

Mich-A-Con RF

Iron Mountain, Michigan

December 2008

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<http://www.arrl.org>

Mich-A-Con ARC Clarifies Packet Node Story Packet Will Be Back!

Mike Bray K8DDB, Secretary of the Mich-A-Con Amateur Radio Club in Iron Mountain sent out the following email regarding the Iron Mountain Packet Node MIIMT. It was noted in our November newsletter with an article from *The Standing Wave* (HARA) that the node is down and erroneously stated there are no plans for putting it back up.

Re. the article in the Hiawatha ARA newsletter.

“The report of the demise of Iron Mountain ’s packet system has been greatly exaggerated.”

Please don't take down your packet nodes yet. Once we get established in our new building on Pine Mountain , the MIIMT node will be returned to service. Our old building at the WE Energies tower on Pine Mountain was demolished some time ago so the power company could build a larger structure to house their equipment. A smaller building has been provided for our repeater and packet equipment. We will soon be moving our 2 meter and 440 repeater and MIIMT packet equipment to the new facility.

I know our packet node has been down for a long time, but please be patient for a little while longer and we will have it operational once again.

73,

Mike Bray, K8DDB

Words from the President for December 2008

Tom, W8JWN

We are at the end of another year. 2008 was an exciting year for the club but the deaths of friends and members of the Mich-A-Con ARC dimmed the highlights.

We lost Lee Michaud, Jay Jennings, and Charlie Dickinson. Lee's death was a shock to us all. His contributions to the club were immense. Rest in peace, Lee.

Our repeater got a new home this past year. WE Energies installed a new building for the repeater.

Our "trailer fund" is close to \$1,000. Ham gear donations and estate equipment was sold to add to the fund. Randy Zandt provided many interesting items to be purchased at meetings. The proceeds were added to the fund. By the way, the "Ham" sausage was terrible!

Randy has donated a trailer to be the base for our trailer/tower combination. Work on refurbishing the trailer will begin in the spring. Thanks Randy.

May 17th was a sad day for your president! My tower and beams came crashing down. The tower, weakened by previous storms, finally came down on the roof. It was lucky that there was no damage to any neighbor's property and very little to my roof.



June 28-29 found us at Marion Park for Field Day. Thanks to the leadership of Mike Boileau, our 3A effort placed us 4th in Michigan, just 250 points from 3rd place. We were 7th out of 40 clubs in the Great Lakes Division. Now, if there was a way to keep W8JWN's RTTY signal out of all of the other radios, we could really improve next year!

October 17th brought joy to me, as my tower and new SteppIR were raised. With the help of Gary Schafer and Mike Bray, the installation went smoothly. The four element SteppIR has worked great!



K8V was again activated for Veterans Day

on Pine Mountain. My Cushcraft A3S tribander really performed on 20 meters. Many DX stations were worked on SSB and RTTY. Scott Jarmusch did it again on 40 SSB! His QSO numbers were very impressive. We will operate again next year with the special call K8V. Got to use up those 1,000 QSL cards. HI!

The club is still searching for a permanent home. Randy is working with the VA Hospital to reach that goal. Hopefully, my next December "Words" will mention that we have established a club station in that facility.

Towers...towers... and more towers! Our club has acquired several steel towers this past year.

If anyone is in the need of a 40 foot tower, please contact me.

Merry Christmas to All and a Happy New Year!



Congressional Committee Members Release Report Lambasting FCC Chairman Kevin Martin

from:

The ARRL Letter
Vol. 27, No. 49
December 12, 2008

On Tuesday, December 9, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce – the congressional committee that oversees the Federal Communications Commission -- released its majority staff report "on the bipartisan investigation of the FCC's regulatory processes and management practices." The report -- "Deception and Distrust: The Federal Communications Commission under Chairman Kevin J. Martin" -- stated that the investigation was prompted "by allegations to the effect that [FCC] Chairman Kevin J. Martin has abused FCC procedures by manipulating or suppressing reports, data and information"

http://www.arrl.org/news/files/FCC_Report120908.pdf

"Our investigation confirmed a number of troubling allegations raised by individuals in and outside the FCC," said **Representative Bart Stupak (D-MI)**, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. "The Committee staff report details some of the most egregious abuses of power, suppression of information and manipulation of data under Chairman Martin's leadership. It is my hope that this report will serve as a roadmap for a fair, open and efficient FCC under new leadership in the next administration."

