

Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society

SOLID COPY

JANUARY 2000

RADIOACTIVITY

NOTICE: FrostFest will take the place of our January meeting. See you at FrostFest 2000 and at the meeting on February 18.

FrostFest 2000 will be held on January 16 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM at The Showplace, 3000 Mechanicsville Turnpike (Route 360), near the intersection of I64 and Route 360. Commercial vendors and individuals will have lots of gear to select from. Pat Wilson has been putting in a lot of time and effort as Forums chairman to secure some exciting speakers for Forums. Some big names have been invited and are presently scheduled to be there. The FrostFest web <http://frostfest.rats.net/> has the latest info. Volunteers are needed for everything from setup on Saturday to closing. Security, ticket sales, talk-in and food service are some of the areas where help is needed. Jim Clark, N3JJF, will chair the event again this year. If you have not already volunteered, please contact any Board member (see back) or Jim Clark, N3JJF ASAP to volunteer. Come to browse, to buy, to hear the latest from those who know, to see old friends and make new ones, to have a good time. Let's make FrostFest 2000 the biggest and best ever!

VE EXAMS

Monday, February 7, 2000 at 7:30 PM at C. E. Curtis Elementary School, 3600 W. Hundred Road (Route 10), Chester, VA. Pre-register with TONY AMATO, KR4UQ, at 717-5237. Tony's web page for test information is: http://www.kr4uq.org/Pages/ve_exams.htm.

Saturday, February 20, 2000 9:00 AM at J. S. Reynolds Community College, 1651 East Parham Road, Building B, Room 201. Pre-register with PAT WILSON, K4OW at 932-9424 or email at k4ow@arrl.net. Pat's test information web page is: <http://www.mindspring.com/~w4pw/hamtests.htm>.

RULES & REGS

News from the ARRL and FCC

THE LONG-AWAITED NEWS FCC UNVEILS RESTRUCTURING

On December 30, the FCC released its long-awaited restructuring plan for amateur radio. The new plan will go into effect on April 15, 2000.

Under the new plan, there will be three license classes--Technician, General and Extra, and one code speed requirement of 5 WPM. No new Novice or Advanced licenses will be issued after the effective date. The FCC does not plan to automatically upgrade any existing license privileges. Licensees will retain their current operating privileges, including access to the various modes and sub bands and will be able to renew their licenses indefinitely. Those who qualified for the Technical class license before March 21, 1987, will be able to upgrade to General by providing documentary proof to a VEC, paying an application fee, and completing FCC Form 605.

There will be four exam elements. Element 1 will be the 5 WPM Morse code exam. Element 2 will be a 35-question Technician exam; Element 3 will be a 35-question General exam; and Element 4 will be a 50-question Amateur Extra exam. The VECs Question Pool Committee will determine the makeup of the written exams.

The Novice/Tech Plus HF sub bands will remain as they are and not redistributed to the higher class license holders because, according to the FCC, amateurs did not agree what to do with them. The FCC wants the amateur community to "reach a consensus" regarding new technologies before changing amateur operating privileges and frequencies.

The FCC will combine Technician and Tech Plus licensees into a single "Technician" database. Those who have passed the 5 WPM Morse code exam will continue to have the current Tech Plus HF privileges, although the FCC may request proof of passing the code test from the licensee or VEC.

The FCC action also authorizes Advanced class hams to prepare and administer General class examinations. RACES station licenses will be eliminated, although RACES will remain.

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

Tnx ARRLWeb: W1AW BULLETIN ARLB096, December 30, 1999

<http://www.arrl.org/w1aw/1999-arlb096.html>

MORE NETS

- ✂ Slow Traffic Net Tue & Thur 9 PM 3682KHz
- ✂ Slow Ragchewing Net Wed 8 PM 3720KHz
- ✂ QSO Groups (Meet) Sat 9 PM 14058KHz

- ✂ QSO Groups (Meet) Sat 9:30 PM 7058KHz
- ✂ Slow Speed Chat Sun 5 PM 21158KHz

This information courtesy of Danny, KA4TMT, I will run the entire list again soon.

A CHALLENGE

We made it into the year 2000. I have never been one for making New Year's resolutions, but I would like to issue a challenge to all club members . Do you remember the five principles of the amateur service set forth by the FCC in Section 97 of its rules? Briefly, they are (my paraphrasing)

- ✂ Recognize and enhance the value of the amateur service, especially in providing emergency communications.
- ✂ Contribute to the advancement of the radio art.
- ✂ Improve skills in communications and technical phases.
- ✂ Expand the number of amateurs.
- ✂ Enhance international good will.

