



Watts News



Monthly Newsletter of the
Olympia Amateur Radio Society
P.O. Box 2861, Olympia, WA 98507

May 2006
email: oars@comcast.net

Edited by KB6LE (George Lanning) 360-866-2185
website: <http://olyham.org>

Washington Hams needed in BPL fight

We need your help in our ongoing fight against Broadband over Power Line (BPL) interference. As you may have heard, the ARRL was successful in obtaining language in a U.S. House of Representatives bill, HR 5252, requiring that the FCC study and report on the interference potential of BPL systems. The bill was adopted by the House Commerce Committee and will be on its way to the House floor for a vote shortly.

Now we must turn our attention to the Senate, where similar language is needed. Senator Maria Cantwell is a member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, which is now holding hearings on telecommunications legislation. We need her support of language addressing the BPL interference issue when the Senate bill is marked up in the committee on June 8.

Please write to her today. A sample letter can be found below and on the OARS website, <http://olyham.org>. Please personalize it as much as you can and send it, preferably by FAX to the number shown. Please also send

a copy to the ARRL's Government Relations firm:

Attention: Eric Heis, KI4NFC
Chwat & Company, Inc.
625 Slaters Lane, Suite 103
Alexandria, VA 22314
Fax (703) 684-7594
eric.heis@chwatco.com

If you can't send it by FAX, use regular mail — but please BE SURE to mail a copy to Eric Heis so he can hand carry it to the Hill. Regular mail to members of Congress is seriously delayed. Email is not recommended for this particular project.

Thank you for your assistance and support. If you want to email me in reply to this message, please use the email address shown below.

73,

Jim Fenstermaker, K9JF, Director, Northwestern Division ARRL — The National Association for Amateur Radio

k9jf@arrl.org

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Sample Letter to Senator Cantwell

[DATE]

Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Via FAX 202-228-0514

Dear Senator Cantwell,

I am writing as one of the more than 25,000 federally licensed radio amateurs of Washington to request your help with legislation in the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. During the June 8th markup of S. 2686, the Communications, Consumer's Choice, and Broadband Deployment Act of 2006, please support an amendment directing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct a comprehensive study of the potential of "broadband over power line" (BPL) systems to interfere with public safety and other licensed radio services. Appropriate language drafted by the ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio, reads:

"Within 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Federal Communications Commission shall conduct, and submit to the House Energy and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, a study of the interference potential of broadband over power line systems leading to improved rules to prevent the deployment of systems having a potential to cause destructive interference to radio communication systems."

A similar requirement that the FCC study and report on the interference potential of BPL systems is included in HR 5252 as reported out of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

BPL utilizes electric power lines to serve as the conductors of the broadband signals. Unfortunately, because the power lines are not shielded, they also act as antennas and radiate the signals into the air. These radiated signals will interfere with radio receivers tuned to the same frequency range. BPL has only been deployed to a very limited extent, but Amateur Radio already is experiencing severe BPL interference that the FCC has been unable or unwilling to correct. Unlike BPL, other methods of providing broadband

Internet services to consumers, such as cable, DSL, wireless, satellite and Fiber to the Home, do not pollute the radio spectrum.

Not all BPL systems cause widespread interference to radio. The problem is that the FCC rules do not distinguish between BPL systems with a high potential for interference and those that are more benign. The FCC allows both kinds of systems to be deployed. This places an unreasonable burden on radio users, who must deal with the consequences of the interference. It is also unfair to the responsible BPL companies that have addressed the interference issue effectively but must compete with the spectrum polluters.

The reason we need your help is that the FCC continues to resist growing evidence that its rules are inadequate to protect radiocommunication systems, including those relied upon by First Responders, from radio spectrum pollution caused by BPL systems. The FCC needs to objectively and carefully review this evidence and adopt rules that will keep interference from BPL within reasonable bounds. Unfortunately, not only has the FCC shown no inclination to do that, the agency so far has failed even to enforce its existing rules in specific, well documented instances of harmful interference.

Because we need no infrastructure in order to communicate, the Amateur Radio Service is the only 100-percent fail-safe emergency communications resource in the world. The importance of this capability is documented on page 177 of the recent report of the Select Bipartisan Committee of the House of Representatives, "A Failure of Initiative," on Hurricane Katrina. Amateur Radio is included in the list of "What Went Right" in the White House report, "The Federal Response to Katrina: Lessons Learned." Amateur Radio is one of the few communications services that succeeded in Katrina's aftermath. Interference from BPL emissions will significantly disrupt this unique capability.

Please require the FCC to protect radio services from BPL interference. Thousands of radio amateurs will be grateful for your support.

[Signature]

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Singing

Joe's wife likes to sing so she decided to join the church choir. From time to time she would practice while she was in the kitchen preparing dinner. Whenever she would start in on a song Joe would head outside to the porch.

