

August  
2012

# THE MONITOR

*Published Monthly for members of the Amateur Radio Clubs in Virginia's Central Shenandoah Valley*

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## **August 2 – MARA Meeting – Thursday, at Wood Grill in Harrisonburg**

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., will hold its monthly meeting at the Wood Grill in Harrisonburg on Thursday, August 2. Dinner starts at 6:30 p.m. After dinner, a brief business meeting will be held starting at 7:00 p.m., followed by a brief program.

## **August 3 – PVARC Club Business Meeting – Friday, Page Memorial Hospital**

The Page Valley Amateur Radio Club will hold its regular bi-monthly business meeting on Friday, August 3 starting at 6:00 p.m. in the Day Room of the Page Memorial Hospital. All hams and their guests are invited.

## **August 4 – Mountain Momma Public Service Event in Monterey**

See page 11 for a plea for ham assistance with the Mountain Momma Bike Ride in Monterey (Highland County) this coming weekend, August 4.

## **August 5 – Berryville Hamfest**

The closest hamfest to MARA, VARA, and PVARC, this nice little hamfest takes place this coming Sunday at the fairgrounds just a couple of miles east of Winchester.

## **August 7 – VARA Meeting : Tuesday, at Westside Grill in Staunton**

The Valley Amateur Radio Association, will hold its June meeting at the West Side Grill on West Beverley Street in Staunton on Tuesday, August 7, starting at 6:00 pm with dinner, followed at 7 pm with the business meeting.

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## MARA President's Message – Surprise, Surprise! We all DO get along!

As club president, it is hard to accommodate the many diverse desires and opinions of an organization the size of MARA. Our ages stretch from teenagers to well over ninety. We have retired engineers, business professionals, entertainers, laborers, farmers, truck drivers, housewives, students and just about everything else you can imagine. We have left-wing liberals and right-wing conservatives and lots of everything in between.

But is pleasing that we can “all just get along” when it comes to being a ham radio club.

I am especially pleased that so many of us agreed to give a new Field Day location a “fair shake” and went along with a proposal to change the venue, in spite of all the potential misgivings that many held about its success. That so many are willing to try something new, especially involving a strong and historic tradition as Field Day, is a testament to our desire to work together for the common good, and to try new things in the constant search for something better for us all.

In this issue, you will find several opinion pieces expressing interpretations of this year's Field Day experience. Civil discourse is the hallmark of progress. I know that many local hams are much more frustrated with this year's Field Day than the articles reveal. I also know that many hams might disagree with the interpretations just as strongly and believe this year's Field Day was a resounding success. And it is obvious to me that there are many in the middle who can't easily tell whether the benefits are worth the drawbacks. And to be honest, there are many in the club that just don't care one way or the other.

But the important thing is, we all are dedicated enough to our hobby, fun, and mutual benefit that we “get along”, and we continue working together enthusiastically on future projects. I am looking forward to future discussion as we probe, discover, and consider the many different opportunities on the horizon. I am honored to be a member of this cast of characters as we plan and execute our future productions.... Yes, that includes next year's Field Day, wherever and whatever it may turn out to be. You, the club members, get to decide. So let your voice be heard.

See you at the club meeting Thursday.

David Fordham, KD9LA  
President, MARA

### WA4NUF: For Sale Heil Pro Headset

For Sale one (1) Heil Pro Set headset / boom mic with HC 4 Dream Machine Element. No Adaptor included. Has new ear pads and foam . Very good condition, \$60.00. Gene Sullivan WA4NUF@arrl.net or 289-5906 after 4:00 PM week days.

### KI4GST: iPad (and iPhone and iPod) App for Callsign Lookups

Technivations LLC offers something for hams who have an iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch. This APP pulls call sign info from the FCC database. That means US calls only but if you want an app to look up US calls with no frills, just the raw data, this is it. No ads, no junk. Just \$0.99 for the app and it's worth it. Also this APP is ADA accessible so blind hams with iPhones or other iOS devices can use it.

<http://www.technivations.com/apps/call-sign-lookup>.

## Fred McDavid, KJ4INF, Medical Update, Station Liquidation

The ham community is greatly saddened to learn that Fred McDavid, Jr., KJ4INF has been diagnosed with inoperable brain cancer. He is resting comfortably at home under the care of his family and visiting hospice nurses.

