

W5YI

Nation's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable. May be reproduced providing credit is given to The W5YI Report.

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Commercial Radio Testing to use Amateur Radio Model

The FCC has transferred the responsibility for the development and administration of Commercial Radio Operator license testing to the private sector. The program will be handled in more or less the same way as the successful examination program in the Amateur Service.

Ten years ago, Amateur operator license examinations for all classes (except Novice) were administered by the FCC at its field offices. Diminishing Commission resources forced the FCC in 1984 to reduce amateur testing to only four times a year. The questions could not be revised quickly enough to stay current with changes in technology and regulations.

To fix the problems in the Amateur Radio Service, the Communications Act was amended to permit the use of unpaid examiners. In September 13, 1982, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation allowing the FCC to use volunteers to assist in preparing and administering amateur radio license examinations. Public Law 97-259 actually had its roots in a bill originally submitted by Senator Barry Goldwater, K7UGA.

He said, "The availability of federal funds to administer the Amateur Radio Service need not and should not be permitted to preclude amateur radio involvement for the young or elderly. Amateurs must be permitted, through voluntary efforts supervised by the FCC to supply the services, including examinations to those who would benefit from them as funds are not available to supply

these services any longer."

The FCC proposed two amateur administrative examining levels - one being the *Volunteer-Examiner Coordinator* (VEC), the other a *Volunteer Examiner* (VE.) The VEC would act as an administrative liaison (or coordinator) between the FCC's Gettysburg, PA, licensing facility and the VEs who would give the ham tests. Banks of test questions were developed initially based on the FCC Study Guides to form the various FCC question pools. This function is now completely handled by the VECs. The entire program was called the "VEC System."

The FCC required that an agreement be entered into with the government in order to be a VEC. VECs would approve volunteer examiners who met the statutory requirements. Eventually several organizations entered into an agreement with the FCC to coordinate amateur examinations on a regional basis. There are now 18 VEC groups.

After Congress passed legislation authorizing reimbursement of expenses, the FCC allowed the volunteer testing community to charge a test fee of \$4.00 per examination effective September 1, 1984. The FCC later rewrote the Amateur Service Part 97 Rules to create what is now Subpart F - Qualifying Examination Systems. This section of the rules provides the government guidelines for the qualification testing of ham operators. A provision was made for test fee increases based on

inflation. The maximum test fee that may be charged during 1993 is \$5.60.

Today, the VEC System is an unqualified success! In 1992, this all-volunteer program will administer over 200,000 examination elements to more than 125,000 applicants at some 10,000 test sessions. The questions are current. Fraud and abuse are rare. The program has easily handled increases in the number of applicants stemming from the popularity of the new, codeless Technician Class license. And it is about to absorb testing for Novice Class licenses. The efficiency of the VEC System has not gone unnoticed.

Privatizing Commercial Radio Operator Exams

In September 1986, the FCC released an Inquiry seeking comments on whether the public interest would be served by allowing a private organization to draft and administer all FCC Commercial Radio Operator examinations.

The FCC has been charging a \$35.00 fee for processing commercial radio operator license applications for more than two years now. The establishment of the fee, however, has not permitted the Commission to increase the frequency or number of locations for commercial examinations since all fees collected are deposited into the General Fund of the U.S. Treasury and do not augment the agency's appropriations in any way.

As a result of the 1986 Inquiry, the FCC asked for (and received on September 28, 1990) an amendment to the *Communications Act* authorizing it to delegate the examination of Commercial Radio Operators to non-government organizations. The wording of the amendment is essentially the same as the language in PL 97-259 except that it refers to Commercial rather than Amateur Radio Operator licenses.

Last August, the FCC released a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* which contemplated privatizing the administration of examinations for Commercial Radio Operator licenses. Just as in the case of Amateur Radio operator testing, the FCC said "...it continues to face resource constraints that prevents it from drafting and revising commercial radio operator examinations often enough to ensure examination integrity and from administering the examinations more than twice a year at its various field offices." The public comments closed on November 2, 1992.

Currently, the FCC has seven types of Commercial Radio Operator certificates, licenses, permits and endorsements. And a new class of license, the *Global Maritime Distress and Safety System* Radio Operator's License (GMDSS) has just been created. The GMDSS is an automated ship-to-shore distress alerting system

using satellite and advanced terrestrial communications systems.

GMDSS radio operators will be needed to operate this modern equipment which is just now in the process of being phased in. This system will eventually make the need for manual telegraphy unnecessary. The GMDSS license and most other licenses are valid for a five-year term although the General Radiotelephone Operator license and Restricted Radiotelephone Operator permit are issued for the lifetime of the holder.

On January 14, 1993, the FCC made their final ruling on the matter and approved the handling of all future Commercial Radio Operator license examinations by the private sector.

