

January
2008

The Monitor

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

MARA Club Meeting: January 3

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., will hold its regularly-scheduled monthly meeting on Thursday, January 3, at Tradition's Restaurant in Harrisonburg, at the intersection of Mt. Clinton Pike and State Highway 42. Dinner begins at 6:00 pm, and the business meeting begins around 7:00 pm. Visitors are welcome.



VARA Club Meeting: January 8 (NOTE DATE CHANGE)

The Valley Amateur Radio Association's January meeting will be held the SECOND Tuesday of the month (January, 8th) this month at Shoney's Restaurant in Brands Flats, US 250 just east of Staunton, at I-81. Dinner begins around 6:00 pm, and the business meeting begins at 7:00 pm. Visitors are welcome.

Hide and Seek: MARA Website 404'd?

No, it hasn't disappeared. It's just hidden for a short while.

The MARA website <http://mara.ws>, or its real URL <http://cob.jmu.edu/fordham/MARA/> hasn't been discontinued. But it has been inaccessible for a few days. The James Madison University servers which have been hosting the site have been undergoing major upgrades for speed and performance, and in the process, a new IP numbering scheme was introduced. It takes a couple of weeks for the new numbering scheme to propagate throughout the Internet's Directory Network Services (DNS) servers.

Until your local ISP provider's DNS servers are updated, you should be able to access the website by pointing your browser to: <http://snipurl.com/k4mra>

If that doesn't work, try: <http://134.126.75.84/fordham/MARA/>

The normal links should be up and running within a week or two, so you should not need to update any favorites or links you've been using to the website.



VARA President's Column

A new year is upon us and the question is, what will we as a club accomplish in 2008? What efforts will we make to become better radio operators and better equipped to assist our community when the need arises? Together in 2007 we accomplished a great deal and the club is growing. In fact, at almost every meeting there was at least one new application for membership. How fortunate we have been! I wish to thank each of you for his or her contribution to the club. Serving as your President has been a privilege and honor. However, we have yet to answer the question. What will we accomplish in 2008? I want to challenge you to consider my question and reflect upon it. In fact, I challenge you to come up with some goals you would like to reach in 2008. At our meeting in January, let's discuss those goals, and lay down an agenda for 2008.



Last month, I paid a brief tribute to Jeff, W4PJW. I would like to take a moment and express my appreciation for Ray, KE4HVR. As you know, Ray is our secretary. He has served as the club's secretary for several years, and Ray does an excellent job. He not only keeps the minutes of each club meeting, but Ray keeps up on a multitude of items. Ray keeps up with those who are sick, or who have other pressing needs. He keeps the club updated on every event, meeting, and activity. Ray does a lot of other behind the scene things as well. Ray helps other hams put up antennas, program radios, and he even helps them move from one place to another. Ray helps keep several repeaters on the air, and if you ever ask Ray for help, he will be the first one on the scene. So, tell Ray how much you appreciate him. I do!

Jeff, W4PJW sent the following to me and suggested we add it to our newsletter. It is entitled, "Re-Elmering The Missing Calls."

As we take some time off from work or studies or just our regular routine, it is a good time to ask ourselves, "Where are the missing calls?" Those once-familiar calls that just don't seem to be in our logs these days or answering our kerchunks on the repeater. Some may have moved away, some calls may have new owners, some may just be operating elsewhere, and, of course, some operators may have slipped through the F-layer and lost, but not all of them.

More and more of our friends are "going dark" because of the vicissitudes of downsizing or necessity. What of them? Are they to be permanently QRT? Even in days gone by, there were plenty of circumstances in which it was impossible to put up an antenna or use a radio. Today we find even more situations inhospitable to one's favored modes and bands. Some of these friends

were Elmers to us when we were unfledged and struggling. And if not to us, then to others. Perhaps it is time to return the favor - re-Elmering, if you will.

It's always time for those of us that can to help those of us that can't. Not just during the holiday season. January is just as good a time to offer assistance as any other month and maybe even more so as the holidays recede, but winter lingers on.

