



# Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub  
1733 Gihon Rd. Parkersburg, WV 26101

## FCC PROPOSES TWO NEW AMATEUR BANDS!

Great news for ham radio this week! The FCC has proposed going along with ARRL's request for a new domestic (US-only), secondary HF allocation at 5.25 to 5.4 MHz. The FCC also is ready to permit operation on a 136-kHz "sliver band" in the low-frequency (LF) region. And, in response to a third ARRL request, the FCC has proposed elevating Amateur Radio to primary status at 2400 to 2402 MHz.

"I'm just as tickled as I can be," ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, said upon hearing the news. "This is a classic example of our ARRL at work."

The FCC voted unanimously May 2 to adopt the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in ET Docket 02-98. The Commission released a Public Notice May 9, and the NPRM is expected to be released soon. A comment deadline will be announced as soon as it's available.

The FCC said the new 5-MHz band would help amateurs "better match their choice of frequency to existing propagation conditions." The band, if approved, would be the first new amateur HF allocation since World Administrative Radio Conference 1979 gave amateurs 30, 17 and 12 meters--the so-called "WARC Bands." Assuming the 5-MHz band eventually is authorized, it could be a few years before it actually becomes available.

The League said its successful WA2XSY experiments demonstrated that amateurs can coexist with current users and that the band is very suitable for US-to-

Caribbean paths. In comparisons with 80 and 40 meters, the WA2XSY operation also showed the 60-meter band to be the most reliable of the three. The ARRL also argued that a new 150-kHz allocation at 5 MHz could relieve periodic overcrowding on 80 and 40.

If allocated to amateurs on a secondary basis, hams would have to avoid interfering with--and accept interference from--current occupants of the spectrum, as they already do on 30 meters. The band 5.250 to 5.450 MHz now is allocated to Fixed and Mobile services on a co-primary basis in all three ITU regions.

The ARRL asked the FCC for two LF allocations in October 1998--135.7 to 137.8 kHz and 160 to 190 kHz. The FCC said its action on one part of that LF request "proposes changes that would enhance the ability of amateur radio operators to conduct technical experiments, including propagation and antenna design experiments, in the 'low frequency' (LF) range of the radio spectrum."

Several countries in Europe and elsewhere already have 136-kHz amateur allocations. The first amateur transatlantic contact on the band was recorded in February 2001.

Hams would be secondary to the Fixed and Maritime Mobile services in the 136-kHz allocation. The League said its engineering surveys suggest that hams could operate without causing problems to power line carrier (PLC) systems already active in that vicinity or to government assignments. Unallocated Part 15 PLC

systems are used by electric utilities to send control signals, data and voice.

The FCC said its proposal to upgrade the Amateur Service allocation at 2400 to 2402 MHz to primary "seeks to protect current amateur use of this band." Hams have shared their other 2.4 GHz spectrum on a secondary basis with government users.

Amateurs already are primary at 2390 to 2400 and from 2402 to 2417 MHz. The ARRL has said primary status in the intervening spectrum slice was needed "to provide some assurances of future occupancy of the band segments for the next generation of amateur satellites."

The ARRL has expressed its belief that hams can continue to accommodate Part 15 and Part 18 devices at 2.4 GHz.

ARRL's Chief Development Officer Mary Hobart, K1MMH, was among those welcoming the good news from the FCC. "This is a wonderful example of the work ARRL conducts in Washington on matters important to the Amateur Radio community," Hobart said.

"Thanks to the 10,000 hams who contributed so generously to the 2002 Defense of Frequencies Fund. The success of that campaign helps to make decisions like this possible."

## FCC TO GET TOUGH ON OFFENDING POWER COMPANIES

The FCC plans to get tougher on electric utilities that fail to fix problems causing interference with Amateur Radio and other licensed communications. Special Counsel for Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth met recently at ARRL Headquarters with Ed Hare, W1RFI, and John Phillips, K2QAI, of the ARRL Lab staff to discuss various electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) issues. As a result of that session, changes will be made in the way ARRL and FCC cooperate on power-line cases.

"What we've done is to review all cases that the League has worked on where we had no cooperation," Hollingsworth said this week. "In at least three instances, the power company in question hasn't cooperated as it should have." Hollingsworth said these cases will "go to the next step," which likely will entail involving the appropriate FCC field office for additional investigation and appropriate enforcement. In the future, initial letters from the ARRL and the FCC will impose a shorter compliance window and will be more firmly worded. In addition, a follow-up letter from the FCC will be sent to utilities that fail to respond appropriately to the initial inquiry.

The routine FCC letter to a power company cites the requirement to rectify problems with their equipment "if the interference is caused by faulty power utility equipment." FCC Part 15 rules classify most power-line and related equipment as "incidental radiators." This means the utility equipment does not intentionally generate any radio-frequency energy but may create it as an incidental part of its intended operation. The FCC urges a utility to locate sources of any interference caused by its equipment and make necessary corrections "within a reasonable time."