FCC Commissioner's Open Meeting

The FCC meeting began with *Private Radio Bureau Chief, Ralph Haller* saying "I'd like to begin by thanking the Field Operations Bureau for its assistance in doing this item. In October, the licensing program was transferred from the Field Operations Bureau to the Private Radio Bureau, and so this has truly been a joint item, to try to privatize that operation and put it into the private sector where we believe the public will be yet better served, and we'll be able to conserve the Commission's resources even better. Bill Cross is the author of the item; he's from our Special Services Division."

William Cross, Communications Analyst: "Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. The Report and Order before you privatizes the administration of examinations for commercial radio operator licenses. In 1990 Congress amended the Communications Act to give the Commission authority to privatize these examinations. Based on this authority, the *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* in this proceeding proposed to privatize commercial radio operator examinations to improve the examination system and to save scarce Commission resources."

"The comments supported the proposal. The Bureau believes the privatization of commercial operator examinations would meet the applicants' needs for more frequent examination opportunities at convenient locations, meet industry's needs for examinations that reflect state-of-the-art technology and modern operating conditions, and meet the Commission's needs to reduce the resources it expends on commercial operator examinations.

"Additionally, this item establishes rules for implementing and administering a private commercial radio operator examination system. Many of the

commenters suggested that the Commission use a system similar to the highly-successful Amateur Radio Service's volunteer examiner coordinator system, which to date has administered almost one million examinations. The Amateur Service's system, which employs multiple organizations to independently administer operator examinations, provides examination opportunities in hundreds of locations each year.

"The Bureau believes that, as under the Amateur Service's examination model, the certification of multiple organizations to administer standardized Commercial Radio Operator examinations also will minimize regulation and maximize service to the public. Therefore, this item allows the Chief of the Private Radio Bureau to certify multiple organizations to administer Commercial Radio Operator examinations and specifies basic duties and responsibilities to ensure the integrity of the system.

"Further, this Report and Order delegates to the Chief, Private Radio Bureau to monitor the performance of *Commercial Operator License Examination Managers* (COLEM), and the authority to decertify those that fail to perform satisfactorily. This delegation would eliminate the need to take minor administrative matters to the Commission and provides speedier administration of the system. Accordingly, the Bureau recommends that this *Report and Order* be adopted, and requests editorial privileges. Thank you."

FCC Commissioner James Quello: "Excellent item. We have limited resources. I think it's a good idea to have private parties to provide the operator examinations. I think we can do it more often this way, however; I notice and am glad to see that we still naturally retain ultimate authority and control."

FCC Commissioner Sherrie Marshall: "This item should put us on the road toward having up-to-date exams that can be administered reasonably frequently. I think it's a win-win proposition for everyone involved, not only the Commission but also the industry examinees. So thank you for a good item."

FCC Commissioner Andrew Barrett: "Where will the testing centers be located? Will one have two places in the country they can go to, or more places, and I say that because clearly when we look at an item like this, which has an opportunity to establish new business opportunities, we ought to make it as convenient as possible for those that have the intellectual strengths but not a great deal of money, and certainly can't go somewhere and sit for two nights but they may have the talent to pass the test."

Ralph Haller: "We're hopeful that we will be able to set up examiners that will be able to administer the tests in several areas of the country. One entity that commented in the item is planning, if they are selected, to have over a hundred testing locations throughout the country and give the exam on a daily basis. So, that is compared with what we've been able to do with our resources, and that is give the exam twice a year in about 26 or 30 locations. If we can get just a few entities involved in this we will very soon be providing service well beyond what the Commission is able to do."

Commissioner Barrett: "Did you have any conversation with the Small Business Administration or with our small business advisory office or any groups like that internally?"

Haller: "Other than doing the regulatory flexibility analysis, no."

FCC Commissioner Ervin Duggan: "One question, Mr. Haller, having to do with fees. When we privatize anything, it raises, at least theoretically, the danger that fees will be so high as to price certain people out of the market. I think that would be unfortunate, since this is ultimately a public responsibility to administer these tests. I would like to hear anything that you have to say that might reassure me that we can prevent an escalation of fees that would be contrary to the public interest."

Haller: "Commissioner, we certainly plan to monitor that and we are anticipating that the fees will be reflective of the actual costs of giving the exams. There may be differences, though, between the various examiners. For example, an examiner that sets up the system I described, of having tests available on a daily basis in a hundred locations, it may be somewhat more expensive to take that exam, versus another examiner that may propose to give the exams in 20 locations twice a year. In that case, he wouldn't need the computer support and a number of things that might make that a less-expensive exam, if someone could wait to take the exam in one of those locations. So, at this point we have not considered any particular rate regulation. But we will, as a part of the certification process, ask the entities that desire to be certified what they propose to charge and the basis of that."

