



The Amplifier

Tar River Amateur Radio Club

March 2004

President	Robin Keller, WA4WPD	252-459-9345
Vice President	Bill Fairley, WA4TCC	252-977-1477
Secretary	Bill Thomas, N2BT	252-442-6131
Treasurer	Fred Winner, KE4LXW	252-459-4332
VE Director	Bill Thomas, N2BT	252-442-6131
Newsletter Editor	Les Zavadil, KI4BYV	252-446-7816
Web Master	Bert Carter, WA4TLI	919-467-4522

WEB SITE: www.tarriverarc.com

Next Meeting

The March meeting of the Tar River Amateur Radio Club will be held Monday, March 1, at BODDIE NOELL ENTERPRISES, located at 1021 Noell Lane in Rocky Mount. The meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. Please enter the building through the main entrance. Parking is available in front of the building or in the parking lot. The March program will be "Basic First Aid".

2004 VE Exam Schedule

Bill, N2BT

The Tar River Amateur Radio Club, Rocky Mount, NC, will hold ARRL/VEC Amateur Radio Exams in 2004 as follows:

April 3	August 7
June 5	October 2
	December 4

Exams will start at 9 a.m. and will be held at:
The Braswell Memorial Library
727 N. Grace Street (corner of Grace and Peachtree Streets)
Rocky Mount, NC 27804

Please bring the following items when attending a testing session:

- Photo identification (drivers license)
- Social Security Number
- Original amateur radio license
- Copy of amateur radio license
- Original certificate(s) of successful completion
- Copy of certificate(s) of successful completion
- Test fee of \$12 payable to ARRL/VEC (checks preferred)

For further information visit our club web site at www.TarRiverARC.com or contact:

Bill Thomas N2BT
VE Team Coordinator
Rocky Mount, NC
(252)-442-6131
Email: N2BT@arrl.net

President's Corner

Even as the naysayers are predicting the death of CW. The ARRL Chief Technology Officer Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, has propose a new CW lexicon. It's the @ sign. That little symbol used so much in the internet world. It still has to have final approval from the ITU. But it seems to be on the fast track.

So next time you hear di dah dah di dah dit it's not gobbledegook. It's the new lexicon for @.

SO now, watch for the updates. Seems like I need a new CW decoder. I just hope it will run on that old PC I've been using :).

See everyone at the meeting.

2004 Club Dues

The Tar River Amateur Radio Club dues were due in January. Full Membership is \$15 and Family Full is \$6 each. Associate Membership dues are \$10 and are for Non-licensed persons only.

Please make check payable to the TRARC, and bring to the March meeting or mail to Fred Winner, the club's treasurer.

Weekly ARES Net

The Northern Coastal Plain ARES net, covering Nash, Edgecombe, Halifax, and Wilson counties, meets Tuesday nights at 8:30 p.m. on 145.290 MHz, 146.805 MHz, 146.745 MHz, 224.220 MHz, 444.500 MHz, 444.700 MHz, 442.125 MHz and 443.700 MHz repeaters. Check into the net, participate in ARES training, and enjoy the informal rag-chew afterwards.

Upcoming Hamfests

March 13-14 – Charlotte, NC

March 20 – Charleston, WV

March 21 – Kinston, NC

April 4 – Raleigh, NC

April 17 – Morganton, NC

April 24 – Chesapeake, VA

Contests

Feb. 29-Mar. 1 – North Carolina QSO Party

Mar. 6-7 – ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB

Mar. 13-14 – YL-ISSB QSO Party, SSB

Mar. 13 – AGCW QRP Contest

Mar. 14 – North American Sprint, RTTY

Mar. 20 – 10-10 Int. Mobile Contest

Mar. 20 – AGCW VHF/UHF Contest

Mar. 20-22 – Virginia QSO Party

Mar. 22 – Spring QRP Homebrewer Sprint

Mar. 27-28 – CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB

Mar. 27 – Spring Break RTTY Sprint

ARRL Dues

When you receive your dues notice from ARRL, pay your dues through the club so the club gets credit. Make the check to: Tar River Amateur Radio Club and send it to Fred, KE4LXW, or give it to him at a meeting.

