

# Chicago FM Club Squelch Tale - March 2004

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Volume 2004

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## THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

We just had our monthly Board Meeting last Wednesday, and I'm happy to report that the Club is on good financial footing thanks to Jim (N9RKU). Our Trustee, Howard (N9KTW) along with Radio Rick (W9XB), Ron (KC9MC) and Jerry (WA9KXZ) have been busy making sure the repeater is working properly. Mike (WA9FTS) has been doing a great job with our new web page. Bob (KA9HHH) and John (N9RNQ) have had a lot of success with their VE testing and it looks like Radio Expo 2004 is running right on schedule with Jerry (W9EG) as our Table Chairman.

One of the reasons things are going so well for the Club is that the people mentioned in the preceding paragraph are not afraid to make a commitment. There are quite a few other people that are not mentioned here who also help the Club a great deal, but the point I'm trying to get across is in order for anything to be a success you have to be involved. The Officers and Board Members are always looking for new ways to improve on the Club. If you have any good ideas why not come to our next meeting and let us hear about it.

You should be noticing an improvement in the 2 meter machine. Radio Rick has installed the new transmeter and pre amp. We are running a full 250 watts out of the new equipment and the machine is hearing even better than before.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at our next General Meeting.

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 March 17th. See you at the meeting and don't forget to bring a friend!

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

For Second Reading At The March General Meeting

KE8CR Jim Folk (N9PA K9FFY)

For Third reading And Vote

KC9DUZ Brian M. Kieduk (K9VO KB9AJM)

## Membersdhip Renewals

The following CFMC members renewed during January or February;

N9ABT KC9AVM WA9AYQ N0BCO KE9CR KA9CSO KB9DK WB7DKZ N9DRF WD9DZV WD9GTI WZ9H W9HDD  
KB9ITP WD9JKW K9JQ KB9KJ WA9LST KD9MF KD5MSM W9MUF AA9ON KB9ORA KK9P KB9QPQ N9RNQ  
N9RWD KB9SO WA9TWA WY9U N9VGW W9WOC KB9WXV W9XB KC9YG K9ZAZ N9ZON

The following former member chose not to renew;

N9CBA

## MARCH BOARD MEETING

The March Board meeting was held at Russell's Restaurant. Those in attendance were;

W9EG K9FFY N9RKU WA9TFS KA9HHH WA9KOD N9KTW KA9R W9XB WD9DZV CAROL

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm.

Secretary K9FFY

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

Treasurer N9RKU

Jim passed out his report (look elsewhere in Squelch Tale) and went on to discuss some items.

Technical W9XB

Rick said all the systems are working. The new 2 Meter transmitter has been installed and working just fine. The 440MHZ repeater is OK. The 220MHZ repeater is up and running, but the receiver looks like it might need some work.

New Business

Tim, WD9DZV, said that the March issue of Squelch Tale will be his last. He has been working on the newsletter for over 20 years and feels it's time for someone else to take over.

Howard, N9KTW, made a motion to move the Tuesday Info Net back to 7:00pm from 9:00pm. WA9KOD seconded the motion, The Board voted 2 Yes and 4 No votes. The motion was defeated.

The March general meeting will be held at the Edgebrook Fieldhouse.

KA9R made a motion to adjourn at 7:55pm.

## ODE TO THE CODE

We' ve all heard the cry "abandon the code!,

it's useless outdated, NOT a mod-er-n mode!"

So I said to myself, "could codes' day really be over?

Best left for SKs' fer-til-iz-n' the clover?"

So off went my paddle 'n keyer to a museum,

so those curious of our "past" could drop in an' see um.

I then bought a computer and a box I was told...

would update my station,using all hi-tech modes.

It then was set up,all by my own hand...

the screen it lit up et voilà Heard Is-land!

I switched to transmit to "talk with this gent"

but my screen read "sorry, can't copy 100%!"

"There's static, interference if you could hear it you'd

agree...if it ain't armchair copy we machines cry c'est la vie!"

