

Washington Amateur
 Communications, Inc.
 c/o Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI
 60 Carl Avenue B-2
 Eighty Four, PA 15330-2829

The WACOM

HAM

JANUARY
 2006



Prez Says

Happy New Year to one and all. I hope you have had great holidays and all managed to avoid the cold or flu that is rampant. More people I know have caught it than not.

At the December meeting Susan Robishaw KB3JHQ and I were reelected to Secretary and President, respectively. Bob Ketzell KB3IN and Dave Demotte N3IDH were elected to replace John Moninger WA3VKC and Damian Zanolli KB3JHM on the Board of Directors. Many thanks to John and to Damian for their support and time given to the club. Bud Plants N3TIR continues on the Board of Directors, Joe Caldwell N3XE continues as Vice President, and Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI continues as Treasurer.

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The first big event for WACOM this year is the Washington County Sports Show at the Washington Crown Center Mall (formerly the Franklin Mall) on February 2, 3, 4, and 5. Once again WACOM will be present operating a Special Event Station under the call sign W3C. Everyone is welcome to come and operate during this event. Bring a friend and get him or her interested in Amateur Radio. We will have a sign-up sheet for those interested in attending the Technician licensing class that is conducted by Bob Ketzell KB3IN. The date of the class is not set, but we will let everyone know as soon as it is scheduled.

As always, we remind folks to get their dues in. Anyone wishing to learn more about our club is invited to go to our website: www.wacomarc.org Come to our meetings and get to know us. Questions are welcome — you'll find helpful and knowledgeable hams waiting to help and discuss anything ham-related.

— 73, *Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL*
 President, WACOM

UPCOMING MEETINGS!



Next WACOM Monthly Meeting:
 Thursday, January 5, 2006, 7:30 PM
 Room 103, Washington County Building,
 Downtown Washington.

Next WACOM Board of Directors Meeting:
 Thursday, January 26, 7:30 PM
 Krispy Kreme, Washington

All Welcome!

WACOM Christmas Party

All photos courtesy of and ©Copyright 2006 Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL



Damian hear reindeer!



Lowell, The Fox, and Norma



Response to VA BPL Complaints an "Illusion of Resolution," League Claims

NEWINGTON, CT, December 19, 2005 — In a strongly worded letter to the FCC, the League has once again asked the Commission to shut down the Manassas, Virginia, BPL system because it's still causing harmful interference to Amateur Radio and otherwise does not comply with FCC Part 15 rules. Today's letter from ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay was in response to a November 30 letter from Spectrum Enforcement Division Chief Joseph Casey, who suggested further cooperation between the complaining radio amateurs and the city-owned BPL system. Imlay said it's no longer productive to hold more meetings and discussions about ongoing interference while "this hopelessly flawed BPL system" is allowed to continue operating.

"These meetings have not produced any solution to the interference problem but have, instead, created the illusion that the problem is being addressed," Imlay wrote. Complaints from Manassas radio amateurs of interference from the BPL system date back to early 2004. "This system should have been taken off the air long ago, pending reconfiguration or re-engineering of it," he added, "and the only operating that it should be doing is for purposes of interference testing."

Communication Technologies (COMTek) operates the BPL system over the municipally owned electric power grid using Mainnet equipment on frequencies between 4 MHz and 30 MHz. The League said the FCC has not discharged its "most fundamental obligation" to prevent or

resolve interference issues involving the Manassas system, which, the League charged, only remains operating "because the Commission, for political reasons, has consistently refused to enforce its rules with respect to BPL,"

Continuing a "dialogue" with the victims of the BPL interference is "an avoidance tactic" that neither the League nor its members in Manassas will tolerate. "The only solution at this late date is to order that the Manassas system, which is an unlicensed system of RF devices permitted to operate only on a non-interference basis, *cease operation*, save for interference testing," Imlay declared.

The Part 15 BPL rules the FCC adopted in October 2004 require a BPL operator informed of harmful interference to "investigate the reported interference and resolve confirmed harmful interference . . . within a reasonable period," Imlay pointed out. "No reasoned examination of this case could produce a finding that this rule has been complied with in Manassas," he added.

Imlay says that at a December 13 meeting, COMTek and the City of Manassas "openly acknowledged the interference to amateur stations" but claimed that until a month or so earlier, they had been unable to "notch" amateur allocations because they didn't yet have the equipment to do so.

(BPL Continued on page 3)

Because radio contesting needs to attract and support youth, the YASME Foundation announces a donation of \$10,000 to WRTC-2006 (www.wrtc2006.com) in support of youth participation. These funds will be used to help Young Contesters from around the world attend and participate in WRTC-2006, to be held in Florianopolis, Brazil in July 2006.

