

telstar

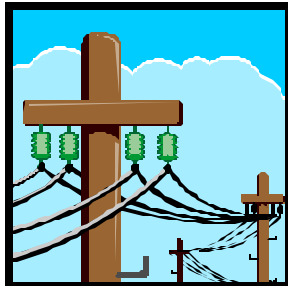


THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF STARS (SOUTH TOWNS AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY)

ISSUE 267 MARCH 2004

FCC Proposes Rules for BPL Systems

The FCC this week released its Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) on Broadband over Power Line (BPL) systems. The 38-page NPRM --in ET Dockets 03-104 and 04-37--proposes amendments to FCC Part 15 rules to define so-called "access BPL," make rules specific to BPL systems and provide measurement guidelines for BPL devices and systems. It would make no changes to Part 15 emission limits for unintentional radiators, however. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, says that while Part 15's current limits on unintentional radiators on HF may be appropriate for short-duration, narrowband emissions, they are inappropriate for the sort of long-duration, broadband emissions BPL would employ. He compared short-duration, narrowband emissions at the Part 15 radiated emission limit to a helicopter flying overhead.



"The noise is deafening, but is tolerable because it doesn't happen very often nor last very long," he observed. "To a radio user, having BPL in the neighborhood would be like having the helicopter hovering constantly overhead."

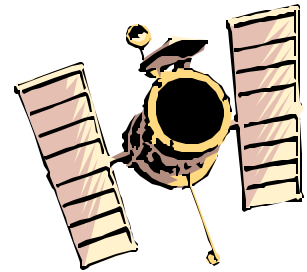
ARRL Lab Manager Ed Hare, W1RFI, offered an example most hams could relate to. "The limit for an unintentional emitter on HF is 30 uV/m at 30 meters from the source," he said. "If you take a dipole cut for 3.5 MHz and put it in a 30 uV/m field, you'll have a noise reading of S9 plus 16 dB at your transceiver."

The FCC proposal takes a broader view of interference. "There is significant disagreement among the commenting

March Meeting

This month's club meeting will begin at 7 PM on Thursday, March 4 at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect Ave. at Hawkins Ave.). All interested in amateur radio are invited; neither club membership nor an amateur radio license is required.

The program that we were unable to get in at the February meeting will be given at the March meeting. STARS Board members Bob KA2WYE, Scott KB2KOL and Bruce KC2GJX will be making a presentation on "Geocaching". This is a high tech treasure hunt for GPS



users and is going on right here in Western New York as well as across the US and in over 180 countries. Some of the hunts don't even require the use of a GPS unit. You can find more about it at www.geocaching.com.

We plan to stage a live geocaching hunt when we meet at our Nike Base club station for the July meeting. Hopefully, it will be warm by then!

STARS News

Craig Andersen K1CRA has had to resign his position as Director for STARS for personal reasons. Jim Sojka WB2TJO has been nominated to fill the remaining portion of Craig's two-year term of office as Director. There will be a vote on this at the March meeting.

A motion was made and passed at the February meeting to eliminate the phone line for the STARS repeater autopatch. This will save the club about \$450 per year. It was generally thought that increased use of cell phones by club members had reduced the use of the autopatch to a point where it was no longer cost justified.

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STARS & ARRL Memberships

Membership in STARS is open to anyone with an interest in amateur radio. A license is not required. Membership applications may be obtained by sending a SASE to Judy Levan N2TEZ, 120 University Blvd., Depew, NY 14043, from the newsletter editor or from board members.

Annual Dues are payable on January 1 and are \$21 for a single membership, \$27 for family memberships and \$8 for a student membership (through grade 12). The dues are pro-rated on a monthly basis for new members plus there is an initiation fee of \$5 when first applying to the club. For example, a new member joining in July would pay \$10.50 (6 months X \$1.75 per month) plus the \$5 initiation fee for a total of \$15.50.



Applications should be returned to Judy N2TEZ along with the appropriate dues. The applications will be reviewed and voted on by the Board of Directors at the business meeting. The applications are then voted on by the general membership at the next regular club meeting.

Members who are joining ARRL for the first time or who are renewing their membership after a lapse of two years or more should send their ARRL membership forms to Jack Cullum, Jr. KB2ESM, 6871 Webster Rd., Orchard Park, NY 14127 along with a check made out to STARS. No extra cost to you and STARS benefits! STARS no longer benefits from normal yearly renewals, so they should be sent directly to the ARRL.

Club Net

STARS club nets are open to all to exchange information on local amateur radio activities.

STARS WB2EZU Memorial HF net meets at 10 AM local time on Saturdays on 3.925 MHz +/- QRM.

STARS Information Net is held on the second, third and fifth Thursdays of the month at 7:30 PM on the STARS 147.090 MHz repeater (107.2 Hz PL tone needed).

Are We Prepared?

