

The SPARK GAP



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NEXT MEETING

The November meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2006. You are welcome to join all who want to eat, ordering off the Connell's II menu, at 6:00 P.M. The meeting will follow dinner at 7:00 P.M.

SEPTEMBER MINUTES (Summary)

The meeting was called to order at 6:56 PM CDT by President Bert W9ZZI. The secretary's minutes of the August 1, 2006 meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report showed \$ 901.91 in the check book and was also approved. It was noted that Jim Fering ordered a Pepsi Product (apparently not a typical personal choice). Old Business included a rundown of future programs (Oct. 3, 2006 Radio Astronomy; November 7, 2006 APRS / GPS; December 5, 2006 PSK 31). Gale WD9HFT reported on the Hamfest at Grays Lake, Ill. New Business included a tentative date for our Tail Gate event on August 18, 2007, plans to update the Club Biography with our new members and an update of our application for Tax Exempt status. The Program was a detailed presentation of the August 19, 2006 "Shoot Out" with Skip W9JRW

capturing the "Bragging Rights."

FOXHUNT INVITATIONAL

The Chippewa Valley Amateur Radio Club hosted a two meter fox hunt on Saturday, September 23 at 9:00 a.m. The fun began at Hardees at 2933 Western Avenue in Eau Claire at 8:00 A.M. where the participants registered and had food and refreshments. A map was provided to show the boundaries of the fox's territory.

A good time was had by all and here are the results followed by some pictures . . . how did Gale manage to get in all of them?

- 1st place - KB9R & KB9EUP
- 2nd place - KB9WPC & Sue
- 3rd place - W9RMA & W9JRW
- 4th place - W9ZZI & Judy
- WOQT & K9RWM (Honorable mention)



—Continues on next page—



INTERESTING ARTICLE

Pirate radio stations challenge feds

By MARTHA MENDOZA, AP National Writer-
Sun Sep 24, 12:28 PM ET

To Stephen Dunifer, it was yet another revolutionary moment. But to the untrained eye, it looked more like a geek fest. Over four days, a dozen men and women shyly bumped shoulders as they studied schematics and tinkered with romex connectors, resistors, microphone cords, meters, sockets and ca-

pacitors — the stuff of illegal radio stations. In the corner of this cluttered electronics lab, hunched over a computer, sat Dunifer, their teacher, "the patron saint of pirate radio." Part rock star, part Johnny Appleseed and fully the bane of the Federal Communications Commission, Dunifer has long, gray hair, large, clear glasses and a deep commitment to what he calls "Free Radio."

"We're not stealing anything. We're claiming something that's rightfully ours," he says. His goal is to create FM radio stations faster than the FCC can shut them down.

"It's always been our position that if enough people go on the air with their stations, the FCC will be overwhelmed and unable to respond," he says.

Pirate radio is radio without a license, radio without government regulations. It's "america the criminal" at midnight on Human Rights Radio in Springfield, Illinois and pre-dawn erotica on Freak Radio in Santa Cruz, Calif. It's an inordinate amount of Frank Zappa at WFZR in West End, Pa. (a station dedicated to playing his music) and the "Voice of the American Patriot" ("no support for liberals disguised as wannabe Conservatives") at NLNR in Butte, Mont.

The rapidly proliferating scofflaws — and there are now hundreds of them broadcasting at any given moment in this country — are usually only audible within a few miles of their "home-brewed" transmitters. They find unused sections of the FM dial, fire up their mini-transmitters, raise their antennas and set up their station.

Some opt to broadcast on the Internet as well, opening up their audience to the entire globe. Costs typically range from about \$250 to \$1,500.

Pirates, as they call themselves, draw loyal audiences in their communities but com-

plaints from the larger, licensed public and private radio stations who say the micro-broadcasters interrupt their signals. And they are a thorn in the side of the FCC, which is tasked with shutting them down.

Ten miles away from Dunifer's radio camp, at an undisclosed location in San Francisco, an FCC enforcement team is part of a nationwide campaign to thwart the pirates.

A record 185 unlicensed broadcasters received fines, cease and desist letters or had been raided by the by early September, up from 151 enforcement actions in all of 2005 and 92 in 2004, according to John Anderson, an expert on pirate radio who tracks FCC enforcement at University of Illinois' Institute of Communications Research. His data show a steady increase in pirate radio enforcement dating back 10 years.

"There are a lot more stations out there these days, thus there are a lot more stations for the FCC to find and bust," said Anderson. Despite federal laws that ban unlicensed radio, efforts to shut down the stations are rarely popular and appear to be ineffectual, at least some of the time. For example:

The neon sign says "ON AIR" at the storefront KNOZ station in Sacramento, Calif., even though broadcaster William Major was fined \$10,000 by the FCC in June. Major says he's been wrongly painted as a pirate station, and that the FCC just overlooked his license application which he says is still pending. And the fine? "It's 10 G's," he said. "I don't have 10 G's. But they're being real gentleman about it, you know what I mean? They gave us the fine and they're letting us do our thing."

Residents of Brattleboro, Vt., are also once again listening to free radio. Last summer the FCC raided and shut down their 10-watt radio free brattleboro, prompting an ongoing fed-

eral court battle. This summer a new community radio station received permits to open and raised a 30-foot antenna.

