

---

# telstar



---

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF STARS (SOUTH TOWNS AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY)

ISSUE 221 FEBRUARY 2000

---

## Restructuring Sparks Upgrades!

By Terry W. Rockhold K200  
STARS VE Team Liaison

As reported in last month's newsletter, the FCC has announced a new restructuring of the amateur radio license classes and requirements as of April 15, 2000. There will be only three license classes: Technician, General and Amateur Extra. To become a Technician, you will have to pass a 35-question written theory test. To upgrade to General, you must then pass another 35-question written theory exam and a 5 wpm code test. Generals may then upgrade to Amateur Extra by passing another 50-question written theory exam.

Before going further, let me make one fact clear. People who already hold amateur radio licenses will lose no privileges after April 15, 2000.

What has become very apparent since the FCC announced the new restructuring exam is that many current amateurs are now interested in upgrading their licenses.

Over the last few years, a majority of people taking license exams were trying for Novice, Technician or Technician Plus licenses. Of course there were people going for General, Advanced or Amateur Extra class licenses, but they were in the minority. Now it appears that the pendulum is going to swing the other way.

We had 12 applicants at our January STARS VE team exams. Nine of those were taking written theory exams for General, Advanced or Amateur Extra. Most were trying to position themselves so that they would qualify for General or Extra once the new requirements come into effect on April 15.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## February Meeting

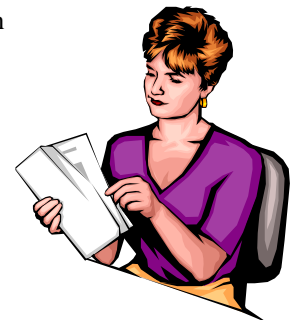
STARS next monthly club meeting will begin at 7 PM on Thursday, February 3 at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect Ave. at Hawkins Ave.). All interested in amateur radio are invited; neither club membership nor an amateur radio license is required.



Our program will be on the new Restructuring of the Amateur Radio license classes and what it means to you. This action by the FCC will almost certainly bring about the biggest change to amateur radio since the introduction of the no-code technician class license.

## Don't Miss Out!

Your dues to renew your 2000 STARS club membership were due on January 1. Did you remember? If we received them in time, your 2000 membership card and repeater codes are included with this newsletter. If not, we have included another 2000 renewal form with this newsletter. Why not take time right now to fill it out and send it along with your dues to Membership Chairman Judy Levan N2TEZ, 120 University Blvd., Depew, NY 14043 or bring them to the January club meeting.



STARS continues to be the largest amateur radio club in the Buffalo/Niagara Falls area, but we need each of you to help keep us great. Won't you do your part by renewing your membership today?

## STARS & ARRL Memberships

Membership in STARS is open to anyone with an interest in amateur radio. A license is not required. Membership applications may be obtained by sending a SASE to Judy Levan N2TEZ, 120 University Blvd., Depew, NY 14043, from the newsletter editor or from board members.

Annual Dues are payable on January 1 and are \$21 for a single membership, \$27 for family memberships and \$8 for a student membership (through grade 12). The dues are pro-rated on a monthly basis for new members plus there is an initiation fee of \$5 when first applying to the club. For example, a new member joining in July would pay \$10.50 (6 months X \$1.75 per month) plus the \$5 initiation fee for a total of \$15.50.

Applications should be returned to Judy N2TEZ along with the appropriate dues. The applications will be reviewed and voted on by the Board of Directors at the business meeting. The applications are then voted on by the general membership at the next regular club meeting.

Members should send their ARRL renewal memberships to Jack Cullum, Jr. KB2ESM, 6871 Webster Rd., Orchard Park, NY 14127 along with a check made out to STARS. No extra cost to you and STARS benefits!



## Club Nets

STARS club nets are open to all to exchange information on local amateur radio activities.

STARS WB2EZU Memorial HF net meets at 10 AM local time on Saturdays on 3.925 MHz +/- QRM.