It comes as no surprise to any of you, but it bears repeating that the number of new amateurs has been declining, and attendance at meetings and special events is also down.

The beginning of this new year seems a good time to commit ourselves to a renewed interest in and vigor toward our fascinating hobby. Technology has brought many changes which can present us with new challenges and opportunities. Each contact--whether by CW or SSB or satellite--is a new person, a new country for us to get to know, or an old acquaintance with whom to share a new story.

I challenge each of you to become more active and to grow this year. Attend more meetings and special events like FrostFest and socials. Call other members and remind them of meetings. Bring someone with you. Become part of a committee. Share your expertise with other club members. Become a buddy to a new member or elmer a potential new ham. Learn about some new aspect of amateur radio and perhaps work a mode you have not worked before. Upgrade your license.

If you have not attended a meeting for a while, let one of the directors know what we can do to meet your needs. What kind of programs would be of interest?

Do you need a ride?

You worked hard to earn your license. Don't let it sit somewhere just yellowing with age. Be an electron who gets charged up and leaves its shell. Dust off the diodes, tweak some transistors. The potential is there. You have the capacity; don't let excuses impede you as your activity circuit becomes unparalleled. Reflect on the five principles and make a commitment to yourself, your club and your amateur radio service.

Wishing each of you and yours a happy and healthy New Year.

Marie, KF4UUI, president

Yuuummm, Yuuummm!!!

Were you there? Did you miss out? Aren't you sorry you missed out on the only RATS Christmas Party this year? If you weren't there, you really missed out!! I am sure there are plenty of good excuses, even some reasons why you weren't there, but sorry...next time. There were about fifty-four (54) people who didn't have excuses or reasons for not being there that had a great time of fellowship and good Christmas cheer. These fifty-four people included spouses and children. If you weren't there, you really should have been, because...Some of our hams were there in suits!!! Probably won't see that again until they make it to the Christmas party next year. They looked good all dolled up, too.

And as usual, all kinds of conversations were taking place. Some talked of radio, some talked of children's goals or the parents' goals for them, some talked of great grand children. Imagine that! Some of the hams in RATS are great grand parents. Some of the things you can learn at a RATS social are just unbelievable.

And the best thing I noticed is there were no "clicks" but instead everyone just milled around and enjoyed the company of everyone.

Shirley did a wonderful job of organizing the food, and the arrangements for the evening. Everything went terrific in the kitchen. She had all the foods set up so as you progressed around the serving table, the things you needed on the plate first and second and so on were in the proper line up.

I wish I could tell you all the foods that were there, but (due to the old age thing) I would forget something that someone brought special and then I would feel bad. But I can tell you that everything that got on my plate was a welcomed and delightful taste to the tongue and pallet. In fact, I didn't hear anyone complain about anything in the food category. The tables in the meeting room were darling. They had items of Christmas nature as centerpieces that were really adorable. The tablecloths and the table settings were so nicely arranged and were very much appreciated by everyone.

Absolutely nothing was done half way. We have an absolutely terrific club President who saw that everything was done correctly, neatly, and in a proper fashion. Marie and Shirley and a couple of others were there an hour and a half early to get things ready for the rest of us to come in and enjoy for the next couple of hours. And their work really paid off. My hat is off to them both. A special thanks for all those who

worked so hard and spent so much time to present the rest of us with a splendid Christmas party.

J. T, KF4ONR.

DITS 'N DAHS
A column about miscellaneous topics

HOW TO SOUND LIKE A LID
--by Rusty Bumpers, N4LID

[The following article appeared in Solid Copy in May 1993 and now appears on several web sites. Curiously, when trying to locate this article, the first web site I checked was a club newsletter citing Solid Copy as its source. Enjoy].

On two meters lately, I have noticed a tendency of people making a concerted effort to sound like a Lid (i.e. poor operator). Since this appears to be the new style in amateur radio, I thought I would present this handy guide to radio nerddom. The following is what I call: "How to sound like a Lid in one easy lesson."

