



Di-Dah-Dit

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

HAM RADIO KEPT BERMUDA CONNECTED WHEN ALL ELSE FAILED

Amateur Radio became a primary means of contact between Bermuda and the rest of the world as Hurricane Fabian swept across the island September 5, claiming at least four lives and causing extensive property damage in some areas. Authorities in Bermuda this week were assessing its extent. A dangerous category 3 storm, Fabian took out power to some 25,000 homes--about two-thirds of the island--as well as all radio and TV stations. Additionally, generator problems took the government's emergency FM station off the air for a time. Tony Siese, VP9HK, reports the police operations center was evacuated after the 120-MPH winds took off part of its roof.

Siese said the only contact with the outside world for a couple of hours was via hams like himself relaying information on 2 meters to HF operators and getting weather reports from the National Hurricane Center via the Hurricane Watch Net <<http://www.hwn.org/>> on 20 meters. He said that when the government emergency station returned to the air, amateurs provided it with updated National Hurricane Center reports from the HWN.

Hurricane Watch Net Manager Mike Pilgrim, K5MP, reports his net on 14.325 MHz secured operations September 6 at 0300 UTC "after a very long and busy day."

Participating HWN volunteers feed ground-level weather data to forecasters via WX4NHC <<http://www.wx4nhc.org/>> at the National Hurricane Center. WX4NHC also operates with a volunteer staff. The weather data and information help meteorologists to develop more accurate storm forecasts.

"We had excellent assistance and vital communications from five VP9 hams who, unfortunately, had to resort to makeshift antennas and back-up battery power as the storm approached their locations," Pilgrim said. WX4NHC Assistant Amateur Radio Coordinator Julio Ripoll, WD4JR, said that while news reporters on Bermuda found themselves uncharacteristically out of touch, "old-fashioned" ham radio HF technology got through. As he put it, "brave Bermuda hams, using car batteries, basic wire antennas and only 50 W of power, were able to send those valued 'surface reports' and receive vital hurricane advisories." Decent conditions on 20 meters also helped.

Also pitching in were Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) volunteers. "The SATERN Net stood by two days at full alert monitoring for information from Bermuda as Hurricane Fabian raged through the island," said National SATERN Coordinator Pat

McPherson, WW9E. SATERN Territorial Coordinator Rick Shirran, VE3NUZ/VP9, said that with power and telephone service down, "the only communication that held up during the event was that of the members of the Radio Society of Bermuda via 2 meters, and HF on the Hurricane Watch Net and the SATERN Net." Shirran lost part of his own roof and the driven element to his antenna. He got back on the air using a makeshift antenna and power from a car battery.

Shirran said it could take more than two weeks to restore power to Bermuda. Telephone service "remains tentative," he said at week's end. The airport was only open to daylight flights as of September 11.

Amateur Radio reports gathered September 7 by Dick Montgomery, N3DV, on the 20-meter Bermuda Net indicated many trees down, damage to docked boats and amateur antennas blown away, but power slowly being restored.

National Hurricane Center Director Max Mayfield expressed his sincere thanks to amateurs who supplied critical information during Fabian. "Wenever would have known what was going on in Bermuda without your help," he said. "You are a part of the hurricane team, and it is a pleasure to work with you."

FCC ASKS POWER COMPANY TO TRY HARDER TO RESOLVE NOISE COMPLAINTS

The FCC has asked American Electric Power Company of Columbus, Ohio, to take a closer look at several power line noise complaints and try harder to resolve them. The cases involve complaints from four Amateur Radio operators in Ohio, Indiana and Oklahoma.

"While we certainly appreciate the considerable effort that AEP afforded this matter, we are puzzled by the lack of results," FCC Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth wrote August 26 in a letter to AEP Senior Vice President Marsha P. Ryan. "In most cases, a noise source can be located easily by trained personnel using the proper equipment."

AEP responded February 10 to the FCC's initial correspondence regarding the four cases. Hollingsworth says, however, that follow-up reports from the complainants suggest discrepancies exist between what AEP told the FCC and what the complainants report. Hollingsworth said evidence to date indicates that none of the cases has been satisfactorily resolved.

In one case, AEP erroneously identified the amateur's own antenna as the source of the noise.

Jerry Daugherty, W9FS, of Indiana told the FCC that he's heard nothing from AEP and was not even aware that the utility was considering his case closed. "As of June 20, 2003, the noise was present at VHF and coming from several different locations," Hollingsworth said, citing information from Daugherty.