WRTC-2006 has dedicated three two-person team allocations to Young Contester teams. Additional Young Contesters may participate as part of multi-operator teams. We encourage young amateurs with a strong interest in contesting to make their applications for those positions by 20 Jan 2006.

The qualifications and criteria for Young Contesters to apply to multi-operator teams will be announced shortly. While the multi-operator teams will operate at existing stations in Brazil, Young Contesters qualifying for the WRTC2006 competitor teams are expected to bring their own equipment.

— 73, Ward Silver NØAX

The FCC has announced that routine processing of Amateur Radio vanity call sign applications will resume January 4, 2006.

The Wireless Telecommunication Bureau (WTB) suspended vanity processing in September as an indirect result of its action to extend regulatory and filing deadlines affecting licensees in parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas and Florida directly impacted by hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

The Commission said licensees or applicants needing relief beyond the initial extension periods should follow the process for submitting waiver requests provided in §1.925 of the Commission's rules. "The Bureau will consider additional relief related to the hurricanes on a case-by-case basis," the FCC said December 19 in a public notice.

During the extension periods, the WTB temporarily suspended certain automated licensing functions. These included dismissing applications that are returned and not amended on a timely basis, changing the status of a call sign from active to expired if a license is not renewed within the two-year grace period for Amateur Radio licensees, and issuing vanity call signs.

Effective 25 January, 2006, despite the protests and the efforts of Radio Amateurs of Canada, the Canadian Amateur Service will lose the 220 - 222 MHz portion of the 220 - 225 MHz band. Details are contained in Canada Gazette Notice DGTP-004-05, available on the Industry Canada web site at:

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insmt-gst.nsf/en/sf08494e.htm>

Send comments to: rachq@rac.ca — KC8VWM

"Electricity is actually made up of extremely tiny particles called electrons, that you cannot see with the naked eye, unless you have been drinking." — Dave Barry

(BPL Continued from page 2)

"This explains why, after COMTek and Manassas claimed earlier that they had notched certain amateur bands the complaining amateurs continued to notice unabated interference when they would operate mobile within the area," the League asserted. "By the admission of COMTek, the capability of reducing interference in this system does not exist."

Previous meetings between the complaining radio amateurs and the BPL operator "produced no measurable results," Imlay contended, referring to the response of Donald Blasdel, W4HJL, to Casey on December 9. At one point in the system, interference was reported at S9 plus 40 dB on typical ham gear. "That level precludes virtually all Amateur Radio communications," he asserted.

Imlay further took the opportunity to again point out that the Manassas BPL system is out of compliance with §15.615(a) because its operator failed to provide full information to the public BPL database by the November 19 deadline.

"ARRL again requests that the BPL facility at Manassas, Virginia, be instructed to shut down immediately," the League's letter concluded, "and that it not resume operation unless the entire facility is shown to be in full compliance with

(BPL Continued on page 4)

Upcoming Events

- January 8 — ARRL Kid's Day
- January 14 — WASH 2 Meter Simplex Contest
- January 15 — WPRC Quarterly Meeting, Mercer Pa
- February 2, 3, 4, 5 — W3C Special Event Station at Washington County Sport's Show
- February 18 — Breezeshooter's Groundwave Contest (CW)
- February 18, 19 — ARRL DX Contest CW
- February 26 — WASHFest 2006
- March 4, 5 — ARRL DX Contest SSB
- March 18 — Breezeshooter's Groundwave Contest (SSB)
- March 25, 26 — CQ WPX Contest SSB
- April 16 — WPRC Quarterly Meeting, Washington PA
- April 30 — 2 Rivers ARC Hamfest, Boston PA * New Date *
- May 19, 20, & 21 — Dayton Hamvention

JOIN WACOM ON THE AIR

2 meter net: Every Tuesday at 8:30 PM on the W3CYO repeaters 145.49 and 443.3 MHz

10 meter net: Every Tuesday at 9:00 PM on 28.340 MHz

FYI Networks

For Your Information needs

Make FYI Your Internet Service Provider

CONTACT FYI AT 1-877-FYI-4NET OR WWW.FYI.NET

MENTION THAT YOU ARE A WACOM MEMBER FOR A SPECIAL PRICE OF \$18 / MONTH.

Announcing the 6th Annual WASH 2M Contest!

This January will mark the Sixth Annual **WASH** 2 Meter Contest. We've already had a lot of interest in it, and this year promises to be even more exciting!

