

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



Volume 19

JANUARY 2006

Number 01

Ye Olde RF Output

MEETING NOTICE JANUARY 12, 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

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

HAPPENINGS

January 12 - 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!
January 3,10,17,24,31 - MVARC ARES NET- 146.055/ 146.655 **7:00 PM local time.** Come and join in!

January 28 - 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 JANUARY 14, 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.

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DECEMBER 2005 FINANCIAL REPORT

By John, K2VPR
MVARC treasurer

Cash on hand	\$ 121.50
Checking	1,354.89
Savings	<u>3,352.77</u>

TOTAL: \$4,829.16

Of that total, \$1719.80 is the Doc Hyde fund.

Expenses for December:
Doc Hyde fund plaque: \$55.35

Income for December:
Interest to savings account: \$1.38

CLUB HOLIDAY PARTY SCREAMED

By Bob, KT4KS

On evening of the second Thursday of December, club members gathered at the Old Country Buffet to celebrate the holidays.

Neither the cold nor anticipated 4-inch evening snowstorm deterred club members from attending this scheduled event. Members began to arrive about 15 minutes before the advertised 7PM start-time, the first arriving members including Frank AA4ZS and his XYL Beverly, Paul AA8O and his XYL, Roy WA4MHB and Doug WA3WEP.

During this time, there was activity on the MVARC repeater, as Bob KT4KS, Vince KE4SKW and "Buc" K3BUC spoke with each another as

they were all driving to the OCB. Most members arrived before the 7PM start time, many of which placed gifts on a table in the back of the room for the gift exchange. Every member staked out a spot at the tables in the party room, and waited for an announcement that it was "time to eat", which announcement came only moments after 7PM..

As always, the buffet included an assortment of delicious items, including salad bar, soups, meats, barbeque, fish, pastas, Mexican items, vegetables, drinks and desserts. While many members generally stayed in their originally staked out seats, a few managed to move around the room to a bit to socialize, generally moving between dishes.

Vince, Bob KT4KS, Ruth KU4WH and Steve K3IZ were seated at the KI30-designated "CW-table", and generally discussed the party and other affairs of the club during the evening. Frank and Beverly sat across the way with Terry K7MPP, Terry's XYL Gloria N4ZZD, and their son Nicolas, all 5 of which are regulars at MVARC's monthly breakfast at the OCB, along with John KD4REG and his XYL Pat. John KA3V and his XYL sat with Howell KG4CKJ and Bob KI30; while John WQ4L sat with his XYL Pat and daughter Ann, along with the Buchanon family including "Buc", Buc's XYL and son.

It was noticed that all of the ladies (and surprisingly, even a couple of the men) were especially very well dressed for the event. Leila WN4PP was dressed in a Christmas-looking vest, while Joan KI4FYN, Gloria, Pat, Pat, Ann and Beverly also dressed especially well for the occasion. Leila's husband, President Carol WA4GFW, was equally well dressed, as was Terry who was wore the always-appropriate MVARC shirt; remaining men being casually dressed for the yearly chow-down.

During this time, Bob spoke with John KA3V who admitted that he presently did not have an antenna in his yard, but planed to put up a dipole; with another member who has 5 acres of property in Midland VA, and who expressed his desire to install a 160M dipole; and with John's WQ4L's wife and daughter about the possibility of each of them getting tickets.

Both Steve and John WZ4A expressed that the food at the OCB is a tremendous bargain for less than \$10, Steve emphasizing that hams are the type of eaters who return to the food tables several time, necessarily eating away at profits. About the time that most members were beginning to select desserts, President Carol and Leila initiated the club gift exchange. As in the past, Carol distributed consecutively numbered tickets to those who brought gifts, and each member took a gift as his number was announced, each member having the option of taking a previously opened gift from another member.