James Kiskis, W8PA, of Ohio reported to the Commission that, although interference identified as coming from two utility poles was fixed, it has since returned from one of them. Kiskis told Hollingsworth that an AEP interference investigator showed up at his residence June 23 and--using a spectrum analyzer hooked up to Kiskis' antenna--found strong noise on 20 and 10 meters. The investigator reportedly told Kiskis that he was turning his findings over to a line crew to have the problems repaired.

William Hannon, N8PW, of Ohio confirmed to the FCC that AEP had repaired several suspect utility poles, "including one very significant noise source," Hollingsworth said. But, he added in his letter to Ryan, Hannon "continues to experience strong noise in dry weather conditions when his antenna is pointed east."

Howard McCloud, KC5RGC, of Oklahoma reported power line noise last April and identified its source for AEP as utility lines about a mile from his station. McCloud was not aware that AEP had attempted to correct it, Hollingsworth wrote. "AEP now apparently maintains that the source of the noise is McCloud's antenna, even when it is disconnected and on the ground," a conclusion Hollingsworth labeled "patently defective." McCloud reports relatively strong noise on HF that continues 24/7.

Hollingsworth asked AEP to "revisit each of these cases" and to update the FCC within 45 days of any progress in each case. He also referred the power company to ARRL RFI Specialist Mike Gruber, W1MG, for technical assistance in resolving the cases.

Court kicks New York ham's "police radio" case:

A New York court has dismissed a misdemeanor charge against ARRL member Richard C. "Dick" Lalone, KC5GAX, for violating §397 of that state's Vehicle and Traffic Law. That section prohibits individuals other than law officers from equipping their vehicles with radios "capable of receiving signals on the frequencies allocated for police use" without first securing a permit. The section, which also prohibits knowingly interfering with police transmissions, contains an explicit exemption for "any person who holds a valid amateur radio operator's license . . . and who operates a duly licensed portable mobile transmitter and in connection therewith a receiver or receiving set on frequencies exclusively allocated . . . To duly licensed radio amateurs." In a nearly 1300-word decision, Judge John J. Hallet said it was clear the legislature never intended the provisions of §397 from applying to licensed Amateur Radio operators, and he dismissed the charge August 5. Susan Terry, KF4SUE, a former New York assistant attorney general, represented Lalone. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, and ARRL Regulatory Information Specialist John Hennessee, N1KB, provided advice or assistance to Lalone. VIA ARRL LETTER

PARKERSBURG AMA- TEUR RADIO KLUB JULY 14, 2003

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub held their July meeting at the Bonanza Steak House on Pike Street with President Elaine Auville presiding.

There was an introduction of 27 members and guests.

John McHale won the 50/50 drawing of \$15.50.

The Secretary's minutes were read and approved.

No treasurer's report was given.

FIELD DAY WAS DISCUSSED - Blame said there would be about \$300 in bills when all were turned in. Field Day was a success as there was no rain.

There will be a FALL PICNIC at CITY PARK OCTOBER 13th at 5:30PM. The Klub will furnish the meat and drinks. Please bring a covered dish and a chair.

The REPEATER SITE needs mowed. The MOWING TEAM decided to wait a couple weeks hoping the site wouldn't need mowed again this fall. Curt Fouse will check on prices of insurance for our Klub and present at the August meeting.

JEP said Danny Graham had back surgery and is home doing fine. JEP motioned we adjourn at 7:40pm. Bob Lyons seconded the motion. Respectfully submitted, Georgia Milhoan, Secretary

PARKERSBURG AMA- TEUR RADIO KLUB AUGUST

The August 11th meeting of the PARKERSEURG AMATEUR RADIO KLUB was called to order at 7:PM by President Blame Auville,.

The President asked for an introduction of 26 members and guests/

The 50/50 drawing of \$22.50 was won by Judy Peterson.

The Secretary's minutes were read and approved.

The Treasurer's report was given as being \$3,971.91.

JEP said the REPEATER SITE will be mowed the early part of September. He needs help with moving. Please contact him if you can help.

A motion was made by Mike Owens that the date of the PICNIC be changed from October to SEPTEMBER 8th. It was seconded by Ray Bodie. Motion carried by those Present.

The PICNIC will be held at the CITY PARK. The Picnic will start at 6PM. The KLUB will furnish the meat and drinks. DON'T FORGET YOUR CHAIR 11111 Georgia Milhoan and Irene Fouse will chair the picnic.

