

The M.A.R.A./V.A.R.A. Monitor

Published monthly by the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., of Harrisonburg, Virginia for radio amateurs in the Shenandoah Valley.

FUTURE OF VARA TO BE DECIDED MAY 12

At the April 14th VARA Club meeting, WB8GIF submitted his resignation as Vice President of VARA. Dick has sold his home and is moving to Ohio.

Normally, we would just elect a substitute to fulfill the remainder of the VP's term but this is not just a normal situation. Dick, as VP had been filling in as President since no-one had accepted that position this year.

Consequently, this leaves VARA without a president or vice president for the balance of 1999. The remaining officers are W4PJW Jeff - treasurer and KB2TBL Dan - secretary. **The future of VARA will be discussed at the next meeting on May 12th.**

ANYONE INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF VARA should be present at the May 12, 1999 meeting. We need someone to take the leadership role for this club. If you want to see VARA SURVIVE, then you should be at this meeting. If you don't care whether the club continues or not, then I guess we won't see you there.

On behalf of all members of VARA, we thank Dick WB8GIF for his leadership role over the years in club activities including his service as President and Vice President and for his participation in many Field Days and many many special event activities. These activities have included but are not limited to: bike rides and races, ARES searches and drills, several walks, 4th of July special event stations including mailing of many QSL certificates. Thanks again to WB8GIF and his wife June KC4PKJ who has assisted and supported him in these activities. They will be missed by all their friends at VARA.

*Jeff W4PJW
Treasurer VARA
Asst. EC Augusta Co.
Skywarn Augusta Co.*

MARA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all from the suburbs of Verona! Thank goodness for warm weather! It sure feels good. We had 20 hams at the April meeting; looks like spring fever got the others. Sorry they missed Homebrew Night! Some great shots of EME arrays, digital voice keyers, an antenna tuner, 432 preamp and Quagi, were some of the highlights. Maybe next April you can make it and see(or show us your own) the projects of do-it-yourself hams!

Congratulations to Norman KA4EEN, Assistant EC for Rockingham County, on the receipt of a plaque, presented by Colin N4ZFY, EC, for his outstanding service with ARES and ARES nets. Great job, Norman!

Remember Field Day! June 25-26. It's a real mountain-top experience! Complete with thunderstorms, winds, skunks, deer, and even an invasion of frogs one year! Make plans to attend and operate. Conditions should be pretty good, allowing for all stations to increase contacts over last year's super score. 6 meters, 10, 15, and 20 should be hot! Only 40 and 80 may be hurt, due to static crashes from storms. Hope to see you there.

Next month's program will be a video tape of Kenwood's TH-D7A Data Communicator. See you May 6 at the next meeting!

*David Tanks AD4TJ
MARA President*

KNOW YOUR COUNTIES?

Last month's *Monitor* contained a map of the area surrounding the Shenandoah Valley. That map displayed the outlines of the counties and cities. How many counties and cities could you identify?

Before going further in this issue, dig out last month's copy and see how well you know the area. The answers are in this issue on page 5.

IN MEMORIAM

The sympathy of the ham radio community goes out to Richard Weaver, W3HXX, and his wife Ginny, on the recent passing of their son. Many of the hams in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County were familiar with Ralph and counted him as a friend. This loss is felt by all of us.

RACES GETS NEW LOGO

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has recently unveiled the new logo to be used by the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES). Hams receiving the *Monitor* electronically in PDF format can see that the new logo is quite colorful.

There is some talk of having the new logo placed on the special license plates authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia available to qualifying members of the RACES organization.



WA4TFZ 146.76 REPEATER SILENCED BY TREE

For those of you with Internet Access, check out the photographs at: <http://www.aresva.org/news/d03rptr.html>

On March 15, disaster befell the repeater site holding the WA4TFZ 146.76 Charlottesville repeater (as well as the 222.76 and the 444.25 machines), and the MACHO packet node, *and* the APRS digipeater.

A winter storm toppled a tree right on top of the shack housing the ham stations. The pictures below show the before and after status of these stations.

