



SIGNAL



December 1999 Volume 8 Number 12

This Months Meeting...Hot Dog!!

The program is Home Brew. So bring along all those projects and gadgets to show off. And for those who have to rush to the meeting we'll have steamed dogs and drinks to satisfy your hunger.

And Beyond

The January meeting program is not known.

The February meeting speaker will be Terry Stader KA8SCP MEMA Area 1 RACES Radio Officer.

The March meeting will be a QSL card sort. Burt W1ZS the W1 QSL Bureau Manager who lives in Vermont will bring cards down for us to sort.

If you have a show-and-tell type of thing or a story you can share bring them along to any meeting.

Last Month's Meeting



Last months speaker was the ARRL Division Vice Director Michael Raisbeck K1TWF.

Mike talked about the league, on going matters and legislative efforts (new and old spectrum issues). He also talked about the upcoming licensing changes and when they might be implemented.

RACES Y2K Meeting

As a preface to this article I want to remind everyone that if something does happen especially to the utilities you should check on 146.490 MHz simplex, 442.900 repeater or the 53.890 repeater to find out what is happening and if we need operators to staff any emergency locations.

There was an Area 1 RACES Y2K meeting November 29th at Area 1 Headquarters in Tewksbury. It was for Emergency Directors and RACES personnel. The meeting was to discuss preparedness for Y2K and the transition December 31st to January 1st. While it is felt that all the utilities and government agencies are prepared there is still concern that a regular failure (non Y2K) might cause panic. So they are going to monitor the situation as it progresses and actively disseminate information. Massachusetts Emergency Management will be fully staffed from December 31st through January 1st with adjustments based on events. The bunker in Framingham as well as the Area Headquarters will be operational during this period. There has been a lot of planning for dealing with this event using the regular communications methods of phone and public safety frequencies. One of the meeting themes was to encourage any Emergency Directors that did not already have an affiliated RACES organization to tap local hams through local radio clubs. This is a terrific opportunity to make contacts and to demonstrate our usefulness. Hopefully nothing will

happen on New Years Eve. But the willingness of many of the Directors to look at this resource is an ideal time to make contacts that could lead to continued relationships. Because of the visibility it is in all our best interest to support whatever activities we can around this event. The best thing that can happen is that we all participate and nothing happens. The worst is that they ask us for help and we don't respond. In that case it might be a long time before they ask again....

There will be net activity on the RACES frequencies with a minimum of checkins at 2300 on December 31st and 0100 on January 1st. Long before the 2300 time we should have a feel for what the situation has been worldwide and if there are problems things will be adjusted accordingly. FEMA has a facility in Washington that will be monitoring the worldwide situation and MEMA will have a liaison person there.

Some cities and towns will have EOC's or sensitive locations manned in case of communications problems. Worcester was looking for forty hams to take shifts in case of problems. Leominster Emergency Management is looking for ham radio operators to be pre-positioned at certain sites. The LEMA communications bus will be manned and located at the Leominster Hospital.

Most of us reside in MEMA Area 1C for RACES purposes. I'd encourage anyone with a few minutes on New Years Eve to check into the 2300 and 0100 RACES nets. It would be encouraging to know that more than a few people would know how to find their way there in an emergency.

Stan

NVARC Adopt a Highway

We received new supplies for the road cleanup work in November. We now have additional gloves and high visibility vests. On November 21st we completed our last road cleanup of 1999. We had good weather and the task was completed in less than an hour. This cleanup was particularly rewarding. See the Treasurer's report for details. Our next cleanup will be in April 00. Oops I mean 2000.

Thanks to everyone who helped out this year (and all of the years) for making this successful and pretty painless.

The following members helped out on the November cleanup. Dave N1MNX, Ralph KD1SM, Earl WR1Y, Erik W1ZBT, Craig N1ABY, Pat N1VAW, Dwight AA1MT and Stan KD1LE.



I would like to see a bigger than usual crew for the first cleanup next year (April). It is always a bit more work due to the five month span from this cleanup.