His wife, with hurt feelings, said, "What's the matter, Joe? Don't you like my singing?" Joe replied, "Honey, I love your singing, but I just want to make sure the neighbors know I'm not beating you."



Treasurer's Report

As of 4/30/06

GENERAL FUND (checking account)

Previous balance	\$ 2,841.33
Income	0.54
Expenses	140.05
Ending balance	2,701.82

REPEATER / PACKET FUND (savings account)

Previous balance	\$ 993.09
Income	0.00
Expenses	0.00
Ending balance	993.09

— Ed Fitzgerald, N7WW, Treasurer



Reality

I realized that my six year old grandson had been watching too many reality TV shows the day we attended a cousin's wedding.

As the four bridesmaids walked down the aisle toward the front of the synagogue, he turned to me and asked, "Is this where the groom decides which one he wants to marry?"

— from David, ZL3AI, via packet



Wedding

Although we were being married in New Hampshire, I wanted to add a touch of my home state, Kansas, to the wedding. My fiancée, explaining this to friend, said that we were planning to have wheat rather than rice thrown after the ceremony. Our friend thought for a moment. Then he said solemnly, "It's a good thing she's not from Idaho."



OARS Net check-ins

The following stations checked in on the OARS General Information Net one or more times in the month of April, 2006:

AA7YD	AB7PS	AC7PT	K5IN
K7GUH	K7KIP	K7TAG	K7VRE
KB6LE	KB7DFL	KC7CKO	KC7FEE
KC7LA	KD7AVI	KD7CZN	KD7ISO
KD7TQW	KD7UJH	KD7YXY	KE7BYZ
KE7EJJ	KI7SS	N6TPT	N7GGX
N7IVM	N7WH	N7WK	N7WW
NX6W	W7SIX	WB7ROZ	WC7I

Net control stations reporting for the month were WC7I and KB7DFL. Thank you for your support!!

The net meets at 7:30 every Tuesday evening on the 3 linked OARS repeaters: 147.36, 224.46, and 441.40 MHz. All Hams are invited to check in.



Care Package

Dan,

Just want to let you know that the package arrived safe and sound. Wow! Thank-you so much for all the items. They are greatly appreciated. It's awesome to see the expression of support.

It was good PR for Amateur Radio too — I got to explain what Amateur Radio is to several people on the team here. Now they know what a "Ham" is. :-)
We'll be sending a more formal response as soon as it's ready. :-)

73, Ed (K6EKB)

P.S. The request to obtain an Iraqi Amateur Operator permit seems to have gotten lost somewhere. I have some information about the Iraqi Amateur Radio Society here in Baghdad from the ARRL HQ International Rep, but due to the club's location and my occupation it's going to be difficult if not impossible to approach them. If I can find a way to get the permit I'll let you folks know — the next step would be to find a way to set up a station and operate...

IS1 Ed Braaten
Intel Analyst
MNF-I JIATF-HVI
APO AE, 09342



Oregon Radio Amateur Dies in Tower Mishap

Well-known DXer Ron J. Spears, W7IX, of Klamath Falls, Oregon, died May 14 when an Amateur Radio tower he was working on in Northern California broke and toppled. He was 44.

News accounts say Spears, an ARRL DXCC Honor Roll member (CW), was attempting to retrieve a 40-meter beam from atop a 170-foot tower near MacDoel, California, when the structure collapsed and fell to the ground with Spears still attached by his safety belt. He was pronounced dead at the scene. His father, Aubrey, was assisting on the ground and witnessed the accident.

Spears had built the tower for its previous owner, Ray Balch, K6VX (SK), and used to do all of Balch's antenna work, so he had prior experience working on the structure. According to his father, Spears had first inspected the tower for safety. Spears earlier had bought the antenna from the current property owner and was attempting to bring it down in pieces. The heavy-duty support structure broke as Spears was about 10 feet from the top.

One unofficial report says that when Spears removed the antenna, it slipped and struck one of the top guy wires, starting the tower swaying until the guy broke. Another account says the beam "got away from" Spears and its huge boom struck

and broke the tower guy. All but the lower 40 feet of the structure reportedly fell.

In addition to his father, survivors include his mother, Oletta, N7OHO, and a sister. Spears was a member of the ARRL and of the Southern Oregon Amateur Packet Radio Association — News media reports; The Daily DX; Rod Ingram, WC7N.