STARS Sunday 10 Meter HF net meets at 10 AM on Sundays on 28.340 MHz. +/- QRM.

STARS VHF net meets at 7:30 PM on Thursdays on STARS club repeater WB2ELW 147.09/ .69 output/input— PL of 107.2 Hz) except on the first Thursday of the month (club meeting night).

## From Your President

Well the long awaited license restructuring is here; as reported in last months Telstar. Terry - K200 did a brief overview and answered several questions during the last club meeting on just what it means to all of us. Ron - AA2VM did a very good job of answering questions about the changes during the STARS 2 Meter Net. We were given little time to get the full impact before the last meeting so this month we will have a more in-depth discussion on the subject. The basics are one 5 wpm code test and 3 levels of written tests for the 3 classes of licenses that we will now have. The cut off date for taking the written tests that are now in effect is April 14th 2000 so if you are planning to test under the old question pool you better get moving now.

With Y2K passed, the world has survived yet another doomsday. I do wish to thank the Amateur Radio Operators from around the world that stood by ready to help if it became necessary. Locally the only problem the I heard about was that about 900 homes in the Town of Eden woke up New Years morning to no power, but it was not Y2K related or so they said. There were rumors that someone had hooked up a generator wrong at their home and caused a system overload, but who knows for sure.

Upcoming events - Lancaster's Winter Hamfest on February 20th and our own Mini-Flea market at the March meeting so bring your stuff to sell. I hope to see you all at the February meeting !

73's Gary KB2YJ  
President

## Repeater News

In late December the remote receiver went on line at the Nike Base and it has been working very well. If anyone has any questions in how to use the remote receiver please refer to your January Telstar Repeater column or feel free to give me a call. We still need to move the 2 meter receive antenna to the southwest corner of the tower and replace the CATV cable (which has a 5 to 1 SWR) with some better feedline. This will be finished as soon as the weather permits. This is also the month that the STARS user codes on the repeater will get changed. For those of you that have not renewed your membership as of yet, please do as you will have until February 12th and then all the 1999 codes will be void.

73's Gary KB2YJ  
President / Repeater Chairman

# I Never Thought It Could Happen To Me

I had intended to write this month about balanced antenna feed lines, but I have something more pressing to share. This article does not have a great deal to do with radio, but it may be even more important. "More important than radio?, you ask, "how could anything be more important than radio?". Something can be when it concerns your life.

Both Christine KC2FUY and I spent last Friday the 20th and Saturday the 21st in the hospital recovering from Carbon Monoxide poisoning. Unbeknown to us, our furnace had developed several cracks in the heat exchanger, flooding the house with deadly carbon monoxide gas while we slept. I awoke about 2:30 in the morning the not feeling quite right. Since I had been suffering from what I thought was the flu for the last few days I dismissed it as nothing more than that, simply a touch of the flu. Christine awoke a short time later with a terrible headache, and nausea. She stated to me in no uncertain terms that she needed to go to the Emergency Room. I got up from bed, and walked into the laundry room on my way out to the garage. I managed to disarm the alarm, but then passed out, striking my head on the washing machine. I awoke a short time later, unable to get my arms and legs to move. I did not understand what was happening to me. I did have enough of my wits about me to know that I needed to get fresh air, so I somehow dragged myself into the garage, and managed to hit the door opener. The cold fresh air revived me, and I realized that I was suffering the ill effects of CO. I work in the automotive industry, and carbon monoxide is no stranger to me, but when you are suffering from CO poisoning it is very much like being extremely intoxicated, and I could not think clearly.

With the fresh air, and my wits now with me, all I could think about was getting Chris out of the house, and driving the few blocks to Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital. I managed to get Christine into the car, and through a supreme effort of concentration drove the two miles to Millard. I dropped her off at the ER, walked her in and parked the car. I walked back and basically collapsed into the arms of the EMT who met me at the door. To make a long story short, we were both very lucky and survived. My CO level was .35 and Christine's as .21. The EMT explained that anything over .50 was lethal.



