

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



Volume 19

JUNE 2006

Number 06

Ye Olde RF Output

MEETING NOTICE

JUNE 8, 2006

7:30 PM

**INOVA MOUNT VERNON
HOSPITAL**

2501 PARKERS LANE
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22306

Second Floor Conference Room
MVARC MEETS ON THE SECOND
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH EXCEPT
IN DECEMBER

HAPPENINGS

JUNE 8 - MOUNT VERNON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB monthly meeting. Held at INOVA MOUNT VERNON HOSPITAL (2nd Floor Conference Rm), 2501 Parker's Lane, 22306. 7:30 p.m. See you there!

JUNE 6,13,20,27 - MVARC ARES NET- 146.055/146.655 **7:00 PM local time**. Come and join in!

JUNE 24 - FIELD DAY/MVARC PICNIC 2006 - Lee District Park, Pavilion #2. Details provided at the June 8 Meeting, on the MVARC reflector, and on the MVARC Website. The status of the MVARC Breakfast will also be provided.

MVARC REPEATER: K4US/R
146.055 MHz INPUT/146.655 MHz
OUTPUT
PL TONE: 141.3 Hz

AUTOPATCH AVAILABLE TO
MEMBERS

MVARC HOME PAGE:
WWW.MVARC.ORG
WWW.MVARC.COM

NOTICE--VE EXAM LOCATION
THE JUNE 10, 2006 VE EXAM WILL
BE HELD AT

The FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
2723 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA

9:30 A.M.

CALL JOHN, WZ4A AT 703-971-3905
FOR MORE INFO.

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

EDITOR

David Whitney-AI4FC
808 Russell Road
Alexandria, VA 22301
703-836-1227

E-Mail:

dmwhitney@comcast.net

STAFF

Glenn Bilger-W4OCC
Frank Mackey-K4EC
Bob May-N4LBR
Bob Raevis-KT4KS
Bob Lepelletier-KI3O
Steve Schneider-K3IZ

MEET YOUR OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Bob Lepelletier - KI3O
107 South West Street #321
Alexandria, VA 22314-2891
703-912-1695

E-mail: rlepelleti@msn.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Howell Crim, III – KG4CKJ
3321 Memorial Street
Alexandria, VA 22306
703-768-1069

E-mail:

potomacpirate@att.net

SECRETARY

George Coyne – N1BV
1102 Alden Road
Alexandria, VA 22308
703-780-8113

E-Mail:

georgecoyne@hotmail.com

TREASURER

Mike Larkin – KE4ER
2118 Rampart Drive
Alexandria, VA 22308
703-780-8028

E-Mail:

slyvia.mike.larkin@worldnet.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

Richard Harman - WA4USB
703-971-5477

REPEATER TRUSTEES

Steve Schneider-K3IZ
703-780-7248

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**

Keith McDaniel-N6JWN
703-256-3568

MVARC WEBSITE

Paul Miller-AA8O

Glenn Bilger-W4OCC
Leila Cutchall-WN4PP
Carol Cutchall-WA4GFW
Frank Mackey-K4EC



MAY MINUTES

By George, N1BV
MVARC secretary

The meeting was held at the IN-OVA Mount Vernon Hospital and was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by the President, Carol WA4GFW. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance. Next, attendees introduced themselves. It was established that there was a quorum present. The April minutes, as posted on the reflector, were approved.

John, K2VPR, gave the Treasurer's Report. As of 30 April 2006:

Checking:	\$ 551.38
Savings:	3,358.33
Cash on hand:	199.75
Doc Hyde fund:	1,839.80
TOTAL ASSETS:	\$4,109.46

The ARES report was given by Steve, K3IZ. John, WZ4A gave the Education report. There would be a test session this Saturday and one at the Olde Virginia Hams Hamfest at Manassas. The FAR report was given by Mary, N4TCI. She announced that the FARFEST would be on 9/10 September, and she put out a call for volunteer announcers.

There was no chairman or representative present from the MARS or USGC. Bob, KT4KS, gave the Community Outreach Report and said that once a Field Day site was selected, he would send out the appropriate publicity. Bob, KI3O, presented the Program Committee

report and said he was looking for follow-on programs. The next club breakfast will be held at the Old Country Buffet on 22 May.

Unfinished Business:

For information of those present, George, N1BV, provided comments he had received on the draft By-Laws. The use of proxies was briefly discussed. George, N1BV, requested that comments contain recommended wording and avoid such things as the "the dues should be \$5 for these members, etc." (Dues are set by the Executive Committee and approved by the membership, not the By-Laws.)

