

The Calendar

No. 173, December 11, 1997

I. WRC-97 Sets Agenda for WRC-99; Amateur Items Postponed

The 1997 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-97) of the International Telecommunication Union was held in Geneva from October 27 to November 21, 1997. The allocations decisions made at the conference will have only minor impact on the Amateur Service, and none at all on the Amateur-Satellite Service. Some of the decisions are favorable: amateurs in parts of Region 1 eventually will be able to make more use of the 160-meter band, thanks to countries that removed themselves from footnotes that provide national preference for other services in part of the band.

WRC-97 attracted 1,801 delegates from 142 countries and 141 observers from a range of international and telecommunications-related organizations, including, of course, the IARU. The IARU representatives were Vice President Michael Owen, VK3KI, Secretary Larry E. Price, W4RA, and Region 1 Vice Chairman Wojciech Nietyksza, SP5FM, assisted for part of the time by regional executive committee members Tafa Diop, 6W1KI, and Eduardo Estrada, HC2EE, who were sent by their respective regional organizations for training purposes. Representing Amateur Radio as an integral part of their national delegations were Oyekunle B. Ajayi, 5NØOBA, Nigeria Amateur Radio Society; Jim Dean, VE3IQ, Radio Amateurs of Canada; Keigo Komuro, JA1KAB, Japan Amateur Radio League (and Secretary, IARU Region 3); Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, American Radio Relay League; and David Wardlaw, VK3ADW, Wireless Institute of Australia (and Director, IARU Region 3). Other radio amateurs who were members of their national delegations in various professional capacities were most helpful to us, as well. Part-time visitors to the conference who were attached to their national delegations included Region 2 President Thomas B. Atkins, VE3CDM, Region 2 Secretary Pedro Seidemann, YV5BPG, and David Sumner, K1ZZ, from the International Secretariat.

For the Amateur and Amateur-Satellite Services, the most significant decisions of WRC-97 involve the agendas for future conferences. Prior to WRC-97 there was one item on the preliminary agenda for WRC-99, adopted at WRC-95, that was of special significance to us: a review of Article S25 of the international radio regulations which has been the subject of intense study by the IARU Future of the Amateur Service (FASC) committee over these last two years. A second item of interest, that was among the WRC-97 proposals from administrations, called for the addition to the WRC-99 agenda of the harmonization of the amateur and broadcasting allocations in the vicinity of 7 MHz. These proposals were the result of work by the IARU 7 MHz Strategy Committee. At WRC-97 we learned that preliminary agendas offer little guidance as to what issues will be considered by a WRC four years later. The draft agenda adopted at WRC-97 for the 1999 conference (it is a "draft" because it is an expression of the conference's view to the ITU Council regarding the agenda, not a final decision as to what should be included) lists a number of issues that could not be resolved at WRC-97, with some items that appeared on the preliminary agenda for 1999 carried over to the preliminary agenda for 2001. The items now on the preliminary agenda for 2001 include the two initiatives of particular interest to us: Article S25 and 7 MHz.

However, this delay until 2001 does not mean that we can relax and ignore preparations for WRC-99. To the contrary, there are two matters on the draft agenda that will require a strong defense on our part: possible additional allocations for "little LEOs" and a possible 6-MHz allocation somewhere between 420 and 470 MHz for the Earth Exploration Satellite Service (active). The specific agenda items read in the Final Acts:

1.11 to consider constraints on existing allocations and to consider additional allocations on a worldwide basis for the non/MSS below 1, taking into account the results of ITU-R studies conducted in response to Resolutions No. 214 (Rev.WRC-97) and COM5-25;

...

8.7 to consider provision of up to 6 MHz of frequency spectrum to the earth exploration-satellite service (active) in the frequency band 420 - 470 MHz, in accordance with Resolution COM5-13.

The second item is among several topics for which additional funding will need to be identified by the ITU Council in order for them to be considered at WRC-99 as the budget is limited.

With regard to future conferences, it is worth noting that there is a strong and growing feeling that the interval between WRCs is now too short and that May 2000 would be a better time for the holding of "WRC-99." If that comes to pass, then the scheduling of WRC-01 also will be set back, possibly to as late as 2003. Conference scheduling will be considered at the meeting of the ITU Council in May, 1998, as well as at the Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis in October.

