Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub

Di-Dah-Dit

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

FCC Responds to ARRL's BPL Brief

On Monday, July 2, the FCC filed its reply brief with the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The FCC attempted to rebut the ARRL's challenge to the FCC's Broadband over Power Line (BPL) rules enacted in late 2004 and affirmed by the agency in 2006. According to ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, "The FCC's brief does not accurately describe ARRL's arguments concerning harmful interference."

Given what is in essence a 100 percent probability of interference from BPL systems to fixed and mobile HF facilities at significant distances from power lines, Imlay said Section 301 of the Communications Act does not allow unlicensed BPL systems to operate in the HF bands. "Basically, Section 301 says you can not operate a radio frequency emitting device without a license. The legislative purpose of Section 301 is clearly to avoid interference. FCC's Part 15 rules have assumed that certain very low power devices and systems can operate without predictable interference, thus allowing them to operate without a license, notwithstanding Section 301. But with BPL, the FCC has ignored conclusive record evidence which shows that there will be, and in fact our experience conclusively demonstrates, that BPL causes severe interference to licensed services," Imlay said.

The FCC claims that it has the authority to permit unlicensed BPL under Section 302 of the Act; this section allows the FCC to regulate the interference potential of RF devices. What Section 302 does not do, Imlay said, is to create a loophole in, or modify, or invalidate Section 301.

"It is the ARRL's position," Imlay said, "that the FCC can regulate and authorize BPL with certain safeguards, consistent with the terms of Section 301; however, the FCC simply cannot honestly maintain the position that BPL has an inherently low interference potential. It has a high interference potential, and the rules they have enacted to date are woefully inadequate and insufficient to address it." The ARRL has long maintained that BPL, when not adequately "notched," causes harmful interference to Amateur Radio operations. In its brief, the FCC claims BPL does not cause significant interference and the Courts must defer to the FCC's expertise to decide this issue.

ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, said, "The FCC misrepresents the ARRL's position as being that the FCC has no authority to allow unlicensed devices that pose any risk whatsoever of causing interference to licensed services. That's not our position at all. Our position is that the FCC possessed clear evidence, at the time it made its BPL decisions , that the limits it was adopting would allow the deployment of BPL systems with a near-100 percent probability of causing harmful interference to radio receivers hundreds of feet from the power lines. Yet, despite this evidence it characterized the likelihood of harmful interference as 'low.'"

The brief goes on to say that, in the FCC's view, mobile stations and fixed stations are protected against harmful interference from BPL. But with respect to mobile stations complaining of interference, the FCC requires only that BPL operators reduce the radiated emission levels to 20 dB below the Part 15 maximum levels for radiated emissions. This, in the HF bands, still permits BPL noise at levels that preclude communications entirely. It offers mobile stations no protection whatsoever, Imlay stated.

Sumner explained, "The FCC claims that it continues to protect mobile stations from harmful interference, but it does so simply by defining whatever interference a mobile station might encounter from a notched BPL system as not harmful! None of the steps to limit the interference potential of BPL systems that the FCC took in this rulemaking proceeding reduce the likelihood of interference to the amateur service, and to this day the FCC has declined to enforce its rules even when protracted violations and interference have been documented."

The FCC's brief also attempted to justify its presumption that a BPL radiated interfering signal decays at a rate of 40 dB per decade of distance. "A 'decade of distance' is a factor of 10," Imlay explained. "For example, if a victim receiver moves from 3-30 feet from the power lines (10 times farther away), that is one decade of distance. For each decade of distance, the FCC believes that there is a 40 dB signal decay. In the HF bands, however, the evidence in the record shows that the signal decay is closer to 20 dB than 40 dB per decade of distance from the power lines. The FCC's brief claimed that there was conflicting evidence on the subject, but ARRL's view is that the FCC merely avoided consideration of the overwhelming evidence favoring the more conservative decay factor."

Imlay said the ARRL has asked the Court to order the FCC to "rethink the rules governing BPL and for the first time to take into account the evidence on the record concerning harmful interference to Amateur Radio." ARRL's reply brief is due for filing with the Court July 28, 2007. There is no date set yet for oral argument before the three-judge panel in Washington, DC.

