

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



Volume 16

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2003

Number 08/09

Ye Olde RF Output

MEETING NOTICE SEPTEMBER 11, 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

September 11 - MOUNT VERNON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB monthly meeting. Held at INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital Second Floor Conference Room on Parker's Lane. See you there!

September 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!

September 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 SEPTEMBER 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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MVARC/ CG TISCOM LIAISON



MINUTES AUGUST 14, 2003 MEETING

The meeting was held at the INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital and was called to order at 7:34 p.m. by the Vice President. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. The President then took over the meeting.

Everyone introduced themselves. The motion to approve the June 12 meeting Minutes as published in the YORFO carried. John, K2VPR gave the Treasurer' Report. He reported he wrote a check for the August \$100.00 donation to the First Christian Church in appreciation for using their facilities. A donation is made each January and August. The Secretary will send the check. The motion to send a \$50.00 donation to the QTH.net mailing list service for MVARC's use carried. The last donation was made in 2001.

Committee/Event Reports

FAR - Mary, N4TCI needs help at this year's FALL FEST 2003 on Saturday and Sunday, September 6 and 7 at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship, MD. If interesting in volunteering, email n4tci@erols.com or give her a call at 703-971-3905.

MVARC/CG TISCOM LIAISON - Carol, WA4GFW reported that problems with the Access List have been corrected and there's 23 members on the list. Several members operated the station to celebrate Coast Guard Day in the beginning of August. They made 150 contacts.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH - Bob, KT4KS passed around copies of the Lorton Valley Star that contained an article on

MVARC during Field Day at Pohick Bay Regional Park.

PROGRAM - Bob, KI3O introduced our speaker, Dan Shultz from AMSAT. September's program will be on digital communications, October's program will be our own ICOM days, and November's speaker will be Chris Imlay from the ARRL.

ARES - Steve, K3IZ said there's a website available for signing up to help at the Marine Corps Marathon. It's the last Sunday in October. They need volunteers. Steve also gave us a Field Day report-"We made a good effort despite the bad band conditions but the food was good." We made 1250 QSO's operating Class 4A and had 3,250 points.

Business

Gene Jenkins, N4JEE is making badges: \$7.00 for each or \$6.00 for 10 or more.

Bob, KT4KS had some World Radio Coupons that disappeared rather quickly. So quick, I didn't see who got them.

Frank, K4EC and Doug, WA3WEP talked about problems, interim fixes, the great work done by Dick, WA4USB, and what needs to be done about our Repeater. We've been having various problems/issues since we took a lightning hit a year or so ago, and having to move the repeater from one floor to another. Currently, the 100 watt Amplifier that Doug repaired had so many spurs, they are using two GE MSTR II PA Decks they borrowed from Sterret, K4MBE. The amps are velcro'd to the top of the exciter. Over the past year, the Repeater Committee has been looking into purchasing a new repeater but after extensive research and discussions with other repeater owners and maintainers, they decided to stay with the Motorola equipment we have now. However, we need spares. The Repeater Committee found a source of supply for the spares we need. The motion to spend up to \$1200 to purchase/upgrade the Repeater carried.

The Club needs to find a new WebMaster for MVARC's website. Thanks went to Frank, K4EC for his outstanding work and dedication keeping up our website over the years. The motion to reimburse Dick Cramer, N4YDP the \$35 so we can get our domain name, MVARC.ORG back to use carried. The decision where to put MVARC's website was tabled until next month's meeting. A committee to investigate web hosting sites and present a recommendation at the next meeting included Carol-WA4GFW, Bill-W2BSA, Bob-KI3O. Frank, K4EC will advise the committee and provide the requirements.

At the Show and Tell portion of the meeting, K3IZ showed us a crimping tool and an Album for Certificates, N5LF showed us a Rocknight QRP XCVR, an Islander keyer, a Socks Key, and March paddles (Serial #3). We also saw a quilt made by KG4YDZ-Here's the deal: If Mark, KG4YDZ made a quilt (took him 5 months) then Karen had to become a Ham. Karen says she has five months. Good Luck, Karen.

Thanks went to John, K2VPR this month's Cookie Monster.

The meeting adjourned.

K2VPR AND WA4GFW PROVIDED RIDES TO BERRYVILLE HAMFEST

by Bob KT4KS

On Aug 3, both John, K2VPR and Carol, WA4GFW provided MVARC members with rides to the Berryville hamfest 2003. It was John who coordinated the MVARC car pool to the Berryville hamfest 2003 by using the Reflector to send out email reminders to club members of the 6:00 AM jump off time from the Rose Hill Shopping Center. John's efforts resulted in 5 cars and 7 members arriving before the appointed moment.

