
B.V.A.R.A. QRM

W3SGJ

www.qsl.net/bvara

December 2003

144.710/145.310 MHZ - 100 HZ PL

447.975/442.975 MHZ - 100 HZ PL

B.V.A.R.A. OFFICERS

PRESIDENT.....KB3EAQ Debbie Reid
1.V.PRES.....N3GZZ Joe Streit
2.V.PRES.....N3OJN Stan Riffle
SECRETARY...N3SVM Bob Reid
TREASURER...N3ALS Wes Morar

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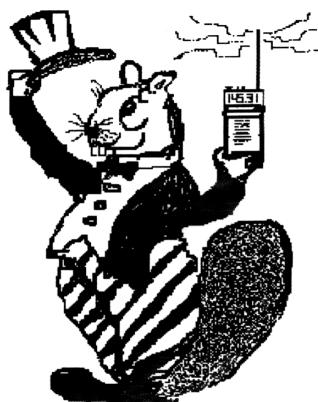
KB3EAQ.....Debbie Reid
N3GZZ.....Joe Streit
N3OJN.....Stan Riffle
N3ALS.....Wes Morar
N3SVM.....Bob Reid
WA3GFM...Al Belardia
KA3SMF.....Dave Heim
KE3ED.....Tony Petrucci/Station Trustee

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

N3NBJ.....Janet Petrucci

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

KB3EAQ....Debbie Reid



THE NET LIST

WPA CW NET.....7:00 PM DAILY.....3.585
TRADERS NET.....7:00 PM MON & FRI 3.898
HOSS TRADERS.....8:00 PM WEDNESDAY.3.910
CALLOUS BOTTOMS...11:00 PM DAILY...3.912.5
WPA PHONE & TFC NET...6:00 PM DAILY...3.983
PA TRAFFIC TRAINING NET..6:30 PM...3.610
E-CARS.....8:00 AM DAILY...7.255
EAN NET.....2:30 PM DAILY..7.243
RIP VANWINKLE.....7:00 AM DAILY..145.31
B.V.A.R.A. 2 METER.....8:30 PM WED....145.31
B.V.A.R.A. 10 METER...9:00 PM WED...28.370
WPA TRAFFIC.....8:00 PM DAILY..146.88
QCWA NET.....8:30 AM SUNDAY.147.03

VISIT THE B.V.A.R.A.'s WEBSITE AT:

www.qsl.net/bvara

If you have a submission for the B.V.A.R.A. QRM you may submit it to Janet N3NBJ by any of the following means.. E-mail: ke3ed@arrl.net or typed in text format on floppy disk. Thank you.

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==CLUB NEWS== CLUB MEETING

A quick Club meeting will be held during our Christmas Party.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

The B.V.A.R.A. Club Christmas party will be held at Maria's Kitchen, 228 Main Street, West Aliquippa, PA. on Saturday December 6th at 7:00 PM. Debbie KB3EAQ promises lots of surprises for everyone. Also our "2003 Ham of the Year" will be honored. We're looking forward to seeing everyone there.

REMINDER -- 2004 DUES NOW DUE

Please note that B.V.A.R.A. dues for 2004 are now due. You will find an application for renewal on the back of this newsletter. Please supply a completed application to our Treasurer Wes N3ALS with your dues so he may keep his records straight.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2004 OFFICERS

Thanks to the following individuals who were elected to fill the following offices in 2004:

President – Debbie Reid KB3EAQ
Vice President – Joe Streit N3GZZ
2nd Vice President – Tom Merz N4KRA
Treasurer – Wes Morar N3ALS
Secretary – Bob Reid N3SVM

Also Denny Ugoletti N3IAJ has graciously agreed to replace Al Belardia WA3GFM as a Club Trustee. Thanks to Al for his service in the past.

B.V.A.R.A. SPONSORED TEST SESSION

The Beaver Valley Amateur Radio Association will sponsor an ARRL VE examination on Saturday December 6th, 2003 at the Community College of Beaver County's Aviation Science building located at 125 Cessna Drive, (Chippewa Twp.) Beaver Falls, PA.

Testing will start promptly at 10:00 AM so please plan on arriving at least 15 - 30 minutes prior. Walk-ins are welcome. Talk-ins will be on the 145.310 (W3SGJ) repeater. Use minus offset and 100 hz pl tone. Also you can see our exact location via APRS on 144.39 Mhz. Look for W3SGJ.

All candidates wishing to take a test should bring the following

1. Two (2) forms of identification.
2. A pencil and a blue or black pen.

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3. Your original AND a photocopy of your current license (if any).
4. Your original AND a photocopy of any C.S.C.E's (if any).
5. The test fee of \$12.00.

All classes of amateur radio license tests will be administered. CW tests will **NO LONGER** be multiple choice.

All Technician Plus operators licensed as such prior to March 21, 1987 should bring a copy and the original proof of this credit.

Candidates are welcome and encouraged to join us for breakfast at the Chippewa Brighton Hot Dog Shoppe at 8:00 AM. For more information contact Tony KE3ED at the following:

Repeater: 145.310 (W3SGJ) minus offset & 100 hz pl tone.
E-mail: ke3ed@arrl.net
Phone: (724) 774-4173

CLUB RIG FOR SALE



This KLM MULTI-2700 2 meter all mode transceiver, which was donated to the B.V.A.R.A. by Bob Wilcox WB3FKB, would make a great rig for someone new to radio as well as a seasoned veteran. It's all mode operation includes, USB/LSB, FM W/N, CW, AM. Also has "Oscar" mode for working satellites and VOX operation. Includes microphone. Asking \$375.00. Contact Debbie KB3EAQ at 724-758-4074.

