

Chicago FM Club Squelch Tale - September 2003

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HELP WANTED

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY, WILL TRAIN

The Chicago FM Club is looking for a few good men and women to be trained as slave labor for this year's Radio Expo. The pay is lousy but the benefits are worse. No kidding. Now is your chance to help out on a Club project that we all benefit from. If you don't know by now, ALL the nice new toys, the receive site packages, new antennas, receivers, pre-amps, etc etc come directly from the monies that the Club generates from Radio Expo! If you would just donate an hour or two to the weekend of Radio Expo 2003 to help out, then when the new equipment works great, you can say that you were part of that.

We need help setting up Friday, and during the days of Radio Expo. On Sunday after Expo is over and teardown begins, more help is needed. The really disgusting work such as garbage removal and cleaning of the washroom facilities will be handled by the fair grounds people.

The Expo Workers Dinner held later in the year is but one way the Club can show its appreciation for all the hard work that goes into Expo. If you can help out in any small or large way, PLEASE give us a call and place your name on our list of workers. The Ham-Help Line phone number is 312-262-6773

THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Radio Expo 2003 is right around the corner. As many of you know this Ham Fest is the clubs main financial support. Without Radio Expo, CFMC would be just another repeater club. The past few Expos have been in the black, but our profit margin is being eaten up by the constant increase in our expenses to promote and put on this event. In the past many of the things to be done for Expo were done by the club member volunteers at no cost to the club. Recently this is not the case. The club has had to pay for services and advertisement that comes right out of our profits.

I know many of you are busy with raising your families and making a living to offer your time to the club, but we could use your financial support. There are approximately 300 members of CFMC and if each of you purchased a minimum of 2 or 3 tickets and gave them to a friend to attend Expo and those friends bought tickets to give their friends, you can see how this can greatly help the club. This is just one of my ideas and I'm sure there are many of you that have even better ones.

I hope everyone had a great summer and I'm looking forward to seeing each and every one of you at Radio Expo 2003.

73 de Phil N9PA

MEETING LOCATION NOTICE

The September General Meeting will be held at Dino's Restaurant located at 7004 Higgins Avenue in Chicago, IL On September 17th. The General Meetings are held at 8:00 PM. You may want to get there early if you plan on dining with some of the members. See you there and don't forget to bring a friend!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

For Second Reading At The September General Meeting

W9NIX Don Nix (K9ZAZ N9ZON)

KB9QVS Charles F. Burian (KB9AJM K9ZAZ)

KC9AEW Victor Guarino (N9PA K9FFY)

For third reading And Vote

WB9JNZ Eric Lanzl (KB9AJM WA9AYQ)

New Members

The Officers and Board of Directors of the Chicago FM Club would like to welcome the following new members voted in at the July and August general meetings.

KC9DFJ Lenord R. Kerns

N2IGC Jim Bersie

KC9BXQ David Welsh

WA9KJE Sonny Hersh

KB9LPA Michael J. Schulz

KB9YEK William Prize

Membership Renewals

The following CFMC members renewed during July and August;

KA9AXA W9BBB N9CMP K9DDI WD9DDJ KB9DIN N9FA K9FFY WD9GAD N9HIN N9HNQ K9JON WW9K
N9LUI KF9MY K9MYK W9NBG K9OHT K9PGN N9RKU KB9SXA AB9Y KB9YEK K9YWF KU9Z

The following former member chose not to renew; N9TSS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINEES

The election of the Board of Directors of the Chicago FM Club for the years 2004 and 2005 will be held at the December general meeting. The following are names placed in nomination at the September Board meeting. Nominations will remain open through the business portion of the October general meeting. If you would like to place a name in nomination, come to either the September or October meetings.

KA9HHH WA9KOD W9XB N9KTW KA9R WD9DZV

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The September Board meeting was held at the Edgebrook library. Those in attendance were;

N9PE W9EG K9FFY WA9FTS KA9HHH N9KYW WA9KOD WA9KXZ W9XB

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

Secretary K9FFY

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

Treasurer N9RKU

The Treasurer was out of town, so there was no report for the Board.

New Business

KA9HHH made a motion that the Club Trustee should be a voting Board member. W9EG seconded the motion. This will require a change in the constitution and a vote at a general meeting by the members in good standing, so the process will be started. As the Board is now, there are four (4) officers and five (5) members of the Board.