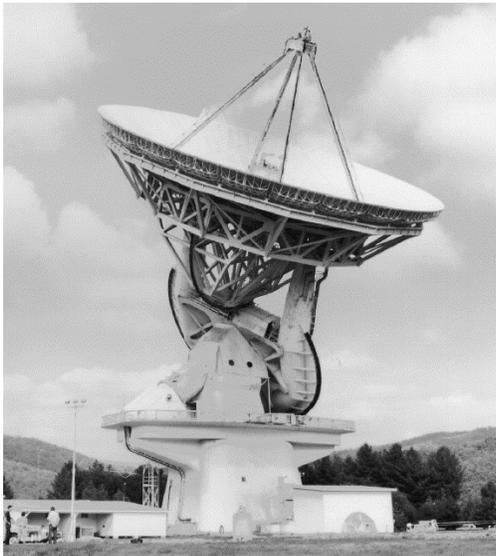


Greenbank Trip

FREE: NATIONAL RADIO ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY TOUR

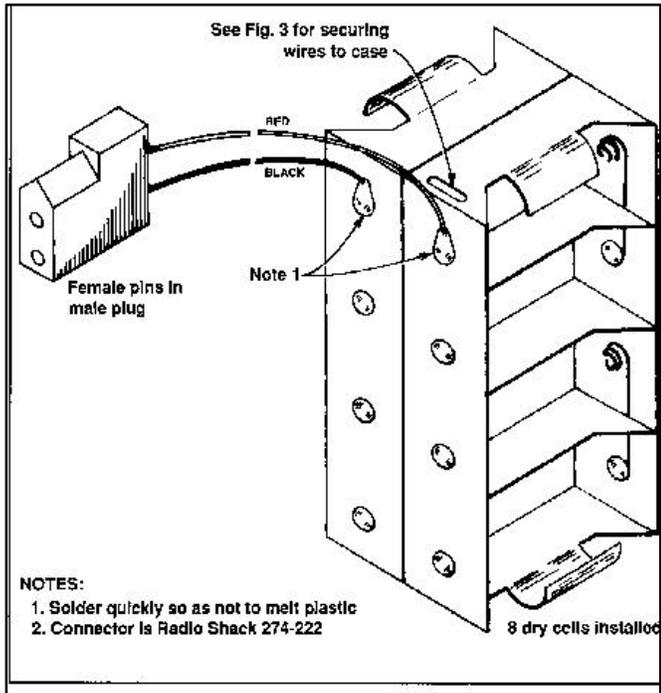
The annual Greenbank trip has been set for May 22. This trip is to go see the progress on the 330' dish antenna (picture below) that is under construction at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Greenbank, W.VA. Anyone that is interested in going can meet at the Staunton Holiday Inn located at exit 225, Woodrow Wilson Parkway off I-81. Take route 275 west off I-81 to the first right turn and then right again into the Holiday Inn entrance. We will meet there at 8:00 am to carpool. The trip to Greenbank takes about 2-1/2 hours and there will be a pit stop on the way. A lunch will be available at the NRAO cafeteria. We have always had a very good tour and have always had a good time. Talk-in to the carpool site will be on 147.075 repeater. This is a very good family trip. The area has other interesting things to see and do. If anyone has any questions contact Joe Meek-KD4FKT. Hope to see you there.

Submitted by Joe Meek KD4FKT



BATTERY HOLDER FOR HT's

Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, furnished us with the drawing below which depicts a way of using an eight-cell holder for alkaline "D" cell flashlight batteries to power your hand-held VHF transceiver. The alkalines will last many hours longer than any NiCd battery pack. This might be a handy gizmo to keep in your emergency jumpkit, especially if you already use "D" cell flashlights and keep extra "D" cells handy.



ARES NETS GOING STRONG

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service nets provide a chance for hams to test their equipment, maintain on-the-air proficiency, exchange news and announcements, and learn to work together on the air.

The Page County ARES net meets every Sunday evening at 8:00 pm local time on the 146.625 (-) repeater.

The Rockingham County ARES net meets every Monday evening at 8:00 pm local time. The first Monday of the month, the net meets on 146.55 simplex, all other Mondays it meets on 145.13 (-) repeater.

The Augusta County ARES net meets on the second Thursday of the month on the 147.075 (+) repeater.

All hams are urged to check into all ARES nets, regardless of location.

NOTES ON MR. SUN

Thanks to Paul Helbert (WV3J) for the update below on the status of the Sun.

