

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



Volume 16

NOVEMBER 2003

Number 11

Ye Olde RF Output

MEETING NOTICE NOVEMBER 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

November 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!

November 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!

November 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:
IN PROGRESS

**NOTICE--VE EXAM LOCATION
THE November 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.

EDITOR

Steve Schneider-K3IZ
8602 Cushman Place
Alexandria, VA 22308
703-780-7248
E-Mail: K3IZ@arrl.net

STAFF

Glenn Bilger-W4OCC
Frank Mackey-K4EC
Bob May-N4LBR
Bob Raevis-KT4KS
Bob Lepelletier-KI3O

MEET YOUR OFFICERS PRESIDENT

Carol Cutchall-WA4GFW
8908 LaGrange Street
Lorton, VA 22079
703-339-5612

E-Mail: cmaxc@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Paul Miller, Jr.-AA8O
8120 Steadman Street
Alexandria, VA 22309
703-780-4064

E-Mail: aa8o@hotmail.com

SECRETARY

Glenn Bilger-W4OCC
5701 Norton Road
Alexandria, VA 22303-1027
703-960-2956

E-Mail: gbilger@prodigy.net

TREASURER

John Tyburski - K2VPR
8625 Woodview Drive
Springfield, VA 22153
703-866-3554

E-Mail: jadam42@att.net

COMMITTEES EDUCATION

John Forrest-WZ4A
703-971-3905

F.A.R. REP

Mary Morris-N4TCI
703-971-3905
Jeannie Rexroad-N4ZGI
703-971-0384

NET MANAGER

George Coyne-N1BV
703-780-8113

ARES

S. Schneider-K3IZ
703-780-7248

REPEATER CHAIR

Frank Mackey - K4EC
703-455-1510

REPEATER TRUSTEES

Steve Schneider-K3IZ
703-780-7248
Jim Claxton-WD4PDP
703-768-7041

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Bob Raevis-KT4KS
703-765-2313

PHOTOGRAPHER

Julie Abrams-KD4WSZ
703-799-9466

PROGRAM

Bob Lepelletier-KI3O
703-912-1695

VE EXAM COORDINATOR

John Forrest-WZ4A
703-971-3905

BOY SCOUT VENTURING CREW SPONSORSHIP

Bill Stewart-W2BSA
703-642-8942

MVARC/ CG TISCOM LIAISON



MINUTES OCTOBER 9, 2003 MEETING

The meeting was held at the INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital and was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by the president. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Everyone introduced themselves. We welcomed new members and guests. Approval of the August and September minutes, as posted on the reflector were approved. John, K2VPR, gave the treasurer's report. He reported a net worth of \$6,966.22. Doc Hyde fund is \$889.67 with the addition of \$50 for the sale of a Model 15 teletype, at the Howard County Fall Fest.

Steve, K3IZ, reported on the ARES activities which included the: October 26 Marine Corp Marathon - starts at 6 a.m. for more info check the Alexandria Radio Club web site, N4ASX, which is point of contact. You need to sign up early to obtain entry for this event, due to security.

John, WZ4A, reported on education, which included: VE Test session on October 11th at the First Christian Church, 2723 King Street Alexandria, VA

Mary, N4TCI, was not present to report on the Foundation for Amateur Radio.

Repeater committee members were not present. Members using the repeater reported that it is operating but the power is low due

to a failed amplifier.

Carol, WA4GFW, reported on the USCG station. During the month of September, several members operated in the Collegiate QSO Party. Operations on Tuesday evenings included checking into the Northern Virginia Traffic Net at 7:30 p.m. and the MVARC ARES net at 8:30 p.m.

Mike, KE4ER, was not present to report on MARS operations.

Bob, KT4KS, reported on the Community outreach. He has reserved a room at the Old Country Buffet, located on route 1, south of Alexandria, on December 10, at 7:30 p.m. He was able to reserve the room without the \$25 deposit. Thank you Bob and thank you Old Country Buffet!

