



Di-Dah-Dit

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

FCC ADOPTS NEW BPL RULES, ACKNOWLEDGES ITS INTERFERENCE POTENTIAL

As expected, the FCC this week adopted revised Part 15 (unlicensed services) rules to specifically regulate broadband over power line (BPL) systems. Meeting October 14 in open session, the Commission adopted a Report and Order in ET Docket 04-37. In comments before voting, three members of the Commission, including Chairman Michael Powell, specifically cited the concerns of Amateur Radio operators and expressed either assurances or hope that the new BPL rules will adequately address interference to licensed services. Republican FCC Commissioner Kevin Martin mentioned Amateur Radio's and broadcasters' interference concerns in a written statement. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, said he was encouraged to see the Commission acknowledge interference to amateurs as a genuine issue in the proceeding.

"What the League has done in the last year and a half on this issue showed in the Commission's public meeting today," Haynie said Thursday. He cited the FCC's approval of three major points that the League had been pushing for: Certification of BPL equipment instead of verification, a requirement for a public BPL database--something the BPL industry did not want--and mechanisms to deal

swiftly with interference complaints. Haynie conceded, however, that the devil is in the details of the R&O, which likely will not be made public for at least a few weeks.

Anh Wride of the FCC Office of Engineering and Technology (OET), acknowledged that Access BPL devices "pose a somewhat higher potential for interference to licensed radio services than typical Part 15 devices." But, Wride continued, "we believe the specific benefits of BPL warrant acceptance of a small degree of additional risk, and that this interference potential can be satisfactorily managed."

Commissioner Michael Copps, a Democrat, said he remains concerned about interference to Amateur Radio users. "I take the concerns of this community very seriously and believe that the FCC has an obligation to work hard to monitor, investigate and take quick action, where appropriate, to resolve harmful interference."

Copps said if interference occurs, "we must have a system in place to resolve it immediately," and he expressed the hope that the new rules would include such "rapid turnaround" provisions. Copps, who dissented in part with the R&O, raised the question of whether util-

ity ratepayers should have to "subsidize an electric power company's foray into broadband."

The Commission's other Democrat, Jonathan Adelstein, said the interference question made the proceeding a challenging one because it had to accommodate concerns raised by Public Safety licensees, federal government users and Amateur Radio operators. "These are important services that we need to protect from harmful interference," Adelstein said.

Adelstein also said that while it's clear that some BPL systems can co-exist with existing licensees, others "haven't fared so well." He said those systems shouldn't be deployed commercially until it's assured that they won't cause harmful interference.

Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy, a Republican, said the FCC had to "make some hard compromises" to deal with questions about interference. But she expressed confidence in "technical solutions."

Chairman Powell called it "a banner day" for communications in the US because, he said, BPL promises "ubiquitous service to all Americans at affordable rates." The chairman, a Republican, conceded that BPL will affect some spectrum us-

ers--including "all those wonderful Amateur Radio operators out there." Powell said the FCC has taken Amateur Radio interference concerns seriously from the start and has put protections in place "to allow that service to continue." At the same time, Powell implied that the FCC must balance the benefits of BPL against the relative value of other licensed services.

Powell said BPL's potential for the US economy "is too great, too enormous, too potentially groundbreaking to sit idly by and allow any claim or any possible speculative fear" keep the Commission from promoting adoption of BPL technology.

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, suggested that Powell was overstating the necessity of yet another broadband pipeline. "It's astonishing to me that the chairman of the FCC can talk about needing a 'third way' to provide broadband to consumers when multiple technologies already are available, including wireless broadband," he said.

The United Power Line Council (UPLC) applauded the FCC's action, saying the new rules should encourage BPL deployment while protecting licensed services from harmful interference. "We didn't get everything we wanted," said UPLC President and CEO William R. Moroney, who called the R&O "the result of close cooperation and compromise" with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to address its concerns about potential interference.

For more information on BPL, visit the "Broadband Over Power Line (BPL) and Amateur Radio" page on

the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/bpl>>.