New officers were elected as follows:

- President - Bob KI3O
- Vice President -- Howell KG4CKJ
- Treasurer --Mike KE4ER
- Secretary -- George N1BV

New Business:

The requirement for a YORFO was discussed. Dave, AI4FC, outside of the minutes, has to spend a lot of time acquiring articles to use. The discussion also raised the issue of whether a newsletter was required. Some felt the FCC requires one to have a station license. Others said there is nothing in Part 97 concerning newsletters. John, W4ZA will investigate this issue.

A motion was made and approved to expend \$150 for our webpage at Mailman.QTH. The Administrator for the page will be Paul, AA8O, with technical assistance from Mike, KE4ER. A discussion took place on what a "Student Membership" is and its definition, as it is not covered in any of the existing club documentation. K2VPR will remain as the MVARC Registered Agent with the commonwealth Corporation Commission.

YORFO CROSSROADS

By David, AI4FC
YORFO editor

Last month, I received in the mail a note from a concerned club member about the May issue of the newsletter.

The writer, a longtime club member, was concerned about the fact that the issue seemed short on material, and arrived at his house too late to inform him of the importance of the May meeting where bylaws and officers were to be voted on.

The truth is, that's the first indication I had received that anyone actually reads this newsletter. And that brings me to the topic of this item: Has the club outlived the usefulness of the YORFO?

This newsletter was started before computers and e-mail became ubiquitous. The first editions of this newsletter actually emphasized the first part of the noun -- news. But now much of what's in the YORFO already has been circulated via the club's email reflector. And the few features I am able to round up could be circulated in the same manner, and on a more timely basis.

Each month about this time, the weekend before the club meeting, I sit down at my computer to arrange what material I have. The only regular contributor is Bob, KT4KS, whose piece on the club testing session and the Manassas hamfest you'll find below. Every month I am grateful to Bob, and the few other people who, though less regular, contribute occasionally to the YORFO. I also will solicit pieces, though my track record of success is thin, or do a little enterprise to come up with my own features when I think of a subject. No one has ever suggested a story idea to

me.

We are all busy. Add to that the fact that readership is only a fraction of the club's membership. Few of us have time to read what comes through the mail, or lands on our doorstep each morning. But we also want "instant" news that's relevant. That's not exactly what the YORFO provides.

I wonder if the time and expense of putting the YORFO together each month is worth the effort.

Very soon, the YORFO's production staff -- Glenn, W4OCC -- will be moving from Alexandria to Georgetown, Del. We need someone to step up to take that job. I'm guessing no one is going to step forward to do that. I got this job as editor, for example, when Steve, K3IZ, detected from a couple of questions I asked him that he could hand the task over to me. I can't even make it to meetings because of my work schedule, have been a ham less than four years and I put together the club's newsletter? No wonder the YORFO is a little thin some months.

Glenn is the person who takes the copy I produce and, using a software program called Page Plus, turns it into the neat columns with masthead and headlines. Glenn emails a copy of that to Bob, KI3O, who publishes it via the reflector. Glenn sends back to me a Word version of the newsletter which I take to a printer across from my office downtown for copying. I then mail out 30 copies, which costs about \$20 a month to print and staple, at 39 cents apiece.

The majority of those copies are what in the newspaper business are called exchange copies. They go to other radio clubs, the ARRL and a few other such places. To my knowledge, we receive nothing back. The other half go to mostly distant club members, many of whom became "lifetime" members

by virtue of 3-digit contributions a decade or two ago to help fund a new repeater for the club.

If you follow me on the math, it costs \$1.05 for each mailed copy of the YORFO. My time and Glenn's is voluntary, but not insignificant. Throw out the 15 exchange copies – I am pretty sure that's what the recipients do anyway – and the cost climbs to about \$1.69 apiece.

I spend three to four hours on a typical issue, of the sort the club reader above complained. For those issues that I put in time to actually report a story, the time is twice that. I worked hours, for example, to track down a ham operator involved in Katrina work. No club member that had been involved wanted to be interviewed, and I got the same response from other area hams they referred me to. I think they were afraid of offending the Red Cross. But I was frankly astounded that no one wanted to be quoted about the work they had done in the hurricane zone, even though the only readers would be fellow hams. I finally tracked down a ham from Connecticut who would talk to me. His name was referred to be by Brad, K4RT.

The subject of the YORFO came up in a recent three-way roundtable on the club's repeater. One of the participants apparently took away from that discussion an impression that I was feeling unappreciated. That's not it at all. I am a reporter for a major West Coast daily newspaper; it's a fact of life for journalists that only a fraction of readers take time to respond to what they read, and that those who do write or call for the most part do so to complain, usually about perceived bias.

But I wonder why I spend some much time each month putting together a newsletter with content that either you already know, or could have known much earlier if, for example, Bob's two pieces had

been e-mailed the day after the events about which he writes.

Not a sermon, just a thought.

-David
dmwhitney@comcast.net

MVARC's MAY TEST SESSION HAD LOTS OF ACTIVITY!