Bob KI3O reported on programs for:

- November 13, Chris Imlay from ARRL
- December 10, holiday party at Old Country Buffet.

Unfinished business addressed the Web Host problem. Carol, WA4GFW, contacted the Quarter Century Wireless Association (QCWA) and determined that they are using QSL.NET as their host. He contacted Al Walker, K3KTJ, at QSL.NET and was able to setup the Web Host for the club at \$35 per year. A review of the August minutes showed that a motion had been passed to reimburse Dick Cramer for the MVARC.NET domain name expense. Treasurer, John, K2VPR, was requested to cut Dick a check. He also reserved the MVARC.CLUB domain name for two years.

Thanks to Bob, KI3O, and his wife Monique for being the Cookie monster for October. George, N1BV, will be the November cookie monster.

Meeting was adjourned.

Ron Rateno, W9WL, district manager ICOM America, presented ICOM Days with hand outs and an enjoyable video presentation of the equipment and the factories in Japan. He fielded many questions of interest to all during the presentation. Our friend Steve, N4SR, from Ham Radio Outlet accompanied him.

Thanks to Carol, WA4GFW and Leila, WN4PP for taking and preparing the October 9 2003 MINUTES in my absence. Glenn-W4OCC

EDITORIAL ON HAM TRADITIONS

by Steve, K3IZ

This could be another subject equivalent to BATTERIES!!! Oh well, I have found it interesting.

Call signs. There are certain ways have grown up over the decades as to how to identify, what to say and when. Many years ago the FCC required that you say both call signs when identifying. Many ops still do that. It is not necessary. Now a days you have to only say your call sign. If you are going to use both that is fine. Remember, always say your call sign last. You are the transmitting station. AS such: WB4EEA, this is K3IZ. or WB4EEA de K3IZ Now, legally, you are required to identify once every ten minutes and at the end of your "communication". That's how the FCC words QSO.

It's not the law anymore to say both. You don't have to. It has become a habit that we will use both call signs during QSOs. At times it does indeed facilitate communications which as communicators that is the point of our being on the air. In a large roundtable saying the call sign of the next person to transmit will lead to much smoother transition. If however, our QSO is on a 2 meter FM repeater and there are only 2 or 3 stations, everyone

knows each other and signals are good just saying "go ahead", "over" or the person's name is just fine. On a repeater if there are a few folks in the roundtable listen for the repeater ID and ID then. Obviously, do this when its your turn; no interfering now. If the roundtable gets large, 4 or more long winded folks, it would be best to ID at the beginning or end of your turn. The discussion or subject matter is what's important. We let IDing get in the way sometimes. Lets not take the opposite tack: never IDing. Be sure to ID properly.

Other modes are different. On a crowded CW band in A ragchew QSO with a distant station with QRM and QRN it is a good idea to use both call signs. Again, it facilitates communications. It really depends upon the situation and clarity of the sigs. If the CW signals are good then you can use the prosign BK dahdididit dahdidah. I have seen and heard ops who have such a command of CW they will be able to go back forth using that prosign, oh, and without a pen and paper in site. What talent! Our own Tom, N4BV is such an OP.

It is interesting that different modes have generated different traditions. HF phone is slightly different from 2 meter FM. With most QSOs using repeaters, the FM signals are quite good. If the signal deteriorates the ops will usually say 73 and try another time. On HF the OPs might try to move up or down the band or tough it out. IDing at this juncture is definitely done as it was in the old days.

HARPING. I am sure that many of you will have noticed if you have heard me on the repeater or at a club meeting say my call sign as K3IZed. yes, Zed. When I was a very young novice lo those many eons ago, I received my first call from the FCC. I was WN4VZI. I took my newly arrived license to show my Elmer, Al Popelarski, W4AHQ. Now Al was a ham of hams. He was an electronic wizard. He really did help extensively on designing and building the first color TV for RCA.

