MARA Elects New Officers

Congratulations to the new officers of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association.

Gerald Nauman, KN4FM, was re-elected as President of the corporation.

Steve Tennyson, KF4ZWK, accepted nomination and election as Vice-President.

Phyllis Haxton, N4VZC, was elected Secretary.

Sandy Mullins, K4PZC, will take over the finances as Treasurer.

David Hughes, KF4SVR, continues as Board Member at Large, with his term expiring at the end of 2001.

And Bob Tennyson, KG4CHL, was elected as the second Board Member at Large, with a term expiring at the end of 2002.

Appreciation is expressed for the service given to the club by the outgoing officers. Wilton Thomas has served several years as club secretary, and Matthew Huffman has served as treasurer.

VARA Elects New Officers, Too

Congratulations to the new officers of the Valley Amateur Radio Association.

Greg Czerniak, W4GRC, was re-elected to the post of President for the new year.

Richard Huttinger, KF4QZG, was re-elected as Vice-President.

Ray Colvin, KE4HVR, was elected as secretary.

And Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR, was elected as treasurer.

Like the MARA Club, the Valley Amateur Radio Association extends a hearty “thank you” to the outgoing officers.

Appreciate is expressed to Pat Smiley, KD4WWF, for his service as secretary, and to Jeff Rinehart W4PJW for his service as treasurer.

The new club officers become effective at the November meeting.

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… and much much more. Send articles, news, and other material to:

David R. Fordham, KD9LA, 131 Wayside Drive, Weyers Cave, VA 24486, or email fordhadr@jmu.edu, or phone 540-568-3024.
Bike Virginia

Watch out for Falling Leaves! With the coming of autumn color, the Shenandoah Valley becomes awash with beauty. The peaceful scenery on the valley’s rural roads create a bicyclist’s paradise.

To take advantage of the color, not to mention the cool weather and relative peace and quiet, every year in October the Virginia Bike Education Association hosts the Fall Foliage Festival, known locally as the “Bike Virginia” ride.

This year, over 1500 bicyclists participated, coming from as far away as the Eastern Shore. The throng included expert athletes who completed 100 kilometers of up-and-down riding without even becoming winded. It also included children as young as five years old, grandfathers, and even a blind biker!

To accommodate such a diverse set of riders, the annual event is composed of over half-a-dozen different routes. Each route is a rough loop, meandering through the back roads and remote lanes of Augusta and Rockingham counties.

Sticking to the back roads, bikers avoid heavy traffic for the most part. But even so, that many cyclists on public roads can present hazards, not only for the cyclists themselves, but for the drivers of cars and trucks.

Every year, many cyclists over-estimate their ability, and become too tired, winded, or sore to continue.

Too, there are the mechanical difficulties: flat tires, broken chains, loose brakes, and other problems which prevent bikers from returning to their starting point.

It is for these two reasons (safety and support) that amateur radio operators are asked each year to help with the ride.

And each year, hams answer the call.

This year was no exception. Twenty-two hams participated, including members of both MARA and VARA.

Hams get to spend the day on the backroads, either on bikes (as did Stin, KE4SSF and Joel, W3ZRW) or in the comfort of their cars and trucks (as did Joe, KD4FKT), or perhaps even at a rest stop featuring plenty of free sandwiches, cookies and drinks (as did Dan, KE4JSX).

Hams in the vehicles rode the loops, looking for bikers in trouble, those having mechanical difficulties, or handling other problems. The hams operated “SAG” vehicles, bringing in those bikers unable to make it to a waypoint on their own.

Net control was set up at the center of the route network. Net control directed hams in the vehicles to areas where needed. Hams reported status and problems as they arose.

One ham was assigned to “shadow” the ride manager, following him wherever he went. This “shadow” provided instant communication with the manager, allowing quick decisions.

Hams manned the rest areas, providing communication between the manager and the way stations. Hams reported the need for more supplies, and the status of medical and repair stations. Hams also delivered messages, and broadcast “be on the lookout for…” bulletins.