==>AMATEUR RADIO SUPPORT CONTINUES IN CALIFORNIA FIRE DISASTER

Ham radio volunteers continue to play a role in the ongoing fire emergency in Southern California. A dozen fires, some of them massive, now have burned some 750,000 acres and claimed 20 lives, most of them in the hard-hit San Diego area. Thousands of residents have been evacuated. ARRL San

Diego Section Manager Kent Tiburski, K6FQ, says a shift in winds has moved the fire danger away from San Diego proper, but hams continue to supplement communication at two of nine shelters in the area—one at Mountain Empire and a second in Borrego Springs, where hams from Imperial County have been assisting.

"We've been busy," Tiburski said October 29. "This is by far the worst disaster we've ever experienced." He estimated that approximately 200 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) volunteers have participated so far in the fire emergency with about 100 in the field at any given time.

Tiburski says hams have been assisting American Red Cross relief efforts, primarily in terms of logistics and working with damage assessment teams. Others have provided liaison between the California Department of Forestry and the Red Cross, which is providing meals and shelter for firefighters. Nearly 13,000 firefighters and support personnel have been deployed in California to battle the fires.

The fires have claimed nearly 1200 homes in San Diego County alone, Tiburski reported, and burned some 450,000 acres. "Everybody I've talked with—to a person—knows someone personally or knows of someone who has lost a house," he said. Mount Palomar—home of the famous observatory—was evacuated, Tiburski said, and firefighters were making a special effort to protect telecommunications sites there as well.

Although the hot, dry Santa Ana winds have abated, Tiburski notes that a stiff onshore breeze is now driving the fires to the east.

San Diego Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) Coordinator Paul Cook, N6RPF, reports he and other SATERN members have been providing communication assistance for The Salvation Army's relief efforts. They've had help from other amateurs as well, he said.

At least a half-dozen Salvation Army emergency disaster services canteens are providing meals to evacuees and firefighters. SATERN National Director Pat McPherson, WW9E, said SATERN is keeping relief teams in contact with each other as well as supporting communication for firefighters, police and emergency responders.

Elsewhere in California, ARRL Orange Section Manager Carl Gardenias, WU6D, says that Amateur Radio operators continue working with relief agencies in that part of the state. "We actually have more Amateur Radio operators available than the Red Cross shelters can use," he said. With ARES teams and other ham radio volunteers from Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange counties available, the hams have been able to rotate shifts.

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"The intensity of these fires has never been at this level before," Gardenias said, comparing the current situation with fire emergencies in the recent past.

At the Red Cross shelters--where more and more displaced people are showing up--hams have been "shadowing" shelter managers, communicating shelter supply requests, and helping with health-and-welfare inquiries for shelter clients, Gardenias said. Amateur Radio also is serving to keep shelters in touch with the Red Cross regional headquarters.

At least 1000 evacuees are taking refuge in a former TWA hangar at the San Bernardino airport.

Amateur Radio SSTV equipment was being used to assist firefighters in San Bernardino. The radio equipment and operators go out on the fire trucks and report what they see back to the command center, Gardenias explained.

In the Los Angeles Section SM Phineas Icenbice, W6BF, reports the Stevenson Ranch fires and Arrowhead are the "very hot spots," and firefighting helicopters and crews are using water from nearby Magic Mountain Amusement Park and from golf courses to help douse the flames. Smoke was heavy October 29 in the San Fernando Valley where Icenbice lives.

Amateur Radio operators also are assisting at Red Cross shelters in the Los Angeles area as well as helping the relief agency to locate and establish new shelters. Icenbice said the problem areas appear to be the outer areas of Los Angeles County and in the mountains. Hams have been helping to locate people left homeless because of the fires.

California Gov Gray Davis has declared states of emergency in five counties. As this letter is prepared on October 31, cool and foggy weather have helped to stall the wildfires' progress.--Steve Ewald, WV1X, contributed information for this report

==>DITTER II--THE RETURN OF THE DITTER

Some solid teamwork between the FCC and the ARRL and accurate direction-finding led some Amateur Radio volunteers to the source of an unidentified and continuous string of dits being transmitted without identification on 14.024.8 MHz. The situation last week was eerily similar to one more than three years ago, when another volunteer eventually tracked down another "ditter" <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2000/07/28/2/>> on the West Coast that had plagued 20 meters. After receiving reports of the more recent signal, ARRL Field and Regulatory Correspondent Chuck Skolaut, K0BOG, found he was able to copy it from ARRL Headquarters. The ARRL called upon the FCC's HF Direction Finding (HFDF) facility in Maryland to get a bearing on the signal.

"Really aggravating," is how the HFDF facility's Betty Mallay, KL7AP, described it. "Of course, it doesn't help when others try to 'dit-dit-dit' along with it," she added wryly.

