Serving Washington County

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The WACOM HAM

MARCH 2004

W3C 2004

Comments on the Show: First, we couldn't get up to the roof to set up the antenna as in previous years.

With 4-6 inches of ice on the roof the management was not allowing anyone to go up there. Thursday we tried to use an antenna inside, attached to a mast, projecting up through the ceiling panels....very poor results. Friday we got permission to put an antenna out on the back railing, so coax was stretched through a vacant store and the Outbacker Jr. was used.

Results were nominal, but at least we were getting out. As a result the number of contacts was way down

Photos courtesy of & ©Copyright 2004 Kevin Smith N3HKQ

UPCOMING MEETINGS!

Next WACOM Monthly Meeting:
Thursday, March 4th, 2004, 7:30 PM

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

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

All Welcome!

FCC Unaninmously Approves BPL NPRM

courtesy of the American Radio Relay League

NEWINGTON, CT, February 12th, 2004 — The FCC today agreed unanimously (with one partial dissent) to go forward with a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* (*NPRM*) on the subject of Broadband over Power Line (BPL). The *NPRM* is the next step in the BPL proceeding, which began last April with a *Notice of Inquiry* that attracted more than 5100 comments, many from the amateur community. The FCC did not propose any changes in Part 15 rules governing unlicensed devices, but said it would require BPL providers to apply "adaptive" interference mitigation techniques to their systems. An ARRL delegation attended the FCC open meeting in Washington, and League President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, expressed disappointment with the FCC's decision.

"I had hoped the FCC would have shown a greater depth of understanding of the issue," he said. Haynie also said he was dumfounded that FCC staff and some commissioners continued to tout BPL as a broadband and Internet solution for rural dwellers when "the economic reality of that possibility speaks for itself." Haynie said the FCC seemed to be echoing BPL industry publicity.

The FCC has not yet released the details of the *NPRM*, and a presentation by the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) revealed only its broad outlines. But ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, said the Commission's own presentation and the individual FCC members' comments demonstrated to him that the *NPRM* should have cut the permissible emission limits under Part 15.

"The Commission clearly recognized that the existing Part 15 emission limits are inadequate to stop interference," Sumner said, "but it's placing the burden of interference mitigation on the licensed user that's supposed to be protected." Sumner said that if the FCC really believed current Part 15 emission limits were sufficient, it would not have had to require that BPL providers institute interference mitigation procedures and systems. Sumner said the League cannot take a formal position until it reviews the full *NPRM*.

Anh Wride of the OET staff outlined the scope of the *NPRM*, which only addresses so-called "access BPL"--the type that would apply radio frequency energy to exterior overhead and underground low and medium-voltage power lines to distribute broadband and Internet service.

"We also recognize the concerns of licensed radio service users regarding the potential for interference due to operations of BPL systems, and that these licensed operations must be protected," Wride said. "The staff believes, however, that these interference concerns can be adequately addressed."

She said the proposal would require that BPL systems "be able to modify their operation to mitigate any interference that might occur." The *NPRM* also would impose identification requirements on BPL providers to aid in interference mitigation.

Wride said the FCC's BPL *NPRM*:

- Applies existing Part 15 emission limits for unlicensed carrier-current systems to BPL systems. Part 15 rules now require BPL systems to eliminate any harmful interference that may occur and to "cease operation if they cannot," Wride said.

- Requires BPL systems to employ "adaptive interference-mitigation techniques, including the capabilities to shut down a specific device, to reduce power levels on a dynamic or remote-control basis and to include or exclude specific operating frequencies or bands," Wride said. This would alleviate site-specific interference concerns, she added.

- Subjects BPL providers to notification requirements similar to those now required for power-line carrier systems. This would establish a public database to include such information as the location of BPL devices, modulation type and operating frequencies.

- Proposes guidelines to measure the RF emissions of BPL and other carrier-current systems. "These guidelines would ensure that measurements of the emissions from such systems are made in a consistent manner with repeatable results for determining compliance with the rules," Wride said. This also would aid in evaluating interference sources and applying "appropriate interference mitigation measures," she added.

FCC Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy, already on record as an avid BPL supporter, said the Commission was "proceeding cautiously in order to minimize the potential for harmful interference." Abernathy asked OET Chief Edmond Thomas to describe a likely interference scenario and "how it might play out" in terms of the *NPRM*'s interference mitigation provisions.

