

**Mount Vernon  
Amateur Radio Club  
K4US**  
*"PUBLIC SERVICE WITH  
FUN AND FRIENDSHIP"*



Volume 16

DECEMBER 2003

Number 12

## Ye Olde RF Output

**HOLIDAY  
PARTY**  
**DECEMBER 11, 2003**  
7:30 PM  
**OLD COUNTRY BUFFET**  
ROUTE 1  
ALEXANDRIA, VA  
MVARC MEETS ON THE SECOND  
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH EXCEPT  
IN DECEMBER

**MVARC REPEATER: K4US/R**  
146.055 MHz INPUT/146.655 MHz  
OUTPUT

AUTOPATCH AVAILABLE TO  
MEMBERS

MVARC HOME PAGE:  
IN PROGRESS

## HAPPENINGS

**December 11 - MOUNT VERNON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB HOLIDAY PARTY** OLD COUNTRY BUFFET, ROUTE 1, ALEXANDRIA, VA 7:30 p.m. See you there!

**December 2,9,16,23,30 - MVARC ARES NET**-146.055/ 146.655-8:30 PM local time. The Ten Meter portion meets immediately following the Two Meter Net on 28.415 MHz. Come and join in!

**December 27 - MVARC Breakfast** will be held at The Old Country Buffet on Route 1 at 8:30 a.m. Everyone's invited to join MVARC members for breakfast. They meet the 4th Saturday of every month.

**NOTICE--VE EXAM LOCATION  
THE DECEMBER 13, 2003 VE EXAM  
WILL BE HELD AT**

**The FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
2723 KING STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, VA**

**CALL JOHN, WZ4A AT 703-971-3905  
FOR MORE INFO OR TO CONFIRM THE  
LOCATION OF THE TEST SESSION.**

Ye Olde RF Output is published monthly by the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club. Voluntary articles and comments are solicited.

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703-642-8942

### MVARC/ CG TISCOM LIAISON



### MINUTES NOVEMBER 13, 2003 MEETING

The meeting was held at the INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital and was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by the President. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Everyone introduced themselves. The motion to approve the October 9, 2003 minutes as published in the YORFO carried. John, K2VPR gave the treasurer's report. He reported a net worth of \$5,974.69. John said he received a receipt for our \$100 donation to the ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund.

#### Committee/Event Reports

**ARES** - Steve, K3IZ thanked everyone who helped with the Marine Corps Marathon on October 26. Bill, W2BSA said a couple of hams actually ran the marathon.

**EDUCATION/VE EXAMS** - John, WZ4A said there were 10 people who took exams-there were more VE's. There's going to be Venturing Crew Technician Class training in January 2004 to early February.

**FAR** - The FAR has suspended the publication of AUTOCALL until further notice.

**COAST GUARD TISCOM** - Carol, WA4GFW said MVARC needs to have more operations and events to help insure continued use of the facilities. Please contact Carol to help or for more info.

**GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY SPECIAL EVENT** - Bob, KT4KS said the notice

announcing the Special Event was mailed to the ARRL.

**PROGRAMS** - Bob, K13O introduced tonight's speaker, Chris Im-lay, W3KD.

**VENTURING CREW** - Bill, W2BSA said the Venturing Crew was very active at the Marine Corps Marathon. The School Board and the Boy Scouts recognized their achievements and efforts.

### Business

The plan is for MVARC to meet at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center for their monthly meetings beginning in January. Tentative reservations have been made but need to be confirmed after December 1<sup>st</sup> before the official announcement of the move can be promulgated.

MVARC is again looking for a Webmaster. Brad, K4RT withdrew volunteering. During a discussion of domain names, it was suggested we register our domain names through Network Solutions. Potentially, your domain name could get sold out if you go through a third party to register your domain. A letter along with a check for \$35 was sent to Dick Cramer on 10 October 2003 to cover the cost of renewing the MVARC.ORG domain name. The motion to reserve the domain name, MVARC.ORG for up to 2 years through Network Solutions carried.

Bob, K13O discussed the Club's project to mail information and invitation brochures to hams in the 223XX Zip codes. He received the addresses from the Buckmaster database. A number of people volunteered to help with the project.

Under the auspices of Show and Tell, George, WA4AEI showed us an old QSL card from the Fort Belvoir Club which preceded MVARC. Steve, K3IZ

reported that Tom, N4BV is doing well right now-Tom said hello to everyone.

