

Chicago FM Club Squelch Tale - December 2003

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THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

December is a month we all anticipate. Some of us for its spiritual significance, others just for the festive season. Regardless of which you prefer you have to admit that it's a special time of the year. I would like to thank all the officers, board members, and general membership that made my job as president this year a rewarding and fun filled time. Thanks to Radio Rick, W9XB and his Tech. Crew the two-meter machine is working quite well, and if you haven't noticed, the coverage is great with the added receive sites and the addition of EchoLink. Radio Expo once again was a success and all because of the countless hours of hard work by you the club members of C.F.M.C. The VE testing sessions have become very successful and I would like to thank Bob, KA9HHH and his VE team for their time and effort in putting this program together. The General Meeting this month will be at the Edge Brook field house and we will be casting our ballots for our 5 Board of Director's positions. Please attend this important meeting. We have some new ideas for the club in 2003, but we will need the participation of you the club members to make them work. I would like to wish all our members Happy Holidays and Seasons Greetings and hope to see 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 December 17th. So see you all at the meeting, and don't forget to bring a friend!

SPECTRUM PROTECTION ACT COSPONSOR LIST TAKES A GIANT STEP

Encouraging news this week from Washington: The list of House cosponsors for the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act, HR 713, has reached 69. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, says he's pleased with the progress since mid-October, when he'd expressed his frustration over a lack of cosponsors. Since that time, the list has grown by 17 representatives. The Senate version of the legislation, S 537, is holding at eight cosponsors.

"I'm cheered up that we've got new representatives to sign on, but we can't just stop," Haynie said. "We gotta keep at it." He said the League has been concentrating its efforts on promoting HR 713 because the bill has the best chance for success of any Amateur Radio-related legislation now before Congress.

Haynie continues to encourage ARRL members to not only urge their senators and representatives to cosponsor HR 713 and S 537 but to write and ask them to actively support them. "This is something that's important to the future of Amateur Radio," Haynie reiterated.

Sponsored in the House by Rep Michael Bilirakis (R-FL) and in the Senate by Sen Michael Crapo (R-ID), the Spectrum Protection Act would require the FCC to provide "equivalent replacement spectrum" to Amateur Radio if the FCC reallocates

primary amateur frequencies, reduces any secondary amateur allocations, or makes additional allocations within such bands that would substantially reduce their utility to amateurs.

HR 713 has been referred to the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet. Haynie testified before that panel in June. S 537 has been referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

For the convenience of those writing their representatives and senators to urge cosponsorship of the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act of 2003, sample letters are on the ARRL Web site. For guidance on the best methods of contacting your members of Congress, see "Communicating with Congress," by Derek Riker, KB3JLF, on the ARRL Web site or in the April 2003 issue of QST (p 46).

Additional information--including the text of the Spectrum Protection Act and information on how to write members of Congress--is on the ARRL's "The Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act of 2003" Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/govrelations/arspa.html>>.

Those writing their lawmakers on behalf of the Spectrum Protection Act are asked to copy their correspondence to the League via e-mail to specbill03@arrl.org.

DZV's DITS AND BITS by Tim, WD9DZV

First US QSO above 400 GHz claimed: Microwave enthusiast Brian Justin, WA1ZMS, reports what he believes is the first QSO above 400 GHz in the US. On November 11 at 0215 UTC, WA1ZMS/4 worked Peter Lascell, W4WWQ, on a frequency of 403 GHz over a distance of approximately 1709 feet in Virginia. WA1ZMS set new North American records on 241 and 322 GHz last December, and he reports the pair used the same basic gear that had been put into service for their then-record-making 241-GHz QSO last year (recently beaten), but with new 30-cm parabolic dishes.

Australia is the latest country to announce it's dropping Morse code testing as a licensing requirement. The Australian Communications Authority <<http://www.aca.gov.au/>> says it will eliminate the Morse testing requirement starting January 1.

