



# THE SHORT CIRCUIT

May, June, July 2004

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ARCTIC AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Arctic Amateur Radio Club (AARC), Alaska's first amateur radio club, was formed in Fairbanks in 1939 and was incorporated as an Alaska non-profit organization in 1966. We have about 121 members and we meet September through May at 7:00 p.m. on the first Friday of the month at the Geophysical Institute University of Alaska. All interested persons are invited to attend.

- o Linda Mullen AD4BL 488-7046 President
- o Vacant Vice-President
- o Debbie Treb AL1S 451-1911 Secretary
- o Benny Benevento NL7XH Treasurer
- o Kevin Abnett NL7WO 474-9484 Board Member
- o Mike Drury KL7GL Board Member
- o Steve Estes KL7XO 488-0483 Board Member
- o Dan Wietchy KL1JP Board Member
- o Rod Mitchell KL7YU Board Member
- o Alex Cryan AL7EX Board Member
- o Jim Movius KL7JM 452-6347 Member, Past President

### Alaska Radio Nets:

- Alaska Sniper's Net 3.920 Mhz 0300 UTC (1800 L) daily
- Alaska Bush Net 7.093 Mhz 0400 UTC (1900 L) daily
- Alaska Motley Net 3.933 Mhz 0600 UTC (2100 L) daily
- Alaska Pacific Traffic Net 14.292 Mhz 1900 UTC (1000 L) daily
- Interior Net 146.88 Mhz 0500 UTC (2000 L) Sunday

### Club Minutes:

#### May 2004 Club Meeting:

##### Greetings

Sec Deb AL1S, Treas Benny NL7XH, Board Members, Kevin NL7WO, Steve KL7XO, Mike KL7GL, Dan KL1JP, Alex AL7EX, Rod KL7YU, Jim KL7JM [past pres], Pres Linda AD4BL

##### Minutes

Treasurer's Report: total of \$1491.38 in both accounts

##### Repeater Report

Old Business

New Business

Scout Challenge June 4, Tour de Cure May 29, Yukon 800, Motley Picnic June 15-27, Officers 2005  
Ham Fest Sept 4 Pioneer Park Picnic in the pavilion, Club Picnic August 14<sup>th</sup> 2-6PM The Board will host.

Board meeting May 13, 2004

\* Not part of the minutes.... Next board meeting will be July 10  
from 2-6PM at my QTH 4555 Melan Dr N for a cookout. Bring roadkill of your choice and a dish to share.  
All are welcome!

## **Board Meeting Report:**

### **July AARC Board Meeting July 10, 2004:**

Meeting was held at the QTH of AD4BL with a cookout and picnic. Those present: Mike Drury KL7GL John  
KL1AZ and his wife and granddaughter Rod Mitchell KL7YU and daughter Alex Cryan AL7EX and wife  
Edna Jim Movius KL7JM and wife Phylis  
Bill Mullen KE4ITP and Linda AD4BL

Minutes

Treasurers Report

Repeater Report

Old Business

Scout Challenge June 4 11 amateurs participated, Tour de Cure May 29, Yukon 800 6 amateurs  
participated

New Business

Officers 2005 President VP Secretary

Nominating committee appointed consisting of Jim Movius, Alex Cryan, Rod Mitchell

Ham Fest Sept 4 Noon to 5PM

Forums...emergency communications, APRS, PSK31 etc

AD4BL will set up APRS, KL7YU will run PSK 31

Amateur Radio EXAMS

Pioneer Park Picnic in the pavilion 2-6PM

Cook hamburgers, hotdogs, and buns club will purchase

Annual Meeting 1:15

ARRL Forum 3PM

Bunny Hunt 4PM

Club Picnic August 14<sup>th</sup> 2-6PM The Board will host.

Pioneer Park in the pavilion

Red Cross emergency exercise Sept 11

Board meeting August 14, 2004 during the picnic.

Website needs to be updated. Need an individual who is website savvy who can work with Steve Estes to get it updated and updateable.

## Repeater Report

As most of you folks that listen to the Ester Dome repeater it has been giving some problems for the past week... I have put a band pass filter on the input to the receiver and it still has problems. Yesterday I swapped out the interface card for the 2-meter side.

If you hear the machine output go to a very low volume please let me know. It is very intermittent and I will need some help from you folks ...

It seems to work ok through the auto patch but when it is in trouble the 146.88 output audio is very low. It seems to come back to normal without any rhyme or reason. It may be OK now with the interface card swap out.... we shall see.

Your inputs will be appreciated.

On another note Alex AL7EX and I went to Canyon Creek and set it up for a new PL tone link frequency then went to Dot Lake and set up the new link PL. We also set up the PL decoder / encoders for the 2-meter link to Mt Fairplay. We removed the 220-link stuff.

We went to Donnelley Dome and fixed the Hi pass filter problem on the receiver there. Found the wind generator to be defective ... it is now being repaired (new bearings needed). When we get the generator back we shall install it with some new batteries to get us through the winter.