Hams handled several other problems, too. Saturday, a cow was loose on the road north of Mt. Solon, presenting a hazard. On Sunday a pack of dogs interfered with the ride by chasing bikers outside of Churchville. In each case, hams handled the situation, saving the Bike Virginia authorities time and trouble.

Hams also shuttled equipment and supplies back and forth between rest stops and the ride headquarters, since they were “going that way anyway”.

Hams also performed “search and rescue” operations. At the end of the day Saturday, several bikers were missing. Hams found most of them straggling on the route and provided a ride home. Hams also collected the direction signs, safety cones, and ran other errands for the organizers.

But in addition to “giving” the safety and support, hams also “received” benefits.

Each ham received a nice colorful Bike Virginia T-Shirt, along with free food and drink for the day.

But more important than the tangible rewards, hams received benefit in the form of the training and experience. We learned how to work in a teams. We learned to communicate more effectively, to coordinate activities, and to become better at our art.

And, lastly, we just plain had some fun. The weather was perfect. What a day to play radio!

The Bike Virginia organizers wish to thank all the hams who helped.
Thanks for the Help...

Hams who provided communications for Bike Virginia include:

Ken Harris, KE4GKD
Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Dan Beidler, KE4JSX
Bill Jordan, KE4LKS
Ray Pitsenbarger, KE4NNV
Stin Lenkerd, KE4SSF
Adam Burgh, KG4EWG
Bryan Fordham, KG4JOE
Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW
Greg Czerniak, W4GRC

Joe Meeks, KD4FKT
Pat Smiley, KD4WWF
Benny Cook, N4BCC
Doug Alder, N4DUG
Norman Benner, KA4EEEN
Clint Campbell, KB4OLM
Richard Huttinger, KF4QZG
Gayle Shull, KU4XN
Robert Steere, N1QEQ
Joel Katz, W3ZRW
David Fordham, KD9LA

Net Control was set up in the trailer (above) located at the lunch stop just west of Natural Chimneys. The communications trailer was provided by KB4OLM, and contained the radio equipment and other equipment needed by Net Control to keep track of the bike rs. The hams were provided with color-coded maps of the routes, and were assigned tactical calls such as “Sag 4”, “Sag 5”, “Rest Stop 1”, “Bike 2”, “Shadow 1”, and “Net Control”. Shown at left are W4PJW, seated, taking over Net Control Duties from KB4OLM.
Tragedy Highlights Need for Public Service

The Bike Virginia Ride was marred by the tragic death of a biker who suffered a heart attack on the route, and died before he could be transported to the hospital.

The man in his mid-50’s, who had a family history of heart trouble, had complained that morning of “feeling bad”. He missed a turn off and deviated from the marked route.

He suffered a massive coronary just west of Dayton on Ottobine Road.

With his being off the route, hams were unaware of the situation and were unable to participate in the effort to assist. A group of riders with the gentleman summoned the rescue squad.

The incident highlights the need for communication and rapid assistance to bikers, such as that provided by the hams.

Hams did provide several instances of minor first aid — everything from band-aids to cold drinks, and especially rides to the nearest aid station.

Kenny, KE4GKD, acting as Shadow for the ride manager, accompanied the manager to the hospital after it was learned that a biker was down.

The gentleman’s widow indicated that he had been a school principal, and had participated in many rides before. She donated his bicycle to a local school group to use in education.

The ham community extends its sympathy to the family of the downed biker.

Big Mountain Repeater Announces: NOAA Weather Bulletins Can Be Transmitted Automatically on 146.625 MHz

The W3MMC Thunder Eagle NOAA weather radio receiver and controller now have a new home at the Cumberland Maryland Outback Link System’s repeater site.

The receiver now serves the entire system with auto-transmitted severe weather bulletins issued by the Sterling Weather Office. These bulletins are transmitted initially by the Moorefield West Virginia transmitter on 162.400 MHz.

