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# WHITE



# NOISE

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Volume 12, Number 1

January 2000

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## AMATEUR RADIO RESTRUCTURING

(How much do you really care?)

Bill Manley KB4XE

### IV. CONCLUSION

69. Consequently, in view of the foregoing, we are amending our rules to: (a) reduce the number of amateur radio operator license classes from six to three, (b) reduce the number of written examination elements from five to three and the number of telegraphy examination elements from three to one, (c) authorize Advanced Class amateur radio operators to prepare and administer examinations for the General Class amateur radio operator license, and (d) eliminate RACES station licenses. The amended rules which are appended hereto will simplify and streamline the regulations that govern the Amateur Radio Service.

*-FCC 99-412 December 22, 1999 page 40*

With their Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (98-143) of August 31, 1998 the FCC unleashed 16 months of comment, debate, and anxiety within the amateur fraternity. It all came to an end with their docket released late last December. The 70 page document redefines the license and examination structure, explains each issue in great detail, acknowledges commentary from key amateurs and amateur organizations, and finally sets the stage focusing upon strengthening the technological skills of the service.

The HF bands have been resounding with discussion, both pro and con, of the pronouncement. Even with careful listening it has been difficult to determine the overall consensus of the amateur community. Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

We resorted to the internet to find documented opinions which could be measured. My favorite newsgroup [rec.radio.amateur.antennas](http://rec.radio.amateur.antennas) reliably posts clear, accurate, and readable technical issues (but not without the usual percentage of spam). Key participants in this newsgroup include such distinguished contributors as Peter Bracket AB4BC who Palm Beach Packet Group members will remember as having contributed, in the past, stimulating discussion at our after-meeting seminars.

In the interval between December 30, 1999 and January 8, 2000 we downloaded 460 comments by 168 respondents spread over 12 threads. Many respondents posted several messages. We read their comments and tabulated whether they Favored, Opposed, or were Neutral about the restructuring.

Our findings were

Favored	28.9%
Opposed	6.6%
Neutral	64.5%

We tabulated as Favored those respondents whose postings clearly indicated that the new structure would be beneficial to amateur radio. We tabulated as Opposed those respondents whose postings clearly indicated that the new structure would not be beneficial to amateur radio. The Neutral postings were somewhat less clear consisting primarily of commentary on other postings. Since they failed to directly address a pro or con opinion about the ruling, it can be assumed that they had no strong feelings one way or the other.

One thing we noted in both the Report and Order as well as the newsgroup postings was that it is clearly recognized that we are entering an age where digital communications and its supporting technologies are the future trend of Amateur Radio.

### **qsl.net**

Alan L. Waller K3TKJ

#### **QSL. NET and QTH. NET users,**

Three years ago today the QSL/QTH systems were born as an experiment in managing a live network and learning Linux. In my wildest dreams I would have never predicted it would grow to be the number one Amateur Radio Site on the Internet. There literally is no other resource for ham radio that can compare. Many sites may be graphically more appealing but none can provide the variety of resources that make up QSL/QTH. A user on QSL/QTH can spend weeks looking at ham radio related topics at a single site. For over 40 years I have enjoyed not only the hobby of Amateur Radio but the people I have met along the way. I had a desire to make a worldwide service and the only requirement was a shared love of the hobby we all enjoy. Today about 40% of the users of the systems are from outside the US.

As we start the new millenium I have a few minor announcements and one very major one...

Let's get the minor things out of the way.

1. For our European users, we are now mirrored at <http://www-dl.qsl.net> in Munich, Germany thanks to the hard work of DL4NER. You still upload the same as always but you can view your home page at either location.
2. The finest DX site on the web is at <http://dx.qsl.net> This is the creation of N6RT.
3. QTH.NET now has almost 900 lists on ham topics, if there is a need for another list topic, you want to move an existing list here, or your club or special event needs a list to help them, please let me know.
4. All servers are at the latest levels in hardware and software as we start the new year...this means it will all be outdated by Spring.<grin>

Now for the BIG NEWS.....

It's with great pleasure I announce that QSL.NET is an International Dial-Up Internet Service provider exclusively for Radio Amateurs.

