

Minute of January 7

The President opened the meeting at 6:42. The minutes were then approved.

The Treasurer reported that the Balance was . Keith Slugantz paid the Club \$519.95 for ham equipment for the EM trailer. The Club also paid for the annual Christmas dinner, \$218.48.

Website: Jerry said that he would like to have representative for the website committee. Steve volunteered for the position.

Repeater: A number of 911 calls have been made on the repeater and as a result the auto patch had been shut off on the 2 meter machine. It has been suggested that the repeater be made closed. Jerry suggested that 911 should be blocked and that we update the auto dial feature for everyone's use.

Adopt A Highway: Paul III has suggested that the Club plan highway cleanup dates for the year. The tentative dates are as follows:

April 3rd, May 22nd, July 10th, August 28th, October 9th, November 6th

Found Raising: Jim Hughes paid \$43.14 for drinks that were not sold during last years raffle sales. The drinks were sold to CKCS.

Emergency: Steve reported that Service Electronics asked if the Club would be interested in a, 35ft. mast. Jerry said that it may be a good idea to have extra incase they are needed.

Net Report

12/4/03 Called by: Paul KF4YRK	12/11/03 Called by: Paul KF4YRK	12/18/03 Called by: Paul KF4YRK	12/25/03
Steve KA4TJD	Paul KB4ENQ	Richard KD4GNX	NOT CALLED
Ed KY4E	Deborah KE4GNX		
	Pete KS4VZ		

Paul III was named cochairman for Net Control

Members Present:

Deborah Harrington	Paul Harrington III	Todd Rose
Steve McFadden	Mike Brannock	Jerry Mueller
Paul Harrington IV	Jim Hughes	Chuck Wilson

Visitor: Drew Chandler W.C. Emergency Management

From the ARRL News letter:

==>ARRL TO PROPOSE NEW ENTRY-LEVEL LICENSE, CODE-FREE HF ACCESS

The ARRL will ask the FCC to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license that would grant HF phone privileges without a Morse code test. The League also will propose consolidating all current licensees into three classes, retaining the Element 1 Morse requirement—now 5 WPM-only for the highest class. The ARRL Board of Directors overwhelmingly approved the plan January 16 during its Annual Meeting in Windsor, Connecticut. The proposals, put forth by the ARRL Executive Committee, were in response to changes made in Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03).

“Change in the Amateur Radio Service in the US, especially license requirements and even more so when Morse is involved, has always been emotional,” said ARRL First Vice President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, in presenting the Executive Committee’s recommendations. “In fact, without a doubt, Morse is Amateur Radio’s ‘religious debate.’” Harrison said the League’s proposal would provide “a true entry-level license with HF privileges” to promote growth in the Amateur Service.

The League says its proposal would continue a process of streamlining the amateur licensing structure that the FCC began more than five years ago but left unfinished in its Amateur Service license restructuring Report and Order (WT 98-143) that went into effect April 15, 2000.

A new entry-level license class—being called “Novice” for now—would require a 25-question written exam. It would offer limited HF CW/data and phone/image privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters as well as VHF and UHF privileges on 6 and 2 meters and on 222-225 and 430-450 MHz. Power output would be restricted to 100 W on 80, 40, and 15 meters and to 50 W on 10 meters and up.

“The Board sought to achieve balance in giving new Novice licensees the opportunity to sample a wider range of Amateur Radio activity than is available to current Technicians while retaining a motivation to upgrade,” said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ. The ARRL plan would grandfather current Novice licensees into the new entry-level class without further testing.

The middle group of licensees—Technician, Tech Plus (Technician with Element 1 credit) and General—would be merged into a new General license that also would not require a Morse examination. Current Technician and Tech Plus license holders automatically would gain current General class privileges without additional testing. The current Element 3 General examination would remain in place for new applicants.

The Board indicated that it saw no compelling reason to change the Amateur Extra class license requirements. The ARRL plan calls on the FCC to combine the current Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensees into Amateur Extra, because the technical level of the exams passed by these licensees is very similar. New applicants for Extra would have to pass a 5 WPM Morse code examination, and the written exam would stay the same. Sumner said the Board felt that the highest level of accomplishment should include basic Morse capability. Current Novice, Tech Plus and General licensees would receive lifetime 5 WPM Morse credit.

Among other advantages, Sumner said the plan would allow new Novices to participate in HF SSB emergency nets on 75 and 40 meters as well as on the top 100 kHz of 15 meters. The new license also could get another name, Sumner said. “We’re trying to recapture the magic of the old Novice license, but in a manner that’s appropriate for the 21st century.”

The overall proposed ARRL license restructuring plan would more smoothly integrate HF spectrum privileges across the three license classes and would incorporate the “Novice refarming” plan the League put forth nearly two years ago in a Petition for Rule Making (RM-10413). The FCC has not yet acted on the ARRL plan, which would alter current HF subbands.