FCC Enforcement Actions for the Week of June 25, 2007

In May and June of this year, the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, Spectrum Enforcement Division, sent out radio amateur enforcement correspondence via certified mail to four hams and one commercial company regarding alleged misuse of Amateur Radio activities.

In two unrelated cases, letters were sent to William E. Westley, Jr, AF4GC, of New Port Richey, Florida, and Donald E. Ellis, KB0TVP, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for repeater interference and included warnings to stay off certain repeater systems. Westley was asked by the licensee of the W4FLG repeater to stop using the repeater. Ellis was requested by the licensees of W0MXW and K0RGR to refrain from using said repeaters. According to the FCC, requests to Westley and Ellis were issued both verbally and in writing. The FCC said both Westley and Ellis were cited for "failure to follow operational rules set forth by the licensee/control operators of the repeater system."

Oscar Resto, KP4RF, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, was cited by the FCC from a complaint originating with the Puerto Rico Virgin Islands Volunteer Frequency Coordinators, Inc. They allege Resto caused interference from your station operating at 145.450 MHz to coordinated repeater KP4IA, operating at 144.770 MHz." According to the FCC, PVRI has found and coordinated another frequency pair for Resto "that would cure the present interference problem, as well as another interference situation involving other coordinated repeater stations." The FCC requests that Resto "either resolve the interference problem or comply with the frequency' coordinator's recommended frequency change by midnight July 1, 2007."

The FCC also sent a letter to Mark F. Hubeny, N9ZHW, citing the "operation of your Amateur Radio station on non-Amateur Radio frequencies," resulting in "deliberate interference. Although the complaints relate to non-Amateur operation, if true they raise serious question regarding your qualifications to remain an Amateur licensee." The FCC requested Hubeny to respond to the FCC within 20 days of receipt of the letter to fully address the complaint. He was also asked to clarify his mailing address for his amateur license.

In a complaint against Tennessee Steel Haulers of Nashville, Tennessee, the FCC notes that "one of your drivers has been operating radio equipment without a license on 28.085 MHz and causing interference to licensed stations in the Ten Meter Amateur Band." The letter goes on to state that the driver was observed operating on May 3, 2007 on Interstate 85 in Gastonia, North Carolina. The penalty for such actions include fine or imprisonment, as well as seizure of any non-certified radio transmitting equipment. Fines can range from $7500-$10,000.

To read the correspondence in its entirety, please see the Enforcement Bureau's Web site <http://www.fcc.gov/eb/AmateurActions/Welcome.html>.
Address all inquiries regarding this correspondence to Riley Hollingsworth <riley.hollingsworth@fcc.gov>;.

Kenwood Purported to Merge with JVC in 2008

A consumer electronic magazine, This Week in Consumer Electronics (TWICE), reports that Kenwood has agreed to merge in 2008 with Victor Company of Japan (JVC) under a holding company. JVC is owned by Matsushita Electric Industrial Company. Japan's Nikkei business newspaper reports that the final details should be worked out by the end of the month, and that under the plan, Kenwood will buy 20 billion yen ($161,469,466) in JVC shares as early as this summer, raising its stake to 13 percent. Matsushita will also sell part of its 52.7 percent of JVC to Kenwood's top shareholder, the Sparx Group. When JVC and Kenwood integrate operations under the holding company in 2008, Matsushita will sell the rest of its JVC shares to the holding company to complete the transaction. The holding company's stock will be listed instead of Kenwood and JVC, according to Nikkei. Combined, Kenwood's and JVC's sales are $7.3 billion dollars annually for their fiscal year that ended March 31.

Field Day at W1AW: "It Was a Blast!"

With the 2007 Field Day now a part of history, it's time to begin planning for 2008. With that in mind, ARRL Regulatory Information Branch Manager and Field Day Coordinator Dan Henderson, N1ND, said, "From the phone calls and e-mails I have received, people all over the country had a great Field Day. It was a blast. Now it's time to get started planning for next year!"

W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, said, "Field Day conditions were weak, but we managed some good contacts, nonetheless. All the W1AW Field Day bulletins were sent without a hitch."