Thomas said that because BPL systems would have to be registered, it would be easy to determine if one were in operation in the complainant's vicinity. "If the answer is yes, they report the interference to the provider," Thomas continued. "The provider has the capability to adjust his power and the frequency of operation to mitigate the interference."

Thomas said that in most such circumstances, the BPL provider--as a Part 15 user--would "notch out the frequencies that are offending."

Commissioner Kevin Martin called BPL "an exciting technology," and added, "I appreciate the sensitivity that we're trying to exhibit to the concerns about potential interference, particularly for the government operations that have been raised by FEMA."

Commissioner Michael Copps said the FCC still faces some difficult questions, including how to handle cross-subsidization between regulated power businesses and unregulated communications businesses. "Is it right to allow electricity ratepayers to pay higher bills each month to subsidize an electric company's foray into broadband?" he asked his colleagues. Copps dissented in part on his approval of the *NPRM*.

Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein said he's been impressed by the potential of BPL technology and thinks the rules changes the FCC is proposing will "promote future deployment of this kind of service." Adelstein said, however, that it's crucial that the Commission address technical issues such as interference.

"I think we need to be mindful of harmful interference, but we can't let unsupported claims stand in the way of this kind of innovation," Adelstein said. "We need to do everything we can to move this forward." Adelstein was not specific in his reference to "unsupported claims."

Chairman Michael Powell called BPL "tremendously exciting." While conceding that BPL has "a long way to go," the chairman said it also could be "the great broadband hope for a good part of rural America." Powell also said the FCC's OET has worked very hard to try to "get their hands around" the issue of interference and that the FCC would continue its vigilance in that area.

The FCC is expected to issue the complete *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* within a few days and will invite comments on it sometime after its publication.

Additional information about BPL and Amateur Radio is on the ARRL Web site

Prez Notes

Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL

Our Tech class is scheduled for Saturday March 6th, Sunday March 7th, and Saturday March 13th, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. (depending on how the class progresses through the material).

The Exam will be given on Sunday March 14th at 1 p.m. Unless there is a conflict, all the classes and the exam will be held at the EOC center in Washington, PA.

Please contact Bob Ketzell KB3IN at 724-228-0425 if you would like to attend the class. If anyone would like to take an exam at this session try to let Jacque Gosselin N3ZEL know: n3zel@fyi.net or 724-746-9235.

However, as always, walk-ins are welcome

Volunteers needed! We need people to run the WACOM net on Tuesday evenings. It doesn't take much time, it gives you great experience, and it isn't too difficult! Please contact Dave, N3IDH at **n3idh@hotmail.com** or Bob, KB3IN at **KB3IN@Yahoo.com** if you're willing to give it a try.

Dayton Hamvention on $20 a night? For Real?

Yes, it is actually possible to go to the Dayton Hamvention and spend about $20 a night for rooms. But if you're interested, you have to act quickly.

Greg Babin KQ3DX has booked accommodations at the University of Dayton dorms for Hamvention weekend. Those who've stayed in these rooms can tell you… they're small suites, each containing two 2 bed bedrooms, a kitchenette, and a living room. Cost for each suite for the weekend is $240, so if you figure on four people splitting the suite, it comes out to $60 per person for the 3 day weekend — or $20 per day,

Six suites have been reserved, but as of deadline, three are still available. (The other three are going to be occupied by members of the Wireless Association of South Hills, the Steel City ARC, and WACOM!) If any of the rooms aren't filled by March 1st, Greg will be canceling those reservations so that the University of Dayton can start on their waiting lists.

Interested? Drop an email to Greg at **kq3dx@hotmail.com** and let him know (and to make arrangements to get the payment to him). But don't delay — once the rooms are filled or returned, they're gone!

And in case you're wondering, the University is south of Dayton, only about a 20 minute or so drive away from the HARA arena (Regatta traffic not withstanding!) .

