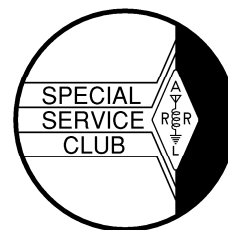




SIGMA



de NINC

March 2009 Volume 18 Number 3

This Month's Meeting

Next club meeting is Thursday March 19th. The program will be the application of VHF antenna modeling by Les N1SV.

No volunteer has come forward to run the Monthly Adopt A Highway road cleanups. We have received the agreement letter from the state. It has to be returned to them before the road cleanups start in April. We need a volunteer prior to that time if we are to continue with this activity.

Meeting site info and maps on the back page and the NVARC Website.

Wear your badge to the meeting so new members can tell your name and you can introduce yourself to them. It may be worth your while.

Last Month's Meeting

Last month's meeting presentation was The Past, Present and Future of Amateur Radio, It isn't a Technical Hobby Anymore.

Bob, W1XP, Stan, KD1LE, John, KK1X, Peter, N1ZRG, Dwight, AA1MT, Larry KB1ESR, Rod WA1TAC, Skip N1NKR2, Russ, WR1Y, Dennis K1LGQ, Erik W1ZBT, Jim N8VIM, Tom K1NNJ, Bruce K1BG, Bo WA1QYM, Gary K1YTS, Jim, W1TRC, Pete KB1LGZ, Joel W1JMM

FT8900 Programming

I have updated the "standard" frequency matrix for the FT8900 mobile radio programming software. The current frequency matrix is dated 090304. If your radio has been programmed in the last few years it has the date code in the alphanumeric display of memory location number one. If you tune to

memory one and press the LOW button for two seconds the numeric frequency display will change to alphanumeric. The date code is year, month, and day. The previous version was 080225.

If you cannot select memory number one it means you programmed the radio yourself or it was programmed with the standard matrix before 2007.

I will bring the computer and programming cables to the meeting. If you want to get your rig memory updated bring it and the power cable.

Need a Ride?

Do you need a ride to the club meetings? Do you know someone who does? If you do please contact Bob W1XP 978-448-6559 and leave a message. We'll see that you get to the meeting.

PSLIST

Every event needs communications volunteers

April

18 Townsend Lions Canoe Race
19 Adopt-a-Highway
26 Groton Race, Ralph KD1SM

May

17 Parker Road Race, John KK1X

July

3-5 Longsjo Classic, Ralph KD1SM
25 Alzheimer's Memory Ride, Ralph KD1SM

We are starting to fill in the 2009 events calendar. Seen www.n1nc.org/Events

Board Meeting

Elections coming up in April. If your interested in taking a position see one of the current officers.

Field Day is a year off, I mean six months, sorry three months away. We need to start planning and get a Coordinator.

Committee meeting for Groton Road Race attended by Stan KD1LE.

Is anyone interested in organizing a club table for Nearfest?

Discussed upcoming meeting presentations.

Ralph gave the Treasurers report. Starting up the book raffle with some new books.

How did everyone do on the Emergency preparedness handout handed out at the past meeting.

Need more local content needed for the newsletter. They can be general interest, reviews of equipment, stories on activities, or subjects like how you got into Ham Radio.

Road Cleanup needs better turn outs. Do we want to sign up in the spring? We need someone new to run the cleanup for 2009 if we are going to continue. We have received the letter from the state but have no volunteer.

Adopt A Highway

We need someone to run the road cleanups if we are to continue. Stan has managed the cleanups since they started more than ten years ago. We will need a volunteer before we commit to MassHighways in the spring.

Also we need a minimum of six people by MassHighways rules for a cleanup. We would like eight as that allows us to cover our 2 miles in an hour. The rules say we need to work in pairs. With four pairs each group walks one quarter mile out and back. With that plan we are easily done in an hour. Think about it this way. If everyone in the club did one cleanup a year we would have our eight people for the eight cleanups just doing one cleanup each. No more cleanups until April.

Stan

Treasurers Report

Income for February was \$65 in membership renewals, \$2 from ARRL renewals, \$5.72 in bank interest, and \$5 for a Worked All Massachusetts Counties certificate request. Expenses were \$50.40 for newsletter postage (3 months of stamps purchased) and \$170.65 for ARRL publications for the meeting raffle, leaving a net expense of \$143.33 for the month.