Duggan: "If I have a continuing concern about this, are you open to editorial suggestions having to do with fees that would somehow express a concern about this?"

Haller: "Certainly."

FCC Chairman Alfred Sikes: "I think this is a good step; I think that Ralph, you and your colleagues have done an extraordinarily good job in trying to help our overall licensing process, this included, to help it become more efficient, to ease the burden on resources elsewhere in the Commission."

(The Report and Order was adopted unanimously.)

Commercial Radio Operator testing

A *Commercial Operator Licensing Examination Manager* (COLEM) is the commercial equivalent of the VEC. Following the model established in the Amateur Service, applicants for Commercial Radio Operator licenses must pass an examination administered by a Commission recognized testing organization. This test will consist of FCC regulations, technical questions and operating requirements. It is anticipated that all examination questions and answers will be known and widely published just as they are in the Amateur Service. Although examination managers will start with FCC developed question pools, this responsibility will eventually be transferred to the private sector.

A *Public Notice* will be issued when the appointment process is completed. At that time, persons who wish to obtain a Commercial Radio Operator license will have to contact an examination manager or their examiners to take the test for any Commercial Radio Operator license needed or desired.

The FCC initially said they would be returning some 1,300 applications and fees paid from people who had already applied to take Commercial Radio Operator license examinations at FCC field offices. A corrected press release, however, had this information deleted. The Commission expects that privately administered Commercial Radio Operator examinations will be available late this summer.

The Commission news release also said "...its decision to privatize Commercial Radio Operator license examinations will provide more frequent examinations in many more diverse and accessible locations. It also will reduce government expenses. The Commission will continue to issue Commercial Radio Operator licenses as well as monitor the progress of private examiners and take steps to improve the overall process when necessary."

FCC supervision of Amateur Service testing normally is received from the Personal Radio Branch in the form of letters, new regulations, examination statistics ...and an annual VEC Conference held annually in Gettysburg, PA. We assume a similar system will be developed for the commercial services.

The development and administration of Commer-

cial Radio Operator examinations appear certain to closely follow the model developed in the Amateur Radio Service's "VEC System" which has been fine-tuned over the past nine years. There are many examination parallels and common problems in the two services.

In both the Amateur and Commercial Radio Services, applicants must demonstrate knowledge of radio laws, regulations and the principles of telecommunications. In some instances applicants also must demonstrate skills in Morse telegraphy. Both service have examination "elements" which must be passed.

At press time, we still had not received the text of the *Order* and the details of the testing program are not fully known. Such technicalities as: how many examining managers will be selected, what testing fees will be allowed, how the fees will be determined, how many examination elements will there be and the content of the new testing rules are yet to be known. We understand that the Part 13 Commercial Radio Operator Rules have been completely rewritten, but they have yet to be released to the public.

There are at present several written Commercial Radio examination elements on marine radio law, operating practices and technical questions. Pass rate for the theory exams is 75%. There are four Morse Code tests: one minute solid-copy of "coded groups" at 16 and 20 words-per-minute and "plain language" text at 20 and 25 wpm.

The FCC recognizes that it has a successful implementation model already functioning in the marketplace. It will build on its proven record of success by using the same mechanism for Commercial Radio licenses as it now does for Amateur Radio. Just as hams have led the way with new communications technologies, their VEC System has blazed a trail for efficient administration of qualifying communications license examinations.

CONNECTICUT SAYS 'LARC's CLAIM IS NOT MOOT.'

The Connecticut State Commission on Human Rights apparently believes that the Lambda Amateur Radio Club has a legitimate discrimination claim against the ARRL. According to Lambda president **Jim Kelly, KK3K**, while the League has agreed to LARC's classified advertisement, it has not agreed to other remedies to insure an end to their problems with the ARRL.

Lambda, a Philadelphia-based organization of gay and lesbian amateurs, says ARRL's refusal to allow LARC to advertise in QST has stunted their growth, forced them to redirect their efforts into dealing with discrimination rather than building the

club, cost the club hundreds of dollars in expenses and has been stressful and frustrating. Lambda wants ARRL to run their ads without undue restrictions as to size or content and to publish a non-discriminatory statement including sexual orientation in QST.

KK3K also suggested an additional remedy, "The ARRL could help LARC build up its membership and repair some of the damage done to us by agreeing to cover our club in QST in the 'Up Front' photo and caption section." He added, "We'd like to see the ARRL recognize that they have an obligation to repair the damage done to us, to insure that discrimination against us or anyone else is not repeated, and to acknowledge that gay and lesbian hams are covered by the ARRL motto: 'Of, by and for the radio amateur'".

