

Chicago FM Club Squelch Tale - February 2003

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THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

One of the things I like about the month of February is that it usually gives you a hint of spring. Not nice warm April and May weather, but just a hint of what's to come.

By now everyone knows that we have moved our transmitters to the Aon Center. I have been getting great reports from everyone on how well the repeater sounds, along with the great coverage. Once again, kudos to Radio Rick and his tech. Committee.

I have been in contact with the village of River Grove and they have requested that we hold our field day exercise at their pavilion area. They will be willing to let us use their boom truck, and set up our 40 meter beam. I'll be checking this out with the field day chairman and will keep you posted.

As most of you know a new term for officers for the CFMC started this January. Our new treasurer is Jim N9RKU, who will be replacing Jerry WA9KXZ. I would like to thank Jerry, as I'm sure all the members would in doing such a fine job. A world of gratitude also goes out too to Dick K9FFY, and Jerry W9EG for their dedication and perseverance.

The next meeting of the Chicago FM club will be held at the Edgebrook field house on the third wed (Feb 19th) at 8pm 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 February 19th. As usual, our Refreshment Chairman Howard, N9KTW will have coffee and donuts available after the meeting. See you at the meeting and don't forget to bring a friend!

CFMC NET VIA ECHOLINK!

As many of you know, our esteemed CFMC president is vacationing in AZ. However, dedicated as he is, Phil asked me to set up Echolink for our 2 mtr repeater so that he can run the CFMC 2 meter Net this Tuesday via Echolink. Phil would be glad to hear as many of you as possible checking into the net on Tuesday. Hope to hear you then!

73, Jerry WA9KXZ

SKYWARN TRAINING CLASS

The Schaumburg Amateur Radio Club extends a cordial invitation to our friends at CFMC to join us for a SKYWARN (severe weather spotter) basic training session. This class lasts about 2 hours and will be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2003 at 7pm. The location is the Schaumburg Police Station at 1000 W. Schaumburg Rd, Schaumburg, Illinois (located on the North side of Schaumburg Rd. directly next to the Schaumburg High School). Talk-in will be on the SARC repeater (145.230- 107.2pl or 442.275+ 114.8pl). Seats are limited so please RSVP by sending an e-mail to N9MYC@arrl.net or calling 847-348-7276.

Thanks and 73' John Nebl N9MYC SARC E-Comm Chairman

CFMC FOXHUNT REPORT

January 2003 CFMC Foxhunt by Tony AA9CC I planned to hide outside. I put the radio, gelcell and antenna in a briefcase as a self contained foxhide package. The battery on the watch was dead and I didn't have time to run to Walmart for a replacement, so I taped 2 alkaline cells to the band and soldered small wires inside. I had an idea to hide near the square dance. The temperature was dropping to 10 degrees and a stiff wind persuaded me to hide in the car. I parked next to a park in Villa Park. Wildwood St. zig-zags there and the zag runs adjacent to the Prairie Path. I parked in the middle of the -. It was a crisp cold clear night with a brightly lit full moon over head. I had 20 minutes to set up. Standing on a picnic table, I put the 10 element beam in a low tree branch, 120 degrees heading and approximating the Brewster angle in elevation. I heard Charlie on the input and all hunters had a good signal. Starting the timer, though one of the wires broke due to a cold solder joint. Luckily it was the positive wire, but it took some time to tape the battery in a position so the positive terminal was touching the case. The timer worked if left undisturbed. The radio was in a position such that the front was on the edge of the briefcase. In this position the channel select knob makes a good wheel. I noticed the radio had slid down and was on 146.735 and I was keying up the wrong repeater! I don't now how long it was off frequency but it might explain why Tom and Charlie were driving back and forth right in front of the car several times, or they might have been looking for the truck. Don and Chuck found me first be walking across there path a block away. Next was Charlie several transmissions later. I gave Charlie number 4 card by mistake. Don said at munchies that he looked like President Bush walking away from the car. Tom and Mike scored simultaneously a short while later. Munches were at Partillios.

Results:

1. K9VGJ/K9KZO, Jo, Betty
2. KB9DIM/Alexis
3. N9CBA
4. WA9FTS, N9LXF

LETTERS

Tim,

Last year I published a QSL Info lookup program. This years' program is a new QSO logging program, Paper Chasers' Log. In addition to doing the usual things, like tracking DXCC, WAS, United States Counties, IOTA (all continents), 10-10 and printing labels, it also tracks a large number of awards, 54 in all, including European, Australian, Japanese and Philippine awards. Paper Chasers' Log also tracks endorsements and awards for the Geratol Net, Century Club Net and OMISS. Full details are at www.n0oks.com. Would you like to mention Paper Chasers' Log in your club's newsletter?