Thanks went to Bob, KT4KS this month's Cookie Monster. John, WQ4L volunteered to be Cookie Monster for the January Meeting.

The motion to adjourn carried.

## **REPEATER UPDATE**

### **11/20/2003**

by Frank, K4EC

As you know we have been having intermittent problems with an extremely low level signal on the input frequency of the K4US repeater which is keeping the repeater from operating properly. This is an external problem, not a problem with the repeater equipment. The four members of the repeater committee have been trying to identify the source of the signal with little success. The committee members are asking for your help in tracing this signal to its source. As licensed Amateur Radio Service operators we all have demonstrated, via FCC administered testing, a level of knowledge that no other radio service licensees are required to demonstrate. We are the only radio service that the FCC allows (and trusts) to build our own radio equipment.

Instead of just saying "SOMEONE has got to do something about this ridiculous, irritating, horrendous, exasperating (etc.) problem"...get involved; use your radio to help! When you notice the repeater "kerchunking" by itself or waiting for an inordinate amount of time for the courtesy tone to play during a QSO, change your 2 Meter radio to the input frequency of the repeater, 146.055 MHz, open your squelch, take notice of any signal you hear, and log the date-time-location (street address or intersection). After you have made

these notes, send an e-mail to Dick (WA4USB@ARRL.NET), Frank (K4EC@ARRL.NET), Doug (WA3WEP@COX.NET), or Sterrett (SterrettC@Yahoo.com) with the information. We will track and coordinate these volunteer reports along with our own RDF efforts enabling us to concentrate on a specific geographic area for a more detailed search. Reports of "No signal heard" or "just background noise at S1" are just as important as a "Signal heard" report. A "No signal heard" report helps eliminate a specific geographic region from the overall search.

Please note that the location and height of the repeater enables it to have a coverage area of well over 150 square miles! Due to the intermittent nature of the interfering signal, its extremely low energy level on the ground, the topography of the coverage area, and the work schedules of the repeater committee members, the origin of the interfering signal has not been determined. The repeater committee members and your fellow club members need your help.

This is an update on the repeater kerchunking problem.

As most repeater users are aware, there have been an intermittent and persistent problem keying the repeater. So far we have been unsuccessful in identifying the source. Other than kerchunking the repeater and occasionally keeping the repeater timer from resetting, it usually does not interfere with conversations since it is such a low level. Everyone can transmit over the interference.

Dave, WA3GIN, who lives within about 3 blocks of the repeater told the repeater committee members that he had some problems with leakage from the Com-cast cable system on channel 18. Dick, WA4USB, was able to contact the Comcast cable technical folks who were very cooperative. They acknowledged that channel 18 is right at or near our repeater

frequency. While on the telephone with Dick and to help troubleshoot the problem, Comcast turned off the channel 18 on their system. The kerchunking persisted with the TV signal was off. Ergo, it is not the cable leakage.

We are continuing to work on the problem. Of course all of this could be alleviated by placing PL or CTSS on the repeater.

*(More on this later-ed.)*

## **GEORGE FARMER III, KX4W (SK)**

It is with a profound sadness that we report that George, KX4W has died due to cancer of the esophagus. George was a long time club member, dating back from the times of the Old Ft. Belvoir Club. He had been having medical problems for some time so he had not been active in recent years.

George was very active in days gone past with regard to club activities. He participated in all the hamfests in the area helping with the club table and buying a number of items from it from time to time as well. He and his wife Rose would always be together at the hamfest to help, browse, and be a part of the flavor of the day.

Field Day was also favorite of George's. He was a big part of the event. The MVARC used KX4W as the call sign for FD for many of the years in the 1980s and early 90s. George really loved to work 75 meters on FD. I remember one Saturday FD night into very early Sunday morning. We had an old Drake TR4 screaming away CQ at about 3850 KHz. Quite a number of stations, of course, from Pa, NY, and NJ were all over the place. We started to notice every once in a while a 0 or 9 would show up and maybe a 5. George was there as was Jeff, WD4ARO. Pretty soon it was all midwest stations. George said it would be really great if we could work a 6 on 75. Yep! California would really indeed be

something to have on the old log sheet. Yes, in those days in was a paper log.

