

CLAY'S CORNER FOR OCTOBER 2010

Big news for me this month is the fact that I am now the Chapter Chairman of SBE-16. All I can remember is that it was in the 70's the last time I was Chairman. I do remember the Vice Chair was Bill Pickering. A lot can fade in 30 years. If anyone can dig up what year that was, I'd appreciate it.

For those of us that go up into the mountains to work on broadcast 'stuff'....The words of Ted Buehner, NWS's WCM, are constantly being replayed in my mind. At the last SECC Meeting he told us about how La Nina' is in full swing with winter temperature projections heading downward. Translation – It's likely we are going to have a return to a snowy winter.

I have been really enjoying my new work with WSU's Northwest Public Radio. As they predicted, lots of travel involved visiting most of their sites in Western Washington. Two locations have consumed a lot of this time. The installation of a new station, KSWs, at Crego Hill Southwest of Chehalis, as well as KVTI in Lakewood. Coming up will be a project installing a new transmitter at Johnson Butte in Tri-Cities. While over there recently I was struck by how different things look on the dry-side of the mountains. A mountain top with no trees! This project will involve a number engineers as we replace a mature transmitter with a new Nautel NV30.

Business indicators appear to be mainly headed upward. CBS's Mooves recently was quoted as being bullish about Q3. Noting that their TV stations are up by over 20% meanwhile Radio is up single digits. CBS owns Channel 11 as well as 3 FM's and an AM in the Seattle Market.

The folks at Channels 13 and 22 have got to be wondering if it will ever be over as the struggle to exit Chapter 11 continues to drag on. Meanwhile Ch 22, KMYQ has changed call letters to KZJO calling itself JoeTV. Perhaps folks remember calls like KOMO, KING and KIRO...I'd bet that hardly anyone can tell you the call letters of other TV stations in this market.

The FCC has announced that 147 FM CP's are going to be on the auction block as they gear up for auction # 91. None in Washington State, but there are 5 of them in Oregon.

Likely the biggest news item this month is that FCC, Yielding to the pressure for more wireless gizmo spectrum, has opened up more spectrum for more high-speed Internet connections for smart phones, tablets and computers. The order, approved unanimously by the five-member commission, is a win for giants Dell, Microsoft and Google, which have lobbied for the use of the airwaves known as "white spaces." Those are parts of the broadcast spectrum that sit between television channels

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said the decision as part of his effort to significantly extend broadband connections in the United States. He added - "This new unlicensed spectrum will be a powerful platform for innovation, and as we've seen time and again, when we unleash American ingenuity, great things happen."

Underscoring how much money is at stake here, Microsoft commissioned a report last year that estimates white spaces would generate \$4 billion in annual revenue for device makers and Internet service providers.

The FCC tried to appease groups that oppose the use of white spaces by rewriting technical details of the order for Thursday's vote that specify the engineering of devices to ensure they do not interfere with broadcast channels. And the FCC said it would reserve two channels on the lower range of the spectrum, for wireless microphones.

One area of concern to Engineers was dealt with by the Commission - The new order eliminates a requirement that devices scan the airwaves for available signals. Rather, they can rely on a database of digital signals, updated daily, for use in locating an available channel on which to transmit.

Will new cell-phones be required to have FM receivers? This is an issue that is not likely to die anytime soon. The NAB is pushing the idea while the CTIA is pushing the other way. The parties have now involved members of congress. It's not that this is a difficult issue, technically, as there are several phones that already come that way. New data is showing that radio reaches more than 239 million people over the age of 12 each week. That's 4 million more than a year ago. Interesting how some are stating that radio is a dying breed as part of their argument that there is no reason to include FM radios in cell-phones. Which group uses radio more? Hispanics and African Americans.

On the subject of cellphones – Here's an idea – A new nanomaterial can convert sound waves into electricity. Combine this with your cell phone and your talking on your phone could charge it batteries. The developers have some other ideas. Using sound walls along freeways to generate electricity. The idea is not really new with piezoelectrics having been around a long time. (remember the crystal microphone) however recent advancements have made the process much more efficient.

.Poor Andy Skotdal at KRKO. Once again some residents, who are still fighting the decision to permit the construction of the KRKO array near Everett, have come up with a new tactic. Not only would this situation impact KRKO, but it could, potentially impact a number of broadcast stations in this state. On behalf of our Chapter I, worked with Andy and SBE Council, Chris Imlay, to draft and submit a letter in defense of KRKO. This threat is not over. I've asked Andy to write a piece for the Waveguide to summarize the situation, perhaps he can attend a future Chapter 16 Meeting and further bring us up to date. If you recall, KRKO was the victim of significant vandalism in the past by those that appear to be unwilling to accept the station in the valley.

NAB is out with Satellite Uplink operators training course. For more information on the 4 day course, contact Cheryl Coleridge at NAB – 202-429-5346.