It then said "there is as YOU know a way to get through,

it's called the code,and what luck for you!"

"You've learned this art,you "stuck it out"

'tis a valuable tool,there isn't a doubt."

"You' ve invested your time,and besides the code you did

learn, possession of valuable skills must be... EARNED!"

So I say to you now don't get fooled when some say...

"Codes an' old dinosaur fadin' away!"

It's part of our past,present and future existence...

anti-coders prepare for "beaucoup de resistance"

## **TWO AMATEUR SATELLITES EXPECTED TO LAUNCH IN 2004**

AMSAT-NA President Robin Haighton, VE3FRH, says he's looking forward to the 2004 launches of AMSAT-NA's ECHO satellite <<http://www.amsat.org/amsat/sats/echo/index.html>> and AMSAT-India's VUsat (also known as "HAMSAT"). In his last President's Letter for 2003, Haighton reported that ECHO is passing final integration and testing with flying colors.

"I am looking forward to the end of March, when we expect the ECHO launch to take place," he said. With less than three months until the anticipated launch, AMSAT-NA still needs to raise more than \$60,000 for the launch campaign.

The new microsat-class satellite is undergoing integration and testing at SpaceQuest in Fairfax, Virginia. Jim White, WD0E, and Mike Kingery, KE4AZN, are heading up the integration process. Among its other capabilities, AO-ECHO will enable satellite voice communication using handheld FM transceivers.

The satellite will incorporate two UHF transmitters, each running from 1 to 8 W and capable of simultaneous operation, four VHF receivers and a multiband, multimode receiver capable of operation on the 10 meter, 2 meter, 70 cm and 23 cm bands. ECHO will feature V/U, L/S and HF/U operational configurations, with V/S, L/U and HF/S also possible. FM voice and various digital modes—including PSK31 on a 10-meter SSB uplink—also will be available.

Haighton reported that VUsat <<http://www.amsat-india.org/official/vusat.htm>> experienced some problems in testing but these are being resolved. A VUsat launch could come as soon as late summer. VUsat will incorporate two linear transponders, with a UHF uplink and VHF downlink and CW, USB and FM capabilities.

"An exciting year is ahead," said Haighton, who's already announced that he does not intend to seek another term at the AMSAT-NA helm when his current term expires in October. By then, he said, ECHO should be in orbit, but, paraphrasing Yogi Berra, he added, "It ain't up and working till it's up and working."

## **ARRL TO PROPOSE NEW ENTRY-LEVEL LICENSE, CODE-FREE HF ACCESS**

The ARRL will ask the FCC to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license that would grant HF phone privileges without a Morse code test. The League also will propose consolidating all current licensees into three classes, retaining the Element 1 Morse requirement—now 5 WPM-only for the highest class. The ARRL Board of Directors overwhelmingly approved the plan January 16 during its Annual Meeting in Windsor, Connecticut. The proposals, put forth by the ARRL Executive Committee, were in response to changes made in Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03).

"Change in the Amateur Radio Service in the US, especially license requirements and even more so when Morse is involved, has always been emotional," said ARRL First Vice President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, in presenting the Executive Committee's recommendations. "In fact, without a doubt, Morse is Amateur Radio's 'religious debate.'" Harrison said the League's proposal would provide "a true entry-level license with HF privileges" to promote growth in the Amateur Service.

The League says its proposal would continue a process of streamlining the amateur licensing structure that the FCC began more than five years ago but left unfinished in its Amateur Service license restructuring Report and Order (WT 98-143) that went into effect April 15, 2000.

A new entry-level license class—being called "Novice" for now—would require a 25-question written exam. It would offer limited HF CW/data and phone/image privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters as well as VHF and UHF privileges on 6 and 2 meters and on 222-225 and 430-450 MHz. Power output would be restricted to 100 W on 80, 40, and 15 meters and to 50 W on 10 meters and up.

"The Board sought to achieve balance in giving new Novice licensees the opportunity to sample a wider range of Amateur Radio activity than is available to current Technicians while retaining a motivation to upgrade," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ. The ARRL plan would grandfather current Novice licensees into the new entry-level class without further testing.