If you know someone who's off the air but misses ham radio, why not put your thinking cap on and figure out a way to keep the link alive. It may be as simple as offering to help install an indoor ground plane and programming a handheld for someone whose eyesight isn't quite up to making connections and punching tiny buttons anymore. For the truly radio-less but Internet-connected, they might need help configuring their computer to use the Echo link system. And if you're really adventurous, what about setting up one of the new transceivers with Ethernet connectivity so they can chase that New One, too?

What about the faces that are no longer seen at club meetings? Could it be that the traffic and the nighttime driving are too much for their comfort or safety? It costs little to offer to drive and believe me, it's appreciated. Coordinating a share-the-ride list would be a terrific club activity, don't you think? Plus, it might get you into the car pool lane, saving everybody time and hassle.

I won't belabor the point except to suggest that during this holiday season, we pause to consider whether we can render some assistance to the hams that made us and our hobby what it is today. Elmering works just as well in reverse as it does forward.

73, Ward NOAX

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One last comment from your president: In mid December Augusta County was placed under a Winter Storm Warning. David, AD4TJ sent out an e-mail (via KE4HVR) requesting help in case some shelters in the area had to be opened. He only got four responses. Maybe five if you include me because I did respond to Ray's e-mail. The lack of response concerns me. In the event of an emergency, Amateur Radio will be called upon. Will you rise up to the occasion? Give it some thought.

73, and Happy New Year!

Greg, W4GRC

Dee Hale, KE4GMI, SK

It is with regret that we report the passing of Dee Hale, KE4GMI, wife of Jerry Hale, KR4EQ. Dee, whose full name was Delores Desper Hale, lived in Lyndhurst, where she was active in the White Hill Church of the Brethren, and also Moose Lodge 1308. She was a frequent participant in the regular Friday ham lunches in Staunton. She was survived by a large number of family members, including husband Jerry, five children, sixteen grandchildren, eight great-grand-children, and a number of brothers and sisters and in-laws.

The ham community extends its condolences to Jerry and the family.



It is Knot! – It is, too! – It is Knot! – It is, too!

Thanks to Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, for advising us of this SUPER website which uses animation to illustrate instructions for tying all kinds of knots! Being a crusty old Scoutmaster for more than 15 years (and a three-bead Woodbadger: “I used to be an Eagle, and a good old Eagle, too!”) your newsletter editor took pride in being something of a master when it came to knot tying. But this website blew me away! Check it out: it makes even the most challenging of knots quite simple to tie. With a little practice, you can wow your friends at Field Day!

<http://www.animatedknots.com>



Rockingham County ARES Net Control Volunteers

Thanks to the hams below for volunteering to serve as net control for the Monday night Rockingham County ARES Nets! The net meets every Monday at 8:00 pm local time on 147.225, except the first Monday of the month when it can be found on 146.550 simplex.

January 7: Bryan Daniels K4RMY
 January 14: Gerald Nauman KN4FM
 January 21: David Fordham KD9LA
 January 28: Hugh Pettis K3EC

February 4: Ray Ritchie K4NRA
 February 11: Gerry Brunk K4RBZ
 February 18: Norman Benner KA4EEN
 February 25: Vic Alger K4XTT

Augusta County ARES Net: Second Thursday Night at 8:00 pm

The Augusta County ARES net meets once each month on the second Thursday evening at 8:00 pm on the 146.850 repeater.

Like the 147.225 repeater, this machine requires PL of 131.8 Hz.

The next two nets are scheduled for **January 10**, and **February 14**.

(While waiting for the net Thursday to roll around, check out your radio equipment by dropping in on the minus-2 net every night at 10 pm on 146.850.)

NN4JM (former KI4FZY): New DXCC Prefix

I thought that if you did not already know, the ARRL gave us a Christmas Present! Another New DXCC Country that we can fight the pile-ups for.

It is St. Barthelemy (FJ prefix). It was approved for DXCC credit after December 14, 2007. Any QSOs before that date are not valid for DXCC credit.

There is a station that is currently active on FJ. He is FJ/OH2AM and he can be found on most HF bands. He can easily be worked from my QTH. (Got him on 20 SSB). There is a Grand Total of 338 DXCC Countries now.

Best of 73s,
James McDowell, NN4JM

Volunteer Examiner Exams: On-Going...