By Bob, KT4KS

MVARC May test session was very active, as 12 VEs were arrived to provide 18 tessees with opportunities to both upgrade and obtain original licenses.

Team Leader John WZ4A and Leila WN4PP both set up and directed operations from the registration table; Frank AA4ZS, George AF4OH, and Patrick KG4ORD proctored the CW testing; Glenn W4OCC, Paul AA8O and Phil KF4AJZ provided and graded written tests from the grading table; and Carol WA4GFW and Bob both provided the communications by running papers from table to table, and informed tessees of test results. Mary N4TCI set up the copying machine.

The actual testing began about 9:30AM, and the first tesse to complete her test was Patrisha of Manassas, who upon obtaining news that she passed, stated that she was "Excited". While waiting for the results from taking her Extra exam, Anna Keller KG4DEX was asked how she thought she did, and in response Anna simply laughed aloud and said, "No comment....I got the first three right, I know that".

Upon receiving news of his passing grade on his Technician test, John of Alexandria said that "It feels great after all these years...this is where I got my start in electronics,

with my next door neighbor". Joyce of Dale City was asked how she felt as she was waiting for her first ham radio test score, and she immediately responded "Confident". Joyce also stated that there were a few answers that she knew, and a few others that she did not recognize at all. Regardless, Joyce subsequently received word of a passing score on her Technician exam.

A young man from Dale City, Tristen, also took his first ham radio test, and while waiting for his results expressed, "I'm a bit nervous, but I think I have somewhat of a chance". When told that he fell just a bit short on the score, Tristen decided to try again, and said "I feel that I can do a little better". Another young man, Jay of Bethesda, who passed his Technician on the first attempt, was asked how it felt to be a ham radio operator, and simply exclaimed that "I wouldn't know yet". (Hopefully, he will know soon, and like it.)

When Desiree of Arlington was informed of her passing score on the Technician test, she immediately said, "I feel terrific...I am delighted...I am just thrilled. Thank-you so much." Desiree is an accountant in Arlington, and learned about ham radio only after she volunteered to help provide emergency communications at her place of work. Desiree was also thrilled with the test sessions being free. Tesse March of Alexandria passed the written portion of the Extra exam, and in response expressed "I feel really great. I'm really pleased with everything and myself for studying. It was a little trickier than I thought. Now I can concentrate on getting the CW done." Art KD4FBT, Vice President of the Alexandria Radio Club, was asked how it felt to pass his Extra examine, and said "I'm still trying to assimilate it".

During the testing, there were lulls in the workload. John K2VPR, who arrived just a bit late, took the time

to adjust the LED display on his hat, using paper directions that he literally keeps in a pocket under the hat. Mary worked a Japanese based game called Sudoku, and tried to learn from both Bob and John K2VPR how to toss a hula-hoop across the floor so that it would return to her. Bob inquired as to whether it is easy for Mary to come to morning test sessions, and Mary said that she and John just wake up and "grouse to one another", and then she makes herself Starbuck coffee at home and then heads on in. When asked about the larger number of testees at the session, Mary said, "Lots of warm bodies".

There was only one testee who took a CW test during the morning. Afterwards, VE George was asked whether the CW VE's ever talk to one another at the CW table when there are no CW test takers, and he said "Never".

Leila, working the registration desk with Team Leader John WZ4A, and who was thus second in command of the session, was asked if she was ready to run the registration desk all by herself. In response, Leila said, "No, I do not. John WZ4A is the expert, and knows all".

Glenn was asked about his experience at the grading table, and simply expressed that "It was very busy". Asked if the graders made any mistakes today, Glenn responded, "This team never makes mistakes". Paul, former Vice President of MVARC, added his always valuable thoughts, expressing that "I just want to say one thing, that we did it all for you, and national security".

During the test session, Bob spoke with John WZ4A about how useful that club copying machine has proven to be at the test session, in that it has assured that all the paperwork may be completed at the test site, and it did away with any need for testees to make a quick

drive to the local grocery store to make photocopies of their licenses.

Bob expressed that those avoided drives to the grocery could potentially even save a life, when considering the number of SUV drivers that are overly anxious to drive into the grocery store parking lot to obtain a badly needed item, such as a quart of milk. John readily agreed, and commented that he felt that it was a bit difficult to get the club to agree to pay for the copier. Bob expressed that many club members simply could not have appreciated its importance, and likely are not aware that the club signs up a large number of new members due to the test sessions, which dues more than pays for all test session costs, including the \$89 copier. In fact, one man once wrote a \$100 check at the test session for the club's testing of his entire family over the years.

When the testees were all done, the materials were all packed away, and several of the VE team got into their vehicles to head to Ruby Tuesday on South Van Dorn for lunch. In the parking lot, Leila mentioned that her husband Carol was now well enough to do all of their driving, and that she was especially pleased as she no longer had to deal with any back seat drivers, once again proving that good health for one, is good health for all.