FCC to Issue BPL NPRM

The FCC has unanimously approved a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) to deploy Broadband over Power Line (BPL). The NPRM is the next step in the BPL proceeding, which began last April with a Notice of Inquiry that attracted more than 5100 comments--many from the amateur community. The FCC did not propose any changes in Part 15 rules governing unlicensed devices, but said it would require BPL providers to apply "adaptive" interference mitigation techniques to their systems. An ARRL delegation that included President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, attended the FCC open meeting in Washington, and later expressed disappointment in the FCC action.

"The Commission clearly recognized that the existing Part 15 emission limits are inadequate to stop interference, but it's placing the burden of interference mitigation on the licensed user that's supposed to be protected," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ.

Sumner said that if the FCC really believed current Part 15 emission limits were sufficient, it would not have had to require that BPL providers institute interference mitigation systems. The FCC has not yet released the actual NPRM, and a presentation by the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) revealed only its broad outlines. Sumner said the League would not take a formal position until it reviews the full NPRM.

Anh Wride of the OET staff spelled out the scope of the NPRM, which only addresses so-called "access BPL"--the type that would apply radio frequency energy to exterior overhead and underground low and medium-voltage power lines to distribute broadband and Internet service. She said the OET staff believes that interference concerns "can be adequately addressed." Wride said the FCC's BPL NPRM:

* Applies existing Part 15 emission limits for unlicensed carrier-current systems to BPL systems. Part 15 rules now require that BPL systems eliminate any harmful interference that may occur "and must cease operation if they cannot," she noted.

* Requires BPL systems to employ "adaptive interference-mitigation techniques, including the capabilities to shut down a specific device, to reduce power levels on a dynamic or remote-control basis and to include or exclude specific operating frequencies or bands."

* Subjects BPL providers to notification requirements that would establish a public database to include such information as the location of BPL devices, modulation type and operating frequencies.

* Proposes guidelines to provide for consistent and repeatable measurement of the RF emissions from BPL and other carrier-current systems.

Mirroring his colleagues' enthusiasm, FCC Chairman Michael Powell called BPL "tremendously exciting." While conceding that BPL has "a long way to go," the chairman said it could be "the great broadband hope for a good part of rural America." Powell also said the FCC's OET has worked very hard to try to "get their hands around" the issue of interference and that the FCC would continue its vigilance in that area.

The FCC is expected to issue the complete Notice of Proposed Rule Making within a few days and will invite comments on it sometime after its publication.

Additional information about BPL and Amateur Radio is on the ARRL Web site, www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/.

From ARRL E-mail Bulletin.

ARRL Licensing Proposal

The ARRL has filed a Petition for Rule Making asking the FCC to amend its Part 97 rules to complete the Amateur Service restructuring the Commission left unfinished in 1999. The League wants the FCC to create a new entry-level license, reduce the number of actual license classes to three and drop the Morse code testing requirement for all classes except for Amateur Extra (see "ARRL to Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access" <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/01/19/1/>>). The ARRL says its petition follows in the footsteps of changes in Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations adopted at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003. Among those changes, WRC-03 left it up to individual countries to determine whether or not to mandate Morse testing for HF access. While several countries--including Germany, the UK and Australia--already have dropped their Morse requirements, the ARRL emphasized in its petition that Morse code is not the central issue.

"Changes in Morse telegraphy are one aspect of the proposal, and it would be insufficient for the Commission to address those issues in a vacuum," the League said, calling its licensing proposal "a plan for the next decade." The ARRL said that plan's overall intention is "to encourage newcomers to the Amateur Service and to encourage those who enter its ranks to proceed further on a course of technical self-training and exposure to all aspects of the avocation."

