



WCARC News

February 2005

www.wcarc.com

Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act of 2005

NEWINGTON, CT, Feb 25, 2005--At the urging of the ARRL, Rep Michael Bilirakis (R-FL) has introduced The Amateur Radio Spectrum Act of 2005 into the US House of Representatives. The bill, designated [HR 691](#), has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee where Bilirakis serves as vice chairman. Like previous versions of the proposal, the current measure would require the FCC to provide "equivalent replacement spectrum" to the Amateur Radio and Amateur-Satellite services in the event of reallocation to other services of primary amateur spectrum or the diminution of secondary amateur spectrum. The bill also would cover additional allocations within Amateur Radio bands that "would substantially reduce" their utility to Amateur Service licensees. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, expressed his appreciation to Bilirakis this week.

"As president of the American Radio League and on behalf of the more than 670,000 federally licensed Amateur Radio operators throughout the country, I would like to thank you for once again sponsoring the 'Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act,'" Haynie told the Florida Republican. "As you know, this legislation is vital for ensuring that the Amateur Radio Service, the only 100-percent fail safe emergency communication capability, remains a viable public safety option."

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January Meeting Minutes

The WCARC meeting was called to order by President Mark Stennett, NA6M. There were 32 members and visitors who signed the attendance sheet. The three visitors were: Tom Nevue – W2MN, James Aulfather and Richie L. from KXPW-LP.

The minutes posted on the WCARC web site were approved as posted in the WCARC Newsletter.

Treasurer's Report – Jon Boles, K5AEM

January, 2005

Beginning balance	\$ 2238.68
Receipts/Deposits	\$ 431.00
Expenditures	\$ 75.75
Ending Balance	\$ 2593.93
ARES Funds	\$ 172.12
WCARC Funds	\$ 2421.81

The December 2004 Treasurers report was approved as posted in the WCARC Newsletter, and the January 2005 Treasurers report was posted as read.

DX Report – none

Contest Report – none

Repeater Report – Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX

The repeater is working well.

ARES Report – Galen Helmcamp, WA0YVQ

Reference the ARES Report, Page 3.

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President's QRM

The Georgetown swap fest was a success this year with only 11 out of 65 tables not sold. Thank you, Rick Trommer for coordinating this event with your usual style and grace. And thanks to the club members for supporting this annual event. The San Gabriel Park Community Center will be closed for renovations next year so we will need to find an alternate location for the 2006 swap fest. Please let us know if you have any suggestions.

The WCARC spring picnic is coming up in April. We need to nail down a date at the March meeting.

Field Day is also just around the corner so now is a great time to start talking about it. We need to set up a planning committee and iron out the details and will start the process at the March meeting.

A hot topic this month appears to be spectrum protection and encroaching interference. While these are not new issues by any means, keeping them top of mind is a worthy goal. I read with interest a recent FCC Order concerning interference from electric blankets and compliance with Part 15 of the Commission's Rules.

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-05-337A1.doc

Join Us For Breakfast

WCARC Breakfast - Saturdays at 6:45AM
Monument Café
1953 S. Austin Avenue
Georgetown Texas 78627

WCARC Officers

President - Mark Stennett, NA6M

Vice President - Dick Foster, W5TA

Guest Speaker Committee

Vice President - Dick Foster, W5TA, Chairman
Tom Whiteside

Bob Redoutey, N5KF

Secretary - Greg Worthington, AG5W

Treasurer - Jon Boles K5AEM

Public Information Officer - Virgil G. Buell, KD5KQV

Newsletter Editor - Mark Stennett, NA6M (who is looking for you to volunteer for this position.)

Emergency Coordinator - Tom Whiteside, N5TW

Webmaster - Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX

"It Seems to Us . . ." Death by a Thousand Cuts

By David Sumner, K1ZZ
ARRL Chief Executive Officer

ARRL Editor's note: Typically, only ARRL members get to read the "It Seems to Us . . ." editorials that run each month in QST. We're posting this editorial that appears in the March, 2005 issue of QST in the hope that both ARRL members and nonmembers might appreciate it and find it informative.