ARSENE OSCAR SATELLITE LAUNCH

The French amateur radio satellite organization known as "The Radio Amateur Club de l'Espace" (RACE) recently sponsored a conference in Toulouse, France, to announce the first OSCAR satellite scheduled to fly in April '93.

The planned launch date for ARSENE is April 20, 1993 which will fly aboard an ARIANE-4 rocket launcher along with a geostationary television satellite known as ASTRA-1C. Right after launch there will be two stations in place at Reunion Island (Africa) prepared to copy telemetry from ARSENE immediately after it separates from the rocket booster. These two stations will gather telemetry and send it Toulouse, France where the ARSENE satellite ground control station (FF1STA) will begin to analyze the satellite's condition during these first critical hours of its life.

On the fourth orbit, ARSENE's "apogee-kick-motor" will be fired in order to place it into the proper orbit. The final orbit will have an apogee of 22,500 miles, a perigee of 12,500 miles, an orbital inclination of zero degrees, and an orbital period of 17 and one-half hours! This orbit will allow stations located between latitudes of 60 degrees north and south to see and use ARSENE for at least 50% of its period!

The ARSENE transponder frequencies:

UPLINK FREQUENCY #1:	435.050 MHz
UPLINK FREQUENCY #2:	435.100 MHz <----
UPLINK FREQUENCY #3:	435.150 MHz
(CW/SSB)	Mode S Combination
DOWNLINK FREQUENCY #1:	145.975 MHz
DOWNLINK FREQUENCY #2:	2446.500 MHz <---

ARSENE will be a packet radio "relay" satellite but will not have bulletin board system capability. All three uplink link frequencies will accept AX.25 1200 baud FSK packet. However, when ARSENE is in Mode S, one can transmit on 435.100 MHz and listen to their

downlink on 2446.500 MHz. During Mode S, one can use this "analog" transponder for CW or SSB. The downlink passband on Mode S is 16 KHz wide. The French telecom authorities gave the callsign FXØARS to the satellite, but the AX25 frames will be labeled ARSENE-1, ARSENE-2 or ARSENE-3 depending on which TNC is transmitting.

We expect many bulletins to be forthcoming from the RACE of France to help further explain the various operational aspects of ARSENE. Also, while the ARSENE launch team is in Kourou, French Guiana preparing for launch, there will be daily HF nets from there to help share information about ARSENE to the radio amateur world. On launch day, there will be a "launch-net" to help keep amateurs around the world informed on the progress of ARSENE, especially in the first critical orbits.

INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR RADIO LICENSING

Steve Hutchins, KN6G and DJØHB has sent new additional data to the FCC on his *Petition for Rule Making* (RM-7680) which would simplify the reciprocal Amateur Radio operating procedures.

The European community has formed an alliance whereby each of 31 nations (basically all of Europe, Scandinavia and the United Kingdom) recognize the Amateur License of other so-called CEPT countries. This allows visiting foreign amateurs to operate in other CEPT countries without obtaining an individual temporary license.

Hutchins urges the FCC to include language in Part 97.5(d) which will not only recognize the CEPT Radio Amateur License as a valid license to temporarily operate in the United States, but also to recognize the Amateur Radio licenses from all countries which have signed a reciprocal agreement with the U.S.

There are two CEPT license classes. Class 1 permits utilization of all bands; Class 2 permits operation on all frequency bands above 30 MHz. The call sign used is the operator's home call sign preceded by the CEPT (actually the ITU) call sign prefix. A "Table of Equivalences" relates national license classes to the CEPT Class 1 and 2.

Countries which are not CEPT members may apply for participation in the CEPT radio amateur licensing system by applying to the CEPT European Radiocommunications Committee (ERC) in Copenhagen. The application must include the license classes in the country concerned, their privileges and the proposed CEPT license class equivalents. For example, all U.S. amateur radio license classes might qualify for CEPT Class 1 except the No-Code Technician would be Class 2.

Telecommunications Technology Update!

RBDS - READING THE RADIO!

Get ready for the new radio broadcast data system (RBDS)! Several manufacturers (including Sony, Kenwood, Grundig and Delco) have introduced AM/FM broadcast radio receivers that have eight character digital displays.

The readouts will display radio station call signs, broadcast formats, emergency alerts, paging and other data. The new receivers should be available in the marketplace later on this year.

While some stations - especially those in major markets - will make more use of RBDS than others, all stations will display their callsign and format. No longer will you have to listen to a radio station to determine if it is a news, talk, sports, religious or music station. If music is featured, the readout will tell you which type.

NASA TO ROCKET SPACE ADS!

You have heard of the Good-year blimp, but what about the NASA Comet? For half-a-million bucks, advertisers can purchase 58-ft of billboard space on the hull of an expendable NASA rocket.

