

FCC INVITES COMMENTS ON SIX MORSE CODE-RELATED PETITIONS

The FCC has invited public comments on six separate Morse code-related petitions for rule making, some of which would altogether eliminate Element 1, the 5 WPM Morse test, from the Amateur Service rules (Part 97). World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) made optional the requirement to prove the ability to send and receive Morse signals to operate below 30 MHz.

A petition from Peter M. Beauregard, KI1I, designated RM-10781, would give all Technician licensees current Novice/Tech Plus CW privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters and limited phone and image privileges on 80, 40 and 10 meters. Beauregard said the CW privileges would "encourage Technician class licensees to upgrade to General" by giving them a "practice area." He has proposed new Tech phone/image privileges on 3850-3900 kHz and 7225-7300 kHz. His petition would not eliminate Element 1.

Pete V. Coppola, KG4QDZ, and family--Tina Coppola, KG4YUM, and Pete A. Coppola, KG4QDY--have asked the FCC to eliminate Element 1 from the rules. The Coppolas'

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NTIA EXPRESSES "BROAD CONCERNS" IN BPL COMMENTS

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has weighed in on the FCC's Broadband over Power Line (BPL) initiative. While urging the FCC to "move forward expeditiously" with its inquiry into BPL, the NTIA expressed "broad concerns" about interference to government users. The NTIA also has launched an extensive modeling, analysis and measurement program for BPL. A Commerce Department branch, NTIA administers spectrum allocated to federal government users.

"Notwithstanding BPL's potential benefits, the Commission must ensure that other communications services, especially government operations, are adequately protected from unacceptable interference," the NTIA said in late-filed comments in the BPL Notice of Inquiry. "In tailoring its rules to promote BPL deployment, the Commission must be certain to provide all communications stakeholders with adequate protections against BPL emissions that may cause unacceptable radio frequency interference."

Until releasing its comments this month, the NTIA has been largely silent on the issue since last spring. In an April 24 letter, then-NTIA administrator Nancy J. Victory applauded the FCC's decision to launch its inquiry into BPL, but called on the Commission to make sure that BPL does not cause harmful interference to other services.

In early July, Frederick R. Wentland, NTIA's associate administrator in the Office of Spectrum Management, told the FCC that the NTIA did not favor Current Technologies LLC's <http://www.currenttechnologies.com/> request for a permanent waiver of the field strength limit specified for Class B emissions under FCC Part 15 rules. A Maryland BPL

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Who we are...

The Fauquier Amateur Radio Association (FARA) is an ARRL- affiliated association in the Roanoke Division. The Club call sign is W4FAU. Our focus is on ARES activities, support of the community in emergency situations and education. Our ARES coordinator is Don, N2VA. Our education coordinator is Neil, AB4YK. FARA sponsors the W4FAU repeater in Warrenton, Virginia on a frequency of 147.165(+) MHz. A net is held on the repeater each Wednesday evening at 2100 hours local. The repeater committee chairman is Bill-W4NFR. The Fauquier Amateur Radio Association operates a packet radio network on the following frequencies:

145.070, 145.090, 223.54, 446.075 and 7.1009.

The primary packet node is FARA7 on 145.070. The BBS can be accessed on all frequencies by connecting to the Node alias of FBBS9 or by connecting directly to N4YXW-1 on 145.090. The BBS type is F6FBB and has several call books available over the air including DX. Both the nodes and the packet station are open to all amateurs. The sysop is Chuck, N4YXW.

The Fauquier Amateur Radio Association (FARA) Newsletter, "Toroid", is published monthly through the efforts of the members of FARA. The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual authors and not necessarily that of FARA.

Visit the Club's web page:
www.gsl.net/w4fau

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER
Chuck N4YXW**

(Editor's note: For some reason I don't have Chuck's column. E-mail problems, perhaps?).

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MORSE

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petition, designated RM-10782, would grant Tech Plus HF privileges to current Technician licensees. It also would retain the current CW-only subbands. The Coppolas asked the FCC to make the change effective immediately on a provisional basis.

Kiernan K. Holliday, WA6BJH, has asked the FCC simply to "remove all requirements for knowledge of Morse code" from the Amateur Service rules. Holliday said there is less reason to require Morse code in the Amateur Service today. In his petition, designated RM-10783, Holliday also said the code requirement limits the ability of handicapped individuals to get ham tickets. "The Commission's policy should be to encourage the use of Amateur Radio," he said.

Dale Reich, K8AD, petitioned the FCC to delete Element 1 for General class applicants but keep it in place for Extra class applicants. Under Reich's scheme, "no-code" Techs wanting HF privileges would have to upgrade to General first. Reich's petition is designated RM-10784.