Threats to radio amateurs' access to the radio spectrum come in several forms.

We can lose allocations, either at the international or the domestic level. The ARRL and the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) devote a lot of resources to the protection and expansion of our international allocations through the International Telecommunication Union and regional telecommunications organizations. In its Washington-area Technical Relations Office the ARRL has four full-time staff pursuing the same objectives at the national level. Through the efforts of the ARRL and the IARU, outright losses are rare; gains are more common.

New sharing arrangements can be imposed on us that reduce the utility of our bands. The bands between 420 MHz and 24 GHz are especially vulnerable because our allocations are on a secondary basis, meaning that at least one and sometimes more services have primary allocations and therefore can claim priority over us. Historically, the biggest user of these shared bands has been the military. Their systems must be resistant to interference anyway, so we have been able to coexist pretty well. However, as new uses for this highly desirable part of the spectrum are developed, even the Pentagon has to accede to commercial pressures for reallocation--and commercial sharing partners may be much more difficult for us to live with.

The most insidious threat comes not from new allocations to licensed services, but from the proliferation of unlicensed radio frequency (RF) devices. We have always had to cope with some interference from incidental radiators, such as electric motors, that are not intentionally designed to generate RF energy but do so in the normal course of operation. Other kinds of devices intentionally generate RF energy, but the radiation of the energy is unintentional; radio and television receivers, computers, and power line carrier systems fall into this category. Still others intentionally radiate, but at levels low enough that the FCC does not regard them as significant interference sources (an issue on which we find ourselves in frequent disagreement). Finally, there are unlicensed personal communications devices that are confined to specific frequency bands and are subject to technical regulations designed to limit their interference potential to licensed services as well as to one another.

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Old Business

WCARC Newsletter – Mark Stennett, NA6M

Mark published the WCARC Newsletter this month and repeated his request to have another club member take over this responsibility.

Trailer Project – John McColly, W5RQ

No update available

Georgetown Swapfest – Rick Trommer, W5RHT

The WCARC Georgetown Swapfest will be held Feb 6 at the San Gabriel Park Community Center. Setup will start at 10AM with the doors being open to the public at noon. The event will conclude at 3PM. A VE session will begin at 8:30AM. The Lion's Club will provide refreshments.

Volunteers are still needed to help with setup and cleanup. Those interested should contact Rick and plan to be at the site by 8:00AM for set-up and 3:00PM for clean up. Many of the volunteers plan to meet at the Monument Café at 7:00AM Sunday morning.

At the time of the meeting, there were only a few tables left to be sold. A checkout table has been set aside pending equipment and personnel to man the table.

There was discussion regarding the "need not be present to win" tradition for the main door prizes. The club agreed to continue with this practice. The club also agreed to continue to sell the raffle tickets at \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00.

Dave Hassell, N5IW, requested that VE's for this testing session be at the Monument Café for breakfast at 7:00AM or at the community center at 8:00AM for set-up.

WCARC Equipment List – Greg Worthington, AG5W

There has been some confusion as to who in the club maintains the equipment list. It was agreed that the equipment list would be maintained by the club secretary and reviewed the first month of the quarter at the club meeting. When equipment is transferred from one club member to another, that club member should send an e-mail to the club secretary with notification of the change.

The equipment list will be posted quarterly in the newsletter and as often as the owner of the newsletter deems appropriate.

Web Site of the Month

KR6LP shows us how easy it is to make custom analog meter faces using Paint Shop Pro.

<http://www.qsl.net/kr6lp/meter.html>

New Business

Spring Picnic – Jim Bittick, KC5BHF

Jim asked the club if it wanted him to make arrangements for the club's spring picnic and continue to handle the chef's responsibilities. There was an enthusiastic round of applause indicating the club's desire for Jim to continue his excellent job of handling the club's picnics.

March Refreshments

Kees Talen, K5BCQ, has also agreed to provide refreshments for the March meeting.

