

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



Volume 16

JUNE 2003

Number 06

Ye Olde RF Output

MEETING NOTICE JUNE 12, 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

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

AUTOPATCH AVAILABLE TO
MEMBERS

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

HAPPENINGS

June 12 - MOUNT VERNON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB monthly meeting. Held at INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital Second Floor Conference Room on Parker's Lane. See you there!

June 3,10,17,24 - 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!

June 28 &29 - Field Day at Pohick Bay Regional Park. Come and join us to help setup and tear down, or operate, or visit, and be at the Picnic around 5:00 p.m. On Saturday. Bring a covered dish!

June 29 - MVARC Breakfast will be held this month only at the Pohick Bay Field Day Site early morning.

NOTICE--VE EXAM LOCATION THE JUNE 14, 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 MAY 8, 2003 MEETING

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

Everyone introduced themselves. Glenn, W4OCC read the Minutes of the April 10, 2003 meeting. The motion to approve the Minutes carried. John, K2VPR gave the Treasurer's Report. For the month of April, \$290.00 was collected in Annual Dues and there was \$78.86 in outflows.

Committee/Event Reports

ARES - Steve, K3IZ reminded everyone that Field Day is the fourth full Weekend in June (June 28-29). The usual 12 campsites have been rented at Pohick Bay Regional Park. This year several steps were taken to avoid the noise problem with the generators we had last year. It's not too early to start thinking about the Marine Corps Marathon. Steve gave us an update on where we stand with setting up communications at the Mount Vernon Hospital. He said an antenna is needed at the INOVA Healthplex in Franconia.

FAR - John, WQ4L said the number of AUTOCALL subscriptions was going up and the FAR was pleased.

REPEATER - Frank, K4EC said, "It's working...barely". He said Dick, WA4USB has been doing a yeoman's job keeping the MVARC repeater up and running and should be recognized for his efforts. Work continues on the problems. The repeater committee is working on alternatives and will

submit a proposal concerning either more motorola equipment or another commercial repeater. There's a set of Duplexers at Bob's, KT4KS, and the Venturing Crew has a cabinet. However, there's a problem getting them up to the level that's required at the repeater site. They are looking for rigging equipment or waiting until someone else needs to take stuff up to the same level. If you hear the repeater is off, please call Dick, WA4USB.

MVARC/CG TISCOM LIAISON - Frank, K4EC said Dick, N4YDP will be down at TISCOM operating for Armed Forces Day this weekend. Frank said Dick picked up the equipment at NRL today.

PROGRAM - Bob, KI3O said tonight's program will be presented by the Venturing Crew. Next month's program will be on Field Day and in July thanks to John, WQ4L the Club will tour the Cox Communications facility in Merrifield in lieu of the meeting at the Hospital. Maps will be available. We need to let them know how many will be attending. The host at Cox is a Ham.

Business

Currently, there's 43 members that paid their dues. 152 members paid dues last year.

Mount Vernon days is on May 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Walt Whitman School. Volunteers are needed to help with MVARC's display.

Steve, K3IZ passed around a tool to see if anyone could figure what it was used for as part of Show and Tell. No one knew. The tool was used to align the type bus on an IBM typewriter.

The Club will tailgate at the Manassas Hamfest.

Thanks went to Bob, KT4KS this month's Cookie Monster. John, K2VPR volunteered for next month.

The meeting adjourned and we all enjoyed an awesome presentation by our Venturing Crew. Besides being very interesting and informative, we got to know the Venturing Crew members a

whole lot better and hopefully they got to know us a whole lot better too. Thanks.

MVARCERS BRING HAM RADIO INFORMATION TO LOCAL RESIDENTS!

By Bob KT4KS

"I'm not a thinker, I'm a doer", exclaimed Frank, AA4ZS, who successfully organized the MVARC table at the Mount Vernon Days Event on May 17 at the Walt Whitman Middle School, located across the street from the Mount Vernon Hospital.

The yearly event was sponsored by a Mount Vernon coalition of local merchants and civic associations, and included a military parade, outdoor ceremony, food concession and many display tables that provided information for the public. The display tables included locally based charitable groups, church groups, and even a vote-seeking organization of local politicians. Like last year, the tables were set up inside the school due to the weather.