Fred is not in any pain, but is bedridden. Most frustrating, he can hear and understand, but has great difficulty speaking the right words to reply. Imagine participating in your favorite net or ragchew with a perfectly good receiver but an intermittent transmitter and you get the idea of what Fred is suffering through.

Fred has a wife and grown children, along with five grandchildren, as well as a sister and brother who are visiting here in Harrisonburg to try to share his burden.

Fred would like to save his XYL and family from the trouble of liquidating his ham equipment. Gayle Shull has posted on Valleyhams Groups listing Fred's station equipment, and Liz, Fred's XYL, says that the only thing sold so far were the Yaesu FT-8800's. The remainder is still for sale. If you see something you are interested in, call Fred's XYL Liz at 540-434-8313.

Even if you don't know Fred, when you call, be sure to ask about how he is doing, and let us all know of his condition as the days go by.

(Editor's note: The prices are asking prices, you are welcome to offer more if you feel so inclined.)

- Yaesu FT-60-R HT radio with charger , manual, and original box, asking \$100
- DC Power Injector, no price listed
- Astron RS-20A 12-volt 20-amp traditional (non-switching) Power Supply, asking \$100
- Kenwood external VFO and speaker combination, asking \$75
- Kenwood TS-820-S classic HF Transceiver (3 of them), asking \$200 each
- Astatic 468-D104 microphone, asking \$100
- Remote Mobile Speaker, asking \$20
- Rigblaster, Radio-to-Computer interface,with software and power supply (2 of them), asking \$75 each
- Vectronics 300-watt antenna tuner, lighted cross-needle meters, asking \$75
- Loads of ham radio books, and lots of other various items



## Additional Hams Needing our Thoughts and Prayers

In addition to **Fred McDavid, KJ4INF** above, **David Gordon, KB4LCI** is reported to be recuperating from brain surgery to open a blocked blood vessel. Last word had him doing well after getting out of University of Virginia's Intensive care unit. He is expected to make a full recovery.

And **Ellsworth Neff, K4LXG**, is hobbing around on crutches after misunderstanding someone's admonition to "Break a Leg". Everyone always knew that Ellsworth was a leader of the "Cast of Characters" in ham radio circles.

## W8HGH: Scaffold Reef is so popular, countries are fighting over it!

Bob Dixon provides this tidbit based on information he got from the Washington Post:

China and the Philippines both claim the miniature island of Scarborough Reef. You may remember this as being the site of the ham radio DXpedition sparking a controversy because the rock is so tiny, the hams had to build a scaffold to hold the operating desk.

China says it has maps from the 1300s that show it as part of China. A couple of weeks ago a Filipino fisherman got into a brouhaha with a Chinese fisherman and told the Chinese fisherman to get out and away from the reef because it is Philippine territory.

Since then the Chinese have suddenly found all kinds of diseases in the bananas they import from the Philippines and have declared an embargo against Philippine bananas. The banana are rotting on the wharves in the Philippines and 200,000 Filipino workers are out of a job.

Further, later news reports say that China is scheduling naval military exercises in the area, including live-fire weapons testing.

Sounds like we hams shouldn't count on Scarborough Reef coming up on the DXpedition lists anytime soon.



## WA4FJC: For Sale Items benefitting the Waynesboro Repeater Association

The Waynesboro Repeater Association has been donated the following items in order to provide funding support.

1. A SATEL AZ-EL dual axis antenna rotator system with control, computer with software, monitor, keyboard and mouse. The software will download the location elements from the internet and the rotators will track the satellites once it knows your location on the earth. Photo available upon request.
2. Two RITRON Patriot Business Band two way radios. 15 Watt, Hi Band with mike. Photo available upon request.
3. KENWOOD RC-10 Remote Controller for 2 Kenwood radios. With service annual. Photo available upon request.
4. One MFJ 1270 TNC 2 Packet controller. Case is open. Photo available upon request.
5. One MFJ 1270 TNC 2 Packet controller. Photo available upon request.
6. TWO MFJ 1278 MultiMode Data Controllers. Photos available upon request.

Anyone interested is invited to contact Gordon WA4FJC at

GPBATEY@wildblue.net

## Field Day 2012: Six Meters Performance

Hi everyone. Well, I was pretty discouraged that we only made 24 6 Meter QSO's during this year's Field Day; that is, until I read some of the Soapbox comments on the ARRL's website( under Operating; Contests; Results etc; Soapbox for Field Day 2012 ). At least 2 other operations reported making ZERO 6 meter contacts! And some others noted only a handful. So maybe our 24 weren't so bad, after all!!!!

