

Chicago FM Club Squelch Tale - July 2004

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Volume 2004

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THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

July is the month we head full swing into summer. Although my favorite time of year is spring I still look forward to the fun of summer. Our summers in Chicago can be blistering hot or cool and mild. Either way Mother Nature makes the choice for us.

The members of CFMC have the ability to make their own choices when it comes to club activities. We have been going thru some difficult times as far as the club is concerned. Tim WD9DZV after many years of service to the club has decided not to be the editor for Squelch Tale. This leaves us with some really big shoes to fill. Also Jerry W9EG has taken a job where he will not be able to attend Radio Expo this year, and no one has come forward to be expo chairman. This is what happens when new people do not come forward to relieve the old guard from duties they have performed for years and the members take for granted. I have been asking for members to come forward for years and have had very little success in recruiting people to hold office, chair a committee, or take on a position which serves the club. Once again it is up to you the members to make our club a success.

On a more positive note The Village of Worth has contacted me and will allow us back on their new t-mobile cell tower site. We will be installing a new 220 south, and 2 meter receive antennas. The next meeting will be held at the Edge Brook field house and I'm looking forward to seeing you all there.

73 de Phil N9PA

MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of The Chicago FM Club will be held at 8:00 PM in the Edgebrook Field House which is located at 6100 N. Central Avenue. The entrance is on the west side of the street between Cauldwell and Elston Avenues. Just so you won't get confused, the address on the entrance is 5900 N. Central. As always, CFMC's general meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month which will make this meeting date July 21st. See you at the meeting and don't forget to bring a friend!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

JULY GENERAL MEETING

FOR FIRST READING AT THE JULY GENERAL MEETING

KC9EQO JAMES JOINER (N9PA K9FFY)

FOR THIRD READING AT THE JULY GENERAL MEETING

W9KMP KENNETH PANCZYK (WW9E W9NBG)

NEW MEMBER

The Officers and Board of Directors of the Chicago FM Club would like to welcome the following new member voted in at the June general meeting;

AB9EI DAVID C. SWAIN

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The following CFMC members renewed during May and June;

**KB9AFJ K9BAM WD9BIC KA9CRV W9EG W9GYC W9HVV KB9JOK AA9KK WA9KOD WA9KXZ W9MJS
N9MHK NF9N KB9OOM N9PA WB9RYY**

The following former member chose not to renew;

KB9WPW

JULY 2004 BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors held their meeting at the home of Jim, N9RKU. Those in attendance were;

W9EG K9FFY N9RKU WA9FTS KA9HHH WA9KOD N9KTW W9XB WD9DZV

SECRETARY K9FFY

The minutes of the May Board meeting as printed in Squelch Tale were accepted with no corrections or additions.

TREASURER N9RKU

Jim passed out his report and went on to discuss some of the details. (look elsewhere in Squelch Tale for report)

TECHNICAL W9XB

Rick went into detail about the rebuilding of the Worth site. A new 220MHZ antenna has been received and will be put up on the tower. All new cable is being supplied by the cell phone company. The Worth site should sound really great when it comes back on.

RADIO EXPO 2004 N9PA

The advanced sale of both tickets and tables is lagging behind last year. KA9HHH made a motion to allow Mike WA9FTS to pay for our web site that has been removed temporarily. The Board will pay back Mike for this expense. N9RKU seconded the motion and the Board voted yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18PM.

FOXHUNT REPORT - June 2004 - by Tom N9CBA

Fox, Tom N9CBA, was located in a Bartlett park parking lot feeding a vertical 4-element tape-measure beam 5-ft up, pointing east, with a nominal 25 watts. The spot was near the NW quadrant of Stearns and Bartlet Road in Bartlett in the southern end of Apple Orchard Park. The first fox spotted was Mike and Paul at 9:01; they were west-bound on Stearns having gone north on Rt 59 en route. However timing was such that the passage was between transmissions, so they had continued east a mile perhaps when the next transmission occurred. Munch Ruby Tuesday's at Gary and

Schick roads

Release was at 8:06.