Although neither Christine or I suffered any apparent neurological damage, we are currently receiving treatment in a hyper baric chamber, much like a diving bell, where under the pressure of 3 atmospheres we are fed pure O2. I used to own a CO detector, but after many false alarms I discarded it this summer, feeling safe and secure in my relatively new house. A lesson for us all to learn, even though my furnace was less than 12 years old, it still became defective. One of the nurse related to us of recently treating a family whose furnace, malfunctioned the night it was installed! You just never know...

I would encourage everyone that does not currently own a CO detector to get one, not tomorrow, not next week, but right now! You never know, and certainly never think that it can happen to you, but it can, and it does. CO poisoning mimics flu like symptoms, and often we are not lucent enough to even know something is wrong. Had it not been for Christine's instance we go to the ER, most likely we would not be here today.

I want to thank my many ham friends that called and offered help and support throughout. The phone calls, emails and cards are certainly treasured by Christine and myself. Thank you all. It is my sincere hope that this will not be ignored, please do yourself and your family a favor and be certain that your home is equipped today with a properly functioning CO detector.

-Bruce KG2IC

## Congratulations Hugh, Kay, Bernie and Bill!

Several friends of STARS were elected or appointed to new ARRL positions:

Hugh Turnbull W3ABC (former Atlantic Division Director) was elected to an Honorary Vice President of ARRL position.

Kay Craigie WT3P was elected a Vice President of ARRL.

Bernie Fuller N3EFN will succeed Kay as ARRL Atlantic Division Director.

Bill Edgar N3LLR was picked to succeed Bernie as ARRL Atlantic Division Director. Bill has been a STARS member for some time, but we don't see him too often since he lives in Pennsylvania.

Congratulations to all!



# "PACKET RACKET"

an introduction to packet radio, part 12

In this issue we will continue with our discussion on advanced servers, focusing on the eighteen plus "databases" that are active on BBSVW. To see what databases are available to you, simply type: SH DB. This of course stands for Show DataBase. You may also type: SHOW DB, if you prefer. This should be done from the normal BBS prompt, NOT from one of the server sections. You will be given a list, which looks like this:

Filename:	Description:
ALLOC	Directory of International Prefix Allocations
BEACON	Directory of Worldwide Beacon Stations
CONTEST	Dx-related contests, including rules/results
COORD	Lat/Long & Grid Squares for US cities
CLUBS	Database of Canadian Amateur Radio clubs
DEALER	Amateur Radio Dealers & Manufacturers
DXCC	DXCC countries list with WAZ info.
DXNODES	Directory of Worldwide DxClusters/Nodes
GUIDE	Guide #s from the HAZMAT database
HAZMAT	HAZardous MATerials database
INFO	Huge database of varied information
IOTA	Islands On The Air (award) reference
MIC	Tnc/radio connection information
OBLAST	Russian/CIS oblast information
RULES	Complete FCC Part 97 rules and regulations
TODAY	Historical information & perpetual calendar
XREF	Prefixes with current ARRL DXCC status
ZONE	Zone information by prefix or country
etc.	

There are other databases, not part of this grouping, which can be found by typing: PS, as we discussed in an earlier section of the manual.

Now that we have the listing of the available database, now what? Just as for the other servers added to BBSVW, there is a help section for each of the databases. As an example we will pick one of these databases to review in some detail. Let's pick the INFO database.

Typing: SH INFO (show info) will list the sections available in this database. You can consider each of the sections shown as subdirectories, of the info directory. The mechanics are similar. One important note: many DxClusters run databases, similar to these. Their command structure however is different, They require a "/" following the SH command, i.e. SH/INFO. When accessing these on the BBS, you must NOT use the slash. Two of the databases have been taken from a DxCluster, and modified to work on BBSVW. After modification was done, I edited the databases (some are very large), and attempted to remove any references to SH/etc. If you do see any references to the "\" following the SH command, just ignore them!