About 3 or 4 am lo and behold a W6 gives us a call. But wait! Get the exchange; get the exchange. Be sure the section is for sure 6-land. The guy come back with a W6 and 4A and SCV: Santa Clara Valley!! Whoa that's it all right. Give him ours; don't lose that W6. "We are 6A, Va." We held our collective breaths. "QSL, KX4W. 73 de W6xxx" WOW!! Hi-fives were going all around in the middle of the night.

I will miss George all right. He wasn't the best DXer or contester, didn't have the fastest CW fist, maybe not the best conversationalist. George was always quick with a howdy and a big smile, a helping hand when needed and an all around good person. What more can another ask of a friend. 73, George, CUL.

## **MORE NEW MEMBERS**

by John, K2VPR

Please welcome Mark Hatcher, N0NKA to MVARC membership. Mark is an extra class licensee and I have just received his e-application.

Another warm welcome goes to Tom Talleur to the "inner circle" of MVARC membership. I have received Tom's e-application today. Tom's call is KI4BXQ and he is a newly licensed, holding a technician class license. Tom's email address is KI4BXQ@arrl.net.

Be sure to join us for all MVARC activities, the net on Tuesday evenings, the Coast Guard Station and too many more to list at this time. Epecially be sure not miss the MVARC Christmas Party at the Old Country Buffet on Rt. 1 South of Alexandria on Thursday, Dec 11 starting at about 7:00 pm.

## **WANT TO BECOME AN AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR?**

by John, WZ4A

**Qualify for the entry level Amateur Radio Technician Class License from the FCC**

- No Morse Code Required
- Just four weekend classes including the Exam
- Open to the Public.

### **Sponsor**

SCOUTING VENTURE CREW 80 and the MOUNT VERNON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

### **When**

Four Successive Saturdays in January and February 2004

January 17 - 10:00 AM - Noon (Orientation and Study Materials Distribution)

January 24 - 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM (Instruction)

January 31 - 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM (Instruction)

February 7 - 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM (Instruction, Review and Exam)

### **Where**

First Christian Church - 2723 King Street - Alexandria, VA

(Near the intersection with Janey's Lane)

### **Cost**

\$20 (Cost of Supplied Materials Only - 1 textbook plus CD-ROM - Yours to Keep!)

Additional tax-deductible donations to Crew 80 are always welcome!

### **Age**

No Limit (parental accompaniment recommended under age 14)

### **Instruction Method**

Textbook-reading assignments combined with personal and videotape

instruction and computer-based practice exam question review. You keep the textbook and CD-ROM.

They are great references!

### Course Description

Everything you need to know to get an Amateur Radio Operators Technician

Class license without having to learn the Morse Code. Fundamentals of electricity, electronic circuit theory, electronic components, radio theory and electromagnetic wave propagation, antennas, feed lines, amateur radio operating procedures, practices and equipment, and FCC rules and regulations.

### How to Sign Up

Pre-register anytime but no later than January 4, 2003. By email to [venturecrew80@yahoo.com](mailto:venturecrew80@yahoo.com) ", or by phone at 703-960-9301 between 7-9 PM.

Provide Name, Address, Phone Number and Email address. The registration fee (cash preferred) will be collected at the first session on January 17.

### Questions

Email to "[venturecrew80@yahoo.com](mailto:venturecrew80@yahoo.com)", or call any of the following:

Demi Pulas K4BSA 703-820-2534

Bill Stewart W2BSA 703-642-8942

Dick Harman WA4USB 703-971-5477

Bill Schmitt KD4CNS 703-960-9301

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First Christian Church  
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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS  
Alexandria, VA 22302

[www.w3bsa.org](http://www.w3bsa.org)

## I WAS GOING HOW FAST?

by Ron, W8RJL  
from the Yahoo Ft100 Reflector

### HOW TO DETERMINE CODE SPEED ON NEW TRANSCEIVERS WITH SOFTWARE MENUS

I believe you can make your own calibration chart. The word "PARIS" is the perfect "word" for testing Morse code speed. If the word PARIS is sent five times in exactly one minute with perfect dit length, dah length, and spacing the speed is 5 WPM. If you send the word PARIS 10 times in a minute it is 10 WPM etc. Even if you can't send perfect Morse code it will give you a place to start on your calibration.