Current balances:

General fund	\$4,049.35
Community fund	\$2,699.41

As of 12 March we have 48 members who are current with their dues and 17 renewals outstanding. Please check the member roster that is circulated at the monthly meeting if you do not remember your renewal date. Your membership date also appears on your newsletter mailing label. You can always ask Ralph if you are in doubt.

Remember; the Club gets a commission on any new ARRL memberships or membership renewals that you submit through Ralph. Checks should be made payable to NVARC so that our commission can be deducted before we forward your membership to Newington.

Ralph KD1SM

ARRL Letter

FCC SPECIAL COUNSEL LAURA SMITH VISITS ARRL HQ

Laura Smith visited ARRL Headquarters on March 5 and 6, her first official visit as Special Counsel. Smith was named to the position earlier this year, filling the vacancy created when Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, retired in 2008; Hollingsworth served in that position for more than 10 years as the Commission's enforcement watchdog over the Amateur Radio Service <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/07/03/10198>>.

While at Headquarters, Smith visited with various departments, such as the Lab, the Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC), the Regulatory Information Branch and Membership and Volunteer Programs (MVP).

Spending all Thursday afternoon with ARRL Lab staff, Smith discussed power line noise and how it can affect Amateur Radio. "Since Riley had retired last year, very little had been done at the FCC with

regard to the power line noise enforcement," said ARRL Laboratory Engineer and power line noise expert Mike Gruber, W1MG. "The Lab staff discussed the status of the ARRL-FCC Cooperative Agreement on power line noise with Laura and how best to proceed forward
<<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2002/07/26/3/?nc=1>>. While the ARRL is not in the enforcement business, the Cooperative Agreement was an attempt to help the FCC focus its limited resources in the area where they are most needed -- enforcement. The ARRL's goal is to help resolve as many of these cases as possible with technical and other help before they ever get to the FCC."

Gruber also briefed Smith on some power line noise basics, including a demonstration of some professional grade locating equipment. Using a Model T spark coil as a noise source, Gruber was able to show Smith how a utility can locate power line noise - in many cases, without too much difficulty.

According to ARRL Regulatory Information Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, the FCC committed to Smith visiting the ARRL once she accepted the position. "I think this visit has been a very productive two days. We are getting to know Laura, and she is getting to know our organization and what we, as the ARRL, can do to help her make her job easier to help the amateur community as a whole," Henderson said. "I just kind of played tour guide and facilitated the visit, introducing her to all the departments here at Headquarters."

Smith, a lawyer, is no stranger to the FCC or Amateur Radio. She began her legal career with the Commission, working in the Mass Media Bureau and Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB), working with Senior System Analyst Bill Cross, W3TN; she also served as Deputy Division Chief of the Public Safety and Private Wireless Division. Smith also knew Hollingsworth through her father-in-law Richard M. Smith, former Chief of the Field Operations Bureau, at the time responsible for all FCC field engineering and enforcement activities. Richard Smith led many investigations of illegal uses of the radio spectrum, including the successful apprehension of "Captain Midnight" who overrode a satellite television broadcast signal
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_Midnight_%28HBO%29>. Smith also served as Chief of the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology (OET).

"Riley worked for my father-in-law for years," Smith said. "My father-in-law was the Chief of the Field Operations Bureau at the FCC for 25 years. So enforcement is actually something that is a long-standing family tradition. A member of my family --

the Smith family -- has worked at the FCC continuously since 1964: Myself, my husband and my father-in-law."

Calling Hollingsworth "irreplaceable," Smith said what he did for the Commission and for the amateur community was "amazing. He volunteered for that job. He stood up and said, 'I'm an amateur. I love this community and I want to give back to it.' This position needs to be filled by somebody who is interested in doing it long-term. This [job] is not a stepping stone; it's not a short term process. This wouldn't work if I were trying to be Riley. I'm not going to be Riley. We're very different people. But we both have the same goal: To make the amateur community better."

Smith emphasized that an Amateur Radio license is "a privilege, not a right. When you come to the FCC and you sign up for a license and you get that license, you have agreed to abide by those Rules. That is inherent in the application process. As an applicant and a licensee, you have said, 'I will hereby comply with the Rules that have been enacted by the FCC.' So you have said, 'I will adhere to that.' And if you choose not to, then you are subject to losing that privilege."