Stan

W1 QSL Bureau Ready for Y2K

As many of you know the W1 QSL bureau handles incoming DX QSL cards for amateurs with a US callsign containing the number one. Any amateur who establishes an account with the Bureau can receive cards destined for him at no cost other than the cost of postage from the Bureau to his home. Twenty-six volunteers work "at the bureau". All work from their homes sorting upwards of 50,000 QSLs each month. The Bureau has evolved over the past half century from a single individual to what is now a group of close to thirty people living in many parts of New England. The bureau has accepted envelopes, stamps, checks, and cash over the past. The volume has increased to an extent that the Bureau functions more efficiently by eliminating the collection of envelopes and stamps.

Effective on January 1, 2000 the Bureau will no longer accept envelopes and stamps as credits for an account. With the changing cost of postage, the variety of sizes of DX QSLs, and the total volume of amateurs using the bureau it is to everyone's advantage to make this change. It saves much time for the individual sorters as well as being less expensive for the individual amateurs

who use this service. There are no fees or profits for the bureau. Each shipment results in a charge of 10¢ for the envelope and face value for the postage to mail it to any destination requested by the individual. With each shipment the individual will receive not only the QSLs but also an itemized statement of the balance in their account. We look forward to working with you for the next half century !! For information about using the bureau or any questions about your account please email to w1qsl@yccc.org or check it out at <http://www.arrl.org>. You may also write to the W1QSL Bureau, PO Box 80216, Springfield, MA 01138.

-- 73 Tom/K1KI and Mike/K1TWF

Remember that the club pays to send out QSL cards through the ARRL Outgoing QSL Bureau. The only requirement is that you be a League member. If you have outgoing cards bring them and an address label from your QST Magazine to a meeting and give them to Bob W1XP our Outgoing QSL Manager.

Stan

Membership Committee

A committee has been formed to develop ideas on membership issues. The members are Les, Dave N1MNX, and Stan KD1LE. The initial thrusts were on increasing club membership and meeting participation. So we are looking for suggestions on the types of meeting programs that would interest you and the activities that the club should participate in. If you have any ideas or want to participate actively get in touch with one of the above mentioned people. One simple idea was to set up tables for the meeting so people would have a place for their coffee or meeting materials. Hence the arrangement seen below.



One of the first items was the updating of the club brochure. This has been completed and copies made. Everyone can help out here. Pick up a few at the next club meeting. If you know a location where there is public traffic that has a bulletin board or a place for brochures you can pin up or drop off a few. Shopping Centers, electronic stores, and places like Radio Shack are good for beginners. If your town has a community center or senior center those are worth trying also. Another good place to have them available is when you work as a VE at a test session. If anyone has any other places or thoughts of places let us know.

The only other thing we know is that activity breeds activity and membership. We can't miss opportunities like Septemberfest or Field Day if we want to promote ourselves as active hams. But these things take someone to coordinate them. It's usually not a lot of work for the typical event (field day excluded) but it can't be the same people every time. So will probably generate a list of events for the year at which we think we should have a presence. We will still need someone volunteer to coordinate each one of them.

Repeater Etiquette

In preparation for holiday travel and next year's vacation time here is a reminder about information that should not be discussed openly on a repeater. I have read of cases where non-hams using scanners monitored repeaters and using information gathered there and from a callbook (which is readily available – including on the Internet) to plan and execute home burglaries. Information about people going away on a vacation or a trip, or when someone is getting back should not be discussed on the air. Likewise peoples hours of work or any information that would indicate when their home might be unoccupied should not be discussed.

If you have ever been the victim of a break-in you know what a trauma it causes. Besides the outright loss there is the time spent trying to itemize the property that was stolen some of which will not be replaceable and some of which you don't remember for months or years. There is the battle with the insurance company over valuables which you always lose (victimized twice). Then there are the replacement locks, keys, credit

cards, etc. So let's help all our friends and not set them up for disaster. If someone asks if your friend and his family are gone to Yosemite for the month ignore the question. Call on the phone later if he really needs to know.

Stan KD1LE

VE Sessions

There will be a VE session in Nashua on Saturday December 11th. If you want to plan ahead for an upgrade future exams by the NARC group are tentatively scheduled for 2/26/2000, 6/17/2000 in Nashua and May 13th at Hosstraders.

NVARC FoxBox

We are running out of weekends for the FoxBox this year and this season. Depending on conditions it may be out over the Christmas to New Years week. Snow on the ground ends the season since it becomes impossible to hide the fox.