Al told me he knew David Sarnof personally. I believe that to be true. (If you don't know about David Sarnof, do a Google search on him.) Al asked me my new call. I proudly said WN4VZeel. In his deep authoritative voice he said "always say ZED". I knew exactly what he meant.

AL, W4AHQ is now an SK as a lot of the great ones are. I found out he was and is right. As I had that call and now this one, I have found that this tradition is true. This didn't start with me. Other hams with Zs in their calls always say ZED. In starting a QSO using phonetics it will be said that way from other hams, American hams without propting from me. I know all about how the English say ZED as the name for that letter. This is not a British thing its a Ham Radio thing. It does facilitate communications. If said Zee, it can be confusing. A number of letters in the alphabet sound alike: e,g,v,z,c. Was that K3IC, K3IG, K3IZ, K3IE? Saying K3IZed will be clear. you know precisely what was said.

I like traditions. There are many that are being ignored or left by the wayside these days. So if you have a Zee in your call, always say ZED. If you have a QSO with me please use ZED in my callsign: K3IZed. Do you have to? No, this is America. But I'm sure the long gone Elmers would smile down upon us for keeping these traditions alive. This is just one admittedly small one, but part of the greatness of our hobby. The old timers smoothed out the kinks in this communications hobby to find out what worked. Keeping ham radio with the same vigor, enthusiasm, beliefs and traditions they had is what they expected us to pass along. We do have that responsibility if we want Amateur Radio to be with us as we know it. I don't like it when I hear the 2 meter band referenced as 2 meter CB. Let's not let that happen. Take the high road.

REPEATER UPDATE

by Frank, K4EC and the Repeater Committee

I know all of the repeater users have been patiently waiting for some finalization of the MVARC repeater situation, especially since the club voted, a couple of months ago, on spending some money to upgrade the

system. We had plans worked out to fix the current Motorola Micor repeater (vintage 1970s) and to obtain spares for every major part in the repeater so we would not have to wait when we had a failure.

The Micor was donated to MVARC about 1991 and it has served us well. After doing some research for a replacement, we realized that it is still among the best equipment out there unless we wanted to spend many thousands of dollars on a brand new Motorola.

Since the club vote a couple of months ago, we had been given an offer which we could not publicize until we knew it would come to fruition. Consequently, we had held up on replacing the Micor. Sterrett, K4MBE, loaned the club a 100 watt GE amplifier to keep us going. That amp recently bit the dust. Doug, WA3WEP, has another GE amplifier just about ready to go into the repeater. It's installation will probably occur by this weekend. (10/15/03 ed.)

Now for the good news, the Venturing Crew has been instrumental in obtaining a Motorola MSF-5000 (1990s vintage) with complete spares as a donation from a commercial company to MVARC. The MSF-5000 is a completely programmable repeater. The repeater committee picked up the new (previously used) equipment on Monday. We are making arrangements to re-program the repeater to our frequencies and interface the repeater with our controller.

Folks, please be patient. This will take a while to complete

and get the repeater installed at the repeater site. But I think that you will all be pleased with the final result.

MVARC WELCOMES CHRIS IMLAY, W3KD FOR THEIR NOVEMBER PROGRAM

By Bob, K130

Mark your calenders for Thursday, November 13th, 2003!!! Our guest speaker will be the ARRL's General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, (who also practices communications law in general). In attendance will be Dennis Bodson, W4PWF, ARRL Roanoke Division Director; Tom Abernethy, W3TOM, MDC Section Manager, Carl A. Clements, W4CAC, VA Section Manager, Tom Gregory, N4NW, VA Section Emergency Coordinator, Brian Bayus, N1KC, VA Official Observer Coordinator, Howard Cunningham, WD4DBC, Fairfax County EC, etc., etc.

CW KNUCKLEBUSTERS

by Andy, W1AWB

After being off the air for 35+ years, I took the plunge in May a year ago and took my tests to become licensed again. As soon as I got back on the air, I became interested in the CW end of things and ever since then I have been focusing on this aspect of the hobby.

