

Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
P. O. Box 2112, Parkersburg, WV 26101

LEAGUE FILES PARTIAL RECONSIDERATION PETITION

The ARRL has formally asked the FCC to reconsider and modify two aspects of its December 30, 1999, Report and Order that restructured the Amateur Radio rules. The League wants the FCC to continue to maintain records that indicate whether a Technician licensee has Morse code element credit. It also seeks permanent Morse element credit for any Amateur Radio applicant who has ever passed an FCC-recognized Morse exam of at least 5 WPM.

The League's Petition for Partial Reconsideration in the WT Docket 98-143 proceeding was filed March 13.

The League suggested that it would be less of an administrative burden for the FCC to maintain the Technician database as it has been doing. The database now identifies Technician and Tech Plus licensees by encoding the records with a "T" or a "P" respectively. The ARRL also said the inability to identify those Technicians that have HF privileges and those who do not could hamper voluntary enforcement efforts. It further suggested it would be wrong to put the burden of proof of having passed the Morse examination on licensees.

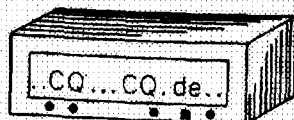
The League cited the demands of fairness in asking the FCC to afford Morse element credit to all applicants who have ever passed an FCC-recognized 5 WPM code

exam. The rules already grant Element 1 credit to those holding an expired or unexpired FCC-issued Novice license or an expired or unexpired Technician Class operator license document granted before February 14, 1991. It also grants Element 1 credit to applicants possessing an FCC-issued commercial radiotelegraph operator license or permit that's valid or expired less than 5 years.

The League has asked the FCC to "conform the rules" to give similar credit to those who once held General, Advanced or Amateur Extra class licenses.

SATELLITE TRACKING

Neat star/satellite tracking site: A new star/satellite tracking site, Heavens-Above, is on the Web at <http://www.heavens-above.com/>. The site is primarily devoted to visual observing, but it recently added the capability to provide Amateur Radio satellite pass predictions. Heavens-Above draws on the support of the German Space Operations Center, which hosts the Web site.--thanks to Steve Ford, WB8IMY



FCC FINES

FCC fines Washington firm for illegal amplifier sales: The FCC has affirmed a \$7000 fine on Cellular Systems Northwest Inc. of Enumclaw, Washington, for willful and repeated violations of the Communications Act and FCC rules relating to the sale of transmitting equipment. In a Memorandum Opinion and Order March 16, the FCC said Northwest, a consumer electronics dealer, on two occasions in 1997 and 1998 sold and offered to sell "external radio frequency power amplifiers--commonly known as 'linear amplifiers'" to two different FCC agents posing as a member of the general public. The FCC said the amps were capable of operating in the 27-MHz Citizens Band.

A Notice of Apparent Liability was issued in June 1998. Northwest sought rescission of the \$7000 forfeiture saying it never intended to offer or recommend the linears for CB use; its violation was unintentional; that it had ceased selling the illegal equipment; and that it is "small retailer" attempting to make ends meet. The FCC was unmoved and upheld the \$7000 fine. The company was given 30 days to pay.--FCC

FCC: HOLD THE PHONE ON CORES AND FRN

The FCC has rescinded a March 16 Public Notice that announced implementation of the FCC's agency-wide Commission Registration System (CORES) and the issuance of an FCC Registration Number (FRN) to each licensee. The new system, which would supplant Universal Licensing System registration for Wireless Telecommunications Bureau-administered licensees, was to have gone into effect next Monday, March 27. Some key FCC personnel said they were unaware of the new system until they saw the Public Notice on the FCC's Web site.

This week, the FCC said it was delaying implementation of CORES and FRNs and suspending the March 27 effective date "until further notice." The FCC said it plans to soon issue a new Public Notice "clarifying certain issues about the new program and providing a new effective date for implementation."

CORES registration is expected to replace ULS registration within a year and possibly as early as six months from now. Information provided to the ARRL by FCC officials indicates that a new CORES registration form will take the place of the ULS Registration Form 606 when the new system goes online. Once in place, CORES will assign a new 10-digit FCC Registration Number, or FRN, which will replace the Licensee ID Numbers now issued by ULS for WTB licensees. Most FCC licensees are handled by the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

The ULS--which covers Wireless

Telecommunications Bureau licensees and applicants--became effective for the Amateur Service last August, and the FCC still has not removed all the wrinkles from the system. Most hams have yet to register in ULS. Those who have automatically will be registered in the new system.

