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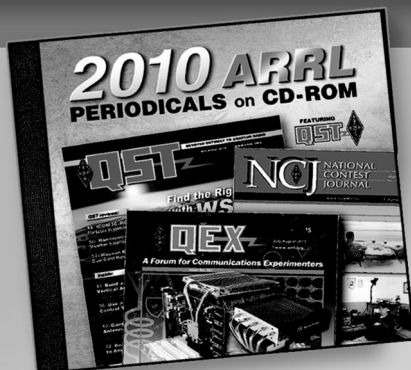
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QST Issue: Jan 1994

Title: Behind the Diamond: W1AW Chief Op Jeff Bauer, WA1MBK

Author: Jim Cain, K1TN

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supported local, voluntary band-planning as a means to accommodate the interests of diverse groups of amateurs, such simply could not work in this case, and that current FCC staffing does not permit it to referee amateur-to-amateur disputes. Thus, a statutory subband seemed the only solution.

FCC RELEASES DETAILS OF "INSTANT LICENSE" PLAN

On November 4, the FCC issued a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM, PR Docket 93-267) on its plan to grant temporary operating authority to unlicensed persons who pass the examination for a new amateur operator license. The temporary authorization would begin when the exam is passed and an application for a license is filed, and last until a full-term license is received from the FCC, with some restrictions (see December 1993 *QST*, page 92). The Commission said it believes this system would reduce the approximately

11,000 inquiries it receives each year from amateur license applicants about the status of their applications. The ARRL is on record as preferring to see Commission resources devoted to the implementation of electronic filing and other measures to minimize the turnaround time for the processing of applications. The comment deadline for this NPRM is January 10, 1994; reply comment deadline is February 10, 1994.

For the full text of this NPRM, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) to the Regulatory Information Branch at ARRL Headquarters and ask for PR Docket 93-267. ARRL Members are encouraged to express their views on this proposal.

LICENSES WITHDRAWN IN PROBE OF VE EXAM IRREGULARITIES

The FCC has invalidated the licenses and license upgrades of 27 people after an investigation of irregularities at four Vol-

unteer Examiner (VE) test sessions in southern California in June and August 1993. The sessions involved the ARRL and W5YI VECs, and a number of volunteer examiners have had their accreditations suspended as a result. The ARRL/VEC has suspended the accreditation of four volunteer examiners at the FCC's request, and that of three additional VEs involved in one of the test sessions, after finding irregularities in the records from one of the suspect test sessions. The FCC thanked the ARRL/VEC for its help in the investigation, and lauded VEs for their hard work and dedication.

John B. Johnston, chief of the FCC's Personal Radio Branch, said: "I'd like to commend the ARRL-VEC for working together with the W5YI-VEC to uncover irregularities at several recent sessions in the Los Angeles area and suspend the VEs involved. Your action will prevent future occurrences and assure that amateur

Behind the Diamond: W1AW Chief Op Jeff Bauer, WA1MBK

If Jeff Bauer comes to visit, keep him away from your tower. Before you know it, if it's up, the Human Gin Pole will take it down, and if it's on the ground he'll put it up.

At 42, an age when most of us at least start to think about cutting back on tower work, Jeff seems to have accelerated his need to climb. This month we present the third in what's becoming a series of visits with HQ staff "retreads"; Jeff Bauer was a W1AW evening shift operator in 1973-74, returning to HQ and W1AW in 1984, taking over as head honcho at W1AW a couple of years ago (two other licensed ops complete the W1AW contingent). Between tours of duty here, he was a sound engineer for local rock and roll bands and repaired consumer electronics equipment, for a while running his own small business.

Sometimes these Behind the Diamonds begin to sound like a broken record, but facts is facts: Jeff started with a crystal set as a boy, listening to local stations when he wasn't burning up electric train transformers or building cranes with his Erector Set. His long fascination with radio culminated in WN1MBK in 1969, when Jeff was a senior at Farmington High School (he also graduated from Ward Technical College in Hartford with a major in communications technology).

Jeff says that ARRL Washington Area Coordinator Perry Williams, W1UED, was his "Outdoorsman" at Boy Scout camp. "For three summers Perry tried to get me to learn Morse code for my First Class badge. For some reason I just couldn't do it," Jeff admits. But later, as a Novice ham, Jeff got his 20-WPM sticker from W1AW. Go figure.

The first Jeff Bauer aerial was a

barbed wire fence, which he tapped into for his crystal set (and you thought there wasn't any farmland in Connecticut). Not counting the prefix switch from WN to WA, Jeff has always had the same call sign, a rarity for our generation (some of us being barely able to remember the *last* call sign we had). Back in 1990, when W1AW was being completely redesigned, Jeff worked full time on the project for six months, implementing many of his own ideas for improvements. Today his work—including the installation of more than a mile of Heliac cable—is evident all over the new W1AW. Check it out when you come to visit.

As Chief Operator, Jeff handles the administration of the station; if ARRL Headquarters is Mecca for visiting hams, W1AW is its shrine. Every year, several thousand visitors tour the station and many operate from one of three visitor operating consoles. W1AW is on the air more than 3500 hours a year, transmitting code practice and bulletins, and taking part in occasional special projects.

As for two-way contacts, Jeff says his staff answers more than 5000 QSL cards a year. At home, Jeff is on the local *PacketCluster*, TCP/IP and dabbles in HF DXing, contests and QRP. Like most of us who live in the country around here, he spends a lot of time "rearranging rocks" (which in these parts, have a way of growing right up out of the ground, explaining why Connecticut Yankees in the 18th century gave up farming and turned to manufacturing). Jeff's also interested in computers, likes to hike and plays several musical instruments. When he's not high on a tower, of course.

—James D. Cain, K1TN



W1AW Chief Operator Jeff Bauer, WA1MBK, "The Human Gin Pole." (K1TN photo)