Emergency Response Training

Having too much free time on their hands Ralph KD1SM and Stan KD1LE committed two days of the Thanksgiving weekend to a class on Emergency Response to Terrorism. The class was sponsored by the Leominster Emergency Management Agency. The class was primarily aimed at first responders such as Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical personnel but could be valuable to anyone who happened to arrive first on the scene of an "accident".

NVARC FoxFinder

One additional FoxFinder kits have been sold. So far word-of-mouth has been the most effective means to promote the device. So, if you know someone that 'hunts' let them know about our great little device. We can also email them a one page document with a description.

The cost of the kit is \$59.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling. The kit can be ordered by sending your order to NVARC, P.O. Box 900, Pepperell, MA., 01463. Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

From the ARRL Letter

VAST MAJORITY OF HAMS NOT ULS-READY

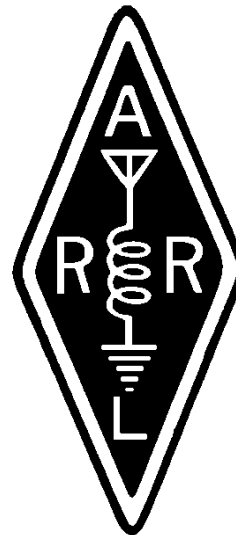
Even though registration has been available for approximately two years now, most Amateur Radio licensees have yet to register with the FCC's Universal Licensing System. The ULS Task Force reports that, as of mid-November, 682,212 amateurs still have not registered. This figure includes individuals whose licenses have lapsed but remain in the two-year grace period. The FCC recently said approximately 3% of US licensees had registered with the ULS. The FCC deployed the ULS for the Amateur Service on August 16, 1999. Amateurs must be registered in the ULS in order to file applications with the FCC—including renewals, modifications, and vanity call sign requests. Meanwhile, the latest "good news/bad news" scenario from the ULS could go something like this: "Dear Amateur: The good news is that we have granted your requested Group C vanity call sign which you sought 10 weeks ago when you were a General class licensee. The bad news is that when we granted your long-awaited vanity call, we also undid the Advanced and Extra class upgrades you accomplished while your vanity was pending. So, congratulations! You're a General once again."

The ULS Task Force says it recently discovered that the bug occurs when several applications are pending (eg, a vanity application and an upgrade application). The FCC is attempting to

straighten out the unintended downgrades and says it will have the operator class of affected licensees corrected within a week.

FCC personnel are currently testing the processing for club, military recreation, and RACES applications and hopes to act on pending applications before the end of the month. Up until now, those applications have been filed on paper and still must be manually keystroked into the ULS prior to processing.

The ULS Task Force also wants amateur applicants to know that if they apply too early for license renewal, their applications will be dismissed. A license renewal must be filed no sooner than within 90 days of expiration, even if coupled



with a license modification. This is only an issue for those filing paper applications; the electronic filing system will not let applicants file prematurely.

To register for the ULS, visit <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls> and click on "TIN/Call Sign Registration". Paper registration also is possible. For more information, call toll-free 888-CALL FCC (225-5322).

FCC LETTER INCLUDES OPERATING REMINDERS FOR NETS

FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth recently took advantage of an enforcement-related letter to issue some operating reminders for nets.

On November 3, Hollingsworth wrote Alan E. Strauss, WA4JTK, of Carol City, Florida, to follow up on earlier complaints about the "14.247 DX Group," for which Strauss serves as net control. The FCC had contacted Strauss earlier this year regarding complaints that the 14.247 DX Group monopolized that frequency and interfered with ongoing amateur communications. The November 3 letter included correspondence the FCC received on August 4 that Hollingsworth said conflicts with Strauss's explanation of interference alleged to have occurred to the net in July. Hollingsworth said the case will remain open, and the FCC will continue to monitor net operations.

Hollingsworth used the occasion of the Strauss letter to again point out that amateur frequencies are shared, and no net has a greater right than any other ham to a given frequency and cannot take over a frequency unless it is voluntarily relinquished.

If the frequency is not relinquished, Hollingsworth said, amateurs must exercise "good Amateur practice" in choosing another frequency that does not disrupt existing communications. "A net 'taking over' a frequency from existing legitimate communications or deliberately operating disruptively close to existing legitimate communications will be considered to be engaging in deliberate interference," he wrote.

