

# 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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## CLUB CALL SIGN PROGRAM IN JEOPARDY

It is beginning to appear that the FCC's Club and Military Recreation Call Sign program is not going to be established after all. At least not in the way it was originally proposed by the Commission. This rule making looked toward using volunteer Call Sign Administrators from the private sector to issue call signs to Amateur Service clubs and military recreation ham stations.

It has been more than 15 years since the FCC issued club call signs. In 1978, the Commission completely revamped its Call Sign Assignment System to provide for only "systematically issued" call signs from one of four call sign groupings. By systematic, the Commission meant in strict alphabetical order by call sign group. Also eliminated at the same time were secondary, repeater, military recreation and club call signs.

As part of the *Telecommunications Authorization Act of 1992*, Congress approved legislation authorizing the FCC "...for purposes of providing club and military recreation station call signs, to use the voluntary, uncompensated and unreimbursed services of Amateur Radio organizations..." The ARRL is said to have been the driving force behind this legislation. In any event, the League not only wanted the availability of club call signs reinstated, but they also wanted to be the sole Call Sign Administrator as well.

Responding to the legislation, on May 11, 1993 the FCC adopted Rules authorizing the use of volunteer organizations to assign club call

signs. The plural terminology used in the Order (the FCC reference was to "organizations" and "administrators") clearly indicated that the Commission wanted to consider multiple groups to grant club calls. The Order also contained new Part 97 Rules detailing the qualifications needed by private sector organization necessary to qualify for Club and Military Recreation Call Sign Administrator status

These requirements included a necessity to be tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, an organizational membership that included at least one percent of the amateur operators licensed by the FCC and a willingness on the part of the organization to provide the club call signs at no charge to applicants.

On June 1st, the FCC released a *Public Notice* entitled "Call for Club and Military Recreation Station Call Sign Administrators." The purpose of the bulletin was to notify the public that the Commission was now accepting applications from organizations wishing to issue club call signs. The Commission authorized their Private Radio Bureau to execute agreements with qualified organizations. The PRB began accepting requests beginning July 26th on a first come first serve basis.

Each organization requesting designation as an administrator had to provide the information requested in new Section §97.29 (a) through (k).

Additionally, the organization had to include a listing of the twenty-six possible call sign blocks (NA through NZ) in descending order of preference. Each approved administrator would be assigned the first available block of call signs based on its preference listing. It thus became important for the applicant to get their request in to the FCC as early as possible on the morning of July 26th if a specific call sign block was wanted.

### **Issuing club call sign**

Once approved Call Sign Administrators would issue a (2-by-3 letter format) call sign and send the call sign document to the FCC in Gettysburg, ready for their endorsement and mailing. The call sign would consist of the FCC-approved two letter prefix (NA to NZ), the appropriate numerical geographical area designator (1 through 0) and three suffix call letters. Part 97.17(f) says **the FCC** will not grant any request for a specific call sign. But it was assumed that private call sign administrators would be able to issue any combination of suffix letters, however, as long as the correct prefix was used. This turned out to be an incorrect assumption. In addition, Section §97.29 directed Call Sign Administrators to provide certain other services to the public, the call sign applicant and the FCC.

Call signs are a most important part of ham radio - and certain call letter combinations are actively sought by Amateurs. So it was baffling that the entire Club and Military Station Call Sign System was adopted by the FCC without the usual (and time consuming) notice and comment rule making.

The FCC's answer was that ".....the amended rules are minor and non-controversial and a subject in which the public is not likely to be interested. We find, therefore, for good cause, that compliance with the notice and comment procedure of the Administrative Procedure Act is unnecessary." The new rules, however, were to soon become very controversial!

### **Multiple organizations apply...**

Not only did the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) submit an application to become a Call Sign Administrator, but so did five other organizations: The *Quarter Century Wireless Association* (QCWA), the *National Amateur Radio Association* (NARA), the *W5YI Group* and the *Southeastern Repeater Association* (SERA) all applied. QCWA and NARA wanted to issue call signs to its affiliated clubs, and W5YI to schools and the Boy Scouts. SERA saw an opportunity to make an "NR" call signs available to repeater users. ARRL, as the only Club Call Sign Administrator, wanted

to issue them to everyone. All groups claimed to be qualified - or were in the process of becoming qualified.

Then the issue turned contentious. ARRL issued a press release calling the other groups "less qualified entities" who "...have filed applications that appear to be defective in one or more respects." On August 5th, the ARRL filed a formal (24-page) opposition (with very unfriendly wording) to the requests of the other four organizations who wished to serve as call sign administrators. The League cited what they thought were the shortcomings of the other submissions and reminded the Commission that there was no requirement that more than one administrator be named -- nor any advantage to be gained in doing so.

The ARRL's formal opposition charged that W5YI-VEC (although non-profit) had not yet received its 501(c)(3) tax exempt status from the IRS and, further, its VE's could not qualify as members of an organization. QCWA was characterized as having 501(c)(7) "pleasure and recreation" status rather than the required 501(c)(3). ARRL said NARA did not meet the membership requirement of one percent of all licensed amateurs ...and neither did SERA. SERA was the first to file since it faxed its application to the Commission before it opened for business on July 26th. ARRL charged "...a facsimile signature is insufficient and not acceptable for filing." ARRL also seemed to have its own definition of what constituted a "member."