Benny NL7XH

## Events Schedule:

12 Aug 04 AARC Board Meeting  
14 Aug 04 2d Annual AARC picnic  
9 Sep 04 AARC Board Meeting  
Sep 04 events  
    HamFest (**Chair person needed**)  
    Freeze Up Canoe Race  
1 Oct 04 AARC Club Meeting  
14 Oct 04 AARC Board Meeting  
5 Nov 04 AARC Club Meeting  
11 Nov 04 Board Meeting  
3 Dec 04 AARC Club Meeting  
9 Dec 04 AARC Board Meeting

## Event Report:

Submitted by, Fred Brantingham WL7 IJ:

Boy Scout Camporee

“It was a Dark and Stormy Night...” is the classic beginning to an adventure story. Fortunately the latest adventure by AARC hams began on a Bright, Hot and Clear Friday Evening with not a cloud in sight. It

continued through a clear night where the temperatures got down to 42 degrees and finished in the heat of the next day.

What an adventure! We were able to help the Boy Scouts on their Spring Camporee while they did an overnight hike on the 15-mile Granite Tors Trail. The Plan was for them to hike the trail in Patrols, stopping at 9 Activity Stations and completing back at the Headquarters. Our Plan was to put a Ham Team at each Activity Station, at the Headquarters and along with some of the Scout Patrols. The Plan was for them to start in the evening and finish in early morning. So we wouldn't need anything but radios, a bit of food and light clothing.

Like all plans this one varied just a wee bit. With delays instead of finishing in the early morning in fact the last patrol didn't finish until nearly noon Saturday. This meant that some of us got a refresher course in sleeping on the ground, in the open, in temperatures way below what we planned for. It also meant some were hiking for a bit longer time. Boy, were we having fun!

But, as always we adapted and overcame. We were able to keep the Scout Leaders informed on where each and every scout was. They had planned on using FRS radios for their comms. When those radios didn't do the job we demonstrated that AARC was ready, willing and able to keep everyone in touch. Several of the hams are also Medics and were available if needed. In short, the Scouts came away from the night with a new appreciation of how much help hams, and AARC, are. Best of all, we had a lot of fun and a bit of adventure. Who could ask for anything more?

The AARC Team for the Camporee was: AD4BL, Linda (Our Leader); KE4ITP, Bill; KL7YU, Rod; KL1MJ, Matt; KL1ML, Alex; KL1PN, Eric; KL1FD, Zac; WL7CRD, Dave; WL7CRE, Carol; KD7MWT, Shaun; Ryan, Ryan, Army Volunteer; Juice; Army Volunteer and WL7IJ, Fred.

73's to all, and will someone pass the bug dope?

Fred  
WL7IJ

## **AARL NEWS:**

**The ARRL Letter; Vol. 23, No. 30; July 30, 2004:**

### **ARRL SEEKS CLARIFICATION OF FCC RESPONSE TO BPL INTERFERENCE COMPLAINT**

The ARRL wants the FCC to further explain its recent response to a North Carolina amateur's complaint of BPL interference. FCC Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) Deputy Chief Bruce A. Franca replied July 22 to an April 27 BPL interference complaint from Thomas A. Brown, N4TAB, of Wake Forest. Brown had complained of BPL interference to his amateur HF mobile station emanating from a Progress Energy Corp (PEC) BPL field trial in the Raleigh area. In his letter, copied to ARRL, Franca said an on-site investigation had concluded that PEC's BPL trial "is in compliance" with FCC rules and that the company's ham band notching efforts "are effective" to avoid the potential for harmful interference. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, however, cited evidence to the contrary.

"It is not at all clear that the tests and measurements taken by the FCC . . . established the absence of harmful interference to licensed stations," Sumner responded July 22. He said the League would like the OET to make its test report available to the general public or at least to the League for technical review and comment. The ARRL also wants to know what steps PEC took between April 27 and June 28--when the FCC began its testing—to address interference complaints from Brown and several other radio amateurs.

The FCC defines as "harmful" any interference that "seriously degrades, obstructs or repeatedly interrupts a

radiocommunication service operating in accordance with the Radio Regulations."

According to Franca, FCC personnel "undertook extensive testing and measurements" of the PEC BPL system between June 28 and July 2. The complainant--Brown--says the FCC delegation never contacted him while it was in North Carolina. Franca says FCC measurements indicated notch depths averaging 24 dB below Part 15 emission limits, which he characterized as "sufficient to eliminate any signals that would be deemed capable of causing harmful interference, including interference to amateur operations."

Franca maintained that "in no instances" were signal levels high enough to "cause serious degradation, obstruction, or repeated interruption" of amateur mobile or fixed communications. He conceded, however, that notching on 10 meters was somewhat less effective at the low end of the band and said the FCC would instruct PEC and its partner, Amperion, to widen its notch there.

Sumner noted that the Part 15 device operators "must eliminate all harmful interference, and therefore in some cases must achieve more--in certain cases, considerably more--than a 24 dB reduction in order to be in compliance." He also cited recent reports from amateurs in the area indicating that strong BPL interference continues in parts of the PEC trial zone.