Mark, NØOKS

ARRL LEAGUE LINES

2002 A GROWTH YEAR FOR ARRL CONTESTS

The year 2002 was a banner year for ARRL's Contesting Branch. Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, reports a record number of total entries for ARRL-sponsored operating events. "The total of 18,817 beats 2001's 18,505, a nearly 1.7 percent increase!" Henderson said. Despite the downward slope of Cycle 23, the 2002 ARRL 10-Meter Contest saw a more than 18 percent jump in log submissions over the previous year, he added, even as logs continued to arrive. "Activity is up across the board for almost all contests, and I think we would have seen more than 19,000 logs returned," Henderson said, "but the World Radiosport Team Championships (WRTC 2002) in Finland last July affected numbers for the IARU HF World Championships, as several hundred of the world's top contest operators were there." Henderson notes that since WRTC 2002 used slightly different rules, the logs from those operators could not be entered in the IARU event, which ARRL administers. The 2002 ARRL 10-Meter Contest, proved to be record-setter in several ways. According to Henderson, not only was the December 14-15, 2002, operating event the most active 10-meter contest on record, it had the single highest number of participants returning logs of any single contest in League history. As of January 16, the Contest Branch had logged 3051 entries and was still counting. "That's the very first time a single-weekend ARRL contest has topped the 3000 mark in entries," Henderson said. Other ARRL operating events that also saw increased numbers of logs over 2001 were Straight Key Night, up 22 percent; the ARRL 160-Meter Contest--a CW event--up 19 percent; the ARRL 10 GHz and Up Contest, up 11 percent; and ARRL Field Day, up by one-half of one percent. For the first time ever, the 160-meter event topped 900 entries.

ARRL November Sweepstakes entries jumped between two and three percent for the CW and SSB weekends in 2002, Henderson said. Entries received for the ARRL international DX Contest remained approximately level for each mode last year as did submissions for the ARRL's four major VHF-UHF-SHF events in 2002. Henderson said the move to require Cabrillo-format electronic logs has proved a major boon to the Contest Branch. The elimination of most manual log entry has moved up the posting of contest results by about a month, he said. He said he expected the Contest Branch would be fine tuning electronic log-processing during 2003. Rules for all ARRL-sponsored operating events are available on the ARRLWeb site <<http://www.arrl.org/contests/calendar.html>>.

NEW LEAGUE BROCHURE TARGETS KIDS

A colorful, new, kid-tested ham radio brochure is available from ARRL Headquarters. "Leap into Amateur Radio" aims at an elementary school audience and introduces youngsters to the hobby. "Amateur Radio is an exciting hobby that lets you meet new people of all ages--and have a great time!" the full-color, tri-fold flier emphasizes. "Getting started is easy!" Field and Educational Support Team Leader Mary Lau, N1VH, headed the team that produced the flier. She cited two objectives in its design. "There was a desire to specifically target 8 to 11 year olds," she said, "as well as the need to supply a youth-oriented handout to replace the Archie's Ham Radio Adventure comic book that is no longer published." The brochure is comprised of colorful graphics, photos of kids operating and several boxes of basic text explaining what Amateur Radio is and does. There's also space on the back for local clubs or organizations to affix their contact information, so that children and their families can get more information about the hobby. The back panel also includes a blurb about ARRL and gives its e-mail address. On the "What is Amateur Radio" page right inside the tri-fold brochure is a brief explanation of what Amateur Radio is. "Anyone can be a ham--no matter what age, sex or physical ability," the flier points out. Accompanying the text are photos of youngsters--a boy and a girl--on the air. Fully open, the flier presents four capsules of information about Amateur Radio:

- * How ham radio and wireless technologies fit into lives that include cell phones and the Internet.
- * The several modes hams use to communicate with each other--including voice, computer, and even telegraph key.
- * The various types of operating activities available--including public service and the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program.
- * How simple it is to get started in Amateur Radio and whom to contact.

Assisting the in the project were ARRL Educational Program Coordinator Jean Wolfgang, WB3IOS; Educational

Correspondent Marjorie Bourgoïn, KB1DCO, and Field and Educational Services Assistant Linda Mullally, KB1HSV. After assembling the material for the flier and putting together a prototype, Lau and her staff got the brochure into the hands of a number of area youngsters for some product testing. The children offered a few ideas to make the handout even more appealing, she said. Arizona-based graphic artist Cameo Hill did the final layout and design.

"Leap into Amateur Radio" will become available in mid-February--free of charge and in limited quantities of up to 25 fliers--to any Amateur Radio operator or amateur club. Lau said the only cost will be for shipping. The brochure is now available as an Acrobat PDF file via the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/materials/Leap-into-AR.pdf>>. To order copies of the brochure, interested clubs or individuals should contact Linda Mullally, KB1HSV, lmullally@arrl.org; 860-594-0292.

ARRL BOARD DISCUSSES STRATEGIC PLANNING, WRC-03

Establishing a timeline for future strategic planning, increasing ARRL membership and raising the level of awareness of Amateur Radio issues at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) were the primary topics as the ARRL Board of Directors met January 17-18 in Connecticut. Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, cited a cooperative spirit and said the session's overall mood was upbeat. As a result of action taken at the meeting, the Board plans to convene a leadership seminar in July and a two-day strategic planning retreat in September. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, said strategic planning--especially aimed at embracing new technologies--is vital for the League's health. "We're interested in planning for the League on a long-term basis to ensure that we're on the right track 5 to 10 years from now," he said. "We have to keep up with emerging technology." Haynie said he's excited with what the High-Speed Multimedia Working Group <<http://www.arrl.org/hsmm/>> and the Digital and Software Defined Radio committees have come up so far. The Board also created a new ad hoc committee, chaired by ARRL International Affairs Vice President Rod Stafford, W6ROD, to focus on recruiting and retaining members. "This committee is for the near term to explore ways to entice people to join the organization," Haynie said. The panel also will look at what the League can do to make the ARRL more attractive to potential members.