In exchange, they get about 30 to 60 seconds of live launch time coverage plus exposure during the prime-time news networks that always cover major space shots. Advertisers are adding up the numbers (audience, ratings, ...exposure) and it is starting to make economic sense to some!

NASA, in an attempt to attract ad dollars to help offset mushrooming launch costs, will embark on a novel fund raising venture code-named "COMET" ...an acronym for the COMmmercial Experiment Transporter.

The program allows advertisers to conduct in-flight scientific ex-

periments during orbit in addition to getting a space banner advertising their firm. We understand that three companies (Upjohn, Eli Lilly and Dupont) have already committed to participate.

But at least one private sector company has been formed to sell ad space without any accompanying experiments. Space Marketing of Roswell, GA, is already talking with such national advertisers as soft drink/cola distributors. Another wild promotion allows people to leave messages (supposedly beamed back from space) by calling a 900-number painted on the side of a NASA rocket!

VIDEO GRAPHICS TECHNOLOGY

A new digital interactive video technology called 3DO was introduced at the recent Winter Consumer Electronics show held in Las Vegas. Its resolution allows video presentations (which can be in three dimensions - thus the name) to approach the quality of 35-mm movie film.

The 3DO technology is the brainchild of Electronic Arts, an interactive videogame software publisher. The project is well funded and has Time-Warner, AT&T and Panasonic as equity partners.

3DO Multiplayers (\$700) which read CD-ROM disks will be available in the marketplace later on this year. Next comes interactive software delivered to cable TV. Expect the technology to also show up in videogame players. Nintendo says they are not worried since their units sell for far less!

DEVELOPMENTS FROM IBM

IBM is working with several different firms on new high-tech products. Polaroid and IBM are working together on a high resolu-

tion digital camera system that stores color images in a PC.

Blockbuster (the video rental firm) and IBM have a new delivery system that will allow music store customers to download customized compact discs from an inventory stored in a computer.

Toshiba and IBM are developing "thin film transistor" technology that will permit large (up to 19") but very thin TV screens.

IBM also announced that it has restructured and streamlined its Prodigy staff by laying off some 250 people and discontinuing unpopular services - such as electronic grocery shopping. Prodigy is the nationwide consumer information service delivered to some 2-million PC users.

The shake-up - which may be based on achieving profitability - shifts power from technology and programming to marketing executives. Prodigy will shortly offer a communications package that will quickly and easily send FAXes and first class mail to anyone. MCI-Mail has had this feature for some time.

MCI NOW HAS A VIDEOPHONE

MCI Communications is causing a ripple in the emerging VideoPhone business. AT&T introduced their VideoPhone last year which requires each party to have a \$1500 unit. It has not been selling well at all!

Now MCI is in the process of marketing their own VideoPhone at half the price that boasts more features. For one thing, there is no delay between spoken and visual transmissions. It looks like a regular sized telephone - except that it has a push-button flip-up screen.

MCI will offer a discount when more than one unit is purchased so two MCI units will cost less than one from AT&T. Look for AT&T to counter with a steep price cut. Such is life in the hi-tech world!

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● The first *Amateur Radio Industry Committee* meeting of 1993 will be held at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 5th at the Miami Airport Marriott in conjunction with the *Miami Hamboree* which takes place on Feb. 6 and 7. The ARIC is a loosely knit group of industry leaders who are interested in strengthening the growth of Amateur Radio.

● The FCC has proposed to re-allocate a section of the 28 GHz band from Common Carrier point-to-point microwave radio to a new multichannel video service to be known as *Local Multipoint Distribution Service* (LMDS.) To foster competition, there will be two licenses in each of 489 service areas. LMDS will compete with cable TV by using the radio spectrum (rather than wireline) to reach subscribers. Comments close March 16.

● *Do televised home shopping channels serve the public interest?* The FCC wants to know. Are they just feature-length commercials or do they "...respond to issues of community concern." HSN (Home Shopping Network) owns 10 TV stations and has 91 affiliates. If they don't meet public interest requirements, FCC is considering giving home shopping services 18 months to change their format. At the very least, cable systems would not be required to broadcast them under the "must carry" local TV requirements. The big question, is what yardstick do you use to tell.

● *Many cities and municipalities in Canada are taking it upon themselves to regulate radio antennas and towers.* This is in spite of Canadian law which mandates that the location and erection of all masts, towers and other antenna supporting structures lies in the federal government domain.

Some cities, for example, are getting around federal jurisdiction by defining free-standing antennas and their supports as "accessory

buildings" which are subject to land use restrictions. Canada's two national ham radio organizations take the position that municipalities should not be able to enact bylaws or legislation wherein individual amateurs have to ask permission to install antennas.

They are also frustrated by the fact that the Canadian *Department of Communications* has been ineffective in getting the specifics of the law out to local regulators, instead the "procedural language" is general in nature causing costly misunderstanding and confusion.

