

telstar



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

ISSUE 285 SEPTEMBER 2005

FCC Proposal on Dropping Morse Code Licensing Requirements

By Terry W. Rockhold K200

As we reported in our last issue, the FCC has issued Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) #05-235 which proposes to eliminate Morse code testing requirements for all amateur radio license classes. The actual NPRM can be found at: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-05-143A1.pdf.

As of August 26, 2005, over 1900 comments have been filed with the FCC about this NPRM. There is no easy way to determine exactly how many people are supporting or opposing the NPRM. A sampling that I took from early filed comments showed that about 60% were supporting the proposal, 30% were opposing the proposal and about 10% supported dropping the code requirement for General class licenses but retaining it for Extra class licenses. A sampling that I took of recently filed comments showed that about 40% supported the proposal, 40% opposed the proposal and 20% supported keeping the requirement for Extra class.

What the exact percentages would be if you reviewed all 1900+ comments is hard to say. Does it make any difference? I personally doubt it!

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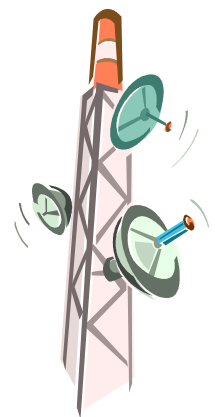
September Meeting

Our general meeting this month will be held on Thursday, September 1. It will be a field trip to the Channel 4 TV transmitter site, which is the home of the STARS WB2ELW repeater. It is located on Center Street south of East Aurora. Between Colden, NY and Holland, NY. You can see the location for miles because of the huge TV tower.

Actually, there are 2 huge TV towers on Center St.; Channel 4 is the northern one of the two. People can arrive anytime after 6:30 PM.

We will have a mini-cookout with hot dogs and hamburgers. You can bring food items to share with other members if you would like. You will also want to bring lawn chairs to sit on.

Clint N2FMM will host the visit and will conduct tours of the repeater and the TV transmitters.



STARS Programs

STARS Program Chairman Jim Sojka WB2TJO reports the following programs planned for the remaining months of 2005: September - Field Trip to Ch.4/WB2ELW repeater site. October - 2006 Club Officer/Director Nominations. November - 2006 Club Officer/Director Elections and a Show and Tell session. December - 2005 STARS Holiday Party.

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.

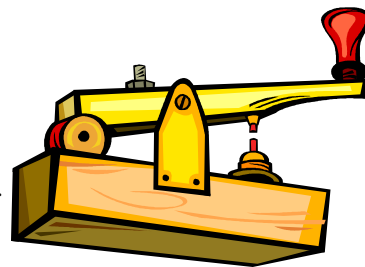
Members who are joining ARRL for the first time or who are renewing their membership should send their ARRL membership forms to Jack Cullum, Jr. KB2ESM, 6871 Webster Rd., Orchard Park, NY 14127 along with a check made out to STARS. No extra cost to you and STARS benefits!



CW, The First Digital Mode

We continue to be blessed with good weather for our events. The annual Nike Base picnic meeting was no exception. Although some storms were poised to present a wet outcome we stayed high and dry throughout the evening. Thank you Mother Nature and keep it coming.

I know most of you have heard by now that the new FCC proposal to drop Morse code as a requirement for any amateur radio license is gaining momentum. This topic always conjures up interesting discussions and arguments on both sides of the fence. It seems to be the growing trend since European nations dropped the requirement and even our own military has abandoned it. Still I can't seem to get used to the idea. Now I'm no expert CW



operator but amateur radio without CW, our first wireless mode of communication, doesn't sound like a good idea to me. Imagine future generations of amateurs unable to send or receive CW. Remember the movie "Independence Day" where the only successful world-wide mode of communications was CW? Let's just hope this scenario never becomes reality.

CW was the first digital mode. That being said, we haven't seen the end of digital communications in amateur radio. Radio teletype and packet widely used by amateurs and the military was a springboard for current technologies such as SSTV and PSK31. Spread spectrum is becoming popular because the algorithms used allow more users per bandwidth and is the primary technology for the wireless cellular phone industry. We are also seeing new SSB transceivers on the market that are strictly digital.

Future FCC policies will no doubt be influenced by heavily funded commercial lobbyists and most likely our bandwidths will shrink under the pressure. The future of digital technology holds the key to more efficient use of our amateur radio bands by providing multiple channels for a given bandwidth. So if we have to say goodbye to the Morse code requirement, I take comfort knowing that the digital revolution we live in today had it's beginnings with continuous wave. Thank you CW, you have served us well, and may you rise again when all else fails.

Club Net

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.