The Board also discussed strategy for protecting Amateur Radio's interests at WRC-03 <www.fcc.gov/wrc-03/>, to be held in Geneva from June 9 to July 4. The hottest ham radio topic is 7 MHz and the objective of a worldwide 300 kHz harmonized amateur allocation. Sumner said the immediate need is to get the US Government to support a realignment of allocations for amateurs and broadcasters in ITU Regions 1 and 3. "The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA, which oversees the federal government's use of radio spectrum) thinks that Region 1 and 3 administrators should take the leadership role on this issue and that we in Region 2 should make no proposal," Sumner said. "We're trying to change that view." Sumner says the US has a responsibility to represent the interests of amateur licensees whose 40-meter operation is severely impacted by high-power broadcasting stations elsewhere in the world. "The US did so in 1979 and 1992 and should do so again in 2003," he said. The Board also updated the League's legislative positions for the 108th Congress. ARRL will work for a re-introduction of The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Consistency Act <<http://www.arrl.org/govrelations/hr4720/>>. Known last session as HR 4720, the bill deals with deed covenants, conditions and restrictions. Also set to be reintroduced is the Spectrum Protection Act. In other business, the Board adopted a 2003 budget; resolved to honor the Hospital Disaster Support Communications System <members.aol.com/emcom4hosp/> (HSDCS) of Orange County, California, with the ARRL National Certificate of Merit; and elected Tod Olson, K0TO, and John Kanode, N4MM, as honorary vice presidents.

ARRL ANNOUNCES "AMATEUR RADIO TODAY" CD-ROM PRESENTATION

The ARRL soon will make available a new video presentation, Amateur Radio Today, that tells Amateur Radio's public service story to nonhams. Directed by Dave Bell, W6AQ, and narrated by former CBS news anchorman Walter Cronkite, KB2GSD, the presentation runs approximately six minutes. "We wanted to have something for people to take to nonhams and civic clubs," said ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP. Haynie also anticipates that the CD-ROM production will come in handy during his visits to Capitol Hill. Haynie recently wowed those attending the January ARRL Board meeting by playing--and distributing--draft copies of the disk. A slightly revised, final version is expected to be ready for distribution in early February.

The presentation focuses on Amateur Radio's role in emergency communications. Copyrighted by ARRL, the presentation is intended for personal, noncommercial use as a tool to showcase Amateur Radio in a manner that nonhams can relate to. "Dozens of radio amateurs helped the police and fire departments and other emergency services maintain communications in

New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC," narrator Cronkite intones in reference to ham radio's response on September 11, 2001. "Their country asked, and they responded without reservation." Amateur Radio Today also highlights ham radio's part in helping various agencies respond to wildfires in the Western US during 2002 and mentions ham radio in space. Haynie said he and Bell discussed the project, and Bell agreed to take it on. Alan Kaul, W6RCL, authored the script, and Keith Glispie, WA6TFD, edited the production. Haynie said Bell, Kaul and Glispie donated a lot of their own time and effort in making the the video presentation a reality. Amateur Radio "really is the best back-up communications system in the world," Cronkite says in his concluding remarks, adding, "and that's the way it is." That phrase was the one Cronkite always used to close out his nightly newscasts during his tenure with CBS. Individuals may order a copy of the Amateur Radio Today CD-ROM (approximately 70 MB) from the ARRL on-line catalog <<https://www.arrl.org/catalog/?item=8861>>. Plans are under way to also make Amateur Radio Today available in other video formats if there is sufficient demand. ARRL will make the presentation available for downloading from its Web site as soon as the final version is available. All that's needed to show the presentation to a group is a laptop computer with a CD drive plus a large monitor or a video projector and screen. Bell, a Hollywood TV producer, is a past chairman of the ARRL Public Relations Committee. Kaul is an NBC Television producer. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, of Amateur Radio Newline also assisted in the presentation's production. Because of copyright restrictions, Amateur Radio Today may not be broadcast, multicast or cablecast in any manner. Those seeking to distribute copies of Amateur Radio Today must contact ARRL for permission. To request permission, send your name and contact information and a brief description of the intended use to ARRL Editorial and Production Manager, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111; permission@arrl.org.