The HFDF facility was able to localize the signal's source to vicinity of Houston, Texas. Skolaut then called on ARRL South Texas Official Observer Coordinator Carl Griffin, KA5KQZ, to see if any of his volunteers had direction-finding equipment that could pin it down.

Two of them--who prefer to remain anonymous--took on the challenge. Their DFing led to a location in a Houston suburb that was within three miles of where the FCC's HFDF facility said it would be.

As in the earlier case, "Ditter II" apparently had no idea his station was transmitting. "I called him on the phone, and he went and checked the station and it had something up against the keyer," one of the volunteers said in his report to Griffin. "He was embarrassed." Left unanswered was why the unidentified amateur's transmitter was powered up and ready to transmit in the first place.

Complimenting the OOs on their quick work, South Texas Section Manager Ray Taylor, N5NAV, took a philosophical view. "I monitored it several times with about S7 signal," he said. "We all make mistakes at times."

==> LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD NOW WORKS ON MACINTOSH COMPUTERS

ARRL's Logbook of the World continues to grow and expand, and it's now operational on the Macintosh OS X operating system. Mac enthusiast Steve Palm, N9YTY, compiled a version of TrustedQSL to work with newer Macintosh computers. The program was built using MacOS version 10.2--"Jaguar"—and was tested on versions 10.2 and 10.3, the new "Panther" upgrade.

Palm, said he had a lot of fun porting the TQSL code to the Mac environment, and was satisfied that he was able to help fill a real need for Mac users. "There was a lot of discussion about this on the HamMac mailing list. It was obvious that many Mac users were looking for something," he said. Palm, the author of EchoMac, a Macintosh OS X EchoLink program, said it took about a week of concentrated effort to complete the port to the Mac platform.

"The base code developed by the TrustedQSL team at ARRL didn't really have any issues that prevented it from being ported to the Mac, so kudos go out to them for doing a good job writing portable code," Palm said. He tackled a few Windows-Mac translation issues and made the Macintosh program "more Mac-like," with configuration and help files embedded in the program so it can be installed in drag-and-drop fashion.

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ARRL Web and Software Development Manager Jon Bloom, KE3Z, said he's also working on integrating Palm's MacOS changes into the official source tree so that other Mac developers will be able to easily build a library and their applications from the source code. The TQSL software also runs on the Windows platform, and Red Hat Linux versions 7.2 and 8.

Palm, a ham since 1994 and a programmer since the early 1980s, said that with the new program development tools Apple has recently released, he believes that more Macintosh Amateur Radio software authors will now get involved with porting existing ham programs and creating new ones.

In the six weeks the system has been open to the public, Logbook of the World has accepted logs from 4,000 users from 158 DXCC entities. These users--all with secure digital certificates--have uploaded nearly 21 million QSO records into the system, as of November 3. All of those contacts have so far resulted in more than 350,000 records being generated, Bloom said.

ARRL Assistant to the CEO David Patton, NN1N, said Logbook continues to evolve, with the ability to claim confirmed contacts for ARRL awards credit being just around the corner. He said the cost per credit would be between 15 and 25 cents, making each credit far cheaper than the cost of mailing a paper QSL card with a self-addressed, stamped envelope and possibly an international reply coupon, as well.

For a complete overview on Logbook of the World, just head on over to the LoTW Web page at www.arrl.org/lotw or check out the article by ARRL Membership Services Manager Wayne Mills, N7NG, on page 46 of the October 2003 QST.

==> NWS/ARRL SKYWARN RECOGNITION DAY SET FOR DECEMBER 6

The fifth annual SKYWARN Recognition Day will take place Saturday, December 6, 2003, 0000 UTC to 2400 UTC. During the special event, Amateur Radio operators visit National Weather Service (NWS) offices and contact other operators around the world. The purpose of the event is twofold: to recognize Amateur Radio operators for the vital public service they perform during times of severe weather and to strengthen the bond between radio amateurs and their local NWS office. The event is cosponsored by the American Radio Relay League and the National Weather Service.

Traditionally, hams have assisted the National Weather Service during times of severe weather by providing real-time reports of severe events and storm evolution. "You simply can't put a price tag on it," said Scott Mentzer, N0QE, organizer of the event and Meteorologist-In-Charge at the NWS office in Goodland, Kansas. "The assistance that radio amateurs provide to the NWS throughout the year is invaluable."

This year, radio amateurs once again proved their worth. On May 4, after tornadoes knocked out all communications in Stockton, Missouri, portable ham radio stations were set up and staffed by volunteers, with licensed NWS employees forwarding specific forecasts to hams at the Stockton Emergency Operations Center (EOC). In August, an Amateur Radio storm spotter in Iowa tracked a tornado until it lifted, providing the local NWS office in the Quad Cities with "ground truth." This resulted in more specific information and earlier warnings being disseminated to the public.

The story doesn't stop there. Deployed during a winter storm last March, hams in Fairbanks, Alaska reported pinpoint locations of freezing rain and snow. The information was relayed on 2 meters, which allowed the local NWS office to sharply define the warning area and provide detailed statements of ice accumulation. In Wisconsin, a volunteer operator reported to the NWS office at early one spring morning and solicited snowfall reports from amateurs across the region, allowing the NWS to produce a detailed snow graphic and make a public statement summarizing the storm. Amateur Radio success stories such as these occur every year, all across the country.

