



Di-Dah-Dit

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

RADIO AMATEURS BUSY AS DEADLY STORMS AGAIN HIT MIDWEST

Amateur Radio volunteers in northwestern Tennessee and elsewhere were active April 2 when a string of tornadoes struck the Midwest and South. The severe weather left more than two dozen people dead and many injured, most of them in Tennessee. ARRL Tennessee Section Emergency Coordinator Jimmy Floyd, NQ4U, reports SKYWARN volunteers relayed reports to the National Weather Service Office in Memphis as the twisters approached.

"Several hams were active in the Dyersburg-Newbern area Sunday night passing local traffic for the area folks needing to let relatives know that they were okay," Floyd told ARRL. "According to local hams, most of the communication infrastructure was intact after the storms."

Authorities in Dyer County, where 15 people died, say some houses were totally destroyed by the storms, and large trees across highways hampered access by emergency crews. Severe damage reports emerged from Gibson County where some 1200 houses and other structures--including the police station--were said to have been damaged. The NWS said it had received preliminary reports of more than 60 tornadoes April 2. Tennessee state police were con-

tinuing to search for additional storm victims and warning those "without legitimate business" to keep out of the affected areas and let first responders and law enforcement personnel do their jobs.

In Illinois, Lawrence County Emergency Coordinator Gary Auerswald, WB9UDJ, found himself in the middle of "a horrendous storm" while returning home with his family from Indiana.

"Trees were coming down, and people were getting blown off the road," he told ARRL Illinois Section Emergency Coordinator Pat Ryan, KC6VVT. "All electricity in the area went out." Fallen power lines prevented Auerswald from taking his usual route along Illinois Route 1. "We traveled by back roads and oil field roads and made it home," he said.

Downed trees and power lines and other property damage greeted his arrival. "A lightning burst gave me a clue to what else was missing: My antenna farm," he said. Auerswald said that until he can "piece something together," he's off the air. He was providing power to his home from a generator.

Ryan reports the Illinois ARES HF Section Net on 75 meters secured

early because of high atmospheric noise levels. The ARES Net on the Starved Rock Radio Club W9MKS repeater in Lenore yielded to an ongoing weather-spotter net activated earlier by Jim Morris, N9PLM, who served as net control. "Weather Net members monitored for storm activity and, at one point, the LaSalle County EOC was activated," Ryan said. One person died in Illinois.

Other states affected by the tornadoes and high winds included Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana and Ohio. Kentucky Section Emergency Coordinator Ron Dodson, KA4MAP, reported "plenty of nets up and running" the evening of April 2. Dodson says the storms decreased in severity by the time they reached his state. "Trees, power and phones lines went down," he said, "but there were no major structural incidents or injuries."

The April 2 tornadoes came less than a month after a huge string of tornados swept through the nation's midsection on another Sunday, killing 10 people in Missouri and Indiana and causing damage in several other states, including Illinois, Kansas and Arkansas.

RANDY GOES HOME

Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ, the sole survivor of the January 2 Sago Mine disaster in West Virginia, left a Morgantown rehabilitation center March 30 and returned to his home on newly named Miracle Road in Simpson, West Virginia.

"I'd just like to thank everybody for their thoughts and prayers," McCloy remarked on his departure. Neurologist Julian Bailes told reporters that he believes McCloy, 26, has a great potential for "a possibly complete" recovery. McCloy did require some assistance walking as he left the Morgantown facility.

West Virginia Gov Joe Manchin announced the new street name at a press briefing this week, and he presented McCloy with a Miracle Road street sign. Earlier this month McCloy visited his home in for the first time since the mine tragedy.

On March 2, McCloy's wife Anna told CBS The Early Show co-anchor Hannah Storm that her husband has told her he remembers "bits and pieces" of the mining disaster that left 12 of his co-workers dead of carbon monoxide poisoning. McCloy this week told the Associated Press that he doesn't understand why he was the only one to survive. He also said he will not go back to work in the mines.

Well-wishers have been sending cards and QSLs to McCloy at PO Box 223, Philippi, WV 26435. A fund has been set up to accept donations for McCloy's benefit: The Randal McCloy Jr Fund, c/o Clear Mountain Bank, 1889 Earl Core Rd, Morgantown, WV 26505.