Henderson agreed. "Propagation was not the best up here in New England. But we managed to pull through, and had a lot of fun doing so." W1AW made a total of 804 contacts: 317 on CW, 466 on Phone and 21 on the digital modes; each mode ran at 100 W. Taking into account all the bonus points available, W1AW's claimed score is 2284. "We ran Field Day as 4F. Since W1AW is an EOC station, we are allowed the 'F' designator. Although we didn't make any satellite contacts, we did demonstrate it to staff and visitors," Carcia said.

W1AW managed to make contacts with 42 of the 50 US states. Unfortunately, operators were not able to make contact with South Dakota, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon or Kansas. "We're okay with that, because at W1AW, we view Field Day as more of a teaching, or educational, experience. There are times where we are not operating, or not operating that much, because we are showing new or prospective hams what Amateur Radio is all about," Carcia said.

Carcia noted that just as during regular W1AW operating hours, visitors were "more than welcome" to come by W1AW on Field Day. "We had one visitor from Hawaii. He and his family were in Connecticut on family business, and he operated pretty much both days. In addition to visitors, we had 11 ARRL HQ staffers show up to both operating and to conduct a VE test session on Saturday," Carcia said. A total of eight people took exams, with six passing.

Carcia said that the W1AW 60 kW diesel generator suffered "some nastiness" the Saturday before Field Day, but was repaired in the days prior to the operating event. "As near as we can tell," Carcia said, "lightning struck a power line a street over, inducing voltage in the line. We are guessing the induced voltage arced across from the neutral side in the transfer switch and 'whacked' the solenoid coil and control board in the transfer switch. We think this only because the coil is about an inch away from neutral buss." The generator story, as well as pictures from W1AW's Field Day, are on the ARRL Field Day Web blog <http://www.arrl.org/blog/Field%20Day%202007>. Post your Field Day experiences on the Field Day Soapbox http://www.arrl.org/contests/soapbox/?con_id=133>.

Solar Flux to Bottom Out in July as Cycle 24 Gets Closer:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Space Environment Center (SEC) released their monthly forecasts of sunspot number and 10.7 cm radio flux, including high and low bounds to their forecasts. The SEC forecasts that the smoothed sunspot number reached its low value of 11.7 in March 2007, and predicts that the solar flux will reach its low of 75.4 this month. This is the fourth month in a row that the SEC predicts the solar flux will bottom out in July. Based on the SEC predictions, this is probably at the bottom of Cycle 23 and extremely close to the beginning of Cycle 24. Two events will mark the beginning of the next sunspot cycle: The observation of the first opposite magnetic polarity sunspots compared to Cycle 23 sunspot polarity, and the observation high solar latitude sunspots -- the Cycle 23 sunspots are now very near the solar equator. The SEC predictions table <http://www.sec.noaa.gov/ftpdir/weekly/Predict.txt> and sunspot number and solar flux prediction graphs <http://www.sec.noaa.gov/SolarCycle/> are available on the SEC's Web site.

North Carolina Governor Signs Antenna Bill:

On Friday, June 29, North Carolina Governor Mike Easley signed HB1340, the "Amateur Radio Antenna" bill into law. North Carolina becomes the 25th state to pass a state model of the FCC's 1985 PRB-1 regulation, and becomes the halfway point for all 50 states having some kind of state antenna legislation. The bill was introduced for the first time in February and passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate. The law takes effect October 1 and permits antennas up to 90 feet in height in areas regulated solely by municipal (county and city) ordinances.

ARRAY OF NEW GEAR DEBUTS AT DAYTON 2007

It's always a treat to get your first look at a new HF transceiver at Dayton. This year, there were no fewer than six to drool over. Here, in alphabetical order, is a rundown:

Elecraft <http://www.elecraft.com/> announced its new K3 HF and 6 meter transceiver. It includes many upgrade options, so many, in fact, that you can configure anything from a kit-built 10 W portable QRP radio to a full-featured, contest-ready 100 W rig with *two* high-performance receivers. It is scheduled to ship starting in July.

FlexRadio Systems <http://www.flex-radio.com/>, a pioneer in high-performance software defined radios (SDRs), introduced its Flex-5000 HF plus 6-meter transceiver series that promises higher performance and more features than its earlier model. Included are the Flex-5000C, a fully integrated system in a single box, and the Flex-5000D, which includes a second receiver.

