

Central Division News & Views

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The Greatest Ever Threat To Amateur Radio – (Part 2)

The concern about BPL's interference potential is spreading to other licensed users of the 2-80 MHz spectrum. NTIA (the agency that looks after government and military RF spectrum needs) has already gone on record questioning this interference potential. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) is not happy with this BPL proposal. And even the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is making technical inquiries. However the five FCC Commissioners continue to publicly support the current BPL proposal despite it's technical absurdities.

The NOI comment period deadlines are long past and the commissioners must now decide what they are going to do about this proposal. I'm betting it will now go to a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) if Part 15 device transmit limits are relaxed. The technical specifications will be spelled out and they could be quite different from what is discussed in their NOI.

However, even if the current Part 15 Device transmit limitations are maintained, licensed users of 2-80 MHz spectrum will end up with area-wide interference as BPL systems enlarge and multiply. And if Part 15 requirements are relaxed, the interference will become stronger in a shorter period of time. There is the very real possibility that BPL systems in one country will interfere with licensed RF users in other countries - particularly during band openings.



The debate on this issue could get quite nasty before a ruling is made. BPL proponents cannot prove that this technology can coexist with licensed RF users. Their technical arguments are based more on wishful thinking than proven physical laws. In fact, the only defense these people have mounted so far is to question the authenticity of the facts the ARRL presented in its comments and reply comments to the FCC's NOI. It may be that congress will eventually have to overrule the FCC again - as it did a couple of weeks ago on an unrelated issue. Perhaps all the hot air coming from BPL proponents and their FCC cheer leaders will hold down our winter heating bills.

BPL is a serious threat to us all ! W9GIG

Photo: Paula Uscian, K9IR

Where Can I find More Information?

What I have said above is very general and is subject to different interpretations, depending on the viewpoint of the interpreter. The ARRL web site has extensive, constantly updated, information on BPL proposal and many links to other sites where you can obtain even more information. If you read and listen to all the material available here and via the links, it will take you the better part of a day. You can get started at: <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/>

How Can I File FCC Comments?

If you want to file electronic comments (on-line informal comments, or a formal comment as an attached file) on future BPL petitions or proposed rule makings before the FCC - or any other proposal before the commission, you can start at: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> . Even before you file comments, I suggest you visit this web site and work through all the procedural information so that when you file, you won't get bogged down in the process.

2003 W9DXCC Convention

This was the 51st year for the W9DXCC Convention, hosted by the Northern Illinois DX Association (NIDXA). Chasing HF DX is what first drew me into this great avocation and I have been going to this gathering of DXers many years before I became the Central Division Director. This year's convention was the first time that ARRL CEO Dave Sumner, K1ZZ was able to attend.



W9DXCC MC W9WU, K1ZZ, W9GIG, K9KM

Photo: Clay Melhorn, N9IO

At the Saturday night banquet, K1ZZ gave a brief, easily understood report on the actions taken at WRC-03 that affect the Amateur Radio Service. The multi-decade saga of the work to restore our 40 Mtr band to it's pre-WWII allocation was the highlight of Dave's speech. It has taken thousands of man-hours and lots of money to restore a common 200 KHz world-wide 40 Mtr band. Hopefully, we will eventually recover the remaining 100 KHz in ITU Regions 1 and 3 before I am raising daisies.

Was WRC-03 Effort Worth The Cost?

CQ (magazine) states that it has been money well-spent. However, this cost has been borne by a minority of the U.S. hams. I urge all of you reading this newsletter to join, or rejoin the ARRL, or if you are a member, to go out and recruit more members. It's getting ever more expensive to mount this kind of a long term international campaign and we are now faced with doing the same thing at the national level in the U.S. It's not just the money. We need the additional membership to enhance our standing as the voice of Amateur radio in the U.S. Outside consultants tell us that we have a good percentage of the U.S. amateurs as members. But I will not be satisfied until the ARRL has over 50% of them... using current license numbers, that about 300,000 people.

Unless the FCC is directed by Congress to change the way it now operates, all non-commercial users of the RF spectrum will be under continuous threat of spectrum allocation loss to the commercial sector. In the political arena it does take money to be heard. But to be truly effective in defending our interests, the real bottom line is the question eventually asked by each Congressman and Senator: "How many votes do you have behind you?"

LoTW Now On-Line

After months of testing and tweaking, the ARRL **Logbook of The World** (LoTW) went on-line shortly after 600 PM September 15, 2003. As of September 29th, LoTW already has 6,576.000 plus QSO records in its database with 1835 registered users. And 33,688 QSL records (QSO matches) have been verified. I have already downloaded and installed the latest version of the Trusted QSL (TQSL) software and now have digital signature certificates for my current and one previous call installed. And I have uploaded a few contest logs using the ARRL web site and via an email attached file.

The process is quick and easy if you read and follow all the directions. When asked to type in your FCC license mailing address, make sure you type it in exactly as it appears on your license. This should eliminate any possible address-matching problems for the LoTW certificate computer.

The LoTW page on the ARRL website is: www.arrl.org/lotw/

Please take the time to read the FAQs before you start the certificate request process - particularly if you want certificates for more than one call in. Your first certificate request must be for your current FCC call in. After your first digital signature has been issued, you can use this certificate to verify previous domestic call signs you have held. Foreign call in registration requires a photocopies of the foreign license and a picture ID be mailed to ARRL headquarters for verification.

Step by step instructions are found on the *Getting Started* section of LoTW at: www.arrl.org/lotw/getstart.html (*LoTW continues on page 4*)

(LoTW, continued)

Once you have done all your registration work and successfully uploaded a couple of your logs, I believe you will like just how easy it is. Like any new process, there is a learning curve. But it's a short one. All but about 100 of my HF QSOs are already in digital format. About 10 years ago, I typed in all my early hand-logged QSOs. I have a lot of file conversion work to do, but my goal is to put every HF QSO I have made since I was first licensed in 1977 into LoTW.

Hamfest Visits & Meetings

Here is my ARRL travel schedule for the next four months. It is subject to change if required ARRL meeting dates were to be changed.

Nov 8	Wisconsin EC Conference	Oshkosh, WI
Nov 16	Fort Wayne Hamfest	Fort Wayne, IN
Dec 6	ARRL Committee Meeting	Windsor Locks, CT
Jan 3	West Allis RAC Hamfest	Waukesha, WI
Jan 15-18	ARRL Board Meeting	Windsor Locks, CT
Jan 25	Wheaton Hamfest	Saint Charles, IL

I hope to see many of you at these gatherings. In addition to shopping for new and used equipment, they are a great way to renew and develop friendships and to meet some of the voices you have heard on your radios.

73 - George R. (Dick) Isely, W9GIG
Central Division Director