Smith is not yet a licensed amateur. She said that she will get her license "someday," but that she did not want to get her license just because her job involves Amateur Radio: "I didn't want to come into this job and become a ham, saying, 'I'm getting this job so I'm going to be a ham -- not because I'm interested in being a ham, but because it looks better on paper.' So ultimately I will become a ham." Smith said that her father-in-law, when stationed in the FCC's Field Office in Los Angeles, used to administer the Morse code test to prospective licensees: "So he has challenged me that before I can become an amateur on any level, I must learn Morse code and I must pass the test with him administering the Morse code. So I have a challenge. I am going to begin learning Morse code this summer. He is going to start teaching me, so once I have sufficient proficiency, then he will let me take the [Technician] test."

FCC HAS DONE "LITERALLY NOTHING" TO COMPLY WITH COURT RULING

On February 25 -- 10 months to the day that the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit released its decision on the ARRL's Petition for Review of the FCC's Orders adopting rules governing broadband over power line (BPL) systems
<<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/04/25/10064/?nc=1>> -- ARRL General Counsel, Chris Imlay,

W3KD, sent a letter to FCC Acting Chairman Michael Copps, requesting that the Commission "revisit the BPL rules without further delay, and to comply with the obligations placed on it by the Court" <http://www.arrl.org/news/files/Feb2509_Letter_to_Copps.pdf>. In its April 2008 decision, the Court agreed with the ARRL on two major points and remanded the rules to the Commission. According to Imlay, "to date, literally nothing has been done by the Commission to comply with these instructions."

In its 2008 ruling, the Court did not vacate the Commission's 2004 BPL rules. Imlay said that the ARRL did not request the Court do so, as the current Part 15 rules governing BPL, "inadequate though they are, were slightly preferable to the general application of the Part 15 rules to BPL systems in terms of interference prevention." Imlay said that the FCC's "inaction" since the remand has "served neither BPL deployment, nor Amateur Radio, well."

Imlay pointed out to Copps that without such rules protecting the Amateur Radio Service, Amateur Radio operators have no protection from the interference from BPL systems: "While there are configurations of BPL systems which can adequately reduce the probability of interference ex ante and without significant constraints on BPL deployment, the current BPL rules do not mandate the use of these interference prevention mechanisms."

The Court demanded two things from the FCC in its ruling: release the redacted studies that the Commission relied on for its BPL findings, and provide a "reasoned justification" for an extrapolation factor of 40 Db per decade, or adopt another factor and provide a reasoned explanation for it.

Regarding the redacted studies, the Court ordered the Commission to "make available for notice and comment the unredacted 'technical studies and data that it has employed in reaching [its] decisions' [with respect to BPL]...and shall make them part of the rulemaking record." The FCC used five substantially redacted field studies that the Commission's Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) staff conducted of BPL field trials. To date, these unredacted studies have not been released.

The Court also ordered the FCC to "either provide a reasonable justification for retaining an extrapolation factor of 40 dB per decade for access BPL systems sufficient to indicate that it has grappled with the 2005 studies, or adopt another factor and provide a reasoned explanation for it." The 2005 studies refer to those conducted by the Office of Communications, the FCC's counterpart in the United Kingdom. The ARRL submitted these studies to the Court, along

with the League's own analysis showing that an extrapolation factor closer to 20 dB per decade was more appropriate, as part of the record in its petition for reconsideration of the FCC's BPL Order. The Court said that the FCC "summarily dismissed" this data in a manner that "cannot substitute for a reasoned explanation." The Court also noted that the record in the FCC proceeding included a study by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration that "itself casts doubt on the Commission's decision."

The extrapolation factor pertains to the rate at which radiated emissions from power lines carrying access BPL decay with distance from the power lines, and therefore the extent to which the radiated energy from the lines can interfere with licensed radio services, such as Amateur Radio.

Imlay said that since its 2004 rulemaking in Docket 04-37

<http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-04-245A1.pdf>, BPL technology has "evolved," and the opportunity now presents itself to craft revised BPL rules that address the "actual interference potential of BPL systems while enabling BPL as a broadband delivery or grid management technology." He reminded Copps that eight months ago, ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, and ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, met with representatives from the FCC's OET with a plan for BPL. "The revised regulations suggested by ARRL would be sufficient to reduce the potential interference to the point that it would be practical to address such instances on a case-by-case basis," Imlay said. "Compliance is achievable with present BPL technology without significant limitation on BPL deployment."

