

SOLID COPY™



Spring 2003

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



Envy, Entitlement and the FCC

Parke Slater, N4KFT, Vice-President

I am envious, and for good reason. It's not just the "data stream" I hear when tuning 30 meters—the superhighway of CW, where I wonder about the "baud rate." And it's not the Extra, Advanced or General portions of the other bands where CW resides. It's sometimes the Novice portion, where I hear CW beyond my reach.

The wonderful blessing/curse about amateur radio is that there is always something else to do. Blessing, because it perpetually affords us something else to explore and accomplish. Curse, because I see so many others who have accomplished much more than me.

Let me tell on myself. When I carried my son to his first testing session, I went with no intention of obtaining a ham radio license. In fact, I was merely his mode of transportation. Nevertheless, I left the session with a Technician Class CSCE while my son tested for his Novice ticket.

My pride in my accomplishment was soon dampened by some who dared to ask me when I intended to get my General. It wasn't difficult to formulate the reasons why I wasn't interested in doing so. My

problem was that I knew from the beginning that my reasons were just excuses with window dressing. Looking back, those who challenged me knew this too—probably because they had walked the same path.

When I finally became an Amateur General class licensee, (within days of the expiration of my General theory CSCE), envy had struck again. While I was struggling to maintain five wpm, my son was passing ten.

Don't get me wrong. Time (or lack of it) was, and will continue to be a genuine obstacle to doing what I want in amateur radio—something to which we all can relate. But the line between what I simply could never accomplish, and what wasn't willing to work toward was a line that was anything but black and white.

All of us, at one time or another, have probably worked for an outfit where we saw the younger being promoted, or the salaries of those with less tenure being rewarded disproportionately to ours. It's disheartening. Liken that to those who had to master 10 wpm for Amateur General, 13 wpm for Amateur Advanced, and 20 wpm for Amateur

RATS THIS SPRING

The Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society, Inc., will host a presentation by the ARRL's Virginia State Club Coordinator Jim Humphries, W4IM, and the ARRL's Virginia State Official Observer Edward A. Ray, W4NEZ, during the monthly meeting on March 21st at 7:30 PM.

FrostFest volunteer prizes will be awarded, and a preliminary report of *FrostFest* results will be made.

Dave Kiefer, N4DWK, and Parke Slater, N4KFT, will bring a short presentation on radio operations—both repeater and HF procedures and protocols.

(See *Monthly Meetings* Page 3).

Extra, as they look at us who stood in the welfare line to receive our license "handout" with only a five wpm 'mastery' of code.

I will be the first to admit that I would not be Amateur Extra, had the FCC not given me a free ride by lowering the CW requirements. But

what did that do? It made me lazy. After obtaining my Amateur General in September of 2000, I still have not gained much momentum with CW. And whom can I blame? Never mind.

it.” Okay, I didn’t. But I have always had too much respect for those who did to have ever asked them to allow me unfettered access to the HF privileges they worked for—even

This committee will begin its work in April.

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 \$12.00 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 first exam is on April 12, 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 second exam is May 7th at Pietro’s Restaurant at the corner of Jeff Davis Highway and Osborne Road in Chester. The time is 7:30 PM. For more information or to preregister call (804) 768-2255 or visit:

http://www.kr4uq.org/V_E_EXAM/S/v_e_exams.html

The third exam is June 14th at the J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College location at 9:00 AM.

IN & AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH

The Down East Hamfest Association will host a hamfest at the Lenoir County Fairgrounds on Fairground Road (Hwy 11 South) in Kinstron, North Carolina. This will be from 8:00 AM until 3:00 PM on March 23rd. For more information,



Ham crowd fills *The Showplace* for *FrostFest* February 9, 2003.

The bottom line is that the FCC has allowed me to embarrass myself. I am an Amateur Extra licensee who struggles at seven to 10 wpm. Is it any wonder that I might be looked down upon if I consider myself on par with those who hammer out 25 or 35 wpm, merely because of my license class? I imagine that it is only because of *their* caliber that I have not been told to take a hike (via phone, of course.)

