

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



Volume 18

DECEMBER 2005

Number 12

Ye Olde RF Output

HOLIDAY PARTY
DECEMBER 8, 2005
7:00 PM
OLD COUNTRY BUFFET
ROUTE 1
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22306

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

December 8 - Holiday Party Held at Old Country Buffet, Route 1, Alexandria, VA . 7:00 p.m. See you there!

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

December 24 - 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 DECEMBER 10, 2005 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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CQ NOEL, CQ NOEL, CQ NOEL

OK, so there's no chance of winning an Icom 756PROIII or a TS 2000, but you can still have a chance to take home something cool!

The club's annual holiday party is Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Old Country Buffet, beginning at 7 p.m.

There will be club prizes. Bring a \$10 gift and you can participate in the ever-so-fun gift exchange. And there will be dancing girls! Oh wait. Due to popular demand, Frank, AA4ZS, will be dancing instead, in his holiday Speed-O. No photos, please.

This is a don't-miss event. And because it's such a big deal, the December club meeting is canceled and the next regular meeting will be Jan. 12, 2006.

ANTENNAS I HAVE SEEN AND ADMIRIED

By DAVE, AI4FC
YORFO EDITOR

On the rare days I leave my bicycle at home and take the subway into work from my home on Russell Road, I usually walk on East Chapman Street. There I have long admired a corner duplex not because of the house, but because of the impressive antenna array in the backyard. Even before I took my technician license three years ago,

these antennas were like a beacon summoning me back to the hobby I had given up as a young teenager in California.

The antennas - and the house they dwarf -- belong to Pradyumna Rana, whom I called one evening last week after tracking him down from his call sign on the vanity license plate on his car - WB4NFO.

We met Saturday afternoon. We stood in the cold on his backyard deck as he told me that the Telerec 6-element 3-band beam on his tower dwarfing the two-story home no longer is made. The two wire antennas strung through the tower are 80-meter and 40-meter inverted vees, he said, and on top the array is a 2-meter Hustler vertical. A 7-band Hustler vertical is stuck in the middle of the back yard. There are guy wires going everywhere.

And most remarkable of all, in this age of urban antenna restrictions and suburban neighborhood covenants that have sent many a ham antenna into hiding, one of the guy wires swoops down from the tower, across the front of the house and anchors itself just a foot or so off the sidewalk.

It's enough to make a ham's heart soar, even though neighbors in this increasingly upscale neighborhood might not necessarily share that enthusiasm.

In his basement shack, with 20-meter SSB chatter over the TS 430 in the background, Rana told me his remarkable story.

Born and raised in Nepal, Rana attended St. Xaviers Catholic School in his hometown of Katmandu. Father Moran ran the school and was Nepal's only licensed ham operator, by special privilege extended to him by the king. Later, Rana took a job with the U.S. Embassy in Katmandu, and his association with embassy staff eventually led him to immigrate to the United

States in June 1965.

Like so many of us who learned to love the magic of radio at an early age, Rana longed to become a ham. But licensing required U.S. citizenship, which for Rana came in 1973. His first license came a year later and soon the antennas began to grow from his Alexandria house.

"Oh, to get ham radio," he said. "It was the one way I could communicate with my country."

Telephone calls to Katmandu had to be arranged three days in advance, and the cost was nearly \$5 a minute over bad lines, when they were available. Advancing up the licensing chain, Rana, who worked for Bell Atlantic arranging microwave links for television stations, spent hours each day calling home over his radios to his dear friend and mentor, Father Moran, 9N1MM.

In the 1980s Rana became something of a ham radio ambassador. He arranged for a DX expedition of American and Japanese hams to travel to Nepal in the hope of attracting the interest of other young people in Nepal. He wanted Japanese hams on the trip so that the message of ham radio as an international - rather than purely American - hobby became clear. He came back to cartons of QSL cards from hams around the world he had worked.

Later there was another expedition to Thailand, and additional efforts to increase international awareness of the hobby. But at home, in his basement shack is where Rana would power up his Henry amplifier and to chase DX and talk to his now-deceased mentor.

"I've worked 327 countries," Rana said, as we pored over a binder of QSL cards from around the globe. "This one's pretty rare," he'd say occasionally as we flipped through

the pages, referring this time to a card from 1A0KM, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

So did your neighbors ever complain? I wondered, thinking of my own pitiful wire loop hung haphazardly in the trees from my house just a few blocks away.

Sure, Rana said. But what could they do? The city of Alexandria had issued him a permit for the tower. And over the years, he said, he's made peace with most of his neighbors because he has helped them eliminate sources of interference, even when it was not his own, by suggesting improvements.