As severe weather threatens, the bulletins will be activated, providing information to hams whose radios don’t cover the extended receive frequencies of the NOAA service. This is one less frequency hams have to monitor to stay tuned to weather events.

Control codes will be limited to Skywarn officials, but the bulletins are available for all to hear on Ham radios or scanners tuned to 146.625 MHz.

Designated control operators will be able to call down the “last transmitted” bulletins, as well as the general weather forecasts for the area. Length of these forecasts are limited to 90 seconds by the hardware!

Old bulletins are deleted and replaced by new bulletins. They are also erased at the conclusion of each 2-hour period.

Everyone on the Outback Link System should benefit from the addition of this new NOAA weather receiver.

(Note: My original plan was to make the control codes publicly available, but this has since been altered by agreement of the individual repeater owners. It is natural for the owners and trustees of equipment to hesitate to make public the control codes for equipment they are responsible for. Many local repeater groups follow this protocol. Oh, well, there is always your scanner or Fisher-Price battery-operated NOAA receiver to fall back on! —Bob, W3MMC)
MS Walk 2000 Report

The M.S. walk was held on Saturday, October 21st in Harrisonburg. The walk began on the campus of JMU and included the vicinity of Court Square and the surrounding area. The walk covered about 5 miles and ended back on the campus of JMU. According to Regina Carlson, (walk coordinator), this year there were over 400 persons signed up to walk. This was about double the amount from last year.

It was a beautiful day that was enjoyed by all. Once again thanks to all for their help.

The hams who helped:

- Bob (KG4CHL),
- Steve (KF4ZWK),
- Dale (N4ATF),
- Jason (N4DSL),
- Gayle (KU4XN),
- Enos (KF4BFF),
- Gerald (KN4FM), and
- Dick & Phyllis Haxton (KC3AN & N4VZC)

N4DUG — Net Control

Thanks to MARA For Donation to Big Mountain Repeater

Many, many thanks to the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association for the donation of $50.00 for maintenance, repairs, and insurance costs of operating the Big Mountain Repeater equipment on 146.625. This certainly helps keep things up and running. None of this donation will go to the Outback Repeater Network, it will all stay local, supporting the local repeater, to help out hams right here in the Valley.

Anyone wishing to contribute to this repeater fund can make a check payable to: BMRA, mailed to “Treasurer, c/o 20197 Arbuckle Road, Bergton, VA 22811.

Bob Neimeyer, W3MMC

Special Program for MARA: November 2

MARA Members are in for a treat: A worldclass DX-er, Bob Eshleman, W4DR, will present the program at the November meeting! This will include a computer presentation, as well as an entertaining program by one of ham radio’s foremost “authorities”. Don’t miss out on this meeting! Come early to get

“Come hear a True DX’er!
He holds
5BDXCC
certificate #1!”

Work RTTY and Camp Out, Too!

Daryl Cline, WB4YEX, is planning to go camping at the Field Day site near Flagpole Knob, in the mountains just west of the Valley, and to work the WAE RTTY contest on November 11 and 12. He extends an open invitation to all hams to join him, both for camping and for working the contest! Bring your own camp gear, but he’ll share the radio! Come see the fun to be had on Radio-Teletype! This mode is enjoying a resurgence. See You There! If you have questions, contact Daryl on the 146.625 or 145.130 repeaters, or drop him a line at: jdc@cfw.com
VARA Secretary's Report

October 3, 2000 MEETING

The Valley Amateur Radio Association club meeting was held at David’s Restaurant in Staunton on October 3, 2000. PRESIDENT GREG CZERNIAK W4GRC opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. There were 22 members and guest present.

50/50 was a total of $32.00. So a split of $16.00 for the club and $16.00 for the winner, Joe W4LIG, congratulations Joe.

Clint, KB4OLM & Richard KF4QZG informed the club that negotiations are still on going with the tower that Waynesboro is donating to the club.

