

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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FCC Issues NPRM to Implement Regulatory Fees

The cost of acquiring and maintaining most FCC licenses will be going up sharply shortly! Even commercial earth stations and AM/FM/TV construction permits are included. On March 11th, the FCC adopted a *Notice of Proposed Rule-making* (NPRM) seeking to activate the provisions of a new *Section 9* of the *Communications Act of 1934*. The good news is that amateur radio operators are basically exempted.

This section authorizes the Commission to assess and collect annual regulatory ("user") fees to recover costs incurred in carrying out its enforcement policy, rulemaking; user information services, and international activities.

Technically, the FCC does not actually retain the funds. Instead some \$82 million dollars in new "user fee" revenues will end up in the U.S. treasury. The program was originally scheduled to begin operation on April 1st, but had to be delayed ...probably to July 1st. Getting the rule-making paperwork out has taken longer than anticipated. Section 9 Regulatory "user" fees are authorized by the *Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993* ...the so-called Clinton deficit reduction package.

In addition, the FCC already raises some \$45 million a year through its license application fee program which is authorized under Section 8 of the Communications Act. Section 8 application filing fees reimburse the government for the administrative (clerical) costs involved in

processing and issuing a license.

Most licensees will be charged both Section 8 (user) and 9 (filing) fees. When both fees are due, a single check attached to the application must be paid to the FCC. The law permits future Section 8 and 9 fees to "...be amended, adjusted or modified to reflect changes in the Commission's appropriations, its costs and changes in the nature of the Commission's regulated services." In other words, these fees can be increased if the FCC needs more funding.

The objective is for the FCC to be able to "cover" its \$130 million annual budget. That's the figure for fiscal 1994. As far as the U.S. taxpayer is concerned, the agency will be paying its own way. For FCC licensees, it's simply more taxes!

Both application and the newer regulatory fees are part of the government's new policy of requiring beneficiaries of specific services to pay for the services they receive. The rulemaking is on a super-fast track - the fastest of any proceeding within memory! The NPRM has a comment closing date of April 7th even though it wasn't released until March 11. Reply comments close on April 18, only ten days after the comment date!

Amateur Radio Operators

Special Emergency Radio, Public Safety Radio Service licensees, and amateur radio

operators are exempted from the payment of any regulatory or application fees on the basis of their non-commercial status. A provision is made, however, for the optional payment of a statutory fee for "Amateur vanity call-signs."

The FCC has proposed new rules in PR Docket No. 93-305 that would allow vanity call signs. A vanity call sign is an amateur licensee selected station call sign of their choice. Comments on the vanity call sign issue were recently extended to April 21, reply comments to May 23. The original closing date was March 7th and many comments have already poured into the FCC. Private Radio Bureau Chief Ralph Haller said at the Miami Hamboree last month that he hopes to be issuing vanity ham calls by late summer.

Paragraph 59 of the NPRM on implementing regulatory fees has this to say about: (*Quote*)

"c. Amateur Vanity Call-Signs

59. If Part 97 of the Rules is amended by the Commission to authorize the use of vanity call-signs, amateur radio operators would be able to request a specific call-sign. Each amateur licensee with a vanity call-sign will be assessed a regulatory fee of \$7.00 per year. The total fee of \$70.00 will cover the ten year license term during which the call sign will be in use. The first 10-year fee must be paid at the time a request for vanity call-sign(s) is made. If a requested vanity call-sign is not available or otherwise cannot be issued to the requestor, the regulatory fee will be refunded since amateurs are expressly exempt under the statute from regulatory fees, unless they have received their vanity call-sign." (*End Quote*)

That last bit of information is news since the NPRM on vanity call signs does not provide for a refund if a selected station call sign is not issued. Proposed rule § 97.19(g)(1) asks an amateur to select 10 call signs in order of preference. "The list will automatically end with the call sign vacated as the eleventh choice."

Nothing in the NPRM, however, suggests that amateurs will get their money back if the eleventh choice is selected - only that "The [application] form [610-V] must be submitted with the proper fee to the address specified in the Private Radio Services Fee Filing Guide."

Commercial Radio Operators

Section 9 of the Communications Act requires the Commission to collect the fees listed in the *Schedule of Regulatory Fees*. All applications for new, reinstated and renewed licenses will carry a regulatory fee. Applications for modification or replacement licenses will not and will carry the original expiration date.

Paragraph 58 of the NPRM says "The \$7.00

annual regulatory fee for commercial radio operators will be assessed on a per license basis and, at the time of application or renewal, the total \$35.00 fee will be paid to cover a five-year license term. Restricted permittees (holders of the *Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit*, RP) and *General Radiotelephone Operator Licensees* (GROL) will be assessed a one-time regulatory fee of \$105.00 to cover the lifetime license or permit term."

The \$105.00 regulatory fee is based on the statutory \$7.00 annual fee times an arbitrary figure of 15 years. There is no examination for the *Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit*. Applicants must pass Element 1 (Radio Law) and Element 3 (Electronic fundamentals and techniques), however, to qualify for the GROL. The \$105.00 regulatory fee will be in addition to the examination fee charged by the COLEM (Commercial Operator License Examination Manager.) Thus the total fees for a commercial radio operator license will shortly double or triple current costs! A COLEM is the commercial counterpart of the amateur service's VEC.