73, Keith Patterson KC2DGC
STARS President

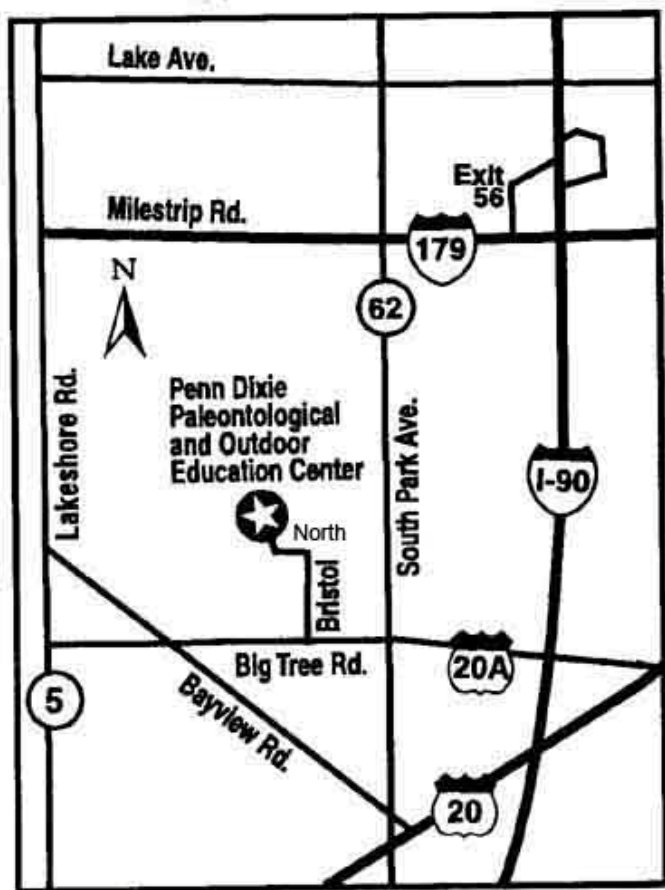
WNY Earth Science Day Amateur Radio Demonstration

STARS will demonstrate Amateur Radio to visitors at the Hamburg National Historical Society of WNY. Earth Science Day activities on Saturday October 1st from 9 AM to 3 PM at the Penn Dixie Site (See Map below.

George N2NOB Is looking for Volunteers, The Volunteers can contact him at n2nob@netscape.com or at 892-8088.

Thank You from the Chairman of the Event.

73, George N2NOB



Higher Vanity Call Sign Application Fee Now in Effect

The application fee for an Amateur Radio vanity call sign rose to \$21.90 effective for applications received by the FCC on or after Tuesday, August 23. The FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau released a new Fee Filing Guide <http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-260618A1.pdf> this week, and WTB personnel have confirmed that the new vanity fee is in effect.

In a Report and Order and Order On Reconsideration (R&O) in the assessment and collection of regulatory fees for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 released July 7, the FCC raised the vanity application fee for FY 2005 from \$20.80 to \$21.90 for the 10-year license term. The FCC said it had adjusted FY 2004 "payment units" for each service to better reflect expected FY 2005 payment liabilities. The fee went up from \$16.30 to \$20.80 a year ago.

A reevaluation in the number of anticipated vanity call sign applications--or "payment units"--accounts for this latest fee hike. The FCC says it anticipates 7600 vanity applications--up only slightly from a year earlier.

The fee applies to applications for new vanity call signs as well as to license renewals for current vanity call sign holders. Vanity call sign licenses issued in 1996 when the FCC resurrected its vanity program will be coming up for renewal starting in mid-2006. Under current rules, Amateur Radio licensees may only file renewal applications within 90 days of their license expiration date.

More information on vanity call signs is available on the ARRL Web site;

<<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/vanity.html>>.

The ARRL Letter 8/26/05

FCC Proposal

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The FCC has already seen the basic arguments for and against dropping the code requirements many, many times. This discussion has been going on for years. In 2000, the FCC dropped the 13 and 20 WPM code tests and retained only the 5 WPM test. At that time they had to keep it because of the international requirement to demonstrate knowledge of Morse code to use HF bands. That international requirement has since been dropped, leaving the decision up to individual countries.

After the international requirement was dropped, a total of 18 different petitions were filed with the FCC dealing with dropping or maintaining the code requirement. The petitions also addressed several other aspects of amateur radio licensing requirements, such as a new entry level license class. Over 6000 comments were filed with the FCC about these 18 petitions. After taking a long period of time to summarize and analyze these comments, the FCC finally issued this NPRM which proposes dropping the Morse code requirement for all license classes. They declined to propose every other aspect of licensing restructuring that was in the 18 petitions.

After the comment period on this NPRM closes and the FCC staff has time to analyze the comments and report their findings and opinions, the same board that passed this NPRM will be voting on whether or not to adopt it in final rule making. This is not a case like in Congress where a bill passes the House and then must be voted on by a totally different group of Senators. I am not much of a betting man, but even I would be willing to bet that they are going to adopt it. Of course, nothing is certain until they finally vote on it.

The ARRL has reported on two issues that many people seem to be confused on regarding this NPRM. They say that any FCC decision to

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Let The Seller Beware!