Supreme Court Case

The US Supreme Court this week agreed to hear a case that involves ARRL Life Member Mark J. Abrams, WA6DPB, of Rancho Palos Verdes, California. While the case does not involve Amateur Radio antennas, it got started several years ago when Abrams began diplexing his commercial Land Mobile Radio Service facilities into his Amateur Radio repeater antennas--something the city said he needed an additional permit to do. The city years earlier had okayed the 45-foot Amateur Radio antenna support structure at Abrams' residence, and its legality was never in question.

The city denied him a conditional use permit for the commercial application, but the California Supreme Court eventually ruled that Abrams didn't need one anyway. In the meantime, Abrams filed suit in US District Court asserting the denial of the conditional use permit violated the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Again, Abrams prevailed, but the District Court denied Abrams monetary damages and attorneys' fees. The US Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit reversed the US District Court, but the 3rd and 7th Circuits ruled otherwise. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes then took the case to the US Supreme Court on the issue of damages and attorneys' fees, and the high court agreed to hear the case because of the disparity in findings at the Circuit Court level.

SOUTHEASTERN REPEATER ASSOCIATION RESCINDS CONTROVERSIAL REPEATER TONE POLICY

The SouthEastern Repeater Association (SERA) Board of Directors has rescinded a controversial policy that would have amended SERA's coordination policy and guidelines to require CTCSS or DCS receive and transmit tones on all new FM voice repeaters. Existing voice repeaters would have had to comply by July 1, 2006. The Board adopted the "all tone, all the time" policy during its summer meeting in June. SERA President Roger Gregory, W4RWG, said the SERA Board repealed the policy "after much discussion" on October 4.

"We may revisit this issue at a later date, but with input from the membership," Gregory told ARRL. He said that while SERA received many positive comments as well as negative ones, complaints from repeater owners prompted the Board's change of heart on the tone policy.

"Some [repeaters] had been untuned for years without any interference issues," he said. "They did not wish to tone. North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee seemed to have more concerned repeater owners."

The largest Amateur Radio repeater coordinating body in the US, SERA provides voluntary frequency coordination for repeaters in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and parts of Virginia and West Virginia. In a letter on the SERA Web site <<http://www.sera.org/>>, Gregory called the tone requirement

"just another tool we thought was needed to help us to continue to do our job." He noted that SERA has been requiring tones on 10-meter, 6-meter and 70-cm repeaters "for years."

Some of those upset with SERA's June decision to require tones tried to get the FCC involved. The Amateur Repeater Society of East Tennessee (ARSET) <<http://arset.org/>>, which sprang up because of the controversy, wanted the FCC to recognize it as the official coordinating body for eastern Tennessee.

FCC Special Counsel for Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth said the Commission does not recognize or certify specific coordinators in the Amateur Service, as it does in the Land Mobile services, and had no plans to get involved in the SERA controversy. But he said requiring tones is a good idea.

"From a spectrum efficiency standpoint, tones will be the wave of the future and have been in regular use in the Land Mobile services for decades," said Hollingsworth, who oversees Land Mobile as well as Amateur Radio Service enforcement. He said if tones will cure an interference case in the Land Mobile services, he tells the parties to implement them.

"It is surprising that tone systems are not used more in the Amateur Service, a service we expect to be on the leading edge of technology instead of being wedded to old ways of doing things," Hollingsworth added. "As for tones, it's only a matter of time, just as it was with transistors and integrated circuits."

PARXERSBURG AMATEUR RADIO KLUB

August 9th, 2004

Minutes

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

There was an introduction of 28 members and guests.

Lloyd Boston won the 50/50 drawing of \$17.00.

The Secretary's minutes were read and approved.

The Treasurer's report was given as being \$3,691.90.

President Auville asked the KLUB'S Treasurer to reserve Shelter #9 at the CITY PARK for the CLUB'S SEPT. 13th. PICNIC. Gene Gildow announced the Marietta Club will hold their meeting August 10th at RYAN'S RESTAURANT. Dinner at 6PM meeting at 7PM. Speakers to be Joe Phillips K8QOE and Howe Turley KC8FS.