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

Upcoming Events

February 29 — WASHFest 2004, Castle Shannon VFD Memorial Hall, Route 88 Castle Shannon

March 4 — WACOM March Meeting

March 6 &7 — ARRL DX Contest SSB

March 6 & 7 — WACOM Tech Classes

March 13 — WACOM Tech Class

March 14 — 2 Rivers ARC Hamfest, The Boston Spectrum, 6001 Smithfield Street, Boston PA

March 14 — WACOM VE Test Session, 1 PM

March 20 — Breezeshooters Groundwave SSB

March 25 — WACOM Board of Directors Meeting

March 27 & 28 — CQ Worldwide Prefix Contest SSB

April 15 — WASH VE Exam, Peters Twp. Library

May 8 & 9 — First Annual Mid-Atlantic QSO Party

May 14—16 — Dayton HamVention, Dayton OH

May 29 & 30 — CQ Worldwide Prefix Contest CW

June 6 — Breezeshooters Hamfest, Butler PA

June 12 & 13 — ARRL June VHF Contest

June 26 & 27 — ARRL Field Day

September 12 — Butler Co ARA Hamfest

October 9 & 10 — Pennsylvania QSO Party

Rules, 1st Annual Mid-Atlantic QSO Party

OBJECT: To contact as many stations in the Mid-Atlantic States of Delaware, Maryland-DC, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia in as many Counties within these States as possible.

DATE: May 8-9, 2004.

CONTEST PERIOD: 1600 UTC Saturday until 2400 UTC Sunday. (12 noon EST Saturday until 8 P.M. EST Sunday)

BANDS: All MF/HF bands (except WARC bands) and 50, 144, 222, and 440 MHz. No cross-mode/cross-band/net/repeater contacts permitted.

MODES: SSB/FM and CW only.

CATEGORIES: <u>SINGLE OPERATOR,</u> (one operator only) - <u>QRP</u> (up to 5W output power), <u>STANDARD POWER</u> (5W – 200W output power). <u>MULTI-OPERATOR</u> *(includes Clubs)*, <u>MOBILE</u> (One operator call used. Operators in same vehicle may NOT work each other for contest credit.) Maximum output power is limited to 200 watts for all categories, except QRP.

CONTEST EXCHANGE: <u>Stations Within Mid-Atlantic States</u> - Send serial number plus QTH group. QTH group consists of 5 characters where the first 3 are the county and the last 2 are the state. <u>Stations Outside Mid-Atlantic States</u> – Send an exchange consisting of a serial number and the QTH group composed of either the 2 character U.S. state identifier, or the 2 or 3-character Canadian province/territory identifier, as applicable. <u>DX Stations</u> will send a serial number and 'DX' as their location identifier. Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, are DX. ***ALL STATIONS MUST USE the QTH Group shown in the MAQP list or the QSO will be deleted and considered a BUSTED QSO.***

WHO WORKS WHO?: Stations in Mid-Atlantic states work any station, anywhere, for points. Stations outside the Mid-Atlantic states region work only stations in Mid-Atlantic states for points.

Mobile stations can be worked again, for points and multipliers, as they activate new Counties. Multiplier logging/scoring must meet the criteria stated within the **MULTIPLIERS** section of the Rules. A mobile station is defined as one that can be operated while in motion, is fully independent of external sources of power, and does not utilize any antennas not attached to the vehicle.

Portable/'rover' stations are considered fixed stations for scoring purposes.

Serial numbers shall start with 1 and increase sequentially in increments of 1. No penalty will be assessed for non-sequential or duplicated serial numbers. Mobile stations are allowed to maintain a continuous sequence of serial numbers for all contacts, or may begin with serial number 001 for each separate County they activate.

QSO POINTS: <u>Phone</u> - one point, <u>CW</u> - two points, <u>Mobile</u> - three points, regardless of mode. All stations worked count for contact points. The 3-points for working a mobile station are credited to the station that CONTACTS the mobile.

MULTIPLIERS: Multipliers can be counted for credit ONLY once. For DX multiplier scoring purposes, multiplier credit will only be earned for the first DX contact worked, however, each succeeding DX station worked will count for contact points. Multiplier lists for U. S. States, Canadian (VE) multipliers along with MAQP County check-off sheets are provided within these rules.

<u>Stations within the Mid-Atlantic region</u> - All U. S. States, Canadian Provinces & Territories, any one DX country, and each County within the Mid-Atlantic States of DE, MD, PA, NJ, NY, VA, and WV count as multipliers. Washington, D.C. and Baltimore City count as valid multipliers for Maryland.

<u>Stations outside of the Mid-Atlantic States</u> - Only the Counties within the Mid-Atlantic States of DE, MD, PA, NJ, NY, VA, and WV count as multipliers. Washington, D.C. and Baltimore City are valid multipliers for Maryland.

