

March
2008

The Monitor

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

VARA Club Program March 4: RadioTeLeTYpe – Getting started in RTTY

The VARA Club will meet at its usual date, time, and location – Tuesday, March 4, at Shoney’s Restaurant just north of US 250 east of I-81 east of Staunton. The program will be presented by Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW.

Jeff will show how easy it is to get started on RTTY. He will also show some simple circuits that make getting on RTTY quick and simple for almost anyone with an HF rig and a computer.

This classic but effective mode has been around longer than Jeff has, and is still just as vibrant and active as it was half a century ago. Best of all, RTTY still “gets the job done” – even in these times of missing sunspots, as evidenced by the recent scores on the national and international RTTY Contests (see article on page 5 of this issue).

Jeff’s program was presented at the February MARA meeting, and resulted in at least four new RTTY operators.

Dinner starts at 6, the business meeting starts at 7, and Jeff’s program follows immediately after.

MARA Club Meeting at Traditions: March 6

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association will meet at the usual time and place, Thursday March 7 at Traditions Restaurant in Harrisonburg. This meeting will discuss a potential change in meeting venue, so be sure to come and provide your opinion and thinking about the club’s future meeting location. The program will explain how to get started using the “Logbook of the World”, a free electronic logging infrastructure available to all hams everywhere.

K4EME: Contester Extraordinaire?

Just as this issue was going to press, we received word that Cowles Andrus, K4MEM, might have placed among the top scoring stations in a recent Earth-Moon-Earth contest. We did not have time to research the award, but wanted to ensure that Cowles was recognized for his outstanding performance in this international contest.



Radio Controlled Model Aircraft Event

I counted at least a dozen of the local hams at the R/C swapmeet last weekend in Weyers Cave, so I think there is some interest of hams in model aviation.

The Expoland R/C Club will have a display of model aircraft at the Staunton Mall (Peebles Court), Saturday March 22, 2008 The display will be from 9:00AM till approximately. 800PM.

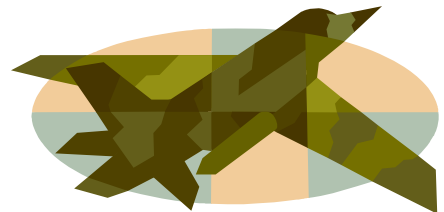
We will have 30-40 planes on display, two R/C flight simulators, and a TV playing various R/C related tapes.

There will also be several R/C warbirds that were used in the making of a film that is due out this Summer.

Club website www.expolandrc.bravehost.com

For more info contact Gary VanFossen garysue@cfw.com

Gary VanFossen, KI4FZV



Field Day Committee

VARA has selected their FD committee and it consists of: Benny N4BCC, Greg W4GRC, Jeff W4PJW, and Scott KI4QQZ

MARA has not actually appointed their committee but at their last meeting three hams voiced a willingness to serve: Sandy K4PZC, Bob N1QEQ and James NN4JM.

It is assumed that MARA will appoint their committee at the March meeting. (hint, hint!)

Therefore, the first FD Committee planning meeting will be held at **Burger King in Mt. Crawford at 6pm on Thursday March 27, 2008**. Everyone is invited to attend and take part in the discussion, even if you are not on the committee. Only committee members will be able to vote on decisions that are made, but everyone's input is always greatly appreciated!

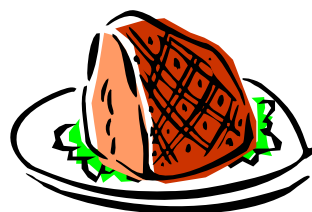
Submitted by Jeff W4PJW

VE Session Report: More New Hams

We had a good turnout on February 9 for the VE session. There were six candidates, and everyone left with something. There are now four new Technician class hams in the area, one new General and one new Extra class upgrades. It is very encouraging to have a session like that.

I want to thank the VEs that were there to help. Hugh, K3EC, Mike, W4AZR, Richard, KC3AN (he brought Phyllis, N4VZC along), Andrew, AG4XN (your father said he would be there, where was he?), Jim W4POL, Ray, K4NRA and Ellsworth, K4LXG.