Ray Bodie said mowing of the Repeater Site will be Monday August 26th. Contact "Little" John for info.

HAMFESTS COMING UP August 14th .Huntington .Field House
Aug. 28-29 .Jackson's Mill .Weston
Sept. 12 .Findley, Ohio

Harold Dooley motioned the Club accept Carolyn Scott (no license) and Gary Bosworth KC8ZZS as new members. Club accepted.

The President opened nomina-

tion for 2005 officers. The Officers nominated:
President .Blaine Auville V-President .Dan Betts and Connie Hamilton
Tech V-Pres. .Jim Palmer
Secretary Mike Davis v/Pam's help
Treasurer .Ray Johnson

Lloyd motioned the Klub adjourn at 7:35PM. Respectfully submitted, GM

September 13, 2004 Minutes

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub held their September meeting at Shelter #9 at the Parkersburg City Park. At short meeting at 7:00pm following the annual picnic with Blaine Auville WA8IOE presiding. There were 31 members and guests in attendance.

There was no treasurer's report.

The following incoming officers were announced after a motion by Kurt Fouse K8UC and seconded by Mike Davis KC8SIP.
Technical VP is Jim Palmer K8BOT
Social VP is Connie Hamilton N8IO
VP is Dan Betts N8OG

Hal Turley W8HC, WV Section Manager and Morris (Mac) McMillan W8XF WV ARES Representative gave a short talk on ARES. They provided several prizes for drawings.

Jim Palmer K8BOT moved to adjourn and seconded by Jane McGuffy N8MOW.

October 11, 2004 Minutes

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub held their monthly meeting at the Bonanza Steak House on Pike Street with President Blaine Auville (WA8IOE) presiding.

There was an introduction of 29 members and guests.

Peggy Phillips (KC8DRS) won the 50/50 drawing of \$13.00.

The Secretary's minutes were read and approved for the August and September meetings.

The Treasurer's report was given by Ray Johnson (KC8RUJ) current balance of \$3972.28.

Repeater mowing party was scheduled for 10-18-04 at 10:30. Followed with a covered dish picnic at City Park Parkersburg, WV.

Blaine Auville (WA8IOE) suggested a committee be formed to determine the control codes for the repeater and make list of the codes. This would enable the repeater to comply with FCC regulations and maintain better control of the machine. The committee will be chaired by Jeff Palmer (K8BOT) the members are Bob Lyons (KB8EFB) and Curt Fouse (K8UC). The purpose of this committee will be to determine control codes on both machines 146.97 and 147.39. Blaine Auville (WA8IOE) volunteered to be part of the committee to help. The meeting schedule to be determined.

Blaine Auville (WA8IOE) suggested if we have a problem with the controller and cannot fix it, to

get a new controller. Jim Palmer (K8BOT) to research and determine what is available.

The Christmas Party is targeted to be at the Washington Bottom Community Building on 12-11-04 at 6:00PM. The dinner will be covered dish.

Blaine Auville (WA8IOE) introduced Kenny Harris (WA8LLM) to talk and answer questions on the ARES/DAREN basics.

Jerry Wharton (KA8NJW) brought up that the klub scrapbook had not been updated in several years. Scrapbook go back to the 50's. There are several breaks in the timeline but it does have some pictures and dates in it. It was brought up that members could review the book and Georgia Milhoan suggested that the klub should have a Historian to be in charge of keeping the klub history up to date.

Connie Hamilton (N8IO) advised that the Massillon Ham fest is 10-31-04 at the fairgrounds, with a dinner the night before. The Marietta Amateur Radio Club meeting is Tuesday 10-12-04 at 7:30. Agenda for the meeting is the condition of the Marietta Repeater on 146.88.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jeff Palmer (K8BOT) and seconded by Georgia Milhoan.