The combined groups are now working on a communications video and accompanying explanatory document which will be used to explain the situation to neighbors and community officials.

● *The Basic No-Code ham ticket came to Canada in late 1990.* It was responsible for a 5.3% growth rate that year and another 10% in 1991. 1992's figures show an increase of 20% over 1991 through the third quarter! There are now about 35,000 ham licenses in Canada. (By comparison, there are 90,000 licensed hams in California alone!) Amateur license fees in Canada were also increased to \$23 this year.

● *It is anybody's guess as to who the new FCC Chairman will be.* Al Sikes resigned effective the day before the inauguration. We have heard names of many possible prospects tossed about ...the most prevalent being Toni Cook, a Senate Commerce Committee lawyer. Cook is the 35 year old step-daughter of Clinton transition advisor, Vernon Jordan.

It could be months before Pres. Clinton brings the new FCC is up to speed since he will also have to replace Commissioner Sherrie Marshall who is expected to step down once she finds a job.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Quello is temporarily handling the

Chairman's function. The big question mark is what will be the doctrine and regulatory approach of the new FCC.

● *A rather amusing story leaked out of the FCC this past week* concerning a rather innocent farewell bash that was given for outgoing FCC Chairman Al Sikes.

It seems that federal ethics guidelines do not permit soliciting and accepting industry contributions for a private parties - even from friends. The story we got, is that Sike's secretary whipped up the affair which was held on the dusty ninth floor of an unfurnished, unfinished Washington office building under construction.

Different groups (industry organizations, spectrum user associations, lobbyists, and such) were asked to donate liquor and cash to finance the bash. But it got kind of sticky once the media and the "watchdogs" got wind of the affair.

What was to be a "friendly thank you, good-bye and wish you well" got embarrassingly messy. The *Center for Media Education* publicly called it "...sleeping with the vested interests ...the kind of behavior we expect the Clinton administration to stop." Everyone ran for cover. Even the FCC's ethics officer is now investigating.

We heard that one \$200 corporate check was ultimately returned. Another report said one industry group sent over a case of liquor "...although it only contained one bottle" the value of which was under the limits of the guidelines.

Everyone participating apparently thought the party was O.K. since Sikes no longer would be a government regulator. Such is life in the agency arena.

● *The retesting by W5YI coordinated VE teams of twenty amateurs who were originally examined by ARRL VE teams in Waterville, New York, a year ago continues.*

The League turned over the

questionable January, February and March 1992 test session paperwork to the FCC once the irregularities were disclosed. All examinees have until February 11th to be re-examined.

● **Whatever happened to KV4FZ?** He is presently under a form of house arrest known as "home detention." He can still go to work (he has a broadcast "talk" show) and to church, but no social functions.

Herb Schoenbohm, KV4FZ of the U.S. Virgin Islands (convicted of illegally using telephone access codes) was originally sentenced to a month imprisonment in a federal penitentiary to be followed by a month of home detention and \$5,000 fine.

That sentence was changed by the court to 2 months home detention, 2 years probation and a \$5,000 fine when new evidence was supposedly discovered. KV4FZ contends, however, that the government is withholding that evidence which the court has ordered them to produce.

An arbitration judge has ordered Herb's police department (communications officer) job reinstated with back pay if the matter is eventually resolved in KV4FZ's favor during the appeal process.

● **How big will interactive TV be?** The financial community apparently thinks "interactivity" and the marriage of the television, the telephone and the computer to be the coming thing! The only two publicly traded interactive TV stocks (ACTV and the Interactive Network) have doubled in price ...ACTV in two weeks, the Interactive Network in three months. Other firms (IBM, Call Interactive, TV Answer, Arbitron and a program called the Game Challenge) are also in the picture.

● **You can forget "Earthwinds" at least for a while!** The long

awaited round-the-world balloon launch finally took place in Reno, Nevada. But it didn't last long. Its ballast balloon crashed into a mountain and was damaged. The crew let out the helium and safely landed.

Two amateurs on board, KB7JGM and RV3DD were to use ham radio in conjunction with GPS (Global Positioning System) to report their location every half hour on 28.303 MHz.

● **Grammar checking comes to word processing.** WordPerfect Corporation has purchased a controlling interest in San Francisco-based *Reference Software International*. They now bundle their Grammatik grammar checker with WordPerfect. Plans are to eventually develop "intelligent word processing" to do such complex tasks as indexing, abstracting and re-writing.

● **Ever have trouble finding something in a super market?** VideOcart is a combination radio receiver, TV and computer with 2 MB of memory installed on the front end of a shopping cart. You can look at a shelf-by-shelf map of a grocery aisle by pushing its buttons.