The ARRL license restructuring design calls for no changes in privileges for Extra and General class licensees on 160, 60, 30, 20, 17 or 12 meters. Novice licensees would have no access to those bands.

See “ARRL to Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access” on the ARRL Web site, <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/01/19/1/>>, for the specific subband allocations ARRL is proposing for each class.

The amateur community and other interested parties will have an opportunity to comment on the ARRL proposal once the League formally files a Petition for Rule Making and the FCC puts it on public notice.

==>FCC'S ABERNATHY ACKNOWLEDGES AMATEUR RADIO BPL CONCERNS

In a seeming shift away from “Broadband Nirvana,” FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy <<http://www.fcc.gov/commissioners/abernathy/>> this week specifically cited Amateur Radio concerns about the interference potential of Broadband Over Power Line (BPL). In remarks prepared for delivery at her alma mater, the Catholic University of America’s Columbus School of Law <<http://www.law.edu/>>, Abernathy said BPL should not be widely deployed before dealing with ham radio’s interference fears.

“I recognize that Amateur Radio licensees have raised concerns about harmful interference,” Abernathy said, “and that is something that will have to be addressed before any mass market deployment can occur.” She addressed the convocation “The Journey to Convergence: Challenges and Opportunities” January 22 on the school’s Washington, DC campus.

Abernathy said that if engineers can find a way to prevent harmful interference to other radio services, BPL would represent “a tremendous advance for consumers, because it could bring broadband to any home that has electricity.”

In her speech, “Overview of the Road to Convergence: New Realities Collide with Old Rules,” Abernathy called BPL “another promising technology” that electric utilities have already successfully field tested. As an “add-on service to the existing electrical grid,” she said, BPL might be a cost-effective alternative to provide broadband service to rural and other “underserved communities.”

Missing from her remarks was any mention of interference worries that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) have expressed to the FCC in the BPL proceeding.

Abernathy drew fire from the Amateur Radio community last September after she expressed unabashed enthusiasm for BPL in a talk before the United Powerline Council’s <<http://www.uplc.utc.org/>> annual conference. In that talk, she’d suggested that BPL was a step along the pathway to “Broadband Nirvana.”

The ARRL led the barrage of strong objections in the wake of Abernathy’s characterization. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, pointed out that preliminary testing already had established BPL is a significant source of radio spectrum pollution” and that BPL could not be implemented without causing harmful interference to radio services. Abernathy’s office later conceded that her “Broadband Nirvana” speech may have failed to make sufficiently clear her concerns about potential BPL interference.

More than 5100 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/>>.

==>AMSAT-NA ECHO SATELLITE MOVES ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO LAUNCH

The AMSAT-OSCAR ECHO satellite has edged a bit closer being launch-ready. An initial integration effort recently determined that 90 percent of the hardware onboard the new satellite tested out successfully,

AMSAT-NA <<http://www.amsat.org>> reports. During the next six weeks or so, the development team will resolve various outstanding issues, and final integration will be scheduled.

“The launch window opens in late March, so the satellite is coming together on plan,” said AMSAT Marketing Manager Jim Jarvis, N2EA. He says there’s still time for satellite enthusiasts who donate to the ECHO project to have their names placed in orbit aboard the new satellite. “The names of all contributors will be placed inside the ECHO satellite,” he said. AMSAT-NA has not yet reached its \$110,000 goal to pay for the AO-ECHO launch.

Jim White, WD0E, and Mike Kingery, KE4AZN, headed the integration team assembled in December at SpaceQuest in Fairfax, Virginia. In addition to hardware testing, the integration team also wrapped up telemetry calibration for the new bird. AMSAT says that even the experimental L-band receiver and S-band transmitter functioned well during their first tests.

The satellite is tentatively set to go into space from Russia on March 31. AO-ECHO’s planned sun-synchronous orbit will be approximately 800 km above Earth. Among other capabilities, AO-ECHO will allow satellite voice communication using handheld FM transceivers. Visit the AMSAT AO-ECHO Web page <<http://www.amsat.org/amsat/sats/echo/index.html>> for additional details.

==>ARISS SCHOOL GROUP CONTACT FALLS VICTIM TO SPACE STATION AIR LEAK

NASA this week postponed an Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) <<http://www.rac.ca/ariss/>> school group contact as the space agency and the station crew continued efforts to pin down what was causing air pressure to decay aboard the ISS. Students at Armstrong Middle School in Flint, Michigan, had been scheduled to speak with Expedition 8 commander Mike Foale, KB5UAC, at NAISS early on January 12. Space agency officials now believe the culprit was an air leak in the US Destiny Lab module.

“The pressure loss was traced to a braided flex hose on an observation window in the Destiny module,” NASA said. The hose reportedly helps keep air and condensation out of the Destiny module’s Earth-facing window. Foale and flight engineer Alex “Sasha” Kaleri, U8MIR, detected the hose leak using ultrasound equipment, and Foale reported the hissing sound stopped after the hose was disconnected. As of January 15, air pressure aboard the ISS continued to hold steady.

