



M.C.W.A. NEWS

Vol. 15 # 8

August 2015



MEETING AUGUST 4, 2015

Socializing - 6:30 PM
Meeting - 7:00 PM
Crystal Lake Bank
5100 Rt, 14
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

PROGRAM

All About D-Star
By
Dave , K9RUF

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145.410 Repeater

Per FCC records and KK9DX
The following persons are not
allowed to use the KK9DX
repeater with either recent or
future call signs:

Robert Abraham	W9RCM
Andrew Slythe	KC9ONA
Ray Kelly	Ex- K1MBE
Andy's club call	KD9BKM
Rob's club call	N9ROB

August Hamfests

- 2 - Peotone, IL
<http://ham-ham.org>
- 8 - Sturtevant (WI)
<http://www.w9udu.org>

AUGUST CONTESTS

- 1-2 - Int'l Light--
House/ Ships
- 1-2 - 10-10 SSB
Summer QP
- 1-2 NAQP CW
- 7 - NCCC RTTY
Sprint
- 30 - NA SSB
Sprint

AUGUST DX

- 7 - 10 **Faroe Is.**
OY/DL2RJM
- 9-23 **Seychelles**
S79DPX

Good Hunting !

WIN XP Vulnerable

Many hams continue to use Windows XP on their shack computers and some older ham software fails on newer operating systems. Microsoft considers this operating system, which was introduced in 2001, to be obsolete. Official support for the operating system was discontinued in 2014.

Now, Microsoft has now announced that it will discontinue issuing antivirus signature updates for the Security Essentials package in Windows XP. Updates to the Malicious Software Removal tool are also being discontinued, leaving XP computers potentially vulnerable.

http://www.zdnet.com/article/windows-xp-security-just-got-worse-again/?tag=nl.e589&_cid=e589&ttag=e589&ftag=TRec64629f

WIN XP

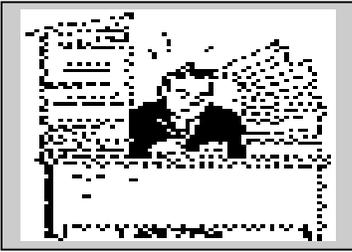
Thus, if you chose to continue use of Windows XP and you connect your computer to the Internet to use email, LoTW, eQSL, QRZ, Hamcall, online clusters, etc. you need to install an antivirus package and keep it updated periodically.

Although many antivirus packages (Norton, McAfee, Kapersky, etc.) are commercial only packages, there are other companies who offer free versions of their software (AVG, AVIRA, AVAST, Panda, etc.). Thus, there is no reason for anyone to have an unprotected computer.

Of course, if your only network connection is through HF radio frequencies, then you have nothing to fear.

Be safe on-line.

de Ray, N9RWC



M.C.W.A. NEWS

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

WB9RFP SK It is with sadness we report the passing of Tom Schwar who passed on 21 July. Tome was a MCWA member and will be missed. Our condolences to his family. RIP Tom !

STRAY Rules for antennas... Any antenna is better than a bucket of wire in the shed. If you want a bigger signal put up more metal. If you cannot put up more metal put the metal you have higher. If you never transmit they can't possibly hear you.

KB1GMX de Eham

STRAY So many antennas.....so little time!

W5XJ de Eham

ARRL Complains to FCC About Home Depot's Marketing of RF Lighting Devices:

The ARRL has filed a formal complaint

<http://www.arrl.org/files/media/News/Home%20Depot%20Complaint%20Letter%20FCC%2007142015%20Filing%20Copy.pdf> with the FCC, alleging that The Home Depot retail chain has been marketing certain RF-ballast lighting devices in violation of FCC Part 18 rules. Accompanying the League's July 14 letter to FCC Enforcement Bureau Spectrum Enforcement Division Chief Bruce Jacobs and Office of Engineering and Technology Laboratory Division Chief Rashmi Doshi was a 20-page report <http://www.arrl.org/files/media/News/Home%20Depot%20Ballast%20Report%202015%20Gruber%20Filing%20Copy.pdf> prepared by the ARRL Laboratory's Mike Gruber, W1MG. His report outlines four instances in which ARRL investigated The Home Depot's marketing and sale to consumers of non-consumer-rated RF lighting devices.

In three cases, The Home Depot sold non-consumer devices having far greater emission limits and intended for commercial use to consumers who specifically expressed plans to use the devices in residential settings. Although notices accompanying the store's display and included with some devices purchased indicated that they were for commercial use, the information did not specify that the devices could not be used for residential purposes. In the case of products that did include such a notice, the information was not visible without opening the packaging.

“Clearly Home Depot's marketing and sale of non-consumer ballasts is not adequate to ensure compliance with FCC Part 18 requirements,” Gruber's report concluded. The ARRL asked the FCC to “investigate and commence an enforcement proceeding” regarding The Home Depot's retail marketing and sale of RF lighting devices in the US.