Representative John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce echoed Stupak's concerns: "Any of these findings, individually, are cause for concern. Together, the findings suggest that, in recent years, the FCC has operated in a dysfunctional manner and Commission business has suffered as a result. It is my hope that the new FCC Chairman will find this report instructive and that it will prove useful in helping the Commission avoid making the same mistakes."

The report said that "in an investigation of this nature," the Committee would usually hold hearings "to receive testimony from witnesses and to further examine the issues." But due to what the Committee called "the climate of fear that currently pervades the FCC," the report said the Committee found that key witnesses "were unwilling to testify or even have their names become known." For that reason, they issued a report in place of a hearing "to protect the many honest people who came forward under a promise of protection or anonymity." Chairman Martin was invited to meet with the Committee to discuss matters addressed by the investigation, but the report said he "ignored [the Committee's] Invitation," as did his Chief of Staff Daniel Gonzalez and Chief of Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Derek Poarch.

In its 110-page report, the Committee described 12 allegations, ranging from retaliation against FCC employees who differed with the Chairman's policies to enhanced 911 wireless services to broadband over power lines (BPL). To go along with the 12 allegations, 22 exhibits were attached to the report, such as internal e-mails, e-mails from FCC commissioners to their staff, statements made by FCC commissioners and letters to and from commissioners (including Chairman Martin). Not all 12 allegations were substantiated by the Committee.

* Broadband over Power Lines

Concerning BPL, the report alleges that FCC officials "ignored complaints of radio frequency interference caused by BPL high-speed Internet technology, delayed an enforcement investigation for two years and improperly withheld engineering data regarding BPL from the public."

The report found that in October 2004, as then-Chairman Michael Powell issued his final rule "defining BPL access and setting technical and administrative requirements to protect licensed radio operators from harmful interference," the FCC "withheld from the public certain engineering reports on which it relied in promulgating the rule" from the final rule and order.

Even though the BPL rules were adopted during Powell's tenure, the report found that "it was under Chairman Martin that the Enforcement Bureau and the General Counsel continued to withhold the redacted engineering reports and insisted on doing so in the course of the ensuing litigation [with the ARRL]" <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/04/25/10064/>

The report goes on to say that on April 25, 2008, the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit found that the FCC, in the case filed by the ARRL, "violated the Administrative Procedure Act when it played 'hide and seek' with engineering data used in its support of the order and 'cherry-picked' a study on which it had relied" <http://pacer.cadc.uscourts.gov/common/opinions/200804/06-1343-1112979.p>.

"The fact that the FCC withheld the required engineering reports in this matter," the report concluded, "indicates poor judgment and an attempt to hide critical weaknesses in its decision. Ironically, the FCC's attempts to hide this information only served to provoke suspicion and its handmaiden, litigation. This case [filed by the ARRL] illustrates the extent to which a culture of secrecy has developed at the FCC that is as counterproductive as it is unnecessary." The report states that this "particular situation" has been corrected by the courts and technological issues arising from BPL have been "rendered largely moot over time due to improvements" in BPL technology.

"It is distressing, but unfortunately not surprising," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, "to read that the FCC's mishandling of the BPL issue was simply a part of a broad pattern of dysfunction at the Commission. This is a relatively recent development and is unprecedented in the ARRL's long experience with the FCC -- an association that dates back to the very creation of the agency, 20 years after the founding of the ARRL. While the marketplace failure of BPL and the steps taken voluntarily by the few companies that have deployed BPL systems have combined to minimize interference, the regulatory issue is by no means moot. The rules remain inadequate."

Sumner continued: "More than seven months after the Court remand, the FCC has done nothing to correct its errors, nor has it complied with the very specific instructions from the United States Court of Appeals. These instructions included the disclosure of the studies that it intentionally withheld from the public, but upon which it relied in adopting its rules. Indeed, the only step the Commission has taken since the Court's remand order is to mount an unsuccessful effort to oppose our claim for reimbursement of the printing costs for the briefs in the case -- a small fraction of the expenses incurred by the ARRL in our appeal -- expenses that would not have been necessary had the Commission followed the law in the first place" <http://www.arrl.org/?artid=8338>>.

* Other Findings by the Committee

The report also showed instances of where Chairman Martin "manipulated, withheld or suppressed data, reports and information," and said Martin's "manipulation [of another report] may have damaged the credibility of the Commission, and certainly undermined the integrity of the staff. Moreover, it was done with the purpose of affecting the congressional decision-making, in that it was issued as a report to Congress."