Although the leak may now be fixed, NASA has announced that Foale and Kaleri—along with flight controllers—will carry out an ISS air pressure test over the weekend. “The crew will close the hatches to divide the space station into three separate sections for leak checks and to gather data on air pressure fluctuations,” NASA said. Foale and Kaleri will remain in the Zvezda Service Module from the evening of January 16 until the morning of January 18.

The space agency said the earlier decline in air pressure had amounted to only a few hundredths of a pound per square inch each day and did not endanger the crew.

ARISS team member Scott Lindsey-Stevens, N3ASA, said ARISS “looks forward to the ISS crew’s resumption of their inspiring conversations with the schools.”

AO-7 turns 30! The oldest working satellite, AO-7, will mark its 30th year in space during 2004. The satellite, which came back to life in mid-2002, was launched November 15, 1974, and it remained operational until 1981, when it went dark due to battery failure. It remained dormant—and largely forgotten—until it suddenly and unexpectedly sprang back to life. AO-7 is in a 1460 km orbit, and AMSAT-NA considers the satellite “semi-operational.” Jan King, W3GEY reports AO-7 <<http://www.amsat.org/amsat/news/wsr.html#ao-7>> is running solely from its solar panels, so it will only

work when in sunlight. It has a Mode A uplink passband at 145.850 to 145.950 MHz and a downlink passband at 29.400 to 29.500 MHz (CW/USB). Beacons are at 29.502, 145.972, 435.1 and 2304.1 MHz. Ground controllers have only been able to activate some command functions. It also contains a Mode B transponder. To mark the satellite's 30th anniversary, AMSAT-NA will make available a special commemorative QSL card. AMSAT-NA Board Member and Awards Manager Bruce Paige, KK5DO, reports additional information will be available on the AMSAT-NA Web site <<http://www.amsat.org>>.

==>ARRL SEEKS COMPUTER-BASED MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATIONS AND VIDEOS

ARRL Field and Educational Services (F&ES) continues to seek Amateur Radio presentation programs or slide shows that utilize Microsoft PowerPoint or similar slide-viewing software. F&ES also is interested in VHS and digital video programs for the ARRL Video Series <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/materials/videos.html>>.

Topic choice can be any Amateur Radio subject of interest to hams or targeted for a non-ham community, including demonstrations and tutorials on various topics. The ARRL Web site's Multimedia Frequently Asked Questions page <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/materials/visuals.html>> has further information. The League's video library needs media in forms that are easily portable, easily presented and up-to-the-minute. As file size and download speed may be an issue for downloading submissions from the ARRL Web site, F&ES wants to offer the best submissions by topic collection in CD-ROM format.

Presentations and slide shows submitted should be placed on disc or CD-ROM. Videos should be in VHS or DVD format and not exceed 20 minutes in length. Submissions must contain original material and should not use music, video clips or copyrighted materials owned by others without appropriate permissions. Submissions should include a cover sheet describing the program, system requirements and file sizes and noting any use of materials used with the permission of others. ARRL will require a signed release form provided by ARRL. CDs selected for distribution would be made available to clubs and interested individuals for the cost of duplicating, shipping and handling.

Send presentations or slide shows on disc, CD-ROM, VHS tape or DVD to: Multimedia Project, c/o Mary Lau, N1VH, ARRL Field and Educational Services, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111. Contact Lau <mlau@arrl.org> for additional information.

Northern Florida ARES group activates after bus mishap: Duval County, Florida, Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) activated on the morning of January 18 after a bus rolled over in Jacksonville near the junction of Interstates 10 and 95. ARRL Crown District Emergency Coordinator Miller Norton, N4RYX, reports the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department (JFRD) initiated the Northern Florida ARES group's activation through an automatic telephone notification service. "In Duval County, ARES is automatically paged out by JFRD communications when a Level III mass-casualty incident occurs," Miller explained. "Level III means an event with 22 or more casualties. We began receiving radio check-ins within moments of launching the system." In all some 30 ARES members checked into the net. The bus had rolled down an embankment, landing upright, Norton said. More than 20 injured bus passengers—both adults and children—were transported to three area hospitals. None of the injuries was considered life-threatening. Duval County ARES dispatched amateur operators to the three hospitals receiving victims. Ten JFRD rescue units and five private ambulances responded to the scene along with other emergency vehicles and the JFRD Command and Communications Center mobile unit, Norton said. The call-up service Duval ARES uses is a telephone message-forwarding service called CallingPost.org, which is able to alert all ARES members quickly once an activation has been called. "This is a superior way to notify ARES members without the need for a telephone tree, which wastes precious time," Norton said. "Hats off to Duval County EC Bob Nelson, N4CUZ, and his group for a job well done!"