A Green Bay, Wisconsin repeater group's request to be a Call Sign Administrator was received a couple of weeks later, but admitted in their request they did not have the required membership, thus was never seriously considered.

On August 16, 1993, NARA filed comments defending its qualifications and included a *Motion to Strike* the ARRL's document as being untimely and unauthorized by the Commission's rules. The W5YI-VEC, Inc. filed a similar document August 18, 1993

### **Surprise! "Vanity" call sign legislation!**

While all this was happening, Congress was back at what they do best. They legislated another provision for distinctive amateur call signs that caught everyone by complete surprise! Neither the ARRL, the general amateur community ...nor the FCC knew it was coming! (We reported on this occurrence in our August 15th issue.)

Basically, due to the efforts of one (incredibly persistent) Amateur, Congress slipped in a provision for special ham call signs - provided the recipient footed the bill. This was right up the Administration's

alley. They were looking for ways to reduce the federal deficit and pay for increased services.

Essentially, the Amateur (Jim Wills, N5HCT of Tyler, Texas) got his Congressman to add only 5 words (23 letters) to Pres. Clinton's much-heralded Deficit Reduction Plan. The words, "Amateur vanity call-signs \$7" appear in the *Schedule of Regulatory Fees* (the so-called "User Fees") that the FCC could "...assess and collect annually in advance for a number of years not to exceed the term of the license held by the payor." Now the Government had a way to get reimbursed to issue special Amateur call signs - one of the big stumbling blocks of the process. There is still confusion today as to whether the FCC or the General Treasury gets the fee.

Four days after Clinton signed the *Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993*, the club call sign matter took another new twist. On August 14th, speaking to the FCC forum at the Huntsville, Alabama hamfest and ARRL National Convention, Ralph Haller, Chief, Personal Radio Bureau said he expected the Call Sign Administrator program to be a "stopgap procedure" lasting possibly 18 months or so until the FCC could get their newly-authorized activities of issuing preferred "vanity" call signs for a fee operational.

During early September, each of the organizations wishing to be a club call sign administrator was contacted by the FCC's Personal Radio Branch. The FCC explained that their position had changed because of the new vanity call sign legislation. It was now anticipated that the "Club Call Sign Administrator" program would be eventually folded into the newer "Vanity" call sign program and operated by the FCC themselves.

Furthermore, during any interim period in which the Call Sign Administrator program might be operational, call signs would be required to be issued in strict alphabetical sequence. SERA immediately withdrew its application. On September 22, 1993 the W5YI-VEC, Inc., through its attorney, hand delivered a letter to the Personal Radio Branch in essence agreeing to placing the entire program on "hold" until such time as the Commission's final action on the "vanity" call sign issue is determined.

An advantage of having club call signs folded into the vanity call sign program would be that the FCC would be able to issue a specific call sign rather than a "systematic" (non-specific) call letters. It was thought that most clubs would prefer a specific combination of letters and would be willing to pay for them.

Our understanding now, is that the entire matter of club and vanity call signs will soon become the subject of a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* and the public will be given a chance to comment on the path that Amateur station call signs should take.

## AWARD PRESENTED TO HAM RADIO OPERATOR FOR ASSISTANCE IN FALSE DISTRESS CASE

On October 13, 1993, Richard M. Smith, Chief, Field Operations Bureau, FCC, presented amateur radio operator **Melvin I. Woods, KN4ZT**, of Annandale, Virginia, with a bronze plaque and a letter of appreciation signed by Commission Chairman Quello. The award was made to recognize Mr. Woods for the outstanding assistance he rendered to the Commission and the U.S. Coast Guard in solving a major false distress case in the Amateur Radio Service. The award ceremony, which included presentation of the U.S. Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award to KN4ZT by Rear Admiral William J. Ecker, U.S. Coast Guard, was held at the Coast Guard's Headquarters in Washington, DC.

On the evening of August 7, 1992, fraudulent distress communications were heard on the 20 meter ham band frequency of 14.313 MHz. A sinking vessel was reported off the Turks and Caicos Islands, British West Indies. The hoax distress incident posed potential threats to the safety of responding Coast Guard personnel and caused the agency to divert crucial equipment and personnel to conduct needless search and rescue operations.

During the evening, Mr. Woods heard the false transmissions and contacted the FCC watch officer with important information regarding the suspected location of the transmitter being used in the hoax incident. Woods also later cooperated with the FCC in conducting tests with the suspect equipment and measuring the effects of those tests on the operation of his amateur radio station.

Chairman Quello's letter stated that Mr. Woods' help and cooperation was undoubtedly a key factor in the swift and successful resolution of the case and conviction of the perpetrator. On May 12, 1993, **Jorge Mestre, NS3K**, of Fairfax, Virginia, was sentenced in U.S. District Court, Alexandria, Virginia, for knowingly and willfully communicating false distress signals in violation of 14 U.S.C. §88(c). He received one year probation with 60 days home confinement, 200 hours of community service time and agreed to permanently surrender his FCC amateur radio license, dispose of his amateur equipment and make immediate restitution of \$50,000 to the Coast Guard.

Mr. Woods served in the U.S. Navy from 1952 to 1976 and is a former Senior Chief Radioman and Chief Electronics Technician. After retirement from the Navy, he was employed as a Senior Principal Engineer at Computer Sciences Corporation, Falls Church, VA, until 1989. Mr. Woods received his Novice Amateur Operator License in 1953 and held K7CMZ between 1958 and 1969. After a 22 year period of inactivity, he returned to the amateur radio hobby in 1991.