LIMITED "LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD" TESTING IS A HIT

The long-anticipated "Logbook of the World" (LoTW)--the ARRL's secure electronic contact-confirmation system--took a major leap toward public release this month with several weeks of limited--or "alpha"--testing. Dozens of Amateur Radio operators checked out a preliminary version of the LoTW software, which is still under development. Once it's ready, LoTW will provide a means for participants to qualify for awards such as DXCC or WAS without having to first collect hard-copy QSL cards. "This is cool!" exclaimed one alpha tester. "Slick!" declared another tester. "It's pretty neat so far. This looks like a good start." ARRL staffer Dave Patton, NT1N, said the limited test run was extremely helpful. "One of the main things that will come out of this phase of testing is a good package that will be ready to give to logging program developers to incorporate into their software," he said. ARRL Web and Software Development Manager Jon Bloom, KE3Z, explained that the League hopes that logging software vendors will choose to add value to their products by integrating LoTW client-side functions. "But the software we provide to individual amateurs will be sufficient for basic use of LoTW," he added. ARRL will not be releasing the LoTW server code, however. Linked via e-mail, the LoTW testers spent two weeks registering their call signs, uploading logs and attempting to push the system to extremes. One tester was amazed at its robust nature after he uploaded a complete station log of about 320,000 QSOs. "I sent this blob expecting it to croak the server, but it didn't!" he said.

Logbook of the World Project Leader Wayne Mills, N7NG, says LoTW won't spell the end of QSL cards. Instead, he says, it will provide an avenue for increased speed and accuracy for hams chasing awards, as well as remove some chances for human error that can occur in the traditional process. "This is really a system to offer credits for awards," said Mills, who is also ARRL's Membership Services manager. Mills said LoTW will minimize opportunities to "game the system" or otherwise cheat--something that's not always possible to detect even with paper QSLs. He emphasized that the League has no plans to do away with accepting traditional QSL cards as it's been doing all along. "We're not replacing the whole paper QSL scheme with Logbook of the World," he said. Unlike electronic QSLing systems now in use, LoTW is not set up to exchange QSL "cards" via the Internet. The main idea is that ARRL will maintain a secure log database that will be constantly updated by DXers, contesters, DXpeditions and thousands of individual amateurs. Registering and uploading electronic logs cost nothing; the only time a user will incur a charge is when applying accumulated contact credits toward an award. LoTW beta testing for the general Amateur Radio public is expected to begin soon. The ARRL has not announced a specific inauguration date for Logbook of the World.

FCC NEWS

FCC SEEKS COMMENTS ON WRC-03 DRAFT PROPOSALS

The FCC is seeking comments on draft recommendations that the World Radiocommunication Conference Advisory Committee (WRC-03 Advisory Committee) adopted January 8. The FCC established the WRC-03 Advisory Committee in

January 2001 to assist the agency in developing WRC-03 proposals. "Based upon our initial review of the recommendations forwarded to the Commission," the FCC said this week in a Public Notice, "the International Bureau, in coordination with other Commission Bureaus and Offices, tentatively concludes that we can generally support the proposals recommended by the WRC-03 Advisory Committee." The FCC said the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has submitted letters to the FCC containing draft proposals developed by Executive Branch agencies, and the FCC requests comment on those draft proposals as well. The FCC will consider the draft proposals and comments during upcoming consultations with the US Department of State and NTIA in the development of US proposals to WRC-03. Once agreed to by these agencies, proposals will be used by US delegations at bilateral, regional and international meetings. "The draft proposals attached to this Public Notice may evolve as we approach WRC-03 and during the course of interagency discussions," the FCC said. "Therefore, they do not constitute the final national position on these issues."

The Public Notice includes proposals concerning WRC-03 agenda items 1.35, 7.1, 7.2, 2.16, 1.8.2, 1.13, 1.20, 1.22 and 1.36. Agenda item 1.20 concerns the so-called "Little LEOs." Item 1.36 involves examining the adequacy of the frequency allocations for HF broadcasting in the vicinity of 4-10 MHz. Complete texts of draft proposals are available via the FCC's WRC-03 Web site <<http://www.fcc.gov/wrc-03>>. Interested parties may file comments via e-mail to wrc03@fcc.gov. Commenters also may submit an original and one copy of comments to the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20554. Provide a courtesy copy to FCC WRC-03 Director Alex Roytblat, Room 6-A738. Comments should refer to specific proposals by document number. The deadline for comments on draft proposals and NTIA letters is January 31, 2003. WRC-03 takes place in Geneva, Switzerland, from June 9 until July 4, 2003.

FCC LAUNCHES "CONSUMER-FRIENDLY" ELECTRONIC COMMENT FILING SYSTEM

The FCC has launched "ECFS Express," an updated electronic system that the Commission says will make it easier for at least some members of the public to file comments on FCC proceedings. ECFS Express is a simplified version of the popular Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), but it is not available for all FCC proceedings.

ECFS Express is accessible from the FCC home page <<http://www.fcc.gov>>. Users just click on the "File Comments" logo--which is on the left-hand side of the page about one-third of the way down under the words "Filing Public Comments." To comment, users click on a topic, fill in their personal information, write their comments and hit "SEND." "ECFS Express will highlight the proceedings most likely to generate consumer interest," the FCC said this week in a Public Notice. "The topics will change periodically as new issues emerge." The downside is that if the particular issue you want to comment upon is not listed among the ECFS Express topics, you'll have to use the "expert version" of ECFS to comment, the FCC said. At the moment, the ECFS Express list includes no Amateur Radio-related petitions. The FCC says the original Electronic Comment Filing System--which includes all docketed FCC proceedings--will remain accessible on its Web site <<http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>>.