Private Radio Bureau fees

All payments of small regulatory fees (generally less than \$12,000.00) are due in advance for a number of years not to exceed the term of the license with the application. All Private Radio Bureau regulatory fees are considered to be "small" and therefore payable in advance. There are two levels of fees. Licensees that have exclusive use of a frequency will pay a higher fee than those who share frequency assignments.

The FCC also proposed to allow the payment of fees by electronic means, under an installment plan or by VISA or MasterCard credit card. Delinquent licensees are subject to a 25% late charge ...even license revocation.

Applicants must submit their applications and fees to the appropriate "lockbox" address. The Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, serves as the FCC's fee depository and many post office boxes have been established at that bank. A different P.O. box is used for each type of license transaction.

As a general rule, "shared-use" services - that is, licensees that share common spectrum will be assessed \$7.00 per year per license. That includes:

Part 87 (aircraft and aircraft-to-ground stations) which will be subject to a regulatory fee of \$70.00 (in advance) for their ten year license term.

Marine Coast stations authorized under Part 80 are subject to a \$35.00 regulatory fee for each license covered by a five year license term. A coast station is a land-based station in the maritime service

which provides communications services to ships.

Shipboard radio installations are required for large passenger and cargo vessels. In addition, radio equipment may also be voluntarily installed on smaller vessels, such as recreational boats. All ship stations will be assessed a \$70.00 regulatory fee per station covering their ten year license term.

General Mobile Radio Service stations authorized under Part 95 will pay an additional \$35.00 regulatory fee for their five year license term. GMRS is the old Class A-UHF Citizen's Radio Service. Part 90 (Land Mobile) stations are also subject to the \$35.00 regulatory fee. Microwave, IVDS (Interactive Video Data Service) and certain other Land Mobile stations operating above 470 MHz will pay \$16.00 a year instead of \$7.

Mass Media regulatory fees

These category and Common Carrier licensees get hit the hardest! AM broadcasters will be paying a new \$100 to \$900 annual regulatory fee depending upon their class of their radio station. FM broadcasters: \$600 to \$900 a year.

The VHF television regulatory fee is \$5,000 to \$18,000 a year based on the size of their market. UHF-TV broadcasters pay slightly less: \$4,000 to \$14,400. The FCC estimated regulatory fees from commercial television stations alone would bring in \$17 million a year.

Licensees of secondary television broadcast stations (low power TV, TV translators, TV boosters, etc.) will pay \$135 annually. Broadcast auxiliary stations: \$25.00 annually. (These are stations associated with a particular television or radio broadcasts station - such as used for remote pickup.)

Cable TV operators get socked with a regulatory charge of 37¢ for each subscriber per year (or \$370.00 per 1,000 subscribers.) This should bring in more than \$20 million in revenue since there are more than 53 million cable subscribers nationwide.)

International (HF) broadcast stations operating between 5,950 kHz and 26,100 kHz will be assessed an annual regulatory fee of \$200.00 per license. International Public Fixed Service (point-to-point microwave or HF) licensees: \$110 per year per call sign; domestic circuits: \$55.

Common Carrier

Common carriers provide wireline and radio communication services to the public and their regulatory fees are based on the size of their operation. These annual fees range from 6¢ per subscriber (or \$60.00 per 1000) for cellular telephone and personal

communications up to \$90,000 for a space station in low-earth orbit. (AT&T alone will end up paying more than \$6 million annually in regulatory fees!)

Application fees

In addition to the new rules for regulatory fees, the FCC proposed to revise several sections of the rules governing the payment and collection of fees associated with applications and other filings. It is also anticipated that Congress will increase the Section 8 application fee from \$35.00 to \$40.00 or \$45.00 based on a 14.8% cost-of-living adjustment on the existing application processing fees.

Beginning about July (if the present timetable holds - and the FCC is notoriously late with its schedules) licensees of FCC stations will begin paying greatly increased license fees. The bottom line is that ham radio operators are basically unaffected. That is, unless you want a special "vanity" call sign.

Amateur and Commercial Radio Fees

Here is the lineup of *anticipated* fees for amateur and commercial radio operator licenses which *should be* effective about July 1st..

<u>Amateur Radio Operator:</u>		<u>New/Renew</u>	
Station/Operator license:		None	
Vanity Call Sign:		\$70 for 10 yrs.	
<u>Commercial Radio Operator:</u>			
<u>Commercial License</u>	<u>New License Exam. + Reg.</u>	<u>Renew License</u>	<u>Replacement License</u>
RP	None + \$105	None	\$45
GROL	COLEM + \$105	None	\$45
Others	COLEM + \$35	\$80	\$45

Notes: New Licenses=Except for the RP, carry both an examination and a regulatory fee. RP=Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit, GROL=General Radiotelephone Operator License. (The RP and GROL are both lifetime licenses.) Others=Marine Radio Operator Permit, Commercial Radiotelegraph Operator Certificates, GMDSS Radio Operator and GMDSS Radio Maintainer. COLEM=Testing fee charged by COLEM (Commercial Operator License Examination Manager) examiners. Renew License=\$80 fee consists of \$35 regulatory plus an *anticipated* \$45 application fee. Replacement Licenses=Includes duplicate and modified (e. g. name change) licenses.