1. Charlie KB9DIM and Alexis 9:06
2. Mike WA9FTS and Paul N9LXF 9:10
3. Dave AA9XS 9:58

VEC TESTING AT RADIO EXPO

CFMC will offer VE testing at Radio Expo on Saturday September 18, 2004 and Sunday September 19, 2004 from 8:00 AM till 11:00 AM. No one will be accepted for testing after 10:30 AM either day.

Candidates who wish to test need to bring the following:

Your valid FCC license, and/or CSCE and a copy of each (copies will not be returned).

1. Proper picture identification, ie: school IDs, drivers license, etc.
2. Twelve dollars (\$12.00) cash, check or money order.

If you are a Tech Plus that was licensed prior to March 21, 1987 and desire to become a General, be sure that you have either from the FCC stating that you were properly licensed prior to March 21, 1987 or a prior license showing you were a Technician prior to March 21, 1987. A copy of these documents must be submitted with your application.

Note: All copies are the responsibility of the candidate and must be submitted at the time of application.

Should there be any questions regarding VE testing I may be contacted at 773-262-6628.

Bob KA9HHH

FCC TURNING BLIND EYE IN BPL PROCEEDING, ARRL CHARGES

The ARRL says the FCC apparently has already made up its mind about broadband over power line (BPL) and "wants no bad news" about the technology. In reply comments filed June 22 on the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rule Making in ET Docket 03-47, the League called on the Commission to take "a fresh look" at BPL before enabling its deployment. Again asking the FCC to put the proceeding on hold for a year, the League recommended that the Commission in the meantime require BPL providers to conduct FCC-monitored interference testing with all stakeholders. The ARRL charged that while an overwhelming majority of comments oppose BPL due to interference concerns, the FCC continues to rely on what the League called "vacuous assurances that BPL would not cause harmful interference." Test data and a growing record of unresolved complaints indicate otherwise, the ARRL said.

"ARRL is of the view that this proceeding has been prejudged and will, in the end, be decided not on the technical issues that should control the outcome of this proceeding, but on the politics of the matter," the League commented. "Given the evidence on the Commission's table, it cannot now authorize BPL at the radiated emission levels proposed, and without substantial restrictions."

Among those restrictions, the League recommended keeping BPL altogether away from all Amateur Radio allocations, should the FCC decide to authorize BPL under its proposed rules. As an alternative, the FCC should guarantee that an interfering BPL system can be shut down immediately in the face of a valid complaint, "not after a BPL provider has taken months to discover that the interference cannot be resolved."

To date, the ARRL contended, the FCC has seemingly ignored the League's BPL technical studies as well as the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Phase 1 BPL study that clearly demonstrate BPL's interference potential. Five additional technical evaluations accompanied the ARRL's reply comments.

"The Commission is obligated by the Administrative Procedure Act to look for fire where it is shown a good deal of smoke," the League said. "Here there is far more than smoke in the record." Any decision in the BPL proceeding "must be supported by substantial evidence," the ARRL asserted.

The League said the results of both its studies and the NTIA's "are entirely consistent." Referring to the NTIA Phase 1 analysis, the ARRL said it's "quite reasonable to assume that the interference potential of BPL systems to fixed HF Amateur Radio stations is on the order of 460 meters (approximately 1509 feet) from the nearest BPL device." No proposals address BPL interference mitigation for mobile stations, the ARRL noted.

While commenting extensively on--and in some instances agreeing with--the NTIA's late-filed comments, however, the League said they depict an agency that must "balance dual and, in this case, conflicting roles" as the White House telecommunications policy advocate. The League questioned the NTIA's contention that BPL is a "win-win" situation and its deployment would lead to lower power line noise.

"Not so," the ARRL countered. "Licensed radio services operating in the sensitive HF environment should not have foisted upon them a substantial interference risk from unlicensed devices or systems whatsoever." The League said replacing one interference source with another in the same bands is "not in any way beneficial."

The ARRL also faulted the FCC for neglecting to acknowledge or respond to a mounting number of interference complaints, most from amateur licensees living in BPL field trials areas. "The Commission has, as of this writing, adjudicated not a single one and has ignored repeated requests from licensed radio amateurs for even a confirmation of receipt of their complaints!" the ARRL emphasized. The League also expressed little confidence in utilities that have failed to resolve power line noise complaints to do any better with BPL complaints.

