

RCA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

JULY, 2006

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

INDIANAPOLIS, IN

BECAUSE THE JULY 4th HOLIDAY FALLS ON OUR REGULAR MEETING DAY,
WE WILL HAVE NO MEETING IN JULY.

SATURDAY, JULY 8th IS THE INDIANAPOLIS HAMFEST AT CAMP SERTOMA, BROOKVILLE ROAD (US 52) AND GERMAN CHURCH ROAD ON THE SOUTHEAST SIDE OF INDIANAPOLIS. OUR CLUB WILL BE SELLING FINE JUNK AT THE SHOW AS USUAL. PLEASE, WE NEED YOUR HELP LOADING AND TRANSPORTING THE STUFF TO THE HAMFEST ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 7th.

WE PLAN TO START LOADING BETWEEN 3 AND 4 PM AT OUR STORAGE AREA AT MIKE KOSS' PLACE. IF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN THERE, AND YOU CAN HELP US OUT WITH THIS PROJECT, PLEASE CONTACT JIM KEETH AT 587-3667 (WORK) OR 257-8774 (HOME) FOR DIRECTIONS. THANKS !

RCA ARC NEWS

SUMMARY OF THE JUNE 6 MEETING – Club shirts were again discussed. Jim R. will get a quote by the next meeting. The price is expected to be in the \$20 range. The tower and repeater were discussed. Generally both are in good shape. The Club will get a gift certificate for the first prize in the Home Brew contest at the Indy Hamfest, July 8. Jim Keeth will get some advance tickets. Loading of the junk will take place on Friday afternoon, July 7. Jon Powell, KC9GUM will bring his trailer and save us renting a truck. Thanks, Jon! It was decided for the Club not to participate in Field Day this year as only 4 members have expressed any interest.

PRESIDENT'S RAMBLINGS – No Club Meeting in July

The meeting date falls on the 4th of July so we decided that with the Hamfest on the following weekend, we would not have a meeting in July. The next meeting will be August 1st.

No W9RCA in Field Day this year. This is the first time since 1970 that the RCA ARC has not operated in the ARRL Field Day. There were only four members that were interested and of those only two who really wanting to do it so after much debate we decided to cancel it. After the fact we had several people e-mail or call indicating they were interested in coming over an operating with the club.

Help needed for Indy Hamfest -- We need help Friday loading the club's junk at Mike Koss's and unloading and setting up at the Indy Hamfest. Jon Powell, KC9GUM, has offered to let us use his trailer. The plan is to start loading at Mike's around 3:30 PM.

We really can use help from everyone as there is a lot of stuff to load. Last year we didn't have enough help loading the stuff! We do sell most of the stuff Friday evening, so anyone that can help unload and hang around and help sell and setup the booth would be appreciated.

Saturday we can use help manning the booth selling the parts by the bag. Anyone that helps man the booth is welcome to bring items they want to sell to our booth. They will need to mark on them the price and have a list of what they will accept.

The money from the Hamfest pays the expenses of the club, the repeater maintenance and club liability insurance.

Indy Hamfest -- The Indy Hamfest is Saturday July 8th, at the CAMP SERTOMA, US Highway 52 East at German Church Road, Indianapolis, IN. Flea Market opens at 6 AM and the Commercial Display open at 7 AM. For more information: <http://www.indyhamfest.com/>

Indy Hamfest Tickets -- If you're interested in an advance Indy Hamfest ticket, contact Jim Keeth, AF9A (Phone x3667) in the Thomson South Building and Jim Rinehart, K9RU (Phone x4256) in the Thomson North Building. Advance tickets are \$6. At the gate, \$8.

Band Conditions -- We continue to have very good band conditions. 10 meters has been open and we had some real outstanding 6 meter openings. The weekend before the VHF contest 6 meters was open coast to coast and Saturday of the VHF contest found 6 meters open across the US and into the Caribbean. These openings last beyond midnight. Field Day 6 was open at the start Saturday and on and off through the whole contest.

W9IMS F1 Operation -- W9IMS, the special event station for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway will begin the F1 Race operation on June 26 continuing through July 2nd. Visitors and guest operators are welcome, especially anyone in town for the race. W9IMS does operate and monitor 146.52 FM simplex on race day. For more information on operating frequencies and QSLs, check out W9IMS on: www.qrz.com

HAMFESTS; EVENTS

July 8	Indy Hamfest, Camp Sertoma http://www.indyhamfest.com
Aug. 5	Broadripple, 7373 Westfield Blvd., Indy
Aug. 6	Stuben County 4-H Park, Angola, IN
Aug 20	Tippecanoe Co. Fairgrounds, Lafayette, IN
Aug. 26	Owen County Fairgrounds, Spencer, IN
Sept. 24	Hancock County 4-H Fairgrounds, Greenfield, IN
Oct. 8	Lake County Fairgrounds, Crown Point, IN
Nov. 18-19	Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Fort Wayne, IN
Nov. 25	Vanderburgh Co. 4-H Auditorium, Evansville, IN

ARRL ASKS FCC TO PROTECT 902-928 MHZ OPERATIONS

The ARRL has asked the FCC to avoid making any changes within the 902-928 MHz allocation - including further deployment of unlicensed Part 15 devices - that might increase the noise floor or otherwise adversely affect Amateur Radio operations there. The League filed comments recently in a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in WT Docket 06-49, which seeks input on encouraging the little-used Multilateration Location Monitoring Service (M-LMS) -- a terrestrial service for location of

objects and tracking -- while continuing to accommodate licensed and unlicensed uses of the 902-928 MHz band. Amateur Radio is secondary in the band to federal radiolocation systems, industrial, scientific and medical devices, federal fixed and mobile systems and the M-LMS.

