



Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
820 23 rd. St. Vienna, WV 26104

Amateur Radio and the Law :

Mixed Decision from the California Court of Appeals in Palmdale, California Antenna Case

On January 27, the California Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District, issued its Opinion in the antenna case of Alec Zubarau, WB6X. In several respects, it is a win for Amateur Radio in California; however, the Court decreed that Zubarau was not entitled to his HF antenna, and said that his vertical antenna would suffice as a substitute for it.

The Court found that the Palmdale antenna ordinance, as it pertained to the height limit for vertical antennas, was "unenforceable" because it allowed a radio amateur to have a vertical antenna up to 75 feet high when measured from the ground but limited the "active element of the antenna array" to 30 feet. The ordinance did not define "array" or "active element" and did not specify from where the 30 permitted feet for such "array" was to be measured. The Court found that if even one reasonable interpretation of the ordinance could be found, the ordinance could be upheld, but that in this case, no one could understand what the limitations were and how they could be applied. That portion of the City's ordinance was therefore unconstitutional and unenforceable.

Happy Valentine's Day: Love Is On-the-Air

Every once in a while, we will feature a story written that has been sent to us by a ham. This is one of those times. We hope you enjoy it.

Life can be funny at times. In high school, I was one of those kids who kept to themselves. I was so into the academic side of things that I only went out with a few girls. But there was one girl in school who every time she walked by, my heart would skip a beat. I never saw her with a boyfriend; she was one of the prettiest girls in school and all the guys were too afraid to ask her out. In our senior year, we had a math and English class together, and when we graduated, I joined the Navy.



I saw the world in the Navy. I spent some time overseas and from time to time, I wondered about that beautiful girl who I never asked out in high school. I was too busy with my naval career to settle down, always on the move with Special Ops. I spent 25 years in the Navy and when I retired, I was ready for my next career. I had some radioman experience in the Navy, so I got my Amateur Radio license and started work at a major communications company.

Years later, I found myself at a hamfest, looking for some new radio gear. I saw this radio I wanted back when I was a

kid. I saw a guy pick it up and start to look at it. I ran over to the booth and waited for him to put it back on the table. He finally walked away so I asked how much the radio was and if it worked. The lady behind the table looked at me, told me the price and that the rig worked the last time she used it. Then we locked eyes. It was her! The girl from high school! I would know her face anywhere.

After the shock wore off, I asked her if this was her gear for sale. She told me that it was hers and her late husband's. She got her license back in high school and met him at a local club meeting. She told me that they had been married for 23 wonderful years and had one child who was now in the Navy. We talked for hours. She told me that she had had a crush on me back in high school, but was too afraid to ask me out; I told her I felt the same. After the hamfest, I helped her pack up the table and we went to get a bite to eat.

We talked all night, getting caught up on everyone we went to school with. Then she asked me if I had ever thought of her over the years and if I still had feelings for her. Of course I said yes! After a few dates, I asked her to marry me and she said yes.

We have now been married 10 years and I can honestly say that I married my high school sweetheart. I looked over my station logs and found that years ago I had worked her in a contest, but I never knew it was her. Oh, about the radio that started the whole thing -- yes, it works! -- Paul Rios, KC6QLS, kc6qls@arrl.net

Amateur Radio in Space:

NASA's Nanosatellite Heard by Hams
When a NASA nanosatellite -- NanoSail-D -- ejected unexpectedly on January 17 from the Fast Affordable Scientific and Technology Satellite (FASTSAT), the agency called upon Amateur Radio operators to help track it. NASA asked radio amateurs to listen on 437.270 MHz for the signal and verify that NanoSail-D was operating. NASA received almost 470 telemetry packets from 11 countries.

The NanoSail-D beacon sent an AX.25 packet every 10 seconds; the packet contained data about the spacecraft's systems operation. Listen here for a recording of the nanosatellite's beacon, made by Hank Hamoen, PA3GUO, on January 21.