By 9:00 AM on this drizzly morning, Frank, Leila, WN4PP and Club President Carol, WA4GFW had the club table set up immediately adjacent the front entrance. The club display included: a 40M Ten Tec QRP transceiver; Icom 745 with MFJ Versa Tuner II and microphone; two meter mobile; and assortment of bug, straight key, and single lever paddles that were all electrically powered and connected to a working speaker. In addition, a plethora of ARRL brochures, ham radio comic books, and ham radio magazines were neatly placed on the table as freebies, having labels affixed thereon that provided both MVARC mailing address and club web site.

Carol, VP Paul, AA8O and Bob, KT4KS all wore their MVARC shirts, while Leila wore an even louder shirt with the phrase

"Amateur Radio" boldly printed across its front. Naturally, the MVARC banner was hung along the front of the table.

The club table drew many people, including both adults and children. One visitor was a member of the Fairfax Fire Department, who stated that his Dad is a ham. The fireman admitted that he is not a ham, and said that he could still remember ham equipment and tower on his Dad's 10+ acre Springfield estate. The fireman must have been a bit older than he looked, as he stated that his Dad paid \$279/acre for the land years ago. Another adult visitor competently tried his hand on the working straight key, expressing that he had not done that since WW II. Jim, W4HRT and Charlie, KE6SGV, stopped to identify themselves as hams and to say "Hello".

Adjacent to the keyers was positioned a sign stating, "Send your name in Morse Code", and in response at least 4 youngsters actually gave the straight key a try. These youngsters used a Morse Code chart to find the combinations of dits and dahs that represent the individual letters in their names. Those who appeared a bit less assertive were entertained by having their names sent for them by MVARCers at the table. The keyers were clearly the biggest draw to the table, with the "Archie" ham radio comic books being a close second.

Many women were drawn to the club's table, one YL asking if ham radios would be useful for a neighborhood watch. In this instance, Paul exhibited his tiny dual band 500 milliwatt Yaesu HT to the inquiring mind. Another YL who lives in Augusta, WV asked about ham radios for her son. A third YL, who resides as far away as Damascus, VA also obtained information for her family. Another YL, Susan, stopped by to say that she knows a ham whose first name is John, who retired from the FCC, and who now deals with sound recordings. That individual was subsequently determined to be MVARC's own John,

WQ4L.

Everyone who stopped at the table walked away with at least one ARRL ham radio brochure for later study. Many walked away with both a brochure and MVARC flyer. Many of the handouts had Bob's phone number written on them. Many times, Bob told the visitors not to lose the information, and to feel free to call in a week or even a year, but to definitely call when interested. In addition to the contact information, each person walked away with the knowledge that they are only a 35 question multiple choice test away from becoming a ham. Additionally, it was made clear that children have successfully passed the multiple choice test, that people do not have to learn Morse Code to become a ham operator, and that most hams today only talk across town on attractive looking HTs and mobile rigs.

Towards the end of the day's event, Leila expressed that she "found it very interesting to see the young children and older people who stopped by the table to try their hands at sending their names in code". Carol, who also had a good time, stated that "this is a fine affair" and that "we had a relatively good turnout despite no Chilli dogs".

During the event, both of MVARC's newest big shots, Prez Carol and VP Paul, discussed the possibility of having a "Kid's meeting" for the club. Frank suggested that a Saturday morning meeting time might be preferable to the normal evening meeting time for such a meeting.

About 2:00 PM the numbers began to dwindle, so all helped to pack Frank's equipment away into his ham truck. Table organizer Frank proclaimed the effort a "great success", and expressed his desire to have another MVARC table next year at the Mount Vernon Days Event. The event proved to be fun for all who volunteered, hopefully will inspire new ham radio operators, and once again showed that MVARCers who care will work to share.

TO ALL PAST MARINE CORP MARATHON VOLUNTEERS

by Rick, N4ASX

Amateur Radio has again been asked to volunteer to support the 2003 Marine Corps Marathon. Last year you all did an outstanding job; I've had no problems brought to my attention and a great deal of positive comments about your professionalism and capabilities. At this time, I don't have any requested changes in operation from the Marine Corps, so all of the old assignments are available.

Rip Smith, K3XO has initiated his website for signup. It's http://www.k3xo.net/mcm_form.html. Please let me know what type of assignment you would like and if there are any other considerations. For more information on the Marine Corps Marathon see www.marinemarathon.com

I would also appreciate you passing the word to any others who would like to operate at this year's event. I've had very few comments or feedback from last year, but there are a few problems I will try to address.