Another way to get a feel for speed is to match the speed of W1AW code practice transmissions. They always send the same thing when they start and when they announce a speed change. If you listen to W1AW code practice transmissions you can hear perfect Morse code. Try to mimic what you hear. "QST QST QST DE W1AW, THE FOLLOWING CODE PRACTICE WILL BE AT 5, 7.5, 10, AND 13 WPM" or something like that.

I wish everyone could send like W1AW. NOTE: DO NOT USE YOUR TRANSMITTER TO SEND ALONG WITH W1AW AS THERE MIGHT BE SOME RF OUTPUT EVEN IF YOU SET THE POWER TO ZERO. Use a code practice oscillator or some radios will let you key the side tone with out activating the transmitter. I don't have time to convert the FT100 [menu] numbers to WPM but you should be able to look at your WATCH sweep second hand and send "PARIS" into a dummy load and figure it out close enough.

*(This is a great way to be sure of your code speed. Come by the Old Country Buffet on Rt. 1 in Hybla*

*Valley for the MVARC Christmas Party to discuss this and many other fascinating subjects. Its on Dec. 11 which is the second Thursday of the month in lieu of the regular meeting. CU there. ed.)*

## FREQUENCY FRED

Meet Frequency Fred...  
The man we all dread.

He tunes up on the spot you are using.  
Then calls CQ, right over you-  
A practice we find unamusing

There's a rare DX station and you have his location  
But it's tough as his signal's not strong-  
But along comes our Fred, in a manner ill bred,  
And tunes on the spot loud and long.

Without any doubt, this arrogant lout  
Won't listen for a moment or two,  
To see if it's clear to go on the air-  
Could this be a portrait of you?  
From "Break-in" 1981

## TOP TEN REASONS TO BECOME A DXER

10. Can't tell the difference between poor condx and tinitus.
9. Another reason to put more antennas.
8. A real reason to operate contests.
7. Away to use up those QSL Cards with your misspelled name.
6. You don't like the new TV line up.
5. Use that packet station for something useful.
4. Need QSLs and awards to cover up bad paint job on walls.
3. Enjoy the challenge; enjoy the hunt; enjoy the sitting down.
2. Make your 9th grade geography class finally pay off.
1. Two words: New Radios!

## NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS...

A Ham Radio Operator's Night before Christmas...

Twas the night before Christmas,  
And all through two-meters,  
Not a signal was keying up  
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up  
From the tower, quite high,  
To catch the weak signals  
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Tech-Pluses,  
Took their HT's to bed,  
And dreamed of the day  
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,  
I plugged in the key,  
And we tuned 40 meters  
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged  
by a signal with power.  
It smoked a small diode,  
and, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,  
And with all she could muster  
Logged a spot of the signal  
On the DX PacketCluster,

While I ran to the window  
And peered up at the sky,  
To see what could generate  
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,  
But the moon made it gleam -  
A flying sleigh, with an  
Eight element beam,

And a little old driver  
who looked slightly mean.  
So I thought for a moment,

That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa,  
The Santa of Hams.  
On a mission, this Christmas  
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,  
Then stopped in his track,  
And he slid down the coax  
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid  
Behind stacks of CQ,  
This Santa of hamming  
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk  
Of paper and parts,  
And filled out all my late QSLs  
For a start.

He ran copper braid,  
Took a steel rod and pounded  
It into the earth, till  
The station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,  
Resoldered connections,  
Cranked down modulation,  
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes  
In my linear amp...  
(Never worked right before --  
Now it works like a champ).

A new, low-pass filter  
Cleaned up the TV.  
He corrected the settings  
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer  
That would not compute,  
And he backed up the hard drive  
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep  
In the bag that he brought,

And he pulled out a big box.  
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?  
A Yaesu, for me?!"  
(If he thought I'd been bad  
it might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate Station!  
How could I deserve this?  
Could it be all those hours  
that I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up  
And in record time, quickly  
Worked 100 countries,  
All down on 160.

I should have been happy,  
It was my call he sent.  
But the cards and the postage  
Will cost two month's rent!

He made final adjustments,  
And left a card by the key:  
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.  
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,  
Looked me straight in the eye,  
Punched a code on the pad,  
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,  
And the pile-up was big,  
But a card from St. Nick  
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final  
came over the air.  
It was copied all over.  
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed  
What a ham might expect,  
"Merry Christmas to all,  
And to all, good DX."

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