Earlier this month, the ARRL filed a well-documented and supported complaint on behalf of Jim Spencer, W0SR, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The League suggested such BPL complaints deserved careful analysis, but not the Commission's cold shoulder.

"What ARRL is unwilling to tolerate is the continuation of the

Commission's sweeping of these complaints 'under the rug,' which is exactly what has happened in this proceeding," the League commented. The Commission must put its zeal over BPL aside and "take a fair look at them before any action is taken in this proceeding."

"The Commission has not proposed any rules which would predictably and reliably protect HF and low-band VHF radio systems from interference," ARRL concluded. "The interference resolution mechanisms that are adopted should be real, rather than merely illusory."

UTILITY CUTS SHORT BPL TRIAL THAT WAS TARGET OF AMATEUR COMPLAINTS

Alliant Energy has called an early end to its broadband over power line (BPL) pilot project in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The "evaluation system" went live March 30, and plans called for keeping it active until August or September. Alliant shut it down June 25. Ongoing, unresolved HF interference from the system to retired engineer Jim Spencer, W0SR, and other amateurs prompted the ARRL to file a complaint to the FCC on Spencer's behalf demanding it be shut down and the utility fined.

Alliant Energy's BPL Project Leader Dan Hinz says the ARRL complaint "certainly was a factor" in the utility's decision to pull the plug prematurely but "not the overriding factor." The main reason, he said, was that Alliant accomplished most of its objectives ahead of schedule. The primary purpose of the Cedar Rapids evaluation was to gain an understanding of BPL technology and what issues might be involved in a real-world deployment, Hinz explained. But, he added, regulatory uncertainty and other unspecified technical issues also factored into the choice to end the pilot early.

Hinz said Alliant is "mashing the data" to compile a written evaluation of the Cedar Rapids pilot, but the company has no plans at this point to move forward with BPL. Alliant did not partner with a broadband services provider,

and it has no other BPL test systems in operation. The system used Amperion BPL equipment.

According to Spencer, five fixed Amateur Radio stations within proximity of the BPL evaluation system and two mobile stations formally reported BPL interference on HF. "The radio amateurs and Alliant Energy cooperated by sharing interference information," he said. "Alliant Energy turned the BPL evaluation system off twice to allow collection of extensive BPL frequency and signal level data--with and without BPL." He said Alliant and Amperion tried various "notching" schemes to rid amateur frequencies of the BPL interference with only limited success.

The system included both overhead and underground BPL links to feed 2.4 GHz wireless "hot spots" for end user access. Hinz said the area's topography presented some challenges, especially with the wireless links. "I think in the end, we actually over-challenged ourselves with this specific pilot location," he said. And, despite "substantial progress" in mitigating interference, Alliant decided at this point that "it wasn't worth the extra effort" to resolve the thornier technical issues, Hinz added.

As for any broader implications, Hinz says he's always viewed BPL as a "strategic deployment technology," not one a company could roll out just anywhere and expect to be competitive with existing broadband services such as cable and DSL. "At least that's how we were looking at it," he said. "You have to find the right areas with the right topography with the right concentration of certain types of customers," he said.

"It's never been in my mind that BPL has to compete with the speeds of cable today," Hinz added. "It has to compete with the speeds of cable and the next best thing tomorrow as well, if it's going to be usable well into the future." He hinted that Alliant might want to take another look at BPL once the FCC has put BPL rules and regulations into place, and the technology has further evolved.

The ARRL's formal complaint to FCC Enforcement Bureau Chief David H. Solomon called on the Commission not only to close down Alliant's BPL field trial system but to fine the utility \$10,000 for violating the Communications Act of 1934 and FCC Part 15 rules. Commenting on the termination of the Cedar Rapids BPL trial, ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, pointed out that Alliant had tried for more than 12 weeks to fix the interference problem to a station 600 feet from its installation.

"In the end," Sumner said, "the interference was not eliminated except by shutting down the BPL system. Could the case against BPL deployment be any clearer?"

Spencer said he was happy with Alliant's decision, and he was gracious in expressing appreciation to the utility for working with him. "And thanks also to the ARRL and the Cedar Rapids BPL Steering Committee for their knowledge and efforts in making a truly professional evaluation," he added.

Still outstanding are some chronic power line noise problems Spencer has experienced.

