VARA President’s Message

I would like to remind everybody about the next field day committee meeting to be May 13th. We will need some help gathering up the necessary items this year. If you would like to provide something, email me at KG4JOF@arrl.net. There are some questions about the site; hopefully I’ll have some answers for everybody soon. Thanks to Greg W4GRC for conducting the meeting for me while I was in Alexandria. Thanks to Gordon Batey WA4FJC, Richard Huttinger AA4RH and Greg Czerniak W4GRC for their work on getting together Amateur Radio classes.

I would also like to remind everyone to be prepared in case bad weather should hit, like keeping batteries charged and a go box on standby and have radios programmed for the local repeaters and simplex frequencies. Richard AA4RH, Program Chairman, is looking for anyone that would like to do a program for the club. Give him a call and set up a date to present it.

Thanks to Dan Beidler KE4JSX for the great presentation on emergency preparedness. I would also like to remind everybody that next month we’re meeting at Kathy’s in Verona, same time for the meal and meeting.

73’s all
Billy, KG4JOF

MARA President’s Message

Echoing the remarks of the VARA President above, I also remind all valley hams, regardless of which club you belong to, to BE PREPARED.

I also want to publicly thank the crew that is running the ham radio classes at the Government Center in Verona. These fine men are freely giving of their time to help us all.

And another public “thank you” is due to Elwood Shrader, KB4DJN, who has been holding Morse Code classes at his home. Morse Code is a lot more fun to learn when you’ve got someone to learn it with, and Elwood has done a great job of getting our new amateurs upgraded and onto the HF frequencies where they can really do some international hamming!

I haven’t yet heard about the GreenBank trip, but I caught a rumor that it is in the works. Stay tuned to the local nets to learn the date and time, since we probably won’t have another newsletter before the trip.

And speaking of the nets, TUNE IN! These nets are the best way to discover that your feedline has a fault in it, your audio is way down, your mic cord has an intermittent connection, or the dad-gummed groundhog has chewed through your coax again! And you can hear some fast-breaking news on these nets, too.

This month’s club meeting will feature a special presentation on Echolink: Hooking Your HT to the Internet and Work the World on ham radio from your PC! Jason N4DSL will show us the ropes and how easy it is to get started.

See you at Ever’s on May 6!

David Fordham, KD9LA
Public Service Report: Harrisonburg March of Dimes Walk

If you had to walk 10 miles one morning, what kind of weather would you want?

It was perfect. A crisp, cool morning, temperatures in the low 60’s, with light high clouds just thick enough to prevent sunburn, and a very light breeze to cool you off if you get heated.

The date was Saturday, April 24. Hams provided support communication for the 2004 Harrisonburg March of Dimes walk, manning the rest stops, refreshment stations, and working the impromptu sag vehicles, providing status reports and other information.

Over 400 walkers of all sizes and shapes started out at the headquarters tent in the field behind the Harrisonburg Municipal Building at 9:00 am. Within minutes, Bryan K4RMY at the first refreshment center at Harrisonburg High School reported a run on their water bottles and bananas! A few minutes later, Ray K4NRA at Hillandale Park Shelter #2 reported that walkers were making short work of the McDonald’s Orange Drink! Richard KC3AN and Phyllis N4VZC worked as a team to keep the Keister Elementary School station on the air, but technical problems (Murphy’s Law) allowed them to save a lot of their battery power (not to mention the granola bars) by the time it was all over!

Gayle KU4XN and Gail XYL operated a roving vehicle — a good thing, since the March of Dimes had been promised a Sag Vehicle by one of the local car dealerships, but the vehicle never showed up! The two Gayles later helped out at the Spottswood Elementary School rest area. (Question: which rest area had the popcorn?)

Gerald KN4FM also operated a moving station initially, and later manned the watering hole on the JMU campus. Chris K14BAQ operated foot-mobile and helped direct the walkers between the short and long routes along Main Street.

Net Control was located under the walk headquarters tent, and was handled by David KD9LA and his daughter Dianna.

By noon, all the walkers had returned to the starting point, safely shepherded in by cleanup runs by KN4FM, KU4XN, K4RMY, and K4NRA. The hams enjoyed a free lunch and a few laughs, as well as being awarded a nice soft maroon T-Shirt each! (Guess who wears a triple-Extra-Large?)

