

Washington Amateur
 Communications, Inc.
 c/o Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI
 60 Carl Avenue B-2
 Eighty Four, PA 15330-2829

The WACOM

HAM

AUGUST
 2005



FCC Proposes to Drop Morse Code Requirement for All License Classes

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

BPL In Monroeville	2
A new use for antennas?	3
Coming Events	3
WACOM Picnic Details	3
A 20 Meter Antenna You can build	4
What is a first Field Day like?	5

NEWINGTON, CT, July 20, 2005— The FCC has proposed dropping the 5 WPM Morse code element as a requirement to obtain an Amateur Radio license of any class. The Commission recommended the change to its Part 97 Amateur Service rules in a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM)* in WT Docket 05-235. Any rule changes proposed in the *NPRM* would not become final until the FCC gathers additional public comments, formally adopts any changes to its rules and concludes the proceeding by issuing a *Report and Order (R&O)* spelling out the changes and specifying an effective date. That's not likely to happen for several months. The FCC declined in its *NPRM* to go forward with any other suggested changes to Amateur Service licensing rules or operating privileges beyond elimination of the Morse requirement.

"Based upon the petitions and comments, we propose to amend our amateur service rules to eliminate the requirement that individuals pass a telegraphy examination in order to qualify for any amateur radio operator license," the FCC said in its *NPRM*, released July 19. This week's *NPRM* consolidated 18 petitions for rule making from the amateur community--including one from the ARRL--that proposed a wide range of additional changes to the amateur rules. The FCC said the various petitions had attracted 6200 comments from the amateur community, which soon will have the opportunity to comment again--this time on the FCC's proposals in response to those petitions.

The Commission said it believes dropping Element 1--the 5 WPM Morse examination--would "encourage individuals who are interested in communications technology, or who are able to contribute to the advancement of the radio art, to become amateur radio operators." The FCC said it also would eliminate a requirement it believes "is now unnecessary and that may discourage" current licensees from advancing their skills, and that it would "promote more efficient use" of current Amateur Radio spectrum.

(FCC Continued on page 2)



UPCOMING MEETINGS!



Next WACOM Monthly Meeting:
 Thursday, August 4, 2005, 7:30 PM
 → WACOM Picnic Saturday, August 6, 2 PM
 @ Carl KB3FZS's QTH — See Page 3!

Next WACOM Board of Directors Meeting:
 Thursday, August 25, 7:30 PM

Meeting Location: Room 103, Washington County Building, Downtown Washington. All Welcome!

FCC Proposes to Drop Morse Code Requirement for All License Classes

(Continued from page 1)

The FCC cited changes in Article 25 of the international *Radio Regulations* adopted at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 as the primary reason to go forward with eliminating Morse code as an Amateur Radio licensing requirement in the future. Among other changes, WRC-03 deleted the Morse testing requirement for amateur applicants seeking HF privileges, leaving it up to individual countries to determine whether or not they want to mandate Morse testing. Several countries already have dropped their Morse requirements.

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, said he was not surprised that the FCC proposed altogether scrapping the Morse code requirement. The League and others had called for retaining the 5 WPM requirement only for Amateur Extra class applicants. Sumner expressed dismay, however, that the FCC turned away proposals from the League and other petitioners to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license class.

"We're disappointed that the Commission prefers to deny an opportunity to give Amateur Radio the restructuring it needs for the 21st century," he said. "It appears that the Commission is taking the easy road, but the easy road is seldom the right road."

Sumner said ARRL officials and the Board of Directors would closely study the 30-page *NPRM* and plan to comment further after they've had the opportunity to consider the Commission's stated rationales for its proposals.

In 2004, the ARRL filed a *Petition for Rule Making* asking the FCC to amend Part 97 to complete the Amateur Service restructuring begun in 1999 but "left unfinished." The League called on the FCC to create a new entry-level license, reduce the number of actual license classes to three and drop the Morse code testing requirement for all classes except for Amateur Extra. Among other

recommendations, the League asked the FCC to automatically upgrade Technician licensees to General and Advanced licensees to Amateur Extra. In this week's *NPRM*, the FCC said it was not persuaded such automatic upgrades were in the public interest.

The FCC said it did not believe a new entry-level license class was warranted because current Novice and Tech Plus licensees already can easily upgrade to General. "We also note that, if our proposal to eliminate telegraphy testing in the amateur service is adopted," the FCC continued, "a person who is not a licensee will be able to qualify for a General Class operator license by passing two written examinations, and that a person who is a Technician Class licensee will be able to qualify for a General Class operator license by passing one written examination." The FCC said it does not believe either path to be unreasonable.