First, the sun has been very quiet past few weeks, and as a result, the solar flux is at fairly low levels ... skirting right around 100 as we speak. The solar flux goes up and down about every 24-28 days as the sun rotates. Right now, we are at the beginning of an upswing. In fact, it is believed April 21 was the minimum.

Solar flux will be 110-115 by the time you read this. Just barely at a level to keep 15M open, and doubtful on 10M. Of course always check, you never know. 20M will be the main band during daylight hours.

The GEOMAGNETIC FIELD is another story. It's been rotten past few days as many of you have noticed, with K indexes in the 4-5 range (minor storm) and active conditions today. Here's what's happening: On April 17th, there was a coronal mass ejection (CME) for which the shock wave hit the earth at 1600+ UTC on April 19th. That triggered minor storm conditions most all day.

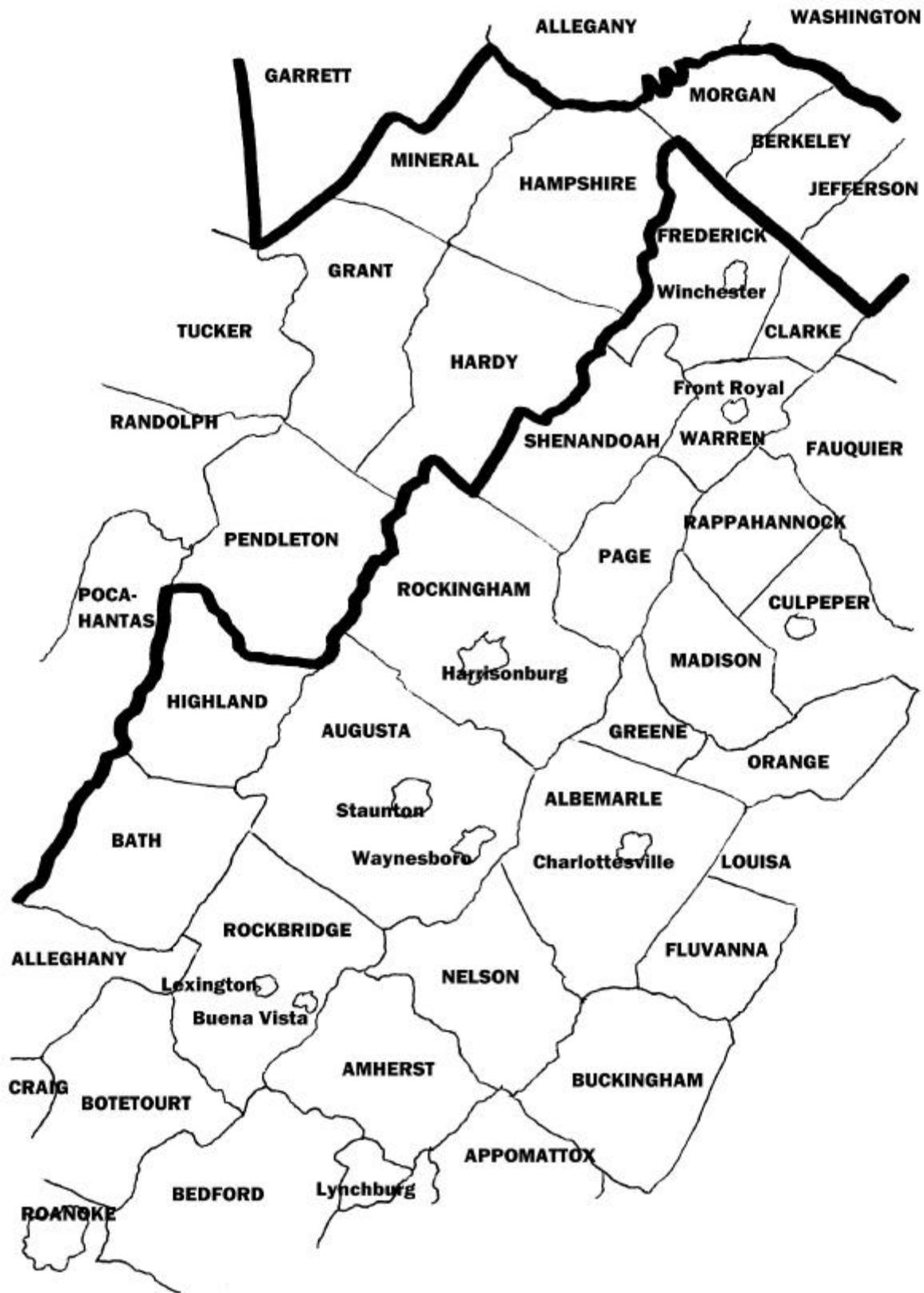
Remember, March's issue of the *Monitor* had a nice article on how to interpret the Solar Flux numbers.