FCC WARNS RADIO AMATEURS TO SETTLE PERSONAL DIFFERENCES OFF THE AIR

The FCC has advised four Texas licensees to take an "ongoing dispute" off the Amateur Radio bands or face enforcement action. Special Counsel in the FCC Enforcement Bureau Riley Hollingsworth sent essentially identical warning letters February 28 to Luis A Caraballo, N7PLC, and Sharon E. Millhouse, KC5PRX--both of Floresville, and to Thomas O. Caldwell, WD5GXH, and Gary Sheets, WD5FWP--both of San Antonio. Hollingsworth said the dispute has "led to allegations of slander and deliberate interference" on the ham bands.

"The Commission is not concerned with the merits, or lack thereof, of any dispute between you or of how you settle such disputes," Hollingsworth wrote, "but any use of amateur frequencies to carry on the dispute is contrary to Section 97.1 of the rules and will lead to enforcement action against the licenses of each of you."

Hollingsworth told ARRL that the personal squabble among the four radio amateurs has been going on for several years, eventually spilling over onto 2 meters. FCC efforts to resolve the dispute have been unsuccessful, he said, adding, "it's degrading the Amateur Service."

Sanctions could include license revocation or suspension as well as fines of up to \$10,000, Hollingsworth warned. "We may also consider proceedings to restrict or remove the voice privileges of your licenses," he added, noting "this is

the last warning you will receive before enforcement action is initiated."

Hollingsworth this week said he'd heard back from all but one of the individuals who received his letters, but only one reply was in writing. In a handwritten note, Sheets pledged to amend his attitude and practices. Hollingsworth said he's awaiting written responses from the other three recipients.

ARRL "HELLO" CAMPAIGN VIDEO NOW AVAILABLE

A 30-second video public service announcement (PSA) to promote the ARRL's "Hello" campaign--"Celebrating 100 Years of Voice over Radio Worldwide"--has been released. A radio spot has been available since March. Hello's architect, ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP, says the spot is available on disk in either DVD format--which plays on standard players--or in two larger broadcast-quality DV formats.

"We want to celebrate 100 years of people talking over the radio but not just look backward," he said. "In just 30 seconds, this video takes us on a rollercoaster through time and electronics, into today, when we find friendly people still ready to say 'Hello' all over the world."

Richard Lubash, N1VXW, of 2K-Plus in Atlanta, produced the new PSA. He had musical help from Emory Gordy, W4WRO, and voicing by New York City radio personality Johnny Donovan.

The video includes clips from all over, shot especially for the PSA, plus video of radio amateurs from IARU member-societies in Italy and Japan. Among the radio amateurs appearing in the video spot are Associazione Radioamatori Italiani (ARI) President Luigi Belvederi, I4AWX/AB1FJ, and Japan Amateur Radio League International Affairs Manager Jay Oka, JA1TRC/KH2J. Others include: Jack Parker, W8ISH; Kevin O'Dell, N0IRW, and his son Chris, N5CMO; Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, and wife Cyndy, KD4ACW; Nick Esposito, KC2ONP; Halley Orshan, KC2LYJ; and Emily Shaffer, KF4SUV.

A low-resolution version is viewable on the ARRL Public Relations Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/pio/#pubserviceannouncements>> (scroll down to "Video Files"). A special high-definition television (HDTV) version is available if needed.

Because copies are individually duplicated depending on the needs of the station and because of the costs of the disks, Pitts asks that "at least initially" requests be voluntarily limited to those who have contacts with a cable, TV or similar broadcast outlet and can get them shown to the public.

To request a disk, e-mail the Hello campaign <hello@arrl.org>; your name, mailing address, the station or location in which you will be placing the video and the video format you need (DVD, DV or uncompressed-DV).

Hello campaign brochures, bumper stickers pins and other paraphernalia also are available. There's more campaign information on the

"Hello" Web site <<http://www.hello-radio.org/>>.

Pitts will be on the road this month to show off (and market) the new audio and video PSAs at the annual conventions of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the Radio and Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) April 22-27 in Las Vegas, and at a regional RTNDA convention April 8-9 in Boston.