Hilberling, the first Amateur Radio transceiver maker from across the Atlantic for some years, announced its PT-8000 transceiver. It's offered as a full-featured HF and VHF transceiver available in 10, 100 or 600 W versions. The North America distributor is Array Solutions <http://www.arraysolutions.com/>.

ICOM <http://www.icomamerica.com/> unveiled its IC-7700 HF + 6 meter transceiver. It appears to be a single-receiver version of its top-tier IC-7800, sharing the 200 W transmitter, high performance receiver and 7-inch display of its sibling. Contesters are the market target, but the IC-7700 may be of interest to anyone who covets the features of the IC-7800 but doesn't need two receivers or the higher price tag.

Ten-Tec <http://www.tentec.com/> has its new Omni-VII HF + 6 meter transceiver on display. The unit's "distributed roofing filter architecture" promises ham-band-only receive performance with a general coverage receiver. Stay tuned for the "Product Review" in July QST.

Finally, Yaesu <http://www.yaesu.com/> showed its new FT-450 HF + 6 meter offering. The FT-450 bears some similarities to the Yaesu FT-2000, but with fewer features and a correspondingly lower price.

What else?

Array Solutions is distributing the SPE Expert 1K-FA solid-state linear amplifier. It is a compact light weight (44 pounds) fully automated, full break-in capable amplifier that puts out 1000 W PEP on 160 through 10 meters (700 W PEP on 6 meters). It has an internal 120 or 240 V ac power supply and antenna tuner.

Dishtronix <http://www.dishtronix.com/> showed off its 100% duty cycle, 1500 W output (on all modes) solid-state linear. This is a "serious" amplifier at 65 pounds with the choice of a separate 120 pound linear power supply or a 54 pound switcher.

Tokyo Hy-Power <http://www.thp.co.jp/> enjoyed a great debut at Dayton this year, showing three HF amplifiers newly introduced to the US market. On display were the HL-1.2KFX 750 W output, HL-1.5KFX 1 kW output and HL-2.5KFX legal limit amplifiers as well as the HL-500V 2 meter linear. All are solid state. THP also offers a new legal-limit automatic antenna tuner.

Kenwood <http://www.kenwood.com/> announced a new V/UHF mobile transceiver, the TM-71A. Of particular note is free software that allows downloading repeater data from ARRL's Travel Plus http://www.arrl.org/catalog/?item=9930> directly into radio memories. It also can function as a crossband repeater.

Yaesu introduced a new V/UHF transceiver especially for hams on the go! The FTM-10 is designed to mount on the handlebars of your bike or motorcycle so that you don't even need a mic! Just talk into the front panel, and you're on the air!

Radio accessories are always popular at Dayton and MFJ can always be counted on to have new products. Topping the list this year is the MFJ-998 1500 W Intellituner. This legal-limit auto tuner is designed to handle loads from 12 to 1600 ohms from 160 to 10 meters and includes two outputs and sophisticated memory, protection and control features.

West Mountain Radio <http://www.westmountainradio.com/>, the RigBlaster and RigRunner folk, have branched out into the audio side of your radios. They introduced a DSP-equipped speaker designed for the HF operator who would like more signal and less noise.

Palstar <http://www.palstar.com/> has a new AT1KP tuner that covers 160 through 6 meters. By switching in the 160 meter inductance only when needed, the AT1KP reduces the minimum capacitance of the tuner so it can cover 6 meters.

The Swiss Antenna Matching System from Heinz-Bolli is a legal-limit remote-controlled tuner designed for outdoor mounting. It can be manually tuned by remote control or auto tuning can be used to select the best tuner configuration or adjust the parameters. Array Solutions is the North American distributor. -- Joel Hallas, W1ZR

It's not too early to start working up those holiday gift lists.

FCC ANNOUNCES ENHANCEMENTS TO ULS LICENSE ARCHIVE

The FCC has announced a redesign of the Universal Licensing System (ULS) License Archive Search. Users can access this new functionality via the "Archives" button under "SEARCH" on the ULS page.

"Each time a license is acted upon, the current version is captured within ULS," the FCC explained this week in a public notice. "The License Archive allows users to view the current and prior versions of a license."