— from the ARRL Letter



FCC Won't Say Publicly When it Will Act on Morse Code Issue

All bets appear to be off as to when the FCC might make a final decision on deleting the Morse code requirement. Last July, an FCC Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O) in WT Docket 05-235 proposed to eliminate the Element 1 (5 WPM) Morse code requirement for all license classes. Most observers expected the Commission to release a Report and Order (R&O) to that effect by the end of this year, but even that timetable could prove optimistic, based on what the Commission will say publicly. Before tackling the Morse proceeding, the FCC wants to wrap up another important

OARS OFFICERS FOR 2006			
President	Lee Chambers	KI7SS	866-0236
Vice President	Sharon Kinder	N7SSD	943-6187
Secretary	Tom Bohon	KE7EJJ	786-4211
Treasurer	Ed Fitzgerald	N7WW	491-2289
Member at Large	Larry Watkinson	KC7CKO	943-4352
KEY CONTACTS			
RFI Committee	Ghery Pettit	N6TPT	412-1340
Repeater Committee	Larry Watkinson	KC7CKO	943-4352
Club License Trustee	Duane Braford	WB7ROZ	412-1902
Information Net	Duane Braford	WB7ROZ	412-1902
ARES Net	Tom Dennis	KA4VVA	786-5500
OLY Packet Node	Larry Ikenberry	K7APT	943-7208
	Rick Taylor	K7CAH	943-6793
Packet BBS	George Lanning	KB6LE	866-2185
Newsletter	George Lanning	KB6LE	866-2185
OARS Website	George Lanning	KB6LE	866-2185
Classes	Lee Chambers	KI7SS	866-0236
License Exams	Klaus Neubert	AC7MG	753-1493
Equip. Custodian	Larry Watkinson	KC7CKO	943-4352
REPEATERS:	147.36 MHz	224.46 MHz	441.40 MHz
PACKET:	145.07 MHz OLY Node 40 BBS		
Membership is open to all interested radio amateurs. Yearly dues are: \$20 for individual, \$25 for family.			

Amateur Radio proceeding, WT Docket 04-140, the so-called “omnibus” or “phone band expansion” proceeding. Responding to an ARRL inquiry, FCC personnel would not go on the record and declined even to hazard a ballpark guess on when the FCC might act on either Amateur Radio proceeding.

“They’re at different points in the process,” an FCC staffer said, refraining from saying anything that might suggest a commitment. “One is farther along in the review chain than the other.” The staff member indicated that the “omnibus” proceeding is “way ahead” of the Morse proceeding in the WTB pipeline.

The FCC staffers attempted to assure ARRL that the WTB has not been sitting on its hands. “It takes a while to plow through 4000 comments,” one said, referring to the huge volume of opinions filed in the Morse docket. “It’s not being neglected.” The staff member did allow that WTB staff had completed its comment review in the Morse proceeding but wouldn’t say when it might see the light of day. “I’d hesitate to say,” one staff member demurred. Neither would even say whether the WTB expected to conclude either proceeding by the end of 2006.

“They should probably start learning code,” one staffer advised those waiting for the FCC to drop the Morse requirement before upgrading, noting that a Certificate of Successful Completion of Exam (CSCE) for a written exam element is only good for a year. Even after the FCC goes public with its decision on Morse code, still more time is likely to pass before any new rules go into effect, the staff member pointed out.

Earlier this year an WTB staffer, speaking without attribution, told ARRL, “We certainly hope to release WT Docket 05-235 sometime this year, but we’re not making any predictions at this time. We certainly are not saving up any big announcements for Dayton Hamvention.”

Bill Cross, W3TN, the FCC Public Safety and Critical Infrastructure Division staff member who typically addresses Amateur Radio-related proceedings during Dayton Hamvention’s FCC forum, won’t be attending this year’s show.

When the FCC does act, no one’s expecting any major surprises: The Commission appears poised to simply drop the Morse requirement for all Amateur Radio license classes as it proposed last summer. Beyond that, the FCC turned away several other petitions, including proposals to create a new entry-level license class.

Any FCC decision to eliminate the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for HF access would have no impact on either the current HF CW-only subbands or on the CW

privileges of Amateur Radio licensees. Current Technician licensees who have not passed Element 1 will not gain HF access if the FCC drops the Morse requirement.

The “omnibus” Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in WT Docket 04-140, released in April 2004, consolidated a dozen petitions for rulemaking, some dating back to 2001. The Commission has proposed to go along with the ARRL’s Novice refarming plan aimed at reallocating the current Novice/Tech Plus subbands to expand portions of the 80, 40 and 15 meter phone bands. The FCC also agreed with an ARRL proposal to extend privileges in the current General CW-only HF subbands to present Novice and Tech Plus licensees (or Technicians with Element 1 credit).

Among other things, the FCC also proposed to essentially do away with its rules prohibiting the manufacture and marketing to Amateur Radio operators of amplifiers capable of operation on 12 and 10 meters. And it further proposed to adopt a rule to limit the number of applications a licensee may file on a given day for the same vanity call sign.

