

Chicago FM Club Squelch Tale - May 2003

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May is a transitional month where we go from spring to summer. Although my favorite time of year is Spring I still look forward to the fun of summer. Our summers in Chicago can be blistering hot or cool and mild. Either way Mother Nature makes the choice for us.

The members of CFMC have the ability to make their own choices when it comes to club activities. I am still looking for a Forums Chairman for Radio Expo. This is an important part of Expo and with the right person can really add to the success of our Hamfest. If you are interested or know of someone please give me a call or catch me at the next meeting.

Don't forget that Field Day is right around the corner. Adam (KU9Z) has agreed to be Field Day Chairman again this year. WE will have a new location for Field Day this year. The village of River Grove has asked us to give a demonstration of Ham Radio. What better way then to present it on Field Day. Adam is still looking for operators and people to help setup and tear down. If you've never experienced Field Day, now is the time.

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

73 de Phil N9PA

MEETING NOTICE

The next General Meeting of the Chicago FM Club will be held at 8:00PM in the Edgebrook Library, which is located at 5300 W. Devon Avenue. As always, CFMC's General Meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month, which will make this meeting date May 21st. Our Refreshment Chairman Howard, N9KTW will have coffee and donuts available after the

meeting. See you all at this month's meeting, and don't forget to bring a friend!

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MEETING RAFFLE

There will be a raffle at this month's meeting. The Club will be raffling off 2 tickets to an upcoming Hamfest. You must sign in on the sign-in sheet to be in this raffle!

FOXHUNT REPORT by Mike, WA9FTS

April 2003 CFMC Foxhunt

Chuck KA9KZO was the fox and got the hunt off shortly after 8 PM but did not make the repeater. The hunters took the Ike west and north on 290. But how far to go on 290? Paul and I planned on using North Ave as an alternate west route.

In going from the Ike to 290, I thought Chuck might be just east of 290 near North Ave. Giving the hunters some problems, Chuck missed 2 transmissions. We got off at Lake St. and waited - then east on Lake. Now the signals were loud

and SW. Charlie KB9DIM, fresh from a Florida vacation, called it quits. We tried the retirement home that was the old Northlake Hotel. We drove to the back and found Chuck in his car behind an earth-moving vehicle for the win. We went to Portillo's and waited for the rest of the hunters. Tony AA9CC showed up after finishing 2nd. Charlie and Alexis arrived just before Tom N9CBA. Chuck went home and Don W9RA joined us.

Results:

1. Paul N9LXF, Mike WA9FTS

2. Tony AA9CC

3. Tom N9CBA

Did Not Find Charlie KB9DIM, Alexis

AMATEUR SPECTRUM PROTECTION ACT TO GET PUBLIC AIRING

The chairman of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet has agreed to hear testimony on the House version of the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act of 2003, HR 713, at a public hearing later this spring. Rep Fred Upton (R-MI) this week assured the bill's sponsor, Rep Michael Bilirakis (R-FL), that the hearing, which will be convened to address public safety spectrum needs, will include an opportunity for a member of the Amateur Radio community to appear before the panel. Upton also told Bilirakis that he shares his interest in protecting Amateur Radio.

"That indeed is good news!" said ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP. "A hearing is exactly what we'd like to have in order to state our case, and I think we can state a good case, too." The date of the hearing has not been set.

Upton's willingness to hear testimony on the bill is considered critical to providing it with the credibility it needs as it moves through the legislative process. It also marks a major step toward getting HR 713 through this Congress.

The agreement, during a meeting of the full House Energy and Commerce Committee, came after Bilirakis asked to speak prior to consideration of another piece of spectrum legislation, HR 1320, the Commercial Spectrum Enhancement Act, which Upton sponsored. During his comments, Bilirakis

spent about five minutes discussing the importance of Amateur Radio to the committee, chaired by Rep Billy Tauzin (R-LA).

The newest cosponsors of HR 713 include representatives Jerry Moran (D-KS), John Olver (D-MA), Mike Ross, WD5DVR (D-AR), and Walter Jones, Jr (R-NC).

The Senate version of the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act, S 537, recently got a boost when the chairman of the Senate Communications Subcommittee, Montana Republican Conrad Burns, signed on as a cosponsor. His co sponsorship indicates that the measure now has his attention and could convince others to follow suit.