The middle group of licensees—Technician, Tech Plus (Technician with Element 1 credit) and General—would be merged into a new General license that also would not require a Morse examination. Current Technician and Tech Plus license holders automatically would gain current General class privileges without additional testing. The current Element 3 General examination would remain in place for new applicants.

The Board indicated that it saw no compelling reason to change the Amateur Extra class license requirements. The ARRL plan calls on the FCC to combine the current Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensees into Amateur Extra, because the technical level of the exams passed by these licensees is very similar. New applicants for Extra would have to pass a 5

WPM Morse code examination, and the written exam would stay the same. Sumner said the Board felt that the highest level of accomplishment should include basic Morse capability. Current Novice, Tech Plus and General licensees would receive lifetime 5 WPM Morse credit.

Among other advantages, Sumner said the plan would allow new Novices to participate in HF SSB emergency nets on 75 and 40 meters as well as on the top 100 kHz of 15 meters. The new license also could get another name, Sumner said. "We're trying to recapture the magic of the old Novice license, but in a manner that's appropriate for the 21st century."

The overall proposed ARRL license restructuring plan would more smoothly integrate HF spectrum privileges across the three license classes and would incorporate the "Novice reformatting" plan the League put forth nearly two years ago in a Petition for Rule Making (RM-10413). The FCC has not yet acted on the ARRL plan, which would alter current HF subbands.

The ARRL license restructuring design calls for no changes in privileges for Extra and General class licensees on 160, 60, 30, 20, 17 or 12 meters. Novice licensees would have no access to those bands.

See "ARRL to Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access" on the ARRL Web site, <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/01/19/1/>>, for the specific subband allocations ARRL is proposing for each class.

The amateur community and other interested parties will have an opportunity to comment on the ARRL proposal once the League formally files a Petition for Rule Making and the FCC puts it on public notice.

### **DZV's DITS AND BITS** by Tim, WD9DZV

AO-7 turns 30! The oldest working satellite, AO-7, will mark its 30th year in space during 2004. The satellite, which came back to life in mid-2002, was launched November 15, 1974, and it remained operational until 1981, when it went dark due to battery failure. It remained dormant—and largely forgotten—until it suddenly and unexpectedly sprang back to life. AO-7 is in a 1460 km orbit, and AMSAT-NA considers the satellite "semi-operational." Jan King, W3GEY reports AO-7 <<http://www.amsat.org/amsat/news/wsr.html#ao-7>> is running solely from its solar panels, so it will only work when in sunlight. It has a Mode A uplink passband at 145.850 to 145.950 MHz and a downlink passband at 29.400 to 29.500 MHz (CW/USB). Beacons are at 29.502, 145.972, 435.1 and 2304.1 MHz. Ground controllers have only been able to activate some command functions. It also contains a Mode B transponder. To mark the satellite's 30th anniversary, AMSAT-NA will make available a special commemorative QSL card. AMSAT-NA Board Member and Awards Manager Bruce Paige, KK5DO, reports additional information will be available on the AMSAT-NA Web site <<http://www.amsat.org>>.

DXCC rule change adopted: At its January meeting, the ARRL Board of Directors removed paragraph 1.c) "The entity has a separate IARU member-society" from the criteria for determining a DXCC entity. This provision, implemented in 1998 as part of the DXCC 2000 Program, had provided that "An entity will be added to the DXCC List as a political entity if it . . . has a separate IARU member-society." Since then, the rule has allowed for the addition of four new DXCC entities and the retention of one existing entity. Unfortunately, the provision also had the unintended consequence of stimulating applications for IARU membership that do not further the objectives of the IARU, creating an unfortunate and unnecessary administrative burden. The rule change will have no effect on entities created by or as the result of the rule. According to DXCC Rule II, 5. C), "A change in the DXCC criteria shall not affect the status of any entity on the DXCC List at the time of the change." The other two criteria for the determination of a political entity for DXCC continue in effect.

