April 15: It’s Not Just For Taxes Anymore!

April 15 is getting closer! Only a couple of more weeks left for current hams to upgrade under the “Grandfather” rules.

If you are a technician-plus, you can take the written exam prior to April 15 and become a General.

If you are an Advanced, you can take the written exam and become an Extra.

After April 15, the new licensing rules will apply.

See the listing on page 3 for locations for exams between now and April 15!

Study hard. And fast.

Elmer Needed

Attention, Hams in the Broadway, Timberville, New Market, Bayse, and Mt. Jackson areas. You have an opportunity to help someone become a ham.

Jeff Rexrode is interested in ham radio, and would appreciate if a local ham would call him at 540-477-2410.

If You Can’t Read This...

If you are not able to read this, one reason might be that you forgot to renew your dues.

Pass the word. Hams who did not renew their club membership prior to March 20 are not receiving a Monitor (neither paper or electronic) until the treasurer of the respective club notifies the editor of their re-joining status.

Ah, so that explains it...
MARA President’s Message

I would like to thank Dale, N4DAI, for the very informative presentation about ARES at the March meeting. ARES is the most important service that we provide to the general public. Being prepared for, knowing how to react and what to do during an emergency can make a difference in the lives of those affected by whatever caused the emergency. I would like to encourage everyone to participate in all the training opportunities we have to further out skills and preparation for the next catastrophe, whatever it is and whenever it occurs.

I would like to congratulate Andrew Barbour, one of our newer club members. He passed the Technician exams at Madison on March 11, so we should have a new ham on the air by the time you read this. Anyone that has listen to the local repeaters on recent weekends has heard about a lot of us taking tests to upgrade our license class in anticipation of the April 15 FCC rule changes. It will be interesting to see how much of a change will occur in the use of the HF bands due to all upgrades.

This months meeting is Home-brew night. Bring all of those kit and scratch built radios, antennas and gadgets that you have been working on the past year to share with the club. It is always fun to see what others have been working on, and to get ideas for the next thing that you may want to build.

I hope everyone can make it to the April meeting at Ever’s Restaurant on Rt. 11 north of Mt Crawford on April 6 at 6:30 for the meal, or 7:30 for the meeting.

If anyone has an idea, or would like to present a program at a club meeting, please let me know.

Gerald Nauman
KN4FM

VARA President’s Message

I think that from time to time it is important to recognize the accomplishments and service of others.

During the last VARA meeting the club members had the opportunity to do so. A motion was made, second, and passed unanimously that Kenneth L. Harris, KE4GKD be given lift time membership to VARA as an act of appreciation by the club for all his years of sacrificial service. Anyone who knows Ken, knows that he will go out of his way to help you. Thank you Ken for setting the example for others to follow. Thank you for your many dedicated years of service to VARA. As the current president, I look forward to learning from your experience and unselfish leadership.

I would also like to share with the readers the following programs that will follow our regular club meetings. I want to thank Clint, KB4OLM and Richard, KF4QZG for lining up interesting and informative programs.

In May, our program will center on antique radios. In June our program will deal with electrical safety. In July our program will discuss power supplies. In August we will hold a home-brew project night. And in September we will discuss cw (code), keys, keyers and techniques.

So if you are looking for something to do and enjoy some good fellowship come and join us on the first Tuesday of each month at Davids on Greenville Avenue. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m., but if you like to eat join us at 6:30 p.m.

We are looking for a few good men and women to help with three up and coming area events. They are:

1. The MS walk-a-thon to be held in Waynesboro on Sunday, April 30th. Radio operators will be needed from about noon until 4:30 p.m.
2. The next event will be on Saturday, May 27th. At least five amateur radio operators will be needed to help cover the run, canoe, and bike relay. The event will start at 10:00 a.m.
3. Help is also needed for a much larger event sponsored by Bike Virginia. We have been asked to provide communications from July 5th through July 7th. This promises to be a big event with over 2000 bicyclists involved.

Please mark these events on your calendar and send me an e-mail at grcljc@cfw.com. The club needs a good turn out for these events. More information will be shared as I receive it.

It is not too early to start thinking about Field Day as well. Field Day this year falls on June 24th and 25th. Of course set up needs to be done before the 24th. VARA is fortunate to have Clint, KB4OLM, Richard, KF4QZG, and David, AD4TJ serving as the Field Day committee. I’m sure they could use some help, so if you want to lend a hand, let one of these men know.

VARA would also like to welcome our newest members. They are David Tanks, AD4TJ, J. Allen Bonck, N3JB, William F. Green (Frank), KE4ASC, and Lonnie Czerniak, N4WW. We are really glad you are part of our club!!