• The winner of the **1993 Nobel Prize for physics, Princeton University's Dr. Joseph H. Taylor**, attributes his success in science to his early involvement in amateur radio, according to published news accounts. Taylor (Amateur radio call sign K1JT), who shared this year's award with his former student and current Princeton colleague, Dr. Russell A. Hulse, told reporters that he developed his scientific skills as an Amateur Radio enthusiast while a student at Moores-town Friends Academy in New Jersey.

He earned a bachelor's degree from Haverford College in 1963 and a doctorate degree in astronomy from Harvard University. The Nobel committee awarded this year's physics prize to Taylor and Hulse for their study of the gigantic gravitational forces exerted by pulsars. Their results are thought by scientists to confirm many of the predictions of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity.

• According to a widely distributed letter, **Glenn A Baxter, K1MAN, of Belgrade Lakes, Maine, has "...decided to go ahead with a lawsuit against the ARRL** regarding the 'K1MAN Newsletter' issue." Baxter contends that the ARRL accepted a small classified advertisement for his newsletter which they later decided to reject. A \$21.00 refund check was sent to Baxter which he returned with a request for the ARRL to honor their original acceptance. The League's attorney, **Chis Imlay, N3AKD**, now claims that the ad was never accepted to begin with and that the ARRL has no intention of running the ad for Baxter's publication. K1MAN claims that "...this policy is inconsistent with the very purpose of the American Radio Relay League - if not illegal suppression of free speech."

K1MAN is manager of the *International Amateur Radio Network* and produces a daily bulletin service which is broadcast over the 20 and 80 meter ham band.

• Canada has been reporting record Amateur Radio growth since they restructured their service in 1990 to include a "Basic" (no code) Certificate. **The RAC (Radio Amateurs of Canada) News Service says there are now 41,014 Amateurs in Canada - up 62% since April 1990.** "Nearly 72% of all amateur operators have obtained the highest level of qualification. In 1987 more than 60% of all amateur operators were over 50 years of age. In 1993 the percentage dropped to 54%. In the under 30 years of age bracket, the percentage of amateurs has increased from 5.5% to 9.6%.

• The ISC (*Industry and Science Canada* - Canada's telecommunications regulatory agency) and the RAC have established the Canadian Amateur Radio Advisory Board (CARAB) to review topics of mutual interest.

• Canadian amateurs believe that they will lose 220-222 MHz due to what is being called an "ISC harmonization policy" with the United States FCC. RAC says the ISC is "...caving in to FCC pressure to 'go along' with U.S. plans for 220-222 along the international border.

• *The New York Times* reports that since there is no phone service or mail delivery in eastern Bosnia, **a network of ham radio operators is used to unite separated family members.** Generators and car batteries are sometimes used to power radio sets due to a lack of regular electricity. The Serbs have their own ham operators who often try to interrupt the health and welfare traffic by jamming the ham bands.

An Oct. 7th *New York Times* article tells how amateur radio operators in rural India have established a communications network to help earthquake victims. The nearest operational telephone is twenty-five miles away! More than 120,000 people have been left homeless by the earthquake; more than 10,000 dead.

### AMATEUR RADIO CALL SIGNS

...issued as of the first of October 1993:

Radio District	Gp. "A" Extra	Gp. "B" Advan.	Gp. "C" Tech/Gen	Gp. "D" Novice
0 (*)	AA0PB	KG0IU	N0XZG	KB0LMJ
1 (*)	AA1HM	KD1RL	N1QJK	KB1BEA
2 (*)	AA2PV	KF2RN	N2WRJ	KB2QPD
3 (*)	AA3FY	KE3KE	N3QKZ	KB3AZA
4 (*)	AD4LB	KR4EU	(***)	KE4GPS
5 (*)	AB5PX	KJ5QV	(***)	KC5DMN
6 (*)	AB6XG	KN6TA	(***)	KE6CGD
7 (*)	AA7ZE	KI7SG	(***)	KB7YZF
8 (*)	AA8MP	KG8EM	(***)	KB8PZH
9 (*)	AA9IN	KF9RR	N9VDL	KB9IVM
N.Mariana Is.	AH0V	AH0AO	KH0CF	WH0AA
Guam	NH2V	AH2CT	KH2HM	WH2ANH
Johnston Is.	AH3D	AH3AD	KH3AG	WH3AAG
Midway Is.		AH4AA	KH4AG	WH4AAH
Hawaii	(**)	AH6NE	WH6PS	WH6CQY
Kure Is.			KH7AA	
Amer. Samoa	AH8H	AH8AF	KH8AX	WH8ABB
Wake W.Peale	AH9C	AH9AD	KH9AE	WH9AAI
Alaska	(**)	AL7PH	WL7NM	WL7CHI
Virgin Is.	WP2B	KP2CC	NP2GS	WP2AHU
Puerto Rico	(**)	KP4VS	(***)	WP4MKY

\*=All 2-by-1 "W" prefixed call signs have been allocated in all radio districts. AA-AK block 2x2 calls are next assigned.

\*\*=All Group A (2-by-1) format call signs have been assigned in Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico.

\*\*\*=Group "C" (1-by-3) call signs have now run out in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and Puerto Rico call districts. Technician/General class amateurs are now being assigned 2-by-3 Group "D" format call signs.