Bob, KT4KS was the first to arrive at Rose Hill, shortly followed by Carol and Leila WN4PP, Steve K3IZ, John and then Julie KD4WSZ. Club tables and items to be sold were then packed into John's van, and then the two volunteering drivers drove off, leaving three cars at the lot for a late afternoon return.

John took the lead in this two car caravan, and elected to take the scenic route to the hamfest. The group drove west on Route 66 that passed through the Thoroughfare Gap of the Bull Run Mountains, taking the exit for Route 17 that passed through both the Cedar Run Valley and tiny village of Paris at the Intersection of Routes 17 & 50. John then drove west on Route 50 along the Ashby Gap to the peak of the Blue Ridge Mountains, making a surprising turn towards the north on Blue Ridge Mountain Road, otherwise known as Route 601. This runs along the peak of the Blue Ridge Mountain range, parallel to the adjacent Appalachian Trail, subsequently passing by the Federal installation known as Mount Weather. After reaching Route 7 in Bluemont at the Snickersville Gap, John then turned west for the final stretch towards Berryville. During the drive, the passengers in both vehicles kept in touch via 2M Simplex on 146.415.

The crew arrived at the fest about 7:50 AM, and were permitted to drive into the middle of the grounds. After parking, the club's selling members immediately set up two tables and chairs, so that all their valuable goods could be exhibited for sale. While most of the items were ham related, our table included non-ham items (examples including: electric juicer and rice maker) for buyers who wished to raise their standards of living within their kitchens as well as their shacks. The weather at the site was generally warm and cloudy, making for a comfortable setting where no one missed the club's canopy which was inadvertently left home.

During the morning, all of

the members took the time to walk around to find items of interest. Steve purchased several antenna switches, while Bob purchased a case of 12 quarts of full synthetic motor oil for only \$30 and a 3 amp switching power supply for \$10. Allen, N5LF stopped by the table to tell about his \$100 purchase of a tiny set of newly designed magnetic paddles on a vertical base by March (<http://www.qsl.net/k4qu>), expressing that it was only the third such paddles constructed.

Several club members and local hams stopped by the club table to say hello. The list included Dwight, N4GSD, who mentioned that he can not hit our club repeater from Manassas; John, WD4EBY and his little girl; Roy, WA4MHB and Ralph, K4TXD, Roy leaving 4 homemade J-poles at the table to be sold at the bargain basement price of \$30 each; George, AF4JH; and Doug, WA3WEP who sat behind the club table for a good part of the early afternoon.

During the later morning hours, the event sponsors began to announce door prizes, one of which was won by George. The prize announcements proved to be of interest, as the announcements included home towns as well as names/calls, illustrating the hams were present from such locations as Harrisonburg, Woodbridge, Silver Spring, Roanoke, WVA, and as far out as New York State. Door prizes were of a large assortment, including: 50 amp Mirage power supply, radio, lantern, portable power supplies, and ham radio books.

While the fest had the routine assortment of hams walking around looking (and acting) as if they had only \$10 in their pockets, one individual stood out. A woman was walking around with an 8 month old black cat named Boo on a 5 foot long leash. Boo seemed to be happy as he walked among the crowd, many individuals of whom bent over to pet him. During his time at the MVARC club table, Boo amused himself by climbing up

Steve's 2 and ½ foot tall cassette table holder, subsequently knocking it over to the ground. The cat's guardian expressed that Boo enjoys sleeping on the console in the car, and likes being taken to tractor pulls. At home, Boo is never on a leash.

Attendance at the fest seemed to lighten up at 12:30 PM, which was about the time that the VE testing began at the school located across the street. During this period, several of our members took the time to enjoy the barbeque which is routinely served at the event. Just a bit afterwards, discussion shifted to thoughts about the drive home.

About 1:20 PM, the crew packed up both unsold valuables and newly purchased items into the two vehicles, and then drove off towards home. Carol took the lead in the caravan home, and decided to take a different scenic route back. Once Carol reached the peak of the Blue Ridge Mountains on Route 7, he took the turn off for the Snickersville Turnpike (<http://www.snickersvilleturnpike.org/byway.htm>), otherwise Virginia Byway Route 734, which passes through the actual town of Bluemont. The two vehicle caravan stopped at the Bluemont General Store to ostensibly pick up sodas, but primarily to visit the only store that was known to be open in that part of the state during the Civil War. The group then traveled down the byway through Philmont, across both Beaverdam Creek via the 150+ year old stone Hibbs Bridge (<http://www.snickersvilleturnpike.org/bridgehistory.htm>) and site of the Civil War's Battle of Aldie (<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/battles/va036.htm>), and then finally reached Route 50, turning to the west in the little town of Aldie.

