



Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
1733 Gihon Rd. Parkersburg, WV 26101

ARRL to Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access

NEWINGTON, CT, Jan 19, 2004-- The ARRL will ask the FCC to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license that would include HF phone privileges without requiring a Morse code test. The League also will propose consolidating all current licenses into three classes, retaining the Element 1 Morse requirement--now 5 WPM--only for the highest class. The ARRL Board of Directors overwhelmingly approved the plan January 16 during its Annual Meeting in Windsor, Connecticut. The proposals--developed by the ARRL Executive Committee following a Board instruction last July--are in response to changes made in Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). They would continue a process of streamlining the amateur licensing structure that the FCC began more than five years ago but left unfinished in the Amateur Service license restructuring Report and Order (WT 98-143) that went into effect April 15, 2000.

The ARRL has addressed frequently asked questions (FAQs) concerning this proposal.

"Change in the Amateur Radio Service in the US, especially license requirements and even more so when Morse is involved, has always been emotional," said ARRL First Vice President Joel Harrison,

W5ZN, in presenting the Executive Committee's recommendations. "In fact, without a doubt, Morse is Amateur Radio's 'religious debate.'" The plan adopted by the Board departs only slightly from the Executive Committee's recommendations.

The "New" Novice The entry-level license class--being called "Novice" for now--would require a 25-question written exam. It would offer limited HF CW/data and phone/image privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters as well as VHF and UHF privileges on 6 and 2 meters and on 222-225 and 430-450 MHz. Power output would be restricted to 100 W on 80, 40, and 15 meters and to 50 W on 10 meters and up, thus avoiding the need for the more complex RF safety questions in the Novice question pool.

"The Board sought to achieve balance in giving new Novice licensees the opportunity to sample a wider range of Amateur Radio activity than is available to current Technicians while retaining a motivation to upgrade," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ. "It was also seen as important to limit the scope of privileges so the exam would not have to include material that is inappropriate at the entry level."

As an introduction to Amateur Radio, the Novice license served successfully for most of its 50-year

history. The FCC has not issued new Novice licenses since the 2000 license restructuring, however. Under the ARRL plan, current Novice licensees--now the smallest and least active group of radio amateurs--would be grand fathered to the new entry-level class without further testing.

Anticipating assertions that the new plan would "dumb down" Amateur Radio licensing, Harrison said those currently holding a ticket often perceive the level of complexity to have been greater when they were first licensed than it actually was. "Quite frankly," he said, "if you review the questions presented in our license manuals throughout the years, you will be surprised how they compare to those of today."

A Spanish-language version of this story is available on the Puerto Rico Amateur Radio League Web site.

Technicians and Generals The middle group of licensees-- Technician, Tech Plus (Technician with Element 1 credit) and General--would be consolidated into a new General license that no longer would require a Morse examination. Current Technician and Tech Plus license holders automatically would gain current General class privileges without additional testing. The current Element 3 General examination would remain in place for new

applicants. ARRL already has proposed additional phone privileges for Generals in its "Novice refarming" petition, RM-10413, but the FCC has not yet acted on that petition.

Morse Code Testing Retained for Extra

At the top rung, the Board indicated that it saw no compelling reason to change the Amateur Extra class license requirements. The ARRL plan calls on the FCC to combine the current Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensees into Amateur Extra, because the technical level of the exams passed by these licensees is very similar. New applicants for Extra would have to pass a 5 WPM Morse code examination, but the written exam would stay the same. The League's plan calls for current Novice, Tech Plus and General class licensees to receive lifetime Element 1 (5 WPM Morse) credit.

"This structure provides a true entry-level license with HF privileges to promote growth in the Amateur Service," Harrison said. "It also simplifies the FCC database by conforming to the current Universal Licensing System (ULS) structure and does not mandate any modifications to it."

Sumner concurred. "The Board started out by recognizing that three license classes was the right number when looking down the road 10 or 15 years," he said. "We need a new entry-level license."

"On the other hand, there's nothing particularly wrong with the existing Extra class license," he continued. "The change in the international

regulations notwithstanding, the Board felt that the highest level of accomplishment in the FCC's amateur licensing structure should include basic Morse capability."

Sumner and Harrison say the current Technician entry-level ticket provides little opportunity to experience facets of ham radio beyond repeater operation. "The quality of that experience," Sumner said, "often depends on the operator's location."