In another WRC-97 matter of interest to amateurs, the ITU Secretary General submitted a paper calling for the study of whether a specific frequency should be set aside within the amateur bands for disaster communications. A resolution was adopted which commends a new draft Convention on Disaster Communications scheduled to be considered at an intergovernmental conference in Finland in June 1998. The resolution was cosponsored by a number of countries from all parts of the world and specifically mentions amateur radio as a resource for disaster communications. In the process of adoption of this new resolution, Resolution 640 was suppressed (deleted). Since WARC-79, Resolution 640 has named most amateur frequencies below 146 MHz as a spectrum reserve in the event of a natural disaster. Of course, even without Resolution 640, administrations retain their sovereign right to take such steps as they consider necessary in the event of a communications emergency

It should also be emphasized that the favorable outcome of WRC-97 with regard to allocations was not an accident. It was the result of hard work over a period of years by many radio amateurs, working with their administrations and through their IARU national societies. In particular, the outcome on the subject of wind profiler radars was due in large measure to the work of Paul Rinaldo, W4RI. Paul served as the chairman of ITU-R Task Group 8/2, which was responsible for the technical studies relating to this issue and their final resolution at WRC-97 in a satisfactory manner.

Another matter that requires emphasis is the increasingly important role of regional telecommunications organizations, especially CEPT (Europe), CITEL (the Americas), and APT (Asia Pacific). The regional IARU organizations have been working hard to ensure that the needs of the Amateur and Amateur-Satellite Services are taken into account in these regional forums. There is a trend toward common regional proposals being submitted on behalf of multiple administrations by the regional telecommunications organizations; therefore, it is vital that this commitment by IARU regional organizations be continued and expanded in the future.

II. FASC Releases Second and Third Reports

The IARU Future of the Amateur Service Committee (FASC) has released two additional "Report[s] Following Release of Discussion Paper." The Second Report was issued before the IARU Region 3 Conference held in September in Beijing and was made available to attendees as a conference document. After the Beijing Conference the Third Report was released, reflecting input from the conference.

Like the First Report, these papers attempt to summarize the committee's work, to describe the current state of the committee's thinking, and to solicit input from all concerned. It must be emphasized that nothing the committee has done to date should be interpreted either as a recommendation or as a proposal for consideration by administrations. The committee's work is simply a work in progress and will remain so until a final report is submitted to the IARU Administrative Council and the Administrative Council formulates a position for the Amateur Service.

The WRC-99 action postponing consideration of Article S25 until at least 2001 gives all of us more time to determine the course of action that will best serve amateur radio in the 21st century.

The Second and Third Reports of FASC are enclosed with this Calendar. They are also available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.iaru.org>.

III. Beijing Administrative Council Summary Record Released

The Administrative Council of the International Amateur Radio Union met in Beijing, China, September 13-15, 1997. The meeting took place after the IARU Region 3 Conference. A copy of the Summary Record of the meeting is enclosed with this Calendar. Here is a summary of the actions of the Administrative Council:

1. The ITU meetings at which IARU representation will be required during the coming year were identified and the appointment of representatives was announced by the President after consultation with the International Secretariat. The Council reaffirmed that in the selection of representatives to such meetings, appropriate consultation with the regional organizations shall take place.
2. The participation of the Regions in the activities of regional and sub-regional telecommunications organizations was reviewed. These organizations are assuming increasing importance.
3. The Council agreed on instructions to be given to the IARU delegation to the 1997 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-97). The International Secretariat will update this material as new information becomes available. The core delegation will consist of Larry Price, W4RA, Michael Owen, VK3KI, and Wojciech Nietyksza, SP5FM.
4. The status of the action plan developed by the 7 MHz Strategy Committee and previously adopted by the Council was reviewed. Following WRC-97, information will be sent to member-societies updating the plan in the light of decisions taken at that conference.
5. The second report published by the Future of the Amateur Service Committee (FASC) was considered. The Region 3 Conference has shared the results of a comprehensive review of the FASC report to the conference. These comments will be incorporated in a further report to be circulated as the next step in the process of developing an IARU position regarding the possible revision of Article S25 of the international radio regulations. The position will be developed by the Council following the receipt of the final report of FASC in September 1998.
6. A budget for 1998-2000 was adopted as submitted by the International Secretariat. The budget includes provision for financial contributions from the three regional organizations to defray a portion of the expenses that are assumed by the International Secretariat beyond its constitutional obligation.
7. Planning for IARU participation in the next World TELECOM (Geneva, 1999) was reviewed. A report was received from Region 1 on their preparation for Amateur Radio participation in Africa TELECOM 98 in South Africa which is being organized by the Region in accordance with IARU policy.
8. The IARU Strategic Plan for the Development of Support for Amateur Radio was updated. The associated action plan for 1998-99 was approved and has the goal of employing resources to enhance the support for Amateur Radio in Africa. The implementation of the plan will be coordinated between the International Secretariat and IARU Region 1.
9. The present and anticipated future requirements for radio spectrum allocations to the Amateur and Amateur-Satellite Services were reviewed, updated, and approved.
10. An Ad Hoc Monitoring Service Review Committee was appointed to review the terms of reference of the IARU Monitoring System and make such recommendations as it may deem appropriate. Pedro Seidemann, YV5BPG, was appointed chairman.