In the redesigned License Archive, the search interface, results screen and detail pages will use the same display as ULS License Search. On the detail pages, users now will be able to directly access license information.

"There will be no need to 'drill down' -- follow link after link -- to reach the information you need," the FCC noted. "This enhancement increases functionality and improves compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act."

The redesigned License Archive search interface allows a user to search using most of the criteria available in ULS Advanced License Search except for Radio Service Group, Licensee City, State and ZIP Code and Frequencies. Users will have the same ability to sort and restrict their archive search results that they have in ULS License Search, the FCC said. Licensee ID no longer will be available as a License Archive Search criterion, however. Users should now search by the Licensee's FCC Registration Number (FRN).

The search results display will be similar to the search results in License Search, with a few minor exceptions: There will be no display of a "Pending Applications" icon, a column titled "Version" will display "Archived" or "Current" depending on the version of the license and a "Last Action Date" column will be used instead of "Expiration Date."

In general, the License Archive Search details will look similar to License Search details. However, the following additional fields will be displayed for all archived licenses: Last Action Date, Version, Licensee ID, and Sub-Group Identification Number (SGIN).

Also, other License Search functions that previously were not available in the License Archive have been added, including a "Printable Page" link that allows the user to print the contents of the page pre-formatted for most common printers. A "Reference Copy" link now allows the user to print an unofficial copy of the license. A link to view "Related Applications" from the current version of the license has been added, as has the ability to view attachments and automated letters in a PDF file.

License Archive will display termination pending components similar to the manner in which they are currently displayed in License Search. Additionally, License Archive will display all terminated components of a license, regardless of when it was terminated. These components will indicate a status of "Terminated" on the component's summary and detail pages. Under the previous License Archive system, terminated components were not displayed unless the license itself was terminated as well.

For additional information or assistance, visit the FCC's at <http://esupport.fcc.gov/index.htm> or call the FCC Support Center, (877) 480-3201 or 717-338-2888 (TTY 717-338-2824) and select Option #2, Forms or Licensing Assistance. Hours are weekdays, except federal holidays, from 8 AM until 6 PM Eastern Time.

New General class books are good to go!:

According to ARRL Sales and Marketing Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, the new ARRL General Class License Manual is ready for shipping. As of July 1, 2007, a new General Class license exam pool will take effect; the old pool will no longer be valid. The new ARRL General Class License Manual has everything you need to pass the General Class exam. Also available is the ARRL General Q&A. This book makes upgrading to General Class quick and easy, allowing you to review from the entire question pool with brief explanations following each question. You can order the new manuals, plus manuals for Technician and Amateur Extra from www.arrl.org/catalog/lm/.

RILEY REITERATES RECOMMENDATION TO "LIGHTEN UP" ON HAM BANDS

FCC Special Counsel in the Spectrum Enforcement Division Riley Hollingsworth's main message at the Dayton Hamvention® <http://www.hamvention.org/> 2007 FCC Forum may not have been a new one. But it's certainly one he believes bears repeating -- at least until it starts cutting through the QRM and QRN that pervade more communication channels than our Amateur Radio bands.

"Well, you could have gone to the flea market, but you came to church instead," Hollingsworth quipped to his Dayton forum audience. "I've got you now."

Hollingsworth repeated what for many Riley Watchers has become a familiar refrain: That the Amateur Radio community needs to "lighten up" on the air. Acknowledging that he was repeating himself, Hollingsworth urged his audience to take his message more to heart. "All of you can learn from each other," he said, "and you need to work together more and show a little more respect for your diverse interests and for the Amateur Service as a whole It isn't about you. It isn't about enforcement. It's about Amateur Radio."

As radio amateurs take to the airwaves, he continued, they need to decide what's most important -- the best interests of ham radio or their ego, pride or perceived "rights."

"I realize I may be preaching to the choir here, but on the air you need to be more cooperative and less argumentative -- and I need you to take this message with you when you go home," he continued.

s a "homework assignment," Hollingsworth encouraged his listeners to read the "It Seems to Us . . ." editorial, "Most Effective Use" <http://www.arrl.org/news/features/2007/05/01/1/>, by ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, in May 2007 QST. In his commentary, Sumner stressed that interference occurring as a side effect of legitimate Amateur Radio activities in crowded bands "is simply a fact of life" and that it's "unfair to your fellow amateurs to assume that every instance of interference you may encounter is a hostile act."