Among other advantages, Sumner said the plan would allow new Novices to participate in HF SSB emergency nets on 75 and 40 meters as well as on the top 100 kHz of 15 meters. The new license also could get another name, Sumner said. "We're trying to recapture the magic of the old Novice license, but in a manner that's appropriate for the 21st century."

Proposal Includes "Novice Refarming" Band Plan

The overall proposed ARRL license restructuring plan would more smoothly integrate HF spectrum privileges across the three license classes and would incorporate the "Novice refarming" plan the League put forth nearly two years ago in a Petition for Rule Making (RM-10413). The FCC has not yet acted on the ARRL plan, which would alter the current HF subbands. The Novice refarming proposal would eliminate the 80, 40 and 15-meter Novice/Technician Plus CW subbands as such and re-use that spectrum in part to expand phone/image subbands on 80 and 40 meters.

The ARRL license restructuring design calls for no changes in privileges for Extra and General class licensees on 160, 60, 30, 20, 17 or 12 meters. Novice licensees would have no access to those bands.

Proposed Phone/Image HF Subbands (Includes Novice Refarming Proposal)

80 Meters

Extra: 3.725-4.000 MHz (gain of 25 kHz)
General: 3.800-4.000 MHz (gain of 50 kHz)
Novice: 3.900-4.000 MHz (new)

40 meters

Extra: 7.125-7.300 MHz (gain of 25 kHz)
General: 7.175-7.300 MHz (gain of 50 kHz)
Novice: 7.200-7.300 MHz (new)

15 meters

Extra: 21.200-21.450 MHz (no change)
General: 21.275-21.450 MHz (gain of 25 kHz)
Novice: 21.350-21.450 MHz (new)

10 meters

Extra and General: 28.300-29.700 MHz
Novice: 28.300-28.500 MHz (no change)
Proposed CW/Data-Exclusive HF Subbands (Includes Novice Refarming Proposal)

80 meters

Extra: 3.500-3.725 MHz
General: 3.525-3.725 MHz
Novice: 3.550-3.700 MHz

40 meters

Extra: 7.000-7.125 MHz
General: 7.025-7.125 MHz
Novice: 7.050-7.125 MHz

15 meters

Extra: 21.000-21.200 MHz
General: 21.025-21.200 MHz
Novice: 21.050-21.200 MHz

10 meters

Extra/General: 28.000-28.300 MHz
Novice: 28.050-28.300 MHz

Page last modified: 11:00 AM, 26 Jan 2004 ET
Page author: awextra@arrl.org
Copyright © 2004, American Radio Relay League, Inc. All Rights

WEST VIRGINIA HAMS SURPRISE GOVERNOR

It's not often one sees a state governor at a loss for words. Upon learning that the call sign of his late father, Robert Wise Sr, WA8AYP, was going to be used by the ham radio station in the new Kanawha County Metro Emergency Operations Center in Charleston, West Virginia, Gov Bob Wise quietly said, "I don't know quite what to say."

In a February 17 ceremony, Gov Wise prepared to present a \$50,000 check to Kanawha County officials to purchase Amateur Radio gear for the new EOC--set for completion next spring. However, he was interrupted by a voice calling him on the ham radio set up in his office for the event. Control operator Bill Hunter, K8BS, identified the station as WA8AYP. When he handed over the mike, the surprised governor responded, "This is the son of WA8AYP."

It was then that Gov Wise learned that the call sign of his father, who died in 1986, had been secured for the ham station at the new EOC. It was an emotional moment. "Thank you very much for remembering Dad," he said. "I can't think of anything that would make him happier." Then he quipped, "Do I get a QSL card for this?" To the governor's surprise, officials then unveiled a specially designed WA8AYP QSL card and passed out copies, later signed by the governor for the eager hams in attendance.

Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper, W8CHS, said Amateur Radio

operators provide the county with \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year in free services during disasters.

Some of the state funds also will provide ham gear for a new Mobile Command Center.

On hand was the West Virginia Legislature's only ham radio operator, Kanawha County Delegate Sharon Spencer, KC8KVF, who also serves as the section's ARRL Affiliated Club Coordinator.--Jim Damron, N8TMW

PARKERSBURG AMATEUR RADIO KLUB January 12, 2004

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub held their January meeting at the Bonanza Steak House on Pike Street with President Blame Auville presiding.

There was an introduction of 29 members and guests.

The GUEST SPEAKER for the evening was Keith Page W8CFL, a representative from Allegheny Power Company who talked about interference problems. He said if you had a complaint to call the Fairmont, West Virginia office.

The 50/50 drawing of \$16 was won by Lulu Belle Janes.

