

June 2004

FEEDBACK



The OFFICIAL Newsletter

of the

Georgian Bay Amateur Radio Club Inc.

P.O. Box 113, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5P1

GBARC Meetings

are held on the 4th Tuesday of every month except July and August in our CLUBHOUSE, Unit 6 Rockford Plaza, Rockford On. 5km S of Owen Sound. 7:30 p.m.

Breakfast Anyone?

Any Saturday 9:00 a.m., at the Rockford Restaurant.

Nets

80 metre net on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on 3.783 Mhz. Two metre net on Thursday at 9 p.m. on VE3OSR 146.94-Mhz.

Submissions

are always welcome.

This Month

"It Seems to Us . . ." Harmful Interference

Swap Shop

Message From The Newsletter Team

GBARC Mail Box

NEXT MEETING will be on September 28 at the Rockford Restaurant

President

Gene VE3IJD



Vice-President

Bob VE3XOX



Secretary

Tom VA3TS



Treasurer

Bob VE3LKD



Newsletter Team

Editor

Barry VA3WBG

Steven VE3SEG

Tom VE3CVL



Program Director

Jim VE3CJM



"It Seems to Us . . ." Harmful Interference

Belatedly and grudgingly, the proponents of Broadband over Power Line (BPL) are beginning to acknowledge that their systems cause interference to radiocommunication. They have a new refrain: it may be interference, but it isn't *harmful* interference.

Every radio amateur should be familiar with the concept of harmful interference. The definition is right there in Part 97:

Harmful interference. Interference which endangers the functioning of a radionavigation service or of other safety services or seriously degrades, obstructs or repeatedly interrupts a radiocommunication service operating in accordance with the Radio Regulations. (FCC Rules, §97.3(a)(23))

This definition does not just apply to the Amateur Radio Service. It originates in the Constitution of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and is faithfully reproduced in the international Radio Regulations as well as in the general rules and regulations (Part 2) of the FCC Rules.

Amateur Radio is a radiocommunication service. BPL is not. In the spectrum management context, BPL has no rights whatsoever. In fact, the international Radio Regulations--which have the force and effect of a treaty--require that "Administrations shall take all practicable and necessary steps to ensure that the operation of electrical apparatus or installations of any kind, *including power and telecommunication distribution networks...does not cause harmful interference to a radiocommunication service....*" [emphasis added]

Mark this: Protecting the Amateur Radio Service from harmful interference from BPL is *not optional* for the FCC. It is *required*. The FCC couldn't get out from under that obligation if it wanted to.

For most of its 70-year history--that is, until very recently--the FCC gave more than lip service to its obligation to protect licensed services. It is the reason that the following rule is enshrined in Part 15:

Operation of an intentional, unintentional, or incidental radiator is subject to the conditions that no harmful interference is caused and that interference must be accepted that may be caused by the operation of an authorized radio station, by another intentional or unintentional radiator, by industrial, scientific and medical (ISM) equipment, or by an incidental radiator. (FCC Rules, §15.5(b))

With this background it should be obvious why the BPL proponents are grasping at the "it may be interference, but it isn't harmful interference" straw. They know they don't have a leg to stand on.

Going back to our definition, if a BPL system "seriously degrades, obstructs or repeatedly interrupts" amateur radiocommunication then it is in violation. It doesn't matter how weak the signal is that you're trying to hear, or whether you're operating in the comfort of your own home, portable or mobile: BPL cannot inflict serious degradation, repeated misinterpretation, or repeated loss of information (these terms are taken from the ITU definition of "interference") on a radiocommunication service.

If a violation occurs, what happens then? What *should* happen is obvious: it must be corrected immediately. Remember, the operation of the device is "subject to the conditions that no harmful interference is caused and that interference must be accepted...." If the device causes harmful interference then it must be shut down.

Period. Remember, neither the device nor its operator has any right whatsoever to use the radio spectrum if doing so causes harmful interference.

And if the operator, once informed of the harmful interference, willfully refuses to take immediate corrective action? Then a higher authority than the FCC kicks in: the Communications Act of 1934, by which the FCC was created in the first place. Section 333 says, "*No person shall willfully or maliciously interfere with or cause interference to any radio communications of any station licensed or authorized by or under this Act or operated by the United States Government.*" Clearly, the operator of a device causing harmful interference who refuses to fix the problem immediately is interfering willfully and is subject to stiff penalties.

This is exactly what has happened in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where the station of Jim Spencer, W0SR, has been subjected to harmful interference from BPL for more than *12 weeks* despite repeated demands to the operator, Alliant Energy. The ARRL has interceded with the FCC's Enforcement Bureau on Jim's behalf, requesting that a monetary forfeiture of no less than \$10,000 be levied against Alliant Energy.

Power utility companies often receive complaints of harmful interference to licensed radiocommunication services resulting from sparking and corona discharge. The radio users receiving such interference are entitled to prompt resolution of the interference. However, no one would expect the interruption of electrical service to scores of customers until the sparking/corona problem can be rectified.

The situation with regard to BPL interference is entirely different. The radio users receiving harmful interference from a BPL source have *every right* to expect that the interference will be eliminated *immediately* upon notification to the operator.

According to §15.5(c) of the FCC Rules, "The operator of a radio frequency device shall be required to cease operating the device upon notification by a Commission representative that the device is causing harmful interference. Operation shall not resume until the condition causing the harmful interference has been corrected." Offenders may argue that they are not obligated to remedy interference until the FCC tells them to. Nonsense. That's like arguing that if you run a red light and cause an accident, but a police officer doesn't see you, then it's not your fault.

For a BPL system operator knowingly to continue to cause harmful interference to a licensed radiocommunication service--amateur or otherwise--is totally unacceptable. There is no reasonable reading of the international Radio Regulations, Communications Act, and the FCC Rules that could lead to a different conclusion.

Swap Shop

For Sale

TS-690
HF plus 6 Meters
Asking \$1000.00
John Fox
R.R.#2
Tara, Ontario, Canada
N0H-2N0

Icom IC-551d
100 watt 6 Meter All Mode
\$550
Bob Vary
R.R.#8
Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada
N4K-5W4
519-376-8060

Kenwood TS-520
HF Transceiver
Asking \$275.00
Bob Vary
R.R.#8
Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada
N4K-5W4
519-376-8060

MFJ Antenna Tuner
MFJ-901b
Asking \$40.00
Bob Vary
R.R.#8
Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada
N4K-5W4
519-376-8060

REIS 25 Amp P.S.
German Made
Asking \$100.00
Bob Vary
R.R.#8
Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada
N4K-5W4
519-376-8060

Do you have some ham equipment for sale or are you looking for something, well then what better place to do that then in the GBARC feedback. If you are looking for something or have something for sale just send your name Callsign and what you have for sale to ve3seg@rogers.com where it will be posted in the swap shop section of the GBARC feedback and on the GBARC Web Page.

MESSAGE FROM THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

Have you made an interesting contact or read a really interesting article that you think others would like? well then what better way of doing that then in the GBARC newsletter. The GBARC newsletter is always looking for interesting stories so if you have one done be a chicken be a ham and send it to Steven VE3SEG and Barry VA3WBG at ve3seg@rogers.com

From The Mailbox

ZEROBEAT

THE BRUCE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWSLETTER

IS NOW POSTED 73 DE JIM COVERLEY VE3OVV

<http://www.brucearc.on.ca>

When in Barrie stop in at the **Barrie Amateur Radio Club Meeting**

Georgian college, Rowntree Theatre

Date: TBA Time: 7:30 PM

73 de ken ve3kpp