

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



Volume 16

FEBRUARY 2003

Number 02

Ye Olde RF Output

MEETING NOTICE FEBRUARY 13, 2003

7:30 PM

INOVA MOUNT VERNON HOSPITAL

2501 PARKERS LANE
ALEXANDRIA, VA

SECOND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
MVARC MEETS ON THE SECOND
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH EXCEPT
IN DECEMBER

HAPPENINGS

February 13 - MOUNT VERNON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB monthly meeting. Held at INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital Second Floor Conference Room on Parker's Lane. See you there!

February 4,11,18,25 - 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!

February 22 - 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.

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

AUTOPATCH AVAILABLE TO
MEMBERS

MVARC HOME PAGE:
<http://www.mvarc.org>

**NOTICE--VE EXAM LOCATION
THE FEBRUARY 8, 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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MINUTES JANUARY 9, 2003 MEETING

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

Everyone introduced themselves. We welcomed our guests, Joseph Tripp, KG4WMP; Joseph Stahl, KG4WNJ; and Vic Blanchard, KG4WNI. Approval of the November 14, 2002 Meeting Minutes was deferred by a motion that carried. John, K2VPR gave the Treasurer's Report.

Committee/Event Reports

ARES - Steve, K3IZ provided an INOVA Hospital update on the status of the antennas. He reminded everyone about the Alexandria President's Day parade in February.

VE EXAM - John, WZ4A announced that after more than 10 years, the location of the VE Exams was changing to the First Christian Church in Alexandria. Lee District Park could no longer accommodate our schedule nor provide the facility. The motion to send a \$100 donation to the First Christian Church in January and August of each year we use their facilities for VE Exams carried.

FAR - Mary, N4TCI handed out Pins to those who helped at this year's FALLFEST in Maryland.

REPEATER - The repeater is up and working but the Construction is still not completed so we'll have to wait until it is before everything settles down.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH - Bob, KT4KS said two people are considering taking his position. If anyone is interested taking Bob's place,

please contact him. Bob said he's advertised the Special Event at Mount Vernon in February. The President said he would check on the Mount Vernon facilities.

PROGRAMS - Bob, K130 got the first part of the year covered as far as programs are concerned, however, he needs help for the second part of the year. Please consider giving Bob a hand or some ideas about programs.

Business

The President set up a Nominating Committee with Bob, K130 as the Chair.

The motion for the Club to have a table at the Richmond Hamfest, February 9 carried.

We need to transmit our Logo to AUTOCALL to go with our AUTOCALL article.

We will determine what to do concerning our Domain Registration for MVARC.ORG at the February meeting.

Mr. Dan Blasberg, FAR President spoke on the history of FAR and updated us on what's happening with AUTOCALL and the Scholarship program. The motion to reimburse the two guests who were charged \$2 each for their issues of AUTOCALL by Mr. Blasberg carried.

ISN'T THAT SPECIAL

By Bob, KT4KS

On Feb. 15th & 16, Saturday and Sunday, the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club will be operating a "Special Event" from the grounds of the Mount Vernon Estate. See http://www.mvarc.org/info/special_event.html The club will have 3-5 radio stations, and will be making contacts with other hams throughout the world. We will be using both Voice and Morse code. If any of you are interested in getting on one of these radios, and actually talking to people around the country, please feel free to give me a call. If you'd like just to come by to just take a look, that's fine too. You may bring your friends, kids,

Mom, Dad, husband, wife and/or even a honey. Yep, we'll put your little kids on the air! This is an opportunity for all of you to have fun, and to determine if this hobby might interest your families. If asked, we will explain to you how to obtain a license by taking a 35 question multiple choice test given locally every 4th Saturday morning. Oh, the youngest ham in Utah was 6 years old. I know we've passed at least one 8 year old on a Sat morning.

Generally, club members set up antennas in the trees about 8:30AM. We are up and running by 10:30AM, and transmit till 4PM. Saturday is the best day for visitors to come. We usually have around 5-10 people at the site at any one time. We will be set up at the Mount Vernon greenhouse, only about 200 yards from the traffic circle in front of Mount Vernon that most of you have seen in the past. Parking is on the grounds by the greenhouse, so no walking is necessary. There is no charge for us to enter the grounds to reach the greenhouse.

This Special Event is listed in QST Magazine, so other hams will be looking to make contacts. Any of those hams who mails the club a SASE will received a 9x11 Certificate. Special Events are common in ham radio. See:<http://www.arrl.org/contests/spev.html>

Entrance is to the right of the Mt. Vernon Inn (going south) which has a gate. After entering the entrance, turn immediately right which will take you to a long maroon and gray building with lots of parking, and push the call box, if the gate is not open. Tell them you are a member of the Special Events Station.