IRIDIUM--QRT

Iridium QRT, but suitors still knocking: With their \$5 billion constellation of 66 satellites now on the verge of destruction, officials have been given approval by the US Bankruptcy Court in New York to begin shutting down the company's mobile phone system. Service was terminated last Friday, and Iridium has asked the Bankruptcy Court to release up to \$8.3 million in company funds to cover the closing of the operation. But there's still some eleventh-hour interest in keeping the Iridium array intact. This week, two groups have stepped forward: One is a group of investors led by hotJump Inc, a privately held content network. A group spokesman says it's made an acquisition bid for Iridium. The second, Las Vegas-based Merit Studios Inc, has contacted Iridium's attorneys to discuss a plan "to salvage the failed venture." There's been no comment from Iridium backer Motorola or from Iridium on either potential offer.

Another potential suitor, Gene Curcio, of Crescent Communications Inc, last week expressed interest in buying the constellation and transitioning its management to General Dynamics if Motorola would agree to keep the birds in the air for another 60 to 90 days. Motorola reportedly declined, and Curcio didn't have the necessary up-front money. Barring the

eventual emergence of a financial savior, Iridium will go forward with plans to deorbit and destroy the satellites. The de-orbiting process could take as long as two years.--press reports

FCC LEVIES HEFTY FINE ON FORMER AMATEUR

The FCC has told a former Houston, Texas, amateur that he's liable for a \$17,000 fine for unlicensed operation and for failing to allow the FCC to inspect his radio equipment. A Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture--an NAL--was sent March 3 to Leonard D. Martin, formerly KC5WHN, by the FCC's Houston Office.

Martin has bumped heads with the FCC on several occasions. The FCC said it received a written complaint in May 1998 alleging that a station identifying as KC5WHN was operating on frequencies not authorized by his Technician ticket. FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth sent Martin a Warning Notice in November 1998 outlining the complaints. The Commission said Martin "generally denied the unauthorized operation."

After tracking transmissions on various 27 MHz frequencies to Martin's residence on at least two occasions in early 1999, an FCC agent was twice rebuffed in his efforts to inspect Martin's radio equipment. The FCC's Houston Office issued Martin an Official Notice of Violation last April. Martin acknowledged the complaint and promised that "no further action by the Commission" would be necessary. In July, he turned in his Amateur Radio license for cancellation.

Martin's troubles didn't end there, however. Last October, following up on complaints of RF interference to a telephone in Martin's neighborhood, the FCC again tracked 27 MHz transmissions to Martin's residence. Martin reportedly again refused to let the FCC inspect his equipment.

The FCC NAL said that, based on the evidence, Martin "repeatedly and willfully" violated Section 301 of the Communications Act by operating without an FCC license and by refusing to allow an FCC inspection of his radio station. Martin has 30 days to pay or to request reduction or cancellation of the proposed forfeiture.

AMATEUR RADIO SPECTRUM BILL INTRODUCED IN SENATE

The Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act bill now has supporting legislation in the US Senate. Idaho Sen Michael Crapo has introduced a bill that mirrors the house bill, HR 783. The Senate measure has been designated S 2183.

"In introducing this bill, we want to do something for Amateur Radio in return for all the good it has done the people of Idaho and elsewhere in the US by providing a reliable means of backup communication in times of emergency," said Crapo, who pledged to work hard to push this bill in the Senate.

Like the House version, the Senate bill, if enacted, would require the FCC to provide equivalent replacement spectrum should it ever be necessary to reallocate Amateur Radio frequencies for

some other purpose. The new Senate legislation was introduced with bipartisan co-sponsorship.

So far, the House version of the spectrum bill has drawn bipartisan support, with 140 cosponsors to date, and has met with no opposition. However, Congress, and the all-important House and Senate Commerce committees, have been preoccupied with non-telecommunications matters and the Amateur Spectrum Protection Act has not yet moved out of committee. The new Senate bill provides additional motivation for the Congress to consider the legislation.

US APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS RF EXPOSURE REGULATIONS

The US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit has upheld the FCC's 1996 RF exposure guidelines. The court also turned away a challenge to the FCC's exclusive ability to regulate relevant radio facility operations. The wide-ranging challenge was brought by the Cellular Phone Taskforce joined by other petitioners including the Communications Workers of America.

In an opinion released February 18, the three-judge panel upheld the FCC against the challenges on all points.

The Court disagreed on all facets of the petitioners' claims. The petitioners, in part, had claimed the FCC failed to account for non-thermal effects of RF radiation, didn't evaluate new evidence, failed to get expert testimony, and failed to account for "scientific uncertainty" about RF exposure in deciding to not

lower the maximum permissible exposure levels below the maximum permitted thermal levels. The petitioners also faulted the FCC for adopting a two-tiered MPE level system that allows for higher exposure in "occupational/controlled" situations than in "general population/uncontrolled" situations.