"This decision was made considering public comments at the meetings and initial analysis of submissions to the discussion paper," the ACA said, adding that it would make interim changes to its rules to allow immediate access to privileges previously available only to those satisfying the Morse proficiency requirements. The change will give holders of Intermediate and Limited Amateur licenses access to the same frequency bands as Unrestricted Amateur licensees, and holders of the Novice Limited Amateur license access to the same frequency bands as Novice licensees.

The Wireless Association of Australia <<http://www.wia.org.au>> says dropping the Morse requirement will mean no changes in existing licenses or call signs. WIA President Ernie Hocking, VK1LK, urged hams in Australia who don't yet enjoy HF privileges not to get on the air ahead of schedule.

Ireland, Switzerland, Belgium, the UK, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Austria, New Zealand, Luxembourg, Singapore and Papua-New Guinea have already dropped their Amateur Radio Morse testing requirements or have announced an intention to do so.

Radio Amateurs of Canada asked Industry Canada to drop the Morse requirement at the 21st Industry Canada-Radio Amateurs of Canada Amateur Radio Advisory Board meeting October 23 in Ottawa. US amateurs have commented on 14 petitions calling for outright deletion of the Morse requirement or changes in existing requirements. The FCC is not expected to act on the matter until 2004 at the earliest.

Turtles vexing TO4E DXpedition: The Daily DX reports the Europa Island DXpedition team was "a bit tired" after taking part in the CQ World Wide DX Contest (CW) the weekend of November 29-30. Operating as TO4WW for the contest, the crew put some 5 million points (and 4000 QSOs) in the log. DXpedition Co-organizer Rafik Djandji, F5CQ, reports that protected sea turtles have been a nuisance for the TO4E operation. Lowband antennas are installed on the beach, and each night, the turtles knock them over and destroy the radials on their way from the ocean to the top of the beach to rest during the night. This means the team then must repair and reinstall the antenna systems on a daily basis. The Clipperton DX Club is sponsoring the Europa operation. There's more information on the Europa 2003 DXpedition Web site <<http://europa2003.free.fr/>>.

Ed Giorgadze, 4L4FN, now active from Angola: Ed Giorgadze, 4L4FN—who made ham radio history with his P5/4L4FN operation from North Korea now is active from Angola as D2PFN on RTTY and SSB. QSL manager for D2PFN and P5/4L4FN is Bruce Paige, KK5DO. More information and an on-line log will be available on Paige's Web site <<http://www.amsatnet.com>> (click on D2 Angola).

ROHN ANNOUNCES ASSET PURCHASE AGREEMENT

Amateur Radio and telecommunications industry tower manufacturer ROHN Industries <<http://www.rohnnet.com/>> has announced that it's entered into an asset purchase agreement with SPX Corporation <<http://www.spx.com/>>, a global, multi-industry company. ROHN filed September 16 for Chapter 11 (debtor-in-possession) relief in the US Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Indiana. The deal will include ROHN subsidiaries that are party to the bankruptcy proceeding.

"The asset purchase agreement provides for the sale of certain assets of the company and the affected subsidiaries to SPX Corporation for the amount of \$5,450,000," ROHN said in a news release.

Through its Broadcast and Communication Systems and Services division, SPX provides analog and digital TV and FM systems, high-frequency and medium-frequency antennas, transmission lines, towers and radio frequency filter systems for the broadcast market. SPX also is a major site developer for the PCS/cellular industry.

The bankruptcy court must approve the ROHN-SPX agreement. ROHN filed an amended motion with the court November 13 seeking the court's approval of the asset sale and authority to sell the assets "after an opportunity is provided for competitive bidding." A hearing to consider proposed bid procedures is scheduled for November 25, and the bidding auction is set for December 8. The bankruptcy court is to consider approval of the asset sale December 9.

In addition to its other products and services, ROHN manufactures towers, antenna support structures and "infrastructure equipment" for the telecommunications industry. Horace Ward is ROHN's chief executive officer. The company consolidated its manufacturing operations in Frankfort, Indiana, earlier this year.