Remember: In response to input from our participants, and in view of the growing popularity of radios like the Ten-Tec 6N2, IC-706 & FT-100, the contest will NOT only be an FM contest but also open to SSB, and CW! (Digital? Maybe next year!)

Everyone who participated in it the last four years had a blast, and we hope to continue the tradition again this year!

There may be some additional "tweaking" of the rules between now and January, so keep an eye on this column in the next few newsletters, and we'll look forward to seeing you on the 14th!

Date & Times: Saturday, January 14th, 2006 from 7 to 11 PM EST.
(That's January 15th 0000-0400 UTC to the purists!)

Objectives:

- To make as many contacts as possible
- To have fun!

Band, Mode & Frequencies: The contest will take place solely on 2 meter band.

FM: FM simplex only, no repeater contacts. The FM frequencies are all standard 2 Meter simplex frequencies, as per the ARRL 2 Meter Band Plan, every **15 kHz**, from **146.535 to 146.595 MHz**, and **147.520 to 147.580 MHz**. The National Simplex Frequency, 146.520 is **not** to be used. Use of simplex frequencies in the "FM Experimental Simplex" band of 145.510 to 145.670 are not recommended. See list of recommended simplex channels at the end of the rules.

CW: 144.05 to 144.1 MHz Only. (See ARRL 2 Meter band plan)
SSB: 144.2 to 144.275 MHz Only. (See ARRL 2 Meter band plan)

*Note: Listen for CW QSO's around 144.1 MHz 15 minutes after the hour
Listen for SSB QSO's around 144.2 MHz 30 minutes after the hour*

In the event of accidental QRM with nets and non-contest QSO's in progress, please respect their right to the frequency and QSY.

Power Limit: Maximum 50 watts output. No external amplifiers.

Exchange: Callsign, contact number, ZIP Code, and whether or not you are a Member of **WASH** or a Club Station. For the purposes of the contest, the 5 Digit ZIP Code for your location is sufficient — do not use the "Zip +4" code. Mobiles and portables should use the ZIP code of their location as determined to the best of their ability. Canadian stations will use their 6 digit postal code.

Example 1: "N3ZCG from N3ZEL, please copy Number 3, 15347, Member."

Example 2: "K3VX from K3CM, please copy Number 21, 16801, Non-Member"

Example 3: "W3WH from W3OC, please copy Number 7, 15137, Club Station"

Contacts: Work as many different calls and locations as possible, giving Exchange as noted above. Work each station **once** per mode, and **once** per ZIP Code — Mobiles can be reworked whenever they change locations. Remember hilltops work best!

Disqualification: Remember, this is a friendly "for fun" contest. Stations may be disqualified for infractions of the rules and for unacceptable operating practices. While not an inclusive list, stations may be disqualified for:

- FM signals transmitted on simplex channels 146.52 MHz and below.
- Intentional interference to non-contesters, established nets, and QSO's
- Intentional interference to other contest operators
- The contest committee reserves the right to verify QSO's. QSO's that can not be verified may be removed from the log without penalty, especially if the committee is unable to obtain log information for verification.

Scoring: Each Contact, non WASH Member: 1 point
WASH Member: 2 points
(* Club Stations: 3 Points)

Multipliers: Number of different ZIP Codes

Power: Stations running 10 watts or less: 2

Stations running over 10 watts: 1

Final Score: Total Points x Locations x Power

(* "**Club Stations**" for the purposes of the contest are those calls assigned by the FCC or Industry Canada to **bona-fide** Amateur Radio Clubs. They include **N3SH, WA3SH, NP2SH, WA3COM, W3KWH, N3GC, W3PIE, K3CR, W3YA, K3HKK, W3YI, W3VC, W3PGH, W3EXW, K3MJW, NY3EC, W1AW**, etc. The call **MUST** be assigned as a Club Call to be eligible..

After the Contest: Fill out all the log information. In the upper left corner check whether "base" or "mobile." In the upper right corner be sure to enter your callsign and club affiliation (or "none" if not a member of any club). Please number all log sheets consecutively. Log sheets can be downloaded from the **WASH** web site, www.washarc.org, no later than January 1st.

Submit Log Sheets: Check your log sheets carefully for dupes. Verify that all information is entered.

Send the logs to: WASH 2 Meter Simplex Contest
c/o Ed Oelschlager, N3ZNI
60 Carl Avenue B2
Eighty Four, PA 15330-2829

Enclose a SASE #10 for return of results.