Calling the Commission "long overdue" in complying with the Court's "very clear and specific" instructions, Imlay said that the Commission's inaction "cannot be allowed to continue. It is necessary to commence further proceedings in ET Docket 04-37 after making the requisite disclosures, and we respectfully urge the Commission to do so without further delay."

Imlay reminded Copps that on his inauguration day earlier this year, President Barack Obama placed a series of goals on the White House Web site. "Among these," Imlay said, "was the following: 'Restore Scientific Integrity to the White House: Restore the basic principle that government decisions should be based on the best-available, scientifically valid evidence and not on ideological predispositions.' The Commission has the opportunity to implement this goal in this Docket proceeding."

BSA UPDATES RADIO MERIT BADGE REQUIREMENTS

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has updated the requirements needed to earn the Radio merit badge. The new requirements became effective with the publication of Boy Scout Requirements 2009. While no new content has been added to the program, the new merit badge pamphlet features lots of new information -- including color pictures and updated charts and text -- that reflects the changes in the Amateur Radio Service since the last pamphlet update in 2002. Approximately 4000 Radio merit badges are earned each year.

According to ARRL ad hoc Scouting Committee member Larry Wolfgang, WR1B, the new Radio Merit Badge pamphlet had been in the works for some time. "BSA has been replacing all merit badge pamphlets with new booklets using color graphics and more modern presentations," he said. "With attractive color photos and clear text explanations of the requirements, the new merit badge pamphlet is a pleasure for the Scouts to read. The new text is due in large part to the efforts of longtime Radio Merit Badge Counselor and K2BSA National Jamboree Staff member Mike Brown, WB2JWD. I am looking forward to using the new pamphlet to teach Radio merit badge at our Council's Merit-Badge-O-Ree this spring, and to having a supply of the new books available for Scouts during the 2009 summer camp season."

Wolfgang said that the requirements for the badge have been shifted around: "The old Part 4 of Requirement 7(b) Broadcast Radio was pulled out and placed in the main body of the requirements as Requirement 8. In addition, the old Requirement 8 (to visit a radio installation and discuss what types of equipment, how it was used, what types of licenses are required to operate and maintain the equipment, and the purpose of the station) was moved up to Requirement 7, so that now the three options appear as Requirement 9. The main result is one additional full requirement."

ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Director and Chairman of the League's ad hoc Scouting Committee Brian Milesosky, N5ZGT, called the Radio Merit Badge "a perfect avenue to introduce Scouts and Scouters to the wonderful world of ham radio. Ham clubs across the nation should locate a local Boy Scout Troop, secure permission from their Scoutmaster and/or committee to teach the merit badge and deliver an exceptional Radio merit badge class. What the boys -- and their leaders and parents -- will learn in the process is a fair amount of what is part of the Technician license exam, so the next logical step

after a merit badge class is an all-out recruiting effort to get that Troop involved in Amateur Radio. They'll meet new friends and have a great way of communicating while in transit to and from the field, as well as additional peace of mind through an effective means of emergency communications while in the back-country."

For a complete overview of the Boy Scout Radio merit badge, see the Radio merit badge page on the BSA [Web site](http://www.scouting.org/boyscouts/advancementandawards/meritbadges/mb-R_ADO.aspx) <http://www.scouting.org/boyscouts/advancementandawards/meritbadges/mb-R_ADO.aspx>.

HAMS IN AUSTRALIA ASSIST WITH MASSIVE BUSHFIRES

In the Australian state of Victoria, Amateur Radio operators have been activated to provide communications links into towns that have had their normal communications destroyed by the bushfires that have decimated the state. Members of the Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network in Victoria (WICEN (Vic)) <<http://www.vic.wicen.org.au/>> -- Australia's version of ARES -- were activated on February 8, with members being deployed to areas with loss of power and other facilities.

According to the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) <<http://www.wia.org.au/>> -- that country's IARU Member-Society -- authorities and resources in Victoria have been "stretched to the limit." WICEN has been on high alert since the fires started on January 28. On February 11, WICEN (Vic) Secretary Mark Dods, VK3XMU, said, "It now appears that WICEN's role in this emergency is going to be a long hard marathon over an extended period."