The date for the CHRISTMAS PARTY has been reserved for December 13th. The BUFFET-PARTY will be held at the WASHINGTON BOTTOM COMMUNITY BUILDING. We will eat at 6PM.

Danny Graham showed 2 films of SCUBA DIVING. The films were very entertaining. The meeting adjourned at 8:05PM. Respectfully submitted, Georgia Milhoan, Secretary

Grassroots effort beats the odds in Florida county:

Hams living in Florida's Brevard County--which includes Melbourne, Titusville and Cape Canaveral now are exempt from all fees and permit processes for Amateur Radio antennas. Bob Keim, W4TAT, says that in return, amateurs have agreed to adhere to accessory building setbacks when erecting antennas or antenna supports. The setback requirement does not include guy wires. Keim said a "grassroots effort" comprised mostly of amateur clubs, individual amateurs and interested county citizens got the Brevard County Commission to agree to the exemption in its ordinances.

"There were those who felt Brevard would never exempt amateurs, and I am truly honored to be part of a group that proved that statement wrong," Keim said. He urged amateurs installing antenna systems to be "good neighbors" by employing "commonsense placement" and ensuring that antennas and support structures meet the highest engineering standards.

Keim credited a large turnout of amateurs at the August 7 hearing where the County Commission agreed to the change.

The county had agreed initially to exempt administratively all amateurs and chose to include receive-only antennas, Keim said, but amateurs worried that changes in staff could make the administrative exemption unreliable over the long haul. "For the entire amateur community to keep this ordinance, we will be dependent upon the actions of each and every amateur to respect the issue and not create a problem with the ordinance," Keim urged. ARRL South Florida Section Manager Sherri Brower, W4STB, wrote the commissioners in support

of working something out with the amateurs, and Brevard County Emergency Coordinator Ray Kassis, N4LEM, spoke in support of the issue at one hearing. The biggest support, Keim said, came from the Titusville Amateur Radio Club and from members of other area clubs. Keim said the core group of supporters that showed up at every hearing "deserve the credit for this touchdown."

FCC PUTS NO-CODE INTERNATIONAL'S MORSE PETITION ON PUBLIC NOTICE

The FCC has invited public comments on another Morse code-related petition for rule making--this one from No-Code International (NCI)

<http://www.nocode.org/>. It's designated RM-10786. When the FCC put six other Morse-related petitions in the sequence RM-10781 through RM-10787 on public notice, RM-10786 failed to show up on the FCC's Electronic Comment

Filing System (ECFS)

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>. It remained missing through September 2. NCI calls on the FCC to delete Element 1--the 5 WPM Morse code exam--"totally" from the Amateur Service rules

and grant "Tech Plus" privileges to current Technicians. It also wants the FCC to act on the matter as soon as possible, preferably in a separate rule making and without further ado.

"[T]he Commission clearly has the authority to modify its rules on its own initiative and without further public notice or comment," NCI asserted in its 20-page petition.

NCI notes that World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) made optional the requirement to prove the ability to send and receive Morse signals to operate below 30 MHz. As a result, "the Commission is no longer bound to maintain any Morse proficiency requirement." The Morse requirement, NCI contends, is keeping newcomers away from Amateur Radio.

Comments poured in this week from members of the amateur community on all seven petitions. Clearly ahead in the comment-collection race is the petition filed by the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators, RM-10787, which had collected more than 350 comments by week's end. The other petitions each have garnered more than 100 comments apiece.

Interested parties may file comments on any or all petitions now on public notice http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-238494A1.pdf by us-

ing the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS)

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>. The ECFS also permits users to view all comments on file. There is a 30-day comment window.

To file a comment, click on "Submit a Filing" under "ECFS Main Links." In the "Proceeding" field, type the full RM number, including the hyphen, and complete the required fields. "RM" must be in capital letters, and you must include the hyphen between "RM" and the five-digit number. You may type your remarks into a form or attach a file. ECFS also accepts comments in active proceedings via e-mail, per instructions on the ECFS page.

To view any comments already submitted for each petition, click on "Search for Filed Comments" under "ECFS Main Links" and type in the complete RM number, including the hyphen, in the "Proceeding" field. "RM" must be in capital letters, and you must include the hyphen between "RM" and the five-digit number.

Several countries--including Switzerland, Belgium, the UK, Germany, Norway and the Netherlands--already have moved to drop their Morse requirements. Austria, New Zealand and Australia are expected to do so soon.

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