Although there were no accidents or injuries, ham radio proved very valuable. One of the phone companies had provided a set of four FRS radios for the walk organizers to use. These radios had promised “range up to two miles”, but they proved useless at a range of less than six blocks! It was Ham Radio that kept the walk headquarters fully informed of the progress of the walkers, and more importantly, the status of all the rest stops and stations.

Thanks to the hams who participated, and a special thanks to Norman KA4EEN for being on standby in case we needed any more help! And finally, a big thanks to the Shenandoah Valley Repeater Association for the use of the 147.315 N4YET repeater.

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Public Service Report: Waynesboro Multiple Sclerosis Walk

The annual MS WALK in Waynesboro was held on April 18, 2004 at 2:00pm from Ridgeview Park.

After not hearing from the MS WALK officials Benny N4BCC contacted them to see if they wanted our help again this year. The lady in charge said she didn’t know how to contact us but they needed our help again.

After the late notice we had a good show of hams for the walk and everything went well for the entire walk. We thank all those that gave up a beautiful Sunday afternoon to come out and participate in the communications. We thank the repeater owner for the use of the 146.850 repeater for this public service event.

The Hams that helped with the communications were: David Tanks AD4TJ, Marvin Henderson KF4WDI, Mac McGrath KZ1A, Richard Huttiger AA4RH, Joe Meek KD4FKT, Benny Cook N4BCC, Billy Hooke KG4JOF, Jess Hancock W4PQK and Ray Colvin KE4HVR.

The Officials of the MS WALK greatly appreciated everyone’s help and said they would contact us earlier next year so we could be more prepared for the event.

Thanks again for all your help.
Ray Colvin KE4HVR
Public Service Report: VE Testing Session

Thanks to the following who helped with the February test:
GERALD NAUMAN
RAY RITCHIE
JASON ARMENTROUT
KEVIN BARB
JIM LEHMAN
NORMAN BENNER
ANDREW BARBER
ROBERT VANFOSSEN
DALE SHOWALTER

And more thanks to those who helped with the April session.
RICHARD HAXTON
ANDREW BARBER
JIM LEHMAN
ROBERT VANFOSSEN
E C SHOWALTER
DALE SHOWALTER

One new Technician license was earned by John Schlabach 671 Mt. Torry RD. Lyndhurst VA 22952.

Our next test will be June 12 and we expect to have the students from the classes now under way at Staunton, so keep this on your calendar as we will need plenty of help.

Again thanks to the fine hams who help make our test a successes.

GAYLE SHULL, KU4XN
Test Session Coordinator

Public Service Report: Waynesboro River Run

No one submitted a report on the River Run.

But rumors were flying that the hams were helping out.

Did a good group of hams show up?

Did the hams provide communication?

Who went?

Answers to these and other exciting questions will appear in Next Month’s issue of the Monitor.

That is, IF and ONLY IF someone lets the Newsletter Editor know about it!

QRP Group — Power Hungry!

In case you haven’t heard, the QRP group is alive and well.

The reason you may not have heard is that they don’t use very much power to communicate!

The QRP group meets in a new location, convenient to both Augusta and Rockingham hams!

The group meets on the second Tuesday of every month, at 7:30 pm, at the home of Andrew Barbour, AG4XN, at 516 St. James Road, Fishersville VA.

While the mailing address is Fishersville, this location is actually quite convenient to I-81, just north of Staunton.

If you would like to use flea-power to get on the air, or if you’ve ever wanted to build a working radio on the head of a pin (well, maybe not quite that small, but pretty close!) or put a radio inside a box of matches, this is your chance! Come out and see what QRP really means!

Second Tuesday of Every Month, 7:30 pm.
The Opinionated One: Pills Bury

I’m old enough to remember the good old days — back when your doctor would give you a prescription if you were sick.

Nowadays, however, you can “ask your doctor” for a prescription even when you’re perfectly well! No kidding.

That’s right. Today, there are dozens, perhaps hundreds, of prescriptions you can take without the inconvenience of having to get sick!