Please make an effort to come by and see how we as hams do these things. I'm sure it will be well worth your time. C U There

FRANK'S BACK

By Frank, K4EC

As some of you may have heard, I underwent spinal surgery Thursday, Jan. 9th. It seems that this procedure has fixed the back (and pain) problems that became very severe in early December. Thank you to all you have asked about me. I would like to thank Dick, WA4USB, for keeping the repeater going through a difficult time. I have been out of commission, out of work, and unable to do anything.

I went back to the neurosurgeon today for a post op visit and all seems to be mending AOK. I will still be out of work until after my next follow-up with him on February 11th. I will slowly be able to become more active before then, but no heavy lifting.

I would like to apologize about not keeping up the MVARC mail reflector and the web page current. Since we are currently single threaded in this area, only me doing the web page, I could not call on someone to keep those things going like we did with the repeater.

If anyone has any expertise in this area and would like to volunteer to help out in the future, please let me know. If I ever got hit by a bus, it would take a lot of work to find out about accessing and updating the web page and mail list.

Anyway, although I am tired and still limited in what I am able to do, I look forward to slowly getting back into things.

MISSED THE LAST CALLBOOK CD...

From Frank, K4EC

From ARRL web page:

Radio Amateur Callbook's Flying Horse to Soar Again. The famous flying horse logo of the Radio Amateur Callbook will rise from the proverbial ashes to soar again. A German firm, ITfM--Infor-

mations-Technologie f Menschen or Information Technology for People--has purchased the rights to the Radio Amateur Callbook from its former owners, who grounded the flying horse last summer due to flagging sales. The sale includes rights to the flying horse logo and the Callbook archive. ITfM inked the deal January 15.

Full Story - <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2003/02/04>

"X" DOES NOT MARK THE SPOT FOR HAMS

By Bob KT4KS

MVARC member Ruth, KU4WH once expressed to me that hams whose call sign suffixes begin with the letter "X" get fewer QSL cards than hams whose calls begin with any of the remaining 25 letters. Ruth would know as she is a former QSL Bureau manager, and was once responsible for call signs in Four-Land whose suffixes began with the letter "X".

Anyway, I recently examined my 4 1/2 year old log book that includes over 3,000 CW contacts, and determined that she may indeed correct, at least when involving CW operators. My log indicated that suffixes that began with the letter "X" included the least number of contacts with only 63, followed by the letters "Q" and "U" with 67 and 84 contacts respectively. In comparison, the most popular beginning suffix letter was the letter "B" with 198, followed by the letters "A" and "L" with 175 and 164 contacts respectively.

I'm not too sure what this means, as the letter "U" is sent much more easily than the letter "L". There must be something less appealing about the letter "X" when it comes to CW hams. Clearly, "X" does not mark the spot for many hams.

ARRL CONCLUDES 5-MHz EXPERIMENTS, AWAITS FCC DECISION ON NEW BAND

With its experimental license having demonstrated the desirability and feasibility of a domestic 5 mhz amateur allocation, the ARRL has allowed WA2XSY to expire on Jan. 1, 2003 rather than request renewal. Last May, the FCC proposed going along with the ARRL's 2001 request for a new domestic secondary HF allocation at 5.25 to 5.4 MHz.

15 Amateur Radio clubs and individual amateurs took part in the 5-MHz experimental operation that began in Jan. 1999 and largely concluded in 2002. ARRL chose not to request another renewal of the WA2XSY license because it already had obtained sufficient information to justify its petition for the band.

In a letter filed with the FCC last August after the comment deadline had passed, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration recommended that the Commission not go forward with the 5-MHz proposal. The NTIA said several government agencies with allocations in the proposed spectrum had expressed reservations about allowing amateurs to use the band.

The ARRL has been working with the government to resolve the impasse. The ARRL has called the 5 MHz allocation an urgent priority of the Amateur Service and said that a new band at 5 MHz would aid emergency communication activities by filling a propagation gap between 80 and 40 meters. In the meantime, experimental operations on 5 MHz continue on a very limited basis in the United Kingdom and in Canada.

ARRL Bulletin 2
January 3, 2003

OUT OF BAND - OUT OF LUCK

By Howard, WD5DBC

For those that are using amateur equipment in non-amateur services. The following FCC enforcement letter was sent to a ham that sold a modified radio and was dumb enough to advertise that fact--At any rate, the FCC seems to be paying attention.

"RE: Amateur Radio license KK7BEN: Advisory Notice Use of Non-Certified Equipment for Public Safety Communications Case #EB-2002-503

"Dear Mr. Ng:

"It has come to our attention that you recently sold on eBay radio equipment, Item Number 1940518254, advertised as follows:

"YAESU VX-1R Dual Band HT, software modified to RX/TX out of band, can talk with FRS and GMRS radios.