[Source: FCC, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania]

## SAREX, STS-58 COUNTDOWN DELAYED TWICE

The countdown clock for the STS-58 flight of the Space Shuttle Columbia began on Monday, October 11 at the T-43 hour mark. Supposedly the launch was to be on Thursday morning, October 14th at 10:53 a.m. EDT with landing at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. on October 28th. The mission was scheduled to last 14 days, the longest Shuttle flight in history.

But things did not go as planned. The launch of the STS-58 Life Science mission after being held for almost 2 hours at the nine minute mark, due to unfavorable weather conditions at Kennedy Space Center was finally scrubbed at T-31 seconds due to range safety computer problems. The flight was rescheduled for the following day (October 15). But that didn't happen either.

A communications receiver problem was detected which caused that launch attempt to be scrubbed too. It seems one of 2 S-Band Transponders used for air-to-ground communications suffered a solid state failure in the receiver unit. Also contributing to the delay was again the lack of favorable weather conditions. NASA engineers changed out the transponder over the weekend ...in plenty of time for the next mission opportunity, Monday morning, Oct. 18, at 9:53 a.m. EDT.

The 3rd launch attempt of STS-58 was successful. The Space Shuttle Columbia lifted off just ten seconds inside the scheduled window, the 75th space mission from Launch Complex 39. [NASA reported lift off as: 10:53:10.066 am EDT. How do you divide a second in a thousand parts? And who needs that precise a time anyway?] The minimal delay was due to a stray U.S. Navy aircraft in the range safety restricted zone. Landing in now scheduled for Nov. 1 at 11:22 am EDT

Columbia's STS-58 primary mission is the second spacelab flight dedicated to life science research. The seven crew members are conducting a series of experiments to acquire more knowledge on how the human body adapts to the microgravity environment of space. Columbia's seven-member astronaut crew are the operators as well as subjects of the medical tests.

Three of the seven member crew are licensed ham operators, Pilot **Richard Searfoss, KC5CKM** (his ham ticket arrived just before flight time), Mission Specialist **Bill McArthur KC5ACR**, and Payload Specialist **Marty Fettman KC5AXA**.

Amateur Radio frequencies for the mission include: voice downlink (World-wide) 145.550 MHz, voice uplinks 144.910, 144.930, 144.950, 144.970, 144.990 MHz, voice uplink (Europe only) 144.700, 144.750, 144.800 MHz, and packet uplink: 144.490 MHz.

SAREX operations started on Tuesday October 19 with a crystal clear, horizon-to-horizon radio check with the Johnson Space Center radio club, W5RRR. Since then, several hams have reported making general QSO

packet radio contacts with the Space Shuttle Columbia as it passed over the continental U.S.

Crew members began the Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment contacts with schools in the U.S. and France on their second day in space as they circled the Earth every 90 minutes at an altitude of 155 nautical miles. Children from more than a dozen schools in Arkansas, Texas, Ohio, Missouri, Arizona, Tennessee, New Hampshire, Kentucky, Colorado, North Carolina, Indiana, and France either got to talk - either direct or by telebridge (a radio/telephone lashup) - with the astronauts as they raced overhead.

School group contacts have occurred fast and furiously. On Wednesday October 20, the Russellville High School in Russellville, Arkansas had an excellent horizon-to-horizon contact with Shuttle Pilot Rick Searfoss, KC5CKM. On October 21, the crew had a very busy SAREX day with 6 school group contacts scheduled. The Red Springs High School in Red Springs, NC and the Bloomfield School in Bloomfield, MO each had more than 10 students ask questions. In addition, the Alamo Heights JHS in San Antonio, TX and the Lloyd Ferguson Elementary School in League City, TX had several students talk to astronauts John Blaha and Rick Searfoss, KC5CKM, respectively.

As we go to press, the SAREX team is still chatting with school groups. As a result, general QSO operations are somewhat limited over the continental U.S. since most of the school contacts are direct.

The SAREX packet radio "robot" was activated last week, logging packet contacts and transmitting STS-58 mission status messages as packet beacons. Some examples of SAREX packet transmissions received by KD2BD in New Jersey on 145.550 MHz:

W5RRR-1>N3KYP <I S0 R0>: #25-is your STS-58 SAREX QSO number.

W5RRR-1>QRZ <UI>: #23-N3KYP N2NRD WA2N W8RRE KA3MUF KG3N KQ4AV KB8KPV KD4UPF KG5JJ N3KTC KB8MBE N9NJK N8NYU AA9FA WB0BBR K0BJ KF2T W7US KD6BOG KD6MKS WD6GYU W6BME.

W5RRR-1>QSL <UI>: WA2N/21 N8NYU/12 AA9FA/11 WB0BBR/10 KD6BOG/4 WD6GYU/2

The ARRL has received numerous reports from amateurs who have already had successful 2-way packet contacts with the Shuttle during this flight. QSL cards should be sent to ARRL, SAREX STS-58 QSL, 225 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111 USA. To receive a QSL, include the QSO information (e.g. date, time in UTC, frequency, mode) which documents the contact or listener report. In addition you must also include a SASE using a large, business sized envelope if you wish to receive a card. No cards will be distributed without the proper postage affixed or sufficient IRCs included. Please expect a lengthy (6-10 month) wait after the mission to receive your QSL card. Development of a SAREX QSL card can be a very lengthy process. (Thanks NASA, AMSAT, KB2BD)

## UPDATE ON CHARGING A NOVICE TEST FEE

You will remember that we wrote about a controversy concerning charging a test fee for the Novice Amateur Radio license examinations in our September 1st newsletter.

