Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub

Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
1722 20th. St. Parkersburg, WV 26101

30th International Marconi Day Event Set for April 22

Dozens of official "award stations" have registered to take part in the 2017 International Marconi Day (IMD) event, this year being held on April 22, 0000-2359 UTC (starting on April 21 in US time zones). All contacts counting toward the Marconi Award must be made on HF with registered stations, but other participating stations do not need to be registered to claim awards.

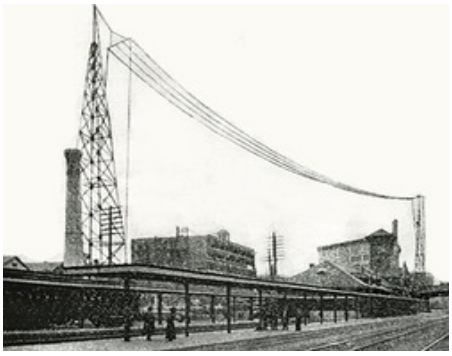
This year marks the 30th IMD, held each year to mark the anniversary of wireless pioneer Guglielmo Marconi's birth on April 25, 1874. IMD is observed each year on a Saturday close to Marconi's birthday. Many special event stations -- some operating from Marconi-related sites -- will be on the air. Marconi Award certificates are available for both transmitting stations and shortwave listeners (SWLs).

The event is not a contest but an opportunity for amateurs around the world to make point-to-point contact with historic Marconi sites using HF communication techniques descended from those used by Marconi, and to earn an award certificate for working or hearing a requisite number of Marconi stations.

There are two categories. Transmitting amateurs attempt to complete contacts with 15 of the official award stations, while shortwave listeners attempt to log two-way communications made by 15 of the official award stations.

nternational Marconi Day special event station GB4IMD will be on the air from Cornwall, helmed by members of the Cornish Amateur Radio Club, which organizes the IMD event. Cornwall was home to some of Marconi's early work. A list of participating stations is on the Cornish Amateur Radio Club's website.

The Kerry Amateur Radio Group in Ireland will be taking part as an IMD award station. EI6YXQ will be set up on the site of the former Marconi Station at Ballybunion. The YXQ suffix commemorates the call sign of the Marconi Station at Ballybunion.



Special event station K2M will be on the air from the site of the Marconi Tower in Binghamton, New York.

In the US, special event station K2M will be on the air from Binghamton, New York, the site of the remaining Marconi tower, where the inventor demonstrated in 1913 that it was possible to communicate via radio with a fast-moving train. For the 7th year, the Norfolk Amateur Radio Club (NARC) will be on the air from special event station GB0CMS at the Caister Lifeboat Visitor Centre to commemorate the village's original Marconi wireless station, established in 1900.

Other IMD sites with historical links to the inventor's work include Cape Cod, Massachusetts (WA1WCC and KM1CC); Nantucket Island (W1AA/MSC); Glace Bay, Nova Scotia (VE1IMD); Villa Griffone, Bologna, Italy

New Bands! FCC Issues Amateur Radio Service Rules for 630 Meters and 2,200 Meters

The Amateur Service will officially get two new bands in the near future. The FCC has adopted rules that will allow Amateur Radio access to the 630 and 2,200-meter bands, with minor conditions. A *Report and Order* (*R&O*) was released on March 29. The effective date of the new rules is hard to predict at this point; more below. (This corrects and updates information that appeared in *The ARRL Letter* edition that circulated to members.) The *R&O*, which also addresses several non-Amateur Radio issues, allocates the 472-479 kHz band (630 meters) to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis and amends Part 97 to provide for Amateur Service use of that band as well as of the previously allocated 135.7-137.8 kHz band (2,200 meters). The *R&O* also amends Part 80 rules to authorize radio buoy operations in the 1900-2000 kHz band under a ship station license.

"It's a big win for the Amateur community and the ARRL," ARRL CEO Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, said. "We are excited by the FCC's action to authorize Amateur Radio access for the first time on the MF and LF spectrum."

The FCC said the Amateur Radio service rules it has adopted for 630 meters and 2,200 meters allow "for co-existence with Power Line Carrier (PLC) systems that use these bands." Utilities have opposed Amateur Radio use of the MF and LF spectrum, fearing interference to unlicensed Part 15 PLC systems used to manage the power grid. Amateurs operating on 472-479 kHz would be permitted a maximum equivalent isotropically radiated power (EIRP) of 5 W, except in parts of Alaska within 800 kilometers (approximately 496 miles) of Russia, where the maximum would be 1 W EIRP. Amateurs operating in the 135.7-137.8 kHz band could run up to 1 W EIRP.

The FCC is requiring a 1-kilometer separation distance between radio amateurs using the two new bands and electric power transmission lines with PLC systems on those bands. Amateur Radio operators will have to notify UTC of station location prior to commencing operations.