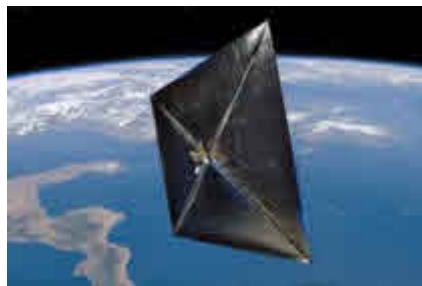
Once the NanoSail-D team received confirmation that the nanosatellite did indeed eject, NanoSail-D principal investigator Dean Alhorn quickly enlisted Alan Sieg, WB5RMG, and Stan Sims, N4PMF, to try to pick up NanoSail-D's radio beacon. Both hams work at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

"The timing could not have been better," Sieg said. "NanoSail-D was going to track right over Huntsville, and the chance to be the first ones to hear and decode the signal was irresistible." Right before 2300 UTC on January 17, they heard a faint signal. As the spacecraft soared overhead, the signal grew stronger and the operators were able to decode the first packet: NanoSail-D was alive and well. "You could have scraped Dean off the ceiling. He was bouncing around like a new father," Sieg recalled. tVideo at this link.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1vZfm500hE>. o watch a video of Dutch ham Hank Hamoen, PA3GUO, tracking NanoSail-D via Software Defined Radio.

According to NASA, the nanosatellite was last heard at 1354 UTC on January 21. Telemetry indicates that the sail deployed on schedule and the satellite is now believed to be out of power, which

NASA said was to be expected. NASA is now asking for visual tracking and sighting reports of NanoSail-D, which is about 650 km above the Earth. According to the agency, when the nanosatellite's sail reflects off the Sun, it could be up to 10 times as bright as the planet Venus -- especially later in the mission when the sail descends to lower orbits. You can track NanoSail-D on the web or on your smart phone. NASA estimates that NanoSail-D will remain in low Earth orbit (LEO) between 70 and 120 days, depending on atmospheric conditions.



An artist's conception of NanoSail-D.
[Image courtesy of NASA]

On-the Air:

ARRL Outgoing QSL Service Announces New Rate Structure

Effective January 17, 2011, a new pricing structure will go into effect for the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service. With the new rate structure, amateurs will no longer need to count outgoing cards and then guess as to what to pay based upon a half-pound rate; a simple weighing of the cards is all that is necessary to determine what amount to send to the Bureau. This new structure also accommodates a small rate increase in response to recent postage, shipping and handling costs.

Amateur Radio in the Classroom:

ARRL Executive Committee Approves Grants for Five Schools

In December 2010, the ARRL Executive Committee reviewed grant applications for the ARRL's Education & Technology Program (ETP), awarding equipment valued at nearly \$5000 to five schools. More than 525 schools across the country have received support from the ETP in the form of grants for equipment, curriculum and resources, as well as teacher in-service training through the Teachers Institute on Wireless Technology. Applications for equipment and resource grants are accepted twice each year; application deadlines are May 1 and November 1. Applications for 2011 summer sessions of the Teachers Institute are currently being accepted. Read more here.



CW DXing

The weekend of February 19-20 is prime time for CW DXing as the 2011 ARRL International DX CW Contest takes to the airwaves. According to ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X, stations in the US and Canada work only DX stations -- Alaska and Hawaii are considered DX for this contest -- and DX stations only work the US and Canada. DX stations will be trying to make QSOs with all US states and Canadian provinces. The contest exchange is simple: US and Canadian stations send a signal report and their state or province, while DX stations send a signal report and the amount of power they are transmitting with. Read more here.

Minutes November 8, 2010

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the November meeting. Introductions were made by 21 members and guests.

In the absence of president Libby Auville WA8FUA, Connie Hamilton N8IO opened the meeting at 7 PM.

The 50/50 drawing of \$12.50 was won by Harold Dooley N8KO.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. Ray Johnson KC8RUJ gave the treasurer's report. Connie N8IO announced the Charleston hamfest will be March 19 from 9 to 2. She also reported on Jerry's N8GRH health. He is in Marietta Memorial Hospital.

Dave N8NWV read a list of equipment he has for sale.

ARRL testing will be this Saturday at 6 PM at the health department.

New ham/upgrade classes will start in January. Connie has Tech manuals only. Carl K8OWL and Blaine WA8IOE need to be contacted. This was tabled until the next meeting.

Question was raised, "Do we want to advertise in the Charleston hamfest program?" No decision was made.

The Christmas covered dish party will be December 18 at 6 PM at the Washington Bottom Community Building. The club will furnish meat and drinks.

It was announced that Jane N8MOW has finished radiation treatments.

Jep K8BOT moved to adjourn at 7:37 PM.

Minutes December 18, 2010

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at the Washington Bottom Community Building for the December Christmas dinner meeting. There were 21 members and guests present.

After a good covered dish meal, president Libby Auville KA8FUA opened a short meeting at 7 PM. The November minutes were read and approved. There was no treasurer's report given.

Jim K8BOT reported that Linda Daugherty KB8YPC is now on the air with the donated equipment.

The Nelsonville hamfest will be January 16. The January club meeting will be at Mary's Plane View Restaurant. Thanks were given to the cooks and helpers.