As of July 1st, ...and at the request of both the ARRL and W5YI-VEC, Novice Class operator license examinations were folded into the VEC System.

The FCC *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* on the matter provided for expense reimbursement (a test fee.) In response to the NPRM, the ARRL said it was taking no position on the addition of a test fee for Novice Class examinations. The League also asked the Commission if a VEC could waive the fee for a year.

The FCC responded in the *Report and Order* (adopted May 3, 1993) to that question by stating that test fees could not be waived when a VEC is on the "annual-method" of expense reimbursement accounting. The ARRL - and for that matter, every VEC - use that accounting method. Our understanding is that the annual method of expense reimbursement accounting was established at the request of the League in 1984.

In any event, the ARRL Directors (not the ARRL-VEC) made a decision not to charge any test fees for Element 2 (the Novice 30 question written exam) and Element 1A (5 wpm code) ...even if the code test was taken after passing the codeless Technician requirements. This decision conflicted with the FCC Order.

The W5YI-VEC contacted its Washington DC attorney to determine if test fees for the Novice Elements could indeed be waived. We were counseled that the Order - which was specifically approved by the FCC Commissioners and had the force of law - was clear. No waivers of the exam fee are permitted since under the annual-method of expense reimbursement accounting, you must charge everyone the same test fee "...because it is premised on accepting reimbursement from each examinee at each session throughout the year." A quotation from the FCC Order.

Thus you have a situation where all VECs - except the League charge a test fee for exam Elements 1(A) and 2 - a fee that they were directed to charge since all VECs utilize the annual method of expense accounting. This had led to much confusion (and a PR problem for most VECs) since it appears to the uninformed that some VECs are improperly charging a test fee to Novices - and to No-Code Techs who upgrade.

In an attempt to resolve the impasse, our Washington DC attorney filed a complaint on August 23rd with the Commission pointing out that it was not proper for VECs to pick and choose which FCC instructions with which they will comply. "The Com-

mission must act and act promptly to curtail the League's non-compliance with the clearly articulated requirements of the Volunteer Examination program."

### *Action taken by the Commission*

As part of its continuing oversight capacity, the FCC has now written each of its largest VECs and has asked them to respond to certain requested information by January 31, 1994. (Some questions edited to conserve space.)

- (1.) What is the total amount of the VEC out-of-pocket expense for Jan. 1, 1993, through Dec. 31, 1993. "These expenses should be shown in detail and itemized using generally accepted accounting practices."
- (2.) What is the total amount of fee reimbursements that the VEC received from examinees for this same period.
- (3.) Describe the procedures that are used to determine the amount of reimbursement fee that is charged the various examinees by the VEs and by the VEC and the sharing arrangement between the two.
- (4.) Was any examinee ever charged more than the actual out of pocket costs for preparing, administering or coordinating an examination.
- (5.) Do the VEs or the VEC charge a fee for preparing and administering examinations for some class(es) of license but not for others?

In addition, there were three questions concerning conflict of interest.

- (1.) If the VEs or VEC did not charge certain examinees a reimbursement fee, what was the funding source for the out-of-pocket expenses incurred?
- (2.) If fees fell short of expenses, how was the difference made up? In particular, was any difference funded in any way from publishing activities.
- (3.) Are the procedures that are used to determine the amount of reimbursement fee ...influenced in any way by any other organizational component.

The VECs also were directed to supply the names and station call signs of the ten most active VE teams during 1993 to the FCC. "These persons will also be requested to provide information similar to that requested from the VEC."

● **GETTING A SECOND CLASS RADIOTELEGRAPH LICENSE** - There seems to be a lot of interest on the part of Extra Class radio amateurs to obtain the Commercial Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate. **Here is what you need to know!**

(1.) Anyone who speaks English and is legally eligible for employment in the United States is eligible to apply for a Commercial Radio Operator license. §13.9(a). You need not be a U.S. citizen and there is no age requirement to be a Second (or Third) Class Radiotelegrapher. (You must be 21 years old to hold the First Class, however.)

(2.) Application for all Commercial Radio Operator licenses (excluding Restricted Radiotelephone Permits) must be made on FCC Form 756. (Available from us or the FCC telephone hotline: 202/632-FORM.) §13.9(c)

(3.) You may hold both a General Radiotelephone Operator License (GROL) and a Commercial Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate. You may not hold both a Marine Radio Operator Permit (MROP) or the Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit (RROP) and any class of Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate. (The MROP or RROP is cancelled when you qualify for a radiotelegraph operator's certificate.) You may hold only one class of Radiotelegraph Operator Certificate. §13.11

(4.) Commercial Radiotelegraph applications also must include the submission of two identical passport type photographs taken within the past six months. Photographs must be signed by the applicant on the front along the left side and be clearly visible. Photograph must be not less than 2X2 inches nor more than 2½X3 inches. Black and white or color photographs must contain clear full face, head and shoulders only. (Radiotelegraph Operator Certificates are the only Commercial Radio Operator licenses that require a photograph.) These photos (in a plain envelope with the word "photos" and your name on the outside) are stapled to the back of your application Form 756.

