

SOLID COPY™



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The Bulletin of the
Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society
P. O. Box 14828 - Richmond, Virginia 23221



Self-policing

Parke Slater, N4KFT, Vice-President
Board Liaison to the Technical Committee

Nobody likes a snitch—nobody who is snitched upon, at least. “Narc, snitch, stool pigeon.” All those names conjure up stereotypes that are derogatory. But consider this: The issuance of federal credentials (your radio license) comes with the expectation that we will all be policemen of sorts. Every time I have heard Riley Hollingsworth speak, he talks of amateur radio being “self-policing.” What does that mean?

All of us have committed an occasional act of omission that has put us at odds with Part 97. Whether it was forgetting to ID at a ten-minute interval, or being a Kc or two out of band, our mental lapses as human beings could have potentially gotten us a personal letter from Riley on an occasion or two. I even saw one letter he sent regarding excessive ignition noise accompanying the carrier of a mobile operator’s transmission!

One thing I learned early on was that real amateur radio operators take pride in technical accomplishments and in strict adherence to the ground rules. If that is not enough, the Amateur Enforcement Bureau expects us to go a step further and follow “good amateur practice!” What does this mean for us?

First, this means that hams are accountable to one another for proper operation if we are to ensure the integrity and future of ham radio. Whether it is the phone call, email, or “You’re out of the window, old man,” transmission on the air, we must remember that self-policing is a staple of the amateur radio service.

If I take my radio license seriously, “good amateur practice” requires that I become an Elmer, Elmer, and policeman, all at the same time. As an Elmer, I must be willing to teach what I know, regardless of how short a time I may have been licensed.

As an Elmer, I must be open to correction. Even though I may have been licensed for years, it may not mean that I am well versed in every aspect of the hobby or not apt to ever err. If I am to be a true ham, always seeking to increase my knowledge and abilities, I need to be open to input to many sources.

Granted, there is a distinct difference between a single act of omission and intentional or repeated acts. In the event of the former, maybe the phone call or reminder is all that is needed. I remember one time I had my daughter calling DX spots to me from the

cluster. We actually had a good rhythm going, until I realized that the last spot she called had put me out of band for my privileges. I could have gotten reamed out on the air. I could have been reported to Riley. As it happened, neither occurred and I have been most careful since then.

(See “Self-policing” Page 2)

A WORD FROM THE BOARD

Guy Carlsen, K4CNF, President

Happy Holidays to all the members of the Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society. In this newsletter you are going to find information for the annual Christmas party. I hope that all of you are able to attend and look forward to seeing you there.

Recently, with new elections and the resignations of the president and one of the directors, the board has undergone some changes. Whether these are good changes will be made manifest in the coming days. As the new president of RATS I take the responsibility of my office seriously.

(See “A Word” Page 2)

SELF-POLICING *Continued*

But what if my apathy about this or other regulations was habitual? What if my operation regularly violated the standards of “good amateur practice” or Part 97, or both? Would you turn your head? Or do you care about the future of the amateur radio service?

As a ham, it goes unsaid that we hold each other’s feet to the fire. But maybe I need a reminder once in awhile, an email, phone call or on-the-spot correction. Done tastefully and with a heart that seeks only to make me a better operator and protect the Amateur Radio Service, I am compelled to listen. Political correctness will mean the death of ham radio. If I get repeatedly offended because I am a LID, then I may sell my radios. However, that would be preferable to the FCC selling our spectrum. Then we will all own a boat anchor

A WORD . . . *Continued*

I know that some of the things that I believe may not be in line with the entire membership and I also realize many speak up with how it can be better. You have, at this time, a board that is working hard together to try to bring this club into the next generation. In recent years there have been many challenges to Ham radio that could impact its very existence. We have seen radio frequency spectrums go to the highest bidder more than once. Why? Well, partly it’s because we, in the Amateur Radio Service, have abused the privileges we have and not used others that we have been given. The radio spectrum is in high demand by commercial interests who are willing to pay to have it and are taking great pains to show the people who control the spectrum why amateurs should not have it. Now I am not saying that every amateur should do everything there is to do in Ham radio. My, wouldn’t that be great? Unfortunately, that is not possible. In fact, one of the great things about this hobby is that once you have mastered one part of it, there