Entry Deadline: February 8th, 2006

Each log submitted with SASE on or before the deadline will receive a raffle ticket to WASHFest 2006 on February 26th

Recommended FM Simplex Frequencies:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 146.535 MHz | 147.520 MHz |
| 146.550 MHz | 147.535 MHz |
| 146.565 MHz | 147.550 MHz |
| 146.580 MHz | 147.565 MHz |
| 146.595 MHz | 147.580 MHz |

The National Simplex Frequency, 146.520, may not be used. To avoid interference to other contestants and other users of the bands, do not operate on 5 or 10 kHz "offsets" from these recognized FM channels.

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Commission rules regarding radiated emissions; with the non-interference requirement of Section 15.5 of the Commission's rules; and not in any case until thirty days subsequent to full compliance with Section 15.615(a) of the rules."

The new BPL "Interference Resolution Web Site" provided by the United Power Line Council (UPLC) and the United Telecom Council (UTC) opened in mid-October.

Field tests conducted by Manassas radio amateurs established that the city's BPL system "was an interference generator at distances of hundreds of feet from the modems on overhead power lines," the ARRL told the FCC October 13. "It was also, incidentally, determined that the system was susceptible to interference from nearby radio transmitters operating between 4 and 20 MHz," the League added.

Manassas formally inaugurated its citywide deployment of the high-speed Internet BPL system in early October, touting it as "the first large-scale commercial BPL deployment in North America." The city receives a portion of BPL subscriber revenues to offset its costs of installing and maintaining the system.



WASHfest 2006

The South Hills Hamfest

Sponsored by the Wireless Association of South Hills Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Sunday, February 26th, 2006

8:00 AM until 3:00 PM Rain or Shine (or Snow!)

Castle Shannon VFD Memorial Hall

3600 Library Road (State Route 88), Castle Shannon, PA

Talk-In on 146.955(-) and 443.650(+) 131.8 PL



(800) 545-8881

Breakfast & Lunch
provided by *Jack's
Catering*
of Peters Township

FREE Coffee for the entire Hamfest
courtesy of **HAM RADIO INSURANCE ASSOCIATES**
of Canonsburg, PA

MAIN PRIZES — You've Got to play to WIN!

- 1st Prize: To Be Announced
- 2nd Prize: To Be Announced
- 3rd Prize: To Be Announced
- 4th Prize: To Be Announced

Additional Hourly Door Prizes!

Main Prize tickets are \$2.00 each, or 3 for \$5.00 — All Prizes Subject to last-minute changes

**Now in our
ELEVENTH big year!**

For reservations, or information, Contact:

Steve Lane, W3SRL at (412) 341-1043 or Bill Hill, W3WH at (724) 746-1776

E-mail us directly at washarc@yahoo.com Check out our website too! www.washarc.org

Hamfest Table Reservation Form—Please PRINT LEGIBLY ALL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: () _____ - _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Call Sign: _____

Tables WITH Electricity: _____ X \$15.00 = _____

Tables WITHOUT Electricity: _____ X \$10.00 = _____

Please make all checks payable to:
WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS
897 Lovington Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15216-1725

We reserve the right to resell any tables not occupied by 8 AM, unless prior arrangements have been made!

Washington Amateur Communications, Inc.
c/o Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI
60 Carl Avenue B-2
Eighty Four, PA 15330-2829



We're On the Web!
www.wacomarc.org

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The editor welcomes articles and timely information of interest to members and the general amateur community.

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PLEASE SEND YOUR 2006 DUES AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Annual WACOM membership dues are only \$15 .
A couple pays only \$22.50.

Send your check payable to WACOM to:

Ed Oeschlager, N3ZNI,
Washington Amateur
Communications Inc.
60 Carl Avenue B-2
Eighty Four, PA 15330-2829



WACOM e-Mail Reflector

An e-mail reflector has been set up for WACOM members.

What's a reflector? It's a mailing list which lets you send one e-mail message to the list address — wa3com@yahoogroups.com — and have it "reflect" to all members of the list. Unlike a personal mailing list, you don't need to know all of the e-mail addresses for every single member of the list. Only group members can send e-mail to other members of the reflector — no spam allowed!

E-mail reflectors are being used by many area Amateur Radio clubs as a means to facilitate news and information at a moments notice. Yahoo! Groups (formerly eGroups) provides this service for free to anyone who wants to avail themselves of their list server. Yahoo! also provides calendar, file storage, & additional services.

To join the WACOM reflector, simply send a blank e-mail to:

wa3com-subscribe@yahoogroups.com