*Gerald Nauman, KN4FM
Acting VE Coordinator*



VARA President's Message

Greetings fellow hams! You've got to be kidding. Is it really March already? I sure hope you have paid off your Christmas bills from last year because the way this year in moving it will be Christmas once again before you know it. The reason I have Christmas on my mind is because of what Scott (K14QQZ) gave me at our February meeting. I have a new (old) briefcase. Everyday, I look at it and make sure it opens. Thus, everyday is like Christmas. Okay, maybe that is a slight exaggeration. So let's get to radio stuff.

First, let me express thanks to the following folks who have agreed to serve on the Field Day Committee. Thank you Jeff (W4PJW), Scott (K14QQZ), Benny (N4BCC), and Greg (that's me - W4GRC). I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to Field Day. It is great time for fellowship and fun, while improving our communication skills. If you have never "come to the mountain" let me encourage you to come this year and see what it is all about. It is really pretty awesome. There is something for everybody. Phone, code, digital, satellite, solar power, you name it and we do it, and if I do say so myself, we do it well.

Our treasurer, Doug (N8ESW) reports that we now have sixty-six members. That's pretty good. The number of members in the club also makes it clear that we need to continue our search for a place to meet with adequate elbow-room. There are several possibilities being discussed. I think we need to act soon. It would really be nice to have a place to hold our meetings where we could set up audio-visual equipment, maybe build projects, and set up displays.

Don't forget our April meeting. It may seem a bit late to have a Chinese Gift Exchange, but you have to admit that we have a lot of fun passing stuff back and forth. The April meeting and gift exchange will be at Staunton Church of Christ, located at 333 Churchville Avenue, (across from the Gypsy Hill Park Playground). We will meet in the fellowship hall at 6:00 P.M. This will be a covered dish event, so bring a covered dish (with food in it). At our March meeting we will discuss how we are going to handle drinks, paper plates, silver wear, and so on.

That's it for this newsletter. See you at Shoney's on March.

73, Greg, W4GRC

Diodes Needed for School Project: Can You Help?

I am in need of diodes for a school crystal project.

My teacher approached me about making crystal radio receiver kits for some of the students in one of his other classes that I will take next year.

I have everything I need except for the diodes.

I will need as many as possible. If anyone has some that they would like to part with (I will pay for them) I would appreciate it.

I plan to be at the MARA meeting or they can get in touch with me via my home number 1-540-234-9488, my cell number 1-540-476-1912, or via email at jmcdiv@msn.com and we can make arrangements.

Thanks,

James NN4JM



Why Are These Hams Smiling?

Because *they* had a great time at the Richmond Frostfest!

Turn to pages 10-11 for more evidence of the fun to be had at a hamfest.

Photographic Proof

The paparazzi have done it again. This photo proves that contrary to popular belief, Pat Smiley KD4WWF, has NOT run away to Brazil with the pretty Flamenco dancer he was seen with after that famous club meeting was raided back in 2001. Pat showed up at the Frostfest in good health and good spirits. Now, if only we can find Jimmy Hoffa....



How To Tell If You Are A Red-Neck Ham Operator

You might be a Redneck Ham Operator if...

One leg of your dipole is tied to the outhouse.

Needle nose pliers are needed to turn your transceiver on and off.

You paid more for your mobile antenna than you did for your wife's wedding ring.

You paused for ID every ten minutes while on your honeymoon.

Your spouse says, "Honey, do you love me?" And your response is "Roger, Roger, 20 over S-9!"

Your trailer home is a major component of your antenna system.

Your mobile radio costs more than the vehicle it's mounted in.

Your power supply consists of jumper cables hanging out the window of your shack attached to the battery of your truck.

Your HF rig is the latest ICOM or KENWOOD but your Desk Mic came from Radio Shack.

Your homebrew amplifier resembles a moonshine whiskey still.

Your QSL Card collection contains more Confederate flags than state silhouettes.

Your TV antenna and 10 Meter Beam are one in the same.

You own a linear amplifier but not a lawn mower.