Our crew of 6 reached the Rose Hill Shopping Center about 3:10 PM, and there everyone reclaimed their particular items from John's van. Everyone thanked both Carol and John for taking on the

tasks of driving, and then all headed for home.

PSK-31 -- TOTALLY COOL!

Nelson Johnson, KG6NXL

After setting up my Icom IC-718 recently I spent some time working SSB and FM, did some CW QSOs, and downloaded some sound card software to experiment with RTTY and other digital modes. Then I stumbled across PSK-31, which stands for "Phase Shift Keyed 31.24 baud." Just playing around, I hooked up my sound card line input to the headphone jack and fired up WinPSKse, a software application by Dave, KA1DT. After a little knob twisting and tweaking I was able to copy DX from Algeria, Argentina and Australia all within half an hour, and 579 to 599. I was hooked. My eyes popped, my jaw dropped and I found myself saying things like "That's amazing! Imagine that!" Imagine being able to copy signals you can't even hear!

I decided to set up my rig for TX as well as RX, and instead of soldering stuff together myself I thought I would try purchasing the connectivity from BUX COMM (K4ABT), <http://www.packetradio.com>. Am I ever glad I did that! In a couple of days I received a package that has changed my ham world forever. What K4ABT sells is a well-engineered, superbly documented and competent product that simply connects your rig to a computer sound card. That takes a couple of resistors, right? Wrong. Not if you want to do it correctly, with isolation transformers and proper attenuation. Right out of the box, in less than 30 minutes, I was working Melbourne Australia from San Francisco, 599 via PSK-31 on 75-meters!!! It was utterly amazing, because I couldn't even hear the carrier, yet the software and the PSK31 standard are so well designed that such QSOs are

commonplace.

My first evening with PSK31 was so inspiring that I am dreaming of inventing new digital modes myself. This technology opens up an entire spectrum of possibilities. A one-watt rig in LA comes in 599 at San Francisco - over 400 miles in one hop. A twenty-watt Ten-Tec in Buenos Aires is perfect copy even when the band is down. This is very exciting stuff. It is reassuring that it is possible to communicate reliably without the use of repeaters and at extremely low power levels in emergency situations. This is just the tip of the PSK-31 iceberg.

QRP on PSK31 is not just a good idea, it's the law. The reason for this is that the higher the power, the wider the signal, and the more likely that our signal will overlap those close by - within 100 Hz. I run 50 watts on my 100 watt XCVR drive that around 35% and the results are spectacular. (20 watts will do you just fine.-ed.) You must not run 100% of your rig's rated power and should stay below 50% to TX with PSK-31. I find that it helps to turn off DSP filtering altogether, and you definitely do not want to use compression. The standard is sideband is USB.

If you haven't yet investigated this new mode you are definitely missing something. If you already have a 133 MHz-plus PC and a stable HF rig it will cost you around 50 bucks to get up and running, if you buy the Rascal from BUX COMM. The software is free, and there are several vendors to choose from. If you type a "PSK31" search string in your favorite search engine you will find WinPSK, WinWarbler, DigiPan and many other free or low-cost software packages that support PSK-31 as well as other digital modes like RTTY, Pac-tor, Amtor and FSK.

If you want to hear the birdies singing, just go to 14.070, USB, in the early evening. This is where most of the action seems to be, although I have worked good DX on other bands as well, and there are

"nests" on almost every HF, VHF and UHF band. What you will hear is the warbling sound of several little birds. Their nest is the whole planet.

MVARC'S MEMBERS NEED NAME BADGES!

By Bob KT4KS

Each month MVARCers attend various functions, including club meeting, club breakfast, ham-fests, and other planned events. During these functions many of our members arrive without any type of identification badges. This works well enough for those members who already know each others' names, but does little for our less active members, newer members and guests.

Everybody in our club needs an ID badge! Big identification badges readily provide an environment that makes everyone more approachable. This way, everyone can more comfortably obtain someone else's attention by simply calling his first name. Badges are not just identifiers, they are actually invitations to be approached too. Naturally, it is the club's duty to make guests comfortable by approaching them even if they lack an ID badge, but as people are people, it sure would help everyone had a badge.

At this time, MVARC is fortunate enough to have two local badge providers. I'm pleased with having purchased a distinctly different badge from each of them. My first badge is large enough that my name, call and home QTH can all be read from across a table. The badge also has "Morse Code Operator" engraved thereon, so the public will have at least a hint at what I may be doing at a picnic table. This particular badge came in red with an attachment pin. This badge is presently sold by MVARC member Jim AF4QG for about \$10. Jim can be contacted at: 703-978-3047 (af4qg@cox.net), or just mail him

the money at: 8516 Raleigh Ave, Annandale VA 22003-3631.