Lately I have been focusing on sending practice in the hope that I can transcend my woefully wet behind the ears status. I would recommend to anyone starting out in CW that they get the best keyer they can afford. After going through 2 other keyers I broke down and got a Logikey and have been very happy. Practice sending. I have found it useful to practice at several different speeds, both slower and

faster than my usual comfort zone. There is nothing sillier than getting to the 25 wpm level and stumbling all over yourself in a 16 wpm QSO because you never practice sending at slower speeds. I have been guilty of this. Understand that my comments are those of a relative beginner and for other beginners. Also make as many on the air QSOs as possible. I like 40 meters for rag chewing; lots of great ops there at all speeds to help you on your way.

I practice off the air sending from almost any printed material. When I come across a difficult word, I add it to my list of CW knucklebusters. I have found this sending practice also helps me in copying because I learn to recognize letter groups at faster tempos by their characteristic rhythms. If you have 5 minutes free here and there during the day, and a keyer and paddles or a bug or hand key at hand, you can run through a page of your own knucklebusters and see how many you can get through without a mistake. Its really helping me clean things up. Here is a list of just a few that have given me trouble at one time or another. It goes without saying that you would seldom have vivisection or ovoviviparous show up in a QSO but both are on my list because the letter "v" was giving me trouble at higher speeds...sometimes I would send "4" or "u". Anyway, here's a sample. Hope it's helpful to somebody.

halfling
quixotic
shahs
influential
vividness
Roquefort cheese
Khrushchev
Cincinnati
Venezuela
insufficient
your social security number
headquarters
reminiscence
schizophrenia
Leonardo Da Vinci

friendliest
(wishing; added by ed.)

Have fun!

FREE VP5 TRIP FOR A YOUNG HAM

by Tom, W1TO

This year KY1V is sponsoring one young ham operator (18 or under) to join our team and receive an all expense paid trip to operate in the CQWW CW contest with our team as VP5X. You can be from any country in the world to be considered for this opportunity provided you hold a valid amateur radio license in your country and can demonstrate proficiency of 20+ wpm in international Morse code.
09/30/03

Congratulations to Daniel Bradke, W2AU, of Niskayuna, NY. Daniel's essay, operating skills and enthusiasm has moved our contest team to select him to be our first annual VP5X Young Ham Team Member.

Daniel is 14 years old and has held an amateur extra class license since he was 11. Daniel is able to send and receive morse code at 30wpm and will be a significant asset to our team for this years upcoming CQWW CW contest.

Daniel is a member of the Yankee Clipper Contest Club, is a member of FISTS and regularly operates during the ARRL Straight Key Night on New Years Eve.

Daniel claims he is a team player, can handle his own in a pile-up and is eager to learn from more experienced operators. Who knows, maybe he can teach us a thing or two.

This will be Daniel's first DXpedition. We are pleased he will be joining us! Congratulations Daniel

>From the www.vp5x.com website.

SORRY OM BUT UR NOT MAKING THE MACHINE

by Matt, N1RWC

on June 25, 2003

Question Number 1: How often do you hear or make the comment, "Sorry OM, UR Not Making It,"? Question Number 2: "How many times have you been on the receiving end of this statement?" Along with everybody else, I have been on both ends, and here's some tid bits of information to assist with solving whatever problems are causing the ever dreadful "Not Making It" Statement.

In the Perfect world, everyone runs a Millionth of a Watt and has a 60 Over S9 signal over a million miles away. In reality, Murphy has this little Law, called Murphy's Law. It means that if in a negative way, it can, it will. If it can break, it will. if it can short out, it will. And this law doesn't pertain to just mechanical and electronic devices. I found lately that my trips seem to always put me in a RF hole at least 3 to 5 times. This is not bad if you know where the RF Holes are, but I found that even knowing where the RF Hole is, and trying to change the route so I can avoid it, doesn't help because the RF Hole has this special feature. IT MOVES! I did find several solutions to this, and it requires several things to be successful.