Every time I change the channel on the TV, there is another ad for another prescription. Every time I pick up a magazine, there is a three-page spread of tiny fine print describing another prescription. They never call this stuff medication, because it doesn’t medicate anything! This begs the question: If it doesn’t medicate anything, why do we need to ask our doctor?

Whatever you want done, there’s a pill for it! Too shy and bashful? There’s a pill for that. Want smoother skin? There’s a pill for that. Too. Want more hair? There’s a pill for that. Want LESS hair? There’s a pill for that, too!

You can take pills to lower your cholesterol or raise your libido, to lower your blood pressure or raise your, um, you-know-what. There are pills that lower your appetite or raise your eyebrows! You can take a pill to whiten your teeth, and another one to whiten your toenails. No kidding! Honest!

The one I really like is the one where the announcer asks “Are you depressed?” and then he recommends you “Ask your doctor if this prescription is right for you!”

Yeah, right! Never mind that the reason you are depressed is that your cat broke down on the inner lane of the D. C. Beltway and is still there; your cat just barfed a hairball all over your DXCC Honor Roll certificate; your wife ran off with the ham who sat across from you at the Christmas Banquet and she took your credit cards with her and the guy has gone hog wild at HRO Woodbridge; and your only son just called from San Francisco to announce his wedding engagement to a skinny mustachioed biker dude from Boston whose left eyelid is his only square inch of skin not covered in a tattoo.

And WORST of all, your TS-870 just went on the fritz and the DX Sweepstakes is coming up in two weeks!

But, hey! None of that has anything to do with your being depressed, does it? Not at all. “Just ask your doctor about this pill!” and you’ll be happy again.

Miracles, I say. Miracles! Just by taking their free 30-day supply! You don’t even have to pray, as long as your doctor determines it is “right for you”.

There are prescriptions for the fat, the thin, the ugly, the beautiful, the smelly, the sad, the happy, the bashful, the grumpy, the sneezy, the sleepy, and yes, even the Dopey!

I’m looking forward to the pills for hams!

Hey, we can get in on the act too, can’t we?! If they can sell pills that work miracles for other people, why not have some for hams? Why, I’ll bet MFJ has a team of researchers conducting clinical trials right now!

Here’s the commercial for the first one:

Announcer: “Do you suffer from a DXCC confirmed country count that is too low? Have you been hamming 20 years and still have more receipts from the Kenwood repair center than you have QSL cards! Would you like to raise your DXCC count by 10 points? How about 50 points? 200? Well now there’s help! Take three doses of the new drug, Dx-Rx, and you too can have a country count that will be the envy of men four times your age! No more calling CQ, no more QRM, no copying silly call signs. Just one pill a day is all it takes. Call this 1-800 number for a free coupon for a 10-day trial sample. You need to know that Dx-Rx does not work for everyone, and some hams end up being contesters instead. But still, isn’t it worth a trip to your doctor to see if Dx-Rx will work for you?”

Here’s another one:

Announcer: “Is your tri-band beam way up...there, and you are way down...here? A problem? Not anymore! Now you can lower your beam instantly without messy belts, harnesses or gin poles! Ask your doctor if TennaSlam is right for you! Within minutes of taking a dose of TennaSlam, your beam is lowered 50, 75, even 100 feet! Proven effective, ... even for quads! Ask your doctor today! Not intended for use on mobile antennas or rubber ducks.”

Or here’s another one:

Scene 1: a wedding where the bride is waiting at the altar for the groom. She asks, “When is Jack going to get here?” — Scene 2: an important board meeting where everyone is waiting on the President to arrive. They look at their watches and ask, “When is Jack going to get here?” — Scene 3: A funeral where everyone is waiting in front of an empty casket. The funeral director bends over and whispers to a family member, “When is Jack going to get here?” — Scene 4: Jack is in his ham shack, working the WPX contest. Announcer: “Don’t you wish they would all just go away and let you work the contest in peace? Well, now you can enjoy the peace and quiet of a nice contest weekend without those pesky interruptions. Just take two of these new Q-Esso tablets and all those problems and distractions disappear.” (Scenes 1 through 3 repeat and all the people disappear). Announcer continues: “What better way to be left alone to enjoy the contest. Within 10 days, you will be free from those irritating XYL demands to fix the kitchen faucets, requests to coach a Little League game, or to visit Aunt Myrtle in the nursing home. Q-Esso is a miracle breakthrough that works quickly, usually after only one dose. Of course, Q-Esso isn’t for everyone. Some side effects include loneliness, and in a few extreme cases, utter poverty — especially in those hams whose wives know a good divorce lawyer. So ask your doctor if Q-Esso is right for you!”