11. An Amateur Radio Outlook Committee was established, in the light of changing technology and the Internet, to make general recommendations as to the future growth and development of Amateur Radio. Tom Atkins, VE3CDM, was appointed chairman.

12. A resolution was adopted encouraging the promotion and development of Amateur Radio digital technology.

13. The Council recognized the need to review the structure of the IARU to ensure its long-term viability, and as a first step, decided that an ad hoc committee be designated by the president to provide a preliminary report for the next meeting of the Council.

14. Reports were received from the international coordinators and advisers who report to the Council on specialized areas of interest, and they were reappointed to new terms. They are Robert E. Knowles, ZL1BAD, IARU Monitoring System; John G. Troster, W6ISQ, IARU Beacon Project; Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS5AKV, IARU Satellite Adviser; and Christian M. Verholt, OZ8CY, IARU EMC Adviser.

15. Finding that the work of the Ad Hoc Beacon Committee could be considered complete, the members were thanked for their valuable contribution and the committee was discharged.

16. The theme for World Amateur Radio Day, 20 September 1998, was selected as "Amateur Radio -- Communicating Worldwide for Three Quarters of a Century." The theme was chosen in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the first transoceanic two-way amateur communication, between France and the United States, in November 1923. The theme of World Amateur Radio Day for 1997 is "35 Years of Amateur Radio in Space." Beginning in the year 2000, World Amateur Radio Day will occur in April, on the anniversary of the founding of the IARU in Paris in 1925.

17. The next regular meeting of the Council will be held in Venezuela beginning on October 3, 1998, following the IARU Region 2 Conference.

The members of the Administrative Council are IARU President W1RU, Vice President VK3KI, Secretary W4RA, and regional representatives PAØLOU, SP5FM, VE3CDM, YV5BPG, HL1IFM, and JJ1OEY. Additional regional observers invited to be present were DF5UG, LU2AH, and VK3ADW.

IV. Region 1 Names Co-Secretary

To assist Region 1 Secretary John Allaway, G3FKM, while John copes with a medical condition, the Region 1 Executive Committee has created the post of "Co-Secretary" which will be filled by R. J. "Tim" Hughes, G3GVV, through the next General Conference of the Region to be held in the fall of 1999. Region 1 requests that effective immediately, all mail for the Region 1 Secretary be sent to the following address:

IARU, Region 1 Office
c/o Audrey Jefcoate, Office Manager
Fossend, Burlescombe, Devon, EX16 7JH, England
Telephone: +44 1823 672146
FAX: +44 1823 673161
E-mail: 106531.3107@compuserve.com

The Region 1 Office Manager will re-route all incoming mail as appropriate.

V. NU1AW Inaugural Operation

As reported in Calendar No. 172, the call sign NU1AW has been issued to the IARU. The first operation under this call sign occurred during the 1997 IARU HF World Championship, 12-13 July. During the 24-hour operating period, a team of operators in Connecticut made 7,154 contacts. QSL cards have been sent via the QSL Bureau system to confirm all contacts outside the United States.

VI. Other Enclosures

With the mailing of the 1996 Annual Progress Report form that accompanied Calendar No. 172, the International Secretariat began to compile a list of countries that share reciprocal licensing agreements with others, and that honor amateur licenses issued by other countries in the absence of formal agreements. The first result of this effort is enclosed. Please review it and advise Naoki Akiyama, NX1L, IARU International Secretariat, of any additions and changes that should be made with regard to the listing for your own country. You can reach Nao by e-mail at nakiyama@iaru.org.

To update your records, enclosed you will also find the most recent editions of the lists of Active Member-Societies and QSL Bureaus. These lists are kept current at the IARU Web site: <http://www.iaru.org>.

Sincerely,

Larry E. Price, W4RA
Secretary

Enclosures:

1. FASC Second and Third Reports Following Release of Discussion Paper
2. Summary Record, Administrative Council, Beijing, September 1997
3. Reciprocal Licensing Agreements as of 8 December 1997
4. Active Member-Societies as of 8 December 1997
5. QSL Bureaus as of 8 December 1997