First, the receiving station has to turn the squelch down or off. The annoying Hiss can be your friend, as it tells you that the Radio's AF Output is working. I stopped over a friend's house one afternoon, after hearing him telling several people that they were choppy and not making it, and turned the squelch down from full to about a quarter closed. This now allowed my 50 Watts to actually be heard at his radio at a distance of more than 10 feet and he could now hear the local repeater Full Quiet-ing. Amazing yet simple.

Secondly, make sure the

Antenna is as high as possible and actually doing something. I had a mobile whip that developed a serious case of RF Deafness. It was a Dual Band Mobile whip with a loading coil in the middle of the whip. I took a simple Continuity Tester to the coax, no short. I went to the whip and placed the leads on each side of the coil. It should have done something but didn't. I cut the shrink wrap off the outside of the coil and noticed a little corrosion and lack of solder at one end of the coil. After cleaning the corrosion off and soldering the end, My mobile whip worked flawlessly for the last 5 years until I switched to a newer multiband whip.

I placed my venerable 2M Mobile in the car which had been a digipeater for almost 6 years. I took out a microphone for it and realized after hooking everything up, the microphone PTT only worked if it wanted to. I then remembered that I swapped the good mic from this radio with the one in my father's truck because he was having the dreaded PTT problem. It was a quick fix and the broken mic went back in the box back then, but I didn't have the time to wait for a new mic to come from the dealer. So I did what every ham does in the present situation, Cut. solder, tape, improvise, and sometimes mutilate.

Actually this was rather easy to repair because the Mic has 3 screws holding the back on and the switch is located in the open. I

didn't even have to remove the board to expose the switch once the housing was open. The manufacturer was good enough to use a large SPDT Switch and they used surface mount solder jumpers to the contacts on the switch. Just desolder the two connections and the switch was out. Then Murphy showed up. The Switch was not anything I had around the junk box. To make matters worse, the local electronics store didn't have it either. The thought of spending \$40.00 for a new mic just wasn't feasible, so I looked at the switch again. It was made in a plastic 2 piece housing, with snap lock tabs holding it together at each end. Removing these little tabs would expose the contacts and show me what was wrong. Worse case, the switch would break and I would have to buy a new mic. So out came the pocket knife and I gently opened the case. Then I saw the problem. The switch has a spring to toggle the switch from a NC to NO when the PTT button is released. The spring was not connected, and this lack of connection prevented the contact from moving to the NC position when the PTT Button was pressed. After reattaching the spring, I checked the contacts and movements of the contacts, then reassembled the switch. A couple of minutes later I resoldered the switch to the solder jumpers on the board in the mic and reassembled it. Little bit of work but it saved me

\$40.00 plus I managed to be on the air same day, not a couple of weeks due to shipping.

The most important part of avoiding the dreaded Not Making It is Operating Practice. I often hear guys on a repeater saying, "Your really scratchy into the machine" yet they are even worse. But they blame the machine, or the other operator before looking at their situation. The guy operating 5 Watts three miles from the repeater is often Full Quieting, while the guy saying that the machine is scratchy is often running 50 Watts 100 to 200 miles from the repeater. I use the general rule, If I can hear them with good solid audio, even at a S-0, more than likely I can be heard by them with good solid audio if they can be bothered to either: A) Turn the squelch down or off. or B) Attempt to listen rather than look at the S Meter on their radio.

Have fun and hope these little tid bits and experiences help.

RRRs, MATELY

I have found a nice site with an explanation and diagrams for the repair and maintenance of the Cushcraft R5/R7 antenna
http://www.iol.ie/~bravo/r7_vertical.htm

73, Frank, K4EC k4ec@arrl.net

Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club
Post Office Box 7234
Alexandria, VA 22307