

Texas Adventist Emergency Communications Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 1

* * * Letters From the President * * *

Hi: Club Members

Well we made it through Y2K with out any problems. I would like to thank everyone who helped out in Y2K exercise you did a very good job THANK YOU!!

The city of Keene, Mayor & city manager was real impressed with our setup we have and all the response we received on check-in. They were not expecting an operation like we have to help out when a call up for help is made. They expressed their appreciation for the help each and every club member that helped on December 31, 1999.

We will be having a Technician class for anyone who would like to get their license. If you know of anyone please have them give me a call before Jan 20, 2000 We would like to get a class started by the last of January.

We will be having a workday to setup our tower. We have to install a base and guy wire anchor before we can set it up. We will be looking forward to seeing everyone at our first club meeting of 2000 on January 16, 2000 at 10: A.M. See you there!

T.A.E.C. President
Gerald Mohr

* * * Letter From the Editor * * *

Great news people!! The FCC has finally voted and passed a new license structure. According to the new structuring, there is only three license classes, Technician, General and Amateur Extra. Also they have dropped the 13 and 20 wpm code requirements. Now the only code requirement is 5wpm.

The only drawback to the new restructuring is that anyone that is within the license classes that are no longer going to be existent, they will not be grand fathered to the next license class up. The only ones that will be, will be any Tech + ham that received his/her tech + license before 1987.

The new license structure is going to be implemented in April of this year. So if any of yall want to upgrade, now would be the time to do it.

* * * Reminders * * *

- Don't forget!! All Amateur radio operators must sign up with the ULS before any changes can be made to your license, upgrades, and renewals. You can sign up online at <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls/>
- I'm looking for articles that can be put into the newsletters. The monthly newsletter will be mailed out on the Monday preceding the monthly meeting, so please email

any articles to me no later than the five days prior to when the newsletter is sent out. I will also be making a paper newsletter to be brought to the monthly meetings for anyone who wants them.

- The next club meeting is on January 16th.

* * * Secretary's Report * * *
December 19, 1999

Meeting called to order:

The meeting was called to order by President Gerald Mohr (KC5PWQ), with 14 members present. November minutes were read. Ray (KD5DON) motioned to accept, Ron (KD5FPM) seconded and motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

The club has \$42.25 in checking, \$20.00 in savings, and \$15.43 cash (to use as change) for a total of \$77.68. Carl (N7PVW) motioned to accept as read, Ray (KD5DON) seconded and motion carried.

New Business:

The Christmas parade was discussed, as well as some ideas for handling the traffic at next year's parade. The work the club performed at the parade was appreciated by the Police of Chief and he extended his thanks to all club members who participated.

The club is still looking for someone to make patches. Ray Alway is going to approach Ellis Haney's wife about making the club's patches.

Joe Watts obtained radios for the club. The club now has 4 new radios. One will be at the depot, one will be in the van, one will be in Joe's car and one will be in the small truck used for community service. The club also received a dual band and mono band antenna for the van and an antenna for the depot.

The Y2K net was discussed, everyone that would be participating was given instructions as to what needed to be done to prepare for the event.

Anyone that knows of someone that is interested in taking an Amateur Radio class contact Gerald.

Please be sure to sign up on the URL <http://www.fccgov/wtb/uls/> Your license cannot be upgraded until you have registered on this site.

Gerald thanked all the members of the club who have put in lots of time

and effort to support the club, and those members in turn thanked Gerald for the work he has done.

The club's goal is to be more involved in community service.

Old Business:

No old business was discussed.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Gerald (KC5PWQ) to adjourn and seconded by Ray (KD5DON). Meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.

* * * ARRL Newsletter Excerpts * * *

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONFUSION FOLLOW IN FCC's WAKE

Questions, comments, and some confusion have been the order of the day since the FCC finally dropped the other shoe on Amateur Radio restructuring on December 30. The FCC's momentous action--reducing the number of license classes to three and establishing 5 WPM as the sole Morse code examination element--has, at least for now, polarized the Amateur Radio community. It also promises to change the complexion of Amateur Radio as it enters the new millennium.

More than half of those responding to an informal poll on the ARRL Web site indicate they plan to upgrade during 2000. Demand for study materials in the past week suggests many amateurs will be hitting the books in the coming weeks.