Eric Ward, N0HHS, seeks immediate elimination of "proficiency in telegraphy using Morse code." The "immediate removal of the telegraphy requirement from Amateur Radio licensing is appropriate and clearly in the public interest," Ward contended in his petition, designated RM-10785.

In a detailed, nine-page petition, the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) is calling on the FCC to delete Element 1 and give "Tech Plus" privileges to current Technician licensees. The NCVEC also asked the FCC to "take expedited action" to allow volunteer examiner coordinators (VECs) to discontinue administering Element 1 "as soon as possible."

"The Amateur Service community suffers from the loss to its ranks of a large number

of potentially excellent operators who are turned away because of the CW requirement," the NCVEC petition said.

The organization, the umbrella group for the 14 VECs in the US, said there's "no longer any reasonable justification for requiring an applicant to demonstrate this antiquated skill," and that most applicants never use Morse after they pass the test. The NCVEC petition is designated RM-10787.

The ARRL-VEC abstained from voting on the NCVEC's petition question when it came up during the NCVEC's July 25 meeting in Pennsylvania. At its own July meeting in Connecticut, the ARRL Board of Directors affirmed its interest in reviewing members' input on the Morse issue as well as on other possible revisions to Part 97 arising from WRC-03. The Board's current position is to retain the Morse requirement for HF access.

Interested parties may file comments on any or all of these petitions using the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) <<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>>, which also permits users to view the petitions and all comments on file. There is a 30-day comment window.

To file a comment, click on "Submit a Filing" under "ECFS Main Links." In the "Proceeding" field, type the full RM number, including the hyphen, and complete the required fields. "RM" must be in capital letters, and you must include the hyphen between "RM" and the five-digit number. You may type remarks into a form or attach a file. ECFS also accepts comment in proceedings via e-mail, per instructions on the ECFS page.

While a Morse code exam element remains on the books in the US, Canada and elsewhere, a handful of countries--including Switzerland, Belgium, the UK, Germany, Norway and the Netherlands--already have moved to drop their Morse requirements. Austria and New Zealand are expected to do so soon.

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 HomePlug standard BPL local network could

seriously impair the system's throughput. A 100 W signal would cause it to collapse altogether.

Ironically, the HomePlug standard substantially notches out the amateur bands—something ARRL convinced the HomePlug Powerline Alliance to do after amateur complaints sparked a recall of HomePlug-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-HomePlug-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.

AMRAD's reply comments are available on the FCC Web site <http://gullfoss2.fcc.gov/prod/ecfs/retrieve.cgi?native_or_pdf=pdf&id_document=6514683575>.

HAMS A BRIGHT SPOT DURING POWER BLACKOUT

When a power blackout struck at least a half dozen eastern states August 14, many Amateur Radio operators were ready and able to provide whatever assistance they could. Hardest hit were metropolitan areas like New York City, Detroit and Cleveland. In New York, residents and commuters found themselves stranded in electricity-dependent elevators and subway or rail cars while visitors ended up stuck at airports, which were forced to shut down. With the cellular system overloaded or out altogether, the incident turned into a test of Amateur Radio's capabilities to operate without commercial power. "It was a good drill," said New York City-Long Island Section Emergency Coordinator Tom Carrubba, KA2D. But, he adds, it was a cautionary tale too. "The lesson is that everybody gets a little complacent," he said. "Have emergency power backup and make sure it's working!"

By and large, Carrubba said, ARES members did what they were trained to do. "It's going to show the worth of Amateur Radio," he said of the blackout response. "There were people on the air immediately."

Diane Ortiz, K2DO, the Public Information Coordinator for NYC-Long Island was one of them. When power went down in her Suffolk County community, she started up an informal VHF net. Over the next 20 hours or so, it passed some 500 pieces of what Ortiz described as largely "health-and-welfare traffic."

"People are getting on and helping," she said. In addition to handling messages for people stranded in the city, amateurs also relayed useful information, such as which stores or filling stations were open and operating. With many radio and TV stations dark, and hams were able to help fill the information void, Ortiz said.

In the Big Apple itself, ARES teams provided

communication support for Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) set up at main transportation centers in Manhattan. ARES members also accompanied ERVs on fire calls.

RACES activated in most Greater New York City area counties after a state of emergency was declared. Some ARES teams—including a few across the Hudson River in New Jersey--activated or remained on standby to help if called upon. In New Jersey, a net linked the Red Cross lead chapter's N2ARC in Princeton with other New Jersey ARC chapters.