"Some got real mad at me," Rana said of past neighbors. "But I brought them over and showed them what ham radio was all about. It helped quite a bit."

"There is one woman who still doesn't talk to me," he said, gesturing toward the street in a manner that said it's not something he gives much thought to.

As impressed as I was with Rana's setup, he made clear that there's always something better out there. He recalled wistfully an antenna another ham in the neighborhood once had, a large quad that for a time carried the signals from the shack of Dave Jordan, WA3GIN.

NOVEMBER 10, 2005 MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was held at the INOVA 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, everyone introduced themselves. We had a guest attendee, Rich, AJ3G. The October minutes, as posted on the reflector, were approved with one change (KI3O should be K3IZ).

K2VPR, gave the Treasurer's Report. As of 30 October 2005:

Checking:	\$2,192.41
Savings:	3,345.75
Cash on hand:	121.50
Doc Hyde fund:	1438.50
TOTAL ASSETS:	\$5,659.75

He reported we have 139 paid members.

The ARES report was given by Steve, K3IO. He read a list of those MVARC members who participated in the Marine Corps Marathon. It was announced that there would be a regular test session this Saturday.

AA4ZS, gave the Coast Guard Station report. The racks are out of the shack, but the antenna rotor parts are no longer available. There was no MARS report.

Dick, WA4USB, for the Education Committee Report, stated that the Venture Crew will conduct a Technician License Class with a test session on 14 January 2006. He also noted that since the question pools were changing, he would be approaching the club later for class new tapes.

Bob, KT4KS, gave the Community Outreach Report, and stated that the George Washington Special Event information was sent to QST and to Mt. Vernon. Bob, KI3O, presented the Program Committee report by introducing Frank, K4EC, who would be presenting a history of the MVARC repeater.

Old Business Carol, WA4GFW, said the new draft set of By-Laws needed to be reviewed.

New Business Jeanie, N4ZGI, recommended that a report of MVARC activities and volunteers for both hurricane Katrina and the USMC Marathon be sent to the ARRL Activities desk.

It was announced that the monthly breakfast would take place on the

usual date, and that the Club Holiday Party would be on the 8th of December at 7:00 PM.

John, WQ4L, demonstrated a \$99 battery tester he had just received, and showed printouts from its tests. Joan, KI4FYN, and Glenn, W4OCC, were the Cookie Monsters. Annie, KG4DEX, and Charlie, AF4NT, volunteered to be the Cookie Monsters in January.

NOVEMBER 2005 FINANCIAL REPORT

Income:	
Dues	\$125.00
Expenses:	
Newsletter supplies:	\$63.62
Cookie monster	<u>16.32</u>
TOTAL:	79.94

Cash:	\$121.50
Checking:	1,330.24
Savings:	<u>3,351.39</u>
TOTAL:	\$4,803.13

Of that total \$1,830.50 belongs to the Doc Hyde fund.

Respectfully submitted,

John/K2VPR/Treasurer

MARINE MARATHOM DRAWS CLUB HELP

By Steve, K3IZ

It was dark and clear morning when those ham volunteers showed for their efforts for the Marine Corps Marathon. Hams provide all the medical and logistical info for the event. Hams were stationed every mile along the race course.

At some stretches hams were at half mile points along the way. We also helped at the aid stations with a voice operator and a packet

operator assigned at each. The voice operator would pass along any needs the aid station would have and the packet op sent injury information back to the main medical location at the Iwo Jima Memorial. Hams shadowed the top medical and command personnel running the race.

So all of these hams needed nets to coordinate the communications flying around about the runners. There were 6 nets all together had to be run by net control operators. Usually there were 2 or 3 ops at each net control.

That made for a bit of an easier time of it as the net control ops could switch off for a breather. All in all, it took about 125 Amateur Radio operators to fill all the needs required by the USMC for the 26.2 mile race.

There were hams from all over the Washington DC metropolitan area and even a few from outside the area. There were a couple of ops who came from NJ and another from NC who helped.

The MVARC members were engaged in every aspect of the race from planning to post race analysis. We had mile marker ops, packet ops, net control ops, water point ops, aid station ops, put up stations ops, tear down station ops, all kinds of ops were opting out there.

MVARCers reported, controlled, packeted, transmitted, received, shadowed, planned, and analyzed. We had all kinds of efforts to get the Marine Corps Marathon to be a well run event.

The MVARC again had a spectacular showing. The members of our club did us proud as usual. We indeed can stand tall as we know the effort put forth by our members who would of course therefore be in good standing. That's us the strong, the brave, the proud, the MVARC!