For additional information, visit the "Broadband Over Power Line (BPL) and Amateur Radio" page on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/bpl>>. To support the League's efforts in this area, visit the ARRL's secure BPL Web site <<https://www.arrl.org/forms/development/donations/bpl/>>.

DZV's DITS and Bits by Tim, WD9DZV

W1AW, NU1AW among headquarters stations for IARU event: During the IARU World HF Championship July 10-11, ARRL Maxim Memorial Station W1AW and the IARU International Secretariat club station NU1AW will be on the air as "headquarters stations." W1AW/0 will operate from Colorado--mainly from the stations of K0RF and KV0Q. NU1AW will be on the air from Vermont, via the stations of K2LE and W2AX.

Vanity call sign fee to rise: The FCC regulatory fee to obtain an Amateur Radio vanity call sign will rise from \$16.30 to \$20.80 later this year. The FCC announced the new fee in a Report and Order (R&O) in MD Docket 04-73, "Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2004." The FCC says it anticipates 7800 applications for FY2004—2000 fewer than the previous fiscal year. The FCC expects revenue collected from the vanity call sign regulatory fees in FY2004 to rise by more than \$2100. The R&O becomes effective 30 days after it's published in The Federal Register. ARRL will announce when the new, higher vanity fee becomes effective.

HEIL TO MARKET CLEAR SPEECH SPEAKER

Turning to the ham radio business scene, word that the NCT Group has appointed Heil Sound Limited as its prime worldwide manufacturer and distributor of the Clear Speech Speaker system. Under the terms of the deal, Heil Sound will distribute Clear Speech speakers to their present amateur radio dealers and commercial broadcast distributors. Also, the

Clear Speech speaker will be improved and several new products will be brought to the market using the NCT Group technologies. According to Heil Sound these new product models are in development and will be available for market by the end of July. More is on line at www.heilsound.com

DUAL-CORE PROCESSORS ON THE WAY

Tech News reports that Advanced Micro Devices plans to begin selling microchips with the equivalent of two microprocessors in one next year. The Sunnyvale, California based company said it plans to offer dual-core processors for data-serving business computers in the middle of next year, and for high-end home computers in the second half of next year.

Dual-core technology combines the power of two processors in one package. This permits the creation of a more powerful computer and increased computation power when multitasking.

Last month, Intel said it would bring dual-core chips to the marketplace in 2005. That's more than a year ahead of schedule.

CW IS GOING STRONG

If you think Morse code is on its way out, the ham radio business community probably disagrees with you. At least that's the impression one gets thumbing through the articles in the July issue of CQ Magazine.

Not only are the ads for Morse related products holding steady, but the new products area has some reviews of the latest CW related products. And not to be outdone, Dave Ingram, K4TWJ, devotes his World of Ideas column to Morse Keys from around the world.

COLOR TV IS CELEBRATING ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR

Now for a bit of a history lesson. Although color TV transmissions were in the development stages many years earlier, the broadcast industry is celebrating its half century mark this year. This is because it was 50 years ago that color broadcasts were initially made available to the public.

NEW DVD PLAYER FILTERS OUT BAD WORDS

Wal-Mart is selling the world's first DVD player that can seamlessly skip over violence, swearing, nudity and other potentially offensive movie content. The \$79 unit features technology by ClearPlay and is manufactured by Thomson Inc. under its RCA brand.

The DVD player is the latest development in a legal battle between the Salt Lake City-based software company and Hollywood. Members of the Directors Guild of America filed suit against ClearPlay in September 2002, when the filtering product was available as a computer program claiming it impinges on intellectual and creative rights. Those legal proceedings are still under way in Colorado's 10th District Court. Both sides currently are waiting for a ruling on a summary judgment filed by ClearPlay.

FIRST CELLPHONE VIRUS ANNOUNCED

On the international scene word that a group of underground virus writers have announced what is believed to be the world's first worm that can spread on advanced mobile phones. According to news reports, the worm named Cabir, was sent to security software firms in the United States and Russia by a member of 29a.

29a is described as a group of virus writers from the Czech Republic and Slovakia who pride themselves in creating proof of concept malicious viruses. Thankfully, Cabir has been found to have no damaging code attached that might destroy files or execute other harmful operations.

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