When I was a Boy Scout I always liked the motto "Be Prepared". We spent a lot of time on honing our skills and collecting merit badges. As part of the Air Force Strategic Air Command (SAC) we regularly held mock drills which kept us ready for the real thing. Your local emergency services are doing the same. In today's post 9/11 world it makes sense to "Be Prepared".

Take a minute and think back about how you personally felt when you first heard the news of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. For me it was shocking disbelief, followed by sorrow for those innocent victims, firemen and policemen who lost their lives, and then a patriotic sense of what can I do to help. I was very proud of the amateur volunteers who were there at ground zero supporting the recovery effort. They were prepared.

There are many instances where the amateur community has answered the call when a disaster strikes. Every year you read articles in QST and CQ about them or you see them posted on the ARRL web site. Ask yourself if you are as prepared as they were if a disaster strikes our area.

How well is your equipment working? Is your shack or portable equipment capable of providing useful emergency communication? At the very least do you get on the air to test your equipment by checking into one of our club sponsored HF or VHF nets? My first attempted to check in to our VHF net since I moved with a portable operation failed miserably last week. I need to get prepared. If you can answer yes to these questions, good, because being prepared for emergencies is one of the reasons the FCC issues amateur radio licenses.

One of my goals this year is to get STARS ready to provide emergency communications support to local disaster preparedness offices. Your past president Bob Koster KA2WYE was instrumental in laying the ground work to make this happen. I'm happy to say that Bob has accepted the position of STARS emergency disaster preparedness chairman and is an active member of ARES/RACES. In the coming months we will be hosting programs about ARES/RACES, emergency traffic handling, emergency disaster preparedness, and SkyWarn. It is my hope that many of you will become card carrying ARES/RACES members and learn traffic handling skills.

This is an opportunity for STARS to demonstrate that we can provide the public and our communities with emergency communications. Look over your equipment and check in to our HF and VHF nets on a regular basis to test your operation and net participation skills. Be prepared.

Keith Patterson KC2DGC STARS President

Hamburg Sno-Fest 2004

The STARS Nike Base Club Station was opened on Saturday, February 7 as part of the Hamburg Sno-Fest 2004.

Members visiting the club station during the day included Keith KC2DGC, Bruce KC2GJX, Scott KB2KOL, Bob KA2WYE, John Sr. KB2VW C, Jack KB2ESM, Bob WB2YSJ, Rich KI2X, John K2CF and Terry K2OO.

Bruce and his wife again provided some great chili for all to enjoy. Hot dog roll-ups, cake, bread & butter, pretzels, coffee and pop were also available.

We started out working some SSB by pointing the beam towards Europe. We worked a station in Croatia and then had a nice QSO with a new ham in England who had only had his license for 2 months.



We then turned the beam to the west and worked several stations participating in the Minnesota QSO Party contest. Strangely, we heard N2CU calling for Minnesota stations for the contest and couldn't resist calling him when he told one of the stations that he was in the Buffalo area. Turns out that it was Tom in North Boston. We told him that he was making a great trip from North Boston to Hamburg! Tom was familiar with the location of our club station.

Some of the guys then switched over to CW and tested out a Vibroplex bug that Bob WA2YSJ brought with him. They worked several stations including one in Brazil.

Switching back to SSB, we had a nice talk with Virg KH6BBC in Waianae, Hawaii. This is on the island of Oahu, northwest of Honolulu. Virg knew where Hamburg was because he had visited his daughter when she lived in Olean. Needless to say, Virg did not have any snow at his home!

As we finished our talk with Virg, a station called us and asked if we could move down 3 KHz since Virg held the original frequency. We agreed and moved down the band. We thought the station calling us was a K4, but we were having some trouble hearing him. We asked him where he was located, and surprisingly, he said that he was in Australia. Then we realized that he was a VK4 station. He was running a small station, but by swinging the beam, we were able to get him up to a 52-53. He said that we were a

strong 59 into Australia. Since it was summer in Australia, he had no snow either!

All in all, it was a great day! Having worked 4 continents (Europe, North America, South America and Australia), we showed that we work we did last fall to the feedlines and antennas was well worth it.

73, Terry K2OO

ARRL International DX Contest (Phone)

STARS Nike Base Club station will be activated so members can participate in the 2004 ARRL International DX Contest (Phone). The contest runs from 7:00 PM EST Friday, March 5 to 7:00 PM EST Sunday, March 7.

This is one of the big international contests of the year where US and Canadian hams try to work as many amateur stations in as many DXCC countries as possible on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 meters.

Plans are now to have the station open Friday night beginning at 7 PM and Saturday beginning at 11 AM. Closing times on Friday and Saturday and any possible Sunday hours are uncertain at this time. Contact Bruce KC2GJX on his cell phone 432-1988 during the contest for latest information on operating hours.