A word to the wise! Thinking of obtaining a Marine Radio Operator Permit, GMDSS Radio Maintainer or a General Radiotelephone Operator License? Get your FCC Form 756 application in before July 1st! Until then, you will only have to pay an examination fee (\$35 if you use one of our National Radio Examiners 1-800-669-9594.) You will pay \$105.00 more for a GROL once regulatory fees go into effect.

• The American Radio Relay League has sent out a press release to the media advising that **ARRL Membership has hit an all time high!** The 1993 year-end membership was the highest ever, surpassing all previous records with a total of more than 170,000 members. The record high reflects all categories of membership, including voting and non-voting members.

"The growth in membership is a reflection in the growth of ham radio as a whole and also the growing number of hams who see a need for an effective national organization to look out for their interests," says Steve Mansfield, N1MZA, Manager of Legislative Affairs and Public Information at ARRL.

The membership total by license class shows:

	Extra	Adv.	Gen.	Tech.	Novice
ARRL:	25.4%	28.0%	19.0%	25.5%	3.0%
All amateurs:	10.2%	17.9%	20.1%	36.1%	15.7%

Approximately 25% of all licensed U.S. amateurs are members of the League. More than half of the ARRL membership holds senior level (Advanced and Extra class) amateur radio operator licenses. (On the other hand, more than 70% of the total amateur population hold Novice, Technician and General class tickets.)

The new total includes approximately 3,000 former Canadian Radio Relay League members who have been converted to ARRL membership.

• **Some AMSAT members are very unhappy that packet clusters have opened on 145.79 MHz.** They claim that according to the ARRL, that band is supposed to be for experimental purposes. Actually the 2-meter ARRL bandplan in our handbook indicates that 145.50 to 145.80 MHz should be used for "Miscellaneous and experimental modes." The OSCAR subband does not start until 145.80 and extends to 146.00 MHz. In any event, some satellite buffs believe interference from 145.79 is spilling over into their domain.

• The RCA Amateur Radio Club of Indianapolis, Indiana, is now the Thomson Amateur Radio Club. It seems that General Electric owns the rights to the RCA name and the dog/phonograph logo which had adorned their newsletter. Club members were concerned about possible legal action so their club name was change to "Thomson" which comes from Thomson Consumer Electronics.

• The Canadian government and Canada's national amateur radio society, the Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) have formed a working group which **looks toward delegating the administration of the Amateur Radio Service in Canada to the RAC.** The four main areas which RAC could eventually manage are:

certification, documentation, licensing and spectrum control. Depending on the agreement, however, the RAC could also end up maintaining the examination questions, issuing call signs, approving delegated examiners, exclusively publishing all documents relating to amateurs and amateur spectrum surveillance.

AMATEUR RADIO CALL SIGNS

...issued as of the first of March 1994:

Radio District	Gp.*A* Extra	Gp.*B* Advan.	Gp.*C* Tech/Gen	Gp.*D* Novice
0 (*)	AA0QI	KG0LO	(***)	KB0LYV
1 (*)	AA1IV	KD1TZ	N1RMF	KB1BGS
2 (*)	AA2RH	KF2UA	N2YBR	KB2QXD
3 (*)	AA3HG	KE3MC	N3RPA	KB3BBC
4 (*)	AD4QG	KR4NY	(***)	KE4KAL
5 (*)	AB5TB	KJ5VI	(***)	KC5FON
6 (*)	AC6AP	KN6YT	(***)	KE6FTE
7 (*)	AB7BL	KI7WH	(***)	KC7BDO
8 (*)	AA8OI	KG8HH	(***)	KB8RSM
9 (*)	AA9KI	KF9UM	N9WHC	KB9IXF
N.Mariana Is.	AH0W	AH0AQ	KH0CK	WH0AAY
Guam	WH2D	AH2CU	KH2JB	WH2ANK
Johnston Is.	AH3D	AH3AD	KH3AG	WH3AAG
Midway Is.		AH4AA	KH4AG	WH4AAH
Hawaii	(**)	AH6NF	WH6SV	WH6CRD
Kure Is.			KH7AA	
Amer. Samoa	AH8I	AH8AG	KH8BB	WH8ABB
Wake W.Peale	AH9C	AH9AD	KH9AE	WH9AAI
Alaska	(**)	AL7PO	WL7QW	WL7CHL
Virgin Is.	WP2G	KP2CC	NP2HG	WP2AHU
Puerto Rico	(**)	KP4WM	(***)	WP4MNW

CALL SIGN WATCH: *=All 2-by-1 "W" prefixed call signs have been assigned in all radio districts. Group "A" 2-by-2 format call signs from the AA-AK block are next assigned to Extra Class amateurs when 2-by-1's are all allocated.

**=All Group A (2-by-1) format call signs have also been assigned in Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico. Group "B" (2-by-2) format call signs are assigned to Extra Class when Group "A" are depleted.

***=Group "C" (1-by-3) call signs have now run out in all radio districts except the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 9th call sign areas. According to the rules (adopted by the Commission Feb. 8, 1978, Docket No. 21135), Technician and General class amateurs are next assigned Group "D" (2-by-3 format) call signs when all Group "C" have been assigned.

The FCC does not go back and reassign expired call signs. Eventually, however, these call signs will be available under the vanity call sign system.