You made up a little miniature yagi for the top of your blue-tick hound's doghouse.

You've got a 440-MHz dipole hanging between the antlers of the deer over your fireplace.

You can spin the tuning knob on your HF rig back and forth in a way that causes an AM carrier tone to whistle "Dixie".

*Contributed by
Don Landes WX4C*



Free EmComm Software Now Available

The NarrowBand Emergency Messaging System (NBEMS) development team announced that a Windows NBEMS software suite is now available for beta testing. NBEMS for Windows is a suite of programs designed for point-to-point, error-free emergency messaging.

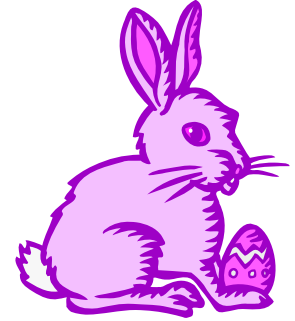
According to developers Skip Teller, KH6TY, and Dave Freese, W1HKJ, the NBEMS system is designed primarily for use on VHF and up, or on HF with Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS) antennas. The system uses the computer soundcard as the modem. Other than a simple interface connection between the computer and transceiver, no additional hardware is needed. Composing and sending emergency messages on NBEMS is no more difficult than sending e-mail via the Internet. All forwarding is done by stations manned by live operators on both ends who can confirm that a frequency is clear locally, or negotiate a frequency change to avoid causing interference.

The NBEMS software can also be used for daily casual communications on PSK31, PSK63, RTTY or MFSK16 and is capable of sending flawless, high resolution, passport photo-sized color images in less than 10 minutes over any path that can sustain PSK250 without excessive repeats, according to program authors.

Radio amateurs are invited to participate in the beta test of the NBEMS. The NBEMS suite can be downloaded from the NBEMS Web site <<http://w1hkj.com/NBEMS/>>. Send comments and bug reports via e-mail <kh6ty@comcast.net>.

[Jay Musikar, AF2C, DEC for East Central District of Northern

Florida, wrote this about his experience with the suite: "It can be very useful as another tool for emcomm. The software enables the user the option of using any one of six digital modes "on the fly." The modes offer the opportunity to receive and transmit everything from simple text to graphics, all in narrow banded digital modes. Some of the main advantages: intuitive installation and usage, and choice of modes - PSK 31, PSK 62, PSK 125, PSK 250, MFSK and RTTY. Digital modes work well using low power and NVIS antennas during emergencies. Modes are narrowband. A minor disadvantage is that the Macros must utilize upper-case letters for commands <COMMAND>. The software is rather Spartan, but as an emcomm program it deserves consideration. It is simple and offers many options. Oh yes, and it's free!"]



Trivia: Early Easter Won't Happen Again In our Lifetimes

Easter is the 23rd this year. Easter is always the 1st Sunday after the 1st full moon after the Spring Equinox (which is March 20). This dating of Easter is based on the lunar calendar that Hebrew people used to identify passover, which is why it moves around on our Roman calendar.

Based on the above information, Easter can actually be one day earlier (March 22) that is rare.

Here's the interesting information. This year is the earliest Easter any of us will ever see the rest of our lives! And only the most elderly of our population have ever seen it this early (95 years old or above). And none of us have ever, or will ever, see it a day earlier!

Here's the facts:

The next time Easter will be this early (March 23) will be the year 2228 (220 years from now). The last time it was this early was 1913 (so if you're 95 or older, you are the only ones that were around for that!).

The next time it will be a day earlier, March 22, will be in the year 2285 (277 years from now). The last time it was on March 22 was 1818.

So, no one alive today has or will ever see it any earlier than this year!

Interesting!