Hollingsworth issues interference reminder: FCC Special Counsel for Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth says no Amateur Radio stations are exempt from the requirement to avoid unnecessarily interfering with ongoing communications. "It is very important for all stations, including automated ones, to realize that they are responsible for any interference caused when they come on top of existing communications," Hollingsworth said in response to a recent inquiry. "There are no exemptions for automated stations." FCC Part 97 <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/news/part97/>> Amateur Service rules generally address interference with other communications in §97.101(d): "No amateur operator shall willfully or maliciously interfere with or cause interference to any radio communication or signal." An amateur had written to Hollingsworth alleging that what appear to be automated PACTOR stations routinely start transmitting atop PSK31 QSOs on 40 and 30 meters. The amateur also contacted one of the PACTOR stations in an effort to "dialogue about it not just complain." Hollingsworth expressed the hope that all involved could work things out. He also points out that stations responding to automated interrogations are equally responsible for not causing interference. "It doesn't mean the frequency is clear merely because they were interrogated by another station," he told ARRL this week. "It's a two-way responsibility."

Bogus ARRL.net messages circulating via e-mail: Several members have notified ARRL that they have received e-mail messages alleging to be from the ARRL E-Mail Forwarding Service <<http://www.arrl.org/members-only/email fwd.html>>, "The ARRL.net team" or some variation. The messages, which often carry a subject line along the lines of "Warning about your e-mail account," indicate that the recipient's ARRL E-Mail Forwarding Service <call sign>@arrl.net address will be closed within three days because of an alleged violation of acceptable practices. These messages are false and did not come from The ARRL Forwarding Service. They are the result of one of the variants on a number of viruses now permeating the Internet. A file usually is attached to these messages. As always, do not open any attachments that you cannot identify. Opening the file could result in your computer being infected by a virus. This is only one of the several virus-laden messages currently propagating across the Internet. The ARRL advises its members to be cautious in opening any message and/or attachment, even if it appears to be from someone you know. All of these viruses use e-mail addresses from the address book of an infected computer to falsify the "From:" address in the header to make it appear that the message is from someone the recipient knows.

UO-11 to mark 20 years in space: UO-11 (also known as UOSAT-2) will turn 20 years old on March 1. To mark the event, AMSAT-UK will issue a commemorative QSL card in exchange for listener reports from stations monitoring the satellite's signal during the month of March 2004. The reports must be posted via the reporting page on the AMSAT-UK Web site <<http://www.uk.amsat.org/uo-11/default.php>>, and QSL cards will be in the form of a downloadable E-QSL. UO-11 was the second satellite to be launched by the University of Surrey group headed by Martin Sweeting, G3YJO. Its telemetry beacon can be heard on 145.825 MHz FM using just a handheld radio. UO-11 also has a 2401.5 MHz beacon, although hearing the 2.4 GHz signal could present a challenge. "Depending on the status of the satellite, it sometimes goes into 'safe' mode, and the beacon transmitters are not active for days at a time," said Trevor, M5AKA. "The University of Surrey Ground station staff will attempt to maximize the number of days the transmitters are active during March." More information is available on the AMSAT-UK Web site <<http://www.uk.amsat.org/>>.

DXCC Honor Roll deadline looms: The deadline to appear in the next DXCC Honor Roll listing is March 31. Submissions must be postmarked by that date for submissions to be included. The DXCC Honor Roll list will appear in August 2004 QST. At present there are 335 entities on the DXCC List, and you must be within the numerical top 10 DXCC entities to qualify. The minimum requirement for Honor Roll now is 326 current entities.