The fires -- some of which are believed to have been deliberately set, while at least one fire began due to a lightning strike -- have so far claimed 201 lives, including one firefighter; local police say they do not expect the death toll to go much higher. Covering more than 1100 square miles, the fires have destroyed more than 1800 homes; officials estimate at least 7500 people are now homeless due to the fires. Victoria Premier John Brumby, in speaking about the bushfires, said, "Out there, it is hell on earth" <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/index.php?option=com_mymedia&Itemid=29%C3%83%C2%A2%C3%82%C5%92%C3%82%C2%A9=en&media_id=364&task=text>.

On February 12, Dods said that "WICEN was given the task of establishing a link between Narbethong and the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre in Alexandra. Initially, the Narbethong-Alexandra link will be on HF. The two WICEN operators that were

on standby for deployment to Buxton have been dispatched to Alexandra to join a column that will be moving down the Maroondah Highway to Narbethong this afternoon. An extra WICEN operator is being deployed to the Alexandra MECC to assist the operator already there with expected extra traffic from Narbethong. Three WICEN operators are now working 8 hour shifts at the Alexandra Incident Command Centre (ICC), operating CFA/DSE radios. We will be providing operators for this task until further notice."

Dods said hams would make "temporary repairs" to VK3RTN, the 6 meter repeater on Mt Gordon that suffered damage during the fire, making it usable until they can get and install a new repeater. The Mt Gordon repeater is being used as a link between Alexandra and Narbethong. The WICEN station in Narbethong closed Saturday, February 14. "The Alexandra WICEN station will continue to operate after the closure of Narbethong," Dods said. "Their role includes guiding relief operators into the town, maintaining an HF link to Melbourne and a listening watch. Operators in the Alexandra ICC have reported increased radio traffic overnight and emphasised the need for concise, prompt and accurate handling of the traffic despite the sometimes tense environment."

Dods recounted that there was what he called a "flurry of activity" on the evening of February 14: "WICEN received a request from DSE [Department of Sustainability and Environment] to provide operators at Woori Yallock ICC. We were asked to cover the night shift last night and the next four nights. Being a Saturday night, it was difficult to contact operators with many being not at home, and others having their mobile phones diverted to voice mail. Two operators agreed to be deployed at short notice, however. They travelled to Woori Yallock only to find that there had been an administrative foul-up and that they were not required. Those operators have returned home with my thanks and apologies. This false start at Woori Yallock does give us a 'heads up' that DSE and CFA [Country Fire Authority] resources may be beginning to stretch thin, and lead to more ICC deployments."

On February 17, Dods said that two WICEN operators will be going to "McAdam's Hill, east of Lake Mountain, to provide health and welfare communications for the firefighters at a Base Camp being set up there. Initially, the primary operating frequency will be 3.6 MHz, so there may well be a need for stations monitoring that frequency to relay traffic. Deployment of a portable 2m repeater to support the McAdam's Hill station is under consideration."

The WICEN HF Net continues to operate on 3.6 MHz at 1000 and 2130 hours (UTC + 11) daily. "As well as keeping a check on the welfare of operators in the field, the Net is being used to pass updated activation information, and also for amateurs in remote areas of the state to check their communications," Dods said. "It is reassuring to hear stations from all over the state and interstate on the Net, demonstrating that we can, if necessary, establish communications independent of hilltop infrastructure. It has been very handy to have other amateurs monitoring 3.6 MHz when they can to relay when fading occurs. Many thanks to those operators who have relayed traffic so far."

Dennis Dura, K2DCD, ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager said: "The work the Australian hams have been doing and the issues WICEN have been facing are not unlike what ARES personnel encounter here. The long hours and duration of the disaster response and the dwindling availability of amateur volunteers take a toll. Yet Amateur Radio still is able to complete the mission. The flexibility we bring is key to meeting the emergency communications needs of those the amateur community serves. Our hearts go out to all those that have lost loved ones and whose lives have been forever changed by these fires. Our colleagues in WICEN make the Amateur Radio community proud in the work they are performing in these very difficult conditions."

HAMS CAN STILL HELP WITH DIGITAL TV (DTV) CONVERSION

Even though the mandatory conversion date for television stations to switch from analog signals to digital has been delayed by four months <http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-09-9A1.pdf>, hams are still assisting the FCC and their communities by providing technical support to those who need assistance <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/12/10/10499/>>. Although many TV stations won't turn off their analog signals until the new deadline, the law allows stations to apply to switch on the original date – February 17 -- or any time before June 12.