Typical was a recent letter from the FCC's Consumer Information

and Governmental Affairs Bureau to Commonwealth Edison of Chicago citing radio frequency interference complaints from five Illinois amateurs. According to the FCC, the amateurs had attempted without success to work through the utility's complaint resolution channels.

Utilities that appear unwilling to abide by Part 15 rules regulating unintentional radiation are in the minority, Hollingsworth said. By and large, utilities contacted by ARRL, as a result of power-line noise complaints from amateurs have been extremely cooperative, and he had high praise for the League's role in resolving complaints in the early going. Only a handful of cases--perhaps a dozen in all--have ended up being forwarded by the ARRL to the FCC for action.

"The League's record is outstanding here," Hollingsworth said. Cases necessitating FCC follow-up action have been minimal, he said, and most of those stem from the utility's failure to understand its obligations under Part 15.

Over the past year, the League has worked with amateurs on behalf of the FCC to handle 72 complaints of suspected power-line interference. Hare, the ARRL Lab supervisor, says that the effort has had its successes, some cases may require more than an advisory letter from the FCC.

"Having the FCC field offices investigate those cases where a power company is not willing or able to assume its responsibilities is a good next step," Hare said. "The League and the FCC both hope that continued cooperation will bring these cases to a satisfactory end without having to resort to drastic enforcement measures."

## 2.4 GHz REVIEW

Review under way of unlicensed 2.4 GHz systems: The AMSAT-NA Board of Directors is reviewing the large number of unlicensed systems active in the 2.4-GHz band. These systems are being used for high-speed digital communications. Although these systems are not licensed, they are permitted to operate under FCC Part 15 rules with low power (100 mW or 1 W spread spectrum). AMSAT-NA and ARRL plan to develop a joint strategy regarding S band, as both organizations anticipate that interference may become a problem area as similar Part 15 unlicensed equipment proliferates.

Two amateur satellites, UO-11 and AO-40, now operate transmitters in the 2.4-GHz band, and both OSCAR-Echo and OSCAR-Eagle--two AMSAT-NA satellite projects now under development--will have S-band transmitters. In addition, various ATV systems and other amateur communication systems operate in the vicinity of 2.4 GHz. The FCC has proposed making amateurs primary at 2400 to 2402 MHz. AMSAT-NA seeks reports from amateurs who have experienced interference with 2.4-GHz reception of AO-40 from a Part 15 device. Send details to [ve3frh@amsat.org](mailto:ve3frh@amsat.org)--AMSAT News Service

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## SWAP MEET SCHEDULED

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub has slated the September meeting to have a picnic (see minutes) and a swap meet. If you have any equipment that needs a new home, bring it on up. I am sure someone NEEDS it.

## PARKERSBURG AMATEUR RADIO KLUB MINUTES JUNE

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub held their June 10th meeting at the Bonanza Steak House on Pike Street with President Blame Auville presiding.

President Auville asked for the introduction of 32 members and guests.

The 50/50 RAFFLE was won by Carol Myers (\$16.50).

The Secretary minutes were approved as read.

In the absence of the Treasurer no report was given.

New members accepted into the KLUB are Carol Myers KC8TUD, Denise Mills KC8TUF and Terry Mills KC8TOE.

Jim Palmer reported that a BACK-UP REPEATER is being repaired at his residence.

Chad Day is working on a 97 REPEATER. He said additional parts are needed. He was given the authority to purchase the parts. Crud said that Tim Miller has given his permission to put an UHF REPEATER on his tower if the KLUB so desires. Chad will do more research on the repeater.

Georgia Milhoan will chair the FIELD DAY PICNIC; The KLUB will eat at 6PM on Saturday evening June 22nd. The KLUB will furnish the supplies. There will be ham, fried chicken and pop. Please bring a covered dish and YOUR CHAIR.

Field Day operators and workers will hold a meeting after the Klub adjourns.

Kenny Harris said his testing site might possibly be changed to the 911 CENTER.

Blame stated that the KLUB not forget to tip the waiter.

Jep motioned we adjourn, Gene

Gildow seconded.  
The KLUB adjourned at 7:35PM.

Respectfully submitted, GM

## PARKERSBURG AMATEUR RADIO KLUB MINUTES JULY

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub held their July 8th meeting at the Bonanza Steak House on Pike Street with President Blame Auville

The 50/50 RAFFLE was won by Dot Harris (22.50).

The President asked for the introduction of 34 members and guests.

Secretary's minutes were approved as read.

In the absence of the Treasurer no report was given.

It was announced that Jeannia Dooley had up-graded to EXTRA.

Kenny Earns said his new testing site would be at the 911 Center.

There will be a HAMFEST at Veterans Park in Huntington August 10th.

A shelter has been reserved in VETERANS PARK on Route 31 for A KLUB PICNIC on our September 9th meeting. The shelter reserved is the first one on the right marked with the initials MS. We will eat at 6PM. Please bring a covered dish and chairs. The KLUB will furnish the meat and drinks.