In 2002, participants logged nearly 23,000 QSOs during the 24 hour event. Last year nearly 70 countries were contacted. To learn more, check out the NOAA Web site. -- Thanks to David Floyd, N5DBZ, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, NWS Goodland, Kansas

==>FCC COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE CLARIFIES "BROADBAND NIRVANA" REMARKS

The office of FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy <<http://www.fcc.gov/commissioners/abernathy/>> has expressed regrets that her remarks in a September speech may have failed to make Abernathy's concerns sufficiently clear about potential interference from Broadband over Power Line (BPL).

"We regret that the Commissioner's remarks may have been interpreted as suggesting an absence of concern over harmful interference," said Abernathy Senior Legal Adviser Matthew A. Brill, responding to complaints from the ARRL and individual amateurs. From a policy perspective, Brill said, Abernathy is "keenly interested" in seeing multiple broadband platforms develop, but that she didn't intend to suggest that BPL "necessarily will emerge as a viable platform or that it does not present interference issues."

In her speech to the United Powerline Council's <<http://www.uplc.utc.org/>> annual conference September 22, Abernathy expressed unabashed enthusiasm for BPL and suggested it was a step along the pathway to "Broadband Nirvana." Brill noted, however, that near the end of her remarks, Abernathy--referring to the FCC's approach to PCS regulation--said the Commission was "right to adopt strict

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interference rules to prevent competitors from externalizing their costs. The same principle will apply to BPL."

Brill assured the ARRL that "ensuring that BPL and all new technologies avoid causing harmful interference to licensed RF users is a bedrock position for Commissioner Abernathy." He issued similar responses on Abernathy's behalf to several amateurs who had challenged her stance (see "ARRL Rebukes FCC Commissioner's BPL-Related 'Broadband Nirvana' Remarks" <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2003/09/25/100/>>).

ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, expressed delight at Abernathy's recent clarification. "Commissioner Abernathy's affirmation of this important principle as a 'bedrock position' is most welcome and reassuring news," he said. From the outset of the FCC's BPL Notice of Inquiry in ET Docket No. 03-104 last April, Sumner said, the League's goal has been to hold the FCC to its statement in the NOI that "each of these authorized services in the spectrum [including the Amateur and Amateur-Satellite services] must be protected from harmful interference."

"Since that time the presence of harmful interference at BPL test sites has been thoroughly documented," Sumner noted, "confirming that our original concerns were well founded."

ARRL's extensive comments, reply comments and technical exhibits are available on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/>>. There are additional information and video clips on the ARRL "Power Line Communications (PLC) and Amateur Radio" page <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/>>.

More than 5000 comments--many from the Amateur Radio community--have been filed in response to the FCC's BPL NOI and are available for viewing via the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) <<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>>.

==>ARRL SPONSORS BPL GATHERING FOR COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS

The interference potential of Broadband over Power Line (BPL) to over-the-air radio services was the topic of an ARRL-sponsored meeting of 25 communications professionals November 7. The National Association of Broadcasters hosted the gathering at its headquarters in Washington, DC.

"Listening to everyone introduce themselves and explain why they had come made the trip to Washington worthwhile all by itself," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, who offered opening remarks and guided the discussion. Sumner showed excerpts from the ARRL BPL field test videos, which graphically demonstrate that BPL's interference potential at HF is real, not just theoretical.

During the meeting, representatives from the shortwave broadcasting, public safety, aeronautical and scientific communities joined amateur and amateur-satellite representatives to discuss the threat of BPL and possible avenues to combat its interference potential to licensed HF and low-VHF spectrum users. Military and consumer electronics representatives participated as observers. Coming the farthest was Chip Margelli, K7JA, who attended on behalf of the Yaesu Amateur Division of Vertex-Standard.

ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, reviewed the status of last April's FCC's Notice of Inquiry on BPL and noted that more than 5000 comments were filed with the Commission--most of them from Amateur Radio operators. Imlay said that proposed FCC rules changes could come as soon as early next year.

Imlay added that a number of non-amateur organizations support ARRL's position on BPL. Representing the National Association of Shortwave Broadcasters, George Jacobs, W3ASK, affirmed their strong support for the ARRL position.

ARRL Technical Relations Manager Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, provided a technical review of BPL. BPL delivery systems would use existing low and medium-voltage power lines to distribute Internet and other broadband services to homes and businesses.

Other points the group touched upon included:

- * BPL emission measurements by government agencies are under way, but the results have not yet been made public. The FCC denied an ARRL Freedom of Information Act request on the grounds that their test results represent work-in-progress.

- * A government representative observed that concerned groups should be wary of tying in the overused term "homeland security" with any anti-BPL campaign, since it could be spun back against BPL opponents.

- * Meeting attendees cited numerous and increasing instances of interference from Part 15 devices, suggesting that such instances only infrequently result in complaints to the FCC--and even less frequently in any FCC action.

A follow-up meeting may be held early next year if it becomes clear that the FCC intends to release a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding BPL. Some attendees indicated a willingness to accompany ARRL representatives to meetings with federal officials to underscore that concerns about BPL are not confined to radio amateurs.