The September General meeting will be held at Dino's Restaurant.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Repeater broken? They'll fix it. Web Page down? They'll fix it. Upcoming club Hamfest? They'll plan it and work it. New amateur on the air? They'll help him. Need someone for the public service communications? They'll always be there. Who is "they"? WE'RE ALL "THEY"!!

It's pretty obvious that we've got to pitch in. This is our hobby. This is our Club. If you or I don't stand up and pitch in, we're not doing our job and hurting no one but ourselves. You're part of the group, you're an Amateur Radio operator, you're a Chicago FM Club member. Enjoy your hobby and Club, get involved!

It's never too late to volunteer to help at your Club's Hamfest! If you have a few hours to help out it would be appreciated, any and all help is more than welcome. If not, it will still be nice to see you there!

de: Tim, WD9DZV

DZV'S DITS AND BITS by Tim, WD9DZV

The W5YI Report to QRT: The W5YI Report, dubbed "America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter," has announced that it's ceasing publication with its July 15 issue. Begun some 25 years ago by Fred Maia, W5YI, as a service to the Richardson (Texas) Wireless Club, The W5YI Report evolved into a twice-monthly paid-subscription compilation of ham radio and, more recently, electronics industry and Internet-related news printed on distinctive pink paper. Maia, 68, sold his company, W5YI Group <<http://www.w5yi.org>>, which included The W5YI Report and the W5YI-VEC, to Larry Pollock, NB5X, in 2000. Maia agreed to continue editing the newsletter for another three years, but now he wants to give it up, although he will continue his monthly column in CQ. Current subscriptions to The W5YI Report will be fulfilled with CQ subscriptions starting with the August issue.

Committee reports now available on ARRL Web site: Committee reports prepared for the July 2003 ARRL Board of Directors meeting now are available on the ARRL Web site. Visit the July 2003 Committee Reports to the ARRL Board of Directors page <<http://www.arrl.org/announce/reports-0307/>>.

DXCC Annual List deadline approaching: The ARRL DXCC Desk says the deadline to submit applications for the 2003 DXCC Annual List is rapidly approaching. Applications must be postmarked no later than September 30, 2003. For more information, contact DXCC Manager Bill More, NC1L, dxcc@arrl.org.

Salvation Army's SATERN participates in Indiana flood response: Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) members this week supported The Salvation Army's response in central Indiana after torrential rains caused widespread flooding. "For the second time this year the streets of Marion and Hendricks counties were flooded as water flowed in from every direction," said SATERN National Coordinator Pat McPherson, WW9E. McPherson said Peggy McNary, N9QT, and her SATERN team from Central Indiana were supporting the operation with Amateur Radio communication. He reports that since September 1, The Salvation Army has served nearly 1000 meals to flood-affected

residents and National Guard troops assisting in the relief work. The Salvation Army also has been providing shelter for displaced residents and distributing clean-up kits. Three Salvation Army canteens are serving meals throughout the Indianapolis area.

ARRL LEAGUE LINES

ARRL Urges Improved RFI Immunity Standards For Consumer Electronics

The ARRL has told the FCC that improved interference standards for consumer electronic devices is the most pressing need as the Commission considers the interference immunity performance of receivers. The League this week filed comments in response to an FCC Notice of Inquiry (NOI), "Interference Immunity Performance Specifications for Radio Receivers" (ET-03-65), released last March to gather input on the issue. While recommending "either mandatory receiver immunity standards or at least guidelines" in most other services, the ARRL said no receiver immunity standards are necessary or practical in the "essentially experimental" Amateur Service.

"The real need for receiver immunity specifications is in the area of consumer electronics," the ARRL said. "With the current explosion of consumer electronics and unlicensed devices, the Commission must—concurrently with consideration of receiver immunity standards in licensed radio services—establish interference rejection standards for unlicensed home electronic equipment and systems as well."

At the same time, the ARRL said, development of any receiver immunity standards or guidelines "should not be used as a means of justifying the overlay of otherwise fundamentally incompatible spectrum sharing partners."

The League said the FCC has had the authority to require improved RF interference immunity of consumer electronics and systems for many years "and has failed repeatedly to exercise it." The result has been "many thousands of instances of complaints against Amateur Radio operators and, in some cases, civil and criminal actions being filed," the League said. In its 21-page reply to the NOI, the ARRL recited the recent history of legislative and regulatory efforts to come to grips with interference from RF sources, including amateur stations, to receivers used in other services, such as TV and radio broadcasting, and to consumer electronics.