FCC INVITES COMMENTS ON AMATEUR-RELATED PETITION

Comments are due February 28 on another Petition for Rulemaking filed by Dale Reich, K8AD, of Seville, Ohio. Reich has petitioned the FCC to require sellers of two-way voice or data equipment to keep on file a buyer's name, address, telephone number and "any future information when selling a radio that required licensing under the current FCC rules." Information collected would remain private, available only to the FCC or law enforcement. Reich said in his petition that, under his proposal, any retail vendor would be able to ask local police to investigate if the retailer suspected that the radios were not going to be used in compliance with the law.

A separate petition would require "ownership and license tagging" for gear operating under Parts 5, 15, 18, 74, 80, 90, 95 and 97, including call sign, owner's name and address and any FCC file number. It would include CB, Family Radio Service, Multi-Use Radio Service and General Mobile Radio Service gear. In his petition, Reich said such tagging used to be an FCC requirement and that his proposed change was long overdue as a needed tool for local law enforcement.

The FCC has lumped both petitions into one, designated as RM-10641. The full text of Reich's petitions is available on the FCC Web site <http://gullfoss2.fcc.gov/prod/ecfs/retrieve.cgi?native_or_pdf=pdf&id_document=6513398853>.

In an earlier petition, designated RM-10620, Reich had asked the Commission to upgrade Novice and Advanced license

holders to the "next" license class if the licensee has 20 or more years of operating experience. Reich said such test-free upgrades would compensate for "the previous tougher exam that was past administered" and give credit for violation-free service records. Before the comment window for Reich's earlier petition closed January 17, it attracted more than 150 comments from the amateur community.

FCC SEEKS COMMENTS ON AUTO UPGRADE

An ARRL bulletin says that the FCC is inviting comments on two Amateur Radio-related petitions for rule making. Both have been put on public notice and are available for review and comment. In his petition, designated RM-10620, Dale Reich, K8AD, has asked the Commission to automatically upgrade Novice and Advanced license holders to the next license class if the licensee has 20 or more years of operating experience. Among other proposed changes in what he calls a "merit and service upgrade" schedule, Reich asks that Novice phone privileges in the 2-meter band be reinstated for those still holding that license. Reich claims that the proposed changes could augment public service abilities by those receiving the added privileges. The deadline to comment is January 17th

FCC SEEKS COMMENTS ON SATELLITE LAUNCH PRE-NOTIFICATION

Also asking for a rules change is AMSAT North America. The ham radio space agency has asked the government to drop its presently required 27-month pre-space notification to the FCC's International branch for Amateur Satellite launches. AMSAT feels that a pre-space notification within 30 days of a launch commitment is more than sufficient. Its request has been assigned as RM-10621. This one also carries a January 17th comment cutoff deadline.

DZV'S DITS AND BITS by Tim, WD9DZV

Second Ducie DXpedition set for March: The second DXpedition to the newest DXCC entity, Ducie Island, is expected to take place in March, according to an announcement this week. Ducie Island DXpedition leader Yuichi Yoshida, JR2KDN, reports he will depart from Narita, Japan, on March 3 heading for Tahiti, French Polynesia, and then on to Gambier Island. Presumably this is where the vessel Braveheart will meet up with the DXpedition team members. They expect to arrive at Pitcairn Island to pick up the remaining team members on March 5 and then head for Ducie Island. Plans are to begin operations March 8 from VP6DI2 (yes, that's a "2" at the end of that call sign) and continue about a week. The operator list includes Dieter, DJ9ON; Hans, DK9KX; Philippe, FO3BM; Hiro, JA1SLS; Yuichi, JR2KDN; Doug, N6TQS; Dave, VP6DB; Mike, VP6AZ; and Meralda, VP6MW. Activity is being planned for 6 through 160 meters on CW, SSB, RTTY and AO-40. QSL via JR2KDN (bureau or direct). Pilot stations for this DXpedition are JE2EHP, DJ8NK and WA2MOE. The initial Ducie Island DXpedition in March of 2002 racked up some 50,000 contacts. A 2.5-square-mile Pacific atoll, Ducie was approved for DXCC credit in November 2001.--The Daily DX <<http://www.dailydx.com>>

Poptronics ceases publication: Poptronics magazine--which evolved from the former Popular Electronics and Electronics Now magazines--ceased publication with the January 2003 edition (Vol 4, No 1). "After 94 years of publishing electronics magazines Gernsback Publications is no longer in operation," said Larry Steckler, Poptronics' editor in chief and publisher. "Negotiations are under way to provide an alternative publication to Poptronics subscribers." Steckler says a new on-line edition of Poptronics will soon be available. Poptronics Interactive, a separate on-line, paid subscription site announced in the October issue of Poptronics, also is scheduled to return soon, Steckler said. The company plans to post the latest information on its Web site <<http://www.Poptronics.com>>. The site has been undergoing "remodeling," but Steckler said it should be back in operation by the end of January. Many veteran amateurs may recall the "Carl and Jerry" stories by John T. Frye, W9EGV (SK), which appeared in Popular Electronics in the 1950s and 1960s. The tales involved the ham radio-related exploits of a couple of teenaged hams.