Hollingsworth also told Strauss that the practice of "identifying only by the last two letters of an Amateur call sign is a violation of Part 97" of the FCC rules and that such practice "must not be condoned by your group." Some amateurs had construed the statement—widely reported elsewhere—as a tightening of FCC station identification enforcement policy. Hollingsworth says that's not the case.

"All we said was that if only the last two letters are given, it doesn't meet Part 97," he said. He pointed out that if a calling station using an abbreviated ID is never acknowledged and given a chance to give a complete call sign, a legal ID would be lacking for that communication. To be strictly legal, stations using a suffix-letter ID always must identify within the first 10 minutes of the communication (and each 10 minutes thereafter) with a complete call sign. Hollingsworth restated the requirements in a follow-up letter to Strauss on November 16.

Hollingsworth this week also reminded net control stations not to encourage rule violations by requiring check-ins to use two-letter IDs without allowing a legal ID at some point within the time limits of the rules.

INDIAN AMATEURS PROVIDE POST-CYCLONE AID

Hams in India were able to play a critical role in providing emergency communication from the eastern state of Orissa, struck by a destructive "super cyclone" in late October. The storm resulted in tens of thousands of deaths, left many more homeless, and created food and water shortages. Troops have been sent into the affection regions, and the US has pledged \$2.1 million in emergency food and shelter aid.

Calcutta VHF Amateur Radio Society Secretary Indranil Majumdar, VU2KFR, an ARRL member, reports teams of amateurs from all over India responded to the disaster. The Calcutta club set up an Amateur Radio Control Room at the shack he shares with his brother, Horey, VU2HFR, running a Drake TR4 transceiver into a three-element beam on 20 and 40 meters. At one point, a dozen Calcutta hams were staffing the facility around the clock.

"This is the first time the whole of India has to come to know and appreciate ham radio," VU2KFR said. He said ham radio provided the initial communication link between the stricken state and the rest of the country.

On November 7, a group of five Calcutta hams took off for the Jajpur District in Orissa in a Land Rover-type vehicle equipped with HF mobile equipment. "The communication was done from the mobile with a dipole fitted like an inverted Vee on the car roof," Majumdar said. The transceiver in the car was a 15-W homebrew SSB rig that the club had put together.

"The entire communication in the state is being maintained by hams—except for some satellite phones that are operating now and then and fac-

ing battery problems," Majumdar said. The disaster communications team has since returned from Orissa as telephone and satellite phone service became available.

Majumdar said the teams handled message traffic relating to emergency food, clothing, and medical needs, road conditions, and health-and-welfare. Similar fixed facilities were set up in other Indian cities—including New Delhi and Hyderabad—and linked via HF.

Majumdar says a group of hams from the National Institute of Amateur Radio in Hyderabad also went to Orissa and set up emergency control rooms in Bhubhaneswar, Jajpur and Paradip. Other stations subsequently were set up in other affected cities with VHF and HF capabilities. VU2KFR says VHF links were being used to regional traffic within and between states. There are no repeaters. The hams are using what he called "human relay."

Majumdar estimated that 50 hams in all were participating in the disaster communication effort using their own or borrowed equipment.

One Jajpur official praised the Amateur Radio efforts. In a letter to Calcutta VHF ARS President Dipak Mitra, VU2DPM, District Magistrate R. Balakrishnan said the radio links were helpful in monitoring the spread of disease and in damage assessment efforts. "I am of the view that the concept of ham radio should be popularized and more and more such groups need to be encouraged," he wrote.

SATELLITES, POWER GRID FACE POTENTIAL SOLAR THREAT:

Forget Y2K! Watch out for OI' Sol! Increased solar activity due to the current sunspot cycle is expected to affect satellites on which US telecommunications customers depend, says National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Director D. James Baker. The solar maximum also could impact US power grids. Starting next year, space storms, radiation showers and effects on power grids are all expected during the upcoming maximum, which is expected to last about three years. NOAA officials said the storms alter the Earth's magnetic field and may send strong enough electrical charges that would overwhelm vulnerable power grids. The last cycle of geomagnetic storms occurred in the late 1980s and resulted in blackouts in Montreal, England and Scandinavia and damaged four Navy satellites. This round of activity is expected to have more dire consequences, Baker says, because customers are much more dependent now on satellite technology. In addi-

tion, there are many more satellites than there were a decade ago. Meanwhile, Amateur Radio operators have been looking forward to the solar maximum hoping for improved HF conditions and enhanced propagation on VHF and even UHF.—from press reports and The Hudson Loop

SPECTRUM PROTECTION ACT UPDATE:

ARRL Legislative and Public Affairs Manager Steve Mansfield, N1MZA, reports that the Spectrum Protection Act, HR 783, now has 126 cosponsors. Efforts are under way to line up a Senate companion bill for introduction after the first of the year.