Ed Troutman
West Virginia



From the ARRL Virginia Section Manager: Placement of Antennas

Any ordinance involving the placement, screening or height of antennas shall reasonably accommodate amateur radio antennas and shall impose the minimum regulation necessary to accomplish the locality's legitimate purpose. In localities having a population density of 120 persons or less per square mile according to the 1990 United States census, no local ordinance shall (i) restrict amateur radio antenna height to less than 200 feet above ground level as permitted by the Federal Communications Commission or (ii) restrict the number of support structures. In localities having a population density of more than 120 persons per square mile according to the 1990 United States census, no local ordinance shall (i) restrict amateur radio antenna height to less than 75 feet above ground level or (ii) restrict the number of support structures. Reasonable and customary engineering practices shall be followed in the erection of amateur radio antennas. This section shall not preclude any locality, by ordinance, from regulating amateur radio antennas with regard to reasonable requirements relating to the use of screening, setback, placement, and health and safety requirements

In spite of this clear language of state code a number of jurisdictions have stipulate a height of 50 ft.. Many other restrictions have crept into the language of tower ordinances that would allow only those hams with strong financial resources to be able to construct a tower. The intent of Virginia law was to prevent this type of local ordinance.

A Section Manager does not have the time to be involved in resolving this issue at every local level. It is vital that every ham club in each locality research their local ordinances to ensure that state code and local code is consistent. If local code is not consistent the state and federal law has preemption. If we do not act, our effectiveness in emergency communications will be impacted in negative ways.

A second threat to our effectiveness in emergency communications is the introduction of HR904. As the proposed law is written the only mobile operations of Amateur Radio would require being "hands free". This proposed law has been tabled until the 2009 session but will surface again nest year. Now is the time to contact the sponsor of this bill and get the language revised to exclude Amateur Radio from this bill that was designed to deal with cell phone use while a vehicle is in monition.

The following is the main body of the proposed bill.

No person shall use a mobile telephone or other wireless electronic telecommunications device while operating a moving motor vehicle on any public highway in the Commonwealth unless such mobile telephone or other wireless electronic telecommunications device is equipped with a hands-free accessory.

There are exemptions from this proposed law but Amateur Radio is not one of them. Marty Mait, AG4DN is our State Legislative Liaison and is working on this issue.

In their recent broad meeting the ARRL has created two new appointments in the area of ARES. These are Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator and Assistant District Emergency Coordinator. This change was requested at least two years ago by the SMs and has now been adapted. In many Sections the naming of people to these positions has been a common practice but it required using a different title when registering these appointments with the league. In the Virginia Section, Assistant Section Emergency Coordinators were registered as DEC's and Assist DEC's were usually not registered as a league appointment but records were kept at the Section level. This new ruling will allow for appointments to be consistent with their function.

The ARRL also decided to drop the senior discount on membership. This discount was a reduction of \$3.00 per year. Item 26. "Mr. Edgar moved, seconded by Mr. Frenaye, that Bylaw 5 be deleted effective January 1, 2009 as recommended by the Administration and Finance Committee. This would have the effect of eliminating the dues rate concession that is available to members who have reached the age of 65. After discussion, a roll call vote being required with a minimum of 10 affirmative votes needed for adoption, the motion was ADOPTED with 12 affirmative votes. All Directors voted in favor except Messrs. Allen, Sarratt and Norton, who voted opposed." This was done as a cost saving measure.

Remember to go to the Section page <http://www.aresva.org/> for the Section Traffic Managers monthly report and to <http://www.aresva.org/aresva.html> for the Section Emergency Coordinator's monthly report.

Glen Sage, W4GHS-Virginia Section Manager

Traveling to the Old Country: Another Reason to Upgrade to Extra

European Reciprocal Licenses Now Limited to Advanced and Extra Class Licensees as of Feb 4, 2008.

The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) has revised its table of equivalence between FCC amateur licenses and the CEPT license.

Effective February 4, 2008, Recommendation T/R 61-01 (as amended) now grants full CEPT privileges only to those US citizens who hold an FCC-issued Amateur Extra or Advanced class license.

This means that those US licensees who hold an FCC-issued General or Technician license are no longer eligible for full operating privileges in countries where CEPT-reciprocal operation had previously been permitted.