[Source: FCC, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania]

***Fact Sheet For The Upcoming STS-59 SAREX Mission**
By NASA Astronaut Jay Apt, N5QWL

What: Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment (SAREX) - STS-59 - Space Shuttle Endeavour

When: Planned Launch - April 7, 1994 at 12:07 UTC for 9 days of 2-meter operations.

Where: Earth Orbit. Altitude 220 kilometers, with radio coverage of latitudes from 70 degrees North to 70 degrees South. We are in one of the lowest altitude orbits ever flown by the shuttle, so pass times will be shorter than usual.

Operators: Dr. Jay Apt (N5QWL) and Dr. Linda Godwin N5RAX. N5QWL is the commander of the Blue Shift aboard Endeavour and will operate the shuttle systems during the "night" shift, while N5RAX is the Payload Commander, responsible for overall operation of three large radars in the shuttle's cargo bay during the "day" shift.

Modes: FM Voice - Call signs: N5QWL and N5RAX
Packet - (Beacons giving daily mission activities daily if we get a chance, and robot QSOs -- successful connects will be issued a contact number by the robot)
Packet Call Sign: W5RRR-1

Frequencies: We will operate split. Please do not transmit on the downlink frequency!

VOICE: Downlink (shuttle transmits) on 145.55 MHz.
Uplink (ground transmits) on 144.91, 144.93, 144.95, 144.97, and 144.99 (except over Europe. We'll listen on those 5 frequencies to spread out the pileup a bit.
Uplink Europe only: 144.80, 144.75, 144.70

Successful QSOs on voice will be facilitated by using standard international phonetics for your call sign. We will not answer any stations using non-standard phonetics. Use your entire call sign -- we log with an audio tape recorder. Do not use our call sign -- passes are very short, and we want to work as many folks as possible.

PACKET: Downlink (shuttle transmits) on 145.55. Uplink (ground transmits) on 144.49 (worldwide)

If you can, decrease your radio's deviation to 3 KHz (most are initially set at 5 KHz) and compensate for the Doppler shift. If you cannot, wait until a minute or 90 seconds after we come over your horizon to transmit -- that will put you within our IF. If a station transmits without following these suggestions, we just hear what sounds like a noisy carrier. The above applies to both

voice and packet.

QSL via: ARRL, ATTN: STS-59 QSLs, 225 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111, USA. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE). Non-US stations include a self addressed envelope with \$0.50 of U.S. postage affixed or appropriate IRCs. Include the Callsign worked, Date, UTC, Mode, and Frequency. For packet contacts, include the QSO number issued by the robot. SWL QSL's: Include the Callsign heard, Date, UTC, Mode, and Frequency.

Information: AMSAT bulletins, Compuserve, Genie, Prodigy, local packet bulletin boards. ARRL bulletins, and HF voice from NASA Johnson Space Center ARC, Houston, TX, W5RRR, or NASA Goddard Spaceflight Center ARC, Greenbelt, MD, WA3NAN, frequencies listed below.

W5RRR may be found on or near: 7.215, 14.280, 21.360, and 28.400 MHz.

WA3NAN retransmits NASA Select Audio and SAREX bulletins simultaneously on or near 3.860, 7.185, 14.295, 21.395, and 28.650 MHz.

The NASA Info BBS at Johnson Space Center, Houston, will also carry Keplerian elements and SAREX bulletins. (713) 483-2500, 1200 baud, 8-N-1. At the "ENTER NUMBER:" prompt, type 62511 <return> and log onto the BBS. The Keps and bulletins will be in the welcome message. Disconnect rapidly to facilitate access by others.

Operations: If you have a packet QSO number issued to you by the robot, don't try to get another one! Our on-board program drops the duplicates anyhow, and all you are doing is making it harder for the other folks. We'll issue you a QSL card if you appear in the "heard" list on the TNC and we have issued you a QSO number ...that's a 2-way contact, AND REMEMBER, THIS IS ONLY A HOBBY!

N5QWL will be asleep over most USA passes, and N5RAX will be busy with assigned duties for most daylight US passes, so try us on packet over the USA if the sun is up. Remember, our packet call sign is W5RRR-1. We'll try to work voice (1) when we are not otherwise engaged, and (2) at night or when the ground is cloudy. (We are generally busy taking pictures of the Earth during clear daylight passes.)

If I can get to it, I'll activate the SAREX about 3 hours into the mission; deactivation will occur at about 8 days, 17 hours after launch. (That is, unless we get a one-day science mission extension, then it will be deactivated at about 9 days, 17 hours after launch.)

COMMENTS ON VANITY STATION CALL SIGNS

The original cut-off date for PR Docket No. 93-305 was March 7th. It was extended to April 21st. Here are some of the comments that have been received at the FCC in Washington, DC as of Friday, March 18th.

Bernhard E. Keiser, WD4O, Vienna, VA

Keiser (who has been licensed 48 years) believes "Certain call groups, such as the calls beginning with a W followed by a numeral and two letters will be in great demand. In recognition of those who have been licensed the longest, and who may not have as long a time to enjoy a special call sign, priority should be granted for the first 30 or 60 days of the program to allow first choice to those who have been licensed the longest. This could be grouped as (1) over 50 years, (2) 45 to 50 years, etc. This would be in fairness to them. Otherwise the assignments will depend on who are the luckiest in getting their requests via the U.S. mail system to the FCC." He also believes at least one year should elapse before any call is reassigned.