Saying that FCC matters have not been handled in an "open or transparent manner," the report said the FCC "rais[ed] suspicions both inside and outside the Commission that some parties and issues are not being treated fairly." The report stated that the Committee's impressions were "confirmed" when it discovered that Chairman Martin made a "preemptory reversal" of [a report's] conclusions and that Martin did not seek "further public comment or conduct further studies" thus giving the impression "that the issue was not handled fairly or openly."

The report also found that Chairman Martin's "heavy-handed, opaque and non-collegial management style has created distrust, suspicion and turmoil among the five current Commissioners." The report states that Martin does not afford his fellow Commissioners "direct

and unfettered access to the Commission staff and their expert advice, thereby hindering the ability of other Commissioners to carry out the duties of their offices and the work of the Commission."

The report also found that Commission staff have not been "effectively managed." When Martin first became Chairman, he "imposed a major reshuffling of FCC staff throughout the agency." While the report said that a "certain amount of reorganization is not unprecedented" when a new Chairman begins his term, the reorganization "was highly unusual in both its breadth (nearly every senior position at the agency changed hands) and its depth (even a number on non-management line staffers found themselves inexplicably reassigned)." Calling it a "waste of resources, the report pointed out that senior employees with "extensive experience and expertise" were reassigned to junior-level positions; as a result, "it appears that some important Commission proceedings were delayed."

V.E. TESTING DATES ANNOUNCED:

The Mich-A-Con amateur radio club announced V.E. Testing dates for 2009.

Mike Bray, K8DDB noted the fee for 2009 has increased to \$15.00.

All tests will be at 9:00 am central time, (arrive by 8:30 am) in the Dickinson County Library conference room. Contact Mark J. Lewis N8UKD, (906)396-5519, 412 Fairmont St. Kingsford, Mi 49802.

Dates:

February 7th, 2009

May 2nd, 2009

August 1st, 2009

November 7th, 2009

Please arrive one-half hour early for test sessions to allow time for application processing. Testing applicants should bring two pieces of I.D. including one photo I.D. Original license and a clear copy of their license if applicable and a completed form 605 will also be needed. (Form 605 will be provided if needed.) Please bring pencils, calculator and the test fee of \$15.00. Please have the correct fee as examiners do not carry change. Please contact the individuals listed to confirm dates, times and locations.

Please remit dues to :

Mike Boileau, N9NBN
1106 Cleveland St
Niagara, Wi. 54151

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip _____
Call Sign: _____
Email Address: _____
Phone: _____
ARRL Member? Yes ___ No ___

Annual dues are due in January.

Please make check payable to Mich-A-Con ARC

Annual dues for Full Membership - Single \$20 __ * Family \$30 __ Repeater Only \$10 __ **

If family membership, please list additional names and call signs:

* The dues for NEW members are prorated - you only pay for the remainder of the year! Please remit \$1.67 per month for a Single membership or \$2.50 per month for a Family membership.

Mich-A-Con RF is published by the Mich-A-Con Amateur Radio Club of Iron Mountain. Send articles to:
Steve Skauge
KD8CCP@arrl.net

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Links

ARRL WEB PAGE: <http://www.arrl.org>

ARRL MICHIGAN:
<http://www.arrl.mi.org>

US REPEATERS:
<http://www.usrepeaters.com>

MICH-A-CON :
<http://www.qsl.net/ka1ddb>

Tropospheric Ducting Forecasts:
<http://www.dxinfocentre.com/tropo.html>

FCC Universal Licensing System:
<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>

QTH.COM: <http://www.qth.com/>

QRZ.COM: <http://www.qrz.com/>

Mich-A-Con ARC Activities for January 2009						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1 New Years	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 ARES	9	10
11	12	13 Meeting	14	15 ARES	16	17 Breakfast
18	19	20	21	22 ARES	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 ARES	30	31

Club Activities:

ARES Nets are conducted at 6:30 PM Central Time every Thursday on our 2-meter repeater (146.850 MHz.)

Meeting: The Mich-A-Con Amateur Radio Club meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Dickinson County Library. Visitors and Prospective Members are always welcome!

Our Saturday Morning Breakfast is held on the 3rd Saturday of every month at 9:00 AM at the Holiday Kitchen Restaurant on Stephenson Ave (US-2) in Iron Mountain.