The FCC also placed a 60-meter (approximately 197 feet) above ground-level (AGL) height limit on transmitting antennas used on 630 meters and 2,200 meters. The bands would be available to General class and higher licensees, and permissible modes would include CW, RTTY, data, phone, and image. Automatically controlled stations would be permitted to operate in the bands. More details soon, on the ARRL website.

Effective Date

The fact that the new rules contain a new information-collection requirement -- notification of operation to the UTC -- makes it difficult to guess at an effective date. The FCC *R&O* says the Office of Management and Budget (under the Paperwork Reduction Act) must first approve the information-collection requirements (in §97.303[g][2]). Then, the revised Part 97 rules sections will become effective after the FCC publishes a notice in *The Federal Register* "announcing such approval and the relevant effective date."

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Russian "Buzzer" Disappears, Chinese "Foghorn" Returns:

The International Amateur Radio Union Region 1 (IARU-R1) Monitoring System (IARUMS) March newsletter reports that the Russian "buzzer" on 6,998.0 kHz has disappeared. For a long time the system interfered with the lower edge of the 40-meter band. In addition, a Russian F1B transmission on 7,193 kHz -- believed to be emanating from Kaliningrad -- has ceased. IARUMS credits German telecoms authorities for submitting complaints and the Russian military. The IARUMS March newsletter further reports that a Chinese over-the-horizon (OTH) burst system radar "foghorn" signal is being heard again on both 40 meters (jumping between 7,128 and 7,187 kHz) and on 20 meters (14,218 kHz). The signals are 10 kHz wide with burst durations of 3.8 and 7.6 seconds. A "numbers" station said to be from the Ukraine SZRU intelligence agency was reported on March 30 on AM (female voice) on 14,212 kHz

PARK Minutes
February 13, 2017

Place - Western Sizzlen Steak House

Park Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. By Jerry Ka8njw.

A video was shown before the meeting on software defined radios.

Introductions were made by 25 members and 2 guests.

Minutes from January were no available to read.

Treasurer's report was read bu Jane N8MOW

Beginning balance 6312.69
Dues collected = 181.00
Total +6493.69

Denny S AC8MW won the 50/50 drawing of $15.00

Unfinished Business + None

New Business - discussion about a new veteran's radio group meeting around Cadwell OH. The group is called the Bell Valley American Legion Post 641. A radio club is one year old and has about 25 members. NOTE- an eMail with the newspaper clipping was sent to the Newsletter mailing list.

Bob KB8EFB motions to adjourn, seconded by Mary W at 7:40pm.

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PARK Minutes
March 13, 2017

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at the Western Sizzlin Restaurant for the March meeting.
The meeting was called to order at 6:58 p.m. by Earl Hulce KB8HRG. Introductions were made by 23 members and guests.
The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report of $6,581.69 was given by Jane N8MOW.

Denny AC8MW won the 50/50 drawing of $14.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Earl KB8HRG reported that the repeater was working-reset clock.

NEW BUSINESS

The Klub approved the applications for two new members who were recommended by Jim Palmer K8BOT. They are Jim Caplinger NE8FFX and Ginny Guthrie N8IJA.

Libby KA8FUA read communications from Mike Farnsworth KD8VLL regarding open positions and announcements for West Virginia Clubs. John W8IDW will communicate with Mike KD8VLL for our club.

FIELD DAY:

Mike Richards WD8BTI will coordinate the event at the end of June. The cabin at Ft. Borman is reserved. Earl KB8HRG needs help operating on top of the hill.

Blaine WA8IOE and Mike WD8BTI will plan a Special Event Station operation for sometime in 2017.

Earl KB8HRG reported that the list of Net Operators was online. Dave N8NWV is Net Operator for Tuesday and may need relays.

CLUB CONCERNS

A sympathy card was signed for Earnest Evans W8RWS at the death of his wife. Darlene W8PAN reported that Eloise KB8EKO had been in and out of the hospital. Connie Hamilton N8IO is going to the Eastern Star Home in Ohio.
Bob KB8EFB and Dave N8NWV seconded to adjourn at 7:37 p.m.
Minutes recorded by Libby KA8FUA, secretary

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Same-Band "Dueling CQs" Now Prohibited in All ARRL Contests

ARRL has clarified its contest rules to clearly prohibit the practice of interleaved CQs — also known as "dueling CQs" — on two or more frequencies in the same band. The clarification is an extension of existing rules that permit only "one transmitted signal," and it formalizes what had been a "gentleman's agreement."

"ARRL reviewed it, concurred that this is technically occupying two channels, and in consultation with several members of the Board of Directors — who had been contacted by concerned parties — and the Programs and Services Committee, it was concluded we needed to 'clarify' our existing rules," ARRL Contest Branch Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, said.