— from the ARRL Letter

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What Hotel Brochures Really Mean

- Old world charm: No bath
- Tropical: Rainy
- Majestic setting: A long way from town
- Options galore: Nothing is included in the itinerary
- Secluded hideaway: Impossible to find or get to
- Pre-registered rooms: Already occupied
- Explore on your own: Pay for it yourself
- Knowledgeable trip hosts: They’ve flown in an airplane before
- No extra fees: No extras
- Nominal fee: Outrageous charge
- Standard: Sub-standard
- Deluxe: Standard
- Cozy: Small
- All the amenities: Two free shower caps
- Plush: Top and bottom sheets

- Gentle breezes: Occasional gale-force winds
- Light and airy: No air conditioning
- Picturesque: Theme park nearby
- Concierge: Stand with tourist brochures
- Continental breakfast: Free muffin

— from David, ZL3AI, via packet

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FCC WRC-03 amateur rule changes now in effect

Several FCC Part 97 Amateur Radio rule revisions to implement changes agreed to at the international level during World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) now are in effect. The FCC Order, released in January, affects 97.111, Authorized transmissions; 97.113, Prohibited transmissions; 97.115, Third party communications, and 97.117, International communications. The Federal Register published the changes May 3.

“These amendments will ensure that the Commission’s Amateur Radio Service rules conform to Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations adopted at the 2003 World Radiocommunication Conference, and will further the Commission’s ongoing efforts to streamline its Amateur Service Rules,” the FCC Order said. “The overall effect of this action is to update the Part 97 Amateur Radio Service rules in the Code of Federal Regulations to conform to now-effective international agreements.”

The FCC Order revises:

* 97.111(a)(1) to permit “transmissions necessary to exchange messages with other stations in the Amateur Service, except those in any country whose administration has notified the ITU that it objects to such communications. The FCC will issue public notices of current arrangements for international communications.” The old language permitted communication among amateur stations in different countries “except those in any country whose administration has given notice that it objects to such communications.” The FCC said the change does not prejudice its proposal to

amend 97.111(a)(2) to clarify that amateur stations may, at all times and on all authorized channels, transmit communications necessary to meet essential needs and to facilitate relief actions.

* 97.115(a)(2) to facilitate the transmission of international communications on behalf of third parties in emergency or disaster-relief situations, whether or not a third-party agreement is in place between the US and the countries involved. The revision now permits communication with any non-US station “when transmitting emergency or disaster relief communications” as well as with any non-US station “whose administration has made arrangements with the United States to allow amateur stations to be used for transmitting international communications on behalf of third parties.” The revised rule further provides that no station may transmit third-party traffic other than emergency or disaster relief communications to a station in a country lacking a third-party arrangement. Still excepted from the prohibition is any third party eligible to be the control operator of an amateur station.

* 97.113(a)(4) to prohibit amateur stations exchanging messages with amateur stations in other countries from making transmissions that are encoded for the purpose of obscuring their meaning, except for control signals exchanged between Earth command stations and space stations in the Amateur-Satellite service, something Part 97 already provides for. The old rule referred to the use of “codes and ciphers.” The same rule also already prohibits transmitting music, communications intended to facilitate a criminal act, obscene or indecent words or language and false or deceptive messages, signals or identification.

* 97.117 to state that amateur stations may transmit communications incidental to the purposes of the Amateur Service and to remarks of a personal character.

The FCC also revised 97.3 and 97.309 to update the definition of International Morse code and of various digital codes in the amateur rules to reflect changes in the international Radio Regulations.

— ARRL Bulletin ARLB008

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June 2006

OARS CALENDAR

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OARS Membership Application

" New _____ Date _____
" Renewal _____ ARRL member ? _____
Call Sign _____ License class _____
Name _____
Address _____
City, St. _____ ZIP _____
Home phone _____
Day phone _____
Email _____

Annual Dues: \$20 (\$25 family) — first year prorated by number of months.

If family membership, please attach above information for each family member.

Send to: OARS
PO Box 2861
Olympia, WA 98507

O A R S Meeting

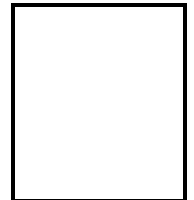
Wednesday, May 24, 7 p.m.

"Field Day Strategy"
Balloon Antenna Project
South Bay Fire Station
3506 Shincke Road NE

An Invitation

If you are a Ham who has received this newsletter, but are not yet a member of OARS, you are cordially invited to join us. Submit the membership application at the left to OARS at PO Box 2861, Olympia WA 98507, or bring it to an OARS meeting and see Treasurer Ed Fitzgerald.

OARS
PO BOX 2861
OLYMPIA WA 98507



If the date on your address label is marked in red, it is time to renew!