

Washington Amateur
Communications, Inc.
1696 East Maiden St.
Washington, PA 15301



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Rules, 2004 Penna. QSO Party	2
N3BV/R QRT	3
Upcoming Events	3
Amateur Refutes FCC's "Clean Bill of Health" on BPL	3
WACOM/WASH ISS QSO	4
WACOM Hamfest Announcement	5

The WACOM

HAM

NOVEMBER
2004

HAMFEST RESULTS!

As of the newsletter deadline, we were still waiting for a hamfest writeup and pictures (guess everyone was too busy working on the Presidential campaign!). We hope to have those for next month's newsletter.

We do know that WACOM had a good turnout and gave away a lot of hourly and door prizes... over 30. (And amazingly enough, Bill N3BPB didn't win anything, a rare, almost unique, occurrence at a Western PA hamfest!)

The Main Prize winners were:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1: ICOM IC-706 | Gary KB3GUZ |
| 2: SGC 239 Tuner | Paul NØVLR |
| 3: Fuji Digital Camera | Jim KC3HW |
| 4: MFJ Antenna Analyzer | Richie N3SBF |
| 5: ICOM IC-2100H | Wireless Association of South Hills |

N3BV/R CHANGING HANDS?

Last month, we told you about Brett N3BV's intentions to let his repeater on 443.650 go dark. There have been, as they say, further developments.

Frank Bobro KB3FZU has stepped forward and begun discussions with Brett about taking over ownership of the N3BV repeater system, including its remote sites. Members of the Wireless Association of South Hills have indicated that they will assist in operation and maintenance of the machine.

More information may be available in our next newsletter!

UPCOMING MEETINGS!



Next WACOM Monthly Meeting:
Thursday, November 4th, 2004, 6:00 PM

Next WACOM Board of Directors Meeting:
Thursday, November 18th, 7:30 PM

Meeting Location: South Strabane #1 VFD, 1696 East Maiden Street, Washington PA 15301

All Welcome!



Does a Bear DX in the Woods?

Paul Signorelli WØRW courtesy of www.eham.net

On July 10th, there was a 20-Meter contest on with lots of strong European stations coming in so I took my Elecraft KX-1 out in the backyard to try for a few.

I was outside walking around just after midnight when I worked Alex, YL2KO, Latvia, on 14,060. This was my first European contact on 20 whilst being peripatetic (Pedestrian) mobile. I was hand holding my KX1 and had my eight-foot whip and a drag wire trailing behind me on the grass.

While calling another station, I saw a big black hulk in my driveway. I also heard a raspy sound of claws scratching the cement; I almost dropped the KX-1 as I dashed for the door. I was trying to figure out how to get inside the door with the 8-foot whip tied to my body, as it slammed shut, locking me outside. The big black bear was only 10 feet away. I had to awaken my XYL to let me back into the house. She went to the wrong door not knowing what was happening outside.

The bear was scared away by the clanking noise of my new antenna's capacity hat, a pie pan, and ran the other way back up the driveway . . . whoosh!!!

The adrenaline rush of working Latvia while Pedestrian Mobile QRP is nothing compared to having a bear walk up on you while you are working DX in the dark.

I think I will leave the midnight (zombie) operation for winter time when the bears are Hibernating. . .

Just life in the city – Colorado Springs, Colorado.

PS: The Bear was back in the yard on July 31st. I got the QSL card from YL2KO but He never heard the rest of story. The local TV crew was out interviewing another lady who had seen the bear and right during the interview the Bear came back into her yard. The TV crew got great pictures of the Bear. The week after the Bear showed up in my back yard the local Paper, The Gazette, July 21, Metro section, Pages 1 and 8 had a picture of this bear eating a fawn! The article said you could fight the Bears off with Binoculars... great! I