These changes are the result of a re-evaluation of US and CEPT license classes equivalence by the CEPT's Radio Regulatory Working Group at its meeting January 29-February 1, 2008 in Basel, Switzerland. The Working Group deals with numerous areas of concern including Amateur Radio, and is responsible for applications from countries to participate in T/R 61-01, as well as other Amateur Radio related issues.

"Changes in the US license structures and examinations often have ancillary implications beyond the immediate impact upon the US licensees," said Dan Henderson, N1ND, ARRL Regulatory Information Manager. "While this CEPT change affects several classes of US licensees when they visit Europe and other CEPT signatory countries, it has no effect on their operating privileges at home."

Submitted by
James McDowell, NN4JM

How Many Countries Can You Identify Just From Their Flag?

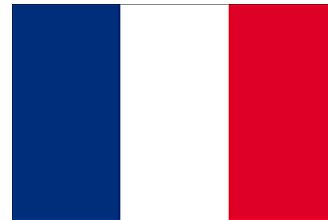


1

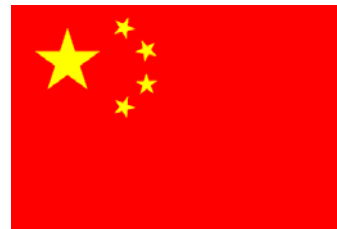
2



3



4



5



6



7



Answers on page 9

UPDATED Net Information

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 net is scheduled for **March 13**.

Rockingham County ARES Net — 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.

March 3: James McDowell NN4JM (*simplex*)

March 10: Gerald Nauman KN4FM

March 17: David Fordham KD9LA

March 24: Hugh Pettis K3EC

March 31: Bryan Daniels K4RMY

April 7: Gerald Nauman KN4FM (*simplex*)

April 14: David Fordham KD9LA

April 21: Hugh Pettis K4EC

April 28: Norman Benner KA4EEN

Page County ARES Net

The Page county ARES net meets every Sunday night at 8:00 pm on the 146.670 repeater. This machine has a minus .600 transmit offset, and uses a PL of 100.00 Hz.

Hams from all counties are welcome and invited to check in. Often this net can be heard from Waynesboro, Fishersville, and Staunton, as well as Elkton, McGaheysville, Grottoes, and Weyers Cave. Some stations can copy it in Bridgewater, Dayton, and even Churchville with a good antenna.

Highland County ARES Net

The Highland County ARES net meets the FIRST and THIRD Wednesday of every month, at 8:30 pm on the Monterey 147.180 repeater.

This repeater can be reached from many places in the valley (especially with a base station and outside antenna).

The machine as a +.600 transmit offset, and uses a PL tone of 100.0 Hz.

SkyLine Regional Net

Using the wide-coverage 147.330 repeater, the Skyline Regional Net links stations from the Shenandoah Valley, Roanoke Valley, Lynchburg and Amherst areas, and Charlottesville and other piedmont vicinities. This net meets every Tuesday at 9:00 pm.

Triple Nickel Net

Darrell Little KI4LLA, will be Net Control for the Triple Nickel Net which will meet at 8:00 pm on the Fourth Thursday of each month.

What's with the "Triple Nickel"?

The net meets on 147.555 simplex. — 555, get it?

(Be sure to note that it is 147, not 146!)

This net is an informal net, supplementing the Minus-Two net, to promote usage of the local VHF band. Put your radio back in the car, take the bank statements off the base station 2-meter rig, charge up the HT batteries, and check in..

Traffic Net Schedules

The Old Dominion Emergency Net meets First and Third Mondays at 6:30 pm local time on 3947kHz. It also meets the last Wednesday at 8:45 pm on 3947kHz, and the second Wednesday at 8:45 pm on 1900kHz

The Virginia Sideband Net meets daily at 6:00 pm on 3947kHz. The Virginia Phone Net meets daily at 4:00 pm and 7:30 pm on 3947kHz. The Virginia Traffic Net meets daily at 1:00 pm on 3907kHz and 7260kHz.

The Northern Virginia Traffic Net meets daily at 7:30 pm on the 147.300 repeater (+.600) MHz.