This year's gifts were obviously very carefully purchased, necessarily resulting in some members trying to "move-up" by taking a previously opened gifts from fellow members. It was John KA3V who seemed to select the most unique gift, it being a tube-type radio. Surprisingly, no one took that radio from John, likely to avoid creating a public fight. As in past years, John WQ4L was the first MVARCer to actually take the initiative to take an item from a fellow MVARCer, taking a Volt/ohm meter from Beverly. Beverly did not seem to be too displeased, as it allowed her the opportunity to select a new gift, providing her with a bottle of wine.

Bob KT4KS subsequently took the meter from John WQ4L, only to subsequently result in John's WQ4L daughter taking the meter away from Bob KT4KS (presumably, at the request of her

Father). Other members who participated in the exchange included Joan (Craftsman toolbox), Glenn W4OCC (hands-off phone system for car), Bob KT4KS (Starbucks Coffee), Howell (pliers-set), Ruth (tool set), Steve (large scented candle), John's WQ4L XYL (a second volt/ohm meter for the Reiser family), Leila (candy and 4-pack of wine, which caught the attention of those who had yet to select), Jeannie (large tin-box filled with cookies), and Mary N4TCI (large box of drill bits, which surprisingly were not taken from her).

During the exchange, all of the members had fun as they watched other members open and steal gifts. Bob KI30 jovially taunted a member who had brought coffee as a gift, and Steve found it especially humorous that the same member purchased that gift via EBay. After the gift exchange, Steve rose up to present the Doc Hyde ham-of-the-year award, presenting it to three-term President Carol who has done so much for our club. Later in the evening, Carol expressed that he was surprised to receive the award. After the award presentation, Joan and Glenn rose to present holiday door prizes.

MVARCers may recall that during the October/November meeting Joan volunteered to obtain door prizes, and that the club appropriated \$100 for those prizes. Door prize tickets were passed out to everyone in the room, with drawing stubs being placed into a custom-made decorative basket that was constructed by Joan.

The first winning ticket was held by Vince, who won an aluminum-com-muter coffee cup. Other winning ticket holders included: John KA3V (CD player), Ruth (tools), John's KD4REG XYL Pat (binoculars), and Jim AG4DH (laser leveler). About 9:00PM, the party members started to leave, all trying to get home before the snow started, and 15 minutes later the party was over.

Everyone seemed to have a fine evening. Only 2 days after the event, John KD4REG expressed to me that his wife Pat had such a good time that she asked him why he does not take her to more radio functions. Hopefully, John KD4REG will now bring her to more.

T1: ELECRAFT'S AUTOTUNER MARVEL

By Dave, AI4FC
YORFO editor

I lack the technical background of most club members but I know what I like. And what I like very much is Elecraft's much heralded T1 automatic antenna tuner.

For a technical description, the January issue of QST devotes a full page to the littler tuner in the magazine's "Short Takes" column. ARRL Technical Advisor Bruce Prior, N7RR, writes in the column that the T1's "combination of small size and great performance makes it a very useful addition to any low-power portable station."

I built my T1 from the Elecraft kit nearly a year ago, and use it regularly not just for 5 watt or less operation, but also to tune my Ten Tec Scout. I've turned down the power on the Scout to 20 watts, which is the maximum rated capacity of the T1. It tunes the Scout as readily as any of the QRP rigs I operate, and achieves a 1:1 match with my 250-foot long-wire loop on every band except 160 and 80. It will tune 80, but the match isn't as good as I get with the MFJ manual tuner. It also will tune 160, but I've got a conflict in my house with the all-digital Kitchenaide electric range, which begins beeping erratically whenever I try to operate on that band.

Even when I use my Elecraft KX1 QRP, I typically turn off that rig's internal autotuner and use the T1 because it is faster and gets a

better match.

The T1 was no problem to build for me. I had several problems putting together the KX1, most of which had to do with a steep learning curve on soldering in close quarters, but the T1 went together in five hours or so, and worked as advertised from the get-go. I also have a FT 817, and bought the separate connecting cable with built-in memory that automatically adjusts the T1 to a proper match virtually instantaneously after first use with the Yeasu QRP rig.