The FCC also said that it's already addressed some of the other issues petitioners raised in its "Phone Band Expansion" (or "Omnibus") *NPRM* in WT Docket 04-140. In that proceeding, the Commission proposed to go along with the ARRL's Novice reforming proposal aimed at reallocating the current Novice/Tech Plus subbands to provide additional phone spectrum. Under the plan, Novice/Tech Plus licensees would be granted CW privileges in the current General CW subbands.

A 60-day period for members of the public to comment on the FCC's *NPRM* in WT 05-235 will begin once the *NPRM* appears in the *Federal Register*. Reply comments will be due within 75 days of the *NPRM*'s publication in the *Federal Register*.

— Courtesy of the American Radio Relay League

BPL Coming to Monroeville August 8

Duquesne Broadband, a joint venture of Duquesne Light and million-dollar startup BPL Global, will launch BPL service in a "pilot service area" of Monroeville starting August 8.

According to the front-page article in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, the two neighborhoods affected are the Saunders Station Road area between Bucknell and Foxwood Drives, and Harvard and Old Concord Roads, and the Stroschein Road area, south of Monroeville Boulevard, bordered by Wyngate Drive and Boston Court Lane. A map of the affected area was shown in the smaller *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article and can be downloaded from the PG web site.

The target area, allegedly a cross-section representing the Pittsburgh region, contains about 2800 residences and several businesses. It is not known how many Amateurs are located within or adjacent to the test area. At least one amateur who works within about 10 minutes of the test area, Jim Sanford WB4GCS, has indicated that he will begin monitoring the amateur bands to see what affects the new BPL service has.

The news articles and press release do not make clear what form of BPL will be in use. However, all indications are that customers will access the system via Wi-Fi or similar wireless technology. The implication is that this system will be closer to Motorola's proposed BPL system rather than

the Access BPL system that has been tested in much of the country and proven (except to the lawyers) to cause unacceptable levels of interference to the Amateur Radio and other communication services.

Interestingly enough, a spokesman for Allegheny Power of Greensburg is quoted in the articles as indicating that their Allegheny Communications Connect unit has explored BPL but decided, for now, not to deploy the service due to "some technical and regulatory issues that would have to be resolved."

Duquesne Broadband is up playing the alleged benefits of their new service, and downplaying the problems. They plan to offer a "standard" service at \$19.95/month and a "premium" service at \$29.95/month, making BPL cost competitive with DSL and cable broadband services. They also desires input from "potential customers outside the pilot area, in order to target other communities for expansion.

The news articles mentioned can be read online at :

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/05183/531994.stm>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/05203/541823.stm>

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/tribune-review/trib/regional/s_355993.html

<http://www.duquesnelight.com/News/NewsReleases/2005/nr050721.pdf>

<http://www.dslreports.com/shownews/65719>

"We are at the forefront of launching a new technology that has the potential to be an important data, voice and video communication link to homes and businesses," claims an unidentified (BPL Global?) exec.

Picnic

Hey Dave! They Shoot Horses, Don't They?

Page 3

The annual WACOM Picnic will be held Saturday, August 6, at the home of Carl Lancaster, KB3FZS, starting at 2 p.m.

As in previous years the club will provide the hot dogs, hamburgers, and buns. Members and their families are asked to bring a covered dish. If you don't know what to bring, post a message on the club reflector and either Carl or Susan will reply.

The calendar tickets are printed and ready to go. These are for the month of January, 2006. This gives us lots of time to sell these tickets. Pick some up at a meeting or the picnic.

73, *Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL*
President, WACOM

The Krassy Fund

Jim McCobb W1LLU courtesy of the Yankee Clipper Contest Club

Krassy K1LZ, took a fall with a 50 foot tower while on the CY9SS DXpedition. He severely injured bones in his upper leg. He continues to be in a lot of pain, but he is now resting at home.

At the request of Mark K1RX, I have set up a Krassy Fund to collect contributions to help defray Krassy's expenses that are not covered by insurance, such as the cost of his return from Canada.

You may make contributions to the fund by sending me a check payable to the Krassy Fund which will be deposited to the account set up for this purpose at the Institution for Savings in Newburyport, MA. My mailing address is Jim McCobb, 65 Coffin Street, West Newbury, MA 01985. Or, you may send the money to me via PayPal (in cash, no Credit Card payments please) and I will of course transfer it to the Krassy Fund account. My address in this case is W1LLU@Verizon.net.

We have decided to place a time limit on this; that being, August 21, 2005. So please send along your contribution as soon as you can. We will not by the way be posting/publishing the names of the contributors on any web site or in the YCCC Scuttlebutt or anywhere else for that matter, but I do intend to confirm to you the receipt of your contribution.

Since Krassy is known far and wide, please don't hesitate to pass the word on this. And if there any questions, likewise don't hesitate to contact me.