"ARRL continues to believe that receiver immunity should be on the order of 3 V/m for receivers that might be in the near field of an Amateur Radio station," the League said. At that distance, a receiver would be immune to an approximately 100-W ham radio transmission into a 0 dB antenna 100 feet away. The League conceded, however, that such a standard would not address the interference immunity of telephones, computers, alarm systems, audio systems and other consumer electronics that "constitute the bulk of the instances of interference involving Amateur Radio operators."

The ARRL suggested the FCC mandate a standard for all consumer electronics or adopt a labeling or grading system that allows consumers to make their own choices about the importance of interference immunity and its value in terms of increased product cost. The League also said software-defined radio (SDR) technology offered the best opportunity to deal with receiver immunity.

The ARRL advised the FCC against relying exclusively on manufacturers to agree on how to deal with interference immunity.

The ARRL also urged the FCC not to make interference susceptibility of unlicensed devices a determining factor in whether a licensed radio service should be given an allocation in bands in where unlicensed—and unprotected—devices are deployed. As an example, the League cited the FCC's recent refusal to allocate a sliver band in the vicinity of 136 kHz "because of the ill-conceived prior deployment of unlicensed power line carrier [PLC] systems."

The FCC, in effect, "refused to make an allocation based on interference susceptibility of unlicensed and unprotected RF devices and systems," the League said. "This is improper spectrum management and the policy should be revisited."

FCC NEWS

FCC Upholds Vanity Fee Policy, Sets New Fee Start Date

The FCC says the new, higher Amateur Radio vanity call sign regulatory fee of \$16.30 for the 10-year license term will go into effect September 9. Until then, applicants for amateur vanity call signs will continue to pay the current \$14.50 fee per vanity application. The FCC expects to collect close to \$160,000 from 9800 Amateur Radio vanity call sign applicants during

fiscal year 2003. That's up by almost \$30,000 and 800 applications from FY2002.

In releasing its annual Report and Order on the assessment and collection of regulatory fees for FY2003, the FCC responded at some length to comments filed from the amateur community. Some comments had questioned the need for the fee, the requirement to pay it when renewing a vanity call sign and why refunds were not automatic.

Telecommunications Act provisions governing regulatory fee assessment cover applications for vanity call signs, which, the FCC said, "are voluntarily requested by licensees" and are "a value-added benefit not afforded to all licensees." Assessment of a regulatory fee to cover the FCC's processing and enforcement costs to make the vanity call sign service available is reasonable, the Commission concluded.

The FCC said its current policy of assessing "a nominal fee" at the time of initial application and at each renewal also allows greater access to vanity call signs. "A high one-time-only fee would be cost prohibitive for many entities wishing to obtain a vanity call sign," the Commission said. The Commission also said it incurs costs to manage each vanity call sign throughout its existence, not just in the first 10 years.

Regarding refunds due when the FCC denies an application, the FCC said its rules require a written request from applicants before it can process refunds of regulatory fees. "The written request serves as documentation when cross-referencing each unique file number that may be entitled to a refund," the FCC added.

The FCC said the documentation was particularly important in the case of Amateur Radio vanity applications, "because filing trends indicate that some applicants file several vanity call sign applications per day for several days on end." Requiring a written request makes it easier to certify which fees are to be refunded for which dismissed applications, the Commission said. In addition, those processing applications in FCC bureaus and offices don't have the authority to issue refunds without proper documentation.

NCVEC STUDYING NEW ENTRY-LEVEL LICENSE PROPOSALS

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) has formed a committee to develop an FCC rule-making proposal for a new entry-level Amateur Service license. The move came during the NCVEC's annual meeting July 25 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where attendees heard presentations on the possibilities for such a new ticket. At the same session, the NCVEC also approved plans to draft and submit a rule-making petition to eliminate the current 5 WPM Morse code requirement (Element 1) and to give Novice/Tech Plus HF privileges to all current Technician licensees. NCVEC Chair John Creel, WB3GXW, of the Laurel VEC presided over the gathering, which included representatives of 12 of the nation's 14 VECs.

NCVEC Question Pool Committee Chair Scotty Neustadter, W4WW, and Rules Committee Chair Fred Maia, W5YI, offered separate proposals for an entry-level license. Neustadter said while the current entry-level license, the Technician class, provides full VHF and UHF privileges, it does not offer a simple entry path. He recommended a 50-W maximum power output level, Novice/Tech HF sub bands plus 12 and 17-meter privileges and a 20-question written exam.