NNJ ARES WORKS WITH RED CROSS:

During October, members of the West Essex (New Jersey) Amateur Radio Club installed a 2-meter J-Pole and seven-element beam for the Metropolitan New Jersey Red Cross Chapter radio systems used to establish direct communications with the lead chapter in Princeton. The club also relocated two scanner antennas and installed new 800-MHz antennas for the chapter's day-to-day communication. Members involved in the project included WEARC President and Essex County DEC Bob Marsh, KB2SGN; Arnold Knadle, N1JX; Dan Callaghan, KC2DLP; Mike Hartman, WA2QIC; Brian Keegan, KF2HC; and Bob Lange, N2NYR, along with Fred Buchner, KO2FB, the NNJ ARES Red Cross Liaison. As part of a NNJ ARES reorganization, each Red Cross chapter will have a designated Amateur Radio club to which it can turn for support.

FCC DENIES LEAGUE'S REQUEST TO STRENGTHEN PRB-1

The FCC has turned down a 1996 ARRL petition asking the Commission to go further in compelling state and local governments to reasonably accommodate Amateur Radio and apply the least restrictive means to regulate amateur antennas and activity. However, in denying the petition, designated RM-8763, the FCC did offer some words that may be helpful to amateurs.

The requested rules changes would have expanded and clarified PRB-1, the Federal preemption of state and local regulation spelled out by the FCC in 1985 and since incorporated into the laws of several states.

Specifically, the League called on the FCC to amend Section 97.15(e) of its rules to say that any state or local antenna restrictions limiting ham radio antennas to heights below 70 feet would be “presumed unreasonable” unless the state or local authority could show its restrictions were necessary for health, safety or aesthetic reasons.

Further, the ARRL asked the FCC to clarify that local government’s role in applying PRB-1 was to accommodate ham antennas rather than to balance local interests against Federal interests in “effective public service amateur communications.” The League also wanted the FCC to acknowledge that it “has no less interest in the effective performance of an Amateur Radio Station” in an area regulated by deed restrictions, covenants, or condominium regulations than by zoning ordinances. It also asked the FCC to preempt overly burdensome conditions and excessive costs localities might require in connection with amateurs antenna installations.

In its denial, in an Order released November 19, the FCC said it would not be “prudent” or “appropriate” to set a height standard for amateur antennas and supporting structures “because of varying circumstances that may occur” for differing antenna configurations. “We believe that the policy enunciated in PRB-1 is sound,” the FCC said, noting that PRB-1 does not specify a height limit. The Commission also said it did not want to mandate specific provisions that localities must include in zoning ordinances.

“We continue to believe that the standards the Commission set, that is ‘reasonable accommodation’ and ‘minimum practicable regulation’, have worked relatively well,” the FCC said. The Commission applied that same philosophy to the imposition of fees, zoning laws and other conditions that localities might impose on amateur antenna installations.

The FCC also said its policy with respect to restrictive covenants already is clearly stated in PRB-1, which excludes restrictive covenants in private contracts as “outside the reach of our limited preemption.” The FCC did say that it “strongly encourages associations of homeowners and private contracting parties to follow the principle of reasonable accommodation” with respect to Amateur Radio. But it drew the line at proposing specific rule changes to bring private restrictive covenants under the umbrella of PRB-1.

On a slightly positive note, the FCC did assert that PRB-1 precisely states the principle of “reasonable accommodation.” Some courts have held that a local authority can merely balance its own

interests against those of the amateur. PRB-1 says local regulations involving placement, screening, or height of antennas based on health, safety, or aesthetic considerations “must be crafted to accommodate reasonably amateur communications, and to represent the minimum practicable regulation to accomplish the local authority’s legitimate purpose.” In its Order, the FCC said that given PRB-1’s explicit language, “it is clear that a ‘balancing of interests’ approach is not appropriate in this context.”