"Please be advised that all equipment used in the FRS and GMRS services must be certified by the Commission and each unit must bear a certification label. The use of modified Amateur Radio units on FRS, GMRS, or any frequency in other services, would be against the Commission's rules and would result in enforcement action by the Commission against the user."

For other enforcement letters from the FCC see the ARRL web site.

NOW AND FUTURE HF TRANSCEIVERS

By Jim Benedict, N8FVJ

From eham.net:

I find it interesting to guess the design and marketing of new to be released HF transceivers. I am using the 'guess' word strongly! The majority of the amateur community wants a superior performing HF transceiver at 1990 or better prices. Amateur equipment

engineering and design costs has been partly supported by commercial and industrial sales for years. I believe the manufactures are not as supportive of this 'in-house give away'. Amateur equipment will continue to depend upon commercial technology for advancement.

DSP, the low cost, multi-task alternate- Digital processing has in part replaced the expensive I.F. crystal and mechanical filters now. As the overall technology improves and the microprocessors become less expensive, the expensive crystal and mechanical I.F. filters will go away. As for features, the software already replaces an array of filters.

FT-100D vs FT-897- The Yaesu FT-100D vs the FT-897 is a good example. The FT-897 is for the most part (I believe) a FT-817 with a linear amp. I would rather own a FT-100D with for about \$200 less if I am correct that the FT-897 has the FT-817 receiver. Most amateurs would prefer the new FT-897! The first released FT-100 had a history of problems. Interesting when a new product is 99.9% well engineered and the .1% shows up. The FT-100D is now well upgraded with engineering revisions. I would not be wary of a FT-100D purchase now. The FT-817 has had much better success regarding manufacturing, warranty costs and I believe sales. The fun factor of both radios is great, but a history of repair does reduce the fun factor and sales. I believe the FT-100D time may be limited as we know it. The price is just too low for such a high-performance radio. Perhaps a repackaging is forthcoming with DSP filtering replacing the FT-100D I.F. crystal filters. After all, the engineering has been paid for. The FT-100D with expanded DSP capacity in a FT-847 base type configuration would be an improvement. Now, the FT-100D would be a \$1800 radio just like the IC-746 PRO with DSP filtering and some FT-847 features included. The FT-920 is a great radio. Its performance is dangerously close to a FT-1000MKV when sold

at the low price. Yaesu has elected to keep the \$1200 'slot' alive. Where does the FT-840 fit in? At \$600, a low profit item for Yaesu.

IC-746 vs IC-746 PRO- This was a good marketing move for ICOM. As the IC-746 pricing became lower, ICOM had to replace the radio, lets say upgrade the radio with DSP and use the well known 'PRO' nameplate. I believe the IC-746 PRO was introduced somewhat on the expensive side, however demand will increase. History proves this to be true. The interesting marketing move was where is the \$1200 HF radio? The IC-706 MKIIG is the compact alternate to the FT-100D. I believe sales has been superior to the FT-100D. Perhaps a 'all options' IC-706 MKIIG fills the profit gap somehow and ICOM does not want the TS-570SG/FT-920 battleground. I am not sure of the IC-706 MKIIG future. Again, pricing is very attractive for us amateurs, but perhaps not as much for ICOM. As for the IC-718, another low profit, entry level HF sharing the IC-706 DSP technology as an option.

Kenwood TD-570DG & TS-570SG- This was a very smart move for Kenwood. First, the mobile TS-50S HF engineering and tooling cost was paid for by Kenwood. The IC-706 came to market with an offering from Yaesu in the near future guaranteed. Why battle it out. Instead, offer the TS-570D with a TS-570S as an option. The successful TS-570 series is reasonably compact, yet had an antenna tuner. The TS-570S filled the \$1200 market range as well with 6 meters included. DSP upgrades created the 'G' series and sales are good. The costly TS 950SDX had to go like the FT-1000D did later and the excellent TS-870S was available. Minor engineering changes improved the TS-870S performance and agreed, it would have been better if in place on the first models. Now, enter the TS-2000. Interesting radio to take the \$1800 position and offer VHF/UHF capacity. The only issue was the slightly high price that

had been adjusted later. Along the same thinking as the TS-570D, offer 1.2 GHz as an option. I am unsure of Kenwood's future offerings. I know R&D is either very guarded or minimal at this time.

TEN TEC- Very smart marketing moves for TEN TEC as well. Riding on the superior performance of the dated OMNI series, out comes the Pegagus and Jupiter. These are not hot OMNIs, but priced low enough. DSP technology everywhere, even on-line software upgrades for free! The '6N2' VHF transceiver is available next and finally, the Orion about to appear. The Orion may out perform the most other radios using a mix of current technology DSP and crystal filtering. At the high-end of HF radios, the cost is not much of a jump from the aging Omni series! If this radio gets a superior performance handle on the IC-756 PROII, it is going to get very interesting! Have fun.

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