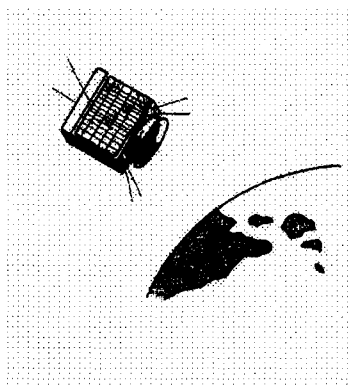
Additionally, the Appeals Court: said the FCC was not irrational, arbitrary or capricious in its decision and that it did not ignore "substantial comments" from experts. noted that licensees are still responsible for compliance "and an interested person can petition the FCC for review of a site believed to violate the MPE levels." disagreed that an environmental impact statement was required from the FCC.

rejected the petitioners' arguments that by not considering RF interference with medical devices, the FCC failed to take a hard look at the environmental consequences of its actions.

rejected arguments that--under the Telecommunications Act of 1996--the FCC did not enjoy broad preemption authority over state or local government to regulate wireless service facilities. ARRL RF Safety Committee Chairman Greg Lapin, N9GL, credits the FCC with being comprehensive in developing its RF safety regulations and thinks the Appeals Court did the right thing. "The FCC is not a health and safety organization, and the Commission never intended the rules to serve as a standard," Lapin said.

Lapin pointed out that the FCC's rules are based on accepted ANSI/IEEE and National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements standards and based on "mountains of research and the opinions of lots of experts."

"The appeals court recognized this in its decision," Lapin said.



OLD SATELLITE RETOOLED FOR NEW USE

UO-14 is proving that you can teach an old bird new tricks. The venerable British satellite recently was switched to FM repeater mode, and reports already are coming in from hams who've worked it using pretty modest equipment.

The satellite's controller Chris Jackson, G7UPN/ZL2TPO, says UO-14 was launched in January 1990 and spent its first 18 months in orbit operating as an amateur store-and-forward satellite, prior to the launch of UO-22. It was then switched for use by Volunteers In Technical Assistance, who used it for messaging into Africa.

"Since the computer which is used for store-and-forward communications is no longer able to perform that task, UO-14 is no longer usable in this mode," Jackson says. "It is, however, possible to use the satellite as a single-channel FM voice repeater, and I have just configured the satellite to do this."

The satellite works as an "FM bent pipe repeater satellite" in full

duplex. Operators with full-duplex transceivers will be able to hear their downlink signal as they transmit. Half-duplex operation also will work satisfactorily.

The uplink is 145.975 MHz, and the downlink is 435.070 MHz. Jackson says he plans to leave the satellite in FM mode for the next few weeks. "If it is useful, then I will probably leave it running," he said. "If it isn't used, it will be switched to transmitting telemetry."

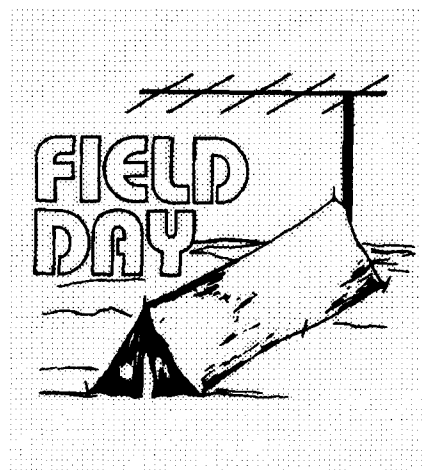
Houston AMSAT Coordinator Bruce Paige, KK5DO, says no more than 5 W is required to make a contact with UO-14, and some have made it with as little as 1.5 W. "It should be a very suitable bird for those with an H-T and a rubber duck," he said.

"Cool satellite!" was the reaction of W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, who worked 11 stations during a "very short" near-horizon pass this week. "Some of the stations sounded like they were next door!"

1987 TECH'S

Pre-March 21, 1987, Technician redux: To qualify for a General class license starting April 15, 2000, applicants must present valid credit for Elements 1, 2, and 3 at a volunteer examiner session. Those who held a Technician license, now expired or otherwise, prior to March 21, 1987, may claim Element 1 (5 WPM Morse code) and new Element 3 (current Element 3B, General exam) credit. Those who held a Technician license, now expired or otherwise, prior to February 14, 1991, may claim only Element 1 credit, as may anyone who has ever held a Novice ticket. The FCC rules provide

Element 2 credit only for individuals who are currently licensed (or within the two-year grace period for renewal) at least at the Technician level. This means that before applying for a General license, a former amateur licensed as a Technician prior to March 21, 1987, and no longer licensed or within the two-year grace period for renewal, also must obtain Element 2 credit. To currently qualify for the Technician license (which conveys Element 2 credit) requires passing a 65-question two part exam (Novice and Technician). Starting April 15, Element 2 will be a single 35-question exam.