Mike & Pam Davis Secretaries

No news is . . . no news:

There have been no changes to the Amateur Radio Part 97 rules nor any news to report regarding FCC action on proposals that address the number of license class-

es, the 5 WPM Morse code requirement (Element 1) to obtain a General or Extra license, or other amateur licensing qualifications or privileges. The FCC continues to review the thousands of comments it received on 18 petitions for rule making--including a petition from the ARRL--that, in general, address various facets of license restructuring and the Morse code requirement.

Prompting most of these petitions were actions taken during World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). The FCC first must issue a Notice of Proposed Rule Making and assign it a docket number, then invite comments on what it decides to propose, based on the petitions it has before it. The ARRL estimates that the FCC is only about one-third of the way through its review of the petitions, however, and does not anticipate any final FCC action--in the form of a Report and Order--until sometime in 2006. The ARRL has posted answers to frequently asked questions on its own restructuring initiative on its Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring2/faq.html>>.

MICROSAT ON DISPLAY

Amateur microsat model on display at Smithsonian: AMSAT's Perry Klein, W3PK, reports that the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, DC, has put the microsat mechanical test model on display, just in time for AMSAT's 35th anniversary celebration and its Symposium and Annual Meeting October 8-13. "They suspended it from the ceiling outside the NN3SI Smithsonian Amateur Radio Club

station, located at 'The Information Age' exhibit on the first floor, west end of the American History Museum," Klein said. "It's been a number of years since an OSCAR satellite has been on continuous display at the Smithsonian." An OSCAR 1 model was in the Hall of Satellites at the National Air and Space Museum for several years, Klein notes, although it's now in storage. But, OSCAR 1 and PCSat models currently are being readied for display at the Air and Space Museum's Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles Airport. The center's space exhibit hangar is expected to open soon.

HZ1AB IS HISTORY!

Saudi Arabia's HZ1AB is history: The HZ1AB club station in Saudi Arabia now is history. Originally the United States Military Training Mission station and more recently known as the Dhahran Amateur Radio Club, HZ1AB was a well-known DX call sign for almost six decades. Club Secretary Thomas Carlsson, SM0CXU/AB5CQ, said this week that new station license requirements in Saudi Arabia made it necessary to shut down the station, and the call sign has been reissued to a Saudi national. QSL manager Leo Fry, K8PYD, has the HZ1AB logs to handle any late QSL requests. Earlier this year, Saudi Arabia licensed 18 new Amateur Radio operators. Details about licensing there are available on the Saudi Arabia Communications and Information Technology Commission Web site <<http://www.citc.gov.sa/CITC/EN/SpectrumManagement/generalservices/?sm=9>>. --The Daily DX <<http://www.dailydx.com/>> and Thomas Carlsson, SM0CXU/AB0CQ

MARS ASSIST

MARS members asked to assist in hurricane health-and-welfare traffic: Army MARS Eastern Area Coordinator Robert Hollister, AAA9E/N7INK, has asked Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) stations and nets to assist in handling health-and-welfare traffic related to the recent hurricanes. "MARS stations in Florida and other affected areas should coordinate with ARES/RACES and local ham radio operators and see if MARS can help handle some of this workload for them," Hollister said in a message to MARS members in the Eastern US. "This is another opportunity for MARS to demonstrate our capabilities and provide a service to the people stricken by these storms." Hollister said that Army MARS stations not supporting the disaster response in the stricken areas should continue to monitor regional net frequencies and remain available to assist as needed in handling traffic. He also encouraged Army MARS members to work with their Air Force and Navy counterparts "to get the traffic out of the affected

FCC AFFIRMS FINE FOR FORMER CALIFORNIA AMATEUR LICENSEE

In an October 5 Forfeiture Order, the FCC has affirmed a \$10,000 fine it proposed earlier this year to levy on Jack Gerritsen, ex-KG6IRO, of Bell, California. The FCC asserts that Gerritsen doesn't have an Amateur Radio license but continues to operate. The FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) promptly rescinded its 2001 Amateur Radio license

grant to Gerritsen after learning of his California court conviction a year earlier for interfering with police communications. The fine is the next step in a case that eventually could lead to criminal prosecution.