And my favorite: A cute yellow cockroach runs across the shack carrying a sign saying, “Tune your antennae without a tuner! Ask your doctor about CapaChlor!” He smiles and squeaks: “I did and I feel great!”

Yes, eventually, we’ll all have more shack shelves covered in pill bottles than we do in radios. So don’t wait! Ask your doctor today! Start enjoying the miracles! Snake Oil, eat your heart out!
The experimentation continues.

A group of avid experimenters is attempting to establish a solid 802.11-based microwave high-speed data link to the Internet from the Field Day site.

This link will allow Field Day participants to directly access the Internet at relatively high speeds. Field Day will now have access to up-to-the-minute weather maps, photos, e-mail, and other web resources.

The photos below show the crew hard at work setting up the test links. Shown are Bob Van Fossen K4DJG, Gayle Shull KU4XN, and John Nelson N3JN, at the Field Day site assembling and manning the western end of the link. Jason Armentrout was also there, taking the picture!

At the eastern end was Kevin Barb, KF4WWM, at the Pear Street radio site, courtesy of Neil Buckingham WA4KKL. The photo below shows the Field Day site under the arrow, direct line-of-sight, 28 kilometers (or over 17 miles) distant on the western horizon, under the arrow. This view is looking west from the Pear Street radio site.

The link was conducted using a 24 dbi parabolic grid dish on each end. At Pear Street, the Orinoco AP-200 running 30mw (yes, that’s milliwatts!) connected beautifully with the Linksys WET-11 also running 30mw on the mountain.

The signal strength was 80%, very reliable, with no lost packets on ping tests. Data throughput on file transfers was 2Mbps, due to distance (see last month’s article).

From Pear Street, the signal will be relayed to an Internet access point, location to be determined shortly.

Thanks to Bryan K4RMY, Gayle KU4XN, Bob K4DJG, Neil WA4KKL, John N3JN, and Kevin KF4WWM.

Jason N4DSL
VARA Secretary's Report — April 6 Meeting

The Valley Amateur Radio Association met at Kathy’s in Verona on April 6, 2004. The Vice President Greg Czerniak W4GRC opened the meeting at 7:30pm. There were 23 members present and 5 guests, Bob VanFossen K4DJG, Grover Cloyd N4SMT, Tom Weyrick, Herb Slade AA2BF, Gary VanFossen. Welcome to our visitors, and we would like to see all of you back next month.

We didn’t have the tickets for the 50/50 this month so there was no drawing.

The Club started lessons for new hams on Monday March 29th and had a group of 16 then picked up one more the second Monday, more are expected for the following meeting. Gordon Batey WA4FJC, Richard Huttinger AA4RH and Greg Czerniak W4GRC are in charge of these lessons. Gordon reported that all was going well and there was lots of interest among the students of various ages. The lessons will end on June 3rd and the VE’s will give the test on Saturday June 12th.

Our Field Day committee volunteers for 2004 are: Billy Hooke KG4JOF, Richard Huttinger AA4RH and Jess Hancock W4POK. Field Day committee meetings is the second Thursday of the month at Burger King in Mount Crawford at 6:00pm. They will be looking for help during field day such as equipment, shelters, set up and when it’s time to take down antennas, towers and gather up extension cords, tarps, stakes and get them all loaded to bring off the mountain. We would like to have more help with site clean up, mowing and trimming this year. There’s a lot of grass to mow at the site and the extra help would be greatly appreciated. While mowing if we have to stop to pick up rocks and limbs it makes the job more time consuming.

The Club voted to order 35 Field Day pins for 2004. These will be ordered along with MARA’s order.

The suggestion of a Club Name Badge was brought up and we will have more information at next months meeting.