SCORING: Final total score is total QSO points multiplied by the total number of multipliers worked.

SUGGESTED FREQUENCIES: Suggest starting 50 kHz up from the bottom of the band, or band-segment, within which the chosen mode is permitted. Take care to avoid those frequencies which are normally devoted to specific purposes (e.g. SSTV, digital, scheduled nets, etc.) While no amateur 'owns' the right to use any frequency, there are modes/operations that have a LONG history of use of a frequency. Attempt to foster 'good neighbor' relations by maintaining a sufficient frequency spacing interval when operating near the edges of their traditionally known and operated frequency ranges.

LOGS/SUBMITTAL/REPORTING: <u>LOGS</u> – ALL log formats, regardless of category, shall show date, time (UTC), band, mode, callsign of station worked, and full exchange sent AND received. Multipliers shall be clearly marked. All stations must submit the required overall summary sheet with each entry. This summary sheet shall show a summary list of all multipliers worked. ***MOBILES MUST BE LOGGED AS ' /M ' in order to be counted as 3-point contacts!***

<u>**SUBMITTALS**</u> - Logs submission deadline is <u>**June 10, 2004.**</u> ELECTRONIC submission of logs is ***PREFERRED*** using <u>either</u> the CABRILLO format, or a comma-delimited ASCII file format. Electronic submittals shall be sent as an attachment to the EMAIL address provided on the website or via a floppy disk mailed to the MAQP address.

If submitted via EMAIL, the <u>***SUBJECT***</u> line shall contain the submitting station's callsign with the words '2004 MAQP LOG' and the attached file name will contain the appropriate callsign. ONLY 3.5" disks are acceptable. If a disk is mailed, the title '2004 MAQP' and the entrant's callsign shall be written on the disk. Summary sheets shall be produced using MS WORD 6.0 or greater (or any format that can be imported into AND read by MS Word 6.0 or greater) and included with the submittal EMAIL or disk.

Submittal of LEGIBLE hardcopy (printed) logs is permitted as long as they follow the format noted under **LOGS/SUBMITTAL/REPORTING**. If, in the judgement of MAQP Committee, a logged QSO entry is unreadable, it shall be deleted without any additional penalty being imposed. Score shall be recomputed after any deletions are made.

ADDITIONAL NOTES - Stations may be worked only once, per mode, per band. No methods using cross-mode, cross-band, net, or any form of relay (repeater, digipeater, satellite, etc.) shall be used for contacts. CW contacts shall not be made in the phone band segments.

A '_BUSTED_' QSO is defined as a QSO where any part of the exchange entered is incorrectly logged. A _NIL_ ('Not In Log') QSO is defined as a QSO where one log shows that a station was logged as being worked but the other corresponding entrant's log does not show the QSO as having been logged.

If a log is found to contain either a 'BUSTED' or a 'NIL' QSO then that QSO will be deducted, without additional penalty, (subject to the greater-than-5% rule) prior to any final scoring being made for that log. Score shall be recomputed after any deletions are made.

If a log shows a TOTAL BUSTED/NIL quantity of QSO's GREATER than five percent (5%) of the TOTAL QSO's submitted, then a penalty of deducting an additional QSO for each BUSTED/NIL QSO will be applied to the aggregate total of BUSTED/NIL QSO's found in the entrant's log. Score shall be recomputed after any deletions are made.

Logs may contain duplicate QSO's. No penalty will be incurred and duplicate QSO's will not affect score computation. No points will be given for duplicate QSO's.

ENTRY SUBMITTAL NOTES - EMAIL date/USPS postmark date will determine 'postmark' for the purposes of inclusion into the MAQP results. MAQP SHALL NOT be responsible for problems causing an entry to be misplaced, misrouted, delayed, or lost via any means. Mailed logs must be postmarked by the **June 10, 2004** deadline in order to be included for judging in the MAQP AND also to be considered for awards. The decisions of the MAQP Committee are final.

All stations that enter in the Multi-operator/Mobile category shall include a complete list of names/calls of all participants who operated with them.

All submitted materials, regardless of method submitted, become the property of the MAQP Committee and will not be returned.

AWARDS: Stations within the Mid-Atlantic region - Certificates will be awarded to the top scorer in each category in each of the Mid-Atlantic States.