What's most fun about the T1 is its size. The unit is only about an inch thick and can easily slip into a shirt pocket. It's lighter than many cell phones. I've been operating it for all these months on the same battery.

If you are looking for an autotuner for portable operations, I'd highly recommend checking out the T1 review in QST. The T1 is available for about \$160 built and ready to go; or for \$135 in kit form, a nice project for a snowy afternoon.

VEC 2005 YEAR IN REVIEW

(Ed. Note: MVARC tests under LARC/VEC. John, WZ4A is the Mount Vernon Club's VEC coordinator, who forwarded the following report. John reports a minor error: MVARC held one more test session than the report accounts for, slightly skewing the results in a way that understates the MVARC team's achievements. Congratulations guys for a job well done!)

By Diane, AA3OF

The Laurel Amateur Radio Club (LARC) VEC is the fourth largest of the fourteen VECs. Our eighteen teams offer VE sessions across the United States. Our people are among the finest volunteers

serving Amateur Radio today.

This is the story of the VEC and its accomplishments during the year 2005.

A. VEC Management

LARC VEC is an all-volunteer organization. We are the only VEC serving the contiguous United States who does not charge for examinations. (Alaska VEC also does not charge for examinations, but they serve only the State of Alaska.)

The Laurel Amateur Radio Club pays for the VEC's expenses. Our expenses consist of office supplies and postage, and total no more than several hundred dollars each year. The sponsoring clubs cover individual team expenses.

As VEC Chairman, my responsibilities are to serve as liaison to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) who authorizes the VECs. The bulk of this work involves in reviewing session packages submitted by the Teams and uploading the session results to the FCC computer. The FCC auto-grants licenses according to the files that the VEC provides. I also attend the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinator meeting each year, along with team members Michele Cimbala WK3X, John Creel WB3GXW, Les Jamison WR3X, John Johnston W3BE, and Rol Anders K3RA. I report to the Laurel Amateur Radio Club and to the FCC.

The VEC has three backups for uploads: Michele Cimbala WK3X, Bob Rose AA3RR, and John Forrest W4ZA. These folks do uploads for their club teams, and also do uploads while I am on vacation.

The VEC web site is:

<http://larcmdorg.doore.net/vec/>

This site contains information about the LARC VE Teams and their scheduled test sessions. All Teams

are urged to submit their exam session information and information about licensing classes for publication on the web site. Our Webmaster is Ed Herbrechtsmeier K3QX, who also is the webmaster for the Laurel Amateur Radio Club web site and the Foundation For Amateur Radio web site.

B. Team Activity

LARC's eighteen VE Teams held 136 sessions during the year, at which they administered 1274 elements to 927 applicants.

The most active LARC VEC VE Team is the Laurel Amateur Radio Club's VE Team under the leadership of John Creel WB3GXW. This team held eighteen VE sessions during the year. Not only does this club provide monthly tests each month except December in Laurel, MD, it also provides testing services at many local Hamfests and at VE Licensing Classes held by other local clubs.

The second most active Team is the Clearwater Amateur Radio Society VE Team at 15 licensing sessions. This Team also holds monthly exams and tests at Hamfests and VE licensing classes. The Maryland Mobileers Amateur Radio Club VE Team and the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club VE Team jointly take third place, with thirteen sessions each during the year.

The Laurel Team tested the most applicants (178) during the year, but the Mount Vernon Team administered the most elements (291.) The Mount Vernon Team was number two for applicant testing volume (157), and the Laurel Team was number two for elements administered (236).

One of the most interesting VE Teams is the Amateur Radio Club of Trinity VE Team. This Team tests students at Trinity High School in Camp Hill, PA. Sean Barnes N3JQ, the Team Leader,

teaches physics at Trinity High School and elmers his students in the Amateur Radio Club of Trinity. This team offered 74 applicants the opportunity to take 86 elements during the year. In the November session, this Team offered examinations to 42 new hams at Trinity High School.