73, David AD4TJ

## Field Day 2012: The Final report Update

Call Used: W4XD  
 GOTA Station Call: K4MRA  
 ARRL/RAC Section: VA  
 Class: 2A

Participants & visitors: 98 Total 74 licensed hams,  
 plus 24 non-licensed, wives, children, visitors, etc.

Power Source(s): Generator, Battery, Solar

Power Multiplier: 2X

Bonus Points:

100% Emergency power :	200
Media Publicity	100
Set-up in Public Place	100
Information Booth	100
NTS message to ARRL SM/SEC	100
W1AW Field Day Message	100
Ten Formal NTS messages handled	100
Natural power QSOs completed	100
Site Visit by invited elected official	100
Site Visit by invited served agency official	100
Youth participation	100
Youth operators=6	
Youth participants=6	
GOTA Bonus	200
Submitted via the Web	50
Educational activity	<u>100</u>
Total Bonus Points	1,550

Score Summary:

	CW	Digital	Phone	Total	
Total QSOs	883	0	1139		
Total Points	1766	0	1139	2905	2,905

Claimed Score = 5,810

Band/Mode QSO Breakdown:

	CW		Phone	
	QSOs	Pwr(W)	QSOs	Pwr(W)
160m	1	100		
80m	272	100	123	100
40m	415	100	591	100
20m	179	100	220	100
15m	13	100		
10m				
6m	3	100	24	100
2m			30	100
1.25				
Other			6	100
Satellite				
GOTA			145	100
TOTAL	883		1139	

GOTA Bonus: GOTA Coach - Double Bonus Points

Name/Call	QSOs	Bonus Points
Andrew Newland, (NONE)	63	120
Chris Shirkey, KI4BHQ	10	0
Daniel Perry, (NONE)	6	0
Ethan Newland, (NONE)	38	40
Kenneth Landry, (NONE)	4	0
Tanya Swisher, (NONE)	20	40
Zachery Galloway, (NONE)	4	0

Submitted by:

Howard H. Mullins III, K4PZC  
 39 Holly Drive  
 Heathsville, VA 22473  
 E-mail: K4PZC@ARRL.NET

## Thanks to Rockingham Emergency Operations Communication Center

On behalf of the Shenandoah Valley ham community, I wish to publicly thank Jim Junkins, director of the Rockingham County Emergency Operations Communication Center, as well as his highly-professional staff for their time, efforts, and material support of our joint MARA/VARA Field Day operation this year. Your participation, cooperation on our behalf, and willingness to provide assistance is acknowledged, and greatly appreciated. We hope you found the mobilization and deployment as useful an exercise as we find the annual Field Day to be. We look forward to a continuing relationship for our mutual benefit.

David Fordham, KD9LA  
 President, MARA

## FD 2012 Feedback: Long Live THE Mountain

The year was 1995 – 4th full week-end in June. At that time, I was living in Dayton, VA. and I anxiously waited for that week-end. It would be the first time for me to participate in Field Day with the MARA/VARA clubs.

Move forward to 2011 – 4th full week-end in June. Now living in Eastern Pennsylvania. And I again anxiously waited for that week-end. Sadly though, 2011 was the last time I participated in Field Day with the MARA/VARA clubs.

So, for the 2012 Field Day, for the first time in 18 years, I chose to fore-go the trip to the Valley, and ran the FD CW station for the local radio club (PAARC).

The decision to do that was not without much reluctance and truthfully, a lot of sadness. But the deciding factor, ultimately, was the move from **THE Mountain** to an allegedly “better” location. Not a better radio location, mind you, but for “convenience”. But that “convenience” came with a price.

There were no trees, there was no wild-life, there was no peace and quiet, there was no place for solitude, there were no chirping tree-frogs, no unwelcome timber-rattlers. There was no place for a fire-ring to enjoy the evening, socializing around the camp-fire. There were no “porta-potties”, no wet grass to tromp through after the rain, no 2:00 AM Field Day morning cheeseburgers on the grille, no delicious breakfast with the Buckingham. These are the things that made **Field Day on THE Mountain, well. . . , just special.**

**Simply put, there was no charm or charisma, nor anything “special” to be found on that “convenient” asphalt parking lot.**

So, after spending the 4th full week-end in June up on **THE Mountain**, for **17 consecutive years**, it all came to an end. And it goes without saying, I missed the camaraderie, and nightly fellowship with my ham radio friends from the Valley.