These are the members who

helped: N1BV, N4ZGI, WA3USB, KE4POK, KP4ZX, K2VPR, KE4ER, N6JWN, WE4BSA, K3BUC, KB8PYM, N4TCI, KG4YDZ, KE4TZ, KG4URM, KG4SCG, W2BSA and K3IZ.

GET ANY GOOD STUFF?

If you get any radio or electronic gear from Santa this year, let me know. If there's enough response, I'll put together a piece for the January issue on how nice Santa and our families have been in feeding our radio habit.

Just send me a note to dmwhitney@comcast.net telling me what you got and how it works. I'm interested in books or magazines, too. -dw

REWARD OFFERED (hee hee)

A reward of 500 microfarads is offered for information leading to the arrest of the desperate criminal Hop-A-Long Capacity.

This unrectified criminal escaped from a primary cell where he had been clamped in ions, awaiting the gauss chamber.

He is charged with the induction of an 18 turn coil named Millihenry, who was found choked and robbed of valuable joules. He is armed with a carbon rod and is a potential killer. Capacity is also charged with driving a dc motor over a Wheatstone bridge and refusing to let the band pass.

If encountered, he may offer resistance. The electro-motive force spent the night searching for him in a magnetic field, where he went to ground. They had no success and believe he returned ohm via a short circuit.

He was last seen riding a megacycle with his friend Eddy Current,

who was playing a harmonic.

Fox News is reporting that the local police, known as the Keystone Caps, formed a by-pass, drew their electron guns and ended up shunting poor Hop-A-Long to ground.

(Submitted by Steve, K3IZ)

ATTENTION HAMVENTIONEERS

By John, K2PVR

Yes, it is early, but some of the rooms are already fully booked! I have reserved and paid for a three bedroom dorm room at the University of Dayton for the 2006 Hamvention in the Campus South building. The cost of the suite is \$84.00 per night regardless of the occupancy (one to six people). I have reserved the room for three nights, Thursday, May 18th through Saturday (check out on Sunday morning). Four of the six beds are already spoken for. So if:

Six people occupy the room it will cost \$42.00 per person for all three nights.

Five people occupy the room it will cost \$50.40 per person for all three nights.

Four people occupy the room it will cost \$63.00 per person for all three nights.

Three people occupy the room it will cost \$84.00 per person for all three nights.

Two people occupy the room it will cost \$126.00 per person for all three nights.

The good news:

1. See above.
2. Reasonably close to the Hamvention.
3. Denny's nearby for breakfast. Other restaurants nearby for dinner.
4. Bed linens and towels are supplied by U. Dayton.

5. Some of us have done this before and it works out fine.

6. No cleaning staff come in to bother your stuff. Everyone gets a key.

The bad news:

1. No cleaning staff comes in to clean up daily.
2. No TV or radio provided.
3. This year there is a kitchen. If you really want to go on the cheap bring frozen dinners!

To look at the room, go to:

HOUSING.UDAYTON.EDU/
FACILITIES/CAMPUS_SOUTH/
INDEX.HTML.

SHOPPER'S REVENGE AT WAL-MART

Things to do at Wal-Mart while your spouse/partner is taking their sweet time:

1. Get 24 boxes of condoms and randomly put them in peoples carts when they aren't looking.

2. Set all the alarm clocks in Housewares to go off at 5-minute intervals.

3. Make a trail of tomato juice on the floor leading to the rest rooms.

4. Walk up to an employee and tell him/her in an official tone, 'Code 3' in housewares and see what happens.

5. Go to the Service Desk and ask to put a bag of M&M's on layaway.

6. Move a 'CAUTION - WET FLOOR' sign to a carpeted area.

7. Set up a tent in the camping department and tell other shoppers you'll invite them in if they'll bring pillows from the bedding department.

8. When a clerk asks if they can

help you, begin to cry and ask 'Why can't you people just leave me alone?'

9. Look right into the security camera; use it as a mirror, and pick your nose.

10. While handling guns in the hunting department, ask the clerk if he knows where the anti-depressants are.

11. Dart around the store suspiciously, loudly humming the "Mission Impossible" theme.

12. In the auto department, practice your "Madonna look" using different size funnels.

13. Hide in a clothing rack and when people browse through, say "PICK ME!"

14. When an announcement comes over the loud speaker, assume the fetal position and scream "NO! NO! It's those voices again!!!!"

(And; last, but not least!)

15. Go into a fitting room and shut the door and wait a while; and, then, yell, very loudly, "There is no toilet paper in here!"

(Source: anonymous e-mail worthless except to fill space and maybe bring you a little holiday cheer.)

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE
YORFO STAFF!!

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