C. VE Activity

Two hundred and six people worked as LARC VEC VEs during the year.

Once again, the LARC VE who participated in the most test sessions during the year is Les Jamison WR3X, who worked eighteen VE sessions. Les also tested with four different teams during the year. Les works for the VEC as a trainer, who helps teams with new team leaders and new team members get organized, and he also volunteers to help out as needed when teams are temporarily short of members.

This year, 10 VEs worked with multiple teams.

The annual standing of the most active LARC VEs is:

VE	
Call	
Sessions Worked	
Jamison Jr., Les WR3X	18
Creel, John WB3GXW	15
Queen, Ken K3EQ	15
David Jr., C. T. K3GXF	14
May, Mary Ellen W3VY	14
Angel, Charles AA3FB	13
Cimbala, Michele WK3X	13
Forrest, John WZ4A	13
Hatfield, William W3QX	13
Mantich, Matt N3JMK	13
Nichols, Harold WA4OGP	13
Schaefer, Rusty N3WKE	13
Zimmerman, Diane AA3OF	13
Bevan, Holly N3MB	11
Corron, George AF4JH	11
Diamond-Rose, Brenda KB3ATI	11
Grady, Patrick KG4URP	11

Lempicki, Francis AA4ZS	11
Rose, Robert AA3RR	11
Scarborough, Robert KC3EV	11
Schaefer, Robin AA3SB	11
Thompson, Ellen N3EMI	11
Cooper, Rick KR3LC	10
Ferguson, William WB3JJS	10
Matthews, Omar "Jerry" N3XWT	10
May, Charles AA3WC	10
Waller, Al K3TKJ	10

Note that many of the most active VEs work with multiple teams, and not only work monthly sessions with their club teams, but also work Hamfests and special test sessions held for licensing classes.

LARC VEC has active VEs who are well known within the Amateur community. These include Bill Edgar N3LLR who is the ARRL Atlantic Division Director, Al Waller K3TJK, who sponsors QSL.net, Jim Cross WI3N, the ARRL Maryland-DC Section Manager, and John Johnston W3BE who is the National President of QCWA and a columnist for WorldRadio magazine.

D. LARC VEC Standing vs. Other VEC's

LARC VEC is moving closer to taking over third place in the VEC activity status. We missed taking third place by 5 applicants this year. (Ed's note: There's a delay in FCC transmittal of information, so the most recent year is actually 2004; 2005 figures won't be available until mid summer.) As you see from the chart, our standing increased from a falling off in activity by WCARS rather than from increased activity by LARC VEC.

Coordinator Name	
Number of Applicants Tested 2004	
Number of Applicants Tested 2003	
ARRL/VEC	15,945
	20,242
W5YI-VEC	6,404
	6,778
W. Carolina AR Soc/VEC, Inc.	1,057

1,180
 Laurel AR Club, Inc.
 1,052
 1,056
 Central America VEC Inc
 476
 793
 Greater LA AR Group
 350
 441
 Sandarc-Vec
 331
 497
 W4VEC
 323
 427
 Sunnyvale VEC ARC Inc
 219
 352
 Anchorage AR Club
 207
 248
 The Milwaukee RA Club, Inc.
 136
 107
 Jefferson AR Club
 40
 11
 Golden Empire AR Society
 37
 13
 MO-KAN VE Coordinator
 30
 49

The FCC provides VEC activity figures during the annual National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators. Note that the FCC figures differ from the LARC VEC's figures; the above chart reflects the FCC figures.

E. New Teams

The Sarasota Emergency Radio Club VE Team, headed by Ron Wetjan WD4AHZ, joined LARC VEC during the year as the newest VE Team.