(5.) All Commercial Radiotelegraph Operator licenses are valid for a term of five years. Commercial Radiotelephone Operator licenses, however, are issued for the lifetime of the holder. §13.15

(6.) Applicants for the Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate must pass five examination elements: Telegraphy elements 1 and 2 and;

Written elements 1, 5 and 6. §13.203

**Telegraphy Element 1:** 16 code groups per minute. (16CG - sets of 3 to 6 random characters)

**Telegraphy Element 2:** 20 words-per-minute plain language text. (20PL - simulated maritime telegraphy message) (Examinee must transcribe message without error for a period of one minute. No other answer format is allowed. Sending test usually not required. All 43 characters must appear at least once in every examination (i.e. letters A-Z, numerals 0 to 9, punctuation period, comma, question mark, slant bar and prosigns: AR BT and SK.) Eighty characters in a row passes 16CG; one hundred passes 20PL. Numerals, punctuation and prosigns count as two characters. §13.207(c) and §13.209(d)

**Written Element 1:** Basic radio law and operating practice with which every maritime radio operator should be familiar. (24 multiple choice questions asked from a pool of 170 questions. 18 correct passes. Pool available now.)

**Written Element 5:** Radiotelegraph operating practice (50 multiple choice questions from a pool of at least 250 questions. Passing score: 38.) Pool scheduled for release in November.)

**Written Element 6:** Advanced Radiotelegraph (100 multiple choice questions from a published pool of at least 500 questions.) Passing score is 75. Pool scheduled for release in November.)

(7.) An applicant is awarded a **Proof-of-Passing Certificate** (PPC) when a passing grade is scored on an examination element. The PPC is the commercial equivalent of the *Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination* (CSCE) used in the Amateur Service and is valid for a 365 day term. The original (and never a copy) of the PPC must be attached to the Form 756 application. §13.211(e)

(8.) Examination credit is given for certain commercial and amateur radio operator licenses held. Marine Radio Operator Permit (MROP) or General Radiotelephone Operator License (GROL): Element 1  
Amateur Extra Class Operator License: Telegraphy Elements 1 and 2.

(Just passing the Amateur 20 wpm telegraphy Element 1(C) does NOT grant Commercial telegraphy Element 1 and 2 credit. You MUST hold an Amateur Extra Class Operator license.)

(9.) Handicapped applicants whose physical disabilities require a special telegraphy examination procedure must be accommodated. The accommodations provided are the same as in the amateur service. The telegraphy test elements must be passed in some way. There is no provision for an exemption without examination based on a physician certified severe handicap. §13.209(h)(i)

(10.) What about Amateur Extra Class Operators who have received an exemption for Telegraphy Element 1(C) based on a disability? Are they also given Commercial Telegraphy examination credit?

Person's with uncorrected physical handicaps which would prevent the performance of the duties of a radio operator at a station under emergency conditions involving the safety of life or property may still be issued a license if found qualified. **Such a license shall bear a restrictive endorsement precluding the performance of any operating duties other than installation, service and maintenance duties.** It would thus be important that the examiner's ascertain that the Commercial Radiotelegraph Operator examinee did indeed pass Element 1(C) in a normal manner. §13.7(c)(6)(i)

(11.) Unlike the Marine Radio Operator Permit and the General Radiotelephone Operator License, there are two fees associated with all Commercial Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificates: an examination fee and a separate processing fee. (There will eventually be two fees for the MROP and GROL once legislation is approved - probably later on this fall.) The examination fee is established by the COLEM (Commercial Radio License Examination Manager - the Commercial counterpart of the VEC. The W5YI Group's **National Radio Examiners** is a COLEM.)

By the way, our examination fee is the lowest: \$35.00 per license. (Other COLEMs charge up to \$60 per examination. An additional \$35.00 check must be attached to the FCC Form 756 to cover the processing fee.)

(12.) It appears that privatized testing for the Radiotelegraph operator licenses will begin in December. Are you interested? If so, drop us a line and we will tell you where to take the test. (We have approximately 250 test centers located in every state across the country ...and some overseas.)

## TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

■ **John Sculley, resigned as Apple Computer's CEO** on one day - and began work as CEO for Spectrum Information Technologies, Inc. the next. (Remember how Sculley sat next to Pres. Clinton's wife, Hilary, during January's state-of-the-union address?)

Spectrum's claim to fame is that it has developed technology that allows computer data to be sent over cellular telephone networks.

You could have made a lot of money if you had you known in advance about his job change plans. A month before Scully switched jobs, "Spectrum" stock was selling on the over-the-counter NASDAQ market near \$3.00. On October 15, it was \$11.125 - up more than triple! It jumped nearly 50% the day his appointment was announced. Apparently the financial community thinks Scully can do for Spectrum what he did for Apple ...take an upstart company to \$8 billion in sales.

Spectrum (with deteriorating sales and no earnings) has skyrocketed on news disclosures before. Its share value shot up above \$13.00 last May when the company mentioned that its licensing agreements with AT&T were worth hundreds of millions. When AT&T renounced that statement, the stock nose-dived down to \$3.00.

■ **The Electronic Information Superhighway is beginning to take shape!** The planned marriage of telephone and cable giants, Bell Atlantic and Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCI) could result in the biggest corporation in U.S. History!. The \$33 billion merger will result in a consolidation of the two wireline industries. Bell Atlantic valued each of TCI's 10 million cable subscribers at \$2,000 each. The result - if Congress allows it to stand - will be a company with huge cable, telephone, paging, cellular and programming capability. (It will own significant portions of the Discovery Channel, Turner Broadcasting, QVC, Home Sports Network, Family Channel ...and many more!) The new company will offer telephone service to TCI cable subscribers and interactive video over Bell Atlantic circuits. The combined Bell Atlantic/TCI will reach 42% of U.S. TV homes - far

greater than any current media company. Is this just the beginning? There is talk now about other major broadcast networks being taken over by telephone companies.