QSL Managers & Routes

3CØR via EA5BVP — W9OL
3D2PA via PA5ET — RW3RN
3XY1L via UY5XE — WØMM
4S7AVG via JA3AVO — JJ1BDX/3
4S7MEG via 7K1MAG — RW3RN
4V2ØYH via DL7CM — N1NK
6W1RW via F6BEE — W2IRT
7P8DA, 7P8NK via K4YL — N1NK
8P9JR, 8P9JS via PA2R — RA3SL
9G5ZS via ZS6EGB — NØJT
9V1GO via OK1DOT — W9OL
A35XM via DL8YRM — W5OZI
A61R via EA7FTR — W2IRT
C53KL via YL2KL — N1NK
C56JJ via PA4JJ — PA4JJ
EK7DX via KP4USA — RW3RN
EM1HO via I2PJA — W2IRT
EW6GF via DL8KAC — WØMM
FP5KE via F5TJP — WØMM
J38AA via WA1S — WØMM
J73CCM via SMØCCM — W2IRT

LZ2TU via WB2RAJ — N1NK
MU5X via G3KKQ — RA3SL
OJØJ via OHØRJ — W2IRT
STØRY via DL5NAM — RW3RN
T88HA via JK1FNN — RW3RN
T88ZZ via F5PTM — RW3RN
TA2ZF via UT2UB — RA3SL
TF8GX via KT6YL — W2IRT
TT8PK via F4EGS — K7ZD
UN7PCZ via DL8KAC — W2IRT
UU7J via W1TE — W2IRT
V44KJ via WB2TSL — N1NK
V47WM via PA2R — RA3SL
V73MJ via JF1NZW — 9K2HN
V8AJV via PA1AJV — N1NK
VK9CJ via JA1KJW — RA3SL
VK9XW via DL2RMC — RA3SL
XT2ATI via EA4YK — RW3RN
YA8G via LA4YW — RW3RN
YI9ZF via SM1TDE — RA3SL
ZA1DX via OH2BH — N8IK

Thanks to the NJDXA DX News & DX Chat Reflectors, the DX-QSL Reflector, 425 DX News, OPDX News, Diamond DX Club News, ICPO Bulletin, & ARRL DX Bulletin for our DX News information. Thanks also to Bill Moore NC1L / ARRL DXCC Desk, & Bernie McClenny W3UR / The Daily DX for confirmations & additional information.

FCC BPL Report & Order Stresses Avoidance, Resolution of Harmful Interference

ARRL Web Extra courtesy of the American Radio Relay League

NEWINGTON, CT, October 28, 2004 — The FCC today released the full BPL Report and Order it adopted just two weeks ago. While extolling the purported benefits of broadband over power line technology, the 81-page document also declares the FCC's intention to "protect licensed services from harmful interference." In line with remarks made at the October 14 open meeting where the FCC adopted the R&O--then still in draft form--the FCC will require BPL operators to address and resolve all valid interference complaints. It declined, however, to reduce the Part 15 radiated emission limit for BPL systems, maintaining that emissions from BPL systems are very localized and at low enough levels to preclude harmful interference in the first place. And it left the door open to possibly upping the limit in the future. When interference does occur, the Commission favors "notching," frequency shifting and power reduction by BPL systems as the preferred mitigation modes.

"We recognize that some radio operations in the bands being used for Access BPL, such as those of Amateur Radio licensees, may occur at distances sufficiently close to power lines as to make harmful interference a possibility," the FCC conceded in its R&O. "We believe that those situations can be addressed through interference avoidance techniques by the Access BPL provider such as frequency band selection, notching, or judicious device placement."

Notches would have to be at least 20 dB below applicable Part 15 limits on HF and at least 10 dB below Part 15 limits on VHF. The FCC called the ability to alter a system's operation to notch out transmissions on specific frequencies where interference is occurring "a necessary feature for resolving interference without disrupting service to BPL subscribers."

FCC Advises Hams to Take Steps to Avoid Interference

The FCC said it had no evidence before it that BPL operation would significantly contribute to generally raising background noise levels. At the same time, it seemed to put some of the onus on Amateur Radio licensees to take steps to avoid power-line interference-and, by inference, BPL interference-in advance.

"In addition, because power lines inherently can radiate significant noise emissions as noted by NTIA and ARRL, good engineering practice is to locate sensitive receiver antennas as far as practicable from power lines," the FCC said. In a footnote, the FCC took pains to advise ARRL that in cases where its members experience RF noise, "such noise can often be avoided by carefully locating their antennas; in many instances an antenna relocation of only a relatively short distance can resolve noise interference."