The ARRL Executive Committee will review the Order at its December 4 meeting to determine what further action is appropriate.

FCC INTERVENES IN POWER LINE NOISE COMPLAINTS

Taking a new direction in a power-line interference case, the FCC has contacted a West Coast power company to remind the utility of its obligation to fix equipment problems that cause harmful radio interference. The case involved longstanding complaints by several northern California amateurs to Pacific Gas & Electric Company regarding severe power line noise on the ham bands.

On November 22, the FCC’s Consumer Center wrote PG&E Senior VP James K. Randolph, who’s also General Manager of Distribution and Customer Service requesting the company to correct the problem “within a reasonable time.” “It is a little bit unusual, but it had been ongoing for quite a while, and I had talked with the power company,” said Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth. He said the situation involved “a long history of non-response” by PG&E. “They’ve shown a lot of patience,” he said of the amateurs who had complained, adding that he’d spoken to some of them during a West Coast visit earlier this year.

“The FCC has the responsibility to require that utility companies rectify such problems within a reasonable time if the interference is caused by faulty power utility equipment,” the Commission’s letter said.

Under FCC Part 15, utilities and others that fall under its provisions are obliged to not cause harmful interference to licensed services and to cease operating a device that’s causing harmful interference upon FCC notification. The FCC said that while it remains confident that utilities can resolve such interference issues voluntarily, its letter was intended as a reminder that the unresolved interference problem “may be a violation of

FCC rules and could result in a monetary forfeiture for each occurrence.”

The FCC letter points out that the FCC encourages parties to resolve such problems “without FCC intervention” but says the FCC will step in when necessary. In this particular case, Hollingsworth said, the amateurs “had worked diligently with the power company and with the League, and we thought it appropriate for us to send a letter reminding them of what the Commission’s rules and policies are.”

Hollingsworth and ARRL Lab Supervisor, Ed Hare, W1RFI—the League’s point man for interference-related issues—say that, before contacting the FCC to intervene as it did with the PG&E situation, affected amateurs first should attempt to work patiently with the utility and should contact the League for assistance.

The ARRL Technical Information Service has prepared a Web page, “RFI—Electrical and Power Line,” at <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/rfi-elec.html>. Amateurs suffering from interference believed to be emanating from power generation or transmission facilities also may contact Ed Hare, W1RFI, 860-594-0318; rfi@arrl.org.

FCC DISMISSES FIVE MORE AMATEUR RADIO-RELATED PETITIONS

The FCC has turned down five more Amateur Radio-related petitions, including three filed by the ARRL. The FCC consolidated the dismissals into a single Order, released November 29. Among the five was a petition filed last spring by the Central States VHF Society. That petition, designated RM-9673, generally sought more restrictive regulation of the modes used by amateurs in the 6 meter, 2 meter, 1.25 meter and 70 cm bands.

The three ARRL petitions dismissed were RM-9259, filed April 3, 1998, asking for an FCC declaratory ruling to equate observance of voluntary band plans with “good amateur practice”; RM-9115, filed March 12, 1997, seeking to permit RACES participants and others to intercommunicate during emergencies, drills and tests and to expand the time allowed for RACES drills; and RM-9106, filed March 12, 1997, asking the FCC to permit stations in the Territory of American Samoa to transmit on 7.1 to 7.3 MHz as a domestic exception to the International Table of Frequency Allocations.

The FCC also dismissed a petition filed March 19, 1997, by James Cardillo-Lee, KE6VGV, asking for a rule change to permit hams who also are emergency personnel engaged in disaster relief to use

the Amateur Service bands while on paid-duty status.

The Central States VHF Society petition, filed May 3, had expressed concern about increasing encroachment into the so-called weak-signal portions of the bands above 50 MHz by wider-bandwidth modes, such as voice FM and packet. CSVHFS said voluntary band plans had not been successful in limiting the activity. In turning down the petition, the FCC said that amateurs, including weak-signal adherents, already have been provided segments in the bands at issue that are off-limits to certain types of stations. The FCC reiterated language from another Report and Order that declared it was “unreasonable” to expect to operate in a totally interference-free environment. The Commission also expressed concern that “subdividing amateur service bands on the basis of operating interests would result in a loss of flexibility to accommodate changes in operating trends and emergence of new technologies.” The FCC said it agreed with the ARRL’s position on the CSVHFS petition that education and the application of existing rules should suffice to minimize interference among various modes.