Overall, the May test session was a success, and provided some fine tuning for the Manassas hamfest on June 4, where there club plans to provide the public with yet another free testing.

THANKS FOR THE GOOD TIMES!

To all MVARC club members, Thank you all for your support during my tenure as club treasurer. Please give Mike, KE4ER, some time to come up to speed and

change things for the better as he sees fit. For those of you who are life members and have already paid your fiscal 2006 dues, thank you. For the rest, please send your dues in promptly to keep from Mike having to send out reminder letters in a month or two. (I usually had to send almost one hundred letters the past two years or so).

73,
John/K2VPR

MVARC'S TABLE WAS ABLE

By Bob, KT4KS

At 6AM on the first Sunday of June, both Steve K3IZ and George N1BV arrived at the site of the Manassas hamfest, and selected a prime location for our club's two tables. The two set up a canopy, chairs and club banner, and then stocked the tables with their valuables.

By 7AM, both Bob KT4KS and George WA2TKO arrived, bringing yet more items that collectively resulted in our tables having the appearance of a poor guy's HRO. No sooner had Bob placed out two of Carol's WA4GFW's tube testers, than a potential purchaser inquired as to the price. As Bob hesitated to speak Carol's asking price (of only \$20), the purchaser offered \$50, obviously providing the club with its first large sale of the morning.

Despite that initial unanticipated success, Bob priced all of his items to sell, and by the end of the day took in a whopping \$442. Bob's pricing scheme was so low that George N1BV expressed that he was "thinking" about buying the tuner Bob placed on the table. Items placed out on the table included the kilowatt-able tuner, 3 HF rigs, keyers, CW practice unit, RTTY device, printer, motion alarm, power supplies, microphone, connectors, books, and miscellaneous items.

As the morning progressed, Glenn W4OCC dropped off even items for sale, with orders not to bring anything back to Alexandria.

During the fest, members at the table took turns walking about the tables to look for bargains. Unlike years passed, there seemed to be a larger number of HF radios for sale throughout the fest, all of which appeared to be in very good condition. The fest included larger vendors that sold connectors, ham badges, stitched hats, fancy paddles, wire and antennas.

The Red Cross had its communications wagon on display, and a local organization had a large bake sale. There were many tailgaters out, and they sold an assortment of items, ranging from a lawn mower to wrestling-mania trading cards. No doubt, the sale of the day was from the large bake sale, as a ham radio operator, who had just come upon a windfall sale, paid \$100 for "a cookie".

While wheeling and dealing took place at the club's tables, some of our more public-service oriented members worked the ham radio test session at the fest. VE leader John WZ4A & crew provided free testing for about 25 test takers, most of which passed some segment of the testing. A few people even passed the CW test.

Notably, one Manassas YL (Patrisha KI4PCM), who obtained her technician ticket at MVARC's May test session in Alexandria, was successful in obtaining an Extra class ticket, as she passed her CW test and both written portions of General and Extra. Those who helped John at the test session included at least: Carol, Leila WN4PP, Glenn W4OCC, Frank AA4ZS, George AF4JH, Patrick KG4ORD, Lisa of Ashburn, Mary N4TCI, Paul AA8O and Don K1DCA.

At about 10:45AM the VE test session closed, and many of the club's VEs walked passed the table. Other club members who came by included John WQ4L, Bob K3IO, Frank K4EC, Anna KG4DEX, Charlie AF4NT, Jim AF4QG, Joan KI4FYN, Ruth KU4WH and Dave KD4SV. At least 10 of our members proudly wore their MVARC shirts, a site that our friends (and shirt providers) "the Phipps" would have be pleased to have seen.

At about 12:00 noon, Bob KT4KS packed up his few remaining items, and drove off to the Manassas Old Country Buffet for lunch with Carol, Leila, Glenn and Joan. All 5 discussed the fest, and discussion seemed to shift to the possibility of the club trying to determine how to obtain new club shirts, a need triggered by various club members

who have worked to obtain trimmer waste-lines.

At 1PM, the grand prize drawing (Yaesu FT-897D) was awarded to someone who did not have a call sign. About that time, Steve, George N1BV and George WA2TKO closed down the tables for the day, and headed for home. After lunch, Bob, Carol and Leila drove out to Front Royal, visiting the John Mosby Monument on Prospect Hill, subsequently returning by the back roads that included two wineries and a miniature horse farm.

As always, the Ole Virginia Ham Club put on quite an event. It was one fantastic bargain for the \$6 admission fee. Everyone had a great time, no doubt enhanced by the sunny, 72 degree, and slightly breezy morning. It is anticipated that the club will have a table at the Berryville hamfest, on August 6.

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