Through a great deal of time, effort and money we have partnered with a major provider of Worldwide Internet Service. QSL.NET now has 450 locations for access and thousands of access numbers in the following Countries:

United States ( 85% of the US can access QSL.NET as a local call) Canada ( Most Major Cities )

Soon to include:

United Kingdom  
France  
Italy  
Germany  
Belgium  
Netherlands  
Switzerland  
Japan

Access is V.90 56K and 64/128K ISDN.

To answer a few of your immediate questions.....

Q. Is this the end of QSL.NET being just for hams?

A. Absolutely not! QSL.NET Internet dialup remains JUST for hams.

Q. Will this service be free too?

A. As much as I would like it to be.... that is not possible, however, it is competitively priced and since there is power in numbers we have the potential to drive the Internet costs into unheard of low monthly rates.

Q. So you're an Internet Provider, big deal, there's a dozen in my home town. Why are you better??

A. To quote QSL/QTH's internet provider:

"PSINet operates a global Internet-optimized network featuring layered switching technology to provide a quality of service that no "router only" ISP can provide. PSINet is in the process of installing more than 10,000 miles of fiber optic route miles at speeds up to 9Gbps (9billion bits per second), making our infrastructure among the largest, most capable communications systems on earth."

Q. Translate the above answer for me?

A. The days of having a local ISP where you dial into a modem are fast going away. This is a huge private network that was built just for the Internet. Reliability and performance are in the 99 percentile area at all times. Besides you already have you e-mail and web page here!

Q. Why would I care about other numbers in other cities?

A. QSL.NET now provides to what amounts to local Internet access, Internationally!....if you relocate, travel or live in two different places, your e-mail never changes, you just dial the number in the city you happen to be in and the Internet works exactly as it does from home. No more reconfiguring IP's and gateways and DNS servers to use another system.

Q. What about my QSL.NET email alias?

A. Your mail account will become a normal "pop3" account and you will send and receive mail from QSL.NET as you would do with any provider.

Q. What has to change on my end to use QSL.NET as my ISP?

A. The number you call for access, your login name, and your password.

Q. I have a "free" e-mail address and web page at QSL.NET what happens to these?

A. Nothing! This is just another service available from QSL.NET..... You are welcome to keep your existing mail and web site for as long as you wish..

Q. I'm interested, what do I do now? Tell me more?

A. Visit our website at <http://www.qsl.net> for all the details.

To say that I am excited about this is to put it mildly. I have spent many months getting this system engineered and working, it works and works well! I would like to thank my beta testers, NE3Y, W3ETT, W4BYG, KB9LPJ, other non-ham friends and members of my family for their help in verifying the reliability and performance of this new QSL.NET service.

As I have told you many times, QSL.NET belongs to Ham Radio, I am honored to get to pull the levers that keep it moving forward. Never think I did this all by myself, the many hundreds of users who have donated talent, time and money are why this works. If I have never thanked you personally please accept my most sincere thanks for your help and support for the last 3years. To the senders of the several thousand "Seasons Greetings" I received, I am sorry I cannot answer every one personally but to all my best wishes for the coming New Year.

In closing I would like to invite you to consider using the new QSL.NET Internet Dial-Up as your provider. It will be good for QSL.NET, Ham Radio and for you.

73 and Happy New Year,

Al

(The Palm Beach Packet Group maintains a web site <http://www.qsl.net/pbpg> on Alan's site. We received this email message from him. We realize that many readers, who receive *White Noise* by snail mail, may never visit our site. Thus we are repeating his message here for their benefit - Ed)

## **PBPG MINUTES**

**December, 1999**

### **OPENING AND REPORTS**

Vice President Doug Welcker (WB4KGY) brought the meeting to order at 19:30 hrs. As all present were acquainted, introductions were dismissed.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Marvin (KD2CK), who had just returned from over a months stay with younger son Stuart, reported that the November 1999 statements show a total assets of were \$5901.85. A complete report will be provided in the January "*White Noise*".

### **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT**

President Doug Welcker (WB4KGY) gave the technical report and indicated that the Palm Beach Switch had again not been visited or remotely reset during the month. Andy (KF4ATC) has readied a Motorola MITREK as a backup spare should it be necessary for the Clewiston APRS site. The next technical task is to get the APRS digipeater in Stuart installed and operational. The spare transmission line was tested with the help of Rick (K4GPS) and his vector impedance meter. Another MITREK will be installed at this site. As mentioned at last months meeting, the hundreds of feet transmission lines on the Stuart tower which were swinging in the breeze were reattached by S&S tower of Okeechobee.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Update on the future Clewiston Switch site: Palm Beach Count approved the necessary land use change from agricultural which includes a zoning change for construction of a tower. Next is the application for permits for the tower and a building.