No Special Protections for Amateurs

BPL operators would be required to notch certain bands, such as those used for life and safety communications by aeronautical mobile or US Coast Guard stations. The FCC R&O makes clear, however, that similar rules will not apply to the Amateur Service, although notching could be one mitigation tool to deal with ham radio complaints.

"We similarly do not find that Amateur Radio frequencies warrant the special protection afforded frequencies reserved for international aeronautical and maritime safety operations," the Commission said, adding that in many instances, amateur frequencies are used for routine communications and hobby activities.

"While we recognize that amateurs may on occasion assist in providing emergency communications," the FCC said, "we believe that the general Part 15 provisions and the specific provisions being adopted herein for Access BPL operations are sufficient to protect these amateur operations."

BPL's Upside Outweighs Downside, FCC Suggests

Although some cases of harmful interference may be possible from BPL emissions at levels up to Part 15 limits, the FCC said, "we

(BPL Continued from page 2)

agree with NTIA [National Telecommunications and Information Administration] that the benefits of Access BPL service warrant acceptance of a small and manageable degree of interference risk." The Commission reiterated in the R&O its belief that BPL's public benefits "are sufficiently important and significant so as to outweigh the limited potential for increased harmful interference that may arise."

The FCC also said that while it agrees with the ARRL that BPL is not a "traditional point-source emitter," it doesn't buy into the notion that BPL devices "will cause the power lines to act as countless miles of transmission lines all radiating RF energy along their full length."

Additional Provisions

Among other specific provisions, the FCC's new rules also mandate certification of BPL equipment instead of the less-stringent verification, a requirement for a public BPL database—something the BPL industry did not want. They also require mechanisms to deal swiftly with interference complaints.

BPL systems will have to incorporate the ability to modify operation and performance "to mitigate or avoid potential harmful interference to radio services and to deactivate specific units found to actually cause harmful interference that cannot be remedied through modification of their operation," the R&O says.

The public BPL database would have to include the name of the BPL provider, the frequencies of BPL operation; the postal ZIP codes the BPL system serves; the manufacturer and type of BPL equipment and its associated FCC ID number; the contact information, including both telephone number and e-mail address of a person at or associated with the BPL operator to facilitate interference resolution (phones would only have to be staffed during "normal business hours," the FCC specified), and the proposed or actual date of BPL operation.

Further, the new rules spell out the locations of "small geographic exclusion zones" as well as excluded bands or frequencies—concessions made primarily at the insistence of the NTIA, which administers radio spectrum for federal government users--and "coordination areas" where BPL deployments at any frequency must be "precoordinated by BPL operators." They also detail techniques to measure BPL emissions from system equipment and power lines.

No Change in Approach to Part 15 Complaint Resolution

The FCC's R&O makes clear that the agency does not intend to deal with

interference complaints regarding BPL systems any differently, nor any more stringently, than it does interference complaints involving other systems that fall under §15.5(c) of its rules.

"Under this rule, parties who believe they are experiencing interference from an unlicensed device are first expected to bring the matter to the attention of the operator of the unlicensed device," the FCC said. "If that action does not resolve the interference, the party may then seek intervention by the Commission."

The FCC further said it expected "good faith" on both sides in resolving any interference complaints that might arise. "Speedy resolution of interference will not result if the database information on Access BPL deployments is abused, and the BPL operators are deluged with frivolous interference complaints," the FCC said

The Commission added that it expects BPL operators to take every interference complaint seriously and to diagnose the possible cause of interference quickly. But it suggested that complainants have responsibilities as well.

"At the same time, we expect the complainant to have first taken reasonable steps to confirm that interference, rather than a receiver system malfunction, is occurring and, to the extent practicable, to determine that the interference source is located outside the complainant's premises," the Commission said.

The FCC pledged to investigate complaints that land in its lap and take action against the BPL operator if it is found to be causing harmful interference. "If, on the other hand, the Commission uses its resources to investigate an interference complaint that is found to be frivolous, the Commission will impose appropriate sanctions for abuse of its administrative process."

Shutting down a BPL system in response to a valid interference complaint "would be a last resort when all other efforts to satisfactorily reduce interference have failed," the FCC said. It did require BPL systems to incorporate a means to allow deactivation of individual components on a remote-controlled basis, but it emphasized that only the FCC may direct a BPL system to cease operation.