"It's apparent that concerns about BPL run very deep and include nearly every over-the-air radio service," Sumner remarked after the meeting. "Now we can work together much more effectively to express our concerns both inside

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and outside of government."--Derek Riker, KB3JLF, compiled information for this report

==>UO-14 REACHES THE END OF THE TRAIL

UO-14 has officially ended its long run as an Amateur Radio satellite, although it continues to transmit telemetry and respond to commands from Earth. The Mission Control Centre at the Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) Center for Satellite Engineering Research announced this week that the venerable and popular bird "has reached the end of its mission after nearly 14 years in orbit." Launched in 1990, UoSAT-OSCAR-14 pioneered the PACSAT communication concept as the first 9.6 kbps Amateur Radio data communications satellite, although it became best known in recent years as an FM "easy sat."

"Since launch, UO-14 has completed over 72,000 orbits and as many charge/discharge cycles of its on-board NiCd battery," said AMSAT-UK Chairman Martin Sweeting, G3YJO. "However recently one of the battery cells has become exhausted and can no longer support continuous operation of the repeater." Sweeting said UO-14's transmitter shuts down shortly after it is commanded "on" due to undervoltage, so the microsatellite's mission has been terminated.

"Thank you UO-14 for your long service!" Sweeting concluded.

AMSAT-NA Board Member Bruce Paige, KK5DO, an enthusiastic UO-14 user, called the AMSAT-UK announcement "sad news." He said the loss of UO-14 leaves amateurs with SO-41 and SO-50 as the only two LEO FM voice satellites. He noted, however, that the planned 2004 launch of OSCAR-ECHO would help to fill the void. OSCAR-ECHO is set to launch next March 31.

The popular and heavily used FM satellite's repeater quit working in August, but hope remained within the amateur satellite community that UO-14 somehow could be revived. Ground controller Chris Jackson, G7UPN, at one point was able to reset the satellite, but he later determined that UO-14 had suffered a primary power system failure that was causing the spacecraft to shut down during some eclipses.

During its active lifetime, UO-14 served several roles. After some 18 months as a PACSAT, UO-14 was switched to non-amateur frequencies for humanitarian use by Volunteers In Technical Assistance, which used it for messaging into Africa. After the store-and-forward communications computer proved no longer able to perform that task, UO-14 was turned back to amateur use as a single-channel FM voice repeater.

UO-14 again served a humanitarian role in early 2001 when hams assisting with earthquake relief operations in the Indian State of Gujarat took advantage of the satellite to provide communication from the stricken region.

The beauty of UO-14 was that it required minimal gear to make contacts--typically 5 W and modest antennas would do the trick. Operators with dualband handheld transceivers and "rubber duckie" antennas often could make QSOs via UO-14.

==>SPECTRUM PROTECTION ACT COSPONSOR LIST TAKES A GIANT STEP

Encouraging news this week from Washington: The list of House cosponsors for the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act, HR 713, has reached 69. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, says he's pleased with the progress since mid-October, when he'd expressed his frustration over a lack of cosponsors. Since that time, the list has grown by 17 representatives. The Senate version of the legislation, S 537, is holding at eight cosponsors.

"I'm cheered up that we've got new representatives to sign on, but we can't just stop," Haynie said. "We gotta keep at it." He said the League has been concentrating its efforts on promoting HR 713 because the bill has the best chance for success of any Amateur Radio-related legislation now before Congress.

Haynie continues to encourage ARRL members to not only urge their senators and representatives to cosponsor HR 713 and S 537 but to write and ask them to actively support them. "This is something that's important to the future of Amateur Radio," Haynie reiterated.

Sponsored in the House by Rep Michael Bilirakis (R-FL) and in the Senate by Sen Michael Crapo (R-ID), the Spectrum Protection Act would require the FCC to provide "equivalent replacement spectrum" to Amateur Radio if the FCC reallocates primary amateur frequencies, reduces any secondary amateur allocations, or makes additional allocations within such bands that would substantially reduce their utility to amateurs.

HR 713 has been referred to the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet. Haynie testified before that panel in June. S 537 has been referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

For the convenience of those writing their representatives and senators to urge cosponsorship of the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act of 2003, sample letters are on the ARRL Web site. For guidance on the best methods of contacting your members of Congress, see "Communicating with Congress," by Derek Riker, KB3JLF, on the ARRL Web site or in the April 2003 issue of QST (p 46).

Additional information--including the text of the Spectrum Protection Act and information on how to write members of Congress--is on the ARRL's "The Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act of 2003" Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/govrelations/arspa.html>>.

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Those writing their lawmakers on behalf of the Spectrum Protection Act are asked to copy their correspondence to the League via e-mail to specbill03@arrl.org.

==>FCC MULLS RESPONSES TO COMPLAINTS ALLEGING INTERFERENCE

The FCC is considering the explanation of a Maryland ham in the wake of complaints that he disrupted an Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) net in September during Hurricane Isabel. FCC Special Counsel for Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth wrote Charles E. Cox Sr, WA3AE, on October 16, enclosing complaints alleging deliberate interference to emergency communications conducted on 2 meters by W3AAC at the Anne Arundel County emergency operations center.

"The allegations, if true, raise serious questions about your qualifications to be a Commission licensee and warrant enforcement action," Hollingsworth told Cox. The US Postal Service returned the FCC's certified letter to Cox as undeliverable. Commission personnel eventually tracked him down to a residence in Laurel, Maryland.