**THOSE LAZY,
HAZY, CRAZY
DAYS OF
SUMMER**

Real summer-like weather has finally arrived in these last weeks of July and the ham bands know all about it. As an example, I was able to easily reach a 2m repeater 60 miles away with my 1/4 watt HT the other evening from the easy chair in the living room. 2m enhancements are typical under our current atmospheric conditions. 6m has also been open some days and evenings---also typical this time of year. These conditions favor VHF and UHF.

Unfortunately, the hazy days of summer can be brutal on HF bands, especially as Cycle 24 is declining. Sunspot numbers have typically been below 50 with rather high A and K indices. Add to this thunderstorms up to a few thousand away and you can experience challenging band conditions when attempting to work DX. Except for some E skip and occasional openings, 10m is in the doldrums these days. I suspect we will see more activity on 10m as we enter into meteorological fall which commences September 1.

In spite of summer challenges, my log shows several nice DX contacts such as E50J on 15m, 9H5BZ on 15m and E51RAT on 12m. The best bands for DX up to midnight local time are 17m down to 40m. 40m has been pleasant for DX. But the band with the most logging past sunset has been 20m. I have been working Europe and the Mideast with little trouble and big signals. I chatted with 9K2UU recently on 20m. It's always fun to talk with Barack! We were hitting each other S9.

As we go across August, look for such calls as ET3AA, J20JM and some JD1 and OY call signs. C5WP will also be calling from Africa. This is just a sample of DX that you can work in the days ahead.

Knowing that these nice summer days will not last too long, I got up on the roof and repaired my 6 band vertical. The wind did a job on it. A wire was torn loose, bolts were loose and a spoke on the capacitance hat was blown off---wind damage. Now it's working well.

Remember that at our latitude each season gives us something to do with this great hobby---even the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer. 73
Dave KA9OZP



MCWA Treasurer's Report
August 2015

Here is the monthly treasurer's report. We added 3 renewals. We added 3 renewals. I believe we still need to pay for the Moose lodge. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. 73

Bank Balance

Beginning Balance:	\$5,225.70	6-29-15
Checks written	227.96	
Deposits	30.00	7-10-15
Interest	.45	6-30-15
Ending Balance:	\$5028.19	6/29/15

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In its letter, the League noted that it has received numerous complaints from the Amateur Radio community of “significant noise” in the bands between 1.8 and 30 MHz from so-called “grow light” ballasts and other RF lighting devices regulated under FCC Part 18 rules. Gruber said emissions from grow light ballasts have been measured in the ARRL Lab to be way above both non-consumer and consumer Part 18 emissions limits.

Although otherwise-legal non-consumer rated ballasts - the subject of ARRL's complaint -- are not nearly as problematic as grow lights, they can still cause interference beyond what would typically be expected or easily addressed in a residential environment. The devices at issue in the League's complaint are only legal in commercial and industrial environments, and they should not be used for residential purposes due to the higher Part 18 emission limits permitted for industrial and commercial devices.

The League said its investigations in several states revealed an alarming number of instances in which non-consumer-rated ballasts were mixed in with consumer ballasts and other consumer products.

“In most of the stores surveyed, unsuspecting consumers have no way of knowing the significance of consumer vs. non-consumer ballasts,” the League said. “In some cases, 'commercial' grade ballasts, with their associated non-consumer emission limits, appeared to be a heavier duty or superior product. The display signage typically used implies, therefore, that commercial ballasts are also a product upgrade for home use.” The ARRL said that store display signage typically did not mention or adequately address applicable FCC Part 18 requirements, as they pertain to interference in a residential environment.

The League said consumers in three of the four instances it investigated made actual purchases of RF lighting devices at The Home Depot retail outlets and “specifically asked about residential deployment of non-consumer RF lighting ballasts.” The ARRL said it's apparent that The Home Depot -- and, by inference, other similar retail stores -- is “actively and knowingly

engaged” in selling commercial RF lighting products to customers for use in residential settings.

“If this activity is left unchecked the Commission will continue to note a deterioration in ambient noise levels and preclusive interfering signals for both AM broadcasters and Amateur Radio licensees in the entirety of the high-frequency bands,” the League's complaint said.

The ARRL asked the Commission to “take appropriate action” with respect to The Home Depot and other retail outlets marketing such RF lighting devices “without delay.”

A copy of the letter was sent to The Home Depot's Atlanta, Georgia, Store Support Center.

ARRL Letter - 23 July 2015

Party Balloon Carrying Ham Radio Payload Circles Southern Hemisphere a Second Time:

After traveling for more than 110,800 km (68,696 mi) aloft, the record-setting pico balloon PS-46, carrying an Amateur Radio payload, completed its second circumnavigation of the Southern Hemisphere, before descending into the Indian Ocean on July 18 due to bad weather. The helium balloon and its solar-powered 25 mW payload were launched on May 23 by Andy Nguyen, VK3YT.