73 from Greg, W4GRC
Field Day 2000: June 24-25

Plans for Field Day are underway.
If you don’t have your calendar marked, do it now!
And if you aren’t scheduled to take vacation for
the week before June 24-25, talk to your boss
tomorrow!
We expect to have a great time again this year,
with plenty of help, food, and fun.
At right, you see the FD2000 committee, hard at
work. It is assumed they are planning the most
important stuff first. Like, what’s on the menu for
Friday night’s dinner?

![The FD2000 committee, hard at work.](image)

VE Exams Prior to April 15 (…within driving distance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
<th>W</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1, 2000</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Salem Church Library, Fredericksburg VA</td>
<td>Edward Forman, 540-439-0568</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2, 2000</td>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
<td>Davis Mem Hospital Mtg Room, Elkins WV</td>
<td>Maurice Brown, 304-636-0760</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6, 2000</td>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Coeburn Library, Coeburn VA</td>
<td>George Williams, 540-679-1240</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6, 2000</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>West Hampton School, Richmond VA</td>
<td>Don Ratcliff, 804-272-7167</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6, 2000</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Berkley County EOC, Martinsburg WV</td>
<td>Greg Lanham, 540-722-4792</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8, 2000</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>NRAO Auditorium, Uva, Charlottesville</td>
<td>John Gray, 804-973-1094</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9, 2000</td>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Lord Fairfax CommColl, Winchester VA</td>
<td>Greg Lanham, 540-722-4792</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9, 2000</td>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Bedford Library, Bedford VA</td>
<td>Judy Friel, 804-525-6142</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9, 2000</td>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Radford Pub Library, Radford VA</td>
<td>Roger Coulter, 540-639-48460</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13, 2000</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Red Cross, 352 Church Av SW, Roanoke VA</td>
<td>Ray Crampton, 540-992-2844</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15, 2000</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>NRAO Observatory, Greenbank WV</td>
<td>Gary Anderson, 304-456-2317</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15, 2000</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Reynolds Comm College, B201, Richmond</td>
<td>Pat Wilson, <a href="mailto:K4OW@arrl.net">K4OW@arrl.net</a></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15, 2000</td>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>SVARC, 2921 Grace St, Winchester VA</td>
<td>George Baker, 304-856-3406</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “W” column indicates whether “Walk-In’s” are allowed.
Multiple Sclerosis Society Still Needs Communications Mgr... 

Last month’s Monitor had a story announcing that the MS Society had actually changed the dates of their fund-raiser 150-mile bike ride, just so that ham operators could provide communications.

“Having ham operators at the checkpoints and safety stations is absolutely critical,” says Kathy Garrif of the local MS office.

“We cannot provide a safe ride for our participants without this communications structure in place.”

Right now, the main need is for a ham operator to serve as the communications manager, to work with Kathy and her staff in developing the plans for the communications system.

You will work over the phone for an hour or so with Kathy, and together you will jointly determine exactly what will be needed in the way of communication, and at the same time, advise her of what is realistically possible with ham radio.

You might also have at your disposal such communications facilities as cell phones, PS radios, and FRS radios, depending on what you work out with Kathy.

The ride is scheduled for September 16-17.

If you can find a few hours to help out with these plans, please call Kathy or the ride manager at 804-971-8010.

Your help is tremendously appreciated.

Other Public Service Opportunities

April 30 in Waynesboro is the MS Walkathon.
May 27 is the annual Run/Canoe Bikie Relay event.
July 5-7 is a special Bike-Virginia fun bike ride in the Shenandoah Valley.
September 16-17 is the MS 150 bike ride fund raiser.

Additionally, there are opportunities to provide traffic-flow assistance and general observation support at local lawn parties, volunteer fire department carnivals, and other activities coming up during the summer.

When you are asked to help, please do your part and give up one or two mornings a year to serve your community.

Mark your calendars now.

Check in to your local ARES net (Sundays on 146.625 at 8:00 pm, Mondays on 145.130 at 8:00 pm, and Third Thursdays on 147.075 at 8:00 pm) for more information.

The Internet has a lot of good stuff on it. A great educational, and fun, website is “How Stuff Works”. Dozens, even hundreds of explanations are given. — A veritable on-line encyclopedia.

Gerald Nauman brings our attention to the page on “How Ham Radio Works”. This is a good intro to show your friends who might be interested.

http://www.howstuffworks.com/ham-radio.htm
This month: The Kink in the Coax!

Last month, we introduced a new column in the Monitor, King David’s Nine Little Alligators. The new column will cover some of the “unforeseen” problems which have reared their ugly head, usually during emergency communications situations.

This month’s alligator is the “kink in the coax”.