In a handwritten note, Cox told the FCC that he was on the air, but he asserted that he was only trying to help and didn't believe he was interfering with the emergency net. "There is a major misunderstanding," Cox wrote, adding that he felt the situation was being blown out of proportion. Cox also said he would change his mailing address with the FCC.

Several complainants--two off-duty FCC employees among them--tell a different story. A station identifying as WA3AE came on the net and uttered "irrelevant comments many times," according to one net control station, who also said that the operator was rude, "seemed intoxicated" and used inappropriate language. Cox told the FCC he has a speech impediment that makes him sound inebriated. The NCS contended that Cox ignored numerous requests to keep the frequency open for emergency communications, but Cox disputes that.

Hollingsworth said the FCC has Cox's response to the complaints under review.

The FCC also is reviewing a response from a California licensee. On October 15, Hollingsworth wrote Angel Carballo, KG6QKR, of Fremont enclosing a complaint alleging interference on 2 meters during a two-hour period. The complainant told the FCC that two repeaters in the south San Francisco Bay area "were being kerchunked." The amateur who complained said he was able to track the source of the interfering signal to an unoccupied vehicle sitting in a corporate parking lot. He said the transceiver appeared to be in cross-band mode, and he was able to spot the transceiver's display blink momentarily each time the repeaters were accessed.

After the complaining amateur approached corporate security and threatened to report the incident to the FCC, security personnel asked him to hold off while they tried to "solve the problem internally." The complainant, whom the FCC did not identify, said security subsequently brought out a man who went to the vehicle and shut down the transceiver. The FCC apparently was able to locate Carballo through the license plate and vehicle description the complainant provided.

In an October 25 reply to the Commission, Carballo told the FCC he believes he "made a mistake" setting up his radios and did not intend to maliciously interfere. He indicated that he had set up his mobile transceiver as a cross-band repeater on VHF and UHF frequencies--one of them 146.94 MHz--and monitored both frequencies from a handheld transceiver in his office.

Carballo said his transceiver is not capable of transmitting on two frequencies within the same band, so he could not explain the interference to the 146.23 machine. He also offered his apologies and asked the FCC to extend them to the complainant as well.

==>FCC THREATENS CONVICTED KILLER'S HAM TICKET ON "CHARACTER QUALIFICATIONS"

The FCC has issued an Order to Show Cause to a Texas Amateur Radio licensee who's now serving a 32-year prison sentence for killing his wife in 1996. The FCC's show cause order released November 21 is the opening bell in a hearing process that could end with the revocation of the Advanced class license of Roger Thomas Scaggs, W5EBC. He must indicate within 30 days whether he plans to appear at a hearing on the matter to show cause why his license should not be revoked.

"Mr Scaggs' murder conviction raises very serious questions as to whether he possesses the requisite character qualifications to be and to remain a Commission licensee and whether his license should be revoked," the FCC said. At one time reserved for assessing the fitness of broadcast applicants and licensees, the FCC's "character qualifications" standard to date has extended into the Amateur Radio arena only in a handful of cases. The Order asserts that the Commission has "consistently applied" character qualifications to Amateur Radio Service applicants. Three of the four examples it cites to support that claim involved telecommunications-related offenses, and one involved indecent assault upon and corruption of minors.

The Order cites §312(a)(2) of the Communications Act that says the FCC may revoke any license on the basis of "conditions coming to the attention of the Commission which would warrant it in refusing to grant a license or permit on the original application." Scaggs, 64, apparently was able to renew his ham ticket in the spring of 1998--the same year in which he was later convicted of murdering his wife, Penny. The FCC granted Scaggs' application for an administrative

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update--apparently a change of address from Austin to Gatesville, Texas. His license expires in 2008.

The FCC reportedly only recently became aware of Scaggs' murder conviction, which could keep him behind bars at least until he's 75.

Assuming that Scaggs or his attorney indicates that he will appear for or be represented at a formal hearing, the FCC will follow up with a Hearing Designation Order. Held before an administrative law judge, the hearing would consider evidence concerning the effect of Scaggs' felony conviction on his qualifications to remain an FCC licensee and, in light of the evidence, whether his license should be revoked.

==>EXPEDITION 8 COMMANDER ENJOYS FIRST SCHOOL GROUP QSO

ISS Expedition 8 Commander Mike Foale, KB5UAC, took the controls of NA1SS aboard the International Space Station November 25 for his first school group contact. The QSO with youngsters at the Renmark Primary School in South Australia was arranged via the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program. Foale predicted during his ham radio conversation with the Renmark pupils that humans would one day colonize the moon.

"People should be living on the moon in another 10 years," Foale told the youngsters, and I hope some of them will be you." Foale and Russian cosmonaut Alex "Sasha" Kaleri, U8MIR, have been aboard the ISS for about one month. Foale said he's already a bit homesick, and he expects that to get worse after the Christmas holiday.

The British-born Foale, who did a duty tour on the Russian Mir spacecraft in 1997, said he has wanted to be an astronaut since the age of six. "People laughed at me when I was a little boy, but I kept thinking about it and studied hard at school and eventually ended up getting to the ISS," he said. Living aboard the space station, he explained, is "like living in a laboratory" and involves a lot of hard work.