Wanted:

**YOUR ARTICLES, IDEAS
AND INPUT! SEND IT IN
NOW TO:**

kd8ccp@arrl.net

Club patches are available from:

Mike Boileau, N9NBN
1106 Cleveland Street
Niagara, WI 54151

The patches are 3 inches in diameter and sell for \$3.00 each. If ordering by mail, please enclose a SASE along with your payment.

FCC requests help from hams

from:

Weavers Words

December 13th 2008

ARRL Great Lakes Division Director:

James Weaver, K8JE k8je@arrl.org

By this time, most ARRL members have heard that the FCC asked the League to help in the coming conversion of analog TV (ATV) to digital TV (DTV). The Commission is concerned there will be problems during this switchover because a number of people may not understand how to connect the converter box or deal with some other aspect of the change. A number of such problems occurred when a trial switch to DTV occurred.

I will not discuss the rights or wrongs, if any, of the coming switchover. It is going to happen. I won't even discuss whether it was right or wrong of FCC to request help through ARRL. This, too, is a done-deal -- they've already asked. What I will discuss is watch-outs I suggest us who lending a hand may want to take to avoid the likelihood Amateur Radio ends up in hot water.

Many of us older hands remember public relations problems that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s when we tried to help with television interference (TVI) that was blamed on amateur transmissions. The answer to the TVI typically was to put a simple filter on the TV set in much the same way the DTV converter will be hooked up. A number of hams went to the length of obtaining these filters and installing them on neighbors' TV sets, trying to be good neighbors.

The problem was that a number of TV sets "went out" soon after filters were installed.

Many owners of these sets blamed the hams for these failures -- never mind that the set was quite old and destined to fail soon.

A lesson from this situation soon became apparent. This is, "Though shalt keep thy hands off thy neighbor's TV set." Give them the filter, but have them install it themselves or let them have a TV technician do it.

The same could happen if we attach DTV converters to TVs. With a high percent of the sets that need converters being a few years old, we should not be surprised if a number of them fail shortly after a converter is attached.

The first rule I suggest anyone who helps out with the ATV to DTV project is to stay away from your neighbor's or a stranger's TV.

The second rule I suggest is to be certain that the instructions provided for connecting converters clearly indicates they come from the Federal Communications Commission of the US Government. These are not our instructions. We are relaying them at the request of the Federal Communications Commission of the US Government. Notice I did not merely say "the FCC." Too many people have no idea what the FCC is. In addition, many may not understand even what the Federal Communications Commission but "US Government" should be understood.

What we can take credit for is that we are taking the time and effort to help our fellow citizens. A few ways we can do this are to set up stands in shopping centers and stores where high volumes of people shop, give demos to church, civic and fraternal groups, or operate phone banks in conjunction with TV and radio stations to spread the FCC's

instructions. TV stations having much to stake in the changeover and are taking the lead in publicizing "how to's" related to it, local clubs might find them willing allies in helping set up and publicizing demonstrations.

I understand the FCC will provide instructions to distribute to consumers and scripts for use over the telephone. These should clearly indicate the source of the information is the Commission. They merely ask us to volunteer time and in a way serve as parrots to distribute the information.

Provided we amateurs do not fall into the trap of being overly helpful or decide to show first hand how technically elegant we are, there should be very little chance this project will haunt us. Let the glory and problems (if any) go to the FCC.

Let us be fully satisfied to be known as good citizens who help our fellow citizens and our government when this is needed. So, feel free to put up signs stating who you are. Feel free too to talk to people about Amateur Radio and the technical advances we are making ourselves in digital and other communications, but stay away from taking credit for the service you are forwarding from the FCC.

This is my thinking about the project. If you choose to help with it, thanks. If you decide you cannot help, thanks for thinking about it.

Club Repeaters:

The club maintains two repeaters, which are located on Pine Mountain (elevation 1,650 feet) in Iron Mountain, with tower and facilities provided by the Wisconsin Electric Power Co.

The range of the 2 meter repeater is about 40 miles under normal conditions, depending upon terrain. The 440 MHz repeater has a range of about 25 miles.

OUTPUT	OFFSET	PLTONE	CALLSIGN
146.850	Minus	-	WA8FXQ
444.850	Plus	100 Hz	WA8FXQ

Repeater Specifications:

The 146.85 repeater is a Melco Hi Pro (built from a kit in the 1970s) with 25 watts output.

The 444.85 repeater is a GE Master Pro with 30 watts output.

The repeaters share a Diamond dual band antenna at a tower height of 125 feet.