David, AD4TJ Needs HELP with the Augusta County Emergency net. Anyone that is willing to be net control and help David out give him a call. David also has the forms for the D.M.V. ID. Cards.

We have the time, date and cost of the Christmas Party. It will be December 5th, same day as the club meeting night. Time is 7:00 pm and we will eat at 7:30 pm. Cost is $11.00 per person. Children 5 and under eat free, over 5 to 10 will be half price-$5.50.

The menu is country style steak, western ham, fried chicken, salad bar, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, green beans, lima beans, macaroni & cheese, baked apples. Dessert will be cobbler & ice cream.

November 15th is the cut off date for reservations. Please make your reservations early so we will know how many to prepare for. Send your checks to Jeff W4PJW 1344 Hankey Mtn Hwy, Churchville, Va. 24421.

OK, Now is the time to send your money to Jeff for the Christmas dinner. Don’t be late, let’s get it in now. November the 15th is the cut off day.

Report from the nominating committee, consisting of Lonnie N4WIV, Joan, KF4CWR, & Nancy, KE4PHP. We have a full slate of officers. Thanks Ladies for the effort and a job well done. Our officers for next year 2001 will be.

VARA OFFICERS:

President Greg W4GRC
Vice President Richard KF4QZG
Secretary Ray KE4HVR
Treasurer Joan KF4CWR

BIKE VIRGINIA: October the 21 & 22: We will need a lot of help this year so please be ready to volunteer. We had a sign up list and looks like we will need more help on Saturday & Sunday so please come out and give us a hand. If you can help Saturday or Sunday give Greg W4GRC, Ray KE4HVR, Ken KE4GKD, or Doug N4DUG a call.

NOTE: ARES address is ARESVA.ORG

NOTE: Next test session Nov. 4th at WOODMEN OF THE WORLD DAYTON.

Clint, KB4OLM gave a very interesting talk on computers and how they work. He also had a lot of parts for show and tell. An excellent presentation Clint, thanks so much for the effort.

PLEASE check your address on QRZ and make the necessary changes. Also add your email address if you have one. Remember ULS all AMATEUR’S have to register. The address is FCC.GOV/WTB/ULS

A motion to adjourn the V.A.R.A meeting was made by Frank, KE4ASC and seconded by Nancy KE4PHP. The motion was accepted and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Submitted by: Pat Smiley KD4WWF
Secretary

Mr. TIMEX: Joe Moomaw W4XD Takes a Lickin’, Keeps on Tickin’

Word has reached us that Joe Moomaw, grand-daddy of Ham Radio in the Shenandoah Valley, has fallen and busted a couple of new ribs.

Joe is still recuperating from his earlier falls. W4XD just keeps on keepin’ on, as they say.

Thanks to Art Williams, W4TY, for this news.

Joe would certainly appreciate a note or letter from his friends in the Shenandoah. His email address is easy to remember. It is: joemoomaw@juno.com

And his U.S. mail address is PO Box 483, Urbanna, VA, 23175.

Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
OCTOBER MEETING
ELECTION RESULTS

Our last meeting was highlighted by elections for President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer. The club elected Greg Czerniak, W4GRC to another term as President, and Richard Huttinger, KF4QZG was re-elected as Vice-president. There was however, a changing of the guard in the offices of Secretary and Treasurer. Ray Covin, KE4HVR was elected as the club Secretary and Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR was elected as club Treasurer. I am looking forward to working with the new team. The new terms begin January, 2001.

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Pat Smiley, KD4WWF (current secretary) and Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW (current treasurer) have done an outstanding job. Both felt it was time to step down and take a well deserved rest. On behalf of the club I want to thank you both for your dedication and hard work on behalf of VARA. It has been a pleasure working with you both!

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Time is growing short to make your reservations for the VARA Christmas Party to be held at Gavid’s on December 5th at 7:00 p.m. (dinner at 7:30 p.m.). The cost is $11.00 per person while children under five will eat free and children ages 5-10 will be charged $5.50 each. Make your reservations now and send your checks to Jeff, W4PJW, 1344 Hankey Mtn. Hwy, Churchville, VA 24421. The cut off date for making your reservation is November 15th.