New Club Call Sign:
Ray Colvin KE4HVR sent the request to have Joe Moormaw’s call sign cancelled and it has shown up on the FCC Database. Gordon Batey WA4FJC and Ray Colvin KE4HVR filled out the forms to get his call sign for the VARA as Joe requested. Charlie Garner WA4ITY reviewed and signed them since he is the Club Trustee and they were mailed on March 30th. Hopefully we will have W4XD for the VARA Club Callsign by Field Day 2004.

SWAP SHOP:
This is for Ham related items only. You can send a list of items you have for sale, swap or something you would like to buy, to Billy Hooke KG4JOF at KG4JOF@arrl.net. Also a picture of the item would help it sell. Go to VARA Web Site at: http://www.qsl.net/w4mus/_IF_YOUR_ITEM_HAS_BEEN_SOLD PLEASE notify Billy so he can take it off the Swap Shop page.

Highland County ARES Net will be on the Monterey repeater 147.180+ and tone of 100.0 at 8:30pm on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month. They would like to welcome everyone to check into the Net.

ADDRESSES!!! Keep your e-mail address up to date. Please send them to: Billy Hooke KG4JOF, KG4JOF@arrl.net Jeff Rinehart W4PJW, jmrrinehart@yahoo.com Ray Colvin KE4HVR, colvinrg@rica.net and David Fordham KD9LA, fordhrad@jmu.edu. Also, it’s good to keep QRZ updated when call signs and e-mail addresses are changed.

ON THE SICK LIST:
Dan James W4DLJ is getting around without his walker part of the time but not able to join us for the Friday lunches. Kenny Harris KE4GKD, is still doing therapy on his shoulder. Let’s keep these folks in our thoughts and prayers.

ARES NET: David Tanks AD4TJ is looking for Net Controls for the Augusta County ARES Net. The Net will be held on the 146.850 repeater on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 8:00pm. This repeater has a minus offset and a tone of 131.8 when needed.

PROGRAMS NEEDED: Richard AA4RH, Program Chairman, is looking for anyone that would like to do a program for the club. Give him a call and set up a date to present it. It does not have to be HAM related. It could be anything you think the group would find interesting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56pm.

Richard Huttinger AA4RH presented a video “Voice of Victory” which Gordon Batey WA4FJC downloaded from the Internet. The video covered the production and use of the Hallicrafters BC-610 transmitter and receiver during WWII. The workers used electric hoists to set the heavy components into the main cabinet. Surely not the type components we see in our transceivers today. The radio transmitter and receiver were installed in a dual-wheel panel truck for transportation. The BC-610 started out as a ham radio transmitter called the HT-4 in 1938 and was converted to military use during WWII. The video showed how the radio was designed and built for mobile use and to withstand vibration during service they used rubber mounts to anchor it to the bed of the truck. After installation was complete there wasn’t a lot of extra room for operators. For the power they pulled a trailer behind the truck containing a generator. They used steel mobile whips for antennas.

Thanks to Richard and Gordon for a great video presentation and Greg for the use of his projector.

Submitted By: VARA Secretary
Ray Colvin KE4HVR

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Icom 756-Pro II For Sale — Cheap!
That’s right, a real honest-to-goodness Icom IC-756 Pro II top-of-the-line radio, with computer interface. Looks and works just like brand-spanking new!
And for only $1800, this baby can be yours! Call Richard Wilkins, KR4V, at 540-433-5277 during the evenings!

NTIA BPL Report On-Line!
Just as this issue was going to press, Charlie Garner WA4ITY, provided a link to the long-awaited NTIA report on the BPL proposal which could spell the death of HF ham radio.
Point your browser to (that’s 61 the number!): http://snipurl.com/61yv
The April meeting of the Massanutten Amateur Radio Association was held at Evers Restaurant in Mt. Crawford. The meeting was opened at 7:30PM by the club president, David Fordham, KD9LA. There were 24 members and 4 guests present.

The secretary’s report for the March 2004 meeting was accepted.

The treasurer’s report was read by Sandy, K4PZC. The balance as of 03/31/04 was $2021.39. The report was accepted as given. One new member application was read to the club, James Stamper, KG4LDY, of Woodstock. The application will be voted on at the May meeting.

The March of Dimes walk will be April 24th, starting at the Harrisonburg Municipal building at 8:00 am, and should be over by noon.