When federal agents raided free radio Santa Cruz in 2004, a crowd of several hundred protesters soon gathered at the 10-year-old broadcast center — including the mayor, who was shouting through a bullhorn. The tires on the FCC agents' cars were slashed before they could leave, and then they received parking tickets before they could repair them. A few days later a fundraiser brought in more than \$25,000 and Freak Radio, which is still on the air, was launched.

The FCC's beef, insisted spokesman David Fiske, is with neither the public dissent nor the abundance of Frank Zappa music. The problem is that pirate radio stations can make it impossible for the public to listen to licensed broadcasting and can cut into air traffic control communications, he said.

"We are completely complaint driven," he said. "If there are more enforcement actions, that's because there have been more complaints."

The FCC's 2007 budget includes an additional \$1,080,000 for Mobile Digital Direction Finding Vehicles which can be used to sniff out pirate radio stations. But that same budget includes no extra staffing for the FCC's 333-person enforcement bureau, which is tasked with policing everything from cable television to telephone services. They're supposed to investigate obscene broadcasts, bust unwanted faxes and regulate the airwaves.

Pirate radio in its current form dates back 21 years to Zoom Black Magic Radio in Fresno, Calif., founded by Walter Dunn to bring diversity to the FM dial. The FCC raided his station and fined him \$2,000 two years later, but like stations of today, he quickly popped up

nearby.

At Dunifer's Radio Camp, students are warned about the FCC and taught how to evade the enforcement agents. At the end of four intense days, they walked out holding their own, hand-built, ready-to-use FM radio transmitter, a shiny box slightly larger than a brick.

Participants came from as far away as Namibia and as nearby as five blocks away.

Their reasons for wanting their own station were equally diverse: a neat, middle-aged woman from Mexico, accompanied by a translator, said she wanted to bring news and political information to her community; two young men from Tucson in flowered shirts and sandals said they wanted to start a new pirate station to replace several that have been shut down by the FCC; a self-described "boring insurance clerk" in a lilac blazer was just "looking for something interesting to do"; a man with red dreadlocks, green earrings and tattooed arms was slated to take over the technology job at his local pirate station.

No one is sorrier to hear about these Radio Camp graduates than Dennis Wharton, spokesman for the National Association of Broadcasters, who described Dunifer as "the patron saint of pirate radio." And he didn't mean it as praise.

He said his members, frustrated by interference on their stations, push the FCC to enforce the rules against pirate operators.

"You'd be hard pressed to find a pirate radio station that isn't interfering with another licensed station," he said.

But Wharton conceded that the FCC's policing efforts can be futile.

"It's like whack a mole," he said. "You knock it out in one place and it pops up somewhere

else."

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NEW LAW FORMALLY MAKES AMATEUR RADIO PART OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COMMUNITY

A section of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) 2007 Appropriations Act, HR 5441, formally includes Amateur Radio operators as a part of the emergency communications community. Congress approved the measure before adjourning for its pre-election break. President George W. Bush signed the bill into law October 4.

Amateur Radio is included within the legislation's Subtitle D, Section 671, known as the "21st Century Emergency Communications Act." Radio amateurs are among the entities with which a Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECC Working Group) must coordinate its activities. Included within the DHS's Office of Emergency Communications -- which the measure also creates -- RECC Working Groups attached to each regional DHS office will advise federal and state homeland security officials.

The final version of the legislation incorporated language from both House and Senate bills and was hammered out in a conference committee.

An earlier version of the 21st Century Emergency Communications Act, HR 5852, included Amateur Radio operators as members of the RECC Working Groups.

In addition to Amateur Radio operators,

RECC Working Groups also will coordinate with communications equipment manufacturers and vendors -- including broadband data service providers, local exchange carriers, local broadcast media, wireless carriers, satellite communications services, cable operators, hospitals, public utility services, emergency evacuation transit services, ambulance services, and representatives from other private sector entities and nongovernmental organizations.

The RECC Working Groups will assess the survivability, sustainability and interoperability of local emergency communication systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Report. That report would recommend how the US could "accelerate the deployment of interoperable emergency communications nationwide." They also will coordinate the establishment of "effective multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks" that could be brought into play in an emergency or disaster.

In light of the new legislation, the ARRL plans to follow up to determine how it can interact with the DHS and its Office of Emergency Communications.

NETS/FREQS/TIMES

- Badger Weather Net 3.985 - 0600
- Badger Emergency Net 3.985 - Noon
- Wisconsin Side Band Net 3.985 - 1715/1730
- ARES/RACES 3.977.5 - Sun - 1800

AREA REPEATERS

Albertville (link)	442.800	110.9
Albertville	444.350	110.9

Chippewa Falls	147.375	110.9
Eau Claire	146.91	110.9
Eau Claire	147.24	110.9
Eau Claire	443.300	110.9
Holcombe	145.47	110.9
Holcombe (link)	147.345	136.5
Holcombe	444.525	110.9
Menomonie	146.61	110.9
Osseo	145.33	110.9
Osseo	444.200	110.9

CVARC OFFICERS

- President -- Bert Spangler (W9ZZ)
- Vice President -- Ron Anderson (W9RMA)
- Secretary -- Ron Krueger (W9JRW)
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