**Long Live THE Mountain !!**

Neal Layman, N4XU

## FD 2012 Feedback: Were the benefits worth the cost?

I am not giving my name because I don't want to offend anyone, especially the hardworking members of the Field Day Committee, and those dedicated individuals who year after year make the MARA/VARA Field Day my favorite event in all of ham-dom and did their best this year again. I also want to say that I am very glad we did something different with Field Day this year. If you never try anything different, you can never improve and you will never do anything better. So it was nice that the clubs voted to try something different this year.

This year's FD had some good things about it and some bad. But I'm not sure the good was worth the bad. I liked the EOC trailer, and thanks to the Rockingham Emergency people for their time and effort (and money for the gas!). Their antenna setup was a lot safer than ours on the mountain. I also liked the air conditioning. I especially liked the clean restrooms. I liked the parking lot, and not beating my car to death on the bad roads. And had a real storm brewed up, I would have liked the solid building to take refuge in.

But I didn't like traffic noise, the fact that I felt I would be camping in someone's back yard, the lack of trees and shade, the hot temperature, and the fact that I felt everyone was just “going through the motions because that was what was expected”, rather than being there to have fun with ham radio in the wilderness.

I may be alone in this, but I think I prefer Field Day at the old location.

## FD 2012 Feedback: CQ, CQ, CQ Field Day,

In February of 2013, I will celebrate 50 years as an Amateur Radio Operator. Over the course of almost 50 years I have participated in many Field Days, in NY, FL, and VA. Because I am not the new kid on the block, I would like to make some observations regarding our Field Day last June. Now I admit that these are my observations and I don't expect everyone to agree with me, and well that's okay.

First, allow me to express my appreciation to Bob, N1QEQ and to the entire Field Day Committee for their hard work. I know that hours were spent lining up publicity, finding a site where we could operate, and lots of dialogue with Rockingham County. No one can take away the committees desire to make Field Day 2012 an awesome event for hams and non-hams alike.

However, it is important that we assess how Field Day turned out. And in my opinion, it was a partial bust. In spite of the best efforts of both clubs the objectives were not met. The public did not show up. I am not sure what happened to our publicity, and where were all the hams that were supposed to show up and operate? It looked to me like we had less, not more operators than in the past. That was certainly the case with the code station.

Allow me to get specific with the areas where I think we failed: 1. Where was the "welcome station"? The welcome station has always been a place to refresh and take a break, meet with other hams and non-hams and interact. 2. Where was the fellowship? Field Day is about emergency communication, I understand that, but I sure missed the fire ring where many gathered to relax and tell stories. When it comes to fellowship our grade is a D at best.

To be fair, it was nice to eat inside on Friday evening and not worry about the weather, and the restroom facilities were much improved. It was great to have power provided by the county, and antenna towers to boot. Still that is not enough for me to ever want to attend another Field Day like the one we had last June. I missed a lot of the hams I worked with in the past.

Bottom line, it simply was not the same. Next year I will be on the mountain or somewhere else. Again this is not a criticism of the hard work the Field Day Committee did. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Our objectives were not met and in my humble opinion, the 2012 Field Day was the Field Day that wasn't!

73, Greg, W4GRC, former 4 term president of VARA

*It's not like it was a disaster or anything. I thought it went quite well, myself. We had more people come out this time, compared to last ... although the payoff was about the same. We may or may not do this again, we haven't decided. If we can pull it off successfully, well, ... we'll have to get our heads together and talk it out and see if it's going to be worth it."*

*Actor Patrick Stewart, in an interview about the latest X-Men movie*

## FD 2012 Feedback: Don't Cook Hamburgers on the Lawnmower

I don't want to in any way sound like I'm criticizing the wonderful job done by this year's Field Day Committee. The members of the 2012 Field Day Committee went far above and beyond the call of duty and deserve a commendation and standing ovation. Hurray for their work.

But I want to share my thoughts. I was one who voted for moving Field Day. It appeared from the discussion that some very hardworking and sincere leaders of the ham community were honestly trying to get us to move Field Day to accomplish two goals. The first goal was to increase participation of hams and the second was to increase public exposure to ham radio. Both of these are nationally-endorsed goals of a Field Day Exercise.