Remember those TV Stations that operated like radio stations on Ch 6? These, so called "Franken-FM" stations has dealt them what may be a fatal blow announcing that low power TV's are going to have to convert to digital or go off the air. In several markets 87.75, the Channel 6 aural carrier frequency, has been the home of outside the FM band FM' operations. None that I know of in the Seattle area. However we continue to find pirate FM's operating below the conventional FM band limit.

This brings up a bigger issue. Now that the Commish has put LPTV stations on notice and proposed a date in 2012 that all of them must convert to digital, many of these stations owners are now faced with how to pay for the change.

We received word today that Ken Casey, the owner of KPST-TV Channel 44 (old analog Ch45) passed away recently.

Proving that once again the FCC takes Public Files very seriously, the Commish has slapped an AM Radio station in Illinois with a 10 Kilobuck fine. The University of Southern Mississippi will get to pay \$3.5K for unauthorized operation and a late renewal filing. I find it to be somewhat amazing that broadcasters continue to draw these fines, it's not that these are new rules.

The FCC has fined Nounoune Lubin of North Miami, Fla., \$20,000 for operating an unlicensed station on 90.1 MHz. Field strength measurements made on Sept. 9, 2009, indicated that the signal was 7,746 times greater than the maximum allowed for a non-licensed Part 15 transmitter. Field agents took field measurements in April and May of this year and found she was still operating a pirate station. The measurements on April 22 indicated that the signal was 6,757 times over the Part 15 limit. Yikes....Will they ever learn? Perhaps it's like operating a vehicle texting or holding a cell phone. Apparently no amount of fines and penalties is likely to change anything.

Local broadcast Crista has launched Spirit 105.9 in Austin Texas. This is the 4th station for Crista who operates Spirit 105.3 and KCIS here in Seattle and Praise 106.5 in Lynden.

The FCC is saying goodbye to CDBS with their promised that the new database will be greatly improved. CDBS was launched 10 years ago. They are now promoting what's called it's License View – On line dashboard. While they are at it, the FCC appears to be throwing in the towel on the 2nd and 1st class Radiotelegraph licenses. The latter a reflection of these changing times.

Remember the story about the wandering satellite? Intelsat's Galaxy 15, which lost contact with ground controllers back in April – Continues to follow a stable path but its transmitters are stuck on and refuses positioning commands and to shut off. It's present drift is putting it closer to Mexico's Satmex 5. This is no little bird, weighing in at over 4,000 pounds. Interestingly the act of one satellite passing another is called a 'flyby' and has occurred in the past. The birds owners are hoping that it will loose its ability to generate power due to it being in the wrong position and eventually run out of power and thusly become a part of the half-million other pieces of space junk out there. Speculation is that an intense solar storm may have cause the problem. This is not good news as solar storms are expected to increase.

A great deal of excitement was created by a recent radio spot that ran what sounded like EAS tones. In fact, some EAS Boxes actually tried to decode it. SBE and others jumped on this one and the stop was pulled. I'll be that the creators of the spot never heard of a rule that makes it clear that no one is to use EAS tones as sound effects for spots.

Barry Miskind continues to serve our industry, more recently with his BDR or Broadcasters Desktop Resource. Take a look at see what I mean at <http://www.thebdr.net/> Thanks Barry !

What should you do if you miss receiving an EAS Test? The answer – The first thing you do is to determine whether or not the problem is with your stations equipment. If it is

not, contact the station, or system, you monitor to determine whether or not they failed to send one (it happens). If they did not send it – Ask them to post this information on the Washington State EAS Remailer. All stations that monitor that system should then print a copy and attach it to their stations EAS Log. Failure to have an explanation for not receiving an EAS test (RMT or RWT) can generate a hefty FCC fine. I recommend that EAS logs be checked weekly, perhaps on Monday's, to see that you have received at least 2 RWT's. A good idea is to monitor more than 2 sources, the added sources could pay dividends by reducing or eliminating FCC actions.

Want to feel a little older (as if you needed my help) The TV show Star Trek started back in September of 1966 – Some 44 years ago. Perhaps that explains why William Shatner looks the way he does?

American Tower continues to expand in Latin America They recently announced the purchased 458 additional communications sites in Columbia. ATC operates a number of sites in this area. In fact the majority of FM's in the Seattle market are at ATC sites.

Another – end of an era – story. GE has closed the last major factory making light bulbs putting 200 out of work. All this is likely as result of conservation laws. Certainly there are energy consumption advantages to using CFL's. It's sad that GE could not make CFL's in this country. The reason they don't is that they would cost 50% more due to wage scales and regulations. The workers in GE's old light bulb plant made about \$30/hour. The shift to off shore production of new-tech items is likely to continue, despite what the politicians claim. Take the new lithium-ion batteries, they come from China.

Nano technology continues to make the news. Scientists at Rice University and Hewlett-Packard are reporting that they can overcome a fundamental barrier to the continued rapid miniaturization of computer memory that has been the basis for the consumer electronics revolution. Bottom line – Look for more storage in smaller sizes. Remember the 8 inch floppy?

Well, my friends, that's it for this edition – Thanks for the read, Lord willing, same place next month.

Clay, CPBE, K7CR