Hollingsworth offered good news and bad news. "The good news: Nothing is wrong with Amateur Radio," he allowed. "It is a good service that is showing its value to the public on a daily basis."

The bad news, he asserted, making a comparison to "road rage," is "that there is an element of Amateur Radio that too often reflects present society generally."

Hollingsworth urged all radio amateurs to cooperate more and depend less on the FCC to solve their operating issues.

"We live in a rude, discourteous, profane, hotheaded society that loves its rights, prefers not to hear about its responsibilities, and that spills over into the ham bands," he said.

Hollingsworth's bottom line: Be flexible in your frequency selection and make regular use of the "big knob" on the front of your transceiver to shift to any of the "thousands of frequencies and hundreds usable at any given time of day or year" as necessary to avoid problems. "The world is ugly enough -- don't add to it," Hollingsworth advised.

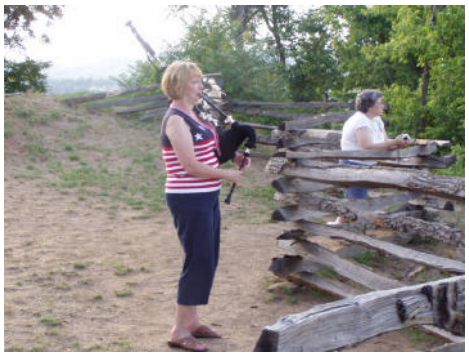
"We can enforce our rules, but we can't enforce kindness and courtesy or common sense," Hollingsworth concluded. "And a very wise person, who happens to be standing to my left [FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau staffer Bill Cross, W3TN -- Ed] once told me: 'You can't regulate stupid.' If we could, we'd be working for the United Nations instead of the FCC."

In his comments, Cross singled out the controversy that erupted recently over fears that automatically controlled digital stations would overwhelm the amateur bands, eclipsing most other modes. Cross cited §97.7 of the rules, which requires each amateur station to have a control operator and, in essence, to employ a "listen-before-transmit" protocol."

When a station is under automatic control, regardless of the transmission mode, Cross explained, the control operator need not be at the control point, but must employ station control devices and procedures while transmitting that ensure compliance with the FCC rules and does not cause harmful interference to ongoing communications of other stations.

The operational rule, Cross said, is: "Your call sign, your responsibility."

Well, Field Day 2007 has come and gone. I would like to thank all of the people who helped out. This Field Day went off without too many glitches. Fort Boreman worked out well and I think it will be a good place next year. Dan Betts took care of the Loggong programs again this year and I think with the bonus points we will be over 2000 points. TWV took a bunch of pictures. Enjoy!
Thanks again to all that helped.
KA8NJW



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Operators test skills during Field Day

By DAVE PAYNE Sr.
Staff Writer

PARKERSBURG – As of 3 p.m. Sunday, Jerry Wharton of the Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub, had been awake 33 hours straight.

He wasn't alone as ham radio operators throughout the Mid-Ohio Valley, the United States and Canada took their radios outdoors and sat in musty trailers or under canopies for the American Radio Relay League's Field Day, which began at 2 p.m. Saturday and ended at 2 p.m. Sunday.

While ham radio clubs compete for bragging rights of who can make the most radio contacts, the goal for the annual event is for clubs to test their abilities to set up self-sustaining radio stations, something they actually do in disaster situations to relay messages to the outside world, Wharton said.

"It is a contest, but it has a serious side. It lets us know what we can do on short notice and see how we hold up. We could set up and be operating in a day and if we had to, we could operate out of our vehicles immediately," Wharton said.