David B. Popkin, W2CC, Englewood, NJ

Popkin believes that a vacated call sign should not be available for reassignment for 27 months (rather than 24 months.) This will allow an extra 3 months for the FCC to reinstate and process a lapsed call sign.

He also believes a call sign assigned to the station of a deceased licensee should be available 6 months after death rather than 2 years. "There is no reason to require a longer wait." Call signs voluntarily vacated by a licensee should also not be available for 6 months. "Collusion between two licensees in which one agrees to give up his/her license so that another can apply for it is not in the public interest."

Popkin agrees the restriction that permits an amateur to select only a call sign appropriate for his license class "...is a good policy and should be retained. The vanity call sign system must not introduce call sign formats that are not presently being utilized.

...The rules should be modified to include a phase-in period similar to that which was utilized for the specifically chosen call signs during the mid-1970's."

In the event that the same call sign is chosen by two amateurs, "The date received by the Mellon Bank should be utilized and the earliest date will prevail..." A lottery should decide who gets the call sign if the applications are received on the same date.

Charles Scheid, KO4VX, Salisbury, N.C.

Scheid, who is Executive Director of the *American Radio Alliance*, has no objection to vanity call signs "So long as the type of calls issued are not offensive or obscene..." He urges the FCC to charge a fee for all license classes, except beginners, and at each

upgrade level "...as a means of defraying cost of monitoring service that is desperately needed to save the ham bands from conflicts, violations of regulations and illegal activities...." He suggests that payment for a vanity call sign be assessed for a five year period.

Harry E. Workman, KD6MOA, Sunnyvale, CA

...is in favor of vanity call signs. "I think \$5.00 per year would be more realistic for the very young and those that are retired. ...the licensing of amateurs should remain under the jurisdiction of FCC."

James H. Walters, WB7AAK, Portland, Oregon

Walters submitted his comments on behalf of the Portland Amateur Radio Club. "Paying the sum of \$70.00, especially in the case of rural area club stations and school club stations, can be a great burden. ...PARC urges that the Commission adopt rules that would exempt schools, public or private, from paying any fees for receiving call signs, vanity or otherwise."

PARC also suggested that club and military recreation station call signs be issued out of a special block reserved for club call signs, on a non-vanity basis, for no fee or for a one-time fee. "...existing club and military recreational station should be allowed to retain their present calls without payment of any fees."

John M. C. Covington III, WN4BBJ, Charlotte, NC

"I am in favor of a one-time fee rather than a fee which will be paid at initial application and at each renewal. The vanity call sign fee should only be collected if a different call sign is actually assigned. I believe that the Vanity Call Sign System should be implemented in stages starting with requests for previously held call signs. The Commission should accept a list of more than 10 preferred call signs if such a list is submitted on magnetic media."

Willard W. Wehe, KD6KJ (ex-W6VZB) San Leandro, CA

"Eligibility for a 'vanity' call sign appears to be based on the class of license held. I agree and add that length of time that an applicant has been licensed should be a factor. For example, if two Extra class applicants requested W6WW, the applicant having been licensed for a longer period would receive preference. Cost of a 'vanity' call sign assignment will not be a problem. ...\$7.00 per year is reasonable and affordable."

Alexander A. Aimette, K2DOX, Souderton, PA

"Even though older hams have what can be called vanity call signs already for which they do not pay, a charge of \$100 in today's present dollar shortage climate would not be excessive. Payment to be included with the application and only in U.S. postal money order format."

Aimette says that the application should be on a single sheet of paper which can be folded into an envelope to retain the postmark date. Applications for vanity call signs should be processed by date of postmark ...and by seniority or lottery if the same call sign is selected on the same date. A list of newly assigned vanity calls should be published in the Federal Register weekly.

Neil J. Nitzberg, WB2CIR, Laurelton, NY

"I've worked long and hard to be born early enough to get a 2X3 call sign that begins with a "W." Presently, only Old Timers hold these distinctive "W" call signs; a status which for many years has separated the seasoned hams from the younger crowd.

"In the interest of preserving this state of affairs, it is my humble request that the FCC please confirm that, under the new Vanity Call Sign System, "W" call signs will remain unavailable to those unfortunate souls whom up to this point don't have 'em."

David L. Heller, K3TX, Yardley, PA

Heller says he has been licensed for more than 30 years and has been an Assistant Director in the ARRL for approximately 20 years.

He believes that "...call signs generally result in the callsign reflecting the longevity or seniority of its holder within the service." The vanity call sign proposal should be dismissed without action.

"...a significant majority of United States amateur radio operators do not want special callsigns to be available." Heller said he came to that conclusion "...through unbiased surveys... More than 90% of those surveyed were strongly against adoption of this proposal. ...It is possible that the additional workload on Commission personnel in conjunction with special callsigns will not be justified by the fees collected, considering the small number who will be requesting them"

"Alternatively, the proposal should be modified to permit free choice of call sign suffix, the prefix to be consistent with then-current rotation as determined by location and license class, or that a previously-held callsign be re-assigned."

Raphael Soifer, W2RS, Glen Rock, NJ

"Under my suggested modifications, certain 'vanity' call signs would be available to all licensed amateurs under specific circumstances, while those holding the higher classes of license (Extra and Advanced) would receive commensurately greater privileges in their choice of call sign.