FCC Power line communications technology shows promise: According to an Associated Press report, the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology has found that power line communications (PLC), which can enable high-speed Internet access over electric power lines, shows promise. The OET has said that PLC is "beginning to look like a viable alternative to cable and DSL connections to the Internet," AP reported. At present, no regulations prevent the use of electric power lines to

provide Internet connections. The FCC wants to ensure that the technology does not cause interference problems with other services, however. Some PLC devices use digital signals that occupy spectrum into the upper HF range. These signals can be radiated efficiently by some electrical wiring, so there can be a significant potential impact on Amateur Radio. ARRL Lab Supervisor Ed Hare, W1RFI, chairs an IEEE C63 "RFI" ad hoc working group on the topic. "The problem with PLC is that if a company wants to supply Internet service via PLC, it's going to happen at HF, and it will radiate," Hare said. Last fall, the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Administrative Council noted the growing use of PLC for high-speed data and expressed concerns that PLC radiation could interfere with Amateur Radio reception. As a result of strong opposition from the Japan Amateur Radio League (JARL), Japan's government said last summer that it was too soon to allow PLC devices in that country between 2 MHz and 30 MHz, due to its interference potential to other HF users. AP says two utilities, PPL of Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Ameren of St Louis, Missouri, are working with consumers to test Internet access over power lines. PLC devices use overhead power lines and/or residential electrical wiring to communicate digital signals--for networking within a home or to provide Internet services to entire neighborhoods.

DXCC Honor Roll deadline looms: The deadline for the next DXCC Honor Roll list is rapidly approaching. DXCC Honor Roll applications must be postmarked by March 31, 2003, for operators to appear in the next list, which will appear in August QST. The DXCC Honor Roll list includes only current entities; deleted entities do not count toward Honor Roll. With the addition of Ducie Island in 2002, the minimum number of entities required for Honor Roll is 326. For Number One Honor Roll, the total is 335 current entities. Plaques remain available for anyone currently or previously on the Honor Roll. Order forms are available on the DXCC Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/>>. On a related note, the DXCC Desk has finished entering September DXCC applications, and all but a handful (ones requiring special attention) are on their way back to members. "With the 75,000 cards postmarked September 30 out of the way, we expect to make a significant reduction in the processing time in the weeks ahead," said ARRL Membership Services Department Manager Wayne Mills, N7NG.

Viewing and commenting on petitions the FCC puts on public notice: Members of the amateur community (and the general public) may comment via the Web or e-mail on any Petition for Rulemaking that the FCC has put on public notice and assigned a rulemaking (RM) number. Visit the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) page <<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>>, which includes detailed instructions. To view a petition and/or any comments filed, click on "Search for Filed Comments" on the right-hand side of the page and enter the RM number in the "Proceeding" field. You must enter "RM" in upper-case letters and include the hyphen followed by the appropriate five digits. To file comments, click on "Submit a Filing" on the right-hand side of the ECFS page or see the instructions on how to file comments via e-mail. A typical comment period runs 30 days from the date the FCC puts a petition on public notice.

Yugoslavia becomes Serbia-Montenegro: Yugoslavia's parliament has voted to formally abolish that nation and replace it with a new country called Serbia-Montenegro, which were the two remaining Yugoslav republics. In accordance with a deal arranged by the European Union and aimed at keeping the two republics together, Serbia and Montenegro will continue to share a capital--Belgrade--and a joint administration for defense and foreign affairs. The new arrangement will have little immediate impact on Amateur Radio. For DXCC purposes, Serbia and Montenegro will be considered a single entity--at least for the time being--and amateurs there are expected to continue using YU/YT prefixes. The situation could change in three years when residents of the two republics would be allowed to vote to stick together or go their separate ways. Yugoslavia was established in 1918 as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. DXCC criteria are available on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/rules.html#sii>>.

Ham Help: Do you have some advice for your fellow hams in dealing with local authorities to get an antenna permit? Want a place to share it? Well try a new website called www.antennasup.org. Its the work of Duane Mantick, WB9OMC, who freely admits that it does get a bit indignant in spots but there is a reason. That being to wake up and shake up a few hams to get them involved in what C-Q Magazine said may be the most serious threat yet to Amateur Radio. The ability to put up a sky hook and get on the air. Duane adds that the site is still under construction and that hes waiting for some graphics. He is also working on collecting some more specific URL's to relevant documents for those who drop in for more information. Again thats www.antennasup.org. Go over and take a look for yourself

Ham Radio Grew In 2002: Happy New Year and welcome to 2003. We start the year with some good news. Ham radio began growing once again 2002. 2002 was definitely a good year for growth in the United States Amateur Service. We ended the year 2000 with a total of 681,187 hams licensed by the FCC. A year later, at the end of 2001 we were down to 680,371. A loss of 816. And many feared that the downward spiral would pick up speed in 2002.