SGC founder, president Pierre Goral, KI7UA, SK: The man who co-founded and headed radio manufacturer SGC Inc—Pierre Goral, KI7UA (ex-N7VRJ), of Kirkland, Washington—died February 12. He was 67. Goral, who established SGC in 1971 with the late Don Stoner, W6TNS (the company originally was called Stoner-Goral Communications, later shortened to SGC), was "an internationally recognized designer, entrepreneur and leader in the field of RF engineering," the company said this week in announcing his death. "He led an adventurous life, working in the jungles of Brazil as a young engineer and traveling the world to represent his company," SGC said. "RF

engineering was his passion, and he devoted himself and his company to producing only the very finest, professional HF SSB products." Outside of his professional life, SGC said, Goral was an artist, photographer, skier and snowboarder who "demonstrated an appreciation of life in everything he did." SGC is a manufacturer of both commercial and amateur gear.

Condolences may be sent care of SGC Inc, 13737 SE 26 St, Bellevue, WA 98005 or via e-mail to [sgc@sgcworld.com](mailto:sgc@sgcworld.com).

## FCC'S ABERNATHY ACKNOWLEDGES AMATEUR RADIO BPL CONCERNS

In a seeming shift away from "Broadband Nirvana," FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy <<http://www.fcc.gov/commissioners/abernathy/>> this week specifically cited Amateur Radio concerns about the interference potential of Broadband Over Power Line (BPL). In remarks prepared for delivery at her alma mater, the Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law <<http://www.law.edu/>>, Abernathy said BPL should not be widely deployed before dealing with ham radio's interference fears.

"I recognize that Amateur Radio licensees have raised concerns about harmful interference," Abernathy said, "and that is something that will have to be addressed before any mass market deployment can occur." She addressed the convocation "The Journey to Convergence: Challenges and Opportunities" January 22 on the school's Washington, DC campus.

Abernathy said that if engineers can find a way to prevent harmful interference to other radio services, BPL would represent "a tremendous advance for consumers, because it could bring broadband to any home that has electricity."

In her speech, "Overview of the Road to Convergence: New Realities Collide with Old Rules," Abernathy called BPL "another promising technology" that electric utilities have already successfully field tested. As an "add-on service to the existing electrical grid," she said, BPL might be a cost-effective alternative to provide broadband service to rural and other "underserved communities."

Missing from her remarks was any mention of interference worries that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) have expressed to the FCC in the BPL proceeding.

Abernathy drew fire from the Amateur Radio community last September after she expressed unabashed enthusiasm for BPL in a talk before the United Powerline Council's <<http://www.uplc.etc.org/>> annual conference. In that talk, she'd suggested that BPL was a step along the pathway to "Broadband Nirvana."

The ARRL led the barrage of strong objections in the wake of Abernathy's characterization. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, pointed out that preliminary testing already had established BPL is a significant source of radio spectrum pollution" and that BPL could not be implemented without causing harmful interference to radio services. Abernathy's office later conceded that her "Broadband Nirvana" speech may have failed to make sufficiently clear her concerns about potential BPL interference. More than 5100 comments—many from the Amateur Radio community—have been filed in response to the FCC's BPL NOI and are available for viewing via the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS)

<<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>>.

## LEAGUE FILES "A PLAN FOR THE NEXT DECADE" WITH FCC

The ARRL has filed a Petition for Rule Making asking the FCC to amend its Part 97 rules to complete the Amateur Service restructuring the Commission left unfinished in 1999. The League wants the FCC to create a new entry-level license, reduce the number of actual license classes to three and drop the Morse code testing requirement for all classes except for

Amateur Extra (see "ARRL to Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access"

<<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/01/19/1/>>). The ARRL says its petition follows in the footsteps of changes in Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations adopted at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003. Among those changes, WRC-03 left it up to individual countries to determine whether or not to mandate Morse testing for HF access. While several countries, including Germany, the UK and Australia, already have dropped their Morse requirements, the ARRL emphasized in its petition that Morse code is not the central issue.

"Changes in Morse telegraphy are one aspect of the proposal, and it would be insufficient for the Commission to address those issues in a vacuum," the League said, calling its licensing proposal "a plan for the next decade." The ARRL said that plan's overall intention is "to encourage newcomers to the Amateur Service and to encourage those who enter its ranks to proceed further on a course of technical self-training and exposure to all aspects of the avocation."