■ Zenith Electronics and a Seattle-based software firm have demonstrated **a novel way to access the Internet over cable channels.** A windows-based software package by Spry, Inc., provides PC users with an interface to "the network of networks."

The Internet links more than 10,000 computer networks and some 20 million users worldwide with electronic mail, newsletters, on-line communications and various databases. Its biggest problem, however, is that it is somewhat difficult to use.

The **Zenith HomeWorks System** consists of a PC gateway card and external RF modem that transmits and receives standard TV channels. The system transmits at .5 megabits per second with the capability of combining four .5 Mbps sub-channels into a single 2 Mbps data stream over a 6 MHz cable channel. The HomeWorks modem and software costs about \$650 and is designed to appeal to individuals as well as business users.

Spry is the first company to offer a proprietary software package which allows the public to access the Internet - but more are on the way! It won't be long before everyone will aboard!

■ **The Miami-based Interaxx Television Network, Inc., plans a 2,000 home test next Spring in Coral Gables, Florida.** The Interaxx Machine features the integration of the CD-ROM, a digital coder/decoder, phone modem, remote control and printer. The built in coder/decoder converts the digital video, graphics, text and audio stored on the CD-ROM (distributed quarterly) into analog RF output to a TV.

Basically, Interaxx downloads access codes and updates data that is stored on a CD-ROM in the "box." This interactive data could facilitate catalog shopping (40,000 items of merchandise), 150 interactive video games, ticket sales for local events, travel agency booking, computer dating, dozens of full-motion movies, personal stock portfolio tabulations ...and an almost an un-

limited number of other interactive services. The home modem would transmit purchase data back to programmers or merchandisers via phone lines.

Interaxx Television does not require the use of cable frequencies, instead using non-TV channel, out-of-band cable frequencies. Interaxx plans a public stock offering in mid-1994.

■ **WHATS\_UP.DOC** One of the more famous drawbacks of DOS is its eight-character limit (plus the .XXX extension) when naming a file (Macintosh users can create filenames almost as long as they like).

PC users try to come up with names of files that, while cryptic, can trigger their memories and help them to at least try to remember what was in them. But BARB11\_3.DOC doesn't tell everyone else that you wrote a letter to your cousin Barbara on November 3rd, or what the letter was about.

Fortunately, a new software package called IDF from Almax Software eliminates the eight-character barrier and expands it to 31. Trying to keep track of your contest logs, communications files and other important data becomes much easier when you can use almost a full sentence to describe the contents of the file. Now you can call up a directory and see: **FIELD\_DAY\_1993\_20\_METERS\_LOG.** Nothing cryptic about that. Retail price of IDF is \$59.95.

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## COMMISSION PROPOSES IMMEDIATE OPERATING AUTHORITY FOR NEW AMATEUR OPERATORS

At their regular agenda meeting on October 21st, the FCC Commissioners adopted a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* which seeks to extend temporary operating authority to persons who pass the examination for a new amateur operator license.

The item was presented to the Commissioners by Monty DePont, Senior Attorney in the FCC's Private Radio Bureau:

**DePont:** "Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. The item before you proposes to amend the rules to grant immediate temporary operating authority to persons who pass the examination for a new amateur operator license. The temporary license permits the successful examinee to enjoy operating privileges right away, without waiting several weeks until a full-term license is issued.

"As I present this item, the Space Shuttle Columbia is in orbit. There are three amateur operators aboard: Shuttle Pilot Dick Searfoss (KC5KCM), Mission Specialist Bill MacArthur (KC5ACR), and Payload Specialist Martin Fettman (KC5AXA). They are using amateur service frequencies to talk directly with students in schools throughout the United States and France. Shuttle Pilot Searfoss only recently passed the license examination. Fortunately, we were able to process his application and issue his license before the Columbia departed. In a prior instance, involving another astronaut however, the timing was not as good. That astronaut did not receive a license before liftoff.

"Although the astronaut examples are unusual, the immediate need for a license by a successful examinee is not unusual. An examinee studies hard for a license and is very eager to communicate with over 620,000 licensed United States amateur operators as well as millions of amateur operators in other countries.

"The amateur service is growing at a healthy rate. Last year, approximately 45,000 persons in the United States qualified for new amateur operator licenses. Even more operators will be licensed in 1993. After they pass their examinations however, they must wait four to eight weeks before they receive their licenses. The proposed temporary operating authority would be valid from the time the examination is passed and the application is filed, until the full-term license is received, or 120 days, whichever comes first.

"This proposal would provide excellent service to new members of the amateur service community. In addition, it would relieve the urgency to process speedily amateur applications, and would greatly reduce the large number of inquiries we receive con-

cerning the status of amateur applications. This proposal, therefore, provides benefits for both the public and the Commission. Accordingly, we recommend that you adopt this *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, and we request editorial privileges."