According to the FCC, there are nearly 1800 full-power television stations in the US. Of these, the FCC said that "220 will have terminated their analog signals before Tuesday [February 17] and another 421 will terminate their analog signals on Tuesday [February 17] before 11:59 PM, for a total of 641 stations, or about 36 percent of all full-power stations nationwide." The FCC has posted a list of stations making the conversion on or before February 17 on their [Web site](#)

<http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-288530A2.pdf>.

ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP, said he has been getting e-mails and phone calls from Amateur Radio operators concerning the digital TV conversion, now set to take place on Friday, June 12. "People are asking what's happening with the DTV conversion -- especially now that it's been delayed -- and wondering what we as hams can do to help," he said. "There has been considerable confusion concerning the extension of the date, but the role of Amateur Radio is simply to be helpful to the people in our communities."

Pitts advises those hams that are helping to provide technical educational assistance keep in mind the following troubleshooting pointers, provided by the FCC:

*** Check Your Connections**

Check that your digital-to-analog converter box (or digital television) is connected properly. Make sure that your antenna is connected to the antenna input of your digital-to-analog converter box (or digital television). If you are using a digital-to-analog converter box, ensure that the antenna output of the converter box is connected to the antenna input of your analog TV. If you are unsure of the proper connections, refer to your owners manual.

Make sure that your components are plugged in and turned on. If using a digital-to-analog converter box, tune your analog TV to channel 3. You should see a set-up menu or picture on your screen. If you do not see this, re-check your connections.

*** Perform a Channel Scan**

Digital-to-analog converter boxes (and digital televisions) have a button -- usually on the remote control -- that is labeled "Set-up" or "Menu" or some similar term. Press that button to access the set-up menu. Using the directional arrow buttons on your remote, scroll to the option that allows you to perform a "channel scan." The channel scan will search for digital broadcast channels that are available in your area. If you are unsure how to do a channel scan, please refer to the owners manual for your converter box or digital television (whichever applies).

Once the channel scan is complete, you will be able to tune to the digital channels received by your antenna.

*** Adjust Your Antenna**

As many hams know, small adjustments to an antenna can make a big difference; digital TV is no exception. If you have an indoor antenna, try elevating

it and moving it closer to an exterior wall of your home. After adjusting your antenna, perform another channel scan to see if your reception has improved.

While adjusting your antenna, it may be helpful to access the "Signal strength meter" on your converter box or digital television set to determine whether your adjustments are improving the signals' strength. You can probably find your signal strength meter via the "Menu" function on your remote control, and your owners manual will provide detailed information on how to perform this function. Remember to do another channel scan after you have adjusted your antenna.

Make sure that you are using an antenna that covers both the UHF and VHF bands and that is connected properly (depending on what channels are in use in your area).

Late last year, the FCC requested assistance from the ARRL in providing educational support to local communities regarding the digital TV conversion.

"I really appreciate the willingness of the ARRL to actively participate in helping Americans with the transition to DTV and your helpful suggestions," said George Dillon, FCC Deputy Bureau Chief for Field Operations (now retired). "The DTV transition will be an historic moment in the evolution of TV. Broadcast television stations can offer viewers improved picture and sound quality and new programming choices. All-digital broadcasting also will allow [the FCC] to significantly improve public safety communications and will usher in a new era of advanced wireless services such as the widespread deployment of wireless broadband. Our goal is to engage the amateur community on a cooperative basis to help with the DTV outreach and to educate consumers."

The FCC said that it is seeking to ensure that even where all or most stations in a market are terminating analog service, consumers who are unprepared for the switch will continue to have access to critical local news and emergency information. In a statement released by the FCC, the Commission "examined each market in which stations planned to end analog service to try to ensure that at least one affiliate of the four major networks -- ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC -- would continue broadcasting in analog after February 17. Many had such a station, but in those instances in which there would be no top-four affiliate remaining in a market, the FCC attempted to ensure that analog local news and emergency information would remain available -- generally through what is being called 'enhanced analog nightlight' service. Under 'enhanced analog nightlight,' the top-four affiliates must keep at least one analog signal on the

air to provide programming that includes, at a minimum, local news and emergency information" <http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-288530A1.pdf>.

FCC Acting Chairman Michael Copps said that the Commission is "trying to make the best of a difficult situation. While this staggered transition is confusing and disruptive for some consumers, the confusion and disruption would have been far worse had we gone ahead with a nationwide transition on [February 17]."