"This 'kitchen sink' of allocations is acceptable from ARRL's perspective, provided that the noise floor is regulated, in terms of aggregate noise levels from unlicensed devices," the ARRL said in its comments, filed May 30. "The high power levels permitted in this band in particular bear careful watching, lest the allocated radio services, including federal systems, suffer decreased utility of the band."

Given that only two M-LMS licensees operate these systems that exist only in six major US cities and in parts of Florida, the League asked whether present FCC rules are the obstacle to M-LMS or whether it's been overtaken by time and GPS technology.

The League urged the FCC to examine the 902-928 MHz band in its entirety. "Specifically, the needs of the Amateur Service in this proceeding are increased protection of weak-signal operations in the 902-903 MHz segment," the ARRL noted, specifying the 902.0-902.2 MHz and 903.0-903.2 "weak-signal" segments.

"The Amateur Service also requires the continued use of the 903.2-928 MHz band for amateur voice, television and digital communications, coexisting with other licensed and unlicensed users of this spectrum," the League concluded.

In its comments, the ARRL pointed out that the NPRM does not propose to adopt, modify or delete any rules but only seeks information "looking toward modifications in the licensing and use" of the 902-928 MHz band. The League described the band as "a patchwork of overlays" and one that has "orphan allocation status" in ITU Region 2, precluding amateur use of the band for communication outside the region. --ARRL Letter

FCC DIRECTS MANASSAS BPL SYSTEM TO RESOLVE AMATEURS' INTERFERENCE COMPLAINTS

In two strongly worded letters, the FCC's Enforcement Bureau has directed the Manassas, Virginia, BPL system to take appropriate steps to eliminate harmful interference to Amateur Radio operators. Several hams in the Manassas area have complained, some repeatedly, about severe interference from the BPL system, operated by COMTek on the city-owned power grid. The FCC minced no words in detailing what it wants the city and BPL operator COMTek to do to ensure its system complies with Part 15 rules governing BPL systems and even hinted that it may shut down all or part of the system. One of the FCC letters followed up on a complaint from Dwight Agnew, AI4II, of BPL interference to his mobile operations.

FCC Spectrum Enforcement Division Chief Joseph Casey told the city and COMTek June 16 that within 20 days he wants a "detailed report on the actions you have taken and the progress you have made in resolving the interference complaint or reducing the emissions in the area referenced in Mr Agnew's complaint to 20 dB below the Part 15 limit," a level the FCC maintains generally is sufficient to eliminate BPL interference to mobile operations. Additionally, Casey said the Commission wants to know "the specific steps you will take to inform customers of a cessation of service in the event you are directed to cease operations, either in part or system-wide."

In an April 7 news release COMTek Vice President Walt Adams called the Manassas BPL system "a real success story" and said its testing showed "an almost identical" level of interference whether or not the system was in operation. It made a similar claim to the FCC in Agnew's case.

COMTek has indicated it expects emissions can be reduced to 20 dB below the Part 15 limit once second-generation BPL equipment is in place along the Virginia Business Route 234 corridor by the end of July. Casey said that's not good enough. "We note that a failure to respond until the end of July to any complaint alleging harmful interference in an effort to determine if the new equipment resolves the matter is not sufficient," he pointed out in a footnote.

Casey said Manassas and COMTek must address and "reach a resolution" with regard to Agnew's interference complaint "as soon as practicable."

Based on the engineering reports the FCC received from the city and COMTek in response to the Agnew complaint, Casey said, "it appears that the BPL system is not in compliance with the Commission's emission requirements at several frequencies," although none were in the amateur bands.

Manassas and COMTek must detail within 30 days steps taken to clean up the system as well as any additional actions necessary for the system to remain in compliance with Commission rules.

In a second letter, Casey requested Manassas and COMTek to examine and address specific longstanding interference complaints from George Tarnovsky, K4GVT; Donald Blasdel, W4HJL; Bill South, N3OH; Jack Cochran, WC4J, and Arthur Whittum, W1CRO. Manassas and COMTek must "take appropriate remedial steps to eliminate any instances of harmful interference" or reduce emissions in the areas cited in the complaints to 20 dB below the Part 15 limit, he instructed. He also reiterated his call for system compliance.

Casey said the FCC wants a report within 30 days on steps taken to address the five radio amateurs' specific interference complaints and eliminate excessive emissions.

Tarnovsky said the complainants are encouraged by the FCC's response to COMTek's reports and are looking forward to the results of the Commission-directed testing.