Minus Two Net

An nice informal ragchew net meets on the 146.850 repeater at 10:00 pm (midnight minus two hours, local time). Sunday through Friday. This repeater uses a minus .600 transmit offset and requires a PL of 131.8.

All hams are welcome to check into this net, too.

The net also meets Saturdays at 10:00 pm on the 147.045 repeater, and is linked to a 220 repeater in West Virginia.

The Valley on Ten

One of the most neglected bands today is Ten Meters. Now really, be honest. When was the last time you talked on ten meters?

Well here's your chance.

A new 10-meter net has been started on 28.490 every Friday night at 8:30 pm. This net is a local Shenandoah Valley net intended to let hams test their equipment and get some fun on a band most of us hardly ever use anymore.

The 10-meter band requires a really short wire dipole antenna, one that can be hung almost anywhere, if you don't have a commercial one. So how far can you talk on groundwave on 10m?

Tune in on Friday night and find out!

Net Schedule on the Web

If you can't remember all the net times, frequencies, and schedules, don't despair.

Both the VARA and the MARA websites have web pages listing all of the major nets serving this area.

On the VARA website, click on the "Net Meetings" link in the menu on the left side of the main page.

On the MARA website, click on the "Net Schedules" link on the main web page .



Answers to Flag Quiz: on Page 7

1. Belgium;
2. Norway;
3. France;
4. China;
5. New Zealand;
6. Cuba;
7. Aruba

Fordham's Fotos of February's FrostFest Fun

(Say that three times fast!)



Photos by KD9LA



Above: Jim and Scott Newlen, KE4CAX and KI4QQZ. checking out the bargains.

Upper right corner: Steve Davis, KI4CGI, having way too good a time.

Right: A display of one ham's junk, another ham's treasure.



Below right: Richard Huttinger AA4RH peddling his wares, just moments before winning a door prize.

Below left: Clint Campbell KB4OLM and Sandy Mullins K4PZC look like they've found those little gizmo's they





Above: Al Bonck N4JB and Andrew Barbour AG4XN check out a no-tune amplifier which incorporates tubes. Yeah, we still don't believe it either.

Upper right: Bob Carlstrom WD4JEL just browsing.

Right: David Firestone K4DPF, hauls a load of loot to the car.

Below right: David Tanks AD4TJ, considering the purchase of a light sabre. Or is that a Remington 12 gauge?

Below left: Gordon WA4FJC, wondering if he's got enough money for the treasure he's found.



K4RMY: Rockingham County ARES News

Summary of conclusions and recommendations as a result of our discussion as interpreted by Bryan K4RMY Rockingham Co. ARES EC.

1. Rockingham Co. ARES net will begin handling practice messaging starting during the Feb. 18th net.
2. Net Control Station (NCS) will have authority to handle how this practice traffic will be dealt with
 - a. Typically when a person announces that they have traffic (practice or otherwise) the NCS will assign a simplex frequency to the persons handling the traffic. NCS will ask if there is anyone willing to take the traffic and excuse both from the net to pass the traffic on the simplex freq. assigned.
 - b. Simplex frequencies. to use in order of preference are: 146.55, 146.565, 146.58. A complete list of frequencies to be used is located below.
 - c. Once the individuals have passed their traffic, they will check back into the Rockingham Co. ARES net and confirm the traffic has been passed.
3. The form used to pass the traffic will be the standard ARRL Radiogram unless otherwise noted. The ICS213 may also be used.
4. Hopefully all those that are officially net control stations will take turns passing traffic when they are not the current net control station. All those that participate on the net are encouraged to pass practice traffic as well.
5. The practice traffic passed will consist of information found on QRZ web site about a specific call sign. You are free to choose any call sign to use. Example:

K4RMY

Class: General Codes: HVIE

Name: Bryan E. Daniels

Address: 2327 Blue Stone Hill Dr.

Harrisonburg , VA 22801

Effective : 28 May 2005

Expires: 26 Aug. 2013

FRN: 0006355069

Lookup: 352

Other information from the QRZ listing may also be used. The example is just that an example. Feel free to include whatever. We are using this information because it is in the public domain and doesn't violate anyone's privacy. When passing practice traffic please note that it is for practice in the PRECEDENCE box and avoid using anything in the HX (Handling instructions) box.