EXPEDITION 12 CREW PLUS ONE RETURN SAFELY TO EARTH

After orbiting Earth more than 3000 times during their six months aboard the International Space Station, Expedition 12 Commander Bill McArthur, KC5ACR, and Flight Engineer Valery Tokarev have returned to the planet. With them on the return trip was Brazilian astronaut Marcos Pontes, PY0AEB, who had been the third passenger onboard the Soyuz "taxi flight" that carried Expedition 13 Commander Pavel Vinogradov, RV3BS, and Flight Engineer Jeff Williams, KD5TVQ, to the ISS April 1.

The Soyuz spacecraft with McArthur, Tokarev and Pontes onboard landed in central Kazakhstan just before midnight UTC April 8. McArthur and Tokarev will remain in Star City for post-flight debriefings.

The most active radio amateur ever to serve aboard the ISS, McArthur worked all continents--including Antarctica--on both VHF and UHF from NA1SS during is nearly 190 days in space. He also racked up QSOs with 130 DXCC entities

and worked all states. The last QSL he needed to confirm WAS--from Wyoming--arrived at ARRL Headquarters not long before the end of McArthur's duty tour. In all, he put more than 1750 contacts into the NA1SS log. Since the WAC, WAS and DXCC programs don't provide for space contacts, his certificates will be honorary.

Pontes flew to the space station as part of a commercial agreement with the Russian Federal Space Agency, Roscosmos and conducted experiments during his eight days on the ISS.

Vinogradov and Williams will spend this week getting better acquainted with their new home for the next six months. No ARISS school contacts are on the NA1SS schedule until the week of April 24. During their duty tour, Vinogradov and Williams will perform two spacewalks and--if all goes according to plan--greet two space shuttle crews.

Scheduled to join Expedition 13 this summer on the shuttle Discovery's STS-121 mission will be European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Reiter, DF4TR, of Germany. He'll also be flying under a commercial agreement with Roscosmos. Reiter will remain aboard the ISS when Expedition 14 begins in October, to help provide some crew continuity aboard the ISS.--some information from NASA and ARISS



BREAD AND SALT: TWO-HAM EXPEDITION 13 CREW ARRIVES SAFELY ON ISS

The International Space Station Expedition 13 crew of Commander Pavel Vinogradov, RV3BS, and Flight Engineer Jeff Williams, KD5TVQ, arrived safely aboard the International Space Station early on April 1. Once airlocks were opened, the new crew--accompanied by Brazil's first astronaut Marcos Pontes, PY0AEB--greeted the Expedition 12 crew of Commander Bill McArthur, KC5ACR, and Valery Tokarev with handshakes and hugs. In accordance with a traditional Russian ceremony of welcome and hospitality, the Expedition 12 crew presented the newcomers with bread and salt. Williams told reporters this week that he and Vinogradov were ready to take the ISS reins.

"Handover's gone very well," he said, adding that and McArthur and Tokarev did a good job of showing him and Vinogradov the ropes. "So I fell we will be very prepared to take over the space station."

The two crews spent much of the week transferring cargo to the ISS and carrying out crew handover activities that included a safety briefing, training with the Canadarm2 robotic arm and detailed briefings on scientific experiments. Besides conducting his own research over the past week, Pontes spoke via Amateur Radio with a school in Brazil and was attempting to re-schedule a contact with a school in Portugal. Williams says the crew handover has been a bit like moving into a new house that's still occupied by the former owners.

"It never occurred to me how difficult that would be to move into somebody's house with all their stuff in it and then pick up without a pause in the normal day-to-day operations," he said. "But overall, it's gone very well and we feel very prepared."

A formal change-of-command ceremony was set for April 8, just before McArthur, Tokarev and Pontes board a Soyuz transporter for the return trip to Earth. Seeing off the retiring crew will be a "bittersweet experience," Williams said this week.

"We've really enjoyed our time on board together," he said. "We've had a lot of fun, we've enjoyed accomplishing the work together. At the same time, I know these guys are ready to go home and rejoin their families."