Here’s the scene: You are on location at a shelter, fire station, or other emergency operation when you realize the other hams can’t hear you. You check everything and discover that there is something wrong with your feedline.

The situation which occurred to me was a kink in the feedline. I had fed the coax cable through a window to reach the outside antenna, and someone had come along and shut the window, kinking and crimping the coax.

In fact, the window had actually pierced the coax jacket and all but cut entirely through the cable.

When coax gets kinked or crimped, the electrical properties and relationship between the outer shield and inner conductor change. These changes can be severe enough to create a very high SWR, which will shut down the final amplifier stages of most of today’s solid-state transceivers.

You can no longer get the signal to your antenna!

The obvious answer is to bring some extra feedline and connectors, along with a soldering iron. But what if those items aren’t handy? In my case, the electricity was off, so my soldering iron was useless.

One solution is to forget about everything downstream from the kink, and make a new antenna at the kink point.

I turned the end of the damaged coax itself into a usable antenna. The dipole antenna I created on-the-spot actually put more signal into the local repeater than had the antenna I was using previously!

To begin making the makeshift antenna, I cut the coax at the crimp point.

I discarded (for the time being) everything on the antenna side of that cut, including the original antenna outside.

From the freshly-cut end of the coax, (on the radio side of the cut) I trimmed 19 inches off the outer jacket. See Figure 1.

(Don’t have a tape measure? Remember, all U.S. currently bills are exactly six inches long! If you have a dollar bill, you’ve got a six-inch ruler! Measure a distance of three dollar bills, end to end, plus a finger or two! Presto… 19 inches.)

I then dug a small hole in the shield braid, at the end of the jacket (see figure 2). I used my carkeys to make the hole.

I reached into the hole with one of my keys, and dug out the center conductor (figure 3).

I pulled the center conductor (insulation intact) all the way through the hole. This gave me a very nice simple dipole antenna. The center conductor formed one leg of the dipole, the now-empty braid formed the other leg. See Figure 4.

Digging a hole in the coax to pull the center conductor through is much easier than trying to unbraid the shield for 19 inches. Hang the antenna vertically when working repeaters.

Be Prepared!
David Fordham, KD9LA

---

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

FIGURE 4
MARA Secretary's Report — March 3, 2000 Meeting

The Massanutten Amateur Radio Association held their regular monthly meeting at Evers Restaurant in Mt. Crawford, VA on Thursday March 3rd. There were twenty-seven members and guests present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by our president, Gerald (KN4FM) with the usual introductions by each one present. The treasurer reported a balance of $2620.63 in the treasury.

Members were reminded of upcoming events. The MS walk will be April 29th. Net controls are needed for the 20th and 27th of May. Also all ARES/RACES members are urged to take a turn calling the net as a part of training.

The field day committee was completed with the volunteering of Doug (KF4YGO), David (KF4SVR), and Sandy (K4PZC). Field Day will be the last full weekend in June.

The possibility of offering a class for new amateurs was discussed and it was decided to wait until the new materials are available. Meantime a survey will be taken to find out what interest there is in attending and in teaching this class.

Paul (WW3J) announced he still had room for a couple more who would like to go with him to the hamvention in Dayton, OH.

Dale (N4DAI) won the 50/50 drawing and donated his winnings to the club.

Respectfully submitted,
Wilton B. Thomas (KF4BFL)
Secretary

VARA Secretary's Report — March 7, 2000 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association club meeting was held at David's Restaurant in Staunton on March 7, 2000. PRESIDENT GREG CZERNIAK W4GRC opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. There were 18 members and guest present.

50/50 was $23.00 and was won by one of the owners of David's, Mark Ellinger, which was $11.50 for Mark and $11.50 for the club.

Richard KF4QZG informed the club that negotiations are still on going with the tower that Waynesboro is donating to the club.

Bob N4ICT has donated a liner amp. To the club. We will offer it for sale for $300.00. It’s a Metron MA1000 and covers 15,20,40,75 & 160M. Works good we got Ozro KD4RD to check it out. Thanks Ozro for the time you spent on this. If anyone is interested give me a call at work 946-1164 or at home 886-0347. No calls as of yet.

David AD4TJ gave a report on ARES. Soon we can watch videotape instead of attending a 6hr class. For more information on this give David a call.

David is planning a QRP simplex net soon so listen up on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 8 p.m. on 147.075 for more information on this.

FIELD DAY: Both clubs M.A.R.A & V.A.R.A have their committees ready to go as soon as they get together we will find out the program for the upcoming events for field day.

We have 4 new members that were voted on and accepted into the club. They are Lonnie Czerniak N4WMV, Frank KE4ASC, David AD4TJ & Al N3J.B. Let’s all make them welcome into the club.