ON-LINE LICENSING COURSE, LOBBYING KIT PART OF ARRL'S 2004 PLAN

An on-line Amateur Radio licensing course--possibly bundled with ARRL membership--plus additional Certification and Continuing Education courses <<http://www.arrl.org/cce/>> are among the strategic objectives of the League's 2004 Operational Plan. The League also plans to evaluate its existing ARRL on-line class offerings. The item was among several the ARRL Executive Committee (EC) designated to include in next year's plan when it met November 9 in Irving, Texas. Work on the licensing course already is under way, and the ARRL expects to announce its availability in the near future.

At a mid-September strategic planning session, ARRL Board members agreed to let the EC pick the 2004 objectives to incorporate into the 2004 Operational Plan. In the future, the full Board will handle the task. Other strategic objectives include development of a grassroots lobbying kit for ARRL members to use when approaching congressional representatives in their home districts on legislation affecting Amateur Radio and surveying served agencies such as relief organizations to identify their present and future emergency communications requirements and areas of Amateur Radio performance that may need improvement.

The EC included some bottom-line related strategic objectives: That the League operate profitably to insure its future well being, and that it develop as ARRL Board policy a requirement that all new programs and services have a business plan and at least break even financially.

In other matters, ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, told the EC that the League is close to signing a contract calling for independent testing and measurement of Broadband over Power Line (BPL) interference characteristics. Earlier this year, the FCC issued a Notice of Inquiry, ET

03-104, that enthusiastically endorsed the prospect of BPL, which the ARRL and others feel poses the potential of possibly severe interference to licensed HF radio services. The contract would include certification by professional engineers.

The EC discussed and developed draft proposals to implement changes in US Amateur Radio rules in the wake of World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). Among other significant changes, WRC-03 left it up to individual countries whether to require a Morse code test for access to amateur high-frequency allocations. The ARRL Board of Directors will discuss the EC's recommendations in detail at its January 2004 meeting.

The EC also voted not to go forward with an appeal of FCC actions to permit expanded unlicensed Part 15 operations in the 24.05-24.25 GHz band. The ARRL had filed a Petition for Review October 22 with the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit of two FCC orders that would allow certification of unlicensed 24-GHz equipment at field strengths 10 times the level Part 15 rules now permit. After discussing the pros and cons of the case and the minimal prospects for a positive outcome, the Executive Committee voted to withdraw the League's appeal

ARRL'S BPL STUDY IMMINENT; LEAGUE TO SOLICIT BPL TRIAL INTERFERENCE REPORTS

An ARRL-sponsored independent engineering study to accurately quantify the interference potential of Broadband over Power Line (BPL) is set to start in the very near future. In addition, the League soon will elicit interference reports from amateurs in communities where BPL trials are known to be under way.

"We're contracting for an independent measurement of potential interaction between BPL and Amateur Radio," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ. The study--to be conducted under the auspices of certified professional engineers--not only will examine and document how BPL might affect HF and low-VHF amateur operation but how Amateur Radio operation could affect BPL systems.

The ARRL-sponsored engineering study should be completed within a couple of months, Sumner said. The ARRL anticipates that the FCC could issue a Notice of Proposed Rule Making in the proceeding (ET Docket 02-104) early in 2004. The FCC's Notice of Inquiry in the matter, released last April, has attracted more than 5100 comments--many of them from the amateur community.

At this point, while some BPL system trials are operating under existing Part 15 rules for unlicensed devices, other systems have secured FCC Part 5 experimental licenses that permit them to use higher power levels. In either case, however, FCC rules require BPL operators to cease operation if their systems result in harmful interference.

In a related initiative, the ARRL will be contacting amateurs in about a half-dozen US communities where BPL field trials now are in progress. The League will ask amateurs to listen on the air for any increase in noise level that might be related to the BPL trial. Sumner says it's most important that hams in trial areas who detect noise first verify that it is indeed caused by BPL before they document and report their observations to the FCC.