NASA ground controllers cut short an ISS experiment April 3 after some alarms sounded in error. The so-called "campout" in the slightly depressurized ISS Quest airlock by McArthur and Williams was intended to test a new procedure to reduce spacewalk preparation time. The experiment hoped to show that having spacewalkers spend the night in the airlock at a lower air pressure would help to purge nitrogen from their bloodstreams, preventing decompression sickness--commonly called "the bends."

"There was never a problem with the atmosphere," McArthur assured an Associated Press reporter.

Vinogradov and Williams will spend six months on the space complex, returning home in September. Vinogradov is a veteran of a nearly 200-day

mission aboard the Russian Mir space station, where he did five spacewalks. Williams, an Army colonel, flew on NASA space shuttle mission STS-101 to the ISS in 2000 and did one spacewalk.

Scheduled to join the Expedition 13 crew later this year is European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Reiter, DF4TR, of Germany. His arrival, no sooner than July, depends on whether NASA declares the shuttle Discovery flight-ready. Reiter would remain on the orbiting laboratory through Expedition 13 and into the first part of Expedition 14.--some information from NASA and ARISS

FCC statistics suggest minuscule market share for BPL:

The latest FCC statistics on the status of high-speed Internet services indicate a minuscule market share for broadband over power line (BPL). The FCC Wireline Competition Bureau report, "High-Speed Services for Internet Access: Status as of June 30, 2005," puts at 4872 the number of business and residential "Power Line and Other" connections that deliver at speeds greater than 200 kbps in at least one direction. The total number of high-speed lines for all technologies is 42,866,469--the vast majority DSL, cable and traditional wireline connections. This puts the share for "Power Line and Other" at a bit more than 0.01 percent of the total. The number of residential BPL "advanced services" lines--greater than 200 kbps in both directions--is 3916 out of 34,259,411, the FCC report indicates. Although some data have been withheld as proprietary, the FCC report indicates there are 18 "Power Line and Other" high-speed providers nationwide. Facilities-based broadband providers must report the number of high-speed connections in service to the FCC twice a year.

(VU4) TO BE ACTIVATED IN A BIG WAY STARTING APRIL 18

Enthusiasm and anticipation have been building within the DX community this week as the radio window is about to open once again on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (VU4). The National Institute of Amateur Radio (NIAR) in Hyderabad, India, will sponsor a first-of-its-kind event, "Hamfest - (VU4) India - 2006," April 18-20 in Port Blair on South Andaman Island. Dozens of VU4 stations are expected on the air.

India's telecommunication authorities have issued a number of short-term licenses to both nationals and foreigners, and operations reportedly will extend beyond the three-day festival to April 26. The most recent VU4 DXpedition, led by Bharathi Prasad, VU2RBI, in December 2004, turned into a disaster communication operation after the devastating South Asia earthquake and tsunami. Prasad and others involved in the 2004 VU4 DXpedition are expected to be active during the Andamans hamfest activity.

All call signs for this event will bear the VU4AN prefix followed by an India mainland call sign. There will be no operation from Nicobar Island and, so far, no operation on 30 meters.

According to The DX Magazine's 2005 survey of DXers Andaman and Nicobar Islands was the 10th most-wanted DXCC entity. There's more information on the NIAR Web site <<http://www.niar.org/>>.-- The Daily DX <<http://www.dailydx.com/>>

.SUPPORT STILL NEEDED FOR HOUSE RESOLUTION 230

The ongoing BPL battles in Manassas, Virginia, and Briarcliff Manor, New York, underscore the need for better FCC rules to protect radiocommunication systems from BPL interference. House Resolution 230 (H Res 230), introduced by Rep Mike Ross, WD5DVR, of Arkansas, calls on the FCC to "conduct a full and complete analysis" of radio interference from BPL, particularly with regard to public safety radio systems.

"Members of Congress need to hear constituents' concerns about BPL interference while they are in their home districts this week and next," ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, observed this week. "Rep Ross has been joined by six co-sponsors, but more support is needed to move this legislation along."

H Res 230 recently received a boost when the March issue of NPSTC Spectrum, the newsletter of the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council, carried an article, "Ham Radio and Public Safety Ask for FCC Reevaluation of Broad-band over Power Lines." The article notes "significantly high levels of potential interference in the VHF low band 30 to 50 MHz range" in several test locations.