Stations outside of the Mid-Atlantic region - Certificates will be awarded to the top scorer in each U.S. State, Canadian province, and DXCC country for each category for which a valid entry is received.

Worked all Counties - Any station, which succeeds in working every County in ANY Mid-Atlantic State, will receive a certificate.

Plaques - A number of special plaques will also be awarded to top scorers.

MORE INFORMATION: The Mid-Atlantic QSO Party Web site is at **http://www.qsl.net/maqso**. Check there for information on MAQP activity, contest software information, County abbreviations, contact information, and other useful information. MAQP results will be posted on the web site when they are complete. A listing of 'logs received' will be posted to the website.

SOFTWARE: See the MAQP website for locations of various suppliers of logging software.

DISQUALIFICATION (DQ): Entries that, in the judgement of the MAQP Committee, exhibit evidence of attempting to improperly inflate, 'game', or change the submittal shall be considered as being liable for consideration as either a 'checklog' (invalid for consideration for awards) OR DQ. Such stations will be listed at the end of the MAQP results with a note of 'checklog' or 'DQ' as warranted by the decision of the MAQP Committee. Stations whose entries that are being considered for DQ action MAY be contacted for clarification, but this is at the sole discretion of the MAQP Committee.

Stations who are DQ shall be ineligible to submit any logs for the MAQP immediately following the one for which their entry was DQ.

All decisions of the MAQP Committee are FINAL.

CONTACT INFORMATION: To contact the MAQP, via email, please select the following EMAIL address which meets your needs:

GENERAL INFO: **generalmaqp@yahoo.com**

LOGS: **maqplogs@yahoo.com**

FEEDBACK: **feedback@yahoo.com**

'SNAIL MAIL' --To contact the MAQP via U.S. mail, write to:

Mid-Atlantic QSO Party (MAQP)
Attn: Chuck Reville K3FT
6400 Baltimore National Pike 131
Baltimore, MD. 21228

FCC Chairman Assures Congressman on BPL

ARRL Letter courtesy of the American Radio Relay League

NEWINGTON, CT, February 20th, 2004 — FCC Chairman Michael Powell has assured US Representative Greg Walden WB7OCE, that the Commission will give "thorough consideration" to all Broadband over Power Line (BPL) studies before it takes final action on BPL.

Powell responded February 3 to Walden's January 15 letter requesting that the FCC defer any further action in its BPL proceeding until the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) releases the results of its BPL study and the public has had a chance to comment. On February 12 the FCC took the proceeding to the next level, unanimously approving the issuance of a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM). Among other provisions, the NPRM would require BPL providers to employ "adaptive interference-mitigation techniques."

"Please be assured that we have already begun coordination of this action with NTIA," Powell told Walden, "and that the Commission will give all studies, including the forthcoming NTIA study, thorough consideration prior to any final action or rules on the subject." The FCC has not yet released the BPL NPRM nor invited public comments. An Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) briefing at the FCC's February 12 open meeting indicated that the Commission would make no changes in Part 15 rules governing emissions from unlicensed devices. To date, the FCC has released only a public notice on its BPL proposals.

Walden, a member of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, had told the FCC chairman that, in view of the importance of avoiding interference to federal government HF communications, the FCC should give the pending NTIA study a thorough airing before proposing any rules to govern BPL systems. The Oregon Republican is one of two Amateur Radio licensees in the US House.

Commenting on last April's FCC BPL Notice of Inquiry in ET Docket 03-104, the NTIA had expressed "broad concern" about the technology's potential to cause interference to federal government users. The NTIA said the Commission "must ensure that other communications services, especially government operations, are adequately protected from unacceptable interference."

An arm of the US Department of Commerce, the NTIA subsequently undertook evaluations of BPL field test sites, in part to gauge the technology's interference potential. The NTIA was supposed to conclude its field work last month, and release its observations and conclusions during the first quarter of this year. The ARRL's own BPL study, which is assessing the potential of interference both from and to BPL systems, also is set to wrap up early this year.

Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce Michael Gallagher and NTIA head Michael Gallagher told a December meeting of BPL proponent the Power Line Communications Association that the NTIA was "studying interference risks and potential means for making risks more tolerable." He indicated that the first phase of NTIA's pending BPL study would recommend radiated emission limits, compliance measurement procedures and other conditions in its report to the FCC.