- 1) Use as many Q signals as possible. Yes, I know they were invented solely for CW and are totally inappropriate for two-meter FM, but they're fun and entertaining. They keep people guessing as to what you really meant. i.e. "I'm going to QSY to the kitchen." Can you really change frequency to the kitchen? QSL used to mean "I am acknowledging receipt," but now it appears to mean "yes" or "OK." I guess I missed it when the ARRL changed the meaning.
- 2) Never laugh, when you can say "hi hi." No one will ever know you aren't a long CW ragchewer if you don't tell them. They'll think you've been on since the days of Marconi.
- 3) Utilize an alternative vocabulary. Use words like "destinated" and "negatory." It's OK to make up your own words here. "Yeah Bill, I pheelbart zaphonix occasionally myself."
- 4) Always say "XX4XXX (insert your own call) for ID." Anything that creates redundancy is always strongly encouraged. That's why we have the Department of Redundancy Department. (Please note that you can follow your call with "for identification purposes" instead of "for ID." While taking longer to say, it is worth more lid-points.)
- 5) The better the copy on two-meter FM, the more you should phonetically spell your name, especially if it is a short and/or common one. i.e. "My name is Al. . .Alpha Lima" or "Jack . . .Juliet Alpha Charlie Kilo." If at all possible, make up unintelligible phonetics. "My name is Bob . Billibong Oregano Bumperpool."
- 6) Always give the calls of yourself and everyone who is (or has been) in the group, whether they are still there or not. While this has been

unnecessary for years, it is still a wonderful memory test.

- 7) Whenever possible, use the wrong terminology. It keeps people guessing. Use "modulation" when you mean "deviation" and vice-versa. And even if the two-meter FM amplifier you're using is a Class C type amp, and thus not biased for linear amplification, be sure to call it your "linear." Heck, refer to all FM-style amplifiers as "linears." You'll be the king of the "wrong terminology " hill.
- 8) If someone asks for a break, always finish your turn, talking as long as possible before turning it over. Whenever possible, pass it around a few times first. This will discourage the breaker and, if it is an emergency, will encourage him to switch to another repeater and not bother you.
- 9) Always ask involved questions of the person who is trying to sign out. Never let him get by with a yes or no answer. Make it a question that will take a long time to answer.
- 10) The less you know about the subject, the more you should speculate about it on the air. The amount of time spend on your speculations should be inversely proportional to your knowledge of the subject.
- 11) If you hear two amateurs start a conversation on the repeater, wait until they are 20 seconds into their contact, and then break-in to use the patch. Make sure that it's only a simple routine phone call. It's also very important that you run the autopatch for the full three minutes.
- 12) You hear someone on the repeater giving directions to a visiting amateur. Even if the directions are good, make sure you break-in with your own "alternate route but better way to get there" version. This is most effective if several other Lid trainees join in, each with a different route. By the time the amateur wanting directions unscrambles all the street names whizzing around in his head, he should have mobiled out of range of the repeater. This keeps you from having to stick around and help the guy get back out of town later.
- 13) Use the repeater for an hour at a two at a time, preventing others from using it. Better yet, do it on a daily basis. Your quest is to make people so sick of hearing your voice every time they turn on their radio, they'll move to another frequency. This way you'll lighten the load on the repeater, leaving even more time for you to talk on it.
- 14) See just how much mobile flutter you can generate by operating at handheld power levels too far from the repeater. Engage people in conversations when you know they won't be able to copy half of what you're saying. Even when they say you are uncopyable, continue to string them along by making further transmissions. See just how frustrated you can make the other amateur before he finally signs off in disgust.
- 15) Give out wacky radio advice. When a newcomer's signal is weak into the repeater, tell him he can correct the problem by adjusting the volume and squelch knobs on his radio. Or tell people they're full quieting except for the white noise on their signal. Or. . . well, you get the idea.

