at all times so anyone can operate the radios.

SPECIAL EVENT: Ron Ramsey AB4A, representative from ARRL Roanoke Division was present and asked for our help for the "**Blueridge Parkway Mile Post Zero Special Event**" Sept. 22 – 23, 2007 on 14.200 & 7.220 from 9:00am until the bands go dead. This has to be set up within 5 miles from Mile Post "0". Jeff Rinehart W4PJJ is the contact person for this event. Please contact Jeff at jmrinehart@yahoo.com if you would like to enjoy a few hours on the Parkway operating the radios. This will be fun event with no pressure to make more contacts than other locations also working the event.

GREAT EASTERN ENDURANCE RUN 100K & 50K will be held on Saturday Sept. 29th. The Start and Finish point will be at Sherando Lake. This event starts at 6:00am and the 100K run is usually over around 10:00pm but has a cutoff time of 1:00am Sunday. Please contact Greg W4GRC at grcjc@verizon.net if you can be available for any time during this event.

ON THE SICK LIST:

Denny Morland N4XPW fell again and was skinned up a little but, no broken bones, he is still in Avanti.

Mike Solomon KJ4RM is getting out now and attended our June Club Meeting. It was good to see Mike out again.

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

e-Mail ADDRESSES: Keep your e-mail address up to date. Please send them to:

Greg Czerniak W4GRC grcjc@verizon.net, Doug Tippet N8ESW dtippett@ntelos.net, Ray Colvin KE4HVR colvingr@comcast.net and David Fordham KD9LA fordhadr@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. Foxhunts 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 7:59pm.

<><> NOTE <><>

Greg W4GRC read through the proposed changes to VARA By-Laws and led a discussion about them. For those not at the June meeting, please read over the proposed by-law changes and write down any questions you would like to ask about them before our July Meeting. The proposed by-law changes are in the May & June MONITOR.

The Membership will vote on them at our next meeting on July 3, 2007.

SHOW & TELL – What makes the Solarcon A-99 work...or is that NOT WORK? By Ray Colvin KE4HVR

Submitted By:
VARA Secretary
Ray Colvin KE4HVR