

DR. SETI'S STARSHIP

Searching For The Ultimate DX

Worked All Worlds

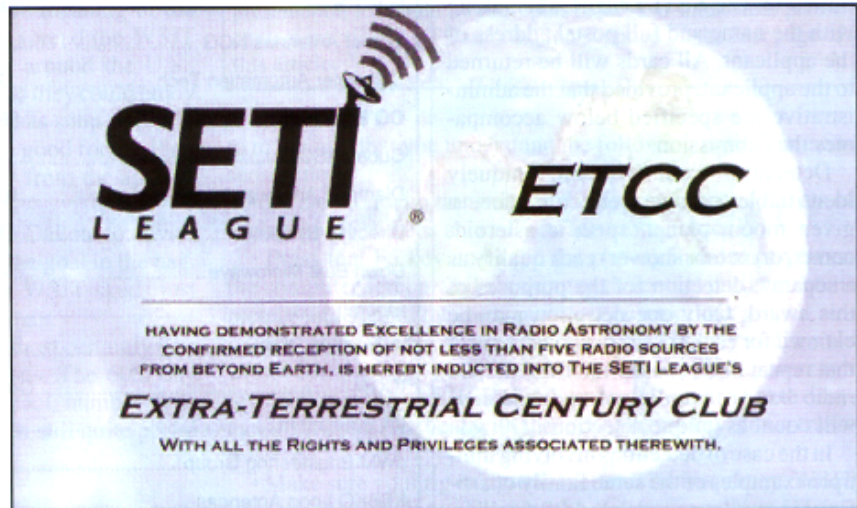
Are you getting bored yet? I sure am! We've been searching for extraterrestrial radio signals for nearly half a century now, and so far, no success. (Okay, well maybe not you and I personally, but for that long, as a civilization, Earth has pursued the science of SETI, the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence, and still no confirmed reception.) Hams have been engaged in the search since the inception of SETI, and hams are notoriously impatient. How do we hold their interest through what might well prove to be a multi-generational endeavor?

The problem is that SETI offers little to those who demand instant gratification. After all, it has been maybe 12 or 15 thousand million years since the Big Bang, the explosion that many of us believe formed the universe. Our Sun was formed perhaps 5 thousand million years ago, the Earth was formed shortly thereafter, microbial life emerged 3 billion years back, and humans came into being just yesterday on the cosmic clock.

What of our ability to communicate across the cosmos using photons, the fastest spaceships known to man? We have had the necessary technology for less than the blink of an eye. So how long *should* it take to detect our cosmic companions? No one can say for sure, but it's safe to guess it probably won't happen tomorrow.

We in The SETI League, however, are asking radio amateurs to build sensitive microwave receiving stations, point their antennas at the stars, and wait . . . and wait . . . and wait.

So far the bands are dead. No wonder we're getting bored. SETI's only hope of holding your interest (and mine) is to establish a program of on-the-air activities, competitions, and awards. When you're huffing and puffing and running toward the goal line, perhaps you'll be less likely to notice that it's light-years away. In my last installment I told you about The SETI League's extra-terrestrial



Confirmed reception of a minimum of five radio sources from beyond the Earth's atmosphere can qualify you for membership in the Extra-Terrestrial Century Club. Endorsements are issued for additional detections, up to a maximum of 100.

al QSL card program to acknowledge your reception of radio sources from "beyond." Today we take the next step.

The SETI League has an awards program to honor the efforts and accomplishments of the world's amateur radio astronomers. The Extra-Terrestrial Century Club (ETCC) award, patterned after the DX Century Club (DXCC) and VHF/UHF Century Club (VUCC) awards from the American Radio Relay League, rewards confirmed reception of a significant number of distinct extra-terrestrial radio emissions—manmade, natural, and even (dare we hope?) alien!

Amateur radio astronomers and SETI enthusiasts documenting radio reception from beyond Earth of a suitable number of artificial satellites, manned or unmanned space probes, natural astrophysical phenomena, Earth transmissions bounced off the Moon or another planet, or confirmed electromagnetic evidence of another civilization in space are eligible to apply for ETCC awards from The SETI League, Inc. The program is open to SETI League members and non-members alike, although interested radio amateurs are encouraged to join the non-

profit SETI League, Inc., this planet's most DX-oriented ham club.

The initial ETCC award is issued for the properly documented detection of five unique extra-terrestrial radio signals. Endorsements are issued for the documented detection of a total of 10, 15, 25, 50, and 100 such unique sources. Detection of extra-terrestrial radio sources in the categories of Natural, Human, Moonbounce, and Alien, in any combination thereof, as defined in our Extra-Terrestrial QSL rules (listed in last quarter's column), will be accepted as qualifying for ETCC initial certificates and endorsements. As is the case for most awards recognizing on-the-air activities, participants are asked to pay a modest fee to cover the costs of administering this program.

Here are some of the specifics:

For the purpose of this award, successful ET radio detections will be evidenced solely by the submission of valid QSL (confirmation of reception) cards. These may include Extra-Terrestrial QSL cards issued by The SETI League, Inc., or QSL cards issued by licensed radio amateurs documenting reception of (or two-way

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radio contact involving) extra-terrestrial communications modes such as moon-bounce, meteor scatter, auroral propagation, and amateur radio satellites. Either the physical cards required for each award or endorsement, in such quantity as may be required (that is, all 5, 10, 15, 25, 50, or 100 cards, as applicable), or legible photocopies thereof, must be submitted to The SETI League, Inc., along with the name and full postal address of the applicant. All cards will be returned to the applicant, provided that the administrative fee specified below accompanies the submission.

Detections from different, uniquely identifiable passive reflectors (i.e., a given moon, planet, specific asteroid, comet, or meteor shower) each qualify as a separate detection for the purposes of this award. Only one detection may be claimed for each source observed, except that repeat observations in different ham radio bands or radio astronomy bands will count as unique detections.

In the case of detections involving multiple examples of the same family of artificial source (e.g., multiple GPS satellites all received on the same frequency), each specific source must positively and uniquely be identified in order for it to count as a separate detection for the purpose of this award.

Mail all ETCC materials to: Operating Awards, The SETI League, Inc., P.O. Box 555, Little Ferry NJ 07643 USA.

The SETI League, Inc. will levy an administrative fee of \$10 U.S. for U.S. applicants, and \$15 U.S. for non-U.S. applicants, for each ETCC initial certificate and each ETCC endorsement awarded. Such fees are intended to cover the costs of administering this award and of returning all submitted QSL cards. The administrative fee is payable in U.S.-dollars checks (drawn on a U.S. bank or U.S. Correspondent bank) or postal money order only, and must be remitted at the time the QSL cards are submitted. Participants are, of course, welcome to make additional voluntary contributions to the nonprofit SETI League, Inc., which may be tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Our most active participants to date are already listed on the ETCC Honor Roll page of The SETI League's website, <<http://www.setileague.org/awards/etcc.jpg>>. I hope to be able to add your name or your call sign to that listing in the coming months . . . or years, or decades, or centuries. ■

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