FYI Networks

For Your Information needs

Make FYI Your Internet Service Provider
CONTACT FYI AT 1-877-FYI-4NET OR WWW.FYI.NET

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



Photo courtesy of & Copyright ©2005 Dave Wagner K3LGM

Upcoming Events

August 6 — WACOM Picnic
August 28 — Skyview RS Hamfest
September 3 — Uniontown ARC W3PIE Gabfest
September 11 — Butler Co ARA Hamfest
September 18 — WASH Picnic
September 24 & 25 — Mid-Atlantic VHF Conference & HAMARAMA, sponsored by the Mt. Airy VHF Society
October 1 & 2 — California QSO Party
October 8 & 9 — Pennsylvania QSO Party
October 16 — WPRC Meeting & Annual Election
November 6 — WACOM Hamfest
December 2, 3 & 4 — ARRL 160 Meter Contest
December 10 & 11 — ARRL 10 Meter Contest
January 14, 2006 — WASH 2 Meter Simplex Contest
February 26 — WASHFest 2006
May 19, 20, & 21 — Dayton Hamvention

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

A Simple And Portable 20 Meter Antenna Project

Joe Caldwell N3XE

All accompanying photos & diagrams courtesy of and Copyright ©2005 Joe Caldwell N3XE

Most hams are familiar with the quarter wavelength ground-plane antenna design. It is often the first antenna they buy or build for use on 2 meters after receiving their technician license. It is a well performing design that exhibits low input impedance, making it ideal for use with ham equipment without the need for special matching techniques. The antenna is easy to construct and due this simplicity is also highly economical.

When considering the type of antenna to build for this year's field day to use with my PSK-31 setup this design was the obvious choice. It provides both low take-off angle and omni-directional radiation, allowing me to maximize my operating capability from a simple station.

The antenna is made up of a single pole which supports the radiating vertical element and is guyed in place with nylon rope. The two radial elements are spread out and held in place by rope. The layout for the antenna and the support pole is shown in Figure 1 and a photo of the completed support pole guyed in place is shown in Figure 2.

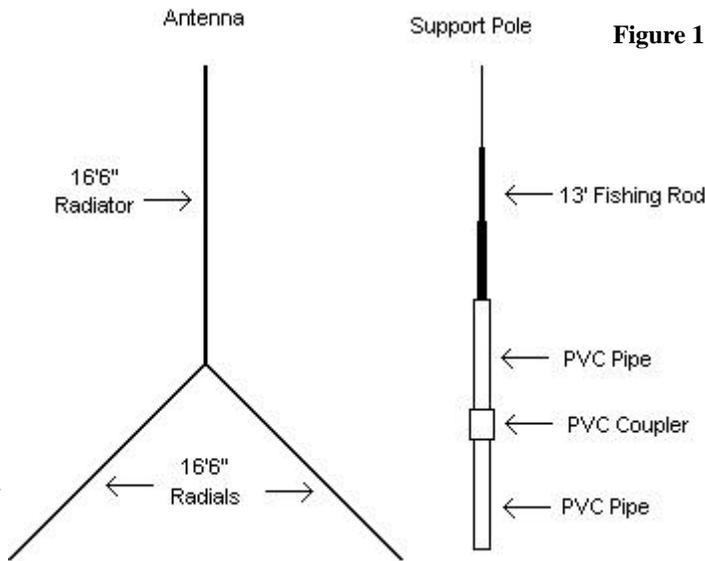


Figure 2

Figure 1

The radiating element and both radials are 16' 6" long #14 AWG insulated stranded copper wire. For ease of assembly I soldered the radiating element to the center of a SO-239 connector and attached solder lugs to the radials. This allows me to attach the radials to the SO-239 with two small bolts passed through the holes on the connector, simplifying construction in the field. I taped the radiating element to the pole prior to

raising the antenna.

The radials were attached after the antenna was erected and securely guyed since the feed point is only 5 feet off the ground providing easy access for mounting. A photo of the feed point assembly is shown in Figure 4. From start to finish assembling the antenna and guying it in place took about 30 minutes for me to do by myself (with more people it could easily be erected in 5-10 minutes).

The performance of this antenna was better than expected. It matched perfectly on the lower end of 20 meters despite being cut for the center of the band. This was due to my use of insulated wire which adds capacitive loading to the antenna, electrically lengthening it.

I made 66 of my 97 PSK-31 contacts using this antenna and the club's ICOM IC-706MKIIG, at 50 Watts or less.

Whether you're looking for a solid performing base antenna or a light, compact, portable antenna this may be the project for you.