OK, back to our topic. SH INFO gives us the sections this database contains. Here is a PARTIAL list:

AIRPORTS = City codes	SCANLAWS = State laws
AREACODE = Codes/cities	SWL = SWL guide
ARRLADV = Committees	SWR = SWR/losses
ARRLFCK = DXCC FieldCkg	THIRD = 3rd party traffic
ARRLMSG = Nbrs/Msgs	TIMES = UTC time table

If our interest fell into the area of SWR values, and what they mean, we would type: SH INFO SWR. You need to type the full "path", not just SH SWR! As I stated, this is just like working with subdirectories. SH INFO SWR would give us a chart, comparing SWR with return loss, with % power reflected, and with Return loss in dB. Typing: SH INFO SCANLAWS would give us another information file, which breaks down the laws we are interested in, according to state:

SH INFO SCAN1 is for CA, FL, IN, KY, MI  
SH INFO SCAN2 is for MN, NE, NJ, NY, OK

Typing: SH INFO SCAN2 provides us with scanner laws involving NY state: Citation for scanner laws are from V&T S397 (The Vehicle & Traffic laws). It goes on to say that scanners are prohibited in vehicles, and "improper" use of scanners is prohibited according to the Penal Law Section 140.40.

In a similar fashion, you can type: SH INFO "section", replacing the word "section" with any topic taken from the list of topics you see after typing: SH INFO. For example, typing: SH INFO MONEY will give you the relative values of many different currencies, based on September, 1993 data!

The SH command will work with each database in a similar  
(Continued on page 5)

## STARS Board of Directors

President	Gary Zanghi	KB2YJ
Vice President	Rick Doherty	KD2QV
Treasurer	John Cullum, Jr.	KB2ESM
Finc. Secretary	Judy Levan	N2TEZ
Secretary	Dave Baco	WA2TVT
Director	John Crawford, Sr.	KB2VWA
Director	Paul Julyan	WB2KFL

President Gary Zanghi KB2YJ may be reached at Kb2yj@aol.com or by calling 549-8476

## AMATEUR RADIO EXAMINATIONS

STARS will hold test sessions on 2/12, 3/11, 4/15, 5/13 and 7/8 in 2000 at Grace Lutheran Church (McKinley Pkwy. and Newton Road) in Hamburg. All candidates should report to the church by 9 AM; walk-ins are allowed. For information on STARS tests, contact Tony Balas, Jr. KB2OUT at 992-2011 or Norm Jones KD2KK at 824-1148.

Lancaster ARC will be holding test sessions at the Aurora Middle School, Lancaster, NY on 2/16, 3/15, 4/12 (or 4/19?), 5/17, 6/14, 7/12 in 2000.. For information on Lancaster exams, call Chuck Koester WD2AIK at 937-3592.

ARATS will be holding test sessions at the North Tonawanda Fire Headquarters at 495 Zimmerman St. on 2/5, 3/4, 5/6 and 6/10 in 2000.. For information on ARATS exams, call Vern Siegel AA2AC at 693-5977 (days) and 634-5276 (nights).

Most sessions except for STARS non-hamfest exams, do not allow walk-ins, so call ahead and make a reservation.

## "PACKET RACKET"

*(Continued from page 4)*

fashion, although the responses back to the command, will vary by database. Some of these databases are very fascinating, and are chocked full of valuable amateur, and non-amateur related information. Typing: SH MIC will give you information about the microphone to tnc wiring for amateur radio packet stations, that many have problems with. Typing: SH MIC INDEX will give an index of the radios contained in this database., one of which is the 8 pin Kenwood microphone arrangement. Typing: SH MIC KEN8 then gives you the pinout arrangement to hookup each of the following tncs: MFJ, PK232, PK88, DRSI, KAN-VHF, & KAN-HF.

Try your hand at each of these databases, following the outline I have given you. You will find a veritable wealth of information at your fingertips, much of which has been compiled by many individuals from multiple resources, and all put together into our database format .