are many more to master without leaving the hobby and going on to another. If you were able to master all areas, there is one that is always wanting for the most enterprising, experimentation. On the other hand, every new ham and every licensee who has had his or her license for a while and has not done anything but use the repeater should examine why they became licensed in the Amateur Radio Service. Some may have very legitimate reasons for staying there, but others may not have ventured into the other areas of the world that make up Ham Radio. The goal of this board, and specifically this president, is to help our members look at other aspects of the hobby and help them to become better at what they choose to do in the hobby. In this way we will show the commercial interests and their political consumers that we are not ready to give up anything that we have worked so long and hard to attain.

We are taking a look at many areas of the club to bring things up to date to meet the needs of the membership of RATS. Change for the sake of change is not good. We don’t do this because we want to look good. This is about making the club appear in its best light. It’s about encouraging those who want to do something else to do it and giving them the assistance they need to accomplish more. It’s about making our members aware that there are other activities available to them and accomplishments that they can attain. It’s about representing Amateur Radio and the amateur community of Richmond in the best way possible. We aren’t trying to ram anything down your throat and we welcome and enjoin all our members to step up to the plate and do what is best for RATS and the amateur radio community general.

The next elections will be held next October for new officers. Until then I ask that you give us a chance to serve you and the club in the best way we can. Be a part of the solution to get this club moving into the next millennium. Do what you

can to protect and defend what we enjoy in our hobby. Come up with positive suggestions and act on them. If you think something could be done differently and maybe even better let us know. We need lots of participants in this club. We don’t need people who can’t or won’t do anything but sit back with repeater codes in hand, volunteer for door watch for a couple of hours at *Frostfest*, and come out once a year for a picnic. There is a lot to do. Let us help you learn about new things, be an active part of what RATS is.

Watch us change, but better yet, help us make the changes. This is not about the board; it’s about you and Amateur Radio. Make it the best you can.

VE EXAMS

Exams for licensing or upgrading for the next three months are as follows. There are two locations, one in Chester and the other in Richmond. To take an exam you must bring \$10.00 cash (exact change) and two forms of ID, one of which must be a photo ID. If you are upgrading, you must bring the original of your current license *and* a photocopy of it.

If you have credit for previously passed element(s) bring your original CSCE *and* a photocopy of it. Arrive 15 minutes early. Preregistration is preferred, but not required (unless you are taking the CW element in Chester, then required). Walk-ins are welcome if seating and materials are available.

The only announced exam is on February 8, 2003, at 9:00 AM at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, 1651 E. Parham Road, Richmond, Building B. For more information or to preregister contact Patrick Wilson, W4PW, (804) 932-9424 or go to:

<http://www.w4pw.org/hamtests.htm>

The Chester exam location is Pietro's Restaurant at the corner of Jeff Davis Highway and Osborne Road in

Chester, but the 2003 exam schedule has not been announced as of press time. For more information or to pre-register call (804) 768-2255 or visit:

http://www.kr4uq.org/V_E_EXAM_S/v_e_exams.html

NOVEMBER MEETING

Jim Stallings, KD4ZOT, presented a tutorial on the use and maintenance of the RATS online membership database. Avail yourself of this resource, and keep your information current. In order for you to receive the new repeater codes, the newsletter and other important club news your address must be correct in this database.

Election results were announced at the regular meeting. All incumbents were returned to their positions for another term: Jerry Long, K4KJL, Director; Warren Winner, W4UIE, Director; Charlie Tribble WA4ERC, Secretary; and Arlo Amstutz, WA4RLO.

Greg Curti, KG4KWW, has been appointed to serve the Board as a Point of Contact for the web site.

BALLOT FEEDBACK

The ballot for the just completed election for the Directors and Officers was combined with the membership renewal form. The intent was to reduce mailing costs and provide convenience. Did it succeed? Or was it too complicated and/or confusing? Was the member profile data understandable (using the key)?