"It is important that each interference complaint be a valid case of actual harmful interference," an attachment to Sumner's letter says. "It is possible to misidentify other noise sources as BPL." Sumner says amateurs must carefully avoid "crying wolf" by filing invalid reports of BPL interference. The League suggests amateurs receiving the solicitation letters enlist the support of "a technically qualified observer"--an ARRL Technical Coordinator, Technical Specialist or local club interference committee--then submit a recording of the interference to the ARRL Laboratory for review and analysis.

The ARRL's solicitation includes a form to document suspected instances of harmful interference from BPL. Sumner says the League hopes the effort will result in a "body of technical evidence that will protect the Amateur Service from this source of potential interference."

In a related development, a California technology company this month wrote the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology to refute ARRL assertions that BPL necessarily poses a severe interference potential. Corridor Systems <<http://www.corridor.biz>> says its "breakthrough" BPL system, operated under existing Part 15 rules, uses frequencies in the 2 to 20 GHz range, will not interfere with HF and low-VHF reception and can provide up to 216 MB per second throughput.

"Corridor Systems has demonstrated a BPL technology which is completely compatible with the Amateur Radio Service and, indeed, with all users of the HF-VHF spectrum," Corridor's Chief Technology Officer Glenn Elmore, N6GN, said in the "open letter" <<http://www.corridor.biz/031201-fcc-letter.pdf>> that was copied to ARRL.

Sumner pointed out in responding to Elmore that ARRL only first became aware of Corridor's work in mid-October and that the League's comments were appropriate within the context of the FCC's definition of BPL systems operating in the 2 to 80 MHz HF and low-VHF spectrum. "The Corridor Systems approach deserves to be distinguished from the spectrum-polluting HF and low VHF systems, not only because of its much lower interference potential but also because of the higher data rates it can support," Sumner said. Additional information about BPL and Amateur Radio is on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/>>.

LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD CONTINUES TO GROW

The ARRL's Logbook of the World secure contact-verification database continues to grow. So far, reports ARRL Membership Services Manager Wayne Mills, N7NG, nearly 5000 users have uploaded logs containing some 25.4 million Amateur Radio contacts. This has resulted in more than 1 million QSL records.

"The key is participation, and it doesn't cost a thing to get the software and upload logs," Mills pointed out. "We're encouraging all hams to participate in Logbook, whether the ham is a casual operator, contester, ragchewer or DXer." To further expand the database and generate more confirmed contacts for all LoTW users, Mills is calling on everyone to sign aboard and submit as many logs as possible.

Once LoTW programming is complete, users will be able to redeem credits for ARRL awards without having to go through the expense and trouble of obtaining hard-copy QSL cards. Mills emphasizes that LoTW is not meant to replace paper QSL cards but supplements traditional QSLing.

Signing up as a new LoTW user is simple. Visit the Logbook of The World Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/lotw>> and read the "Getting Started" document, Mills said. He advises new users to print it out to have the instructions handy.

The "Getting Started" page offers step-by-step instructions for getting a secure digital certificate from ARRL and preparing and uploading logs. Mills noted that most new user problems result from failing to specifically follow the instructions outlined on the "Getting Started" page.

Amateur Radio software developers are starting to include direct support for Logbook of The World in their programs. Most logging software allow users to export a log in ADIF format, which LoTW will accept. A few programs incorporate the ARRL's TQSL file-generation and digital certificate code, which simplifies the process of digitally signing logs and exporting them in a separate e-mail. For more information, visit the Logbook of The World Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/lotw>>.

NEW GENERAL CLASS QUESTION POOL RELEASED

The Question Pool Committee (QPC) of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators has released a revised and expanded Amateur Radio General class (Element 3) question pool into the public domain. The new question pool becomes effective July 1, 2004, and must be used to generate all General written examinations administered on or after that date.