Michigan Section Manager Dale Williams, WA8EFK, reports scattered ARES activations. Williams, who lives in Dundee south of Detroit, was without power August 15 and relying on his emergency generator. Some Michigan ARES teams assisted emergency operations centers and the Red Cross.

In Ohio, Section Emergency Coordinator Larry Rain, WD8IHP, reports that all ARES organizations in northern Ohio were activated after the power grid went down. Still going strong at week's end were ARES teams in Cleveland and Akron. "ARES is handling communication support for Ohio Emergency Management in the affected cities and communities," Rain said. Ohio VHF and UHF nets and the Ohio SSB net on HF have been handling blackout traffic.

Nancy Hall, KC4IYD--who lives 20 mile west of Cleveland--said she's glad she'd taken the ARRL Emergency Communications Level I class. "I have to say that being a ham and knowing about emergency preparedness did make life easier for me and my family," said Hall.

New England states were far less affected by the blackout. ARES/RACES operators in the region were on standby after the blackout. Only Connecticut and sections of Western Massachusetts reported significant outages, and ARES activated in both states.

NTIA

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developer, Current Technologies already is field testing and marketing the technology.

Wentland worried that the pole-mounted interfaces and outdoor power lines used for BPL could interfere with public safety communication in the 30 to 50 MHz range. He told FCC Office of Engineering and Technology Chief Edmond J. Thomas that the "unobstructed and ubiquitous nature of this BPL application, and perhaps other aspects of BPL, differs considerably from the situations presently found in typical unintentional radiators" operating under Part 15.

Wentland--named recently to succeed Victory as NTIA administrator on an interim basis--also invited the FCC to coordinate its own BPL measurement activities with those of the NTIA.

The NTIA's comments, which have not been posted on the FCC Web site, are available on the NTIA Web site
<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fccfilings/2003/bplcomments_08132003.htm
>

**ARRL BOARD REQUESTS
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
TO IMPLEMENT WRC-03
RESULTS**

The ARRL Board of Directors has called on ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, and the ARRL Executive Committee to develop ARRL policy recommendations for an FCC filing to implement the results of World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) in the amateur rules. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, chaired the July 18-19 Board session in Windsor, Connecticut.

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ROY NEAL, K6DUE, SK

Retired NBC News space correspondent, producer and executive Roy Neal, K6DUE, died August 15 in High Point, North Carolina. He was 82. Neal underwent major heart surgery August 12.

Recognized as a leading news expert in spaceflight and science, Neal—born Roy N. Hinkel--covered all of the Mercury missions for NBC and later reported the Gemini and Apollo missions and the early space shuttle flights. His space news experience led him to become involved with the Space Amateur Radio EXperiment (SAREX)--now the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program. ARISS, a joint project of ARRL, AMSAT and NASA, put Amateur Radio aboard space shuttles and developed the first permanent ham station in space aboard the ISS. Neal chaired the SAREX/ARISS Working Group and moderated ARISS international team gatherings and, quite often, school group contact teleconferences. Earlier this year, he was inducted into the CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame for his role in persuading NASA officials to allow Amateur Radio operation from space in the 1980s.

Neal also was a regular visitor and sometime presenter at Hamvention. He hosted the 1987 ARRL video production, New World Of Amateur Radio, an overview of ham radio in space.

A Pennsylvania native, Neal's broadcasting career began at WIBG radio in Philadelphia. He served as a combat infantry officer during World War II and later became a program manager for the Armed Forces Radio Network in Europe. After the war, he was a television pioneer at WPTZ-TV in Philadelphia. He subsequently set up NBC's West Coast news bureau.

Survivors include his wife Pat and sons David and Mark. Arrangements are pending.

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POLICY

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"The League, as the Amateur Radio representative in the United States, will, through its democratic process, review input from its members as to the impact and implementation of these results to the Part 97 rules," a Board resolution declared. A report on the policy recommendations is due next January. The Board expressed gratitude to the IARU and ARRL WRC-03 team for its "tireless and dedicated efforts in promoting Amateur Radio" and congratulated it for achieving the IARU's goals at the month-long international conference, which wrapped up in Geneva July 4.

Delegates to WRC-03 reached a compromise on a 200-kHz worldwide allocation--7000 to 7200 kHz--effective in 2009, with no change to the existing 300-kHz allocation in the US or elsewhere in Region 2. The conference also eliminated the requirement that amateur applicants prove Morse code proficiency to operate below 30 MHz, leaving it up to individual administrations to retain or drop Morse as an exam element. WRC-03 decisions also resulted in changes affecting international third-party traffic, guidelines for standards of competence of amateur licensees, and recognition of the licenses of visiting amateurs.