As an aside, the menu is country style steak, western ham, fried chicken, salad bar, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, green beans, lima beans, macaroni and cheese, baked apples. Dessert will be cobber and ice cream. So come on out and plan to have a good time.

That’s it for this month. Keep your batteries charged and your radio gear dry!

73 From Greg, W4GRC
MARA Membership Roster On-Line

By popular demand, the current MARA membership roster has been posted on-line. The roster, in PDF format, includes callsign, name, mailing address, including city, state, and zip code, as well as email address, and phone numbers. The PDF format prevents automated Net-Bots from capturing the email addresses as they pass from node to node on the Internet. These Net-Bots can read ordinary HTML web pages and extract email addresses by recognizing the @ symbols, and compile mailing lists for use by marketing firms. By using the PDF format, however, the Internet nodes see only binary code embedded within a file. The PDF reader on your computer decodes the binary bits and displays the roster on your screen.

If you do not have the PDF reader, you can obtain a free (perfectly legal) copy from the URL: http://cob.jmu.edu/fordhadr/pdfload.htm

If you do not have Internet access, see a club officer for a paper copy of the roster.

MARA President’s Column

For those of you that missed last month’s meeting, you missed an interesting presentation on operating on the VHF bands. Clint, KB4OLM, told us about some of his experiences working on these bands, and about some of the equipment that he uses. If you missed the program, come to Field Day next year and take a good look at his trailer. That will give you a good idea to what is needed to work these bands on CW and SSB. Thanks Clint for an excellent presentation.

This month we have a different treat. Bob Eshleman, W4DR, will present a celebration of his 50 years in amateur radio. Bob is a native of Harrisonburg. He is now a retired Professor of Dentistry, and lives in Richmond Va.

Among his accomplishments, he holds 5BDXCC certificate number ONE, and is at or near the top of the DX lists for all bands, including 160m! He has also been on several DX’peditions, so he has worked both ends of many pile-ups. This is a program you won’t want to miss. Several hams in this area have seen his presentation and give it good reports.

I want to invite everyone to come this month, and I want to give a special invitation to the VARA group to join us. Be sure to invite any interested person that is not a MARA or VARA member. We meet at Ever’s Restaurant on Rt 11 north of Mt Crawford at 6:30 pm for dinner. If you can’t make it for the meal, join us at 7:30 for a brief business meeting followed by Bob’s presentation.

Gerald, KN4FM

“He is at or near the top of the DX lists for all bands!, including 160m!”

Are You Prepared For Winter?

Squirrels do it. So do the bears. Birds respond by leaving. What about you?

As the leaves change color, hams should be thinking about their preparations for the winter storms that occasionally hit the valley.

First priority should be your own family. If a blizzard hits, will your family have enough food, water, and warmth? Now is the time to be sure your pantry is full of canned goods and other non-perishables. You should have enough food and fuel to let your family be comfortable for at least a week.

Once your family is taken care of, you can think about responding to calls from help from the community. Is your antenna still up solidly? Are your backup batteries charged?

And what about your “jump kit”? Sit down and go through it. Make sure everything is still in operating condition. Be sure your teenager hasn’t “borrowed” something that will be missed when you are out on call.

When an emergency strikes, that is no time to discover you aren’t prepared. Do it now.
New hams looking at the MARA roster might ask, “why are the listings sorted in such a funny sequence?”

The answer has to do with “callbook order”.

Callbook order is the traditional way of sequencing amateur radio callsigns. It works like this: Sort the calls first by the number appearing in the call. In other words, N1ZZZ would come before K4BBB.

After sorting by the number, next sort alphabetically by the suffix. The suffix is the last one, two, or three letters in the call — the letters which come after the number. 

In other words, W4BBB would come before N4CCC.