A sample letter <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/filings/hres230/HRes230-SampleLtr.doc>> is available for ARRL members to use as a starting point in contacting their congressional representatives. ARRL members logging onto the

Members-Only portion of the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/members-only/>> will see contact information for their Member of Congress. Alternatively, visit <http://www.house.gov/>.

When writing, please send a copy of your letter to ARRL's Government Relations firm: Chwat & Company Inc, ATTN: Eric Heis, KI4NFC, 625 Slaters Ln--Suite 103 Alexandria, VA 22314; Fax 703-684-7594; <eric.heis@chwatco.com>;.

It's a photo contest! Have you ever wanted to see a photo of yours in QST,

The annual ARRL Amateur Radio calendar or another ARRL publication? Well, here's your chance! Not only will your photographic skill be propagated far and wide, but we're offering a \$100 prize to the winning entry. The winning photo and three runners-up will be published in QST. All submitted photos will also be considered for the 2007 ARRL calendar. Photos must be received at ARRL Headquarters by May 31, 2006. Subject matter must relate to Amateur Radio and be in good taste. Photos will be judged on overall quality and composition. Digital images or color prints are acceptable, but digital images must have at least 300 dpi resolution. E-mail <upfront@arrl.org>; digital images of up to 2 MB or copy to a CD and mail to ARRL Photo Contest, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111. All entries must include caption information describing where the photo was taken, along with the names and call signs of anyone appearing in the photograph. Photos submitted become the exclusive property of the ARRL, and decisions of the judges (QST editorial and production staff) are final. Only one entry per person is allowed. Good luck in the contest!

ARRL VEC ANNOUNCES VANITY CALL SIGN LICENSE RENEWAL PROGRAM

The ARRL VEC now can process license renewals for vanity call sign holders for a modest fee. The service is available to ARRL members and nonmembers, although League members will pay less. Routine, non-vanity renewals continue to be processed at no cost for ARRL members. In addition, ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, points out that trustees of club stations with vanity call signs may renew either via the Universal Licensing System (ULS) or through a Club Station Call Sign Administrator, such as ARRL VEC.

"2006 is an appropriate year for the ARRL VEC to implement this service, since the licenses of the many radio amateurs who obtained their vanity call signs as a result of the FCC program that went into effect in 1996 will expire this year," Somma said. The first of those licenses are due to expire in June.

"As the FCC has already noted, licensees who want to keep their van-

ity call signs must pay the regulatory fee, currently \$21.90 for the 10-year license term, when renewing their licenses," Somma noted. "Licensees who don't want to pay the mandatory regulatory fee to retain a vanity call sign may request a sequentially issued call sign at the time of renewal."

The FCC has proposed to reduce the vanity call sign regulatory fee to \$20.10 for the 10-year license term. The new fee, if adopted, would go into effect in August or September.

Amateur Radio licensees may file for renewal only within 90 days of their license expiration date. All radio amateurs must have an FCC Registration Number (FRN) before filing any application with the Commission. Applicants can obtain an FRN by going to the ULS <<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>> and clicking on the "New Users Register" link. You must supply your Social Security Number to obtain an FRN.

Those holding specifically requested call signs issued prior to 1996 are exempt from the vanity call sign regulatory fee. That's be-

cause Congress did not authorize the FCC to collect regulatory fees until 1993. Such heritage call sign holders do not appear as vanity licensees in the ULS Amateur Radio database.

Somma says the ARRL's new license renewal/modification Web pages contain complete information on license-filing procedures, including step-by-step instructions on how to renew or update a license using the FCC's ULS site and a schedule of fees.

League members should visit the "ARRL Member Instructions for License Renewals or Changes" page <<http://www.arrl.org/fcc/memberlicenseinstructions.html>>. The "Instructions for License Renewals or Changes" page <<http://www.arrl.org/fcc/licenseinstructions.html>> covers general renewal procedures for nonmembers. There's additional information on the ARRL VEC's "FCC License Renewals and ARRL License Expiration Notices" page <<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/renewals.html>>.

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