"I believe that, except in a few special cases, the proposed 'vanity' call sign system should be primarily restricted to the higher classes of amateur license; however, rather than restricting it to Extra Class only

as in the 1970's, I propose that it be broadened to include Advanced Class amateurs, who would ...be permitted to choose any unassigned call sign in Groups B, C or D. ...adopting the proposal of the NPRM to open the 'vanity' call sign system to all licensees under virtually all circumstances would be to miss this 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to strengthen our services at no additional cost to the Commission.

"Rather than opening up 1X3 calls beginning with the letters W and K to all comers of Technician Class or higher as "vanity" call signs..., I suggest restricting their availability to Extra Class amateurs; this would provide a meaningful incentive for upgrading to Extra Class in addition to the now largely depleted one of 1X2 and 2X1 call signs. Thus, in effect, Wx3 and Kx3 call signs would be transferred to Group A from Group C for purposes of the 'vanity' call sign program. These 'preferred' call signs are not currently being assigned to anyone, so that moving them, in effect, from Group C to Group A (with respect to new assignments only) would not adversely affect anyone's present status."

"A 'user fee' in excess of the actual cost to the Commission of implementing the proposal in this docket would simply be a tax by another name, to which I and, I assume most radio amateurs, are strongly opposed. I would, however, support the Commission's recouping its cost of implementation through reasonable application fees, but only if applicable legislation and budgetary procedures require that the proceeds of such fees be used specifically for the purpose intended. It is my understanding that the enabling legislation presently requires the collection of an annual fee (not an application fee) covering not only the initial period of a license with a 'vanity' call sign, but also renewal periods; clearly, this provision has nothing to do with the Commission's costs and is nothing more than a tax."

Paul J. Graziani, WD5BIV, Little Rock AR

I would recommend ...an initial set of filing categories ...in order of priority for applications.

1. Family members holding amateur licenses and wish to apply for calls of deceased family members or amateurs who held previous call signs.
2. Amateurs holding the Extra Class
3. Amateurs holding the Advanced Class
4. Amateurs holding the General Class
5. Amateurs holding the Technician or Novice Class
6. Club or military recreation stations once holding a call but now lapsed.
7. Club or military recreation stations applying for the first time for a call.

"The Commission could make new monthly updates to its database available to entrepreneurs and membership organizations at no cost."

• ARRL attorney, *Chris Imlay, N3AKD*, has prepared and filed a *Petition for Rule Making for the American Red Cross*. The Red Cross says they need additional VHF (or UHF) communication channels for coordination of supply delivery, personnel dispatch and distribution of message traffic throughout a disaster site, and in and out of the affected area.

Specifically, the Red Cross wants the FCC to expand the available frequencies for disaster relief agencies to include ten dedicated or cooperatively shared 220-222 MHz paired channels on a nationwide basis for temporary base and mobile operation for disaster relief operations in the continental United States and its possessions and to permit disaster relief training exercises periodically on the same frequencies.

The Red Cross is a tax-exempt charitable organization that is organized and exists pursuant to a charter granted by the United States Congress. It is licensed by the FCC as a Disaster Relief Organization under the Special Emergency Radio Service (SERS) and is the principal national relief organization in the U.S. The Red Cross provides critical disaster relief service to the American public in the aftermath of local, regional and national disasters, and provides these services to others throughout the world at the request of the International Red Cross.

The Red Cross said that their single, wide-area dedicated radio channel on 47.42 MHz has proven hopelessly insufficient and inadequate to address the administrative, tactical, logistical and emergency information which must be communicated and disseminated. Mentioned were such massive disasters as Hurricanes Andrew (Florida), Hugo (Caribbean), Iniki (Hawaii), the midwest floods and the recent Los Angeles earthquake.

The Red Cross says they have "made do" with their single channel by resorting to other facilities, either purchased or provided voluntarily.

"Amateur radio operators often provide additional message traffic capabilities for both long and short-range communications on a volunteer basis. ...Amateur radio operator availability varies depending on location, and the ability to plan for communications does not allow the primary reliance on ama-

teur radio. This is not to demean the importance of amateur radio communications during an emergency. It has been of immense value time and time again. The Red Cross will continue in the future to make use of amateur radio as an important adjunct to its disaster relief communications, especially for long-distance message traffic. The urgent need for in-place communications protocols, and for administrative communications which are not properly provided by radio amateurs, prohibits sole reliance on amateur radio operators by Red Cross disaster relief teams."

The Red Cross added "It is critical under any circumstances, that some VHF or UHF frequencies be made immediately available to the Red Cross during a disaster, and that incompatible or uncoordinated sharing be minimized during staging, relief, or cleanup activities. ...Leased common carrier facilities are used for certain purposes, and volunteer amateur radio facilities are useful, but neither can substitute for dedicated short-range communications facilities for administrative and operational communications necessary during a disaster and immediately afterward."

The Red Cross requests that the FCC issue a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* looking toward amending Part 90, Subpart T to expand the allotment of frequencies reserved for assignment on a primary basis to national organizations eligible for disaster relief operation under § 90.41 of the Commission's Rules, to include channels 161-170 in the 220-222 MHz band..." The 21-page petition was filed with the FCC on March 2, 1994.