At the FCC's February 12 open meeting, Powell pledged that the FCC would continue to be vigilant in the area of BPL's interference potential. Anh Wride of the OET staff, who provided the broad strokes of the pending NPRM, said the FCC recognizes the concerns of licensed radio service users regarding BPL's interference potential. Wride said "licensed operations must be protected," but added that the OET staff believes that "these interference concerns can be adequately addressed."

FCC Plans Rules for Major Internet Changes

WASHINGTON, February 13th, 2004 (United Press International via COMTEX) — New rules that could revolutionize the architecture of the Internet and the service it provides are being prepared by U.S. regulators.

Proposed changes by the Federal Communications Commission could allow homes to connect to the Internet through electrical outlets and possibly give businesses the ability to make cheaper telephone calls online, the New York Times reported Friday. The new rules are expected to be completed in a few months.

"This is a reflection of the commission's commitment to bring tomorrow's technology to consumers today," FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell said.

Powell said rules governing the new phone services would seek to make them as widely available as e-mail and possibly much less expensive than traditional phones.

Once the rules allowing delivery of the Internet through power lines are completed, consumers would be able to plug their modems directly into wall sockets, just as they do with a toaster, desk lamp or refrigerator, and be connected to the Internet.

(Editor's Note: From the *Electric Power Industry Journal* . Thanks to Kevin Smith N3HKQ for forwarding this information)

"We are sponsoring a SKYWARN class on March 10th. Details are on our website **www.skyviewradio.net**. *There is a map to the SKYWARN class on the newsletter page of our site. It will be at Allegheny Hyde Park Elementary School in Leechburg. Everyone welcome. Talk in on 146.640- pl 131.8.*

Also, we are putting on a hybrid Level 1 Emcomm, EC-001 class.

On-line registation is March 1-7 on **www.arrl.org**. *Also e-mail Bob, WB3FXC at* **wb3fxc@arrl.net** *to let him know that you are taking the hybrid course.*

First class is Sat. March 13th. 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. (after St. Patricks Day parade)

Second class is April 10th. 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Third class is May 8th. 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Location is at the Boyd Community Center on Powers Run Road in Fox Chapel. Talk-in on 146.640-131.8pl."

— Information Courtesy of the Skyview Radio Society

BIue Knob RA Returns! Jeff Blake KB3FML **kb3fml@arrl.net** courtesy of **www.qrz.com**

3164 feet, the Blue Knob Repeater on 147.15 PL167.9 is on the second highest mountain top at the Blue Knob Ski Resort in Pennsylvania and it serves a large portion of Pennsylvania between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, as well as Western Maryland. It is currently linked to another BKRA machine on 442.10 located in Altoona Pa. This wide area repeater system allows amateurs to communicate almost statewide from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg. In it's hayday it was a very busy machine providing over a hundred miles of repeater coverage to the Pennsylvania Turnpike between mile markers 100 and 120. Unfortunately , the machine has become idle and in mild disrepair over the past 7 years. We think its time to change that!

As we begin to revive the Blue Knob Repeater Association (BKRA), we also are undertaking a rehabilitation project on the 75/15 machine. The repeater is a vintage middle 70's MICOR machine packed with 100 watts of amateur radio talkability. In the near future, with the help of interested supporters and a group of technical advisors lead by Scott Zimmerman N3XCC of Somerset, PA, the machine will be rehabilitated to pristine operation. In addition, this system and the BKRA is prepping for additional full time links to other machines using a variety of remote base linking options. If your club or organization is interested, please let us know!

So the BKRA is issuing a call to all amateurs interested in this wide area regional repeater system. BKRA is initiating a new membership drive in an effort to achieve support for this project as well as increase the use and membership of the BKRA organization and machines.

For information on the BKRA wide area repeater rehab project or membership in the BKRA, please contact Jeff Blake KB3FML at 814-946-4022 or contact the BKRA by mail at: BKRA, RR4 Box 509, Altoona, PA 16601. The BKRA is looking for your thoughts, your input and some of YOUR RF on the 147.15 machine. Give it a whirl and see if you can make that RF trip to this machine!

International Morse is Where It's "@" Courtesy of the Associated Press

Morse code is entering the 21st century — or at least the late 20th. The 160-year-old communication system now has a new character to denote the "@" symbol used in e-mail addresses.

In December, the International Telecommunications Union, which oversees the entire frequency spectrum, from amateur radio to satellites, voted to add the new character.