Once the calls are sorted by number and then by suffix, finally sort by prefix. Thus, K6EEE would come before N6EEE.

The next logical question is, “why do we do it that way?”

The answer lies in the fact that the earliest ham radio calls (back in the 1910s and 1920s) did not have a prefix. For example, my wife’s grandfather’s first call was 1RB. Her father’s first call was 8DTD.

Back then, if you sorted calls logically, you would sort first by number, then by the letters which came after the number. In the early 1930’s, the ITU (or its predecessor, to be perfectly accurate) decreed that all callsigns in the world should have a prefix to denote the country in which the station was licensed. America was assigned the prefix letters of A, K, N, and W.

Ham stations had the prefix added to their call. So, my wife’s father’s call of 8DTD became W8DTD.

But by then, most hams were used to seeing their calls in the original order: number first, then suffix.

The traditional order has lasted to this very day.

**For Sale … (lots of stuff)**

A retired ham is moving into a retirement community and needs to find a good home for his valuable collection of ham radio accessories. He is willing to accept offers. Come see it and figure out which items you can use in your station.

Here is a Partial List of the items available:

- **Miscellaneous lengths of 1/4” guy cable (wire rope).**
- **Miscellaneous lengths and sizes of aluminum tubing for antenna elements.**
- **Variety of spools of coaxial cable.**
- **Misc sizes sheets of aluminum for project boxes and chassis.**
- **Miscellaneous assortment of old (classic) test equipment.**
- **Variety of chokes, coils, capacitors, fixed and variable.**
- **10-80m homebrew kilowatt+ linear amplifier, very nice, built into a standard six-foot 19” communications rack.**
- **Very nice 120-foot high military surplus tower, including guy cables.**
- **Thousands of miscellaneous hardware items: nuts, bolts, screws, already sorted into proper bins and plastic drawers.**

Call Oscar Short, W4YJ. Phone (540) 337-6642, or in Harrisonburg at (540) 574-3808.

Oscar needs to have all this stuff sold by the first week of November.

**“Everything Must Go!”**

**Bits and Pieces Here and There…**

Gerry Brunk, K4RBZ is still trying to sell the brand-new, in-the-box, Icom 718 he won at the Va Beach hamfest. He’s asking only $699 for it. Call him at 434-0440 or 432-4467.

Joe Archambeault N4TRH reportedly is also selling a variety of ham radios. Call him at 540-943-6456 to find out what he has left if you are in the market.

The VE Testing Session will be held the first Saturday of November (Nov 4) at the Woodmen of the World building on State Route 42 just north of Dayton Virginia. Be there at 9:00 am for new licenses and upgrades.

Because of the Thanksgiving Holidays, the deadline for the December issue of the Monitor is November 18.

Think about renewing your membership dues early. And while you are at it, please remember the trustees of the local repeaters. Five or ten dollars isn’t much, but every little bit is appreciated.
SCENES FROM BIKE VIRGINIA

(left) KE4GKD outside the Net Control Trailer.  (below) KE4HVR serving as sag support, KG4JOE serving at Rest Stop 1.

The Fall Foliage was spectacular.

(opposite) Bikers gather at Rest Stop 1 on the Pink starting loop north of Staunton on Saturday.
MARA/VARA

c/o David Fordham
131 Wayside Drive
Weyers Cave, VA 24486
Phone: 540-568-3024
Email: fordhadr@jmu.edu

Address Service Requested

MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Gerald Nauman, KN4FM
Vice President: Steve Tennyson, KF4ZWK
Secretary: Phyllis Haxton N4VZC
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Board (exp 01): David Hughes, K4SVR
Board (exp 02): Bob Tennyson, KG4CHL

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 per year) should be mailed to:
Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
149 North Street
Elkton, VA 22827

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC
Vice President: Richard Huttinger, KF4QZG
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Treasurer: Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR

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:
Joan Pitsenbarger, KF4CWR
352 Campbell Street
Staunton VA 24401