In dismissing as “unnecessary” the League’s request for a declaratory ruling to equate band plan adherence with “good amateur practice,” the FCC noted that a basic amateur principle is that “all frequencies are shared, and no frequency will be assigned for the exclusive use any station.” The Commission suggested it was reluctant to expand its regulatory role beyond the existing limits on the emission types that may be transmitted in different subbands. The Commission, however, did reiterate existing prohibitions against willful and malicious interference.

The FCC said the requested changes “would have the effect of transforming voluntary band plans into de facto required mandates,” something inconsistent with current FCC policy. In denying the ARRL’s petition for changes in the RACES rules, the FCC said the League failed to demonstrate a separate rulemaking was warranted. The FCC noted that it’s currently considering “the necessity of separate licenses for RACES stations” in another proceeding.

HAM SATS ON THE LAUNCH PAD

Amateur Radio’s newest satellites are on the launch pad awaiting liftoff December 8 from Vandenberg Air Force base in California. Preparations are going well, and all payloads have been encapsulated. The Joint Air Force-Weber State University Satellite—or JAWSAT—will serve as a bus

for several deployable payloads. Deployable payloads aboard JAWSAT are the Orbiting Picosat Automatic Launcher—or OPAL—provided by Stanford University, the ASUSAT provided by Arizona State University, and the Optical Calibration Sphere experiment provided by the Air Force Research Laboratory and L'Garde, Inc. JAWSAT will have a 2-meter/70-cm repeater and packet store-and-forward capabilities. ASUSAT will contain amateur 9600-baud G3RUH-type packet hardware and a 2-meter/70-cm FM voice repeater. ASUSAT-1's downlink frequency is 436.700 MHz. OPAL will release three tiny picosats. One of them, StenSat—will have a crossband repeater aboard that will operate much like the popular AO-27 satellite.—SpaceNews; NASA

NEW NCDXF/IARU BEACON

The 17th beacon in the NCDXF/IARU Beacon Network came on the air from Novosibirsk, Russia, November 26 at 0945 UTC. The call sign is RR9O. Beacon operator Yuri Zaruba, UA9OBA, reports that this was the first radio beacon to be placed on the air in Russia, and the occasion got local and national TV coverage. The NCDXF/IARU beacons provide world-wide coverage and transmit in turn every three minutes on five different amateur radio bands at 14.100, 18.110, 21.150, 24.930, and 28.200 MHz. These beacons help HF radio users assess current ionospheric conditions. The entire system is designed, built and operated by volunteers. The final beacon will be in Hong Kong, China, with the call sign VR2HK. For more information, visit <http://www.ncdxf.org>.—Bob Fabry, N6EK

\$December Treasurer Report\$

Income for November included \$34 from the Fox-Finder project, \$15 in membership, and \$2 in ARRL membership rebates. Two eagle-eyed road cleanup crew volunteers made additional donations; Dave N1MNX spied a 10-spot in his section of the highway and donated it to the treasury. Russ WR1Y found a dollar bill and did the same. Just one more example of the many rewards we get from having Adopted a Highway. Thank you both, Dave and Russ, for your generosity. The only expense last month was \$13.20 for newsletter postage.



Current balances:

General Fund \$536.42
Community Fund \$1427.55

Happy Holidays to all, Ralph KD1SM

Your Club needs your timely payment of membership dues (\$15/year individual, \$20/year family). Your newsletter mailing label always contains the date of expiration of your membership.

And remember, the ARRL rebates a portion of your ARRL membership dues back to the club if you renew on a form that I must submit. So when your ARRL membership reminder arrives, bring it to a Club meeting with a check in the full amount made out to NVARC and I will do the rest. You save a stamp, the Club benefits. What could be easier?



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Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month - 7:30 p.m. - Pepperell Community Ctr.
Talk-in 146.490 simplex
442.90 + 100Hz Repeater

This newsletter is published monthly. Submissions, corrections and inquiries should be directed to the newsletter editor. Articles and graphics in most IBM-PC formats are OK. You can leave items on PEPMBX, or

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