The new sign, which will be known as a "commat," consists of the signals for "A" (dot-dash) and "C" (dash-dot-dash-dot), with no space between them.

The new sign is the first in at least several decades, and possibly much longer. Among ITU officials and Morse code aficionados, no one could remember any other addition. "It's a pretty big deal," said Paul Rinaldo, Chief Technical Officer for the American Radio Relay League, the national association for amateur radio operators. "There certainly hasn't been any change since before World War II."

The change will allow ham radio operators to exchange e-mails more easily. That is because — in an irony of the digital age — they often use Morse to initiate conversations over the Internet.

"People trade their e-mail addresses a lot," said Nick Yocanovich, a Morse code enthusiast who lives in Arnold, Md.

Morse code uses two audible electrical signals — short "dots" and slightly longer "dashes" — to form letters, numbers and punctuation marks.

Created in the 1830s by Samuel F.B. Morse, who invented the telegraph, the electronic signaling system spread across the world, and until the past few decades, it was used widely by the public, industry and government.

"It was the beginning of the Information Age," said Gary Fowlie, Chief of Media Relations and Public Information for the ITU, which has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

When Morse died in 1872, more than 650,000 miles of telegraph wire circled the globe. By the early 20th century, Morse messages were being sent wirelessly, via radio.

Perhaps the most famous Morse communication is the international distress signal S-O-S. It consists of three dots, three dashes, and three more dots.

But with the proliferation of digital communications technologies such as cell phones, satellites and the Internet, Morse code has lost its pre-eminent place in global communications. "There's really no reason to use it anymore," said Robert Colburn, research coordinator for the History Center of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Today it's largely the province of ham radio operators, including 700,000 in the United States. While not all of them communicate regularly in Morse, almost all are familiar with it.

Some ham operators wouldn't mind more changes to spice up the language. While Morse code has a period, a question mark, and even a semicolon, it offers no simple way to articulate excitement.

"I was hoping they'd add a character for the exclamation point," said Yocanovich, who is active in the International Morse Preservation Society. "It expresses an emotion that's difficult to get across any other way."

(W3C Continued from page 1)

from previous years.

We did generate some interest, and about a dozen people signed up for information on the upcoming Technician class.

Thanks to everyone who came and helped man the booth and worked the radio. Your efforts were appreciated!

—73, Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL, President, WACOM
& Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI, Coordinator & QSL Manager, W3C Special Event Station

DX News Briefs

Two members of the Florida DXPedition Group will be in San Marino March 16th — 22nd. They will be QRV from the ARRSM club station **T7ØA** . Look for them on the HF bands on CW SSB & RTTY. QSL via ARRSM. Also, two members will be in Sardinia March 22nd — 27th, QRV as **ISØ/N2WB** (QSL via N2OO) and **ISØ/W4WX** (QSL direct or via LotW) — W4WX

"I am trying to put together a team for the IARU contest this July 10th and 11th to operate from Botswana **A22**. Not sure of the cost yet. I would like to arrive in JoBurg on the 7th so we could have a day to unwind before heading over to Botswana. This would all so be a 10 day in country. Everyone could have their on A2 call to use before and after the contest. This is a Phone & CW contest so we need both type of operators. I would like to have a team in place by the end of May" — K5LBU **frosty1@pdq.net** **www.k5lbu.com** **www.dxsafari.com**

HB9BXE will be active as **5H1BP** from Zanzibar (AF-032), Tanzania March 1st – 6th, 10-80 meters CW, SSB & PSK31. QSL via home call. — NG3K

PA5M has been QRV as **9U5M** but will be leaving Burundi on March 17th. He operates in his spare time, usually after 1600 Z, 10-40 meters CW and SSB. QSL via PA7FM — PA7FM, ON5NT

The **T33C** DXpedition to Banaba remains on schedule to be QRV April 4th or 5th & continuing for at least eleven days. There is still room for another one or two operators to join the team, though arranging air transport to Tarawa at this late date may be difficult. Full details on the operation can be found at
http://www.dx-pedition.de/banaba2004/ — K6SRZ

EA4BQ/OHØXX has been QRV as **8R1RPN**. During the ARRL DX CW contest he was QRV as **8R1K**. QSL via Olli's Madrid address — EA4BQ/OHØXX