A profile of each store is stored in VideOcart which is activated by infrared cells mounted above each aisle. When a shopper passes under one of the cells, VideOcart displays animated ads, weekly specials and product maps for that aisle.

Even "paperless coupons" can be requested for use at the checkout. VideOcart's files are electronically updated by signals from a low-powered radio transmitter. More than 200 grocery stores - as well as Toys R Us and Walmart - are using the high-tech system.

● **Why does Japan have more than a million ham operators when**

their population is one fourth that of the United States?

First: their fourth class no-code "Telephone" license allows 10 watts on all bands (including 80, 40, 15 and 10 meter HF) and secondly, the operator license is issued for lifetime. The 144, 430 and 1200 MHz bands are the most popular. Not many holders of the Telephone Class upgrade - primarily because there is little space for a low band HF antenna in Japan.

Seemingly in violation of ITU amateur service guidelines, Japan allows amateur operation below 30 MHz without manual telegraphy knowledge on the basis that it doesn't cause interference other radio services.

The JARL (Japan Amateur Radio League) administers the fourth class license exam at the conclusion of a course of study.

● **Looking for a 1993 calendar for your ham shack?** KB1T Radio Specialties has a (full color photograph) **1993 Ham Photo Calendar**. Large wall-size: 11"x22" unfolded, spiral-bound. Cost is: \$12.95 plus \$2.50 shipping. (Box 1015, Amherst, NH 03031. Tel. 603/673-4100.)

● Morse code is an international telegraphy language. The ILERA (**International League of Esperantist Radio Amateurs**) wants Esperanto to be the international voice language. You can sometimes hear them operating on 7066 kHz. (ILERA, Barry Foreman, GØEXS, 10 Wilmington Close, Brighton, E. Sussex BN1 8JE England UK)

● A Norfolk, Virginia, FCC bulletin reported that **a ham radio operator (no name listed) was recently found jamming a marine radio frequency** over most of the east coast. The ham was using a 5-watt transmitter to retransmit a local FM radio station from his ham shack to his house a few feet away. A enduring weather pattern set up the unusual propagation.

ARRL BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

I asked the League's Executive Vice President **Dave Sumner, K1ZZ**, about three matters that were acted on at the ARRL Board Meeting held in Jacksonville, Florida on January 15 and 16. These are:

- (1.) The action the Board took on HF Digital operation,
- (2.) The Resolution on the continuation of CW proficiency when the Amateur operation takes place below 30 MHz and;
- (3.) Legislation which would legalize into law the important activities of Amateur Radio operators.

Here is his response:

(Item No. 1)

"The revised recommendations of the *Digital Committee*, developed following its September 26 meeting with the five representatives of the STA participants, were presented to the Board in the form of a motion by West Gulf Director **Tom Comstock, N5TC**, Board liaison to the Digital Committee."

[Editor's Note: The Digital Committee's revised recommendations were published in our Oct. 15, 1992, W5YI Report. Basically they endorsed fully-automatic, unattended operation on the IARU "packet priority" segments and semi-automatic operation in all other digital sub-bands. The "packet priority" sub-bands included a small 160 meter segment at the low end of the band plus 3.620-3.625, 10.140-10.150, 14.095-14.112, 18.105-18.110, 21.090-21.125, 24.925-24.930 and 28.120-28.189 MHz. Recognizing the propagation problems likely on the higher frequencies during the coming sunspot low, the Digital Committee also requested 10 KHz for HF Packet at 7.100-7.110 MHz on the 40 meter band. They also wanted the AX.25 convention deleted as the sole protocol requirement and replaced with the ability to use any accepted digital format.]

"An amendment was offered by Dakota Director **Howard Mark, W0OZC**, which:

- a.) eliminated the proposed automatic control sub-band on 160 meters;
- b.) narrowed the proposed subbands on 40 and 15 meters, to reduce the impact on Novices and Technicians; and

- c.) deleted provisions for so-called "semi-automatic operation" which, under the committee's recommendations, would have been permitted anywhere that digital operation was authorized.

"The amendment was favored by 12 of the 15 Directors, and was adopted; only Directors Butler (Southeastern), Heyn (Southwestern), and Comstock opposed the amendment. The amended motion was adopted by voice vote.

"The amended motion, as adopted, reads as follows:

"To implement the recommendations of the Digital Committee, the General Counsel is instructed to file a petition for rule making with FCC seeking rules changes to permit amateur stations to operate under automatic control while using data emissions in the 10 meter and longer wavelength bands. The rules to be sought shall have the following provisions:

"1) Consistent with the frequency privileges and other operating limitations applicable to the license class of the operator, any amateur station may be operated under automatic control using any accepted protocol for data transmissions within the frequency segments specified below. Such stations must be equipped with means to limit transmissions to no more than 5 minutes in the event of equipment malfunction or interruption of contact with another station, and may not transmit third party communications except as specified below.