I will be working on cleaning up the briefing package this year. If you have any changes or recommended inputs, corrections or comments, please send them to me. I'm looking for some help this year in managing this effort. In fact, if you would like to take over in 2004 let me know! I need the following volunteers early:

1 - Race Net Coordinator - Makes sure that assignments to mile markers, food stops, water stops are covered, that all are equipped as needed to cover the net from their assigned locations.

2 - Aid Station Coordinator (Voice) - Make sure that the assignments to the 8 Aid Stations are covered, that all are equipped as needed to cover the net from their assigned locations.

3 - APRS Coordinator - APRS has become an important part of the support, we will need at least 7 APRS trackers with voice capability. This is the race lead vehicle, straggler buses and Tail End Charlie. We will also need three display APRS terminals at IWO, Medical and Net Control.

4 - Packet / USMC LAN interface / Coordinator - Arrange for packet operators at each of the Aid Stations, Net Control location, Prime Medical and with the Marine Corps LAN so that injured runners can be tracked.

5 - IWO JIMA LIAISON Coordinator - Responsible for the amateurs working with various Marine Corps staff officers at the start / finish. These include.

6 - Top Doc operator This operator is a shadow and should have some EMT or Paramedic training.

7 - Command Staff liaison - This will allow Race Director access to our nets and will also be operating an APRS Display.

8 - Prime Medical they will link the field hospital to the aid station net and top doc.

9 - Police Liaison.

Please pass the word to friends. We will need about 95 amateur radio operators this year.

Rick Bunn, N4ASX (703)317-9305
N4ASX@ARRL.NET

GREET NEW MEMBERS ONE AND ALL

by John, K2VPR

Please welcome aboard Mark Jones, KG4YDZ, and his son Austin, KG4YDY. Mark and Austin are new technician class licensees and joined the club at the May meeting.

Another family knows a good deal when they see one. welcome the Jordans to the MVARC membership. They are: David, WA3GIN; Rachel, N1FSU and their son Tim, KF4QQM.

HEY MOE,

by Bob, K13O

As you know I'm trying to keep track of the present whereabouts of our members.

Recently learned that Gary Moe, K4MOE, has moved to Pearce, AZ. Gary says that he will try to attend club functions when TDY to the Washington, DC area. We wish you well Gary in your new digs and look for to seeing you when you back to the area. 73!

ELECTRICAL TAPE TIPS

by KD8FF

From eham.net

Did you ever notice that electrical tape, like a hammer, comes with no instructions? Perhaps the makers figure that everyone automatically knows all the "tricks of the trade". Read on, you may pick up a new wrinkle.

Vinyl electrical tape has been around since 1945, but for a long time after it was introduced, black cotton friction tape was still used for most applications, partly because of the cost difference, partly because of tradition. I remember tearing long strips of half-inch friction tape into quarter-inch wide strips as a cost savings. A unique feature of the adhesive on the friction tape is that it gives off an eerie blue light when the tape is peeled from the roll. It is bright enough to be easily seen in a darkened room. Aside from that trivial fact today's friction tape is used for special applications only as a topcoat for delicate rubber tape as used on high voltage cable splices. Modern materials are superior in every respect. The first vinyl tape I ever saw on the job was gray in color, not black, I suppose it was a telephone company spec.

Today I recommend using

only Scotch 33+ tape for all ham radio uses, except as noted at the end, as it has predictable characteristics and is good for every indoor/outdoor application. The temperature range is 0 F to 220 F. Make sure to get the type with the + sign, as there is also a plain type 33. 3M also makes product called Temflex, but again type 33+ is suitable for every application, especially outdoors.

When taping over coax connectors, or coax splice kits, it is helpful to first wrap the connector with a self-amalgamating Silicone Tape product. The 3M version is Type 70, and Radio Shack also sells it in small rolls under the part number 64-2336.

This is NOT the same product as the coax-seal, or Radio Shack #278-1645 "sealant for RF connectors". I do not care for that sticky material, dum-dum, or any other putty type material that is hard to remove later. The silicone-tape peels off cleanly and easily, so easily in fact that it needs to be covered with a topcoat of Type 33+ to protect it. This two layer approach, when applied as explained below will give a waterproof seal that is weather resistant, and stays flexible for years, but can easily be removed if changes need to be done to the system.