Like the Energizer Bunny, the valley's VE exam team just keeps going and going and going...

The team is under the capable leadership of Gayle Shull KU4XN, with the able assistance of Gerald Nauman, KN4FM, and consists of about a dozen highly-qualified (that means "accredited") volunteer examiners who willingly donate one morning every two months to serve the public by organizing and conducting ham radio exams.

The exams for the new year will be held at the same place as last year: the Woodmen of the World building on State Highway 42, just north of Dayton, Virginia, about a mile south of the large Harrisonburg Wal-Mart South Shopping Center complex on John Wayland Highway.

The exams are scheduled for the second Saturday of every even-numbered month. This means that for 2008, the exam dates will be: February 9, April 12, June 14, August 9, October 11, and December 13.

For information on how you, too, can become an accredited VE (free of charge! The book is even free!), contact Gayle at 540-828-2132, or Gerald at 540-434-0859.

Op-Ed: Augusta Hams' Lack of Response to Advance Call-up is Disappointing

David Tanks, AD4TJ, the RACES emergency communications officer for Augusta County, issued a preliminary call (indicating a standby status) of the Augusta County Amateur Radio Service and RACES in conjunction with the anticipated bad weather in early December. Email was the primary notification.

The response was very unusual for this area.

Out of over 70 hams notified and asked to report their status, only five responded. This could be attributed to any of a number of things. David and other emergency responders aren't pointing fingers or criticizing anyone.

It is essential that the emergency team leadership have some idea of approximately how many hams are actually going to turn up in case a real emergency arises. The actual number responding isn't as important as the advance knowledge of how many hams the leadership can expect to show up in the event the emergency actually occurs.

In one way, the response was good: those few who responded were fully prepared, able, and ready to drop everything at a moment's notice to serve the community. In a way, however, it wasn't good: did the low response rate truly reflect the silent hams' inability or unwillingness to volunteer to serve the community? Or were these hams really there and ready and willing and able, but just didn't respond to a call for a status report?

In the future, it would be more useful for hams to respond one way or another. No one in the leadership will ever criticize a ham who is unable (or even just unwilling) to turn out and activate, especially for a minor situation like weather. But knowing whether the hams are really there or not is important when you are trying to fulfill responsibility as a team leader or planner.

Hopefully, hams will respond to future calls either positively, negatively, or even a "maybe" with some explanation and reservation. This way, better service can be provided the public. After all, we are supposed to be "communicators", aren't we?

Opinionated One: Why The Nation Needs More Young Hams ... and Quickly!

NY author Ned Crabb (WSJ) found the following instructions, coffee-stained and dog-eared, lying in a box amid a jumble of broken tools and electronic and mechanical parts outside his apartment building, along with other discarded holiday trash.

Congratulations! You are the proud owner of a new Sony model DGTYR3000-VX-HDP2 Series2000. Your unit comes completely assembled from the factory and is ready to use. Follow these simple quick-start instructions to set up your unit and begin unparalleled enjoyment of state of the art in electronic home entertainment.

IMPORTANT: Begin by opening the sealed box and removing the 17-piece Styrofoam packing shell. Lift out the shrink-wrapped plume section marked "lithinodestrillator" and refer to the blue-colored regulator intensity chart found on the side. If the chart has the fuchsia-colored code BRZ3435334 your unit requires an AC4-z3z4 power inverter, available from your local Sony dealer. If the intensity chart is cyan instead of blue, you will need the OE3W3344 cable available from your local Sony dealer. If your chart has a mauve or taupe code beginning with the letters C through J, you will need to contact our Speedy-Geek hotline home service provider at 1-800-U-ON-HOLD to obtain the required cable connections. Have your credit card handy before placing your call. If the intensity chart is silver with pink stripes, your distrillator must be activated by an authorized technician at one of our conveniently-located service centers. Bring your unit to either our Yellow Dog, Alabama industrial campus, or our new Frensdale Mall outlet in Frozen Badger, North Dakota during normal working hours for rapid and professional assistance.