Bilirakis filed HR 713 on February 12, while Idaho Sen. Michael Crapo introduced S 537 on March 6. The legislation would amend the Communications Act to require the FCC to provide "equivalent replacement spectrum" to Amateur Radio and the Amateur-Satellite Service in the event

of a reallocation of primary amateur allocations, any reduction in secondary amateur allocations, or "additional allocations within such bands" that would substantially reduce their utility to amateurs. Bilirakis and Crapo, both Republicans, have twice before sponsored similar legislation

at the League's recommendation. The bills point out Amateur Radio's volunteer role in providing emergency communication during disasters and emergencies.

Haynie continues to encourage ARRL members to urge their senators and representatives and to cosponsor the bills. "Letters and e-mails are the key to getting legislation passed," Haynie says. A sample letter is available on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/govrelations/arspa.html>>. Those writing their lawmakers are asked to copy their correspondence to the League via e-mail <specbill03@arrl.org>. (For additional information, see "Communicating with Congress," by Derek Riker, KB3JLF, QST May 2003, p 46.) The text of HR 713 and S 537 is available via the Thomas Web site <<http://thomas.loc.gov/>>.

FOR SALE

Tiger System X Computer

800 MHZ Processor

512 Mg Ram

20 GB Hard Drive

8 MHZ video card

50X CD

32X CD-RW

56K Modem

Win XP Pro

Office XP

MS Works

Click & Burn CD writer software

System includes keyboard, mouse, speakers and a 13.5ö IBM Monitor. Also all restore software included. Asking \$225.00 contact Jerry, W9EG at 630-628-1336

ARRL LEAGUE LINES

DXCC To Accept Iraq Portable Operations

ARRL Membership Services Manager Wayne Mills, N7NG, says the League will accept for DXCC credit YI/ operations from Iraq by US or British military personnel provided the operator has written permission from his or her commanding officer.

"There is precedent for this," Mills said, citing an operation during the 1991 Gulf War. "These operators will need written authorization to operate from their commanding officers until an

interim Iraqi civilian government is in place," Mills said. After that point, operators would need documented permission from Iraqi authorities.

Still not known is whether Ed Giorgadze, 4L4FN, now in the Middle East after wrapping up his North Korean (P5) operation last fall, will be on a United Nations World Food Program assignment inside Iraq in the near future. That could depend in part on how big a role the UN plays in rebuilding Iraq.

FCC NEWS UPDATES

Ham Radio "CC&R Bill" Reintroduced In Congress

Another Congressional attempt is under way to provide relief to amateurs prevented by private deed covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) from installing outdoor antennas. Rep Steve Israel (D-NY) has again introduced the "Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Consistency Act" into the current session of Congress. The measure, designated HR 1478, would require private land-use regulators such as homeowners' associations to "reasonably accommodate" Amateur Radio antennas consistent with the PRB-1 limited federal preemption. PRB-1 now applies only to states and municipalities.

In remarks introducing HR 1478, Israel said passage of his bill not only would assist Amateur Radio operators but society as a whole. "Organized Amateur Radio operators, or "hams", regularly provide emergency communication when regular communications channels are disrupted by disaster," Israel pointed out. The growth of developed communities has put a growing number of hams under an "array of inconsistent regulations," he said, that make it harder and harder, or altogether impossible, to erect the necessary antennas.

"Not allowing hams the equipment they need could restrict communication to the local community in similar situations in the future." Israel said his bill "seeks to ensure the continued viability of Amateur Radio through consistent application of federal regulations."

The one-sentence measure is identical to the text of the CC&R bill that was introduced in the last Congress: "For purposes of the Federal Communications Commission's regulation relating to station antenna structures in the Amateur Radio Service (47 CFR 97.15), any private land use rules applicable to such structures shall be treated as a state or local regulation and shall be subject to the same requirements and limitations as a state or local regulation."

ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, said he was happy to see the bill back before Congress. "Of course I am very pleased that Rep Israel has reintroduced the bill," Haynie said. "The League can do the mechanics, but it is now up to our members to write their elected representative and urge support and ask that they cosponsor and support the bill." Haynie noted that the League has recently ramped up its efforts to educate members of Congress about Amateur Radio, but he said lawmakers respond best to individual members.