“It was an exciting but also an exhausting eight weeks for many hard-core trackers,” Nguyen said. “Their perseverance ensured the balloon was tracked almost around the clock. It was

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M.C.W.A.



BALLOON - cont'd

hard work, and the little party balloon was becoming part of the daily routine for many of us.“

More than 20 ”regulars“ were among those who tracked the high-altitude flight, monitoring the payload's 20 meter signals in WSPR and JT9 modes. Stations in Virginia and Florida, as well as in Peru and Argentina were among those hearing the balloon's beacon.

The last station to hear the balloon was Vince, ZS6BTY, in Pretoria, South Africa. The balloon had been at an altitude of about 9000 meters (29,530 feet), but quickly descended into the ocean.

PS-46 had circumnavigated the Southern Hemisphere the first time in 12 days, and it was starting its third trip around when it went down. Read more

<http://www.arrl.org/news/party-balloon-carrying-ham-radio-payload-circles-southern-hemisphere-a-second-time>. -- Thanks to Jim Linton, VK3PC

de ARRL Letter 7/23/15

Losing Interest

Currently hold a tech license and keep saying gona [sic] upgrade to general just never find the time to. Aside from that in the 10 years that I've held my ham license, the last few I have slowly lost interest in the hobby. Think part of it is due to sort of feeling like the black sheep in my area as no one when holler out will respond to my calls. I quit monitoring the local repeater for that reason also. Would hear someone call out on it, would reply and go unanswered. Seemed like unless they knew you they weren't gona [sic] respond to you.

When I first got into it I enjoyed it a lot an learning all the cool things that one could do from antennas to radios and everything in between. I guess its just hard to enjoy any more when am a lone wolf in the hobby.

My license expires in a few months and don't know if its worth renewing or let it expire and get out of the hobby an sell my equipment. Figure would ask the community and get some feedback ahead of time. *de Eham/forums*

[Ed. - This may be typical of many who let their licenses expire because of negative experiences in the hobby. This Editor has always view the Tech license as more of an entry level license (a.k.a. "learner's permit") as a stepping stone to General or Extra. While some are content to stay Techs seemingly forever, there are those who want more out of this hobby. Be encouraged by the above comment rather than bummed out. If you want something bad enough the effort is worth the time to achieve it !]

M.C.W.A.

FCC Shows No Mercy, Sustains \$22,000 Fine for Egregious On-Air Behavior by Michigan Licensee

The FCC has dropped the other shoe — hard — in the case of Michael Guernsey, KZ8O (ex-ND8V), of Parchment, Michigan, imposing the full \$22,000 fine it had proposed in 2014 for causing intentional interference with other Amateur Radio communications and for failing to identify. In a Forfeiture Order issued on July 22, 2015 — exactly 1 year from its Notice of Apparent Liability (NAL) proposing the hefty fine — the FCC cited Guernsey’s “long history of causing interference to other Amateur Radio operators” and noted that he “has been warned repeatedly in writing.” Guernsey’s interactions with the FCC Enforcement Bureau date back well over a decade, and, at one point agreed to have his license suspended for 9 months.

“Despite repeated warnings from the [Enforcement] Bureau regarding his on-air behavior, Mr Guernsey’s violations included the deliberate playing of music on top of the transmissions of other amateur operators in order to obstruct their ability to communicate on the frequency,” the FCC recounted in the July 22 Forfeiture Order. “Mr Guernsey further used various animal noises to prevent the communications of other stations with whom he had a longstanding and well-documented dispute.”

The FCC said the egregiousness of Guernsey’s “repeated willful acts of malicious

interference” warranted the assessment of the full \$22,000 forfeiture it had proposed a year earlier. “Nothing in the record in this case, including Mr Guernsey’s financial condition, warrants any leniency or mitigation of that amount,” the FCC added.

In responding to the 2014 NAL, Guernsey denied responsibility for the interference, in part noting that FCC agents had not inspected his station and may have heard the signal of a nearby radio amateur. He also sought a cancellation or reduction of the fine based on inability to pay. The FCC was having none of it. The Commission said its agents “positively confirmed the source” of the interfering transmissions as Guernsey’s residence and monitored them for 40 minutes. Further, the FCC said that inability to pay a fine was but one criterion it uses in determining an appropriate financial penalty.

“Considering the entire record, we find no reason to cancel, withdraw, or reduce the proposed penalty,” the FCC said in the Forfeiture Order to Guernsey, who has 30 days to pay the fine or arrange to do so on an installment plan.