**FCC Commissioner Andrew Barrett:** "Mr. Chairman, I don't have any questions; I think it's a good item."

**FCC Commissioner Ervin Duggan:** "Mr. DePont, I was in Florida on Monday morning and I was at Disney World to make a speech. I left my hotel to go for a jog in the morning, and just across the lake I suddenly saw a plume of smoke and a bright spot in the sky. It looked close enough to touch, right on the other side of the water. I said to a group of workmen, 'What is that?' and they said it is the Space Shuttle Columbia. I replied that I had no idea we were so close, and they said it was fifty miles away. But it looked close enough to touch. I went on with my jog, but it was with a great sense of awe. I had no idea until you told us that three of our licensees were aboard."

**Acting FCC Chairman James Quello:** "This procedure, I think, will cut down on status inquiries and give the Commission staff more time to process the applications. It will speed full licensing. But Monty, someone tells me that you have been working for the Commission for over forty years. Is that right?"

**DePont:** "That's correct; I've been here a long time. I hope to continue to serve for a lot longer too."

**Commissioner Duggan:** "You must have come here when you were just a boy."

**Chairman Quello:** "Forty years is worthy of some mention. You've done a good job. It's not glamorous but it's very important - thank you."

[The Commissioners vote on the NPRM and it carries 3-0.]

The immediate temporary operating concept for new hams was first mentioned by the FCC's Personal Radio Branch Chief, John B. Johnston, at the Annual VEC Conference held in Gettysburg, PA on June 18th.

The temporary operating authority would be valid from the time the appropriate examinations are passed and a FCC Form 610 application is filed, to the time that the full-term license is received - not to exceed 120 days (6 months.) Under such authority, the new amateur operator could begin to operate during the waiting period while the license application is being

processed.

Currently, temporary operating privileges are only authorized to amateur operators who upgrade their class of license. An amateur operator who has passed the required examinations, and who has properly submitted to the volunteer examiners an application for the higher class of operator license, is immediately given the rights and privileges of the higher class license. A *Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE)* is the visible evidence of the applicant's operating authority until receipt of the license.

This procedure allows successful examinees to immediately enjoy their new privileges. That procedure, however, does not apply to those successful examinees who do not already hold a valid license. A new amateur radio operator must wait several weeks ...sometimes up to 3 months, for the application to be processed by the volunteer examiners, their VEC and the FCC at their Gettysburg facility and a license granted before commencing operation.

The proceeding was initiated by **Ray Adams, N4BAQ**, of the Western Carolina Amateur Radio Society/VEC, Inc. (WCARS) and assigned File No. RM-8288. He was one of the attendees at this year's VEC Conference and heard that the FCC was considering the new policy. He fired off a Petition for Rulemaking the week after he got back from the meeting. WCARS stated that by providing immediate temporary operating authority to all successful examinees, the Commission would be rendering a great service to new members of the amateur service community.

To better serve new ham operators and to increase productivity in the processing of license applications, the Commission proposed to extend temporary operating authority to all new successful examinees. The temporary operating authority, however, would not be available to any person whose license has been revoked or suspended or who has been involved in other enforcement proceedings before the Commission. The FCC, at its discretion, may cancel the temporary operating authority without a hearing, if the need for such action arises.

For purposes of over-the-air identification, the FCC proposed that stations operated by a new control operator under temporary operating authority shall use a temporary call sign determined by the person's initials and mailing address. The prefix for each call sign would be WZ.

The Commission said that this unique prefix would identify the station as a new amateur station awaiting a license. The prefix would be followed by the number of the Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) Region containing the testing site for the mailing address shown on the license application. The persons initials

and an indicator denoting the license class would follow the VEC Region number. There are 13 VEC Regions. VEC Region 1 through 9 are the same as the standard call sign area designators. Region 10, however, includes Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota. Region 11 is Alaska, Region 12 covers the Caribbean with Region 13 being Hawaii and the South Pacific.

Thus new No-Code Technician amateur John Q. Ham from Minnesota could use WZ1ØJQH/KT for a maximum of six months while awaiting license receipt. The Commission believes this system would be useful to the amateur community, yet practical to implement.

### HAM OPERATOR FINED BY FCC FOR INTERFERENCE TO SAFETY FREQUENCY

A Cedar Grove, NJ, amateur radio operator has been fined \$5,000 for transmitting an unauthorized signal on an aeronautical radio communications frequency.

On August 30, 1993, the New York Field Office of the FCC was notified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Jamaica, NY, that an unknown signal on 243 MHz had been observed at two separate airports in New Jersey for five days.

Using mobile automatic direction finding equipment (MADF), FCC engineers traced the source of the interference on Sept. 1 to a radio repeater installed at 2 Penn Plaza, New York, NY. Subsequent investigation determined the station to be an amateur radio repeater operated by **William A. Krause, WA2HDE**, an Advanced Class operator. The repeater was either operating off of its coordinated 224.66 MHz transmit frequency - or had a spurious emission at 243 MHz. We were unable to reach Mr. Krause for further information since he has an unlisted telephone.

The frequency 243 MHz is designated as the emergency and distress frequency for the use of radio beacons in the Marine and Aeronautical Radio Services. This frequency is monitored by a group of low-orbit satellites which are used for search and rescue operations. This SARSAT/COPAS system is maintained through a cooperative effort by the United States, Canada and Russia.

During the time Mr. Krause's radio was transmitting on 243 MHz, emergency radio communications could have been blocked over a large geographical area.

The action was taken as part of the Commission's continuing effort to preserve the integrity of the aeronautical radio system, a system that pilots depend on for safety while in flight.

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