"I think I can speak for all parties in saying that we're looking forward to a BPL interference-free Manassas," he said. --ARRL Letter

SHORTS

THREE RADIO AMATEURS ABOARD DISCOVERY FOR JULY 1 LAUNCH: NASA has tentatively cleared the shuttle Discovery for a July 1 flight to the International Space Station. Three radio amateurs will be among the seven crew members. One of them, European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut and Mission Specialist Thomas Reiter, DF4TR, will remain on the ISS as part of the Expedition 13 and 14 crews, marking the first three-person crew since NASA grounded the shuttle fleet in 2003. Discovery will carry no Amateur Radio equipment. Commander Steve Lindsey will head the 12-day STS-121 mission. Others on the flight include Pilot Mark Kelly, Mission Specialists Michael Fossum, Lisa Nowak, KC5ZTB, Stephanie Wilson, KD5DZE, and Piers Sellers. The Discovery crew will test new hardware and techniques to improve shuttle safety, as well as deliver supplies to the ISS and make repairs. Now aboard the ISS are Expedition 13 Commander and cosmonaut Pavel Vinogradov, RV3BS, and Flight Engineer and NASA Station Science Officer Jeff Williams, KD5TVQ. --ARRL Letter

SPECIAL WRTC 2006 CALL SIGNS ANNOUNCED: WRTC 2006 Steering Committee Chairman Atilano de Oms, PY5EG, has announced that ANATEL (Agência Nacional De Telecomunicações), Brazil's national telecommunication authority, has okayed the allocation of special call signs for use by World Radiosport Team Championship 2006 teams Saturday and Sunday, July 8-9. The call signs approved are from PW5A to PW5Z and from PT5A to PT5Z -- a total of 52 call signs, although 47 stations will be competing. Call signs will be assigned by lottery prior to the contest.

WRTC 2006 will take place concurrently with the IARU HF World Championship, although WRTC rules differ in some respects from those of the IARU event, and scoring is separate. More information is on the WRTC 2006 Web site <http://www.wrtc2006.com/site/home.asp>. --ARRL Letter

COURTESY URGED ON 6 METER "DX WINDOW": Radio amateurs taking advantage of recent openings on 6 meters are advised that the ARRL 6-meter band plan <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/6m> designates the segment 50.100 to 50.125 MHz as the "DX window." The idea behind this unofficial designation, which reflects a consensus of longtime band users, is to keep that area of the band clear for US-to-DX contacts on "The Magic Band." Veteran 6-meter operators report hearing many US stations working each other when the band is open. Such complaints arise each year when the band first opens, says ARRL Field and Educational Services Manager Dave Patton, NN1N. "Frequently the newcomers learn where to operate quickly enough, and often the veterans can be heard gently coaxing them up the band for a nice chat, at the same time making them aware of the band plan," he added. US stations are asked to keep stateside operation above 50.125 MHz (the "SSB calling frequency") as a courtesy to those attempting to work DX during band openings. --ARRL Letter

AMATEUR RADIO CUBESAT LAUNCH POSTPONED: The launch and deployment 13 Amateur Radio "CubeSats," originally set for June 28, has been postponed until July 26 (UTC), reportedly due to a technical issue during launch vehicle preparation. The backup date is July 27, one CubeSat group told ARRL. A Dnepr-1LV rocket is scheduled to carry the CubeSats into space from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. A fourteenth satellite in the package will not carry an Amateur Radio payload. The CubeSat project is a collaboration between California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo and Stanford University's Space Systems Development Laboratory. All of the CubeSats were designed and built by students at various universities in the US and elsewhere in the world. Twelve of the satellites have downlinks in the Amateur Radio satellite allocation between 435 and 438 MHz, and one will operate on 145.980 MHz. None of the spacecraft will carry a transponder. Transmitter power outputs range from 10 mW to 2 W. --ARRL Letter

UKRAINE FOOTBALL STAR IS RADIO AMATEUR: If you've been following FIFA World Cup football (soccer) matches from Germany, you may know the name Sergei Rebrov, a midfielder on the Ukraine team. What you might not know is that Serge, 32, is UT5UDX and an active CW contester and DXer when he's not on the playing field (he wears number 11). Although Spain beat Ukraine 4-0 in their June 14 match, Ukraine is still considered a favorite to advance from Group H. Rebrov and his teammates next face off against Saudi Arabia on June 19 at 1800 CEST. Rebrov also has operated as M0SDX, TA2ZF and other call signs.--thanks to Osten, SM5DQC; Michael Keane, K1MK --ARRL Letter

THE *RCA ARC MONTHLY NEWSLETTER* IS COMPILED AND EDITED BY JIM RINEHART, AND JIM KEETH. ALL MATERIAL CONTAINED HEREIN IS OBTAINED FROM THE SOURCES CREDITED AND EDITED FOR THIS NEWSLETTER. THE RCAARC INFORMATION PHONE NUMBER IS (317) 587-3059. EMAIL TO w9rca@thomson.net. Check our web site at <http://www.w9rca.org>