**But I have to express my opinion that these two goals are not congruent with what I think most of us want out of our Field Day efforts.**

Yes, as much as this may hurt some people's feelings, I have to say that I don't believe that most of us want to hold Field Day just so we can increase the number of hams in attendance from 20 to 200. Especially since it is obvious that even if 200 hams were to show up, only 20 would be doing all the work anyway. It would be nice to have 200 hams at Field Day, but let's face it: it ain't gonna happen. Those who enjoy doing Field Day are going to come, and those who don't enjoy Field Day aren't going to come. Look at who came out this year and you will quickly realize that the distance issue was a red herring. **Field Day should be for the hams who put it on, not the hams who don't care enough about it to even bother showing up.**

As for the second goal, I don't believe that very many of us really want to hold Field Day just so we can showcase ham radio. Showcasing ham radio is a worthy goal for an activity. But it is a lot of work by itself. Showcasing ham radio properly takes preparation. It takes work. It requires skill and talent. And most importantly, it takes time, and most of us would rather be spending our time doing other things at Field Day. It's like inviting your friends over for a cookout on the day you have set aside to mow your lawn. They get in the way, and are bored out of their skull watching you ride around cutting grass. If you're going to invite them over, don't do it on a day where you've planned to cut your 5 acres of grass.

I propose that we seriously consider taking Field Day back to the mountain so we can accomplish what we want to accomplish by holding Field Day. Namely, getting away from civilization for a while; making sure we can still operate on an emergency basis without the luxuries of modern infrastructure; getting into some cool mountain air for a while; enjoying fellowship with other hams who have shared our successes and sorrows in hamming; having an excuse to get away from the job, the office, the chores, and the lawn mower once a year and spending an entire day, an entire weekend, or heck, an entire week for some of us, relaxing and having fun with ham radio.

**Let's not try to do something with Field Day that the hams who put on the Field Day don't want to do at Field Day.**

There is plenty of opportunity for those who truly do want to showcase ham radio, to put on demonstrations and public displays at other times and other places. Every year, there are county fairs, lawn parties, festivals, and many other places and venues where we can showcase ham radio to our heart's content. And let's not fool with those lazy hams who don't show up to anything regardless of what it is or where it is held.

So please, don't eliminate the fun of Field Day in the mountains next year.

*An anonymous VARA member*



## FD 2012 Feedback: How Many Cars Did We Sell? One Ham's Opinion

First off, let me again thank the participants of Field Day, especially the Field Day Committee, for their work. It was plain that this year's Field Day took a lot more work, by a lot more people, with less personal reward, than Field Day's past. Hat's off to all the hard workers that pulled off what many thought could not be done.

Second, let me commend the MARA and VARA club membership for being willing to entertain suggestions from newcomers. I've been associated with other ham clubs that would tell newcomers to "buzz off" if they suggested changing something that had been working satisfactorily for over 30 years. This open-mindedness is rare in ham radio, and is one reason I believe we have the best ham clubs on the planet, bar none.

Third, I want to thank those who were sincere in their belief that moving Field Day would be a good way to get ham radio in front of the public. That objective is something that many of us, me included, believe needs to be done.

The main reason for this article is to point out that increasing the exposure to ham radio has to be done RIGHT if it's going to be done at all. And while this year's Field Day Committee did the best they could, putting ham radio in front of the public requires a lot more work than anyone in MARA or VARA can imagine.

Doing a good job of getting ham radio in front of the public is more than a "welcome sign and a coffeepot". It's more than just inviting them to an event, and even more than providing a handout for them to take home.

The advance public relations before this year's event was the best I've ever seen. I saw posters in windows of grocery stores, barbershops, and the one at the government center. I read the announcement in the paper the week before. I heard there was a TV interview, too. And I heard the morning newscast Sunday morning. All in all, the amount of exposure was just plain great.

But the exposure didn't accomplish our goals. Why? I'll tell you: it didn't have the marketing savvy to entice the public — it lacked the reason "why should I, John Q. Public, bother to go to Weyers Cave?"

To be honest, I myself cannot even answer that question. Because, even if we had enticed the public to come out, once John Q. Public got to Weyers Cave, what was he to do? He thinks to himself: "Here are lots of guys in trailers talking on radios. Here are lots of poles and wires sticking up in the air, with ropes running down everywhere. And over there is a huge loud official looking government trailer with an intimidating tower on it. And inside is a table with a coffeepot and a group of hams talking to each other. But what does this stuff have to do with me?"