To use the Auto Patch, key your mic and dial the Auto Patch ON code and let up on your mic. You will then hear a dial tone. Key your mic and dial your number. The phone should then ring. When you complete your call, key your mic and dial the Auto Patch OFF code and the phone call will terminate. Club members will be given Auto Patch codes on request.

Mich-A-Con Amateur Radio Club **Minutes of the December 9, 2008 Meeting**

The meeting was called to order by President Tom Martin, W8JWN, at 7:00 p.m.

Secretary Report

The minutes of the November 11th meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer Report

Balances as of December 2:

Regular Savings - \$1,909.20, \$810 of which is in the Trailer Fund.

Repeater Savings - \$899.87.

Checking - \$160.20.

Petty Cash - \$0.00. The \$21.00 previously in petty cash was used for K8V Special Event mailings.

Repeater Report

Bob, WA8FXQ, and Skip, KE9L, moved the repeater equipment into the new building. We need a heater, a small table and chair, a phone and light bulbs for the building.

ARES

No report.

Old Business

Veterans Day Special Event –

70 certificates and 60 QSL cards, including 10 to Europe, have been sent. Money was used from Petty Cash for needed envelopes and stamps.

Club Trailer –

Randy, KB9ZES, has donated a 14 foot trailer with a heavy frame. Members are asked to keep an eye out for a suitable telescoping tower to mount on it. Mike, N9NBN, circulated photos of finished trailers which would fill our needs. Our trailer could be outfitted with outriggers, a deck, job boxes and storage for our generator.

Club Station –

Randy is still investigating space at the VA Hospital.

Lee Michaud's Estate –

Mike, K8DDB, has written a letter to Lee's brother Dale listing club equipment which remains at Lee's residence.

New Business

Charlie Dickinson Estate –

Donations to the club include a 40 foot tower, coaxial cable, various elements and booms from beam antennas, two 11 element 2-meter beams, an 80 meter bazooka antenna and three roof tripods. Equipment is being stored at by Tom, W8JWN, and Gary, K4FMX.

Towers to Sell –

The club has an abundance of towers to sell.

Veterans Day Special Event Publicity –

Tom circulated local newspapers, The Mining Journal and a Florence newspaper, which contained articles about the special event.

Trailer Fund –

Randy, KB9ZES, brought a bag of items to be sold for a donation to the trailer fund.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by Mike Bray

Attendees

Mike Bray, K8DDB---Secretary

Bob, Meyers, WA8FXQ

Randy Zandt – KB9ZES

Nate Mieras, KD8GLP

Burton Armbrust, WB8EBS

Tom Martin, W8JWN---President

Michael Boileau, N9NBN---Vice President/Treasurer

Scott Baker, KB9AVX

Beth Baker, KC9KVP

2009 Sled Dog Race Scheduled

Lou Gembolis, KG8NK announced the 2009 Sled Dog Races are scheduled for February 20th, 21st, and 22nd 2009.

Lou noted Volunteers are needed again this year to cover communications for the races. If you would like to help out this year please contact Lou Gembolis KG8NK via his phone number or email:

Lou Gembolis KG8NK

906 485-5442

lgembolis@chartermi.net

MICH-A-CON RF

Mich-A-Con ARC
c/o Stephen Skauge
213 South Angeline
Ishpeming, Mi 49849

Club Meetings:

The Mich-A-Con Amateur Radio Club meets on the second Tuesday of the month in the Dickinson County Library at 7:00 PM. Visitors and prospective members are always welcome!

The URL for the Mich-A-Con ARC web site is:
<http://www.qsl.net/ka1ddb/>

Previous editions of Mich-A-Con RF can be accessed by a link on the news page.

The ARRL DX Bulletin on the Upcoming Activities page is updated each Thursday and the contests section is updated on a monthly basis.

Club Officers:

President:
Tom Martin, W8JWN
(906) 774-5463
tmartin@chartermi.net

Vice President:
Mike Boileau N9NBN
(715) 251-3137
n9nbn@uplogon.com

Secretary:
Mike Bray, K8DDB
(906) 563-7020
mikebray@chartermi.net

Treasurer:
Mike Boileau N9NBN
(715) 251-3137
n9nbn@uplogon.com

Reminders:

Club dues for the year 2009 are payable on January 1st. Please use the Membership Application - Renewal form in this newsletter when paying your dues. Checks should be made payable to Mich-A-Con Arc and sent to our Treasurer, Mike Boileau, N9NBN at the address listed on the form. Thank-you for supporting your club!

The January Mich-A-Con Meeting will be held on Tues January 13th 2009.