The ARRL again cautions anyone selling Amateur Radio and related equipment via Radios On-Line or QST Ham Ads (or via on-line auction sites or other advertising media) to beware of so-called "advance fee fraud" (or 4-1-9) payment schemes <<http://www.secretservice.gov/alert419.shtml>> aimed at ripping you off. We continue to receive reports from ARRL members who have received responses to their ads from individuals offering to overpay for goods via bank check with instructions to deduct the cost of their item(s) from

the overpayment (typically quite substantial) and return the "change" to the buyer or another individual. The "bank check" is bogus, however, and the seller ends up holding the bag. This is a well-known scam. There's additional information on the Scam Victims United Web site



<<http://www.scamvictimsunited.com/>>. Remember: Transact carefully, and protect yourself from fraud!

The ARRL Letter 8/26/05

Nike Base Clean-up

Scott Barto KB2KOL reports that we will be holding a clean-up day at the Nike Base club station on Saturday, October 15. We will begin around 9 AM and continue for as long as needed. If you can spare the time, please come out and help. They station is definitely in need of attention. We will have more details in the October newsletter.

STARS Board of Directors

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------|
| President | Keith Patterson | KC2DGC |
| Vice President | Scott Barto | KB2KOL |
| Treasurer | John Cullum, Jr. | KB2ESM |
| Finc. Secretary | Judy Levan | N2TEZ |
| Secretary | John Crawford, Sr. | KB2VWC |
| Director | Jim Sojka | WB2TJO |
| Director | George Ebert | N2NOB |

AMATEUR RADIO EXAMINATIONS

STARS will be holding a test session on 9/17/05 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, but pre-registering will reduce time at exams. For information or to pre-register for STARS tests, contact Terry Rockhold K2OO at 656-0865.

Lancaster ARC will be holding test sessions on the third Wednesday of each month at the Lancaster ARC Club House, 525 Pavement Road, Lancaster. For information on or to pre-register for Lancaster exams, call Joe Gearhart WV2NY at 892-2760 or e-mail him at wv2ny@adelphia.net. Pre-registration is required.

ARATS will be holding test sessions starting again in September during 2005 starting promptly at 10 AM at the North Tonawanda Fire Headquarters at 495 Zimmerman St. Walk-ins accepted, pre-registration preferred. For information on ARATS exams, call Vic Gadzik K2YW at 694-9738 or e-mail wb2aiv@arrl.net.

PROS holds test sessions as needed at 585 North Star Road, East Aurora. For information, contact Pat Murray NW2I at 652-8178.

Some exams do not allow walk-ins, so call ahead and make a reservation.

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eliminate the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for HF access would have **no** impact on either the current HF CW subbands or on the HF privileges of amateur radio licensees. Even if this NPRM is adopted, the ARRL says that the FCC has not proposed to extend HF privileges to current Technician class licensees who have not passed the 5 WPM test. They would have to pass the Element 3 General class theory exam to gain access to the HF bands. The ARRL has expressed their opinion that any final rule making on this NPRM will likely not be completed before early 2006.

Extra Class Licensing Course

RAWNY will hold Extra class licensing classes beginning September 12, 2005.

Sessions will be from 7:00pm to about 9:00pm at the Church of the Nativity at the corner of Thorncliff and Colvin Blvd. in the Town of Tonawanda.

Interested persons should contact: Gene KA2IWJ at ka2iwj@arrl.net or Kevin WA2FKV at wa2fkv@arrl.net.

When contacting them, please include your phone number.

Classes will run from 10 to 12 weeks.

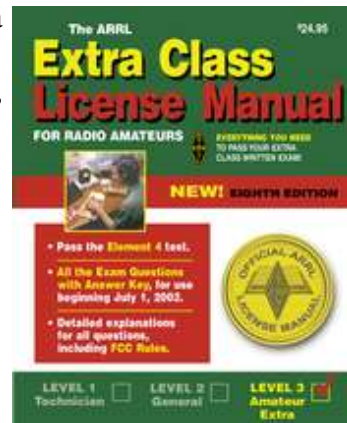
The text is the ARRL extra class licensing manual, eighth edition.

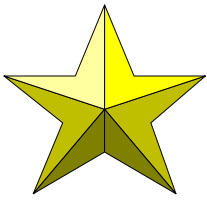
A \$10 free-will donation will be accepted to be passed onto the church for use of the facilities.

Gene KA2IWJ

Request

George Ebert N2NOB and Esther Ebert N2WBM report that Ty Gajweski, a Marine who has been like a son to them, has recently left for duty in Iraq. They ask that STARS members keep Ty in their prayers for his safe service there and return to our country.





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). Use a PL of 141.3 Hz for the Nike Base remote receiver.

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 WEB PAGES

The club has a home site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.wb2elw.com>.

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 7:30 PM and are open to all club members.

CLUB HF STATION

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.

STARS

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