- 16) Use lots of radio jargon. After all, it makes you feel important using words average people don't say. Who cares if it makes you sound like you just fell off of Channel 19 on the Citizen's Band? Use phrases such as "Roger on that," "10-4," "You're making the trip," and "Negatory on that."
- 17) Use excessive microphone gain. See just how loud you can make your audio. Make sure the audio gain is so high that other amateurs can hear any bugs crawling on your floor. If mobile, make sure the wind noise is loud enough that others have to strain to pick your words out from all the racket.
- 18) Be as verbose as possible. Never say "yes" when you can say "He acquiesced in the affirmative by saying 'yes'." (No kidding, I actually heard that one.)
- 19) Start every transmission with the word "Roger" or "QSL." Sure, you don't need to acknowledge that you received the other transmission in full. After all, you would simply ask for a repeat if you missed something. But consider it your gift to the other amateur to give him solace every few seconds that his transmissions are being received.
- 20) When looking for a contact on the repeater, always say you're "listening" or "monitoring" multiple times. I've always found that at least a half dozen times or so is good. Repeating your multiple "listening" ID's every 10-15 seconds is even better. Those people who didn't want to talk to you will eventually call you, hoping you'll go away after you have finally made a contact.
- 21) Give out repeater FM signal reports using the HF SSB R-S system ("You're 5 by 9 here.") Sure it's considered improper for FM operation and you may even confuse some people, but don't let that spoil your fun!
- 22) Always use a repeater, even you can work the other station easily on simplex--especially if you can make the contact on simplex. The coverage of the repeater you use should be inversely proportional to your distance from the other station.
- 23) If you and the other station are both within a mile or two of the repeater you are using, you should always give a signal report. ("I'm sitting under the repeater and I know you can see it from there, but you're full quieting into the repeater. How about me?")
- 24) In the same vein as the previous step, when monitoring a repeater, you should always give signal reports as if the repeater didn't exist. ("Yep I'm right under the repeater. You've got a whopping signal You're S-9 plus 60. That must be a great rig.")
- 25) On repeaters with courtesy tones, you should always say "over." Courtesy tones are designed to let everyone know when you have unkeyed, but don't let that stop you. Say "over," "back to you," or "go ahead." It serves no useful purpose, but don't worry--it's still fun.
- 26) Think up interesting and bizarre things to do to tie-up the repeater. The goal here is not to facilitate communications but to entertain all the scanner listeners out there. Do something original. Try to hum CTCSS (PL) tones. Sing pager tones. You're getting the idea.

27) Use the repeater's autopatch for frivolous routine calls. While pulling into the neighborhood, call home to let them know you'll be there in two minutes. Or call your spouse to complain about the bad you had at work. After all, the club has "measured rate" service on their phone line, so they get charged for each autopatch call. Your endeavor is to make so many patches in a year that cost the club at least \$20 in phone bills. That way you'll feel you got your money's worth for your dues.

28) Never say "My name is. . ." It makes you sound human. If at all possible, use one of the following phrases: a) "The personal here is. . ." b) "The handle here is. . ." Normally, handles are for suitcases, but it's OK to use them anyway. Don't forget this has worked just fine for CB'ers for years.

29) Use 73 and 88 incorrectly. Both are already considered plural, but add a "s" to the end anyway. Say 73's or "88's." Who cares if it means "best regards" and "love and kisses." Better yet, say "seventy thirds." (By the way, 70 thirds equals about 23.3)

30) Make people think you have a split personality by referring to yourself in the plural phrase. When you're in conversation and are alone at your radio, always say "We're" or "We've" instead of "I'm" or "I've" (i.e. "we've been doing this.." "we're doing that..", "we're clear"). Everyone knows you're by yourself, but when they ask you who is with you, make up somebody important like Arnold Schwarzenegger or Bill Clinton.

31) Always attempt to use the higher functions of the repeater before you have read the directions. Nothing will work, but you'll have great fun and get lots of people to give you advice.

32) Test repeater functions repeatedly (that's why they call it a repeater). Test your signal strength from the same locations several times every day. Concentrate on testing things that really matter, like the number of times the repeater has been keyed-up. That stuff is fun to track. Test the outside temperature as often as possible. The farther the temperature goes from the norms, the more often you should test it. Also, if you get a pager set to the repeater's output frequency, as soon as you receive it, set it off every 30 seconds or so until the battery runs down. Better yet, interrupt conversations to test it.

33) If the repeater is off the air for service, as soon as it's turned back on complain about the fact that it was off the air. Act as though your entire day has been ruined because the repeater wasn't available when you wanted to use it.

34) Find ways to get around the "no business" rule on autopatches. Your plan is to try and fool the repeater control operators. Invent code words your secretary at work will understand to disguise any business talk so it sounds like personal chatter. Or get to be friends with the local Domino's Pizza manager. Make it so that when you call on the patch to ask him to bring over the "floppy disk" you need to your house, he shows-up 30 minutes later with a piping hot large pepperoni and sausage pie. The possibilities are endless. . .

Just using a few of these easy steps should put you well on the way to Lid-hood. I hope these helpful hints will save you some time in your quest to sound like the perfect Lid.

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