My second badge is a bit smaller, and actually includes a novel etching of the Mount Vernon building on its front. This badge also includes my name, call and home QTH, and came in MVARC blue with an attachment clip. This second badge is sold by Gene N4JEE of the Alexandria Radio Club for only \$7. Gene can be contacted at: 703-385-9344 (non-business hours), or just mail him the money at: 10892 Norman Ave, Fairfax VA 22030-2932.

Don't let this opportunity slip away from you. Like MVARC's club jackets and shirts, everything comes and goes. Now is the time to both easily and inexpensively obtain great badges via the mail.

THREE TYPES OF HAMS?

by Clinton, AB7RG

April 25, 2000

I've been wondering, after about five years as a Ham. I've seen, heard, and met quite a few different Hams and attitudes on pretty much all the different modes and bands, and both on and off the air. I've come to a conclusion of sorts; that there are three very different types of Hams.

1: The "disgruntled" Ham. This type of Ham is easy to find. They are very bitter, for reasons generally unknown or at least not understood by me, and they really do nothing to help out their fellow Amateurs. What they do is complain and whine a lot, get angry, yell scream, post flames to the discussion boards on the Internet and to various e mail reflectors, cuss at their fellow Amateurs on the air, and are a general pain in the rear. They do not care about Amateur Radio, just themselves their selfishness, and complaining all the time about anything and everything. Kind of depressing when you think about them for too long.

2: The Ham who wants help, and/or is "new" to Amateur Radio. Now this Ham could end up like either the first type of Ham, the third type of Ham, or just get out of Amateur Radio out of disgust. (Then we ALL loose.) This type of Ham just needs a helping hand, someone who is willing to help them set up their station, or maybe even upgrade! They tend to find only the "disgruntled" Hams, and end up leaving the Amateur Radio Service. Funny how most Amateurs never even notice this type of Ham, as they slowly fade away.

3: The very rare Ham, the Ham who wants to help out, and does, in every way that he or she can. This can be in the form of joining ARES, becoming a V.E., starting up Ham Radio classes. Hey a first day Technician is perfectly qualified to teach! Setting up a Club station, helping out the Community, or helping the second type of Ham. Keep in mind that this third type of Ham is very rare, and if you find one, don't lose touch. To bad, that this type of Ham seems to be a dying breed. They might not be, if a few more "type two" Hams were helped out by say the "type one Hams", if they (we), could get their (our), act together... Yes, "type three" Hams care about their fellow Hams, Amateur Radio, and it's future. They are not a part of the problem, as the "type one" hams are, but rather, are a part of the solution.

So, which "type" of Ham are you? Personally I try my best to be a "type three" Ham. Food for thought! "The time has come for all of us set aside our differences, help out all new Amateurs that are coming into our ranks, and help them to become the type of Amateur that we aspire to be."

7 MHZ REALIGNMENT COMPROMISE MAKES RADIO HISTORY

In an 11th-hour compromise, delegates to World Radio Communication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) agreed to move broadcasters out of 7100 to 7200 kHz in Regions 1 and 3 to make room for the Amateur Service. The expanded worldwide allocation at 40 meters goes into effect on March 29, 2009. Amateurs in the US and the rest of Region 2 will continue to enjoy the 7000 to 7300 kHz band they now have, but with greatly reduced broadcasting interference.

While the result falls short of the IARU's goal of a 300-kHz worldwide exclusive band for amateurs, the cooperation of broadcasters, opposing delegates and many others was required to make a positive step for ham radio. Spectrum between 4 and 10 MHz is on the agenda for WRC-07, but further changes to 7000-7200 kHz will not be considered.

The conference also dropped the international Morse code requirement, leaving individual countries to decide if they want to retain a code proficiency requirement, and adopted a number of improvements to the other international regulations for the amateur service. The delegates also agreed to allowed a secondary allocation for satellite borne synthetic aperture radars at 70 cm and made amateur call sign assignment more flexible.

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From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT July 11, 2003

EMAIL - ESPANOL

by John, KA3V

For vocalizing an e-mail address in Spanish, as may come up on the air in QSO with Spanish-speaking stations. The Spanish refer to the at-sign as "arroba." Thus, my old e-mail address, jsm@erols.com (cancelled, to cut off spam), would be: japan sierra mike arroba echo romeo oscar lima sierra punto charlie oscar mike

Arroba is a unit of measure, used mostly with sacks of grain, and has always been abbreviated with what we call the at-sign. That's like our use in English of the pound-sign to abbreviate pounds of avoirdupois weight, of course.

If they don't speak English well, at the other end of your QSO, try the above with e-mail addresses. Arroba is pronounced "ah RR-ROBE ah", with a big roll on that double R if you can do it.