Next, ensure that your unit is the correct model for your local provider's signals. Signals come in Types A, B1, B2, and K13. These will correspond to the fourteenth digit of your serial number. Your serial number can be found behind the small gray panel on the front bezel of the screen unit proper. Press the front of the panel while pushing up diagonally with a small screwdriver on the Sony Logo, being sure not to crimp or damage the delicate plating behind the logo. Doing so will void your

warranty. After removing the panel cover, insert a paperclip into the hole marked "Do not insert anything here", and release the spring holding the locking mechanism, twisting as you do so. Refer to Figure 1.



Figure 1

Breaking the seal precludes your returning the unit for a refund or exchange. If any of the 17 pieces of styrofoam packing has been disturbed or the seal on the outside box is broken or altered, you will not be authorized to return your unit, even if it is the wrong model.

Next lift out and open the plastic bag containing the tools you need for setup and check to make sure you have all the following:

- One 7-3/4-inch extenuator
- Two packages of 3/4-inch fribbets
- Two packages of 3/4-inch fribbets
- One six-jointed revolving spangler
- One spurgel-headed grommeling tool
- One round-headed flonge

Unpack the main components and the screen, being sure not to mix up the disk unit with the memory unit. Insert the units into the proper openings, being sure to align the guide channels as shown in Figure 1.

If your unit is packed with refribrulator bezels, you will need a Sony adapter RYTRP3-33-00A available from your local Sony dealer. If not, you will need adapter YEWE3-333, available from your local Sony dealer. In either case, you will also need to purchase a Sony RIAA-approved copyright decoder (available from your Sony dealer) to connect the surpressing ugonamator to the primary screen input link.

Use HDMI connectors for first-stage signal connections. Use type URX-HDI cables for the second stage and HRQ-HD digital connectors for the stage 3 connection. All are available from your Sony dealer. Use only Sony-brand equipment. Using Radio Shack or other third-party connectors will void your warranty. Make the connections as shown in Figure 1.

Before proceeding further, ensure the bezel has been properly inserted into the varnicle node by the factory. If so, tighten by using

the provided 1/3-inch fribbets and properly utilizing the extenuator.

Next, use one hand to firmly hold the back of the unit by the onkulator, and with your other hand press on the latch release mechanism while holding the green button on top of the unit and simultaneously twisting both release caps on the bottom of the unit exactly 1/15th of a turn clockwise as you look from behind the unit. Do not exceed the travel of the knobs or you may damage the casing tabs. The plastic tabs are very delicate and easily damaged. It might help if you support the unit base with both hands while you execute the above maneuver. Clip the green wire as shown in Figure 1.

Next, ensure your unit is compatible with your other home entertainment devices. Look for the gray nomenclature plate located inside the heating-vent slits found one inch below the ridgeline running along the left edge of the unit. If the plate bears the Urimol symbol, your unit will require the addition of a Sony model 4R-6634 module, available by mail from our parts supply depot in Karachi, Pakistan (see separate ordering instructions). If the plate displays the Thuristal symbol, you will need one of nine different Sony digital decoder modules based on serial number. See our on-line catalog to select the proper module (www.sony.com).

This concludes step 1 of the quick-start setup procedure. Steps 2 through 17 are self-explanatory and involve the proper insertion and tightening of the remaining accessories and connections to your various home entertainment components.

If you have trouble, be sure to follow the instructions found at www.sony.com before calling our toll-free service number. Calls to the toll-free service number are billed at the rate of \$11.95 per minute or fraction thereof, including hold time.

Important note: This unit might not play any or all copyrighted content, such as movies, music, or television programming. This is inherent in the Digital Rights Management design and is not a defect.

Thanks for purchasing Sony — THE name in home entertainment.

VARA Secretary's Report: November 6 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Shoney's in Staunton November 6, 2007. The President, Greg Czerniak W4GRC, opened the meeting at 7:00pm. There were 26 members present and 5 guests, Bob VanFossen K4DJG, Andrew Barbour AG4XN, Eddie Barbour, John Barbour and patsy Rinehart N4PJJ. Welcome to all our visitors, we hope to see you back for next month.

VARA Meeting Place for December 4th will be at the Staunton Church of Christ near the East entrance to Gypsy Hill Park. The club voted to have a covered dish meal, so bring your favorite covered dish and join in the fun and fellowship. After the meal we will have the Chinese Gift Exchange so bring a wrapped or bagged present in the \$5 to \$10 range. The gift can be of the serious type or a gag gift, which can add to the fun.