HR 1478 has been assigned to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Information about the bill and a sample letter to use when contacting your representative are available on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/govrelations/hr1478/>>.

FCC Opens Receiver Interference Immunity Inquiry

The FCC wants to know how it can incorporate receiver interference immunity specifications within its overall spectrum policy. In a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) in ET Docket 03-65, released March 24, the FCC seeks public comments on possible methods and means of improving receiver performance. The Commission suggests that these could include incentives, guidelines or regulatory requirements—or a combination of all three.

"From a technical standpoint, a radio receiver's susceptibility to interference is largely dependent on the interference immunity of the device, particularly with regard to its rejection of undesired radio frequency (RF) energy and signals," the FCC said in its introduction to the NOI. While expressing its reluctance "to implement a new regulatory regime" of mandatory receiver standards, the Commission said it believes incorporating receiver performance specifications could "promote more efficient utilization of the spectrum and create opportunities for new and additional use of radio communications."

The FCC said the NOI builds upon the recent work of its Spectrum Policy Task Force, which looked at ways to improve overall radio spectrum management. The ARRL commented on the Task Force report and plans to comment in the receiver interference immunity NOI as well.

While the NOI does not specifically address interference from Amateur Radio transmitters to consumer TV and radio receivers, the FCC does seek information describing the interference immunity characteristics of "receivers used in the various radio services." With respect to broadcast sets, the FCC suggests in its NOI that set manufacturers have been doing a pretty good job all along.

The FCC seeks comments on "the desirability of developing minimum interference immunity performance specifications for broadcast receivers." But it added that the Commission has no plans to reverse its "longstanding practice of allowing the market to determine the performance of broadcast receivers, with the Commission stepping in only where obvious deficiencies appear" that could disrupt reception.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell said he'd prefer that the Commission "rely on market incentives and voluntary industry programs to establish receiver immunity guidelines."

"Enhanced SSB" Bandwidths "Extremely Inconsiderate,"

The FCC has sent advisory notices to four enthusiasts of what's become known as "enhanced SSB"—the practice of engineering transmitted single-sideband audio to approach broadcast quality. Letters went out earlier this month to amateurs in Illinois, Florida and New Jersey who are aficionados of enhanced SSB, also known as "upper wideband" and "lower wideband."

"The Commission has received numerous complaints regarding the operation of your station," FCC Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth wrote Paul Christensen, W9AC, John Anning, NU9N, Anthony Latin, W4NSG, and Sareno Salerno, W2ONV, on April 3. Hollingsworth said complaints to the FCC

alleged that the bandwidths of the stations' enhanced SSB emissions were "wider than necessary and contrary to good engineering practice."

"Wideband overly-processed audio, especially when coupled with the high intermodulation levels of certain amplifiers, results in the use of bandwidths extremely inconsiderate of other operators," Hollingsworth said. Such transmissions may violate FCC rules and may be at odds with

what Hollingsworth described as "the expectation that the Amateur Service be largely self-regulated."

Occupying more bandwidth than necessary in a heavily used amateur band, Hollingsworth wrote, not only could generate ill will among operators but lead to petitions asking the FCC to establish bandwidth limits for amateur emissions. At present, the FCC imposes no specific bandwidth limits on various amateur modes.

Hollingsworth cited 97.307(a) of the Amateur Service rules that requires the signal of an amateur station not occupy "more bandwidth than necessary for the information rate and emission type being transmitted, in accordance with good amateur practice." Some amateurs have complained that enhanced SSB signals can take up 8 kHz or more of spectrum, cause splatter and unnecessarily interfere with other stations.

"The Amateur Service is not a substitute for the Broadcast Service," Hollingsworth said, "and the frequencies allocated to the Amateur Service were not allocated for a 'broadcast quality' audio emission or sound." Hollingsworth suggested the enhanced SSBers operate when the bands are

less busy or on bands that are not heavily used.

The many complaints the FCC has been getting, 20 or so per week, leads to the conclusion that the stations' enhanced SSB operation is having "a negative impact" on the Amateur Service, Hollingsworth said. He requested that the four amateurs "fully review the rules" and make sure their stations conform to them.