Maia's proposal suggested upgrading all current Tech and Tech Plus licensees to General and allowing their use of all bands. Beginner licensees should be granted call signs from the NA-NZ#xxx call sign block, he said. Both Maia and Neustadter suggest ways to streamline the number of license classes. Maia offered up the possibility of asking the FCC to eliminate the Morse testing requirement immediately, easing code exam format restrictions and giving serious thought to dropping CW-only sub bands as well. Neustadter recommended no changes in CW/phone allocations, at least for now.

Maia, Neustadter, Jim Wiley, KL7CC, and John Johnston, W3BE, will serve on the entry-level license study committee. The panel is to report back to the NCVEC within a few weeks.

The NCVEC representatives' approval to petition the FCC seeking the deletion of the Element 1 Morse code examination requirement for HF access was in reaction to the World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) decision to leave such requirements up to individual administrations. The ARRL-VEC abstained from voting on the issue.

Responding to a question, the FCC's Bill Cross, W3TN, told the group that he did not believe the Administrative Procedures Act would permit the FCC to drop the Morse code testing requirement on its own motion. He predicted a lively debate during any proposal-and-comment period.

In remarks at the meeting, FCC Special Counsel for Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth complimented the VECs for their

efforts. He noted that complaints concerning the administration of amateur exams were at their lowest point in the five years he's been handling amateur enforcement. He also said VECs should not underestimate the FCC's concerns regarding examination integrity.

Members of the Licensing and Technical Analysis Branch staff at the FCC's Gettysburg office demonstrated a beta version of new Universal Licensing System <<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>> on-line filing software expected to go live in September. Among other features, the new, user-friendly

BPL PLACES FCC AT REGULATORY CROSSROAD, AMRAD SUGGESTS

Encouraging Broadband over Power Line (BPL) technology puts the FCC at a regulatory crossroad, the Amateur Radio Research and Development Corporation (AMRAD) <<http://www.amrad.org>> has suggested. AMRAD's remarks

came August 20 in reply comments filed in response to the FCC's BPL Notice of Inquiry (ET Docket 03-104). The Washington, DC-based organization's comments also outlined its BPL testing and measurement efforts, which included laboratory and real-world conditions. AMRAD said any departure from the "current baseline" of Part 15 rules that govern unlicensed services would invite "troublesome unintended consequences" that could prove difficult to correct.

"The FCC is facing some serious decisions on whether to continue with past rules and historical enforcement or to dispense with their historical role and substitute rules which give the unlicensed Part 15 systems priority over the licensed systems such as the amateur radio service," AMRAD said. "Such changes to Part 15 rules would tip the responsibility of compliance so as to favor the unlicensed users and leave the FCC facing a large number of harmful interference complaints to resolve."

AMRAD recommended the FCC proceed "slowly and with caution" in advancing BPL as a viable and economical alternative to existing high-speed Internet technologies.

The non-profit scientific and educational organization expressed concerns as to whether the FCC would be able to enforce Part 15 rules as written in the face of neighborhood Internet service interruptions caused by "a single radio amateur or other FCC-licensed radio transmitter." It said its own testing has demonstrated that a 20-meter amateur transmitter running

as little as 10 W in the vicinity of an in-house Home Plug standard BPL local network could seriously impair the system's throughput. A 100 W signal would cause it to collapse altogether.

Ironically, the Home Plug standard substantially notches out the amateur bands—something ARRL convinced the Home Plug Power line Alliance to do after amateur complaints sparked a recall of Home Plug-standard devices. The new 60-meter band is not notched out, however.

AMRAD said its observations and tests demonstrate that broadband BPL signals that conform to Part 15 "are well above the ambient noise and will interfere with many forms of reception." It said other non-Home Plug-standard systems that don't notch out ham bands "could cause more serious interference problems."

In the final analysis, AMRAD said, the FCC "must proceed with great care and take actions now to conduct testing to gather critical information" before making regulatory assessments. "The FCC efforts should remain focused on providing broadband to the home and not focus on any specific technology," AMRAD asserted.

AMRAD member Frank Gentges, K0BRA, recently assisted ARRL Lab Supervisor Ed Hare, W1RFI, in the League's efforts to assess the impact of BPL on HF. Gentges gave Hare a guided tour of "hot neighborhoods" in Manassas, Virginia, where BPL is undergoing field trials.

Although the reply comment window closed August 20, the number of comments in response to the FCC's BPL NOI was 4553 as of August 29 and counting, with some 100 comments filed since the deadline. Many comments in the BPL proceeding have come from the Amateur Radio community.

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