New Members: Stan Thomas KI4GSU and his wife Shirley KI4VLD. Welcome to the VARA!

New license: Mike Stone KJ4AAF Congratulations Mike!

50/50: John Barbour, Andrew's Dad. Congratulations to John!

2007 Christmas Party will be on December 6, with MARA at Traditions Restaurant on Rt. 42 North of Harrisonburg. We decided to cancel the Chinese Gift Exchange because of the time it would take to work through the large group. We need to be out of the restaurant in time for the employees to clean up before closing time.

CLUB DUES are due in January. If your dues are not paid by our March Club Meeting you will be dropped from the membership. David would appreciate prompt renewals to keep from deleting and reinstating memberships. The Club voted to keep our dues at \$15/yr. for a full membership and \$7.50/yr for an associate membership.

PROJECTOR: The club voted for Al Bonck N3JB to check on a price for a projector for club use in the range of \$500 or less and report back at our December meeting.

Lightning Arrestors: Jeff Rinehart W4PJW reminded those that may be in need of lightning arrestors that there is a company called I.C.E. that has a new type arrestor on the market.

For more information go to: <http://thewireman.com/coaxialimpulsesuppressors.html>

VARA Meeting Place for January 8th 2008 will be at Shoney's in Staunton. **NOTE:** the date change because the first Tuesday falls on New Years Day.

ON THE SICK LIST:

Denny Morland N4XPW would appreciate cards and visits from anyone in the valley.

Fred Evans N4KYM has a compressed vertebrae from lifting but is improving each day.

Let's keep these members 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 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 grcljc@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 7:58pm.

Submitted by
VARA Secretary
Ray Colvin, KE4HVR

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)

The club newsletter, the Monitor, is available free of charge monthly to all members of both clubs via email distribution, in PDF format. If you are unable to open PDF files, you can elect to receive the newsletter via printed copy, by U.S. mail, but are informed that printed copies are often delayed by the postal service, and sometimes arrive damaged by the automated postal equipment.

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE MONITOR via US MAIL RATHER THAN EMAIL? Yes / No / I already do and wish to continue

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

VARA Secretary's Report: December 4 Christmas Dinner

First of all, thanks to MARA for inviting us to join them for the Christmas Party. We had a good turn out from both clubs and everyone enjoyed the fellowship and good food. I didn't hear of anyone not getting enough to eat and most belts were just a little tighter when we left. The VARA had 21 of their members present counting wives and girl friends. I was sorry to hear that some couldn't make it for various reasons. Hopefully next year things will work out and they will be able to attend.

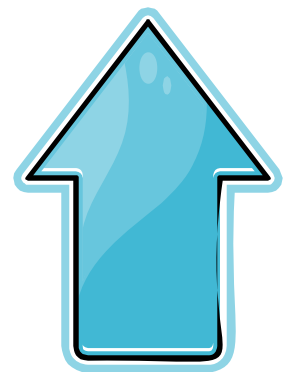
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

VARA Secretary

Ray Colvin, KE4HVR

MARA Secretary's Report: December 4 Christmas Dinner

MARA members enjoyed the Christmas banquet with VARA. There was some discussion among members about the unexpectedly-high price of the meal compared to the usual monthly meeting prices, but no formal business was conducted.



Renew Now!

*Don't let it slip your mind....
go ahead and take out a pen and
your checkbook and get it over with.*

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 08): Gayle Shull KU4XN
Board (exp 09): Ray Ritchie K4NRA

(see article on page 1 about the club website)

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month
at Traditions Restaurant in Harrisonburg.

Dinner begins at 6:00 pm,
the business meeting begins 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: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC
Vice President: Scott Newlen, KI4QQZ
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Treasurer: Doug Tippet, N8ESW
Program Manager: Al Bonck N3JB

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

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month
at Shoney's Restaurant on Hwy 250 east of
Staunton. Dinner begins at 6:00 pm,
the business meeting begins at 7:00 pm

Visitors are welcome.

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

Doug Tippet
2348 Mosley St.
Waynesboro VA 22980