"The pool has been expanded to 432 questions," said ARRL VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, a member of the Question Pool Committee, who notes that all subelements grew slightly. "The largest increase in questions this time around was in our Operating Procedures and Amateur Radio Practices subelements," he said. The General class question pool does not contain any diagrams or symbols.

The new Element 3 question pool is available on the ARRL Amateur Exam Question Pools Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/pools.html>> in Adobe PDF and ASCII text format. It includes all questions and answers relating to Element 3.

The Question Pool Committee now is turning its attention to developing an outline for an updated Amateur Extra class (Element 4) question pool, which will be revised over the next 24 months, Jahnke said. It will go into effect July 1, 2006. The deadline to submit input to the Amateur Extra question pool syllabus is May 1, 2004.

In addition to Jahnke, members of the Question Pool Committee are Chairman Scotty Neustadter, W4WW, Fred Maia, W5YI, and John Johnston, W3BE. Commenters may address specific Element 3 questions as well as inputs to the Element 3 syllabus and question pool to the Question Pool Committee via e-mail <qpc@arrl.org>.

RaNdOm AcCeSs HuMoR

"More hay, Trigger?" "No thanks, Roy, I'm stuffed!"

A flashlight is a case for holding dead batteries.

Lottery: a tax on people who are bad at math.

Error, no keyboard - press F1 to continue.

I have a grip on reality, just not this particular one.

There's too much blood in my caffeine system.

Artificial intelligence usually beats real stupidity.

Cream rises to the top...so do dead fish.

Ask me about my vow of silence!

A bachelor never makes the same mistake once.

If you can read this, my cloaking device is on the fritz.

What's all this about hell fire and dalmations?

I'm not a complete idiot - several parts are missing.

Veni, vidi, velcro: I came, I saw, I stuck around.

Every time my ship comes in there's a dock strike.

Efficiency is a highly developed form of laziness.

Why'd they bury Mozart? Because he was decomposing.

Excuse me, Chief, my shoe is ringing.

Got a Pentium4 for my wife - good trade.

If everything seems to go right, check your zipper.

The four food groups: Fast, Frozen, Instant and Chocolate.

What this country needs is a good 5-cent quarter.

Ensign Walnut approaches Dr. Crusher with caution.

Ted Kennedy's Bumper Sticker: My other car is underwater.

C'mon, where's your sense of adventure?

I'm not round. I'm an oblate spheroid.

Neutrinos have mass? I didn't even know they're Catholic!

Don't be so open minded that your brain falls out.

I know it all, I just can't remember most of it.

What goes around usually gets dizzy and falls over.

If reality wants to get in touch, it knows where I am.

Learn from your parents' mistakes - use birth control!

Hard work has a future payoff. Laziness pays off now.

Give the gift of high velocity lead.

System error - press F13 to continue.

Friends help you move. Real friends help you move bodies.

No, I'm not an elitist. Why do you ask, peasant?

Did you expect mere proof to sway my opinion?

Smokey the Bear says, "Strip mining prevents forest fires."

Just sliding down the razor blade of life.

And you thought space was warped.

Government: not the solution, but the problem.

The most affectionate creature is the wet dog.

The secret of the universe is @*&^^^ NO CARRIER

My IRS check just bounced.

I can't think of anything that remotely fits the subject.

I was born alive. Isn't that punishment enough?

One if by LAN, two if by C.

I pray to St. Francis of ANSI C.

Computing is a terminal condition.

My superiority complex is better than yours!

Double your drive space - delete Windows!

Everybody stand back, he's got a MAGNET!

Everything's falling into place - on top of me.

I won't rise to the occasion, but I'll slide over to it.

Boldly going forward because we can't find reverse.

Karaoke is the Japanese word for "tone deaf."

Sinead O'Connor: a chia pet before adding water.

The is abuse. Arguments are down the hall.

What is a "free gift?" Aren't all gifts free?

Created on December 13, 2003