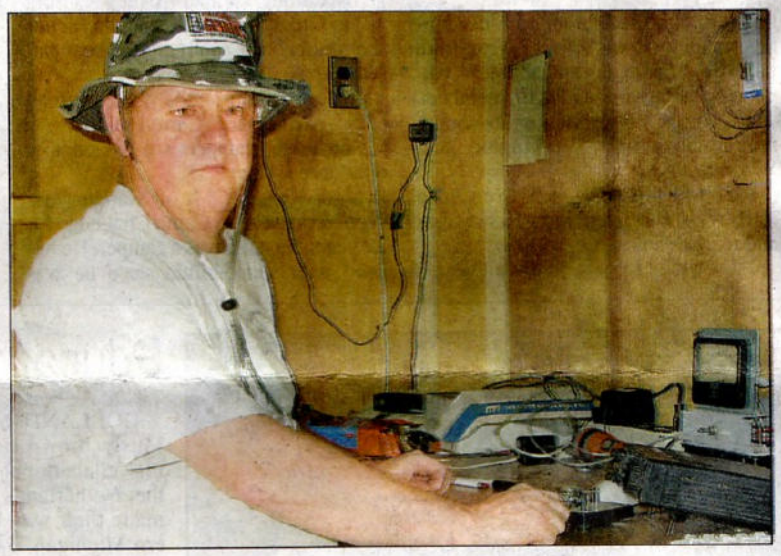
In Wood County, the Parkersburg club had 10 operators at the Fort Boreman Park and Wood County Emergency Communications had 21 at a farm on Laurel Creek Road. The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub spells "club" with a "K" to make the acronym "P.A.R.K."

The operators worked in shifts to keep the radios manned constantly over the 24-hour period, said Ken Harris of the Wood County club.

The ARRL estimates more than 35,000 ham operators participate in Field Day each year. Astronauts aboard the International Space Station also participate, provided their space schedules allow. No operators from either site contacted the space station this year. As the space station orbits at about 17,000 miles an hour, it isn't in range for more than a couple of minutes during the contest period.

Lloyd Boston, a member of the Parkersburg club, said the Fort Boreman Park was a perfect place for Field Day with its high, radio-friendly elevation, public access and commanding view.

"This is a good place to expose the public to ham radio," he said.



Jerry Wharton of the Parkersburg Amateur Radio Club sits at one of the two stations the club operated during the Amateur Radio Relay League Saturday and Sunday. One was at the site of the Fort and the one pictured was inside a trailer near the park entrance.

During the contest, operators use their club's call sign instead of their own. During Field Day, contacts are short and operators do little more than confirm each other's call signs. The Wood County club's is WC8EC.

"WC8EC," said 12-year-old operator Krista Mills of Belleville, "I've said that so many times, I swear I'm going to be saying that in my sleep."

The Parkersburg club had two stations – one in a trailer near the park entrance and another higher up at the fort site. The operators were able to get extra elevation for their antennas by suspending them from the tops of walnut trees. To place their wire antennas, they shot a projectile attached to fishing line over the trees, and used the line to pull ropes through the trees. Then they used the ropes to pull up the antennas.

Wharton said club members talked to people from every state, except Hawaii and Delaware as well as each Canadian province. They also made contacts as far south as Central America.

What was missing for both clubs this year were contacts in Europe and Asia. The farthest contact for the two clubs this year was a Wood County club contact in Greenland.

Signals from such faraway places are radio waves (usually at frequencies below 30 Mz) that are reflected back to earth by layers in the ionosphere, which is between 80 and 300 miles above the earth. As the sun shines on the ionosphere, it is charged and reflects those signals. Otherwise, they simply go into space.

The radio-wave reflecting properties of the various layers in the ionosphere depends on the intensity of energy from the sun and the intensity of sunspots, which follow an 11-year cycle. In the mid-point years of the cycle (2007 is one of those years), radio propagation suffers.

Wood County club member Joshua Morgan, 15, of Belleville said he did hear a station in Germany, but was unable to make a contact.

Fellow club member Tricia Magyarosi, 17, also of Belleville, said she's still amazed she's able to communicate over the distances that were possible over the weekend.

"When you can talk to people so far away, that's just cool," she said.

Contact Dave Payne Sr. at dpayne@newsandsentinel.com

Republicans gather for family picnic

By DAVE PAYNE Sr.
Staff Writer

PARKERSBURG – Several dozen Republicans and their families attended

PICNIC IN THE PARK

• Several dozen Republicans gathered at Fort Boreman Park Saturday for the Wood County Republican Executive Com-

among those admiring the view of the Ohio River, Belpre, Parkersburg and Vienna that the park offers.

"Fort Boreman is beautiful and the food and company are wonderful," he said