For more information on the conversion to digital television, please see the DTV Conversion Web site <<http://www.dtv.gov/>>.

WORLD AMATEUR RADIO DAY TO RECOGNIZE AMATEUR RADIO'S ROLE IN DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS

Each year on April 18, radio amateurs celebrate World Amateur Radio Day. On that day in 1925, 84 years ago, the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) was founded <<http://www.iaru.org/>>. In 2009, the theme of the event is Amateur Radio: Your Resource in Disaster and Emergency Communication.

"It is not by coincidence that last year's meeting of the IARU Administrative Council (AC) <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/06/26/10186/?nc=1>> chose this subject at this time," said IARU International Coordinator for Emergency Communication Hans Zimmermann, F5VKP/HB9AQS. "While the Amateur Radio Service has traditionally made its contributions to emergency and disaster response ever since its very beginnings almost 100 years ago, this role has gained a lot of importance just in the recent past."

Citing the fact that natural, as well as manmade disasters are on the rise, Zimmermann pointed out that today's modern communication technologies are "increasingly complex, infrastructure-dependent and therefore also increasingly vulnerable. The Amateur Radio Service puts two equally valuable assets at its disposal for emergency and disaster prevention, preparedness and response: A large number of very flexible and mostly infrastructure-independent, local, national, regional and global networks, and a large number of skilled operators, who know how to communicate with often very limited means and to establish communications even under the most difficult circumstances."

Zimmermann said that the tools available to Amateur Radio operators "range from the most robust means such as battery-operated stations operating in Morse code, to links through Amateur Radio satellites and interconnectivity with the Internet, in voice, text, image and data modes. They range from local VHF networks of fixed, mobile and portable stations to shortwave networks that span the globe. All these networks are operated on a daily basis by men and women who are thoroughly familiar with their technology and their intricacies."

"Telecommunications have become a commodity that society takes for granted," Zimmermann stated, adding that "the sudden loss of that service is often felt in a similar way to the loss of shelter, food and medical support. When disasters occur in regions that do not have good coverage by public networks -- or when existing communications infrastructures have just been disrupted or destroyed by such events -- the Amateur Radio Service comes to the rescue. Amateur Radio operators provide communications for the rescuers and relief workers and their organizations and they help to provide communications for those affected by a disaster."

Zimmermann continued: "In fact, contributions to emergency and disaster relief are a major argument for the preservation and the extension of the privileges the Amateur Radio Service enjoys in international and national regulations. This is one of the reasons why more and more Amateur Radio operators -- through their clubs and their national societies -- prepare very seriously for their role in emergencies; however, their skills can be put to use only if they are known by other first responders. Effective response to emergencies can only occur with the work of volunteers in all the various fields, from search and rescue to medical assistance and those who can provide food and shelter. Communication skills are a new, but equally vital commodity."

2009 Flea Markets/Conventions

March

21 Easter CT Flea Market Pomfret
22 Southington ARA Flea Market
27-28 Maine State Convention Lewiston ME.
29 Framingham Flea Market
29 Contoocook Valley Radio Club Flea Market

April

18 RASON Auction Norwich CT
18PAWA Hamfest Portland ME
19 MIT

May

1-2 NEAR-Fest V Deerfield NH
17 MIT
29 Hartford Hamfest
30 Southern Berkshire ARC

June

6 Bangor Hamfest
20 NARLFEST Newington CT
21 MIT

July

19 MIT

August

16 MIT

Advertisements



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Tell them you saw it in the Signal. Advertisers should contact the NVARC Treasurer for information.

Contest, DXpeditions and Special Events

The information for a DXpedition can be quite detailed and may include bands, dates, number of stations, and times of day they plan to work certain continents so I can not list it all here. But if a country or prefix is of interest you can get more information at www.425dxn.org.

Contests 2009

March

15 North American Sprint Contest RTTY
28-29 CQ WW WPX Contest SSB



Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

PO Box # 900
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<http://www.n1nc.org/>

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N1NC Trustee: Bruce Blain K1BG
Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month
7:30 p.m. - Pepperell Community Ctr.
Talk-in 146.490 simplex
442.900 + 100Hz Repeater battery power
147.345 + 100 Hz Repeater
53.890 – 100Hz Repeater battery power
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