FIELD DAY 2000 PREPARATIONS UNDER WAY

The official Field Day 2000 information packet now is available online in PDF format at the ARRL Contest Branch Web site, <http://www.arrl.org/cotests/announcements/fd/fdpack.pdf>. You can download this packet, which include the official rules and forms for FD 2000. To order the packet, send an SASE with three units of first-class postage affixed to Field

Day Package, ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111.

A new bonus point category has been added for Field Day 2000. Groups can earn 100 bonus points by setting up a demonstration of a "nontraditional" amateur mode, including APRS, ATV or SSTV. The bonus does not include modes for which regular QSO credit already may be earned (such as AM or FM on phone or packet, PACTOR, AMTOR or PSK-31 on digital). QSOs made via the demo station do not count toward the Field Day score, and the transmitter does not count toward the transmitter total. There are no rule changes regarding the special Novice/Tech Plus station.

The Field Day participation pins also are back this year. To earn a pin, all you need to do is participate in Field Day--no minimum number of contacts to achieve or ARRL sections to work. The pin is for anyone active in helping to make Field Day happen--from the set-up crew and on-the-air operators to the covered-dish organizers and generator crew.

Field Day 2000 pins are available now for \$5 each. Send orders with payment to Field Day Pin Order, ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111. Early orders are recommended, since the 1999 pins sold out rapidly. Clubs and groups are encouraged to purchase their pins together.

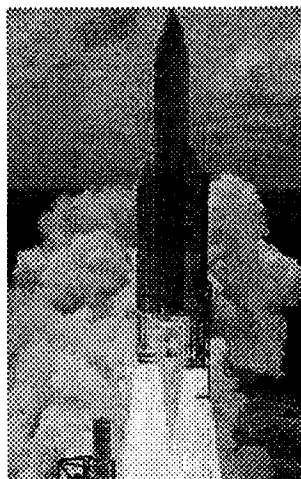
For more information on Field Day 2000, contact Dan Henderson, ARRL Contest Branch Manager, n1nd@arrl.org or 860-594-0232.--Dan Henderson, N1ND

PHASE 3D COULD LAUNCH IN JULY!

The Phase 3D next-generation Amateur Radio satellite has been tentatively scheduled to launch in late July. The information is included in the "Provisional Ariane Launch Manifest" for February through July of this year that appears in the February edition of the Arianespace newsletter. If the schedule holds, the Phase 3D satellite would be sent aloft on Ariane 507, flight V132. A specific date in July was not available.

The Arianespace manifest identifies the other possible payloads aboard 507 as the PAS-1R or Europe*Star packages and the STRV-1C/1D package.

A launch contract accepting Phase 3D as a payload for the first suitable Ariane 5 launch vehicle was signed last October. The Phase 3D satellite now is at the European Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana. Phase 3D will be stored in its shipping container, housed in an air-conditioned integration building at the launch complex until launch preparations commence. All systems have been shut down and the batteries left uncharged. For more information about Phase 3D, visit the AMSAT-NA Web site, .



FCC THREATENS MICHIGAN HAM WITH REVOCATION HEARING

The FCC has told a Michigan ham he could face a revocation hearing if the Commission gets any more reports alleging malicious interference. A *Warning Notice* went out February 23 to Tech Plus licensee Allen J. Stap Sr, N8OKU, of Bangor, Michigan. In it, FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement advised Stap that the FCC has received "numerous complaints regarding malicious interference and jamming, apparently originating from your station" to a 2-meter repeater. Hollingsworth said some of the interference to the Kalamazoo Amateur Radio Club's repeater consisted of "sound effects, unidentified transmissions and keying over ongoing communications." The FCC said there was further evidence that the licensee had been harassing repeater users.