TIME TO THINK ABOUT LIGHTNING

Summer thunderstorms are coming. Remember to re-check your grounding systems. Use a wire brush to brighten the copper and aluminum fittings on your tower or antenna ground wires. Double-check the tightness of your ground clamps. Verify that your lightning arrestor is still in good shape. And get in the habit of disconnecting your antenna from your radio (and grounding it!) when you're not on the air.



AD4TJ looks over a selection of heavy-duty ground wire.



MARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

April 1, 1999 Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association was held on April 1, 1999 at Evers Restaurant at Mt. Crawford, Virginia.

The business meeting began at 7:36 p.m. with 20 amateurs present. Introductions took place as usual.

Norman (KA4EEN) reported on the continual need for ARES net control operators.

A sign-up sheet was passed around for the March of Dimes walk in Harrisonburg on April 24th.

The first weekend in October will again be the date for the Johnny Appleseed ride which the club usually covers.

We were also asked to cover the Mennonite Relief Sale on the Saturday of the same weekend. However, after much discussion it was determined we needed more information on what our duties would cover at the relief sale.

Colin (N4ZDQ) gave us details of the Identification Cards, to be issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles for Virginia state ARES members and the requirements for getting them. He also covered the necessary details for obtaining ARES vehicle license plates.

Dick (W3HXH) brought jumpsuits donated by the American Red Cross for ARES members. He also said that Bob (W3MMC) was ordering Skywarn patches for Rockingham County Skywarn members. They will be available for \$ 3.00 each or \$ 2.75 each if taking five or more. Patches for MARA were also discussed.

Colin (N4ZDQ) presented Norman (KA4EEN) a plaque in appreciation of his work as Assistant Emergency Coordinator for ARES, and especially for his supervision of the ARES nets.

David (AD4TJ) again showed the radio, power supply, antenna tuner setup which was donated to the club by the estate of Vernon Shmitt (W4CND). The club is offering this equipment for sale **by sealed bid**. The bids will be opened at Field Day. See the description in the MARA Monitor for April.

Glen (N4ALS) reported on sealed lead-acid or Gel-cell batteries that are available from him which are discards from a business. Get in touch with him for details.

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m. and then several hams showed us their homebrew projects for Homebrew Night:

Cowles (KB4CNI) brought pictures of his and other Earth-Moon-Earth antenna arrays, and also a 432 low noise preamp he made.

Sandy (K4PZC) described two digital voice keyers he made. One could only record/play one message but the other could do up to three messages.

Al (N3JB) showed us his 160 meter receive preamp, an audio mixer for using two receivers, a headphone limiter circuit for cutting down on static crashes and loud stations, and a kilowatt antenna tuner.

David (AD4TJ) discussed his eleven element 432 Quagi on a ninety-two inch boom, and a digital voice keyer.

Needless to say, those present had a good time.

*Respectfully submitted,
Wilton B. Thomas (KF4BFL)
Secretary*

VARA SECRETARY'S REPORT

April 14, 1999 Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Valley Amateur Radio Association was held on April 14, 1999 at Gavid's Restaurant in Staunton, Virginia. We gathered together at 6:30 p.m. for dinner as usual and the business meeting started around 7:30 p.m. There were twenty-two members present and five guests present. Welcome to the guests!

Dick Waldmuller, WB8GIF, called the meeting to order. A round of introductions was made with everyone giving their name and callsign.

The following reports were made and the following business taken care of:

ARES REPORT: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, reminded us of the Augusta County ARES Net coming up the second Thursday of the month.

SKYWARN REPORT: Skywarn patches are available. Please see Jeff Rinehart if you're interested in purchasing one of these patches.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Secretary's Report was reported to the club as having been in the newsletter the previous month. A motion was made by Daniel Farrow, KB2TBL, to accept the report as written in the newsletter. Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR, seconded the motion and the motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW, passed out at the club meeting a copy of the income and expenses for the club. The members perused their copies during the earlier parts of the meeting and Nancy Colvin, KE4PHP, made a motion to accept the report as given at the meeting. Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, seconded the motion and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS: Clint Campbell, KB4OLM, announced, to the joy of everyone present, that a little 'harmonic' (child) is on the way. Congratulations to Clint and his wife! Also, the estate of WB4KIT is selling some of his old logbooks and other paraphernalia to raise some money. These items are all gems, especially his logbooks, and are worth spending money for.