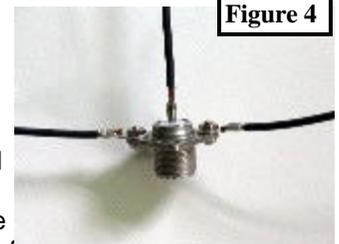


Figure 4

The base of the support pole is made of a ten foot piece of 1.25" Schedule 40 PVC pipe that was cut in half for easier transport in my car. It is joined in the center by a 1.25" PVC coupler. Mounted on top of the PVC pipe is a 13' extendable fiberglass fishing rod which I purchased at Gander Mountain for about \$15.00. I had originally planned on using a 16' rod but none were available when I went to the store, with additional height the radials can be lowered at a steeper angle which in turn raises the input impedance closer to the desired 50 ohms.



Figure 3

I joined the fishing rod to the pipe by first removing some of the plastic at the base of the fishing rod so that it could slip inside the pipe. Next I drilled a single hole through the pipe and rod so that I could secure the two pieces together using a small bolt and nut to prevent the rod from sliding further into the pipe. This method for joining the pipe and rod is shown in Figure 3. I also



CQ Field Day! Linda Sue Boehmer KB3KXN



It was my first Field Day, and I was not sure what to expect. When I arrived at the top of a hill in Washington County, PA (near the Fairgrounds), I first saw vehicles with call signs on their personalized plates. Then I recognized several members of my Amateur Radio Club. I soon noticed a huge antenna on a trailer, and a collection of radio equipment set up on tables on a broad porch outside our host's (a gun club) headquarters. There was also a camping tent!

Ed N3ZNI and Jacque N3ZEL invited me to sit down at one of the radios, where I immediately heard, "CQ Field Day! CQ Field Day!". Within the next hours, I personally heard or talked to people from 23 different states. The different voices and accents were so much fun to hear, from Southern drawls to Texas twangs to hints of Canadian and clipped military (Maritime) voices. It was an exciting and unforgettable experience.

WACOM, my club, had three official radios set up for the entire 24 hour period, 2:00 PM local time Saturday through 2:00 PM Sunday. The equipment was powered by a row of big batteries, some of which required recharging while I was there. Cars and solar panels supplied extra juice when needed. Once I got my bearings, I noticed a collection of different antenna heights and types, which I learned were shared among the radios depending on the frequency being used. Other hams used their own equipment at times.

Although I had never tried it, club members let me operate the microphone, answering with the club's call sign, "WA3COM; Whisky Alpha 3 Charlie Oscar Mike" and then listening to find out if the caller heard. If the caller responded, I would reply with our Field Day information, "3A WPA". If the caller acknowledged that information, I would confirm by saying "QSL". If we hadn't already heard the caller's information, I might ask for clarification so we could log the contact. We noticed that some contacts could tell we had already exchanged information, possibly because they were using a computer logging program. We talked about trying that next year.



During the time I was working the mike, Jim KC3HW was tuning the frequencies (20 Meters) and logging our contacts. He used the time displayed on a 24 hour digital GMT clock. The radio we used belonged to another club member, Bill KB3LIX, who helped us identify call signs and provided technical advice. Later I took a turn logging as Jim or Ed tuned and worked the mike. While I was there, Ken AA3GM was working CW at another radio and Joe N3XE was working PSK-31 on his computer station.

Some of our club members stayed the entire 24 hours, plus the time required to set up and tear down the equipment. Others, like me, dropped in at various times during Field Day (some more than once). Some worked the radios and others were content to listen. Of course, there was a grill going most of the time and there was plenty of other food too.

I had so much fun, I barely noticed the oppressive heat. I can't wait until next year, when I hope to be more involved. Maybe I will be one of the club members with a tent!! **33s!**



All photos this page courtesy of and Copyright ©2005 Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL

Right: Displaying the club banner at the sportsmen's club

Left: WA3COM Field Day 80 Meter Wire, Rope & Duct Tape Antenna

Below: Attaching the Rotor



Larry KB3KXO



Above: Kevin KB3JHO, Ed N3ZNI, & Duct Tape

Washington Amateur Communications, Inc.
c/o Ed Oeschlager N3ZNI
60 Carl Avenue B-2
Eighty Four, PA 15330-2829



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.org

WACOM Officers

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

Vice President: Joe Caldwell N3XE
724-663-5708 joecaldwell.jc@gmail.com

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

Secretary: Susan Robishaw KB3JHQ
sracer318@netscape.net

Board of Directors

Elmer "Bud" Plants N3TIR
bnelectronics@starband.net

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

Damian Zanolli KB3JHM
damian_zanolli@hotmail.com

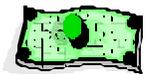
Repeater

Sam Mayberry, W3CYO
724-222-0367 zammy@pghmail.com

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.
60 Carl Avenue B-2
Eighty Four, PA 15330-2829



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@yahoogroups.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@yahoogroups.com