We are so used to the "self-service model" of wall-mart that we forget the usefulness of the sales rep in explaining why we need to buy what is being sold. A successful car dealership has a dozen sales reps ready to pounce on anyone who ventures onto the property. And these sales reps have a prepared script, a "spiel", ready to escort the visitor around, to sell said visitor a car. And have you ever visited a time-share vacation place?

If we want to feature ham radio to the public, more planning needs to be done to do it the right way. This year proved the fact that the same dozen individuals are going to be doing all the work at Field Day no matter where we hold it. Those individuals aren't that enthusiastic about being salesmen (no offense intended, but I think they'd rather be operating a radio). So I suggest we drop the idea of using Field Day as a place to involve the public. Instead, let's allow those who want to be salesmen to put on a special activity whose primary purpose is to involve the public. IMHO, Field Day should be for the hams who do the work to put on Field Day, not the public.

Sorry to offend, but this is my two cents worth.

*Name and club affiliation withheld by request*

## VE Testing Sessions

Thanks to the hams below who helped with the June Testing Session.

he next session will be held at the usual place (woodemn of the world building in Dayton VA) on Saturday August 11, 2012. Note that the extra class test and manual changed as of July 1, 2012. If you need a new study manual, contact Gayle Shull, KU4XN, at gskuxn@msn.com

E. C. Showalter KG4KUR  
 Bob Van Fossen K4DJG  
 Glen Thompson W4GWT  
 Mike McKay W4AZR  
 Steven Presti W4SVP  
 Gerald Nauman KN4FM  
 Jim Lehman W4POL  
 Ellsworth Neff K4LXG  
 Bryan Daniels K4RMY

## Bridgewater Lawn Party

Thank you to the ham who gave their time to support the Lawn Party Parades in the town of Bridgewater. The assistance was greatly appreciated by the town of Bridgewater and the police department.

Chris Shirkey KI4BAQ  
 Andrew Pearson N4RCE  
 Sheryl Tonini KJ4DOC  
 Gerald Nauman KN4FM  
 Dick Haxton KC3AN  
 Phyllis Haxton N4VZC  
 Ray Ritchie K4NRA  
 Nancy Ritchie KG4JAZ  
 Bryan Daniels K4RMY  
 Gordon Batey WA4FJC  
 Gail Shull KG4JBF  
 Gayle Shull KU4XN



## August 4: Mountain Mama Bike Race in Monterey

Saturday, August 4th, the Mountain Momma Bike Race is being held in Highland County. Butch Washer, N5SMQ, EC for Highland County, a good while back asked for help with radio communications for this event. As of last evening he has had only 6 definite "yes'es" to his request. More help is needed. This is very similar to the race events we cover in the fall here in Rockingham and Augusta Counties and is in mountainous, remote areas.

The Mountain Mama offers rides of 25, 50, 75, and 100 miles to accommodate riders of all ages and abilities.

Hams volunteering to help should know there is camping available at the Highlands County High School in Monterey, and the showers will be open. Lodging might also be available at the Highland Inn and the Montville Motel. The ham radio operations begin at 7:00 a.m. Saturday morning. Monterey is about an hour's drive from Staunton.

Please pass the word around about this on Valleyhams, any nets or communications you have. It is a good mutual-aid practice drill. I will be putting the word out on nets I participate in (HF, etc.). Contact him at [n5smqw4@gmail.com](mailto:n5smqw4@gmail.com) to consent and get details. I'm sure that you know Butch as he participates in our MARA/VARA Field Day.

## Sept 22: Bike Shenandoah in Harrisonburg

Saturday, September 22nd, will be the 15th annual Bike Shenandoah charitable ride. The event raises funds for several disaster and relief agencies. The ride features five different rides between five and 100 miles each for cyclists of all ages and abilities.

The event begins and ends at Eastern Mennonite School in Park View in Harrisonburg. Normally, five to six hams are all that is needed, and the event is always a lot of fun. Put this one on your calendar.





## 146.625 Repeater News

Phil Rinaca, KQ4D, trustee of the 146.625 repeater, notifies us that the repeater is now co-equally owned and operated by himself (Phil, KQ4D), and Mark Hensley, N4YSA. These hams are active in the Page Valley ARC, but the repeater is open and welcome to any ham in the area.