An explanatory paragraph points out, "The intent of the rules has always been that a participant would use/occupy only a single channel in a given band, changing frequency in band from time to time leaving a CQ frequency to work a multiplier or to change the CQing frequency as band occupancy or changing propagation dictated, and this rules clarification will now give the needed added clarity to that intent."

The issue arose when a multioperator station successfully employed in-band interleaved CQs in the last ARRL International DX SSB event, substantially boosting their score.

The topic subsequently occupied a lot of bandwidth on the CQ-Contest reflector, where elite contester Frank Donovan, W3LPL, observed, "That doesn't make it right for [a contest station] to follow this practice that is generally understood to be unacceptable behavior by all of the rest of us." At the time of the event, however, ARRL rules did not explicitly prohibit the practice, and as another top contester, Steve London, N2IC, asked, "Falls under the 'what is not specifically prohibited is allowed' rule?"

Responding to a poster who said dueling CQs on the same band was simply "innovation," Hans Brakob, K0HB, opined, "By any reasonable measure, running interleaved CQs on two [frequencies] in the same band consumes two operating channels on that band. In the existing period of limited propagation, many would consider such double-occupancy of a finite resource to be selfish, not innovative."

The update brings ARRL's contest rules in line with those of CQ-sponsored contests, which already prohibit the practice of in-band, interleaved CQs. The IARU HF Championship Contest bans the practice for multioperator entries.

The rule clarification does not prohibit the practice of alternating CQs on different bands, also called 2BSIQ — two-band synchronized interleaved QSOs.

ARRL Entry-Level License Committee Digs in to Study Survey Results

As its April 7 online survey deadline approaches, the ARRL Board of Directors' Entry Level License Committee is preparing for a deep dive into what turned out to be an overwhelming response. Committee Chair and New England Division Director Tom Frenaye, K1KI, said the survey's 8,000 responses, when perhaps 1,500 were anticipated, reflects the high degree of interest in the overall topic. Established by the Board in 2016, the Committee has been gathering input from the Amateur Radio community with an eye toward recommending either a makeover of the Technician license or an altogether new entry-level Amateur Radio license class.

"I think it's our job to come up with the two best proposals," said Frenaye, conceding that the committee's work is fraught with details that include reaching a consensus both within the Amateur Radio community and at the FCC, which pays little attention to Amateur Radio generally. For his part, Frenaye started out thinking that a new entry-level license would be the answer, but now he's leaning more toward changing up the Technician license, in part because he thinks the FCC may be reluctant to create a fourth license class after whittling the number to three in 1999.

It's not just about numbers, but Amateur Radio's future. Amateur Radio growth, at approximately 1% a year, is "pretty good," Frenaye conceded, and in tune with US population growth, but he thinks it could be better, and a big step in that direction is to take a hard look at ham radio's entry gate. He suggested a new pool of prospective radio amateurs might be more drawn to the hobby from the Maker movement, for example, or from among those who tinker with computer technology or experiment with electronics -- areas with high appeal to some young people.

Frenaye said a lot of young newcomers don't seem to find the current license manual very enticing, possibly due to the Amateur Radio terminology and the manual's 12th-grade reading level, which he believes should be lower. One interesting statistic plucked from the survey: Just 23% of recently licensed Technicians went through a club, while 65% studied on their own.

The current Technician license is mainly a VHF/UHF license, Frenaye pointed out, with limited privileges on HF, where he believes a lot of newcomers would prefer to operate. "Either the test covers material that's not needed for a newcomer, or the privileges don't match well enough with what a newcomer needs to see in ham radio in order to decide whether to continue," he said. Technician licensees have only CW privileges on HF below 10 meters, "and CW isn't even a requirement anymore," Frenaye pointed out. He suggested some HF digital privileges may provide one incentive.

The Entry-Level License Committee wants to see better outreach "on both sides of the license" -- from exam preparation to operator training and mentoring.

Whether it's retooling the Technician license to offer newcomers a larger, more attractive slice of Amateur Radio privileges or developing the framework for an entirely new entry-level license, the panel wants to see a more relevant examination with privileges more appropriate to newcomers and better outreach "on both sides of the license" -- from exam preparation to operator training and mentoring.
Frenaye is not afraid to respond to critics who say the entry-level license effort and such initiatives as reaching out the Maker Movement are just ARRL ploys to boost the Amateur Radio population and, in turn, League membership.
"I guess the answer to that is, 'Yes, what's wrong with that?'" he said. "The more trained ham radio operators we have, the more likely we are to actually be able to keep our bands and maybe get new ones."
The committee has only looked at the first "several thousand" survey responses, Frenaye said. The hard work lies ahead. "It's going to take a little time to sort through it all," Frenaye allowed, adding that the committee hopes to have a report to the Board of Directors in July.