The Board also implemented some recommendations of the wide-ranging Final Report of the Volunteer Resources Committee to the ARRL Board of Directors--an Evaluation of the ARRL's Field Organization. The committee, chaired by ARRL Midwest Division Director Wade Walstrom, W0EJ, concluded the state of the ARRL Field Organization is "fair," but not sufficient to meet the League's obligation to provide emergency communications, especially at the national level.

In light of the report, the Board called for a comprehensive system to enhance the communications capabilities of the Amateur

Radio Emergency Service (ARES). There are situations, the Board said--especially given the League's new Citizen Corps partnership with the Department of Homeland Security--when ARES "must have the capability to pass traffic across the nation quickly and accurately."

The Board also called on all Section Emergency Coordinators to develop, implement and maintain a comprehensive Section Emergency Plan by year's end. Additionally, the Board asked Sumner to formally establish leadership training courses as a part of routine Section Manager orientation.

In response to the so-called "Minute 56" report initiated at last July's meeting, the Board voted to initiate a process to revise ARRL band plans for amateur allocations between 902 MHz and 24.25 GHz. "New band plans will be developed using as a goal the full amateur deployment of each band," the Board said. The Board voted unanimously to authorize President Haynie--with assistance from Imlay and Technical Relations Manager Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, "to explore specific terms of expanded partnering plans with the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC). Such cooperation could involve greater integration of amateur operation in the bands from 902 MHz to 24.25 GHz in public safety and homeland security communications."

Citing the Amateur Radio tradition of Elmering (mentoring) new and prospective amateurs, the Board okayed a resolution instructing the VRC to develop two or more viable options for an ARRL Volunteer Mentor program that would provide for "the promotion, support and growth of mentoring in Amateur Radio." The VRC is to present its options at the Board's January meeting.

Additional details are on the ARRL Web site.

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EDITOR'S MUSINGS

Dave WB4FUR

Greetings again. I hope your summer was productive. Mine was pretty intense, particularly during July and August. From all reports everyone, whether working or not, is really busy and has been this summer.

Field Day. I missed seeing some of the regulars, but enjoyed it as always. Frank's new well-thought-out mast was a real joy to put up. He put a lot of effort into that thing, and it went up quite nicely. As we go on with this thing we are getting better and better at deployment.

Bands were really nasty this year. Lots of solar flares in the preceding weeks kept scores down. We really had to dig to score any contacts at all, and did a lot more "hit and bounce" than I like to do. I generally like to park on a frequency and call and call and work them and work them. It sure wasn't that way this year. I even went over to the phone station and made a few contacts this year. Why not? Fun in any case.

Next year I am thinking about bringing my vintage station out just for grins. That's the R-390A and the Valiant II. That would be a hoot, but probably VERY impractical.

One thing that keeps crossing my mind would be combining Field Day with a test of the Federal and State HF resources (the SHARES program for instance). Don't know how we can do this, or if it makes sense, but I'm going to send in the suggestion and see what comes of it.

Broadband on powerlines. The FCC's comment period on the Notice of Inquiry has closed, but there's still plenty of stuff happening in this arena.

While at the FallFest this past weekend I got to see and hear a short demo of BPL, as it is called. It's truly destructive of HF radio, assuming that the noise levels are what

AMRAD made them out to be. This brings me to another point: In order for us to win this thing, we have to (a) get a REAL analysis done (the stuff ARRL has done up to now has been rightly attacked for the technical holes it has in it—I hope AMRAD does better), (b) collect some REAL data (that's going to mean some rigorous tests with some calibrated test gear) and (c) be prepared to wage a long, hard fight (because the power companies smell \$\$\$\$ and they think that the laws of physics are subordinate to the laws of politics). I'm all for helping ARRL to do this, but I really really want to see it done right. I am well familiar with how the FCC does business. Fortunately in this case this was just a Notice of Inquiry. The FCC can't change the rules without a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) and the NPRM will have a comment and a reply comment cycle as part of it as well. The important thing is for ARRL, AMRAD, and whoever else to prepare an absolutely airtight case on this junk.

Mobile antennas. I finally broke down this summer and bought a Tarheel screwdriver antenna. It's the best HF mobile antenna I have ever used. I finally get results on HF like I have always thought possible. Only thing I don't really like is wondering exactly where the tuning is once I move it, until I see the VSWR dip. Someday I'll have the time to build some sort of tuning control for it (like about a year after I retire in 20 years!). In the meantime I will tune it the harder way and just enjoy it. Sure beats a Hustler all to death.

That's all for now. 73!

Dave WB4FUR

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