ARRL Mulling Options

ARRL officials are studying the R&O and considering possible responses. Meeting October 16 in Dallas, Texas, the ARRL Executive Committee (EC) authorized the filing of a *Petition for Reconsideration* in response to the BPL R&O in ET Docket 04-37. The EC also authorized ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, to "prepare to pursue other available remedies as to procedural and substantive defects" in the BPL proceeding.

JOIN WACOM ON THE AIR

2 meter net: Every Tuesday at 8:30 PM on the
W3CYO repeaters 145.49 and 443.3 MHz

10 meter net: Every Tuesday at 9:00 PM on
28.340 MHz

FYI Networks

For Your Information needs

Make FYI

Your Internet Service Provider

CONTACT FYI AT 1-877-FYI-4NET

ON THE WEB AT WWW.FYI.NET

MENTION THAT YOU ARE A WACOM MEMBER FOR A
SPECIAL PRICE OF \$18 / MONTH.

Upcoming Events

November 6 & 7 — ARRL Sweepstakes CW
November 13 & 14 — ARRL Sweepstakes SSB
November 27 & 28 — CQ World Wide DX Contest CW
December 2 — WACOM Meeting
December 3, 4 & 5 — ARRL 160 Meter Contest
December 9 — WASH Meeting & Holiday Party
December 11 & 12 — ARRL 10 Meter Contest
December 31 — Straight Key Night
January 8 — WASH 2 Meter Contest
February 19 & 20 — ARRL DX Contest CW
February 27 — WASHFest 2005
March 5 & 6 — ARRL DX Contest SSB
March 13 — 2 Rivers ARC Hamfest
March 26 & 27 — CQ World Wide Prefix Contest SSB

Washington Amateur Communications, Inc.
1696 East Maiden St.
Washington, PA 15301



We're On the Web!
www.wacomarc.org

Opinions expressed in the WACOM HAM are those of the author and not necessarily those of Washington Amateur Communications, Inc.

Copyright ©2004 by WACOM, Washington Amateur Communications Inc.

Reproduction of material from The WACOM HAM is permitted if credit is attributed to the author and The WACOM HAM.

The editor welcomes articles and timely information of interest to members and the general amateur community.

The WACOM HAM

Editor: Ron Notarius WN3VAW
412-572-6723 wn3vaw@njdx.com

WACOM Officers

President: Jacqu  Gosselin N3ZEL
724-746-9235 n3zel@fyi.net

Vice President: Joe Caldwell N3XE
724-663-5708 jec24@po.cwru.edu

Treasurer: Ed Oeschlager N3ZNI
724-746-9235 n3zni@arrl.net

Secretary: Susan Robishaw KB3JHQ

Board of Directors

Elmer "Bud" Plants N3TIR
bud11@peoplepc.com

John Moninger, WA3VKC
724-228-5787 jam@pulsenet.com

Damien Zanolli KB3JHM

Repeater

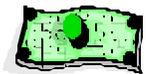
Sam Mayberry, W3CYO
724-222-0367 zammy@sgi.net

PLEASE SEND YOUR 2005 DUES AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Annual WACOM membership dues are only \$15 .
A couple pays only \$22.50.

Send your check payable to WACOM to:

Ed Oeschlager, N3ZNI,
Washington Amateur
Communications Inc.
1696 East Maiden St.
Washington, PA 15301



WACOM e-Mail Reflector

An e-mail reflector has been set up for WACOM members.

What's a reflector? It's a mailing list which lets you send one e-mail message to the list address — wa3com@yahoo.com — and have it "reflect" to all members of the list. Unlike a personal mailing list, you don't need to know all of the e-mail addresses for every single member of the list. Only group members can send e-mail to other members of the reflector — no spam allowed!

E-mail reflectors are being used by many area Amateur Radio clubs as a means to facilitate news and information at a moments notice. Yahoo! Groups (formerly eGroups) provides this service for free to anyone who wants to avail themselves of their list server. Yahoo! also provides calendar, file storage, & additional services.

To join the WACOM reflector, simply send a blank e-mail to:

wa3com-subscribe@yahoo.com