

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



Volume 18

SEPTEMBER 2005

Number 09

Ye Olde RF Output

MEETING NOTICE
SEPTEMBER 8, 2005
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

September 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!

September 6,13,20,27 - 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 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 SEPTEMBER 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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SEPTEMBER 8 MEETING

Dennis Bodson, W4PWF, the ARRL Roanoke Division director, will be the guest speaker at the Thursday, Sept.8, meeting, said Bob, KI3O, the MVARC program chairman.

Bob said there's the usual pre-meeting dinner at Primos Family Restaurant, 1636-A Belle View Boulevard in Alexandria.

A reminder: The club has moved back to INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital. The club meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

MINUTES AUG. 11, 2005 MEETING

By Carol, WA4GFW
President and fill-in secretary

The meeting was held at the 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. The July 2005 minutes as posted on the reflector were approved. John, K2VPR, gave the treasurer's report.

Steve, K3IZ, reported on the ARES activities, which included: Planning for Marine Corp Parade for October 30, 2005. Sign up early to insure you can gain access. You will need a badge. Check

NCACDC.Com for signup details. They expect many more runners this year. Howard Cunningham provided additional details on the operation and needed support equipment.

John WZ4A, reported on education, which included: VE Regular session on August 13th, at the First Christian Church, 2723 King Street Alexandria, VA

Mary N4TCI reported on FAR. They will be holding their ham-fest on September 10th and 11th at the Gaithersburg Fairgrounds.

Dick WA4US and Doug WA3WEP reported on the antenna replacement progress. Funding for the new antenna was approved in the amount of \$1,000

Keith N6JWN, reported on the USCG station. Both the Kenwood transceivers are operational as well as the Kenwood 922 linear. Work is in progress for repair of the large log periodic antenna. The USCG has requested our support for operation of the SHARES net. This would be one Saturday a month for a couple of hours. We need to have more members operate from the station to keep it active.

Bob, KT4KS, reported on the Community outreach

Bob KI3O reported on the program for: September speaker would be Dennis Bodson, W4PWF, the ARRL Roanoke Division Director.

Meeting was adjourned.

Terry Hines N4ZH gave a presentation of transmission lines. The presentation was most informative and many questions were fielded. Thanks Terry.

TRIPPING WITH – AND WITHOUT – RF

Alaska Bound with QCWA

By Leila, WN4PP

On Tuesday, August 16, Carol (wa4gfw) and Leila (wn4pp) left Dulles Airport for the Quarter Century Wireless Association (QCWA) sponsored Alaskan tour and cruise. It was a dream come true. After a long 21 hour trip (plane delays) we arrived at last in Fairbanks and were met by our tour guide.

The fun began early next morning when we went on a bus tour of Fairbanks and then by paddle boat to Chena Indian Village on the Yukon River. We saw several caribou on a river bank and beautiful scenery all around. This was somewhat diminished by smoke from wild fires that were burning hundreds of miles away, but still had a special allure.

The village was very interesting. There were demonstrations of the way the Indians lived and of the work they did to survive the winters. Furs were used for warmth, and there were women sewing and beading clothes made of leather. An Indian woman was there that had a piece commissioned by the Smithsonian and it is now on display there. They lived in small log cabins to more efficiently preserve the wood stove heat and there were structures built on stilts to help keep their food from wild animals. We also saw dogs bred for dog sledding that were being raised by a woman who has been in several Iditarod dog sled races. They were happy dogs and obviously loved her. On the way out we stopped by the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. That too, was very interesting.

In the afternoon we visited Gold Dredge Number 8, but first of all, we were treated to an "all you can eat" miner's lunch (all hams would love this). We then panned for gold. Carol and I together got about twelve dollars worth of gold and I spent ten for a locket to keep it in. Lots of fun!

The next morning we boarded the McKinley Explorer glass domed train for Denali National Park. This eight hour train ride provided us with glorious views all around. An eight hour tundra wilderness tour in Denli National Park was on our Friday activity list. We then rode the train bound for Anchorage. A motorcoach was provided from Anchorage to Seward where we boarded Holland America's ms. Veendam for our cruise. It was here that all of the QCWA hams got together. There were about 150 of us and a good time was had by all. Good company, good food and spectacular scenery, including glaciers. Spotted on the trip were whales, otters, birds, bear, moose, caribou, deer, dall sheep, salmon swimming and jumping up stream and who knows what else that I can't remember.

ICOM had an IC7800 on board for our use. It was located on an aft deck with a vertical antenna on the deck above. Cold and rainy weather didn't hamper radio operations very much, the radio was under cover and people operated regularly. Carol and I both made contacts and that was neat. One of our contacts was the USS Red Oak, a victory ship off of the coast of California. Thank you ICOM!

Sunday, August 28, we all had to say good-by to our new ham friends and return home but the entire trip was awesome!

COLD TURKEY IN THE GRAND CANYON

By Dave, AI4FC
YORFO editor

I hadn't quite realized how much radio has become a part of my life in the nearly three years I have been a ham. I operate regularly on the CW bands from my home set-up, have a 2-meter rig in my truck, a FT 100d at our cabin in the Shenandoah Valley and carry a 2-meter handset in my backpack when I commute to work each day on my bicycle.

So when I signed up to go on an eight-day rafting trip down the 280 miles of the Colorado River as it cuts through the Grand Canyon, I hadn't really thought about how much of a lifestyle change I would be facing.