A small lending library is available to those who want to borrow a book. Please contact Secretary Burck Grosse(KC4UEV).

**NEWS & INFO**

Two presentations were made this month by Doug (WB4KGY) and John (WB4MOZ).The first was to Engineers of Palm Beach County Division of Communications on "What is Packet Radio and what it can be used for". The second was to the Wellington ARC on lightning protection and grounding.

Interesting quote: "We are installing enough optical fiber to go around the earth two times a day. Think of it as backhoe traveling at Mach 3" Quote by Thomas Koch, PHD, Lucent Technologies Optoelectronics

**NEW BUSINESS**

Are we at risk of loosing the Stuart Switch site? One non club operated ham repeater has been sent a letter pay or leave. We will be checking into this situation and report findings next month.

Allen Richter (W4PHL) has requested assistance in setting up a BBS using the 220Mhz 9K6 radios/tnc's/computer the EOC has on hand. John (WB4MOZ)will be working with Allen in completing the goal.

Nominations for elections have been made which includes the current slate of officers plus Dick Schofield (AF4OR) for Vice-president Elections will be held at the next meeting January 13th.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was concluded at 20:25.

**EDUCATIONAL SECESSION**

Doug (WB4KGY) did a presentation on LEO's (Low Earth Orbiting Satellites). This included the Major players; IRIDIUM, Alcatel, Teledesic, Orbcomm and a discussion of their markets, technical aspects, and time to market.

## **Broward Amateur Radio Digital Society**

December 18, 1999

Jim did exactly what he said he would do. His goal was to explain convolution using simple math. He "convolved" 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 with 6, 7,8, and 9. So after we knew what convolution was, he used it do determine the frequency response of a simple filter. So now we all know how to make a digital filter.

We did not have particularly good attendance. I did not realize how many attendees really depended on the reminder messages I had been sending out. I will send a reminder out for our next meeting.

We haven't sorted out what would make a good program for the January 15thmeeting. Everyone has some projects going. Carl is working on a multiple range thermocouple temperature sensor and Seymour has been able to send thermocouple data using a KPC-3 TNC analog input. Bob has gotten some contesting software running that will control the transmitter and send Morse code contest exchanges.

Bob, N4CU

## The Temperature Conversion Guide (Fahrenheit degrees)

50 above - New Yorkers turn on the heat. People in Buffalo plant gardens.

40 above - Californians shiver uncontrollably. People in Buffalo sunbathe.

35 above - Italian cars won't start. People in Buffalo drive with the windows down.

32 above - Distilled water freezes. Buffalo water gets thicker.

20 above - Floridians wear coats, gloves & wool hats. People in Buffalo throw on a t-shirt.

15 above - Californians begin to evacuate the state. People in Buffalo go swimming.

Zero - New York landlords finally turn up the heat. People in Buffalo have the last cookout before it gets cold.

10 below - People in Miami cease to exist. People in Buffalo lick flag poles.

20 below - Californians fly away to Mexico. People in Buffalo throw on a light jacket.

40 below - Hollywood disintegrates. People in Buffalo rent videos.

60 below - Mt. St. Helens freezes. Buffalo Girl Scouts begin selling cookies door to door.

80 below - Polar bears begin to evacuate the Arctic. Buffalo Boy Scouts postpone "Winter Survival" classes until it gets cold enough.

100 below - Santa Claus abandons the North Pole. People in Buffalo pull down their ear flaps.

173 below - Ethyl alcohol freezes. People in Buffalo get frustrated when they can't thaw their kegs.

185 below - Microbial life starts to disappear. Buffalo cows complain of farmers with cold hands.

460 below - ALL atomic motion stops. People in Buffalo start saying "Cold 'nuf for ya?"

500 below - Hell freezes over. Buffalo wins the Super Bowl.

(Received by email from relatives in Buffalo. Nothing to do with radio or digital communications but Dolphin fans and Floridians will appreciate it -Ed)