OLD BUSINESS: MARA's Field Day Committee has been established. They are David (AD4TJ), Sandy (K4PZC), and David (KF4SVR). VARA's Field Day Committee has also been established. They are Richard (KF4QZG), Clint

(KB4OLM) who is going to be at Field Day, and Pat (KD4WWF).

MISCELLANEOUS: A 50/50 drawing was held. The drawing raised a total of \$34 and Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, won the drawing. Congratulations Ray!

A reminder was made that there is an urgent need for the position of President to be filled by a VARA club member. Now, a need for a club member to fill the Vice President's position has opened up since this was last meeting for Dick Waldmuller, WB8GIF. He is moving to Ohio and we wish him well in his move.

A motion to close the meeting was made by Joe Archambeault, N4TRH. Ray Pitsenbarger, KE4NNV, seconded the motion and the meeting was closed at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
J. Daniel Farrow, KB2TBL
V.A.R.A. Secretary

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 1:** Stuarts Draft March of Dimes Walk
- May 1-2:** ARI International DX Contest
- May 2:** Antietam/Hagerstown Hamfest
- May 6:** **MARA Club Meeting**
- May 8-9:** CQ-M International DX Contest
- May 12:** **VARA Club Meeting**
- May 13:** Augusta County ARES Net
- May 14-15:** Dayton OH Hamfest
- May 13:** Augusta County ARES Net (147.075+)
- May 15:** Skywarn Basics I class (Rockville MD)
- May 15-16:** 6M ARRL Spring Sprint
- May 20:** Deadline for June *Monitor* articles
- May 29-30:** CQ WW WPX CW Contest

- June 6:** Ol' Virginia Manassas Hamfest
- June 12-14:** ARRL VHF QSO Party
- June 15:** Skywarn Basics II class (Sterling WSFO)
- June 19:** Bluefield Hamfest
- June 26-27:** Field Day

- July 10-11:** IARU HF Championship
- August 1:** Berryville Hamfest
- Sept 18-19:** Va Beach Hamfest

MASSANUTTEN ARA

President: David Tanks, AD4TJ
Vice-President: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Secretary: Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL
Treasurer: Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL
Board (exp 99): Bob Hughes, KF4BFC
Board (exp 00): Walt Lam, KF4BFB

<http://cob.jmu.edu/fordhadr/MARA/>

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month at Ever's Restaurant on U.S. 11, south of Harrisonburg. Meal starts at 6:30 pm, Business Meeting starts at 7:30 pm
Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$12/yr) should be mailed to the Treasurer, Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL, 5166 Mt Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

THE VALLEY ARA

President: vacant
Vice-President: Dick Waldmuller WB8GIF
Secretary: Daniel Farrow KB2TBL
Treasurer: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW

<http://www.hamsnet.net/w4mus/>

VARA meets the second Wednesday of each month at Gavid's Restaurant on US Route 11 South in Staunton. The meal begins around 6:30 and the business meeting begins at 7:30.
Visitors are welcome.

Dues (\$15/yr) should be mailed to the Treasurer, Jeff Rinehart, 1344 Hankey Mtn Hwy, Churchville, VA 24421

The *Monitor* is published monthly by the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc., a non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Service regulations. The *Monitor* is distributed to all full current members of the Massanutten and the Valley Amateur Radio Associations under reciprocal agreements of the two clubs. Sample copies are sometimes sent to other hams in the Shenandoah Valley to invite them to join the club of their choice. All change of address, articles, comments, and other material for the *Monitor* should be sent to the newsletter editor, David R. Fordham, KD9LA, 131 Wayside Drive, Weyers Cave, VA 24486-2421, phone 540-234-0448, email: fordhadr@jmu.edu.

Massanutten Amateur Radio Association, Inc.
c/o David R. Fordham
131 Wayside Drive
Weyers Cave, VA 24486-2421



FUTURE OF VARA
TO BE DECIDED AT
MAY 12 MEETING