After April 15, 2000, the FCC will only issue Technician, General, and Amateur Extra class licenses. Novice and Advanced licensees will retain current operating privileges and may renew indefinitely. The FCC's new licensing scheme simplifies and shortens the upgrade path from the ground floor through Amateur Extra. Applicants will only have to pass one Morse code test, and there are fewer written examinations and total questions.

"This is the best news I have heard since bread and butter!" exclaimed Jimmy Stewart, WD9FHY, who said he's been trying unsuccessfully for years to boost his code proficiency. On the other side were some who asserted that the revised requirements would contribute to a further decline of Amateur Radio and open the doors to "riff-raff."

The ARRL Board of Directors is expected to review the FCC Report and Order and discuss its implications when it meets January 21-22 in Memphis.

In a significant step, the FCC has left it in the hands of the National Conference of VECs Question Pool Committee to determine the specific mix and makeup of written

examination questions. Current Amateur Radio study materials remain valid at least until the new rules become effective in April.

The nation's Volunteer Examiner Coordinators, including the ARRL-VEC, now are under the gun to meet the plan's April 15 implementation date. "The Question Pool Committee has been meeting by telephone and e-mail to get the updating process under way," said ARRL-VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ. "It's anticipated that the QPC will put out a news release soon that indicates when the updated question pools will be available to the public." Jahnke said the revised question pools will be out "well in advance" of April 15.

No one loses any privileges under the FCC's new plan, and, with one limited exception, no licensee is in a position to automatically gain any privileges when April 15 rolls around. The FCC's action establishes the Technician license--with or without Morse code credit--as the entry-level ticket to Amateur Radio. Technician applicants passing the 5 WPM Morse code exam will gain current Tech Plus HF privileges. The current "no-code" Tech license will continue to be available. Technician applicants opting to not take the code test will gain current Technician VHF/UHF privileges. After April 15, 2000, the FCC will lump Technician and Technician Plus licensees into a single "Technician" database. Despite the name change, current Tech Plus licensees won't lose any privileges.

Similarly, current General and Amateur Extra class holders will continue to enjoy their current privileges. The FCC took no action to reallocate any amateur bands.

The new licensing regime has four examination elements: Element 1, the 5 WPM Morse code test; Element 2, a 35-question Technician test; Element 3, a 35-question General test, and Element 4, a 50-question Amateur Extra test. The new Amateur Extra test is expected to combine the important elements of the current Advanced and Amateur Extra examinations. Only minor changes are anticipated in the new General class examination. The new Technician exam likely will include some questions on HF operating from the current Novice test.

The new licensing plan created a lone and limited upgrade for those who held a Technician license or a Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) before March 21, 1987. Those individuals may claim credit for a new General class license. This is because there was a single Technician-General written test under the old system; only the code tests differed. The upgrade is not automatic, however. Affected individuals will have to apply through a Volunteer Examiner test session, complete Form 605, attach documentary proof of having completed the requirements for a Technician license prior to March 21, 1987, and pay an application fee, if any, to the VEC.

Judging from the questions coming into ARRL HQ, many hams want to know whether to upgrade now or wait for the new system. If you're either a Tech Plus or an Advanced licensee, there might be an advantage to taking an exam now. The FCC has told the League that current Tech Plus licensees holding a valid CSCE for Element 3B may apply for a General class upgrade when the new rules become effective. Likewise,

current Advanced licensees holding a valid CSCE for Element 4B may apply for an Amateur Extra class upgrade under the new system. To be valid on April 15, 2000, any such CSCE will have to be dated on or after April 17, 1999. A CSCE is only good for 365 days. CSCE holders must attend a Volunteer Examiner session, complete Form 605, attach a valid CSCE, and pay any required application fee (\$6.65 for the ARRL-VEC).

The reduced Morse code requirement hit a nerve with some hams who felt it "devalued" their upper-class licenses. Others, however, felt it minimized an unnecessary obstacle. The FCC said it believes a demonstration of Morse proficiency does not necessarily indicate an individual's "ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art," as the FCC put it. The Commission also said it was not convinced that Morse proficiency had any particular value to emergency preparedness.

The reduction in the Morse code requirement was not entirely unexpected. Several other countries already have lowered their Morse code examination requirements, and some observers believe the Morse requirement will disappear altogether once it's eliminated in the international Radio Regulations. The FCC said it opted for the "least burdensome requirement" as its sole Morse standard. While the 13 and 20 WPM code tests soon will be history, the FCC said that "provisions must remain in place for accommodating individuals with severe disabilities."