Last fall a total of 14 Morse-related petitions were filed with the FCC. Several called on the Commission to drop the Morse requirement altogether, while others proposed to keep and even expand the requirement or put forth various license restructuring

schemes of their own. The petitions, RM-10781-10787 and RM-10805-10811, attracted thousands of comments from the amateur community.

Beyond the Morse question, the ARRL says, the time is right, now that

WRC-03 has finished its work, to follow through on the restructuring process the FCC began with its 1999 restructuring Report and Order (WT98-143) <<http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/wt98-143ro.pdf>>. Among other things, that landmark Order, which became effective April 15, 2000, reduced the number of Morse code test elements from three to a single 5 WPM requirement for all license classes offering HF privileges.

Simply dropping the Element 1 (5 WPM) Morse requirement, the ARRL asserted, would fail to address the critical need for an entry-level ticket other than the Technician. Calling the Technician license "a dead

end" for many people, the ARRL said its proposed entry-level license—being called "Novice" for now—would offer newcomers a much wider sampling of Amateur Radio. It would require passing a 25-question written

examination—but no code test—and offer limited HF phone, image, CW and data privileges at modest power output levels.

"This structure provides a true, entry-level license with HF and other

operating privileges which will both promote growth in the Amateur Service and integrate newcomers into the mainstream of Amateur Radio," the ARRL told the FCC. "It will better introduce newcomers to more seasoned licensees who will assist them."

The League proposal also would consolidate current Technician and General licensees into General class without further examination. Future General applicants would not have to pass a code test, but the written exam would remain the same. Current Advanced licensees would be merged into Amateur Extra class without further testing, and the Extra exam would remain intact. The ARRL proposal would retain the Element 1 Morse exam for Extra class applicants.

The ARRL said its overall plan dovetails with the FCC philosophy and goals stated in its 1999 Report and Order, to simplify the license structure and streamline the licensing process. The League said its plan would implement licensing requirements and privileges that are in harmony with each other and is designed to attract and retain "technically inclined persons, particularly the youth of our country" and encourage them to advance in areas "where the United States needs expertise."

"Now, the issue is not merely whether there should or should not be Morse

telegraphy as an examination requirement," the ARRL said, "but rather what is the best overall approach for positioning the Amateur Service for future growth and incentive-based self-training."

A copy of the ARRL's Petition for Rule Making is available on the ARRL Web site

<<http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring2/restrux2-petition.pdf>>. The FCC has requested that individuals refrain from contacting or attempting to comment to the FCC on the ARRL's restructuring proposal before the FCC issues a Rule Making (RM) number for the ARRL petition and invites public comments on it. Until that happens, it is premature to comment to the FCC.

## FCC OKAYS BPL PROPOSAL

The FCC has unanimously approved a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) to deploy Broadband over Power Line (BPL). The NPRM is the next step in the BPL proceeding, which began last April with a Notice of Inquiry that attracted nearly 5200 comments—many from the amateur community. The FCC did not propose any changes in emission limits for unlicensed Part 15 devices, but said it would require BPL providers to apply "adaptive" interference mitigation techniques to their systems. An ARRL delegation that attended the February 12 FCC open meeting in Washington later expressed disappointment in the FCC action.

"The Commission clearly recognized that the existing Part 15 emission limits are inadequate to stop interference," Sumner said, "but it's placing the burden of interference mitigation on the licensed user that's supposed to be protected," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ.

Sumner said that if the FCC really believed current Part 15 emission limits were sufficient, it would not have had to require that BPL providers institute interference mitigation systems. The FCC has not yet released the actual NPRM, and a presentation by the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) revealed only its broad outlines. Sumner said the League would not take a

formal position until it reviews the full NPRM.

Anh Wride of the OET staff spelled out the scope of the NPRM, which only addresses so-called "access BPL"—the type that would apply radio frequency energy to exterior overhead and underground low and medium-voltage power lines to distribute broadband and Internet service. She said the OET staff believes that interference concerns "can be adequately addressed." Wride said the FCC's BPL NPRM:

\* Applies existing Part 15 emission limits for unlicensed carrier-current systems to BPL systems. Part 15 rules now require that BPL systems eliminate any harmful interference that may occur "and must cease operation if they cannot," she noted.