This repeater uses an input down 600 kHz, and requires a CTCSS (PL) tone of 131.8.

The repeater was damaged in the recent storm but is now back on the air, thanks to the assistance of Gene Frazier KJ4HFO, Paul O'Sullivan KK4IRS, and Phil KQ4D.

The group encountered some squatters at the site. It seems that a family of copperheads decided to take up residence at the repeater facility. Since they were not paying rent, an eviction notice was served. Phil provided some photographs of the dedicated hams hard at work making life hard for the slithering critters, plugging the den with concrete.



## Great North Mountain Repeater News

Bob Van Fossen, K4DJG, chairman of the MARA Repeater Committee, went with MARA President David Fordham KD9LA, to the Great North Mountain Repeater site on July 28. The MARA club is in the process of transferring the Forest Service lease for this site to the club to accommodate the 440 MHz repeater (and building and other facilities) donated by the Shenandoah Valley Repeater Group. Dave and Bob spent most of the day whacking weed (er, that's whacking weeds, plural), cutting down small trees, and otherwise tidying up the site in preparation for an expected inspection by Forest Service personnel. The next step is to arrange for the electrical connection to be reinstated, after which the repeater will likely become operational. Photos by David, KD9LA Left: Bob behind the bars after getting caught with the weed... er, weeds. (The bars are actually the security gate for the building.)



## MARA Treasurer's Report – June 24, 2012 to July 23, 2012

Beginning Balance June 24, 2012 (last report)		\$ 3,037.05
Add: July Meeting 50/50		\$ 13.50
Less: Bank Fees	:	\$ 2.00
Field Day Expenses		\$ 300.33
Land Use Fee for Communication Site		<u>\$ 322.20</u>
Total Disbursements		<u>\$ -624.53</u>
Ending Balance as of July 23, 2011		\$ 2,426.02

*Submitted by Sheryl Tonini, KJ4DOC, MARA Treasurer*

## MARA Secretary's Report – July 5 Meeting

Due to a busy schedule by the club secretary, the MARA minutes did not arrive in time for publication this month.

## PVARC Secretary's Report – July 6 Meeting

This being an "odd" numbered month, the Page Valley Amateur Radio Club met informally on Friday, July 6th 2012 for a Dutch Treat meal in a local restaurant. This month, in an attempt to centralize the location and to try a new menu, we gathered at the Luray Southern Grill on US Highway 340 south. While unable to personally attend since the XYL and I were motoring through the mid-west, I am informed that the "eatin' meetin" was well attended and the Southern Grill may become our new meeting place on alternate months. A final decision will be based upon the members opinions at the next business meeting as to whether members would like to settle the restaurant issue now or to continue the search. Stay tuned!

Coming on the heels of the ARRL Field Day during the weekend prior to the meeting, this topic was discussed at great length around the table. PVARC returned to its usual location at the FFA Pavilion adjacent to Lake Arrow Head. New signs giving directions to our operations resulted in greater public awareness and interest. Visits by local elected officials and other invited agency personnel – including boy scouts and younger family members helped run up an impressive 1,250 Bonus Points. When combined with our QSO points (and other multipliers) it gave K4PMH 3,902 total points. Our Class 1-A station operated "off the power grid" using generators, batteries and solar energy. Eighteen members participated. Most importantly, I am told – "everyone had a great time!"

The next scheduled meeting is August 3, 2012, at 1800 in the Day Room of Page Memorial Hospital in Luray.

*by: Sparky Terry/KD4KL, PVARC Secretary*

## VARA Secretary's Report – July 3 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association held its meeting at the Westside Grill in Staunton on Tuesday July 3rd. There were 20 members and guests present. President John Keller W4ZAO brought the meeting to order at 7 pm, and the usual introductions were made.

The winner of the 50/50 drawing was Steve Davis KI4CGI; he won \$12.50.

Another drawing of 2 tickets was done for 2 hats from the Dayton hamfest, and Joan Pitsenbarger KF4CWR and Bennie Cook N4BCC, were the lucky winners.

ARES: David Tanks AD4TJ, EC for Augusta County, said that Scott Newlen KI4QQZ who works for the Staunton City Public Works, that during the unexpected "derecho" wind storm/event that happened June 29th Friday at 9 pm, that the Staunton's ECC radio system went down for about 4 minutes, and that they were considering using the Augusta County system and a possible ARES callup; however the system came back to life, so we were not needed. The next net will be July 12th at 8 pm, and Steve Grant W4IIV volunteered to be Net Control on the frequency to be determined later.