Any time you wrap tape on a threaded component, make sure you wrap it in the direction that tends to tighten the screw threads, not the other way. That means if you are taping a splice, for example two PL-259's screwed into a barrel (PL-258/83-1J) you must tape each connector from the cable end to the barrel center.

Always run the tape "uphill" that is from the smaller diameter to the larger diameter. Start at the smallest end, make several tight turns of one quarter lap for a good seal, then run the tape in one-half laps to the center, with moderate stretch so the diameter of the 33+ is reduced to about five eighths of it's original width. On the last few turns reduce the stretch tension until it is

zero at the last turn, to prevent flagging. Use a scissors to cut the tape end square, as a knife or ripping will add stretch to the last lap and cause it to come loose. Repeat the same strategy from the other side, and meet in the center (if it is a splice kit), overlap the left hand side tape with the right hand side tape. If the connection is to be removed at a relatively short time-frame, fold the last lap does not stick. If the tape job is permanent, simply lay the last lap down flush. Now for the best-kept secret, spray the entire assembly with clear coat enamel or other dielectric spray. I use Krylon Crystal Clear. The overspray absolutely seals the joint and keeps the ends flat.

Non-electrical uses for electrical tape.

For taping cables to tower legs and other such jobs, consider using the Temflex or straight Type 33 as they both are less expensive and have a slightly higher breaking strength. The superior conformal qualities of the 33+ are not needed in these applications.

One of the most common non electrical uses of vinyl tape is to secure rolls of wire, bundles of tubing, cables to rungs, and many other odd jobs that use the material for other than it's weatherproof or electrical qualities. To tie up a roll of cable, the cheapest grade of black vinyl tape is adequate, except that it leaves a gooey mess behind when removed. The secret here is to make the first full two turns with the sticky side OUT. Then simply twist the tape around on itself and continue making a few more turns with the sticky side IN. This same trick can be used with cellophane tape to secure hardware store bundles of conduit, pipe etc, so that it removes cleanly. Wish I had a nickel for every minute wasted trying to get that sticky mess off copper water pipe before soldering!

Another slick idea Scotch came up with is the color-coded vinyl tape. I've tried many schemes over the years of using red, blue,

green white and other color tapes to identify certain cables, for example coax cables in a bundle run up the tower. After toughly confusing myself, I decided to simply use the white tape, and mark the ID on it with a Sharpie permanent marker. Foolproof, and lasts for years.

A final note, the better tapes like 33+ have a shelf life rating of 5 years, but still be careful of "surplus finds", as the age and storage conditions are unsure. Best to buy fresh tape from a known, trusted source.

TEN MORE UNDENIABLE HAM TRUTHS

from eham.net

by Glenn C. Peck (KE5GK)

(In my humble opinion)

1. A clean ham shack is an oxymoron.
2. The rare DX will be on while you're on vacation.
3. The higher the tower, the greater the TVI complaints.
4. Your grandchildren are more likely to become hams than your children.
5. Hamfest attendance is inversely

related to the price of gasoline.

6. Lightning will always hit the expensive gear first.
7. Whistling "CQ" in the dark deters muggers.
8. The older the ham club president, the fewer young members.
9. Computer Nerds think that Hams are the real weirdos.
10. Junk boxes will never, never contain the last part needed to complete a project.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR CW SPEED

by Jim, AD6WL

You have just passed your code test and now what? You may try listening on the bands and find that the speeds are just to fast for you to even think about trying to copy. This can get very discouraging for a new ham. Many new hams want to operate CW but often find the speeds they hear on the air to be very intimidating. You can just listen to the ARRL CW practice on the air but that gets boring after awhile. There is another option. There is a Yahoo group devoted to QRS CW. This is a great opportunity for new hams to get together with other hams who operate at the same speed and for some of you

experienced CW ops to share information with the group and QRS to make contacts with these new hams. I have found the best way to enjoy CW was to make contacts with other hams. After operating QRS for a while you will notice that your speed will start to increase. The website for the group is: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/QRS> CW/.

Here is a list of the unofficial QRS CW operating frequencies. These frequencies are only a guideline as a place for the group to meet and are not part of any band plan. If you hear a slow speed CQ out there then answer the call and enjoy a relaxed QSO at a slower speed.

1.850
3.700
7.050/7.124
10.125
14.050
21.125/21.150
24.8915
28.160

Most QRS activity seems to be on 7.050 & 14.050.

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