• Several weeks ago, *Carole Perry, WB2MGP* was ecstatic to receive an *invitation from astronaut Jay Apt, N5QWL to attend the launch of the Endeavour Space Shuttle STS-59* on April 7th. Carole's ham radio classes have spoken to Jay on their CQ ALL SCHOOLS NET several times.

Carole knew what an incredible experience this would be for a youngster, so she ran an essay contest in her school, and gave one of her passes to an 8th grade student. The winner, *Renee Hoehn, KB2QMR* has spoken to several astronauts via the ham station in Carole's classroom. She wrote a beautiful essay telling why it would

mean a lot for her to see the launch. Renee also participated in the Ocean Challenge program last term with Carole's ham radio classes.

Both Renee and Carole are extremely excited about their upcoming trip to the Kennedy Space Center. They should be coming back to school with some incredible "Show and Tell."

• The Dayton Amateur Radio Association has selected their annual HamVention award winners. They are:

PERRY WILLIAMS, W1UED

Unionville, Connecticut

Amateur of the Year

Perry has served amateur radio for 40 years, the last 14 as ARRL's Washington Area Coordinator. He has shaped the image of our hobby in the eyes of our federal government.

Barb Holmes, N8EYW, who heads up the Awards Committee said that Perry told her he "...helped obtain the legislation that commits the FCC to issue call signs selected by the licensees and that he worked to head off license fees for the amateur radio service."

RUSSELL D. KROEKER, N7HGE

Kent, Washington

Special Achievement Award

For conceiving, planning, implementing and operating the *Evergreen Intertie* - a repeater network which runs in the Pacific Northwest from southern Oregon to British Columbia. Additionally, Russ spearheaded the installation of the amateur repeater link in China from Beijing to the Great Wall and implemented the *Bamboo Intertie* from China to the United States.

RICHARD A. NEWELL, AK1A

Bolton, Massachusetts

Technical Excellence

Dick invented the concept of the DX PacketCluster® and developed the software used around the world to implement the many interconnected DX clusters used by DXers and contesters. This technology is also used by police departments to communicate between officers in the field and their dispatcher.

All three will be honored at the award ceremony to be held during the HamVention banquet on Saturday evening (7:30 p.m., April 30th), at the Convention Center in downtown Dayton.

INTERNET "DATAWAY" USAGE SURGES!

Much has been written about the mammoth computer network of networks, the Internet. Cable, electronic mail (Easylink, MCI-mail, AT&T Mail, SprintMail) various online services (including AppleLink, CompuServe, Prodigy, BIX/Delphi, FidoNet, GENie, America On-line) ...even ham radio all have "on-ramps" ("gateways") leading to the Internet. Telephone companies, broadcasters ...even power utilities are searching for ways to get on the *Information Superhighway*. Some 20 million people now have access to the Internet and new users are joining at the rate of 150,000 a month ...data traffic is growing some 20 percent per month.

Just what is the Internet? It is a global web of some 25,000 (no one is really sure) computer networks that can talk to each other. Most of them are business or education oriented - although the government, U.S. military and many other organizations are also on it.

It began some 25 years ago as an experimental Department of Defense network called the ARPANet for *Advanced Research Projects Agency*. The objective was to design and build a military network that could survive a nuclear attack.

A standard developed called the *Internet Protocol* (or IP) which is used in conjunction with *Transmission Control Protocol* (TCP). The resulting network became known as the Internet after IP; the network standard: TCP/IP. Other groups started their own parallel networks. Among them were UUCP (Unix-to-Unix Copy Program) and USENET (User Network.) CSNET (Computer Science Network) ...and BITNET served the university and research community.

In 1986, NSFNET (a "backbone" network belonging to the National Science Foundation) tied these networks together with high speed supercomputers located around the country. Eventually the different networks became "tourist attractions" along a central Internet "expressway." This "backbone" network is managed by ANS (Advanced Network and Services, Inc.) a partnership of IBM and MCI ...and some universities in Michigan. NSFNET is the equivalent of the U.S. interstate highway system, the regional networks: state highways. During the last 5 years, commercial Internet providers have been able to lease access points from ANS and sign on more users.

The Internet does not have a net manager. No one is in charge but it seems to work. The Internet serves as the framework of how information will get from here to there in the future. But it is not the *National Information Infrastructure*. NII is the so-called Clinton Information Superhighway you have heard so much about. That is still some 2 or 3 years away and there is no telling what it will resemble. Some see it as a huge cable system, some as a huge computer

bulletin board ...others as business E-Mail. There is little doubt that whatever form the Infoway assumes, members of the Internet will have a head start on using and understanding the eventual NII broadband switched network.

How does the Internet work? Basically the same as amateur packet radio. That is a message carries an address header that gets forwarded from computer to computer to its final destination. Although Unix based, any type of PC and operating system can serve as the hard/software - including commonly available Macintosh and IBM-PC/compatibles. The Internet is simply thousands of LANs (local area networks) connected together by larger and redundant networks. Like a car travelling on the interstate and state highway system, if one route fails (or is down) the message goes a different way.

Most of the Internet traffic is electronic mail. Many businesses prefer E-mail sent via the Internet versus fax over phone lines. For one thing, it is more private and secure. You don't have fax pages laying around the office. Some companies have their Internet communications filter through a special workstation which serves as a "firewall" to prevent unauthorized access to their systems.