If you have not tried the databases, you have missed a VERY substantial part of the BBS.

Until next time, 73, and keep those packets flying!  
Greg, KE2VW, SysOp of the STARS KE2VW BBS  
c 1995

## Restructuring Sparks Upgrades!

*(Continued from page 1)*

Similar reports of interest in upgrading have been circulating on the internet. At a Culver City, CA VE exam last Saturday, the room was full and the line of additional people stretched out the door, down the stairs and out into the street. At a hamfest in Loveland, CO, they had 46 people take the tests and at special exam they scheduled for the following Friday, they had an additional 30 people.

**Because of the increased interest in upgrading, the STARS VE team has decided to add two additional exams beyond those they had previously scheduled. They will be on February 12 and April 15 at 9 AM at the Grace Lutheran Church. While we allow walk-ins for the exams, we urge you to pre-register so that we can prepare your paperwork and save time at registration. To pre-register, call me at 656-0865, Tony at 992-2011 or Norm at 824-1148.**

Note that the test on April 15 will be the first opportunity to take the new written theory exams. It also will be the first opportunity to bring in your paperwork (license currently held and any Certificates of Successful Completion of Examinations (CSCE's) which show that you meet the new requirements to qualify for a General or Amateur Extra class license. You must apply for these new upgrades at a VE session; the FCC will not automatically send you the upgraded licenses after April 15 just because you qualified prior to April 15.

These new requirements will give many a chance to gain new privileges in the HF bands. We urge you to take a look and see if you would like to do this too. If you have questions, come to the February STARS meeting. If you can't make that, give me a call at the number above or email me at k2oo@bigfoot.com .

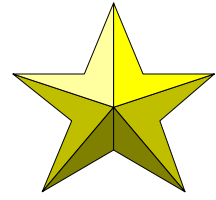
## Greater Buffalo "Winter" Hamfest

The Greater Buffalo "Winter" Hamfest will be held on Sunday, February 20 at the Leonard Post VFW, 2450 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga, NY. That's just a little east of Union Road and Walden Ave. Doors open at 8 AM. Talk-in will be on 147.255 MHz.

For information, call (716) 634-4667 days and ask for Luke, or send an email to lcalianno@freewwwweb.com . You also can get information on the internet at <http://hamgate1.sunyerie.edu/~larc/> .



# STARS



## CLUB REPEATERS

The club repeater (WB2ELW/R) is located near Colden, NY (147.09/.69 output/input, with a PL of 107.2 Hz).  
Autopatch privileges are available to club members.

STARS honorary southern repeater (KE2VW/R) is in Arkwright, NY (146.67/.07 out/in, with a PL of 107.2 Hz).

The club UHF repeater is located near Colden, NY (442.325 MHz with a PL access of 107.2 Hz.)

## CLUB PACKET

The STARS KE2VW BBS, located in Colden, NY is accessible on 145.61 MHz or 145.65 MHz (indirect) by typing: C BBSVW, using 1200 baud. Or connect using 19.2K baud on 441.050 MHz (direct)

Using a telephone modem, you can reach the STARS KE2VW BBS by calling 537-9334.

## CLUB MEETINGS

Club meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of the month at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect Ave. at Hawkins Ave.) at 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome.

Board meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Nike Base Club Station at 7:00 PM and are open to all club members.

## CLUB HF STATIONS

The club Nike Base HF Station (WB2ELW) is located on Lakeview Road 1.75 miles east of Route 20 next to the Hamburg Town Arena. The station is operated on most Saturdays between 1 and 3 PM local time. A second club HF station is located at the Hamburg Youth Center.

## CLUB WEB PAGES

The club has a home site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.cmp-express.com/stars/>

# STARS

Terry W. Rockhold K200  
4805 Transit Road #1903  
Depew, NY 14043  
(716) 656-0865  
k200@bigfoot.com