6. We will hold another meeting on April 12th after the VE session to further discuss and refine this process. Also, hopefully to get some individuals willing to act as contacts with the various real traffic nets in case of having some real traffic to pass.
7. Anyone interested in helping with the practice, please contact Bryan K4RMY at k4rmy@arrl.net.
8. I will be glad to forward a PDF of the ARRL Radiogram or the ICS213 form to anyone who requests it.
9. Simplex frequencies on 2M:

**146.430, 146.445, 146.460, 146.475, 146.490,
146.505, 146.535, 146.550, 146.565, 146.580**

(note: I have not listed the National Simplex Calling Frequency of 146.52, please avoid this freq. for traffic)

**147.420, 147.435, 147.450, 147.465, 147.480,
147.495, 147.510, 147.525, 147.540, 147.555,
147.570**

(these were compiled from several different web sites and are not inclusive. I have left several freq. off that were not listed on ALL the sites.)

Try to stay with the 3 suggested earlier unless there is a large volume of traffic to pass.

Bryan Daniels, K4RMY
ARRL EC
Rockingham County

MARA Secretary's Report – February 7 Meeting

Introductions made all around

1. Reports:

New members- 2nd reading

Russ Mumaw K3NLT of Broadway

Richard Wilson KJ4AAE of Port Republic

Both were elected as members.

a. Secretary minutes as printed in the Monitor, moved, seconded and approved.

b. Treasurer's report - \$1,552.78 Approved

c. Groups

ARES/RACES— Hugh K3EC has said he would be willing to assist in dealing with training for passing traffic. A meeting is scheduled for Feb 9th to discuss this at the Woodman of the World building after the VE session. All interested hams are welcome.

VE- Second Saturday in Jan - Feb. 9th NEED HELP ON SATURDAY

d. Public Service- PENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL Ham radio days in Ray's K4NRA class on Feb. 20th and 21st. All interested are invited to attend to talk to Ray's students about ham radio. Class begins at 8:40 am.

Field Day Planning committee- Need to appoint a committee ASAP. VARA asks that the overall chair of Field Day be a member of MARA this year.

2. Announcements: March 15-17 Va QSO Party

3. Old Business None

4. New Business

There was a discussion of possibly changing the meeting place of MARA. This was tabled until next month so that more information can be gotten about prices, requirements, times, etc.

Motion to adjourn ,seconded and approved.

Program on RTTY was presented by Jeff W4PJW

Submitted by

Bryan Daniels

K4RMY

VARA Secretary's Report: February 5 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Shoney's in Staunton February 5, 2008. The President, Greg Czerniak W4GRC, opened the meeting at 7:00pm. There were 29 members present and 1 guest, Bob Johnson. Welcome to our visitor, we hope to see you back for next month.

VARA Meeting Place for March 4th will be at Shoney's in Staunton. Mike Reno KG4OON is checking on another meeting place with more room and will report back to the club at our March meeting. Also AMC with catering was mentioned and will be checked out by our March meeting.

50/50: Jim Newlen KE4CAX had the winning ticket. Congratulations to Jim!

New Members: Bob VanFossen K4DJG and Patsy Rinehart N4PJJ. Welcome to the VARA!

Dr. Francesca Conte came to our meeting and personally thanked all those that helped with the two runs last year. She also told us she would like to have our help again this year for the Bel Monte (March 22) and Great Eastern Endurance Run (September 29). She said our help is a great help to her in knowing if the runners have past a certain rest stop. If an accident should happen or a runner would make a wrong turn she would know exactly where to look for them. This is a good public service event and a good way to show what amateur radio can do in the event of an accident.

Field day: Field Day 2008 will be here before we know it. We have a field day committee of four, Jeff Rinehart W4PJW, Greg Czerniak W4GRC, Scott Newlen KI4QQZ and Bennie Cook N4BCC. The first field day meeting will be 6pm March 27 at Burger King in Mt. Crawford.