What is it good for? Besides electronic mail, there are hundreds of interest groups on every possible subject (including ham radio.) Internet Relay Chats (IRCs) allow two or more people at separate PCs to talk with each other in real time. The Internet is a global library of information and software.

Part of the Internet is non-commercial. The *National Science Foundation Network* bans commercial traffic. Companies that market access make sure their customer's data filters through privately owned segments of the net.

How do I get on? There are many gateway companies that offer Internet access to anyone for as little as \$20.00 a month plus phone charges. On the other end of the scale, there are providers that offer dedicated line setups for corporations that include the "firewall" security computer. (Cost: around \$50,000!) There is also "remote login." You call up a local Internet computer and log on to that PC.

How does the Internet postal system work? A user's Internet address identifies both the network and the individual computer. It consists of a series of lower-case letters separated by a "." (period) or the "@" ("at" sign.) You read it from right to left. For example my address on the Internet is: fmaia@mcimail.com. The ".com" (called a top level organizational domain) stands for "commercial". MCI mail is the name of the network and fmaia is my user name. We will go into this in more detail in our next issue.

PETITIONS FOR RULEMAKING DENIED BY FCC

Gene R. Signor, WA6HAD (General class, age 73) of Los Gatos, California, has had his *Petition for Rule-making* denied by the Commission. The FCC said that his proposal had already been considered in previous years. Signor wanted the 30 meter band (10.1 to 10.15 MHz) made available to Novices and Technician class amateurs who had passed a Morse code test.

He argued that the 11-year sunspot cycle makes the 10 and 15 meter bands virtually useless. In addition, he felt that the few HF bands now available to beginning operators who have passed a code test are detrimental to their progress. Signor acknowledged that the VHF/UHF bands were available to newcomers, but that the cost of equipment was prohibitive, especially to younger operators.

The FCC said they added the 30 meter band to the amateur service in 1985, but declined to make it available to Novice and Technician class operators. "In its action, the Commission said that an acceptable balance had been achieved between licensing incentives and operating privileges." In 1989, the FCC excluded Novices and Technician class operators from the 17 meter (18.068 to 18.168 MHz) band because of its small size and because Novices had recently received enhanced privileges.

Vern A. Weiss, WA9VLK (Extra class, age 42) of Valparaiso, Indiana, wanted the Codeless Technician class operator renamed to the Amateur Permit. The current Technician Plus operator (a codeless Technician who has passed a telegraphy examination) would simply be redesignated "Technician." The amateur operator class lineup would then become: Amateur Extra, Advanced, General, Technician, Amateur Permit and Novice.

The FCC denied and dismissed Weiss' request stating that the Technician Plus designation is not a license class. Instead it indicates that a Technician class operator has passed a code test and is therefore eligible to operate below 30 MHz.

Weiss had argued that "...some licensees who only have the codeless Technician class operator license are using operator privileges that are specified in the rules for telegraphy-qualified Technician class operators." He believes confusion exists between Technicians who have and have not passed a code test that it is "...causing the Commission compliance problems."

The FCC said they received periodic updates from the VEC System indicating those Technician class operators who have passed a code test. "Hence, the Commission can check to see whether an individual

licensee is exceeding his/her authorized operating privileges. Moreover, this is not a significant compliance problem at the present time."

On renaming the no-code Technician class to the Amateur Permit, the FCC said this was the subject of numerous major rule making proceedings which generated many thousands of comments from the amateur community. "After considering the views expressed, the Commission adopted the rules which are now codified in Part 97. The current operator classes were developed in accordance with the expressed desires of the amateur community. You have not presented sufficient evidence to justify revisiting the matter at this time," the FCC said in their ruling. Both *Petitions for Rulemaking* were denied on March 9th.

FCC DENIES APPEAL OF PIRATE BROADCASTER

The FCC has denied Andrew R. Yoder's *Application for Review* of his \$17,500 fine for repeatedly operating a pirate broadcast station. The FCC rejected Yoder's argument that the evidence was "circumstantial" and insufficient to establish that he was the operator of the station. Yoder also believes that he is not obligated to allow Commission investigators to inspect his radio station. He was ordered to remit the full amount to the FCC by April 11, 1994.

On February 22 and 23, 1992, Commission investigators monitored transmissions from an unlicensed broadcast station that had been operating on 7415 kHz under the call sign "Radio USA" from various locations.

The transmissions were eventually traced to the home of Yoder's parents in Springs, Pennsylvania. The lights were on at the residence and Yoder's car was parked in the driveway. Yoder - who answered the door - refused to allow the FCC investigators to inspect his radio station. Even though it was 3:10 in the morning, the FCC said it was a reasonable time to inspect an operating broadcast station.

The station and operator were positively identified by voice and close-in direction finding techniques. Audio tape analysis later indicated that Yoder's voice was the same as monitored in previous "Radio USA" broadcasts during the prior five months.

On May 21, 1992, the Laurel, Maryland FCC Field Office issued a *Notice of Apparent Liability* (NAL) against Yoder in the amount of \$17,500: \$10,000 for operating an unlicensed station and \$7,500 for failure to permit inspection. The NAL was converted to a fine a couple of months later; The FCC said the stiff fine was assessed in part "...because Mr. Yoder is the author of a book indicating his knowledge and familiarity with this area, see *Pirate Radio Stations* (1990.)