WCARC Program

The program for February was a show and tell given by several members.

Minutes submitted by the honorable club secretary, Greg Worthington, AG5W.

ARES Report – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

This has been a busy and good month of ARES activities.

One of the goals for the year is to have a more thorough Simulated Emergency Training (SET) this year to build on last year's more functionally oriented SET. To prepare for this, a team met here twice this month to organize the year's training calendar. Thanks to Harvey Henning (N0AJP), Virgil Buell (KD5KQV), Chris Hill (KC5AQF), Jim Russell (NQ5L), Dallas Mellichamp (KD4HNX) and Pat Hanger (W5LGM) for their participation and ideas.

Vigil (KD5KQV) led a message passing training session last month that in some ways created as many questions as it answered – the questions center around the best format for exchanging information between agencies – more work to follow with our customers on that one. But the questions added to the value – thanks, Virgil.

Pat Hanger (W5LGM) set up some terrific meetings with county officials that she, Craig Boegler (W5TSN) and I attended. The first meeting was with Patrick Cobb with EMS. Patrick is THE person for setting communications strategies and is a quick study. He outlined some of the increased mission the county faces after 9/11 – they have been prepared to respond well beyond the County's borders and have real limitations on their ability to communicate as they get further from home. Their 800MHz system does not make it much past the borders and their VHF backup is subject to distance and terrain effects. They do have satellite phone capabilities but these are subject to rain fade and other problems. He was really impressed with repeater coverage and with the possibilities of the Winlink 2000 e-mail.

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ARES Report ...continued from page 3.

Craig, Jim Hester (K5HTK) and I whipped out a grant proposal for Patrick that would cover amateur communications gear / antennas for the EOC, a communications center and for three vehicles including the County bus. Hopefully this will be supported!

The second meeting that Pat set up was with Sheriff James Wilson. A new sheriff coming on board in a big county like ours has plenty to do and it was great of him to spend some time with us. We accomplished several things at the meeting. He now understands our capabilities and we now have pull from the top to make things happen at the Sheriff's department. I was very impressed with James and his command of the issues.

One of our goals for the year was to get the expensive PACTOR III TNC ARES purchased last year integrated into the system here. We hit some snags with the Winlink team on what was needed to add this capability, not the least of which was the purchase of a new transceiver that their software supports. I made the decision to proceed with extending our Winlink Participating Mail Box Office (PMBO) to include HF and have personally purchased a TS-570DG, coax and other things to make this happen. Thanks to Mel Crutz (KF6OZ) for donating a multi-band DX Engineering dipole to the cause. The node should be running shortly and will support PACTOR I, II and III. Nueces County ARES is already planning on using this capability in their Hurricane SET this year – we are the perfect distance to support the Texas coast with the low dipole and further away using the main antennas.

The month's activities are continuing at a brisk pace right up to the end: This evening, I will be doing a Winlink 2000 presentation for the Highland Lakes ARC. Adding some coverage out that way will be a great thing!

And Saturday, we have the annual Storm Spotter's training which I am looking forward to.

We have lots going on and I hope you will get involved! Doesn't have to take a lot of time – participate to the level you are comfortable with!

The March meeting will be a new variation on Virgil Buell's (KD5KQV) famous "Plate Exercise". This is great tactical and message passing training and should be fun. Remember that the ARES meeting is the second Thursday of the month at the Round Rock fire station now at 7PM.

And please participate in our Sunday evening nets at 8PM.

Tom Whiteside (N5TW)

ARES Emergency Coordinator for Williamson County

Spectrum Protection ...continued from page 1.

HR 691 references Amateur Radio's role in providing "voluntary, noncommercial radio service, particularly emergency communications," and it points out that hams have "consistently and reliably" provided communication support in the event of emergencies and disasters including tornadoes and hurricanes, chemical spills, forest fires and rail accidents. As the measure notes, FCC actions already have led to the loss of at least 107 MHz of spectrum to radio amateurs.