The Greater Buffalo "Winter" Hamfest

Sunday, March 7, 2004

Sponsored by the Lancaster Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Location: Main Transit FD Hall
6777 Main St., Williamsville, NY
1/16 mile west of Transit Rd. (Rte. 78)
Talk-in 147.255 MHz PL 107.2

All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast !
Prizes * Drawings * Commercial Vendors * Ham Gear
Opens at 7:30 AM
Admission : only \$6
Tables: \$12

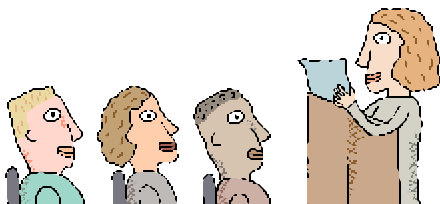
Info & Pre-sale Tickets by Phone: Jim (716) 542-4201
Table Reservations by Phone: Chuck (716) 825-7097
Pre-Sale Tickets & Table reservations:
<http://larc.hamgate.net/>

STARS Meeting Programs

STARS needs ideas for programs for monthly meetings. While most of our programs have an amateur radio basis, other topics are also possible.

We also need to locate speakers for our meetings.

Perhaps you have heard a speaker at some other organization's meeting that you enjoyed. If so, let us know. Of course, you may not need to look around for a speaker for our meetings. How about you? All we need is about 20-30 minutes on a subject that you know something about and could share with our members. You will be surprised how fast that time goes. You don't have to be an expert on the subject. Think about it and you can probably come up with a subject that you would be comfortable presenting.



Ham Radio "Personalities to be W1AW Contest Ops:

ARRL Life Members Joe Walsh, WB6ACU, of the band The Eagles, and ham radio audio expert and manufacturer Bob Heil, K9EID, of Heil Sound will be on hand at Maxim Memorial station W1AW during the March 6-7 weekend to operate the ARRL International DX Contest (SSB) <<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2004/intldx.html>>. ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, says Walsh--a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member and Eagles guitarist and vocalist--and Heil will be available to work zero-point contacts with US stations during the DX contest. Walsh is a major benefactor of the ARRL Education and Technology Program <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/tbp/>>. He and Heil will be part of a multioperator team that will include Henderson as well as ARRL HQ staffers Dave Patton, NN1N, Mark Spencer, WA8SME, and Mary Hobart, K1MMH, among others. A special W1AW QSL card featuring a photo of Walsh and Heil will be available for those working W1AW during the event. Enclose a SASE when requesting a card. W1AW will not begin DX contest operations until regularly scheduled bulletin and code practice transmissions have ended sometime early Saturday, March 6 (UTC). It's anticipated that W1AW will be on the air for the rest of the contest period, which ends at 2400 March 7, although Walsh and Heil will only operate March 6. Walsh and Heil will tour ARRL Headquarters March 5. It will mark Walsh's first visit to HQ. The ARRL Letter 2/27/04

Custom QSL Cards

What is on the QSL cards that you send out? Maybe there's your call sign in a nice big headline font and maybe an outline of your state. Those are OK for everyday purposes, but have you wished you had something better to send out for those special occasions?

Now that computers, photo imaging software, digital cameras, scanners, and photo-quality color inkjet printers are more common in the homes of many hams, the chance to produce your own custom QSL card may be here.

QRZ.COM recently ran a news article entitled, "YOUR UNIQUE QSL CARDS! SHOW THEM HERE!" You can see it at <http://www.qrz.com>. Check for the article title under the Older News section in the right column of the home page.



Many hams have added photos of their personal QSL cards, and some of them are really great. They show their loved ones, airplanes, ships (even the Titanic), horses, dogs, Dxpeditions, 9/11 memorials, light houses, landscapes, sports teams, travel photos, motorcycles, cartoon characters, pretty ladies, and all sorts of other things.

The people displaying their cards have shown great personal creativity. Check them out, and you may starting getting ideas of what you would like to put on your own custom QSL card.

73, Terry K200

STARS Board of Directors

President	Keith Patterson	KC2DGC
Past President	Bob Koster	KA2WYE
Vice President	Scott Barto	KB2KOL
Treasurer	John Cullum, Jr.	KB2ESM
Fin. Secretary	Judy Levan	N2TEZ
Secretary	John Crawford, Sr.	KB2VWC
Director		
Director	Bruce Settlemyer	KC2GJX

AMATEUR RADIO EXAMINATIONS

STARS will be holding test sessions on 3/13, 5/8 and 7/10 in 2004 at Grace Lutheran Church (McKinley Pkwy. and Newton Road) in Hamburg. All candidates should report to the church by 9 AM. Walk-ins are allowed, but pre-registering will reduce time at exams. For information or to pre-register for STARS tests, contact Terry Rockhold K2OO at 656-0865.