Well the pundits were wrong. 2002 was a turn-around year. Not only did the U-S ham radio population increase, its now up to 682,591. A net gain of 2200 and more than offsetting the previous years loss. Not a lot of people, but at least numbers going in the right direction. And looking at the numbers, the greatest growth came in two licenses. As expected the Technician class continued to expand. Surprise was the Extra. A total of 4082 people either upgraded to the top license or

went right to it from ground zero. Either way, the numbers show that there is a lot of interest in the Extra now that the 20 word per minute Morse test has gone away. The losers in 2002? The license classes no longer issued. Tech Plus was down by 45%. Novice class lost 30% and Advanced plunged 20%. But it does not mean that all the holders of these licenses left ham radio. Some probably did, but the majority seemed to have upgraded to higher class licenses with Tech Plus to General leading the way.

AMATEUR RADIO HONORS: THE CQ AMATEUR RADIO HALL OF FAME

Also seeking nominations is the CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame. This ongoing program honors those whose technical or other accomplishments have helped to propel Amateur Radio forward, or whose achievements in other areas of life have helped to improve ham radio's reputation simply through association. Nominations for the award can be made by letter to CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame, 25 Newbridge Road, Hicksville New York, 11801. Nominations can also be filed by e-mail to hall-of-fame@cq-amateur-radio.com. And in case you have not yet figured it out, this award is sponsored by our friends over at CQ Magazine

AMATEUR RADIO COMMUNITY MOURNS LOSS OF COLUMBIA ASTRONAUTS

The flags of the United States, the ARRL and the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) are flying at half staff at ARRL Headquarters as the Amateur Radio community has joined the rest of the world in mourning the loss of the seven shuttle Columbia astronauts. Through the Space Amateur Radio EXperiment (SAREX) and, more recently, the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) programs, amateurs have enjoyed a special relationship with the astronaut corps, many of whom are licensees. Three of the Columbia astronauts were Amateur Radio operators, and the ARISS program is a joint effort of ARRL, AMSAT and NASA. "The ultimate in public service was just given by these astronauts," said ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP. "It's a sad thing that's occurred, and our thoughts are with the families of the astronauts who died doing what they loved. They were part of us." Haynie, who was in Florida last weekend for the Miami Tropical Hamboree, said the news of the Columbia incident cast a pall over the festivities. "You could feel it in the crowd," he said. Haynie led those attending the ARRL forum in a moment of silence in remembrance of the lost crew members. The STS-107 crew, headed by Commander Rick Husband, included Pilot Willie McCool, Mission Specialists Kalpana "KC" Chawla, KD5ESI; David Brown, KC5ZTC; Laurel Clark, KC5ZSU, Michael Anderson, and Payload Specialist Ilan Ramon, the first Israeli astronaut. "The world has lost seven great heroes," said ARISS International Chairman Frank Bauer, KA3HDO, a NASA employee, in extending condolences to the families and friends of the STS-107 crew. Bauer said the Columbia catastrophe "clearly demonstrated the challenging and sometimes sobering aspects" of human space flight. "Our quest for space must continue despite these tragic losses," he said. ARRL and the ARISS Team received condolences from all over the globe. AMSAT-NA President Robin Haighton, VE3FRH--one of two Canadian ARISS representatives--expressed his great sadness at learning of the Columbia disaster. "AMSAT has always been a strong supporter of the shuttle program and of ARISS," he said "Their understanding of the risks taken on this and other missions did not prevent them from performing at the highest level and, unfortunately, paying the ultimate price," he said of the lost crew. Ken Pulfer, VE3PU, the other Canadian delegate to the ARISS International Team, said he was overwhelmed by the tragedy, both in sympathy for his US friends and because he had met so many of the astronauts himself. It was Pulfer who convinced the Canadian government to establish an astronaut corps of its own. "My condolences go out to all Americans at this time." he said, calling February 1 "a sad, sad day indeed." ARISS International Secretary Rosalie White, K1STO, recalled meeting "KC" Chawla at an ARISS meeting at Johnson Space Center. "Kalpana was intelligent, quiet--a professional scientist with a genuine smile," she said. She also noted that Laurel Clark had done some "terrestrial SAREX QSOs" from W5RRR at Johnson Space Center with students in Kansas and New Mexico. The "terrestrial" SAREX QSOs took place at a time when the demand from schools for radio contacts with astronauts was high but the number of scheduled shuttle flights was very low. Built in 1981, Columbia was the oldest shuttle in NASA's fleet and was the first to carry Amateur Radio. Retired astronaut Owen Garriott, W5LFL, became the first ham to operate from space in November 1983. Thousands heard W5LFL, and hundreds had direct QSOs with him on 2 meters. Refurbished in 1999, Columbia was on its 28th space mission. Columbia carried no Amateur Radio gear on its last mission into space, however.