EVENTS: M.S. Walk in Waynesboro the 30th of April at 12:00 N. Till about 4:30 p.m. Please call Greg W4GRC if you can help with this walk.

River Fest in Waynesboro is coming the 27th of May & Bike Va. has ask for help in "July" 5th, 6th, & 7th for a special bike event. Anyone that can help with the events please give Greg W4GRC a call.

Ken Harris KE4GKD has been voted in as a Life Member of V.A.R.A. for the outstanding work and dedication he has done in the past for all Amateur Radio. Congratulations Ken, 2nd dog.

Christmas dinner menu is ready. The date is December 5th at 7:00pm. We will eat at 7:30pm. The cost will be forth coming at the next meeting. We will have a cut off date on November 15th. The owners will be closing the restaurant for us, so let’s all plan on attending.

A motion to adjourn the V.A.R.A meeting was made by Frank WD4LES and second by Ray KE4NNV. The motion was accepted and the meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Submitted by:
Patri Smiley KD4WHF
Secretary
FOR SALE

I have a laptop computer and would like to sale or trade for a desktop model. It is a Toshiba Satellite Model 2535CDS with an LCD Color screen. It is a Pentium 366 MHz with Windows 98 and a 4 GB hard drive. It is a 1997/98 model. I have a PC compatible mouse and standard keyboard hooked up with a "Y" adapter. It has a 33.6 modem built in. It has one USB port, 3.5 floppy drive and CD-ROM all built in. It has a port for an external monitor. Make an offer, but I’d like to get about $500-ish. Call Bill at 289-9801 or wwjones@gte.net.

I have a new ("unused") Kenwood TM261A, 50 watt 2 meter FM compact mobile radio that I would like to sell for $175. Ozzie Dillon KD4RD 540 885 7852 or dillono@juno.com.

MFJ 2-meter mag-mount dual-band gain antenna, new, still shrink-wrapped in the original plastic bubblewrap package, never opened. PL-259 connector with 12’ coax. Asking $20 or best offer. Call David, KD9LA, 540-234-0448 or email fordhadr@jmu.edu.

WANTED TO BUY

Rob Savoye, via Bill Edmonson, is asking whether anyone knows where he can obtain a UHF repeater tunable to 462.55 through 467.440. He has some very tight specifications, since he wishes to use this unit in a solar-powered system. The standby and transmit current should be less than 300ma and 3a respectively, receiver sensitivity and selectivity should be better than .15uV and 80dB respectively. The controller should be remotely programmable via DTMF. Niceties would include a 6-cavity duplexer with isolation up to 100-110 dB, autopatch capability, and LMR-600 coax with N-connectors (loss less than 1dB per 100 feet at 500 MHz). Hardline is unacceptable. A nice antenna with 3.5 to 8 dB gain with a 10dB bandwidth (5MHz) is needed too. If you know a source or brand and model for equipment which meets these specs, Rob just might pay you a pretty penny. Respond via email to Rob Savoye, rob@darkstar.welcomehome.org, or hawker@conrriver.net, or clrh2o@eagle-access.net. Or see Bill Edmonson, who can get them the message.

CALENDAR

April 4: VARA Club Meeting                              April 18: VHF/UHF Spring Sprint: 220 MHz
April 6: MARA Club Meeting (Homebrew)                  April 19: May Monitor Deadline
April 8: VE Exams: Charlottesville                     April 22-24: Six-Meter Sprint
April 9: Raleigh NC Hamfest                              May 2: VARA Club Meeting
April 10: VHF/UHF Spring Sprint: 2m                     May 4: MARA Club Meeting
April 15: VE Exams: Greenbank (possibly)                May 7: Hagerstown MD Hamfest
April 15: Chesapeake (VA) Hamfest                       May 19-21: Dayton (Ohio) Hamvention
April 15: New License Rules Become Effective            June 24-25: Field Day
MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Gerald Nauman, KN4FM
Vice President: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Secretary: Wilton Thomas, KF4BFL
Treasurer: Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL
Board (exp. 00): vacant
Board (exp 01): David Hughes, KF4SVR

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

MAARA 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 per year) should be mailed to:
Matthew Huffman, KD4UPL
5166 Mt. Clinton Pike
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC
Vice President: Richard Huttinger, KF4QZG
Secretary: Pat Smiley, KD4WWF
Treasurer: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW

http://www.hamsnet.net/W4MUS

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month at Gavid's Restaurant on U.S. 11 south in Staunton. Meal starts at 6:30 pm. Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

Visitors are welcome.

Dues ($15 per year) should be mailed to:
Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW
1344 Hankey Mtn Hwy
Churchville, VA 24421