The Morse code issue is expected to be on the agenda of a future World Radiocommunication Conference. The FCC said it would not automatically "sunset" the Morse code requirement even if Morse code is eliminated from the international radio regulations.

Frequently Asked Questions on restructuring are available at <http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring/faq.html/>. A copy of the entire Report and Order (FCC 99-412) is available at <http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/wt98-143ro.pdf> or at http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/1999/db991230/fcc99412.txt.

ENHANCED AMATEUR ENFORCEMENT ENTERS A NEW YEAR

As the new year gets under way, FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth hinted he might have to break bad on hard-core offenders this year. He explained that poor or lax FCC enforcement in the past led him to be more forgiving of rulebreakers during his first full calendar year in the enforcement chair. Now, those who persist in operating outside of the stated basis and purpose of Amateur Radio "are beginning to try our patience," he said. "I can't say we're going to be as compassionate this year."

Hollingsworth said he expected to continue his focus on incursions into the 10-meter band by unlicensed operators, especially as propagation gets better, and on equipment certification issues. "We're very concerned about the illegal equipment we see for sale at hamfests," he explained.

Overall, however, malicious interference remains "the basic problem," as he put it. "We're going to use the High-Frequency Direction Finding Center at Laurel [Maryland] more this year" to track down rulebreakers, he said. In addition, Hollingsworth now has enhanced monitoring tools at his Gettysburg office, allowing him access to the HFDF Center's 14 antenna fields plus VHF-UHF "pods" that can be moved around as necessary. "We have dial-in capabilities to all of our antenna fields and to the pods, so we can cover HF, UHF, and VHF anywhere in the country, right here from the Gettysburg office," he explained.

"It's a force multiplier, so to speak," Hollingsworth said of the new capabilities. Hollingsworth also says he's upbeat about the future of ham radio and the FCC's Amateur Radio restructuring plan announced December 30. "I'm really optimistic about it," he said this week. "I think that it's a good idea to simplify things a little bit as far as the number of license classes," he added, referring to the new three-tiered system.

Hollingsworth said he believes Amateur Radio needs more young blood to keep it going in the future, and he thinks the new licensing system that becomes effective April 15 might help in that regard. He declined, however, to comment further on the specific policies and rules the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau laid down in its Report and Order, saying it would not be appropriate.

For those of you who are not ARRL members, you can view the ARRL Newsletters at <http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter/>

Members of the ARRL, who do not receive the ARRL Newsletter but wish to, can go to <http://www.arrl.org/members/> to sign up.

****Mark your calendars for Swapfests/Events:****
***** 2000 *****

Jan 16 TAEC January Meeting; 10:00 a.m. @ resource depot
North of Keene on FM 2280
Jan 30 Georgetown Sunday Swapmeet 10AM setup, open 12
noon n5mnw@aol.com
Feb 19 Smithville Swapmeet
Feb 20 TAEC February Meeting; 10:00 a.m. @ resource
depot North of Keene on FM 2280
Jan 30 Georgetown Sunday Swapmeet 10AM setup, open 12
Noon. n5mnw@aol.com
Feb 19 Smithville Swapmeet
Mar 19 TAEC March Meeting; 10:00 a.m. @ resource depot
North of Keene on FM 2280
Apr 7-8 Weslaco Camp Meeting
Apr 15 Belton

May 19-21 Dayton, Ohio
June 2-3 Keene Camp Meeting
Jun 9,10 Ham-Com 2000
Jul 28,29 Austin Summerfest- Joe Makeever W5HS 345-0800
Oct 7 Belton

Important Web Sites

TAEC Web site

<http://taec.cjb.net>

The KC5PWQ Web Site

<http://vip.hpnc.com/~geraldm/>

The KC5PWP Web Site

<Http://kc5pwp2.cjb.net/>

Official Austin Ham Home on the web (ARO & AARC)

<http://www.repeater.org>

ARES information can be found at:

<http://www.sss.org/~ares> (soon to be www.TCARES.org)

Newsline, PO Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066

The webpage address is:

<http://www.arnewline.org>

The e-mail address is:

newsline@ix.netcom.com

The Texas VHF-FM Society

<http://www.txvhffm.org>

Take practice ham tests on the web. A few locations are:

<http://www.hamtest.com>

FCC's Universal License System

<http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls>

Very detailed list of VHF-UHF repeaters in Texas:

http://www.clarc.org/~kg5ai/freqs/tex_ham.html