Two teams who joined the VEC in 1994 began testing this year. They are the Palm Beach Amateur Radio Council VE Team and the Clearwater Amateur Radio Society VE Team.

The Clearwater team not only began testing this year, but also became the second most active LARC VE Team.

F. New Team Leader

The Team Leader for the Rochester Amateur Radio Association (RARA) VE Team retired during the year because her job as a Real Estate Agent required

her to work during the times that the Team was scheduled for VE Testing. Raj Dewan N2RD became the new RARA Team Leader.

G. Club Calls

After receiving several requests for Club Call Sign work during the year, I spoke with Bill Cross from the FCC about becoming a Club Call Administrator. LARC VEC is not a Club Call Administrator. I don't know why LARC VEC decided not to take on this work, because this decision was made before I became associated with VEC Management. Bill told me that the FCC considers that Club Call Administration program is working satisfactorily, and that the FCC sees no need to change it at this time. Now that I've completed this research and determined that Club Call Administration is not available to us, I plan to continue to refer the Teams to ARRL for their Club Call needs.

H. Question Pool Committee

Once again, I was not able to get a LARC VEC member on the Question Pool Committee (QPC). The thinking of the NC-VEC seems to be that they want a three-member committee, consisting of a rep from ARRL VEC, a rep from W5YI-VEC and a rep from another VEC (currently a rep from Alaska VEC), with the rep from the "little pistol" VEC serving as Chairman. I think that his policy is short-sited, as it guarantees that every time there's a new Chairman, the new Chairman will have no experience as a QPC member. However, I have not yet been able to sell my point of view. I will continue to work on getting a full QPC member from LARC VEC.

The QPC Chairman, Jim Wiley KL7CC, invited the VECs to appoint "associate members" to the QPC. LARC VEC appointed Rol Anders, K3RA, who is a LARC VE with the Historical Electronics Museum VE Team and the Maryland Mobileers Amateur Radio Club VE Team. Among his many qualifications, Rol teaches licensing classes, and has a unique knowledge of the questions pool questions that results from teaching.

I. NC-VEC Comments on FCC Proposed Rule

The NC-VEC considered submitting comments to the FCC on the notice of proposed rule making. Rol Anders K3RA volunteered to serve on the committee that drafted the NC-VEC's proposed comments. Rol worked long and

hard at drafting comments. Unfortunately, the NC-VEC voted not to submit the comments. I do not think that Rol's time was wasted, however, as his work gave him visibility within the NC-VEC. I hope that this visibility can pay off in election to the QPC next year.

J. Personal Security Question

Beginning 9/25/2005, the FCC has given Uniform Licensing System (ULS) users the option to select a personal security question. This question is to be used for expediting ULS password re-sets. Collecting Personal Security Question information is optional for the VECs.

LARC VEC has opted not to collect personal security question information. ARRL VEC and W5YI VEC, the largest VECs, have also opted not to collect this information. I understand that Alaska VEC is collecting this information, and possibly some of the other VEC's.

K. Records Retention

One important item that came up from NC-VEC was a change in the Instructions to the VECs on records retention. Part 97 requires in Section 97.519 that VECs maintain examination records for at least 15 months. However, until now, the Instructions to the VEC have required "VEC's shall retain all examination sessions records at least fifteen months. Examination results summaries and rosters of examinees shall be retained until further notice." The instructions are not binding on the VEC's, but I have chosen to follow them in the matter of records retention. As a result, the VEC is maintaining boxes of old "results summaries and rosters of examinees" in the Chairman's basement.

Now that the Instructions no longer suggest holding onto this material indefinitely, I plan to dispose of the old records by shredding. The LARC VEC new retention policy is to hold all records from the current year and from the two previous full years. This is a longer retention period than required by the FCC and by the Instructions to the VECs. I will dispose of old records by shredding records from the 3rd previous year. Thus, in January of 2006, I will plan to shred the records from 2003 and earlier.