In response to one youngster who asked what it sounded like in space, Foale remarked that the sound of the air-circulating fans is pervasive. "We hear fans running all the time circulating air," he said. "One time, we turned off all the fans, and it was dead quiet." The fans are necessary because of a lack of convection currents in the spacecraft's microgravity environment. Foale pointed out to the students that the crew could not leave the fans off for very long without risking a dangerous buildup of carbon dioxide.

The selection of food aboard the ISS is good, he said. "I went to boarding school in Britain," Foale quipped, "so I can eat most any food. The food here is better than boarding school."

Foale also noted that he does not get bored in space and always has something to do in his off-time. In addition to e-mailing family and friends, he said he enjoys computer programming and also keeps a journal.

Making the Renmark school group contact possible involved arrangements on two continents. Members of the Riverland Radio Club <<http://www.rrc.org.au>> in Australia assisted at the school, while operators at W6SRJ, the Santa Rosa Junior College Amateur Radio Club station, in California, handled the actual radio link with NA1SS. MCI provided two-way audio teleconferencing for the event. Will Marchant, KC6ROL, moderated the contact from Virginia.

ARISS <<http://www.rac.ca/ariss/>> is an international project with participation and support from ARRL, NASA and AMSAT.

==>IN BRIEF:

*** HAARP facility to quadruple power:** Technical Specialist Richard Lampe, KL1DA, represented the League at the 2003 High Frequency Active Auroral Research Project (HAARP) <<http://www.haarp.alaska.edu>> RFI meeting September 24 at the HAARP site near Gakona, Alaska. "Joint funding through DARPA will allow HAARP to quadruple in size from its current 960 kW output to 3.6 MW," Lampe says. "When completed in 2006, HAARP will then be the premier ionospheric research facility with beam-steering capabilities that other similar arrays worldwide don't have." Under terms of its experimental license, HAARP must transmit on a non-interference basis, and Lampe--who is ARRL liaison to HAARP--says the staff at the control center immediately shut down the transmitters when harmonics were detected on 75/80 meters during experiments last year. "Alaska hams monitor the bands and aid HAARP engineers by reporting RFI issues as soon as they happen," Lampe said.

*** Newfoundland clubs establish VHF transatlantic beacon:** The Marconi Radio Club of Newfoundland <<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~jcraig/mrcn.html>> and the Baccalieu Amateur Radio Club of Carbonear have placed a VHF transatlantic beacon on the air. The VO1ZA beacon transmits on 144.400 MHz. "This beacon has been brewing for a number of years and we're happy it's finally on the air," said Joe Craig, VO1NA, who built the exciter board and the CW IDer. The transmitter runs 250 W and the power amp previously served the VE1SMU beacon. The antenna is an 11-element Cushcraft Yagi fed with half-inch hardline. The repeater site, in the town of Carbonear, is in the middle of a large field at a turkey farm with a clear view of the North Atlantic Ocean through the mouth of Conception Bay on the southeastern coast of Newfoundland. The antenna is at about 300 feet above sea level. Amateur stations hearing this beacon are asked to report to Joe Craig, VO1NA, vo1na@rac.ca, describing in detail what they copied.

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*** Ham radio operators get TV time in South Dakota:** Ham radio operators in South Dakota will be featured during an upcoming segment of the South Dakota Public Television program "Dakota Life." The show will highlight how local hams have contributed during emergencies. It will air November 6, 8 PM Central/7 PM Mountain Time. Reruns are scheduled for November 9, 1 PM Central/noon Mountain Time and November 25, 9:30 PM Central/8:30 PM Mountain Time. Visit the South Dakota Public Broadcasting Web site for more information <<http://www.sdpb.org>>.

*** South Africans Launch Telescope Special Event Nov 21:** A group from the South African Boland Amateur Radio Club will operate a special event station November 21-23 from the Sutherland Observatory in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. "The purpose is to make amateurs aware of the largest Telescope in the Southern Hemisphere," noted Dennis Green, ZS4BS. Using the call sign ZS1SALT ("South African Large Telescope"), the station will operate from 1100 UTC November 21 until 1000 UTC November 23. All HF frequencies will be used and the station can be worked on phone, CW and digital modes. A special QSL card will be sent to all amateurs who make contact and send direct QSL cards. Cards should be sent to Borland ARC, PO Box 273, STRAND, 7140, Republic of South Africa. For additional information on the project, please visit the Web site www.salt.ac.za, as well as the Boland Amateur Radio Club website at www.qsl.net/zs1bak.

*** First US QSO above 400 GHz claimed:** Microwave enthusiast Brian Justin, WA1ZMS, reports what he believes is the first QSO above 400 GHz in the US. On November 11 at 0215 UTC, WA1ZMS/4 worked Peter Lascell, W4WWQ, on a frequency of 403 GHz over a distance of approximately 1709 feet in Virginia. WA1ZMS set new North American records on 241 and 322 GHz last December, and he reports the pair used the same basic gear that had been put into service for their then-record-making 241-GHz QSO last year (recently beaten), but with new 30-cm parabolic dishes.