Lancaster ARC will be holding test sessions on the third Wednesday of each month at the Lancaster ARC Club House, 525 Pavement Road, Lancaster. For information on or to preregister for Lancaster exams, call Peter Orendorf AB2KG 662-0096 or e-mail him at fouroz1@aol.com. Pre-registration is required.

ARATS will be holding test sessions on 3/6, 4/3, 5/1 and 6/5 in 2004 at the North Tonawanda Fire Headquarters at 495 Zimmerman St. For information on ARATS exams, call Vic Gadzik K2YW at 694-9738.

PROS normally holds test sessions at 10 AM on the third Saturday of the month at the Sardinia Historical Society Building, Savage Road off Rte. 39 in Sardinia, NY. For information, contact Pat Murray NW2I at 652-8178.

Some exams do not allow walk-ins, so call ahead and make a reservation.

FCC Proposes Rules for BPL

(Continued from page 1)

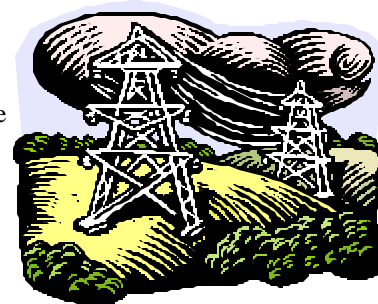
parties regarding the interference potential of Access BPL," the NPRM declares. "Amateur operators and amateur organizations in general are opposed to Access BPL and advocate emission limits that are lower than the existing Part 15 limits."

Still, the NPRM concedes, Amateur Radio operations "are likely to present a difficult challenge in the deployment of Access BPL in cases where amateurs use high-gain outdoor antennas that are located near power lines." Noting that power line noise already presents a significant problem for hams, the FCC said, "we therefore would expect that, in practice, many amateurs already orient their antennas to minimize the reception of emissions from nearby electric power lines."

The NPRM goes on to point out that because BPL has the capability to stay clear of specific frequencies, BPL providers can simply "avoid the use of amateur frequencies when in close proximity to amateur outdoor antennas." The

NPRM also briefly mentions the possibility of interference to BPL systems from Amateur Radio, an issue ARRL and others raised in their comments on last April's Notice of Inquiry on BPL.

The NPRM emphasizes that under the proposed rules, operators of Access BPL systems would be responsible for eliminating any harmful interference that may occur. The FCC says it believes current Part 15 emission limits for carrier current systems --in conjunction with certain additional requirements specific to Access BPL-- "will be adequate to ensure that existing radio operations are protected against harmful interference."



Sumner suggested that, with licensed services and government users taking up large portions of the HF spectrum, protecting all licensed HF users could prove to be a nightmare for BPL providers. He noted, too, that while the FCC maintains that licensed services must be protected, the proposed rules place the burden of initiating corrective action on the shoulders of the licensed services. "And as a practical matter, the FCC's proposed rules offer no protection at all to mobile and portable stations," he added.

Sumner also said the ARRL would continue to combat the "misconception" that BPL systems are viable as a "last mile" broadband technology for rural dwellers. "In low-density areas, the economics just don't work," he said.

The NPRM is available on the FCC Web site in Microsoft Word format <http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-04-29A1.doc> or as an Adobe PDF file <http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-04-29A1.pdf>.

Interested parties may file detailed comments on the NPRM via the main FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) <<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>>. The comment deadline is 45 days after the NPRM has been published in The Federal Register, and that is not expected to happen for another week or two. The FCC also is accepting brief comments on the NPRM via its ECFS Express page <<http://gullfoss2.fcc.gov/ecfs/Upload/>>.

Additional information about BPL and Amateur Radio is on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/>>. To support the League's efforts in this area, visit the ARRL's secure BPL Web site <<https://www.arrl.org/forms/development/donations/bpl/>>.

The ARRL Letter 2/27/04



STARS



CLUB REPEATERS

The club repeater (WB2ELW/R) is located near Colden, NY (147.09/.69 output/input, with a PL of 107.2 Hz). Use a PL of 141.3 Hz for the Nike Base remote receiver.

STARS honorary southern repeater (KE2VW/R) is in Arkwright, NY (146.67/.07 out/in, with a PL of 107.2 Hz).

The club UHF repeater is located near Colden, NY (442.325 MHz with a PL access of 107.2 Hz.)

CLUB WEB PAGES

The club has a home site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.wb2elw.com>

CLUB MEETINGS

Club meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of the month at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect Ave. at Hawkins Ave.) at 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome.

Board meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Nike Base Club Station at 7:30 PM and are open to all club members.

CLUB HF STATIONS

The club Nike Base HF Station (WB2ELW) is located on Lakeview Road 1.75 miles east of Route 20 next to the Hamburg Town Arena. A second club HF station is located at the Hamburg Youth Center.

STARS

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