Rep Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) has signed on as the bill's first cosponsor. Bartlett chairs the Projection Forces Subcommittee of the [Armed Services](#) Committee. One of three scientists in the 109th Congress, Bartlett also is a senior member of the House [Science Committee](#).

Efforts now will focus on attracting additional cosponsors for the legislation. The League is encouraging members to urge their congressional representatives to sign aboard HR 691. A [sample letter](#) is available on the ARRL Web site. More than 100 lawmakers agreed to cosponsor similar legislation in the 108th Congress, where it was designated HR 713. Work is proceeding to have identical legislation introduced in the US Senate.

For general guidance on the best methods of contacting your members of Congress, see "[Communicating with Congress](#)," by Derek Riker, KB3JLF, on the ARRL Web site.

From the ARRL News at <http://www.arrl.org>

Cuts ...continued from page 1.

We have always had to cope with some interference from incidental radiators, such as electric motors, that are not intentionally designed to generate RF energy but do so in the normal course of operation. Other kinds of devices intentionally generate RF energy, but the radiation of the energy is unintentional; radio and television receivers, computers, and power line carrier systems fall into this category. Still others intentionally radiate, but at levels low enough that the FCC does not regard them as significant interference sources (an issue on which we find ourselves in frequent disagreement). Finally, there are unlicensed personal communications devices that are confined to specific frequency bands and are subject to technical regulations designed to limit their interference potential to licensed services as well as to one another.

The public benefits greatly from many kinds of unlicensed devices. The garage door opener is a good example of an appropriate use for an unlicensed, intentional radiator. Commanding the door to open requires just a brief burst of RF, and commands are sent so infrequently that any resulting interference is insignificant. Few people who have garage door openers would want to give them up.

With careful selection of appropriate frequency bands and appropriate technical constraints, the public can benefit from further expansion of intentional radiators and personal communications devices. But the caveat is important. Some of these devices have high duty cycles, occupy large bandwidths, and operate at power levels that are sufficient to make them

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Cuts ...continued from page 4.

significant interference sources. While it is not fully utilized everywhere, all the time, the radio spectrum is fully allocated. Unlicensed RF devices are frequently incompatible with incumbent services and users.

On paper, licensed services always have priority. Operators of unlicensed devices have no rights. The devices themselves may only operate if no harmful interference is caused, and they must accept any interference that may be caused by the operation of an authorized radio station. When we licensees raise concerns about the proliferation of unlicensed devices we are told, "Don't worry. You're protected. Just look at the rules."

But reality is different. Enforcement action is rarely taken to protect licensed services. For more than six months the ARRL has been calling to the FCC's attention ongoing harmful interference caused by Broadband over Power Line (BPL) systems. The FCC has yet to pay more than lip service to its obligation to enforce its own "no harmful interference" regulation.

Or take the benign garage door opener, for example. For reasons that must have sounded good at the time, manufacturers decided to use frequencies in a military band. When the military began using a new communications system, garage doors stopped opening. On paper, that isn't the military's problem. But it is at minimum both a public relations headache and a distraction.

For years, the ARRL has fought a persistent and often lonely battle against the FCC's excessively permissive approach to unlicensed devices. We do so because the cumulative effect of an uncontrolled proliferation of unlicensed devices is to inflict "death by a thousand cuts" on licensed radio services. Every unlicensed emission in a band used by a licensed service diminishes the capability and the value of that service, sometimes at the risk of public safety. Every consumer device that is prone to interference is a potential neighbor-relations nightmare.

BPL is the extreme example. It is not a spectrum user because it is not an intentional radiator. To the extent that it radiates, it is purely and simply a spectrum *polluter*. And it *will* radiate, and therefore pollute, because power lines are an inappropriate medium for a high-frequency RF signal.

In the words of one unusually forthcoming BPL engineer, "This would be a lot easier if we could repeal the laws of physics."