Sumner told Franca that amateurs in the Raleigh area on July 17 and again July 22 monitored a BPL signal "at full strength and causing harmful interference" from 14.290 to 14.350 MHz. "Harmful interference" also was reported in the first 100 kHz of 15 meters as well as on the WWV/WWVH frequencies of 15.000 and 20.000 MHz and on several international broadcasting bands.

"Even in the notched bands," Sumner said, "the interference was still evident on ordinary amateur equipment." He said it's clear to ARRL that the system's Holland Church Road site--where the most recent amateur measurements were taken--is in violation of Part 15.

For his part, Brown--an engineer with considerable RF experience--said he was glad the FCC finally took some action but found some of Franca's assertions "very troubling." He told ARRL that his 14-page complaint cited interference "sufficient to mask a weak signal," although it did not register on his S meter. An active Amateur Radio Emergency Service District Emergency Coordinator, Brown said it's not unusual to have to copy similarly weak signals during an HF emergency net.

"I suspect the principal reason for their coming down here was to say they've actually done something," Brown commented. He also worried that the FCC was attempting to define a standard of "acceptable interference" within the framework of what constitutes "harmful interference."

"If it interferes, it interferes," he maintained.

Sumner also requested that the FCC clarify some additional aspects of its North Carolina testing and measurement activities.

"Until these points can be clarified," he concluded, "we trust that the Commission will not permit its conclusion to be erroneously represented as having given the Progress Energy trials a 'clean bill of health.'"

## **BROADBAND PROVIDER TO DROP BPL IN NEW YORK TRIAL COMMUNITY**

The broadband provider that's been testing BPL in the Village of Penn Yan, New York, reportedly plans to "move away" from that technology. The Western New York community of some 5000 residents has been

considering various proposals with Data Ventures (DVI) to offer broadband service. A BPL trial has been underway in Penn Yan for several months. The village reportedly would get 10 percent of the generated revenue. According to an article in the July 28 edition of the Finger Lakes Times Online, DVI now is proposing to employ wireless mesh "WiFi" technology instead of BPL. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, congratulated Penn Yan Mayor Douglas G. Marchionda Jr and DVI for going with wireless broadband instead of BPL.

"Not only will your citizens receive better service, but a serious radio spectrum pollution problem has been averted as well," Sumner said in a fax to Marchionda and to DVI CEO Marc Burling. "We hope that other communities will be able to profit from your experience." Sumner raised the issue of interference complaints from the Penn Yan BPL trial with Marchionda last April.

The Finger Lakes Times report quotes Burling as saying that his company didn't feel BPL was "commercially deployable." He also cited issues with the BPL trial including security concerns and interference--which will not be an issue with the wireless system.

Burling told ARRL that the Penn Yan BPL system remains on line but would be shut down once DVI starts deploying its wireless system. As for BPL, "We are going to sit back and wait for an official ruling from the FCC and go from there," Burling added.

Penn Yan already has rejected two DVI proposals to bring high-speed Internet service to the community, the newspaper said. Village officials reportedly met again with DVI representatives this week. DVI is partnering with Nortel to offer the wireless service.

In a March 23 article "In This Power Play, High-Wire Act Riles Ham-Radio Fans," Wall Street Journal reporter Ken Brown described a "firestorm" of protest from amateurs when Penn Yan approved the BPL test plan.

ARRL also has learned that Energy East--a cooperative of New York State Electric & Gas and Rochester Gas & Electric--decided against deploying BPL in their Western New York service area. Energy East based its decision in large part on the high levels of radio frequency interference an engineer and company officials observed during a visit to the Penn Yan field trial.

On July 29, Grand Haven, Michigan, announced that it had become the first community in the US to deploy a WiFi network <<http://www.ottawawireless.net/about-us/press-room.html>> that blankets the city and up to 15 miles off shore in Lake Michigan with broadband Internet access.

For more information on BPL, visit the "Broadband Over Power Line (BPL) and Amateur Radio" <<http://www.arrl.org/bpl/>> page on the ARRL Web site

### **For Sale/Wanted:**

1. New never used (excess shipment from HRO must sale or ship back) still in box: MFJ -269 HF/VHF/UHF SWR Analyzer, \$319 firm (save shipping cost). Contact John Slater, KL1AZ, 488-5209.
2. AARC looking for: VP for club, Hamfest chairperson, and Refreshment chairperson.
3. Club officers for next year.
4. Articles for Newsletter.

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR COMMENTS:

All input and comments/articles are welcome. Sorry for the late edition and missing months of the newsletter, but I took a couple of months off to gather up my train of thought and to enjoy some of the early/mid summer outdoors. As everyone has heard Deb Treb AL1S is not doing well and at last report she is currently back home. The AARC has once again participated in a number of public events this past summer, if you have a report about events that have not been reported that the club has provided communications for please send that report to me and it will be included in future letters. **As a reminder if you wish to have something put into the newsletter you may e-mail me at [slaternorthp@mosquionet.com](mailto:slaternorthp@mosquionet.com) and be sure to include your call sign in the subject so I will know it is from another ham, or it will be deleted**, or you may call me at home 488-5209.