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The VARA club has started the Technician training class at the Augusta County Government Center in Verona. Richard Huttinger; AA4RH, reported that there are 16 people signed up.

Gayle Shull, KU4XN reported he will be ordering field day pins again this year. The costs should be split between the clubs. Also if you are interested in field day T-shirts contact Gayle.

Norman, KA4EEN reported that he needs net control operators to volunteer for the Monday Rockingham County ARES nets.

May 1-2: County Hunters Contest
May 1-2: 10-10 International Spring Contest
May 2: Hagerstown (MD) Hamfest
May 2: Page County ARES Net
May 3: Rockingham County ARES Net (simplex)
May 4: VARA Club Meeting—Staunton
May 5: Highland County ARES Net
May 6: MARA Club Meeting — Harrisonburg
May 8: Fredericksburg (MD) Hamfest
May 8-9: Mid Atlantic QSO Party
May 9: Page County ARES Net
May 10: Rockingham County ARES Net
May 11: Shenandoah QRP Group Meeting
May 13: Augusta County ARES Net
May 14-16: Dayton (OH) Hamvention
May 16: Page County ARES Net
May 17: Rockingham County ARES Net
May 19: Highland County ARES Net
May 23: Page County ARES Net
May 24: Rockingham County ARES Net
May 29-30: CQ WW WPX CW Contest
May 29: DurHAMfest (Durham NC)
May 30: Howard County (MD) Hamfest
June 1: VARA Meeting
June 3: MARA Meeting
June 6: Manassas Hamfest
June 12: VE Exams — Dayton VA
June 12: Franklin (VA) Hamfest
June 12: Bloomsburg (PA) Hamfest
June 12-14: ARRL VHF QSO Party
June 19: Ham Radio Kids Day
June 19-20: SMIRK Six Meter Contest
June 20-25: Pre-Field Day Camping
June 26-27: Field Day
July 1: MARA Club Meeting
July 4: Harrisburg (PA) Hamfest
July 6: VARA Club Meeting
July 24: Asheville (NC) Hamfest
July 25: Baltimore (MD) Hamfest
July 31: Roanoke Valley/Salem Hamfest
August 1: Berryville Hamfest
August 3: VARA Club Meeting
August 5: MARA Club Meeting
August 7: 10-10 Summer Contest
August 7-8: ARRL UHF Contest
August 14: VE Exams (Dayton VA)
August 15: Westminster (MD) Tailgate Fest
September 2: MARA Club Meeting
September 4-5: Shelby (NC) Hamfest
September 7: MARA Club Meeting
September 11: Gaithersburg (MD) Hamfest
September 18-19: Virginia Beach Hamfest

MARA Secretary’s Report — April 1 Meeting (no foolin’!)

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Norman, KA4EEN reported that he needs net control operators to volunteer for the Monday Rockingham County ARES nets.

Mark Your Calendars!

Dave Burgess, K1DB won the 50 / 50 drawing. Dave got $16.50 and $16.50 went to the club.

The formal meeting was adjourned at 8:12PM. The April meeting included homebrew night and a swap meet after the formal meeting.

The May MARA program will be about EchoLink, presented by Jason Armentrout, N4DSL.

Todd Harrison, K4TMH
MARA Secretary
MASSANUTTEN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, Inc.

President: David Fordham KD9LA
Vice President: Bill Karle KG4UPN
Secretary: Todd Harrison, K4TMH
Treasurer: Sandy Mullins, K4PZC
Board (exp 04): Richard Haxton, KC3AN
Board (exp 05): John Nelson N3JN

http://mara.ws

MARA meets the first Thursday of each month
at Ever’s Restaurant on U.S. 11 north
of the traffic light in Mt. Crawford.
Meal starts at 6:30 pm.
Business meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

Visitors are welcome.

Dues ($12 per year) should be mailed to:
MARA
PO Box 1882
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

President: Billy Hooke, KG4JOF
Vice President: Greg Czerniak, W4GRC
Secretary: Ray Colvin, KE4HVR
Treasurer: Jeff Rinehart, W4PJW
Program Manager: Richard Huttlinger, AA4RH

http://www.qsl.net/w4mus

VARA meets the first Tuesday of each month
At Kathy’s Restaurant on U.S. 11 north of
the traffic light in Verona.
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