The RADIO KLUB has two trailers that are up for sale. They will be on display at the picnic.

Blame reserved the Washington Community Building for Saturday December 14th for the KLUB'S annual Christmas Party.

Kenny Harris said the Half-Marathon will be August 17th. Anyone interested in helping should contact Judy Paterson.

Nomination of KLUB Officers

will be held at our August meeting.

George Bonnett said he would hold the NET on Tuesday evening but he was afraid he would time out the repeater.

Jep motioned at 7:30 the KLUB adjourn. Bob Lyons seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,  
Georgia Milhoan, Secretary

## SETI GRANT

**A**RRL Foundation grant aids SETI League radio telescope project: The ARRL Foundation has issued a \$3000 grant to the SETI League to design and construct a next-generation radio telescope prototype. The SETI League says its Very Small Array (VSA), now under construction, will combine eight standard satellite TV dishes to form a radio telescope of unique flexibility. The 1296-MHz antenna system is slowly taking shape in the backyard of SETI League Executive Director H. Paul Shuch, N6TX, in Pennsylvania. It will be used to test reception of the SETI League's ham radio moonbounce beacon  
<http://www.setileague.org/eme/index.html>.

Once the array becomes operational, Shuch says he hopes its success will enable the SETI League to attract major corporate funding for a much more ambitious radio telescope array. The VSA will be used in the meantime to test engineering concepts, Shuch said. The SETI League promotes and supports a privatized search for extraterrestrial intelligence. For more information, visit the SETI League Web site  
<<http://www.setileague.org/>>.

## MOTHER NATURE FORCES POSTPONEMENT OF AMATEUR ROCKET EFFORT

High winds in late June forced postponement of an attempt by a group of Amateur Radio operators and amateur rocket enthusiasts to make aerospace history by putting the first amateur rocket into space. The Civilian Space Exploration Team (CSXT) had hoped its suborbital vehicle would carry several Amateur Radio payloads to an altitude of more than 60 nautical miles.

"We came sooooo close to a "launch," said Eric Knight, B1EHE, of Unionville, Connecticut--one of the hams involved. "The rocket was ready to go. All we had to do is push the ignition button." Knight says Amateur Radio is central to the whole flight. Its Automatic Position Reporting System (APRS), amateur TV and packet telemetry gear will enable the team to document success, defined as 50 nautical miles above Earth.

"Our team was ready. The rocket was ready. But Mother Nature had other plans," Knight explained. He said wind gusts of up to 60 miles per hour caused a brutal sandstorm at the Western US desert launch site. The high winds continued throughout the team's three-day launch window, he said.  
"We're currently evaluating our

options for a future launch date," Knight said. "We're dusty--but undaunted--and still very optimistic of a launch in the not-too-distant future."

Knight said all of the equipment and sections of the rocket remain on the West Coast as the team works with the FAA to secure a new launch window.

Overseeing the CSXT effort has been Project Director Ky Michaelson of Minnesota, a semi-retired stuntman and veteran hobby rocket enthusiast who holds dozens of rocket speed records. Knight credits Michaelson with conceptualizing what he called "our grand project." Michaelson was a guest July 12 of radio talker Art Bell, W6OBB, on Bell's nationally syndicated AM Coast to Coast program.

Other amateurs involved include Rod Lane, N1FNE--whose Southington, Connecticut, garage and basement workshop have been largely given over to rocket construction and integration--and Don Skinner, N1HWR, of Tariffville, Connecticut. Assisting in the project for the past three years has been high school senior Julia Cohn, KB1IGU, of West Hartford, Connecticut. Cohn has been involved in constructing and programming some of the sequencing electronics that will go aboard the vehicle. Her electronics instructor and mentor

at Hall High School is Chet Bacon, KA1ILH, of Plantsville, Connecticut, and other students in Bacon's electronics classes also have contributed to the project.

Funding for the project has come from team members' pockets. Knight estimates the costs to date are approaching \$100,000.

More information on the rocket project is on Knight's "Spaceshot 2001/Spaceshot 2002" Web site <<http://www.remarkable.com/rocket>>.

## Field Day Turns Tragic

Field Day turns tragic for Alabama club: Muscle Shoals Amateur Radio Club President Randy Newton, AF4TG (ex-KE4TZV) of Killen, Alabama, suffered a fatal heart attack during the club's W4JNB Field Day operation June 23. He was 43. "Randy had been doing his part to bring club members into the meetings, as well as making everyone feel welcome on the 146.61 club repeater," said club member Rick Ruhl, W4PC. Ruhl said attempts by trained individuals on site failed to revive Newton. "He did pass on doing what he loved, ham radio, which was some comfort to us," Ruhl said. The club terminated its Field Day operation after the incident. Newton was an ARRL member and a volunteer examiner. Survivors include his wife, Mary, KF4MEI. A funeral service was held June 25.

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