Responding to a July FCC Notice of Apparent Liability (NAL), Gerritsen maintained that he still has a ham ticket. He asserted that the NAL failed to show that his interference conviction is under appeal, that the set-aside of his amateur license was unfounded and is only a claim made by Commission personnel; that he holds a valid license and that any possible suspension of his license is pending a hearing, making the NAL moot until a suspension actually occurs.

Not so, said the FCC, citing chapter and verse to back up its Forfeiture Order. Section 1.113(a) of its rules gives the WTB 30 days from publication to modify or set aside an action, such as a license grant, on its own motion. As a result, the FCC said, Gerritsen's amateur application has reverted to pending status, and no license exists.

Gerritsen also argued that he preserved his license by seeking a hearing under §1.85 of the FCC's rules and, further, that he'd been told by FCC personnel that he would get a hearing. Wrong again, the FCC concluded. The Commission pointed out that §1.85 spells out when the FCC may suspend an operator license, but since Gerritsen has no license, just a pending application, there is no license to suspend, and §1.85 doesn't apply. A Hearing Designation Order for Gerritsen is said to be working its way through the FCC bureaucracy. Reports from Los Angeles area hams indicate that Gerritsen contin-

ues to use KG6IRO, although the call sign appears in the FCC's Universal Licensing System as "terminated." Recent letters have implored the ARRL to somehow intervene in the situation.

"Imagine BPL--a million times worse," one radio amateur recently wrote the League. For some time now, repeater owners have been shutting down their machines rather than let an unlicensed user transmit through them.

The FCC said in its Forfeiture Order that agents who tracked transmissions to Gerritsen's house and interviewed him said he admitted to transmitting on various Amateur radio frequencies as well as on various business radio frequencies.

In a handwritten letter Gerritsen wrote while in jail last March on a federal trespassing conviction to the president of one repeater association, he suggested that repeater owners should tolerate his commentaries "a few times a day."

SPUTNIK REMEMBERED

The world changed this week 47 years ago when the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik I on October 4, 1957. The world's first artificial satellite was about the size of a basketball and weighed just over 180 pounds. Sputnik I took about 98 minutes to orbit Earth on its elliptical path, and radio amateurs around the world enthusiastically tuned in to monitor its 20 and 40 MHz beacons. The satellite's 1 W transmitter fed four antennas deployed at 35° angles, and three silver-zinc batteries powered it for three weeks. In addition to ushering in a new era of political, military, technological and scientific development, Sputnik's launch marked the start of space exploration and gave rise to the birth of NASA.--NASA

INTRUDER SIGNAL?

"Intruder signal" on 40 meters disappears: The odd and unidentified signal that had been reported showing up on the 40-meter phone band on or about 7238 kHz has disappeared just as mysteriously

as it arrived earlier this summer. Numerous amateurs in the western US and Canada had reported hearing the signal over a period of a few weeks. The FCC's High Frequency Direction Finding Facility in Maryland, which had narrowed down the signal's source as somewhere east of Prescott, Arizona, was unable to hear it at all during the day and evening watches on September 16. Earlier FCC monitoring had indicated the "buzz" was centered on 7238.1 kHz with a bandwidth of about 1 kHz and consisted of a series of discrete signals spaced about 90 Hz apart. According to an FCC HFDF staff member, a radio amateur in Camp Verde, Arizona, who had reported hearing the signal at nearly 40 dB over S9 a week earlier said it suddenly disappeared, and no one in that area has heard it since. The signal's presence reportedly generated a lot of discussion on a local repeater, however. The FCC offered no firm opinion as to the signal's source. Stations with information on unidentified signals in the amateur bands are asked to report them via e-mail to International Amateur Radio Union Region 2 Monitoring System Liaison Chuck Skolaut, K0BOG, <cskolaut@arrl.org>.

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