*** Kentucky Section leaders lobby for PRB-1 declaration:** ARRL Kentucky Section Manager John Meyers, NB4K, and Assistant SM Fred Jones, WA4SWF, visited September 17 with Kentucky Gov Paul Patton. "We were trying to get the governor to enact a PRB-1 law by proclamation before he leaves office, which is legal in Kentucky," Meyers explained. PRB-1 is the limited federal preemption that requires local governments to "reasonably accommodate" Amateur Radio communication. "We still have hope, be it slim to none, that he'll still come through," Meyers said. He's encouraging Kentucky hams to contact Gov Patton by USPS mail (Gov Paul Patton, 700 Capitol Ave, Suite 100, Frankfort, KY 40601) or e-mail <governor@mail.state.ky.us> and "tell him what PRB-1 means to you as a ham and how it would be helpful."

*** Two wildlife tracking projects under way:** Since 1998, ham radio and VHF monitoring volunteers have helped scientists track the movements of endangered and threatened species. ARRL Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) Coordinator Joe Moell, K0OV, says that hams and monitoring enthusiasts could make a valuable contribution by participating. "The biggest volunteer monitoring project to date is now under way," Moell said this week. He reports that Nick Myatt of the Arkansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research unit has radio-tagged 360 American woodcock in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. "The woodcock migration has begun, and he is seeking reports of tags heard so he can attempt to do pinpoint tracking from a fixed-wing aircraft," Moell said. Possible stopover and destination states for these birds range from southern Minnesota and Wisconsin to Louisiana and eastern Texas. Moell says that Dave Sherman, a biologist with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, also has requested monitoring assistance in tracking two radio-tagged sandhill cranes that are now part of a larger flock migrating from Ohio. Additional information, including frequencies, is available on the Homing In Web site <<http://www.homingin.com>>.

*** Former HQ staffer George Hart, W1NJM, turns 90:** Retired ARRL Communications Manager George Hart, W1NJM, celebrated his 90th birthday November 1. A Charter Life Member of the League, Hart spent four decades as a member of the ARRL Headquarters staff and continues to be an active amateur and regular participant in Field Day as a member of the Newington Amateur Radio League. First licensed in 1929 as W3AMR in Pennsylvania, he began his ARRL career in 1938 as a second operator at the then-new W1AW Maxim Memorial Station. He spent two years in the US Army during World War II, during which the government silenced Amateur Radio, and he retired in 1978 as communications manager. Hart has contributed hundreds of articles to QST over the years. Well wishers may contact him at 66 Highland St, Newington, CT 06111 or via e-mail <w1njm@arrl.net>. Happy birthday, George!

*** Corrections:** The story "FCC Mulls Responses to Complaints Alleging Interference" in The ARRL Letter, Vol 22, No 45 (Nov 14, 2003), incorrectly states the working status of two unnamed FCC agents. The FCC employees were on duty at the time they monitored the alleged interference. The same story contains an incorrect frequency for a California repeater on which interference was reported. The correct frequency is 145.23 MHz. In The ARRL Letter, Vol 22, No 44 (Nov 7, 2003), the story "IARU, ARRL Support Amateur Radio Course at Albanian University," incorrectly listed the call sign of Dan Brown, NA7DB.

*** Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Award nomination deadline looms:** The deadline is fast approaching to submit nominations for the 2003 Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Award. The award goes to a professional journalist whose coverage best reflects the enjoyment, importance and public service value of

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Amateur Radio. It was named to honor the late Bill Leonard, a former president of CBS News and avid Amateur Radio operator in the 1960s and 1970s. Individual journalists may nominate themselves. The winner will receive a plaque and a cash award of \$500. All nominations must be received at ARRL Headquarters by 5 PM EST, December 5, 2003. For more information about the award, including the official rules of entry, contact ARRL Media Relations Manager Jennifer Hagy, N1TDY, jhagy@arrl.org; 860-594-0328.

*** AMSAT-NA announces appointments:** AMSAT-NA President Robin Haighton, VE3FRH, has announced two volunteer appointments within the satellite organization. Haighton has named Ed Long, WA4SWJ, of Peoria, Arizona, as editor of The AMSAT Journal. "Ed is fully conversant with the software which we use for the Journal. He is an electrical engineer and has been a ham for over 30 years," Haighton said. Long holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from West Virginia University (he was formerly WB8IKV) and an MBA from Duke University. An ARRL member, he is currently employed by SPX Process Equipment. Articles for The AMSAT Journal can sent to him via e-mail to <journal@amsat.org>. Williams takes over his editorial duties as of the November/December issue. Haighton also announced the appointment of Jim Jarvis, N2EA, of Pasadena, Maryland, as AMSAT manager of marketing. An ARRL member and fluent in English, French and German, Jarvis has 20 years international business development experience and a formal background in strategic marketing, much of it in the engineering field. Haighton said Jarvis already has begun reviewing the ECHO Launch Fund Campaign.--AMSAT News Service

*** AO-40 transponders off for a month:** AO-40 now is in "hibernation mode." The ALON/ALAT is 45/24. Magnetorquing has ceased, and the satellite will begin drifting toward ALON of approximately 315 degrees. This will take approximately four weeks. This is done twice a year to keep the satellite healthy due to poor sun angles. Although the satellite's passbands are off, its beacon remains on and FEC telemetry is active whenever possible. According to AO-40 ground controller Stacy Mills, W4SM, the passbands should be back on in time for the Christmas holiday. The AO-40 team would like telemetry files. Send zipped files via e-mail to ao40-archive@amsat.org.--Bruce Paige, KK5DO/AMSAT

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