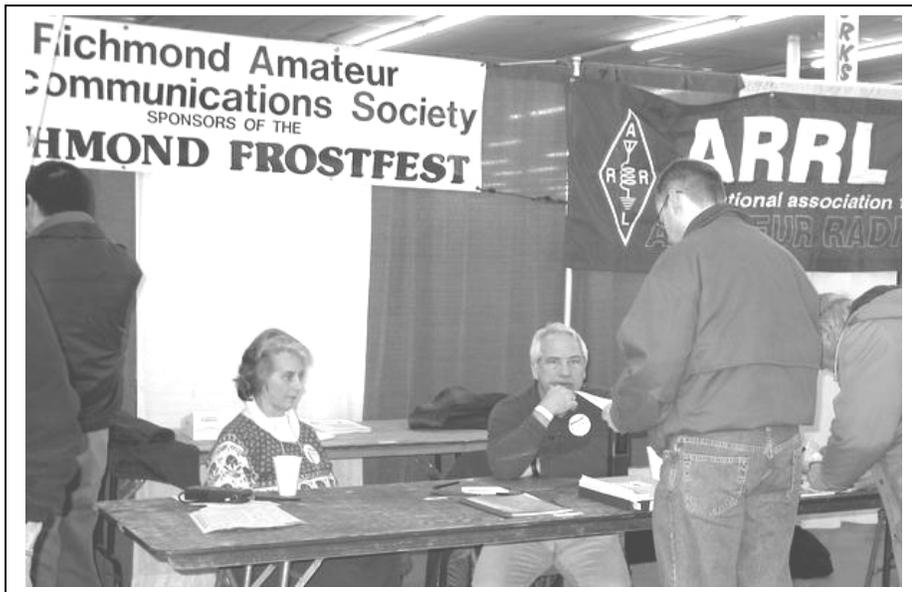
What I *could* do is try to formulate a sub class of amateur licensees that couldn’t care less about code. We could use a vernacular that is distinctly different than “good amateur practice” calls for, and proclaim that “code is dead.” But if code is dead, then why can’t I make contact with the rarest DXCC countries? Perhaps those entities haven’t received that word. My only problem is that I would have to tell them “code is dead” via phone.

Remember the Smith Barney commercial? They got their money “the old-fashioned way—they earned

when I was merely a Technician class licensee. Did I accept the five-wpm handout? Yes. But give me no more! Let me earn my way. I am ashamed enough. FCC, please don’t tempt me with another free ride. Until I have the ARRL certificates on my wall that shows that I have honestly attained 13 and 20 wpm, I will remain a “Novice Extra.” Let’s say “NO!” to government entitlements; that is, unless you’re content to stand in the welfare line. As for me, I am not. When you hear me on 30 meters, it will be because I earned the right to be there, not because I whined, “I am entitled to it.”

VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

It’s time to start thinking about Directors and Officers for the next fiscal year. Three people are needed to serve on the Nominating Committee. If you would like to be a part of this team, let us know at this month’s meeting. Or you can notify one of the current officers by mail or email (see back of newsletter).



Marie Long, K4KML, and Jerry Long, K4KJL, tell visitors all about the Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society.

contact Doug Burt, W4OFO, at (252) 524-5724 after 6:00 PM, or email:

jeanhhd@icomnet.com

Admission is \$5. Talk-in will be on 146.685 and 145.210



The Baltimore Amateur Radio Club will host what they bill as the “largest show in the Mid-Atlantic” and one of the largest shows in the country. This is the 2003 *Greater Baltimore Hamboree and Computerfest* at the Timonium Fair Grounds (Maryland State Fair) in Timonium, Maryland. This is a two-day event with a \$6 admission each day. Dial 1-800-HAM-FEST or email

w3ft@juno.com

for more information. You can also visit their website at:

www.gbhc.org



The Chesapeake Amateur Radio Service (CARS) will host *SpringFest 2003* from 9:30AM until 3:00 PM at 2746 South Battlefield Boulevard in Chesapeake. Talk-in will be on 146.820 which is the W4CAR repeater. Tickets are \$6 each to the April 12th event. For more information contact Ruth Bigio at:

ruthis23505@yahoo.com

or see them on the web at:

<http://www.qls.net/cars>



June 1st will find the Ole Virginia Hams hosting the *Manassas Hamfest*. This is their 29th consecutive “first Sunday in June” show.

This fest will be at the Prince William County Fairgrounds at 10624 Dumfries Road in Manassas. Admission is \$6 and talk-in will be on 146.97(-), 224.660(-) and 442.200 (+).

For more information contact Mary Lu, KB4EFP at 703-369-2877, email to:

mblasd1638@aol.com

or visit their website at:

<http://www.qls.net/olevahams>



The Virginia Beach Amateur Radio Club along with Mossegruppen av NRRL (Norway) will operate a special event stations to commemorate the 112th anniversary of the Norwegian Lady Statue on from 1300Z March 22nd until 2200Z March 23rd.

The station call signs will be W4UG and LA5M. Operations will be on 40 meters and 20 meters. QSL to VBARC, P. O. Box 62003, Virginia Beach, VA 23462 for a certificate.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

In April look for a comprehensive *FrostFest* report. Also the Nominating Committee will begin its work in preparing for this fall’s elections for Directors and Officers.

May will have a demo of club equipment and a Field Day orientation.

Nominees for the fall elections will be announced in May as well.

RATS meets the third Friday of each month at 7:30 PM at the West End Volunteer Rescue Squad Building, 1802 Chantilly Street, Richmond. Coming from either direction on Broad Street, Chantilly is the first intersection east of Staples Mill Road. The WEVRS building is ½ block south of Broad on Chantilly.

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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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