HAMS ASSIST IN SEARCH FOR COLUMBIA DEBRIS

In Texas this week, Amateur Radio Emergency Service and SKYWARN volunteers have been assisting federal, state and

local officials and relief organizations in their search for shuttle Columbia debris and remains of the crew members. "Ham radio has proven to be the only reliable communications options during the recovery effort," said Public Information Officer Tim Lewallen, KD5ING, of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club. "The communications systems used by other federal and state organizations cannot penetrate 'The Pine Curtain' as we know it in East Texas," he said. He said even local authorities were having problems with their radio gear. Lewallen says federal authorities have requested that every survey team have at least one Amateur Radio operator along to help keep the recovery efforts coordinated and organized. Lewallen also cited the reliability of EchoLink connections among the various groups as key to getting the operation up and running and keeping it running smoothly. He suggested that prospective volunteers visit the North Texas Section Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=NTX>> for additional information. Alan Hayes, NE5AH, in the ARRL South Texas Section said February 6 that hams were urgently needed to assist in the search and recovery effort in the San Augustine County area east of Lufkin, site of the debris search command center at the Department of Public Safety. Hayes said a substantial amount of the debris recovery yet to be done--he estimates 50 percent--is in San Augustine County, which has few active hams. Debris from the Columbia has been recovered in more than three dozen Texas counties, and the search now has moved into parts of Arizona and California. "We currently have the infrastructure and portable repeaters in place, thanks to all of the volunteer efforts from outside of our area," Hayes said. Volunteers have been making use of a portable repeater donated by the Garland Amateur Radio Club and set up at in San Augustine. "To date, Amateur Radio has proven to be the only reliable communications in this area of operations, and approximately 25 operators per day have been needed," Hayes concluded. "Thus far, alternative communications from sources other than Amateur Radio have not been successful." Hayes says that two dozen or more operators are needed each day, and he expects that need to continue for the next three weeks. Prospective volunteers may get in touch with South Texas Section Emergency Coordinator Bob Ehrhardt, W5ZX <w5zx@yahoo.com>. Other agencies involved in the effort include the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Department of Transportation, the FBI, local law enforcement and fire departments and National Guard units from Texas and elsewhere. Relief organizations include the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army and the Texas Baptist Men's Kitchen. The Salvation Army also has been using Amateur Radio for its communication needs. Hams also assisted students and staffers from the Humanities Undergraduate Environmental Sciences (HUES) Geographic Information Systems and Forestry Resources Institute labs at Stephen F. Austin State University. Several amateurs in Texas reported hearing a reverberating, rumbling sound as the Columbia broke up above them and debris began to rain down on the landscape. "Very scary," said Ralston Gober, W5ZNN, of Corsicana, Texas. "It shook the heck out of my house and shack!"

SHUTTLE LOSS IMPACTING AMATEUR RADIO IN SPACE

The future of Amateur Radio in space--at least in the near term--could depend on how fast NASA pins down the cause of the February 1 shuttle Columbia disaster and fixes the problem. With the shuttle fleet grounded until it does--and further International Space Station construction on hold as a result--attention is turning to the well-being of the all-ham ISS Expedition 6 crew of Commander Ken Bowersox, KD5JBP, Don Pettit, KD5MDT, and Nikolai Budarin, RV3FB. Three of the Columbia astronauts also were Amateur Radio operators. Under normal circumstances, a shuttle mission next month would have brought a fresh crew to the ISS and returned Bowersox and his crewmates to Earth. With a Progress 10 cargo rocket delivery February 4, the Expedition 6 team now has sufficient supplies to sustain the crew until late June or early July if necessary, NASA said this week. What happens beyond that remains up in the air, although NASA has said it would not mothball the ISS and leave the spacecraft without a crew. The extended stay could have an unintended consequence for Amateur Radio, however, since the temporarily stranded crew would be likely to have more spare time on its hands. NA1SS onboard the ISS represents the first permanent Amateur Radio station in space. The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) International Team recently announced plans to expand NA1SS to include, among other things, separate stations for 2 meters and 70 cm and SSTV capabilities. ARISS is an international program with participation by ARRL, AMSAT and NASA. An ARISS contact set for February 6 with students at a high school in Germany was postponed, although the ARISS contact schedule is expected to resume later this month. "The German school QSO was postponed because of the Columbia accident and the re-planning taking place for ISS," said ARISS International Chairman Frank Bauer, KA3HDO. Bauer said the crew's having to unload a ton of equipment from the Progress rocket also was a factor. He said he's expecting further clarification from NASA regarding future ARISS school QSOs. NASA reports that Bowersox, Budarin and Pettit paid a private tribute February 4 to Columbia's astronauts. NASA ISS flight controllers radioed the crew an audio feed from the memorial ceremony at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. Additional information on the crew's activities aboard the ISS is available on NASA's Human Spaceflight Web site <<http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/>>.

The crippling of the US shuttle fleet has shifted formerly unanticipated demands on Russia and its meagerly funded space program, since Russian supplies the Soyuz capsules that now serve as emergency escape vehicles for the ISS crew. "If we have the money, we can build new [Soyuz] capsules," Russian space official and former cosmonaut Valery Ryumin assured this week. But, more money or no, Soyuz vehicles cannot carry cargo or experiments. The Russians also have temporarily

scrapped their "space tourist" program, which they had been promoting to raise much-needed additional funds. Businessmen Dennis Tito, KG6FZX, and Mark Shuttleworth each paid an estimated \$20 million to fill the third Soyuz seat and spend a week aboard the ISS. 'N Sync pop singer Lance Bass, KG4UYY, had been considered a possible candidate for an April Soyuz taxi flight. Now, the Soyuz could become the principal crew transport vehicle for the ISS, although no decision has been made on whether the April taxi flight now will be used to carry out the crew change.

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