Last fall a total of 14 Morse-related petitions were filed with the FCC. Several called on the Commission to drop the Morse requirement altogether, while others proposed to keep and even expand the requirement or put forth various license restructuring schemes of their own. The petitions, RM-10781-10787 and RM-10805-10811, attracted thousands of comments from the amateur community.

Beyond the Morse question, the ARRL says, the time is right--now that WRC-03 has finished its work--to follow through on the restructuring process the FCC began with its 1999 restructuring Report and Order (WT 98-143). Among other things, that landmark Order, which became effective April 15, 2000, reduced the number of Morse code test elements from three to a single 5 WPM requirement for all license classes offering HF privileges.

Simply dropping the Element 1 (5 WPM) Morse requirement, the ARRL asserted, would fail to address the critical need for an entry-level ticket other than the Technician. Calling the Technician license "a dead end" for many people, the ARRL said its proposed entry-level license--being called "Novice" for now--would offer newcomers a much wider sampling of Amateur Radio. It would require passing a 25-question written examination--but no code test--and offer limited HF phone, image, CW and data privileges at modest power output levels.

"This structure provides a true, entry-level license with HF and other operating privileges which will both promote growth in the Amateur Service and integrate newcomers into the mainstream of Amateur Radio," the ARRL told the FCC. "It will better introduce newcomers to more seasoned licensees who will assist them."

The League proposal also would consolidate current Technician and General licensees into General class without further examination. Future General applicants would not have to pass a code test, but the written exam would remain the same. Current Advanced licensees would be merged into Amateur Extra class without further testing, and the Extra exam

would remain intact. The ARRL proposal would retain the Element 1 Morse exam for Extra class applicants.

The ARRL said its overall plan dovetails with the FCC philosophy and goals stated in its 1999 Report and Order--to simplify the license structure and streamline the licensing process. The League said its plan would implement licensing requirements and privileges that are in harmony with each other and is designed to attract and retain "technically inclined persons, particularly the youth of our country" and encourage them to advance in areas "where the United States needs expertise."

"Now, the issue is not merely whether there should or should not be Morse telegraphy as an examination requirement," the ARRL said, "but rather what is the best overall approach for positioning the Amateur Service for future growth and incentive-based self-training."

A copy of the ARRL's Petition for Rule Making is available on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring2/restrux2-petition.pdf>>. The FCC has requested that individuals refrain from contacting or attempting to comment to the FCC on the ARRL's restructuring proposal before the FCC issues a Rule Making (RM) number for the ARRL petition and invites public comments on it. Until that happens, it is premature to comment to the FCC.

From ARRL E-mail bulletin.

Spectrum Management

In response to a Presidential Memorandum from June of 2003, NTIA has posted a Notice of Inquiry on the web site <http://spectrumreform.ntia.doc.gov/> announcing an inquiry into questions of Spectrum Management. This movement could have significant impact on the amateur radio frequency allocations. Club members are urged to go to the web site and read the notice and the Presidential Memorandum. We should also all read the threads, "NTIA Requests Comments on Spectrum 'Management'" and "NTIA Denies Motion for More Time" on the qrz.com web site.

Related to this movement is a bill that has been introduced in both the House (HR-713) and Senate (S-537), "The Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act". These bills are in need of more co-sponsors if anything is to happen with them. Letters to local Congressmen and both North Carolina Senators will be available at the March meeting for signatures. The letters will urge our Congressmen and Senators to sign on as co-sponsors of this bill.

Frostfest

Frostfest in Richmond was pretty good this year, with 160 exhibitors (according to their web site). There were several third-tier companies, like the Wireman, Buxcomm, Radio Works, etc., but Communications Headquarters was the only "full service" ham store represented. There was no "tailgating" allowed in the parking lot, but a lot of "tailgaters" had tables inside the large hall. There seemed to be a lot of "boat anchors" and some antique broadcast radios, but not a whole lot of modern used equipment. Eddie, KD4CPV had a table promoting the region's six meter nets, including the North Carolina Six Meter Net and the Down East Six Meter Net. All things considered, it was a good hamfest and will be on our schedule again next year.