"2) Such automatic control operation shall be permitted only in the 6 meter and shorter wavelength bands, and in the following segments of the 10 meter or longer wavelength bands: 3.620-3.635, 7.100-7.105 [not 7.110 as proposed by the Digital Committee], 10.140-10.150, 14.095-14.0995, 14.1005-14.112 [Note the absence of 14.0995-14.1005 due to a DX beacon at 14.100], 18.105-18.110, 21.090-21.100 [Not 21.125 as proposed], 24.925-24.930, and 28.120-28.189 MHz.

"3) Stations operating under automatic control in these bands and band segments shall be permitted to transmit third party communications using any accepted protocol provided that the retransmitted messages must originate at a station that is being locally or remotely controlled.

"Further, the General Counsel is instructed to seek an extension, until resolution of this rule making proceeding, of the existing *Special Temporary Authority* for automatically controlled HF data communication by

designated stations."

"The proposed band segments conform to the IARU Region 2 band plan adopted in Curacao last September, and avoid the problems that led some amateurs to oppose the League's earlier petition, RM-7248, which was withdrawn before being considered by FCC."

[Editor's Note: We telephoned Ed Juge, W5TOO, of Burleson, Texas, Chairman of the ARRL Digital Committee to get his views on the Board's action. We were very surprised to learn that Ed - a long term executive at Tandy/Radio Shack headquartered in nearby Fort Worth - has now resigned from the Digital Committee.

This is due to the proposed spinoff Tandy announced of its manufacturing operation into a separate and new public company called TE Electronics, Inc. Juge has gone to work for TE Electronics in the area of corporate level marketing. He said he would assist the new Digital Committee Chairman during the transition period.

He told us he was "...pleased to see things moving ahead on this issue. I appreciate the board's concern for undue QRM to the non-digital world but I am also concerned that no separate authorization for semi-automatic operation may be perceived as overloading those automatic band segments. I would expect the Board's action, in my opinion, to encourage many other petitions to the FCC for alternate plans. I had hoped that the amateur community could get behind one petition which would have increased chances for easier passage through the FCC. Any way you cut it, this is a very difficult issue for everyone."]

(Item No. 2)

"The following resolution, which is pretty self-explanatory, was offered by Hudson Director **Steve Mendelsohn, WA2DHF**, and adopted by the Board:

"**WHEREAS:** Proficiency in Morse Code has been an International requirement for many decades, and

"**WHEREAS:** Morse Code is the international language that fosters communications between peoples with differing languages, and

"**WHEREAS:** Knowledge of the Morse code has, for decades, proven to be of positive value to the Amateur Radio Service worldwide; now therefore, The American Radio Relay League strongly

"**REAFFIRMS** its continued support for a demonstrated proficiency in the International Morse code as

part of the license requirements below 30 MHz, and

"**DECLARES** its desire that demonstrated proficiency in the International Morse code should remain in the ITU rules as a requirement for all ham operation below 30 MHz, and hereby

"**INSTRUCTS** all ARRL representatives to continue to insist before all national and international bodies that there be no modification of the present Morse code proficiency requirement for operation below 30 MHz."

(Item No 3)

"New England Director **Bill Burden, WB1BRE**, offered the following motion, which was adopted:

"Our Washington team is authorized to seek formal recognition by the 103rd Congress of the role played by the Amateur Radio Service as a national resource in preparation for and relief from disasters, and for technical progress in electronics.

"You may remember that Section 10 of Public Law 100-594, signed by President Reagan on November 3, 1988, declared that it was "...the sense of the Congress that:

"(1) it strongly encourages and supports the Amateur Radio Service and its emergency communications efforts; and

"(2) Government agencies shall take into account the valuable Contributions made by amateur radio operators when considering actions affecting the Amateur Radio Service."

"Our pursuit of the *Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act*, H.R.73/S.1372, in the 102nd Congress is well known. At its November 14, 1992 meeting, the Executive Committee felt it was "...undesirable to resume the initiative until it becomes more clear what sort of a relationship the League will enjoy with the FCC under the new administration." Accordingly, the question of seeking reintroduction of H.R.73/S.1372 in the 103rd Congress was deferred.

"The Board's action last week was not aimed at reintroducing the *Spectrum Protection Act* at this time. Rather, it seeks to expand on the theme of Public Law 100-594 to ensure that the new Congress is on record as recognizing the real value of the Amateur Radio Service."

[Editor's note: A very interesting action in that Senator - now Vice President - Al Gore was the Senate's main champion of compelling the FCC to reallocate alternate and equal spectrum in the future event spectrum was taken from the Amateur Service.]