In a related enforcement case, the FCC in January affirmed an \$11,500 fine against Brian Crow, K3VR, of North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, for causing deliberate interference. The FCC The Enforcement Bureau had proposed fining for both Crow and Guernsey in separate, but similarly worded Notices of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture

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FCC Shows No Mercy - cont'd

issued a year ago. Crow did not respond to the 2014 NAL.

In both instances, the FCC said, it responded in March 2014 to “several complaints of intentional interference” on 14.313 MHz, and Commission agents used radio direction-finding techniques to pin down the transmission sources.

de ARRL

[Ed.- This also appeared on the K9RN reflector which is the email group for MCWA. There was some discussion. Does this mean the FCC has taken a harder line with fines for Amateur Radio ? Perhaps. Think we'd all like to see the “bad boys” on ham radio get their “come upins”. As someone one said a few years back in a different context, “If you wanna play, you gotta pay”... think this can also apply to all the scofflaws in Amateur Radio. We can only wait to hear the rest of the above story from FCC.]



FCC Proposes Fining Georgia Ham \$1000 for Failing to Identify

07/23/2015

The FCC has proposed fining a Georgia ham \$1000 for alleged failure to properly identify. David J. Tolassi, W4BHV, had been warned last August about not following the Commission’s Part 97 ID rules. The FCC said his “deliberate disregard” of that warning warranted the proposed penalty.

“Mr Tolassi...has a history of failing to comply with the rules governing the Amateur Radio Service,” the FCC said in a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture (NAL), released on July 22. As the NAL recounted, agents from the FCC’s Atlanta Office used direction-finding techniques to locate the source of a signal on 14.313 MHz to Tolassi’s residence in Ringold, Georgia.

“The agents monitored and recorded transmissions during which Mr Tolassi failed to transmit his assigned call sign,” the FCC said. “The agents interviewed Mr Tolassi later that evening, and, while he admitted operating that evening, he denied making the unidentified transmissions.”

Nonetheless, the FCC determined that Tolassi “apparently repeatedly violated Section 97.119(a)” of the rules. The Commission pointed that it could have assessed a forfeiture of \$16,000 a day for a continuing violation, but it settled on a \$1000 fine.

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Georgia Ham - cont'd

Tolassi is no stranger to the FCC Enforcement Bureau. In 2005, the Commission warned Tolassi, then WA1BHV and living in Vermont, that he was risking a substantial fine if he continued to violate the conditions of his 2004 license renewal. After a series of “enforcement issues” relating to the operation of KB1EVE, his call sign at the time, the FCC renewed Tolassi's General class ticket on the condition that he refrain from 20 meter voice operation for 3 years. The FCC had referred Tolassi's renewal application to the Enforcement Bureau for review the previous year, after then-FCC Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth alleged that Tolassi had engaged in inappropriate on-the-air behavior.

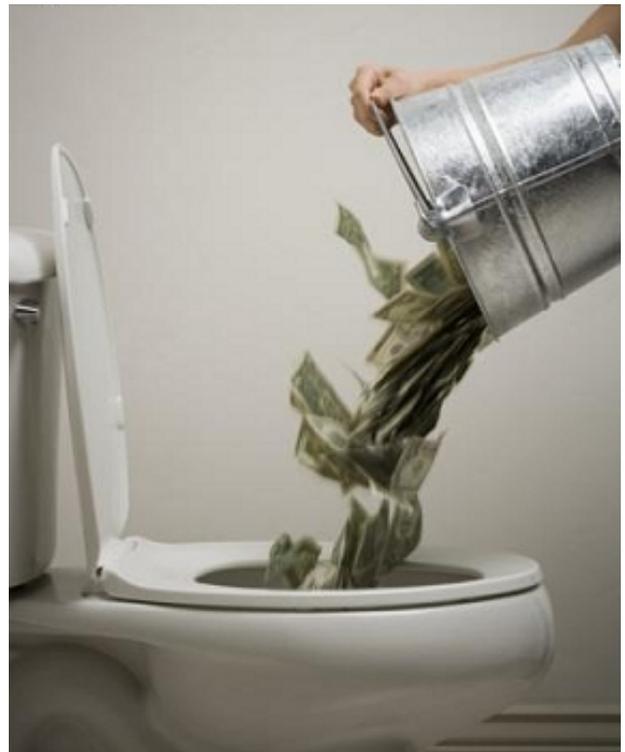
Tolassi has 30 days to pay or seek a reduction or cancellation of the fine.

de ARRL



[Ed. - It appears that there are some out there who are slow learners and think they don't have to abide by Part 97 like the rest of us. This character has had several run-ins with the FCC and apparently has learned nothing. The FCC should give him the “No Mercy” treatment and let him go back to 11 meters ! “]

Hope this is what happens to FCC scofflaws !



A fool and his money ... ???