We put in at Lee's Ferry in Arizona on Thursday, Aug. 17, at about noon. We hauled out at Pearce Ferry on Lake Mead in the early afternoon of Aug. 25. Between those dates, we were totally out of communication – no radios of any sort, no news of any sort, no cell phones, or Blackberries, or Palm Pilots. It's overly dramatic to say we were at the mercy of the Colorado for those eight glorious days, but that would be the truth. We splashed through terrific rapids, climbed through side canyons and slot canyons to reach wonderful waterfalls and pools to play in and just about everyone on the trip wondered at one point or another what was going on in "real time," as opposed to what we called "rim time."

When the last evening of the trip finally arrived, many of us gathered in a circle as the crew prepared a filet mignon dinner (we didn't exactly rough it, though the only bathing of any sort was in the silt-filled Colorado) to discuss the highlights of our experience. Several of us

mentioned the strange feeling of being isolated with no way really to know even whether everything was OK with our families back home. For me, it was the longest period I had gone without talking to my wife since I married her in 1968.

The canyon has had inhabitants, on and off again, for some 1,200 or 1,500 years that we know of – and probably much longer. Many times, as I sat in awe at the unimaginable scale of the canyon from the river looking up, I wondered what life must have been like for them. But what stirred me most is how small one's world seemed when there was absolutely no evidence of any other.

A week later, now fully involved in "real time" once again, I watch in horror the desperate people in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Tens of thousands of them, too, must have pondered this same thing, but obviously in a horrifying way. Radios and cell phones are an essential bridge and when they're gone, we're really not that much more advanced than the Indian families in the Grand Canyon whose pieces of civilization I marveled at.

My radios are back on now, the newspaper lands everyday on my doorstep and now I listen as the ham operators around the country pass traffic back and forth, helping link the rescue teams headed for Katrina's dead zone. There are many who believe that amateur radio is archaic, nearly as useless as the shards of pottery that I fingered in the canyon, more than a thousand years after the vessel they once composed held any water or grain. I think the evidence suggests otherwise, and that of all the tools and toys I play with regularly, it's the radios that still serve reliably to bridge the isolation and make all of us players in a larger world.

Alan, N5LF, SK

We were shocked and deeply saddened by the death Alan Joseph Wermer, a much-respected member of our club who died Aug. 12 at Innova Fairfax Hospital after surfing a stroke. He was 48.

Alan's day job was as a cultural resources archeologist for the the Army National Guard, where he was a primary liason between the Guard and Indian tribes to make sure sacred tribal lands were not harmed by military activities.

But we all knew Alan as a skilled CW operator and low-power enthusiast. Also a member of the Alexandria Radio Club, Alan often brought items to share at club breakfasts and meetings and was a regular at the club's annual QRP field day. For those of us who are new to the hobby, Alan had a kind word and a deep desire to convey his love of the hobby.

In an obituary in the St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press, this was said of Alan's professional work: "Wormser later worked on a national scale to determine whether buildings or other sites on National Guard properties should be designated as historic landmarks. He also led workshops around the country for the National Guard, historic preservationists and archaeologists. In 1997, he was given environmental security awards from the secretary of the Army and the secretary of defense, and the following year he received a personal citation of merit from Secretary of Defense William Cohen."

On eHam.com, here's a couple of the most poignant remembrances:

"Alan had also recently become engaged to a lovely lady Laura. Alan and Laura were planning a new life together. They enjoyed each other's company and it was obvious to all how he felt," said Randal E. Browning, KB3IWA. It is

seldom that we get the pleasure of knowing someone so capable of enriching our lives.”

“Alan had diabetic health issues that carried with them a high probability of complications, his recent death being one of those, although I doubt anybody, Alan included, predicted what actually happened,” said Fred Adsit, NY2V, who had worked with Alan on an FCC matter. “He led a full life. He cared about his own life, but he had a passion for caring for the lives of others, in many walks of life. It may not be politically correct to say this, but I will.. I believe he surely is with God now. He was such a decent gentleman.”

We miss you Alan. 73.

K4US TO GET NEW ANTENNA

By Dick, WA3USB

For those who were unable to attend the MVARC meeting last month, here is a copy of the Repeater Committee Report for August 2005:

About eight years ago, when outside antenna work was done at the George Washington National Masonic Memorial, MVARC found out two weeks too late. When we inquired at that time, the estimated labor costs were \$1,800.

During winter and Spring 2005, planning for a new repeater antenna began as we learned of a radio system upgrade by the City of Alexandria. Sources indicated that the upgrade would occur sometime in the Fall. As recently as the first of July we were told that the subcontractors for antenna work and radio installation had not been selected nor had their contracts been awarded. Suddenly about July 13 we learned that the subs had been

selected a couple of days earlier and that the new system was to be fully operational by August 1.

Obviously we had to move very fast to take advantage of a tower service company doing work for the City at the temple. We contacted the antenna contractor, explained what we wanted done and received positive responses. Following coordination with the Project Manager, we are working directly with the antenna contractor.

We are pleased to report that we should soon have a new antenna installed for approximately 25% less than the list price of the antenna alone. The projected install date is in mid-September. The date is dependent upon actual progress of the city upgrade.

We believe that the new antenna will be a significant improvement as it will be on our frequency, have lower SWR, and will increase coverage of our served area to the South and West.

Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club
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