\* Requires BPL systems to employ "adaptive interference-mitigation techniques, including the capabilities to shut down a specific device, to reduce power levels on a dynamic or remote-control basis and to include or exclude specific operating frequencies or bands."

\* Subjects BPL providers to notification requirements that would establish a public database that would include the location of BPL devices, modulation type and operating frequencies.

\* Proposes guidelines to provide for consistent and repeatable measurement of the RF emissions from BPL and other carrier-current systems.

Mirroring his colleagues' enthusiasm, FCC Chairman Michael Powell called BPL "tremendously exciting," although he conceded that BPL has "a long way to go." Powell also said the FCC's OET has worked very hard to try to "get their hands around" the issue of interference and that the FCC would

continue its vigilance in that area.

The FCC has posted additional information, including a public notice <[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DOC-243879A1.doc](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-243879A1.doc)> on its Web site. The Commission is expected to issue the complete Notice of Proposed Rule Making within a few days and will invite comments on it sometime after publication.

Additional information about BPL and Amateur Radio is on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/>>. 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/>>.

## **NPR FEATURE SPOTLIGHTS ADDITION OF @ SYMBOL TO MORSE CODE**

Some hams may have thought they'd left their transceivers turned on Tuesday, February 17. That's when the popular National Public Radio <<http://www.npr.org>> afternoon news magazine All Things Considered ran a piece about the pending addition of the @ symbol to the official international Morse code lexicon. That's because NPR introduced and closed the nearly four-minute segment with actual CW, catching the ear of many hams.

ARRL Chief Technology Officer Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, conceived of the new character, necessary for transmitting e-mail addresses in CW, among other possible purposes. Assuming approval by International Telecommunication Union <<http://www.itu.int/home/index.html>> member-states, the new

character—the first added to the code in many, many years—will be "AC" run together (.—.-.).

The new character, Rinaldo says, is both unique in the Morse world as well as a mnemonic (think of an 'a' wrapped in a 'C').

ATC co-host Robert Siegel interviewed ARRL Senior News Editor Rick Lindquist, N1RL, for some background on the change, giving Lindquist an opportunity to mention his passion for mobile CW operation. The short feature, "Morse Code Enters Cyber Age," is available on the National Public Radio Web site, <<http://www.npr.org/rundowns/segment.php?wfId=1680529>>.

## **THE BPL FIGHT: CINCINNATI WATCH OUT**

Meantime, Cincinnati Ohio may be among the first to have Broadband over Powerlines across the entire area. This, as a division of Cinergy Corporation announces plans to offer high-speed Internet service over its power lines.

According a March 2nd release, Cinergy Broadband is pairing with the Maryland based Current Communications Group to offer the service in parts of Cincinnati this year. Plans also call for an expansion into Kentucky and Indiana as the regional system grows.

Cinergy says that it hopes to initially market the service to 55,000 of its 1.5 million customers. A second venture will bring the technology to smaller municipal and cooperatively owned power companies, covering 24 million customers across the United States. The companies are committing more than \$70 million to the effort.

## THE ORIGIN OF ELECTRONIC SPAM

And finally this week, a brief lesson on something we dread every time we check our e-mail. You know what it is. Unwanted junk e-mail that people have come to call Spam. Ever wonder why?

We all know that Spam is the trade name of a canned meat product. At least I suspect that most of you do. But have you ever wondered where the phrase "spam" in relation to unsolicited junk e-mail came from. Well, blame it on the computer nerds who were fans of one of the worlds greatest comedy ensembles.

It seems that the term began being applied to junk electronic mail in the early 1990's by computer geeks. It was based on a 1970 Monty Python skit in which an exasperated restaurant customer is urged to order the meat until she screams: "Stop it already. I don't want any Spam!" And that was it. And now you do know the rest of the story.

Created on March 12, 2004