"Broadband Over Power Line" Poses HF Interference Threat

The FCC soon will invite public comment on the concept of using existing electrical power lines to deliver Internet and broadband service to homes and offices. The Commission initiated a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) in ET Docket 03-104 when it met April 23. What the FCC calls "Broadband over Power Line" (BPL) is a form of carrier-current technology typically known as power line communication (PLC). Whatever its name, the technology is raising serious interference concerns within the Amateur Radio community,

since BPL would apply high-frequency RF to parts of the power grid. One aspect of the NOI is to gather information on potential interference effects on authorized spectrum users.

"Entire communities will be affected, so every amateur in that community could have part of the radiating system 'next door' on the power wiring on his or her street," cautioned ARRL Lab Supervisor Ed Hare, W1RFI. Hare chairs the PLC Work Group of the IEEE C63 Accredited Standards Committee on Electromagnetic Compatibility <<http://c63.ieee.org/>>.

The complete NOI has not yet been released, and until that happens, the FCC will not formally accept comments in the proceeding. The ARRL will be among those expected to submit detailed comments in ET 03-104.

So-called "access BPL" would use medium-voltage (1 kV to 40 kV) power lines to deliver Internet and broadband applications. Hare says access BPL is likely to be a more significant interference source than in-building PLC technology "because overhead electrical wiring is a much better antenna than the electrical wiring within a building."

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, editorialized on the subject of PLC in "It Seems to Us . . ." in the October issue of 2002 QST. "Is it possible to do power line communications without causing interference to over-the-air

communications?" Sumner asked. "Count us among the skeptics. What may be a fine transmission line at 60 Hz looks more like an antenna at HF." Hare said his own computer analyses of interference potential from access BPL/PLC suggest "a significant increase in noise levels" from deployed

systems.

The FCC appears enthusiastic about BPL, however, saying it has the potential to "provide consumers with the freedom to access broadband services from any room in the house without adding or paying for additional connections." The Commission also touted BPL as "a competitive alternative to digital subscriber line and cable modem services."

New digital power line designs use multiple carriers spread over a wide frequency range, from 2 MHz up to 80 MHz, and capable of high data rates, up to 20 MB/s, the FCC said.

In addition to viewpoints on interference potential, the FCC also has requested comments on the current state of high-speed BPL technology, test results from BPL experimental sites, appropriate measurement procedure for testing emission characteristics for all types of carrier-current systems, changes that may be needed in Part 15 technical rules, and the equipment

approval process to foster the development of BPL.

Tests of BPL are under way in several states, including Alabama, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Hare says ARRL Lab personnel will visit some of the test cities this spring to take field measurements to quantify the potential for interference to Amateur Radio

operations.

BPL/PLC technology already has been deployed in some European countries, and amateurs there have complained about interference. Japan, responding in part to concerns expressed by its amateur community, decided last year not to adopt the technology because of its interference potential.

FCC Seeks Assistance In Curbing Unlicensed 10-Meter Incursions

The FCC has requested the assistance of the ARRL Amateur Auxiliary/Official Observers

<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/org/oo.html> in monitoring for illegal operation on 10-meters. The request came in an April 28 letter from FCC Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth, who says incursions on the band by apparently unlicensed operators continue to be a major enforcement headache.

"This is the first phase of a renewed investigation effort and may be thought of as detect, collect data, and report," said ARRL Field and Regulatory Correspondent Chuck Skolaut, K0BOG. Skolaut forwarded the request to members of the Amateur Auxiliary May 1.

Hollingsworth said the FCC wants help with a stepped-up effort over the next six months, from May through October, to identify any unlicensed operation on 10 meters "whether from business entities, including trucking companies, truckers or other individuals operating domestically." Hollingsworth said the FCC does not need direction-finding but would appreciate where possible "the names and cities of the operators, and license plate numbers and state if from a vehicle."

Skolaut said the FCC would like to concentrate on obtaining reports of this type of operation to help identify specific areas of the US where this problem is prevalent, although he concedes that not all illegal 10-meter operation originates in the US. "The FCC asks that OOs obtain as much information as possible and send their reports through normal channels to ARRL Headquarters," he said. The decision to record the transmissions of suspected interlopers was left to the discretion of the individual OOs.

The FCC request was made under a longstanding agreement between ARRL and the FCC regarding the use of Amateur Radio volunteers to assist in enforcement.

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