Jim K8BOT moved and Sean KD8ODS seconded to adjourn.

Christmas carols were sung by those attending.

Minutes January 10, 2011

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the January meeting. Introductions were made by 22 members and guests.

The 50/50 drawing of \$9.50 was won by Ken WA8LLM.

President Libby Auville KA8FUA opened the meeting at 7 PM. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. Carol Johnson KC8TUD gave the treasurer's report. Dave N8NWV moved and Curt K8UC seconded to accept the report. Motion passed.

Unfinished business: Mark KR5N has placed a slide on Suddenlink cable channel 15 announcing the upcoming ham classes. He also has updated the club website. It is found at www.qsl.net/n8nbl.

The ham classes will start February 7 from 7 to 9 at Baptist Temple. On the Mondays of the club meetings, students will be encouraged to attend the club meetings. Tentative date for the testing is April 25. Carl K8OWL is the instructor. Permission was given to purchase dry erase markers for the class.

Linda Daugherty KB8YPC sent thanks for the help and equipment to get her on the air.

New business: Hamfests announced were February 13 at Mansfield OH and Orlando FL. Others were announced in March through May and the WCEC one at Butchers Bend on October 8.

Ken WA8LLM announced W5YI testing at the health department on February 12.

Congratulations were extended to Earl KB8HRG on passing his General and Amateur Extra.

A get well card was sent to Glen K8PSK.

For show and tell, Jim K8BOT explained his LDG automatic antenna tuner.

Members were encouraged to think of club activities when the weather gets better and also programs for the meetings.

Curt passed around some postcards of an old Marietta service station.

Next meeting will be February 14, Valentines day.

Jim K8BOT moved and Jerry KA8NJW seconded to adjourn.

Amateur Radio in Washington:

US Rep Greg Walden, W7EQI, Tweets News of New Subcommittee Chairmanship

US Representative Greg Walden, W7EQI (R-OR), tweeted news of his appointment in Morse code.

When US Representative Greg Walden, W7EQI (R-OR), learned December 16 that he would be chairing the House Subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet when the 112th Congress convened in January, he let the world know about it by tweeting the news in Morse code. "Just the ham radio operator in me having fun," he posted to his official Web page. The subcommittee has jurisdiction over "interstate and foreign telecommunications including, but not limited to all telecommunication and information transmission by broadcast, radio, wire, microwave, satellite or other mode."

ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, was pleased to hear the news: "We're delighted that the subcommittee is in the hands of such a well-qualified chairman. Greg was an early cosponsor of HR2160, and while he may not always be able to agree with every ARRL position, we know his door will always be open to us."



ARRL Field Day: 2011 Field Day Packet Available

It's that time of year again -- time to start gearing up for ARRL Field Day, June 25-26, 2011! ARRL's flagship operating event -- always held the fourth full weekend in June -- brings together new and experienced hams for 24 hours of operating fun.

Field Day packets are now [available for download](http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter/audio/aan.rss) and include the complete rules (including a change for 2011), as well as other reference items such as forms, ARRL Section abbreviation list, entry submission instructions, a Frequently Asked Questions section, guidelines for getting bonus points, instructions for GOTA stations and a kit to publicize your event with the local press.

There is one rule change for 2011. Starting this year, all stations operating in Class A may use a free VHF station without increasing their operating category. This is designed to encourage more activity on the VHF bands, especially 6 and 2 meters, during the best sporadic-E season of the year.

We have also included in the FD packet a brief one-page flier with basic "What is Field Day" information that may be reproduced as a handout for your information table.



ARRL Audio News Once Again Available from iTunes

The ARRL Audio News is once again available through iTunes, beginning today. You can find the URL for the Audio News' RSS feed here. To download and subscribe to the Audio News at iTunes, log into your iTunes account and go to the "Advanced" pull-down menu. Click on "Subscribe to Podcast," insert <http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter/audio/aan.rss> in the dialogue box and click "OK." You are now subscribed! If you had previously subscribed to the ARRL Audio News via iTunes, you should not have to re-do these steps; episodes should appear in your podcast folder once you sync your device. Step-by-step photo instructions are available here. <http://www.arrl.org/news/em-arrl-audio-news-em-once-again-available-from-itunes>



Of course, the ARRL Audio News is also available on the ARRL Web site and via telephone at 860-594-0384. The ARRL Audio News is compiled, edited and produced in conjunction with each ARRL Letter (except during the Dayton Hamvention, Thanksgiving and other times as announced).

On-the Air: The King of Digital Contesting Is Here!

Pictures from Christmas 2010