From the ARRL News at <http://www.arrl.org>

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OWNED EQUIPMENT

Reviewed in 5 August 2004 WCARC Meeting

Tower Work

- 1 Gin Pole - KE5RS, John Benedict - 30-Aug-03
- 1 Tower Step - N5NMW, Jeff Schmidt - 7-Aug-03

Antenna measurement

- 1 MFJ Antenna Analyzer - KI5YG, Steve Cowell - 3-Feb-05
- 1 MFJ Grid Dip Adapter - K5KVN, Stuart Rohre - 3-Feb-05

Antennas

- 1 Butternut HF Vertical 10M-80M - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05
- 1 Cushcraft 6-element 440MHz Beam - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05
- 1 Cushcraft R7 HF Vertical - W5TA, Dick Foster - 3-Feb-05
- 1 Hygain triband antenna - W5TA, Dick Foster - 3-Feb-05
- 1 Mosley Triband Antenna (Donated by Harvey, N0AJP) - K5AEM, Jon Boles - 3-Feb-05

Masts

- 2 Push Up Masts - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05
- 1 Push Up Masts - KC5RPF, Ken Larsen - 3-Feb-05
- 2 Push Up Masts - KD5KQV, Virgil Buell - 4-Jul-03

Power Supplies

- 1 20 Amp Power Supply - N5TW, Tom Whiteside - 14-Jul-04

Miscellaneous

- 2 Heavy Duty Power Cords - K5HTK, Jim Hester - 3-Feb-05

Pending sale

- 1 DB Commercial Grade Antenna VHF high-band 158MHz - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05

March Contest Calendar

AGCW YL-CW Party 1900Z-2100Z, Mar 1
ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Mar 5 to 2400Z, Mar 6
Wake-Up! QRP Sprint 0400Z-0600Z, Mar 5
Open Ukraine RTTY Championship 2200Z-2359Z, Mar 5 (LowBand)
0000Z-0159Z, Mar 6 (Low Band)
Open Ukraine RTTY Championship 0800Z-1159Z, Mar 6 (HighBand)
DARC 10-Meter Digital Contest (Mar) 1100Z-1700Z, Mar 6
RSGB 80m Club Championship, Data (Mar) 2000Z-2130Z, Mar 7
ARS Spartan Sprint (Mar)0200Z-0400Z, Mar 8
Pesky Texan Armadillo Chase 0200Z-0400Z, Mar 10
RSGB Commonwealth Contest 1000Z, Mar 12 to 1000Z, Mar 13
AGCW QRP Contes t1400Z-2000Z, Mar 12
Oklahoma QSO Party 1400Z, Mar 12 to 0200Z, Mar 13
Oklahoma QSO Party 1400Z-2000Z, Mar 13
North American Sprint, RTTY 0000Z-0400Z, Mar 13
UBA Spring Contest, CW 0700Z-1100Z, Mar 13
NSARA Contest 1200Z-1600Z, Mar 13 and 1800Z-2200Z, Mar 13
Wisconsin QSO Party 1800Z, Mar 13 to 0100Z, Mar 14
RSGB 80m Club Championship, CW (Mar) 2000Z-2130Z, Mar 16
10-10 Int. Mobile Contest 0001Z-2359Z, Mar 19
BARTG HF RTTY Contest 0200Z, Mar 19 to 0200Z, Mar 21
SARL VHF/UHF Contest 1000Z, Mar 19 to 1000Z, Mar 20
Russian DX Contest 1200Z, Mar 19 to 1200Z, Mar 20
CLARA and Family HF Contest 1700Z, Mar 19 to 1700Z, Mar 20
Virginia QSO Party 1800Z, Mar 19 to 0200Z, Mar 21
UBA Spring Contest, 6m 0700Z-1100Z, Mar 20
9K 15-Meter Contest 1200Z-1600Z, Mar 20
RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB (Mar) 2000Z-2130Z, Mar 24
CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Mar 26 to 2359Z, Mar 27
UBA Spring Contest, 2m 0600Z-1000Z, Mar 27
Spring QRP Homebrewer Sprint 0000Z-0400Z, Mar 28
Low Power Spring Sprint 1400Z-2000Z, Mar 28

From <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>