I3SGR will be QRV as **8Q7SG** from Kuredu Island (AS-013) through March 1st on 40 — 10 meter SSB around 15:00-17:00 Z & 20:30-23:30 Z — VA3RJ

Look for **6Y5/WN9O, 6Y5/WO9Z & 6Y5/W9IU** from February 28th — March 14th on all bands 160 – 10 meters including WARC. They plan to be QRV during the ARRL DX SSB contest as **6Y8Z**; QSL via W9IU — WN9O

Need Norfolk Island? World travelers DL7AFS & DJ7ZG will be QRV as **VK9NB** February 29th — March 13th on 80 – 6 meters, SSB CW & PSK31. QSL via DL7AFS or via the DARC bureau — VA3RJ

KH6GMP & KH6DFW will be QRV as **T32I** & **T32BI** March 1st – 8th. They plan to be QRV as **T32I** as a M/S entry during the ARRL DX SSB contest. Outside of the contest they will be QRV on SSB and as much RTTY as possible. QSL T32I via KH6GMP, T32BI via KH6DFW — OPDX

The Sir Francis Drake Report:

"On the advice of several, I tried W1RAN as the manager (for **XU1SS**). I received a nice note back from Ned with my card that explained XU1SS went QRT in the fall of 1991 and the equipment "dispersed". The note also said XU1SS emigrated to the US in 1992. According to Ned's note, he has never been manager for XU1SS, but he does have the logs for the **XU1SS/DU6** 10/92 operation in the CQWW. So the proverbial million dollar question, was the XU1SS operation of 5 Oct 03 a pirate? That would be a shame, he's my only 40 XU contact" — NØVD

QSL Managers & Routes

3CØV via DJ9ZB — KZ2I	**HP1LR** via DL7CM — JF1LZQ
3D2AD via YT1AD — JF1LZQ	**J49DX** via HA4DX — RA3SL
5JØX via N1WON — K5WW	**LY5A** via LY2ZZ — W9OL
5N43NDP via I5JAN — W4YCH	**OX2KAN** via W1TE —K8SIX
5U5Z via G3SXW — W9OL	**PJ2/NH7C** via KQ3F — KQ3F
5X1T via K3IT — W9OL	**PJ2P** via KQ3F — KQ3F
7XØDX via DL4DBR — RA3SL	**SU9NC** via OM2SA — W4YCH
8P1A via NN1N — JF1LZQ	**TI5U** via JH8KYU — W7LPF
8P1RPM via EA4BQ — EA4BQ	**TY4JM** via ON4JM —W4YCH
8S5T via DF6JC — RA3SL	**VK9XB** via WØYG — WØYG
9M2TO via JAØDMV — RA3SL	**VP2MX** via W8GEX — W7LPF
C5Z via K6VNX — W1TE	**Z32ZM** via I2JSB — W9IXX
EL2WW via ON5NT — K8QM	**ZA1B** via OH2BH — W7LPF
ET3BN via DL1JRC — JF1LZQ	**ZF1A** via W5ASP — RA3SL
FW/G3TXF via G3TXF — K8QM	**ZWØS** via PS7JN — W4YCH

"Anything can go wrong, will" is often referred to as Murphy's Law (also known as Finagle's Law and Sod's Law). But who was Murphy and what did he actually say?

It allegedly came from human acceleration (rocket sled) tests, USAF project MX981, at what is now Edward's Air Force Base. In 1949, one test involved the application of 16 accelerometers to the test subject. They could be applied in one of two ways, and of course, all were done so incorrectly by a lab technician. USAF Captain Edward A. Murphy Jr., one of the development engineers and a West Point graduate, on discovering the mistake, later referred to the technician in frustration by saying "If there is any way to do it wrong, he will."

The test subject, Major John Sapp, referred to this incident at a press conference a few days later, commentating on the project's excellent safety record "with due regard to Murphy's Law." There was widespread reference to the Law in aerospace engineering circles in the coming months, and the rest is history.

If the story is true (there are references to a Murphy's Law going back into the 17th Century and even earlier), when you consider how the good Captain's axiom has transformed in it's application into popular culture, then Murphy's Law is itself a victim of Murphy's Law!

More on the legend, including published references, can be found at **www.xpergo.com/murphyslaw/murphy.html**

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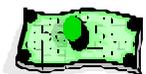**Damien Zanolli KB3JHM**

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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.

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