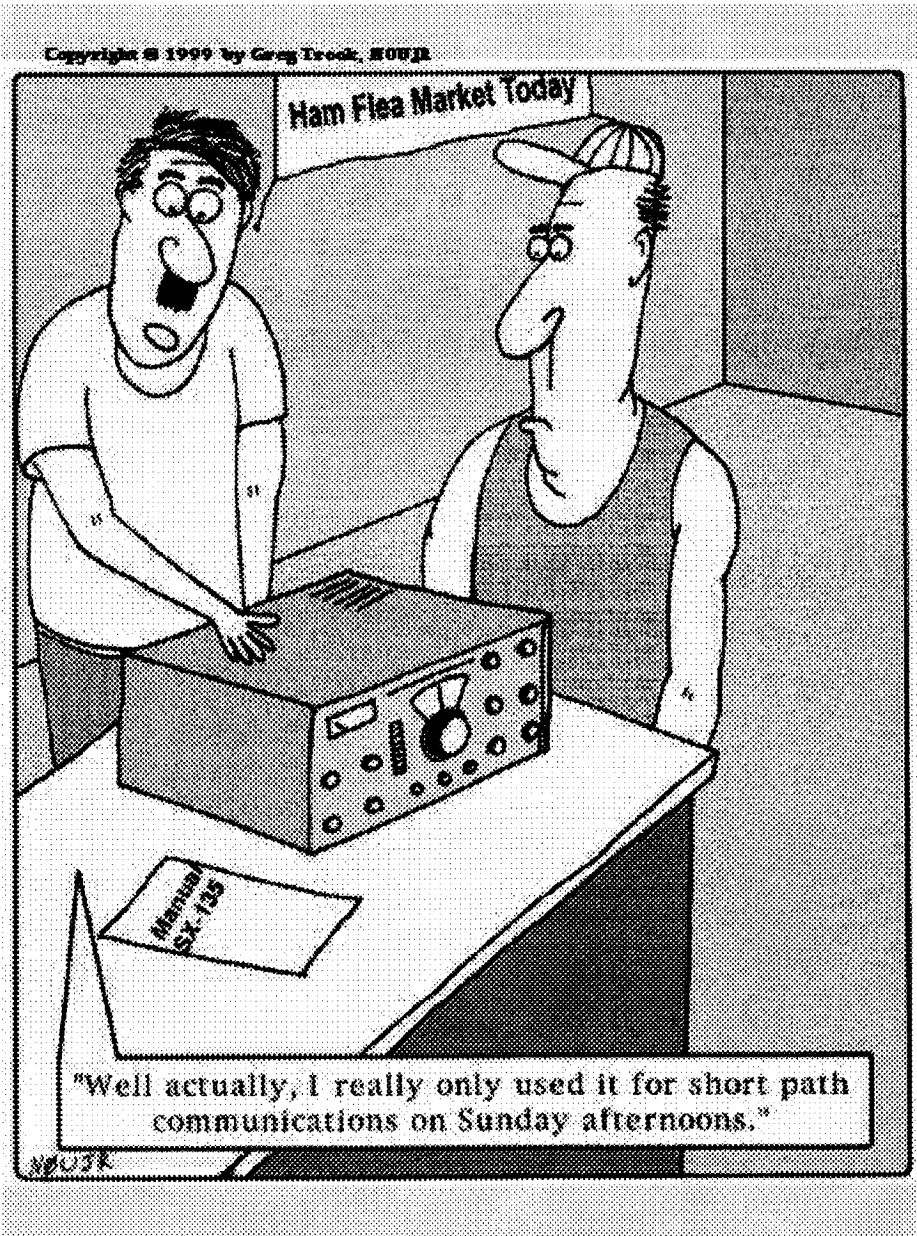
Hollingsworth warned Stap that if "legitimate complaints or our monitoring reveal additional instances of this behavior," the FCC intends to designate his station license for a revocation hearing and his operator license for suspension for the remainder of its term.

According to the FCC, Stap pled guilty in a Michigan district court to interfering with the transmission of public safety messages. He was sentenced to nine months probation and ordered to surrender his 2-meter gear for the duration.

Elsewhere, the FCC has requested that Jeffrey G. Guss, KF4MWT, of Palm Bay, Florida, retake the Technician class ama-

teur examination elements by March 30 or lose his license. In 1997, Guss was cited for unlicensed operation on 154.6 MHz, for failing to permit FCC personnel to inspect his radio equipment, and for failing to reply to FCC correspondence. Early last year, the FCC upheld a \$2500 fine levied against Guss and denied a payment extension. It's not known if Guss ever paid the forfeiture.

In Salisbury, North Carolina, the FCC wrote Advanced licensees James W. Walls, NC4JW, and Jerry W. Cartner, K4JWC, and Tech Plus licensee James R. Christie, KF4QWR, on February 24, citing information that the licensees have been using ham gear on the Citizens Band and other frequencies. The FCC also alleged they had been selling transmitting equipment that does not meet FCC certification standards over the air on those frequencies and operating above authorized CB power limits. In separate letters, Hollingsworth warned all three that such operation could jeopardize their amateur licenses. The FCC gave the three licensees 20 days to respond to the allegations.



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