Field Day report: Scott KI4QQZ reported that we were that close to making a satellite contact for the 1st time in a long while, using 2 Icom 706MKIIG's using the sideband satellites, with help from Cowles Andrus K4EME who operated from his home, helping Scott to check his gear and give hints on proper operating procedures. Everyone appreciated the golf cart taxi that Andrew and Ethan drove around the site; it saved many steps. John W4ZAO said that there would be a questionnaire sent out getting everyone's thoughts on the location and the Field Day effort, in general. We had 102 people sign in this year, as opposed to about 50 last year. The media people let us down; at least Channel 3 TV did, as they never showed up. The Harrisonburg newspaper had a good write-up, and WSVR radio had several short stories on their news broadcasts by Dennis Phillips. Jim Junkins, Director of Harrisonburg/Rockingham ECC, had good remarks about the operation, that it was a good training exercise for their people, as well as being interesting for them to see what we do. Scott reported that there were more satellites available than he thought. David AD4TJ reported that the GOTA station had made 145 Q's, and the VHF station only made 60 versus 400 or more last year. Scott mentioned that other groups had made comments that conditions seemed to be down for them also. John noted also that even though the Phone station had antenna problems, that due to the efforts of Gerry Brunk K4RBZ, that they still managed to make 935 Q's( Gerry made 400 of them! ). John said that he logged for Gerry, and said that he had a hard time keeping up with him.

Reports: Secretary: David AD4TJ made a motion that the minutes be accepted as printed in the newsletter; voted on and approved.

Treasurer: Doug Tippet N8ESW read the report and it was accepted as read.

Event Updates: Berryville Hamfest is 1st Sunday in August, CQ-VHF contest is July 21-22; NA RTTY QSO Party also is July 21-22; Roanoke Hamfest is 1st Saturday in August.

Some or all of the Channel 29 repeaters appeared to be off the air due to the storm.

No old business, no new business, so meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

No program was available.

*Respectfully submitted, David Tanks, AD4TJ, VARA Secretary*

**MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.**

President: David Fordham, KD9LA  
 Vice President: Gerry Brunk, K4RBZ  
 Secretary: John Keller, W4ZA0  
 Treasurer: Sheryl Tonini, KJ4DOC  
 Board (exp 2012): Mike Turner, K4MIC  
 Board (exp 2013): Bob Van Fossen, K4DJG

<http://mara.ws>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month  
 at Wood Grill Buffet on Reservoir Street  
 in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Dinner begins at 6:30 pm,  
 the business meeting begins at 7:30 pm

**Visitors are always welcome.**

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

MARA  
 PO Box 1882  
 Harrisonburg, VA 22801

**VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION**

President: John Keller W4ZA0  
 Vice President: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW  
 Secretary: David Tanks, AD4TJ  
 Treasurer: Doug Tippet, N8ESW  
 Program Manager: Al Bonck N3JB

<http://w4xd.com>

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month.  
 at the Westside Grill on West Beverley Street  
 in Staunton, Virginia

Dinner starts at 6:00 pm,  
 the business meeting starts at 7:00 pm

**Visitors are welcome**

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

Doug Tippet  
 2348 Mosley St.  
 Waynesboro VA 22980

**PAGE VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**

President: Mark Hensley N4YSA  
 Vice President: Dave Firestone, K4DPF  
 Secretary/Treasurer: Mike "Sparky" Terry, KD4KL  
 Board Member: Morgan Phenix K4RHD  
 Board Member: : Robert Forrest KJ4HFU

<http://www.k4pmh.org>

PVARC meets the first Friday of each month.  
 Odd-numbered Months  
 at Browns Restaurant in Luray,  
 Even-numbered Months in the Day Room of  
 Page Memorial Hospital.

The meeting begins at 6:00 pm

**Visitors are welcome.**

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

Sparky Terry  
 PO Box 649  
 Luray VA 22835-0649

The Monitor is published monthly by MARA, Inc.  
 for members of the three amateur radio clubs  
 in the Central Shenandoah Valley.

Distribution is in Adobe PDF format via email attachment  
 to all club members in good standing.

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## MARA/VARA/PVARC

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