Antenna System for Staunton EOC: David Tanks AD4TJ will talk with Donna Good about the purchase of an antenna system at the Staunton EOC and the funding.

CLUB DUES were 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.

Augusta Co. ARES NET: Was held on 146.490 simplex using battery or generator power. There were 25 check-ins and three pieces of traffic passed during the net.

Winter Weather: With Winter here we could have a bad storm anytime so this is a good time to get batteries charged and do a test run on the generator. It is also a good time to get your GO BOX together in case of a call out. Check out your radio to make sure you have the simplex frequencies as well as the local repeaters programmed. An extra antenna for 2M mobile (5/8 wavelength preferably), also a 2M base antenna, mast & coax and a power supply may also be needed. Other items such as, pencils, notepads, flashlights, extra batteries for the flashlight, HT and a battery big enough to power a mobile radio at high power if needed.

Chinese Gift Exchange: The Chinese Gift Exchange was postponed because of the Christmas Party with MARA on December 4th at Traditions in Harrisonburg. We will do the Gift Exchange at our regular meeting on April 1, 2008. Bring a gift in the 5 to 10 dollar range, it can be of serious nature or a gag type. If you pick a gift you don't like you can trade it off for one that someone else has. Come join the fun and who ends up with WHO KNOWS WHAT at the end.

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. The ARES Net will be run on simplex from time to time so listen on the repeater and watch for e-mails to this effect.

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

ON THE SICK LIST:

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

Let's keep Denny 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
dtippet@ntelos.net, Ray Colvin KE4HVR
colvindr@comcast.net and David Fordham
KD9LA fordhadr@jmu.edu.
ALSO, keep QRZ updated when call signs and e-mail addresses are changed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43pm.

John Barbour AJ4DZ gave a slide presentation on the RCA 1000ft tower he helped install in California back in 1973-1974.

The slides were from pouring the foundation through the antenna installations on top of the tower. The coax was shipped in crates and were in 10ft sections and ranging in diameters of three to eight? Inches. The tower has three legs and are spaced 200ft apart. The project took about a year to complete and was done without any job injuries.

Thanks to John for a great presentation.

*Submitted by
VARA Secretary
Ray Colvin KE4HVR*

Why Men Aren't Allowed to Write Advice Columns

The lady who writes Dear Abby went on vacation, and asked a male friend of hers to fill in for her and write a letter in response to a reader. Here's what happened. A female reader wrote the following:

Dear Abby:

As I was driving to work last Friday morning, my engine quit on me. I walked a mile back home and discovered my husband in bed with my next-door neighbor. He claims he has been suffering from clinical depression since losing his job, and he said he just lost control. He says he loves me and wants me to forgive him, but frankly, I'm not sure I can trust him. Do you have any suggestions about what I should do? Signed, — Frustrated

Abby's friend wrote the following:

Dear Frustrated:

The first thing you should do is check for bad gasoline, which is the most common cause of engine stalling. Once you have ruled this out, you can then move on and troubleshoot the carburetor, which can often be plugged with miniscule amounts of dirt and deposits. You might also consider taking the car to your local mechanic who can diagnose any problem with the intake manifold or fuel injectors, especially if it is a late model car. Good luck,

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- March 1-2: ARRL International DX Contest (Phone)
- March 3: Rockingham County ARES Net (146.550 simplex)
- March 4: VARA Club Meeting in Staunton
- March 5: Highland County ARES Net
- March 6: MARA Club Meeting at Traditions Restaurant in Harrisonburg
- March 8-9: Charlotte (NC) Hamfest
- March 9: North American RTTY Sprint
- March 10: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)
- March 13: Augusta County ARES Net
- March 15: Charleston (WV) Hamfest
- March 15-17: Virginia QSO Party
- March 17: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)
- March 19: Highland County ARES Net
- March 24: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)
- March 29-30: Greater Baltimore Hamboree - Timonium (MD)
- March 29-30: CQ WW WPX Contest (Phone)
- March 31: Rockingham County ARES Net (147.225 repeater)



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

<http://mara.ws>

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