These forms would be easy to make separately, but combining the two required certain limitations. Getting the address information to show properly, depending on whether it was going out to the membership or returning to the club address, dictated what could or could not be on the back side for it to fold properly.

Please offer your comments on this year's ballot/membership renewal form to the Board of Directors through the President, Guy Carlsen, K4CNF.

CHRISTMAS DINNER

We will have our Annual Christmas Dinner December 13th in place of our regular monthly meeting. This year's feast will be at 6:00 PM at Sandston Presbyterian Church, 15 Confederate Avenue in Sandston, near the airport. See flyer insert for details.

Thanks to Marie Long, K4KML, for her hard work in preparing this year's Christmas Dinner and to Arlo Amstutz, WA4RLO, for securing the location.

Normally the Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society meets the third Friday of the month at 7:30 PM at the West End Volunteer Rescue Squad building at 1802 Chantilly Street, Richmond.

Coming from either direction on Broad Street, Chantilly is the first block east of Staples Mill Road. The WEVRS building is ½ block south of Broad on Chantilly.

IN & AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH

Upcoming events for the new year include our own *Frostfest*. *Frostfest* will be Sunday, February 9th at the Showplace. Plan to volunteer. Please see the web site for complete details:

<http://www.frostfest.com/>

There will be more about *Frostfest* in January's *Solid Copy*. If you would like to volunteer, contact Jim Clark, N3JJF, at (804) 271-1998 or via email at:

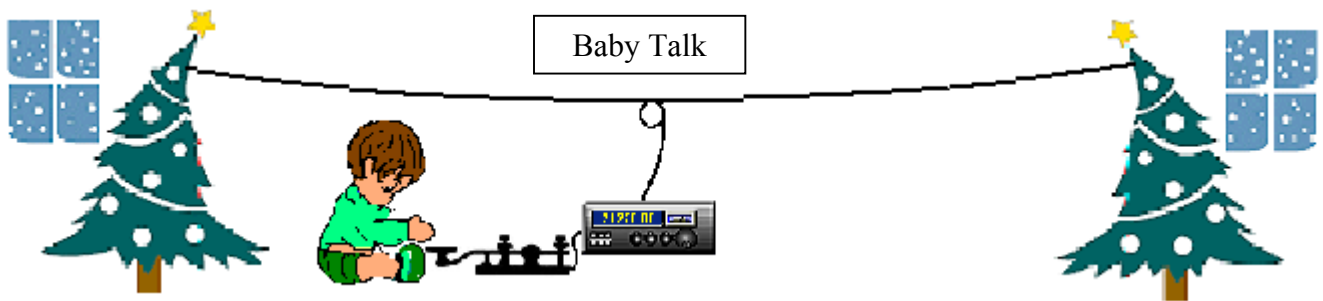
volunteers@frostfest.com

This is a major undertaking for the club and needs everyone's help to keep it one of the Mid-Atlantic's premier hamfests.

ON THE AIR

Look for VK9XE, Kunio, operating primarily on 15 and 20 meters USB from Christmas Island from December 7th through the 14th.

Start the New Year off poundin' brass! ARRL's 33rd annual Straight Key Night will be from 00:00 to 24:00 UTC on January 1, 2003. Locally it will begin at 7:00 PM on New Year's Eve and continue until 7:00 PM New Year's Day. Be sure to insert "SKN" in front of your signal report.



“dah-di-dah-dit dah-dah-di-dah dah-di-dah-dit dah-dah-di-dah di-di-dit di-dah dah-dit dah di-dah dah-di-di-di-dah di-dit di-dah-dah di-dah dah-dit dah di-dah dah-dit dit di-dah-dah di-dah-dit di-dah dah-di-dit di-dit dah-dah-dah dah-di-dah”

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Voice Mail System: (804) 790-0077, mailbox 7287

Internet E-mail Address: rats@rats.net

RATS Web Site: <http://www.rats.net>

Frostfest Contact: Jim Clark, N3JJF (804) 271-1998 or email to: volunteers@frostfest.com

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The board may also be contacted, as a whole, at board@rats.net. Please feel free to contact any of us regarding RATS business, information, and ideas.

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