The Secretary's minutes were read and approved.

The Treasurer's report was given as being \$3,645.79.

Connie Hamilton motioned the club accept David Mays as a member. Jim Palmer seconded the motion. Motion Carried those present.

President Auville announced that Connie Hamilton will talk about HANDLING TRAFFIC at the February meeting.

Jep motioned the club adjourn. Charlie seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Georgia Milhoan, Secretary

PARKERSBURG AMATEUR RADIO KLUB FEBRUARY 9, 2004

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub held their February meeting at the Bonanza Steak House on Pike Street with President Blame Auville Presiding.

The President asked for the introduction of 23 members and guests. Connie Hamilton won the 50/50 drawing of \$15.00.

The Secretary's minutes were read and approved.

The Treasurer's report was given as \$3,835.44.

President said Lloyd Boston and Ray Bodie would be Co-Chairmen of FIELD DAY. Lloyd gave a report on FIELD DAY progress.

There was a BIG discussion on the future FCC rules for ARRL.

Connie gave a talk on how to receive RADIOGRAMS and how to send them.

Jep motioned KLUB adjourn. Glenn Easterling seconded the motion. The KLUB adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted, Georgia Milhoan, Secretary

FCC Proposes Rules for BPL Systems

NEWINGTON, CT, Feb 25, 2004-- The FCC this week released its Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) on Broadband over Power Line (BPL) systems. The 38-page NPRM--in ET Dockets 03-104 and 04-37--proposes amendments to FCC Part 15 rules to define so-called "access BPL," make rules specific to BPL systems and provide measurement guidelines for BPL devices and systems. It would make no changes to Part 15 emission limits for unintentional radiators, however. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, says that while Part 15's current limits on unintentional radiators on HF may be appropriate for short-duration, narrowband emissions, they are inappropriate for the sort of long-duration, broadband emissions BPL would employ. He compared short-duration, narrowband emissions at the Part 15 radiated emission limit to a helicopter flying overhead.

"The noise is deafening, but is tolerable because it doesn't happen very often nor last very long," he observed. "To a radio user, having BPL in the neighborhood would be like having the helicopter hovering constantly overhead."

ARRL Lab Manager Ed Hare, W1RFI, offered an example that most hams can relate to. "The limit for an unintentional emitter on HF is 30 uV/m at 30 meters from the source," he said. "If you take a dipole cut for 3.5 MHz and put it in a 30 uV/m field, you'll have a noise reading of S9 plus 16 dB at your transceiver."

Access BPL, a form of carrier current or power line carrier (PLC) communication, would apply RF in

the HF to low-VHF range to existing low and medium-voltage exterior power lines to distribute Internet and broadband services. It was the aspect of feeding RF signals into outdoor power lines that initially raised Amateur Radio concerns regarding potential interference. Such carrier current or PLC systems are subject to the FCC's Part 15 rules governing unlicensed devices.

In its proposal, the FCC took a broader view of interference issues. "There is significant disagreement among the commenting parties regarding the interference potential of Access BPL," the NPRM declares. "Amateur operators and amateur organizations in general are opposed to Access BPL and advocate emission limits that are lower than the existing Part 15 limits."

In a statement attached to the NPRM, however, FCC Chairman Michael Powell expressed confidence that the new requirements it spells out balance BPL's potential benefits with concerns of potential interference "by establishing new requirements that will help minimize harmful interference that may occur and guidelines for measurement of radio frequency emissions from carrier current systems."

Still, the NPRM concedes, Amateur Radio operations "are likely to present a difficult challenge in the deployment of Access BPL in cases where amateurs use high-gain outdoor antennas that are located near power lines." Noting that power line noise already presents a significant problem for hams, the FCC said, "we therefore would expect that, in practice, many amateurs

already orient their antennas to minimize the reception of emissions from nearby electric power lines."

The NPRM goes on to point out that because BPL has the capability to stay clear of specific frequencies, BPL providers can simply "avoid the use of amateur frequencies when in close proximity to amateur outdoor antennas." The NPRM also briefly mentions the possibility of interference to BPL systems from Amateur Radio, an issue ARRL and others raised in their comments on last April's Notice of Inquiry on BPL.

The NPRM emphasizes that under the proposed rules, operators of Access BPL systems would be responsible for eliminating any harmful interference that may occur. "Furthermore, we believe that the current Part 15 emission limits for carrier current systems in conjunction with certain additional requirements specific to Access BPL operations will be adequate to ensure that existing radio operations are protected against harmful interference from such operations," the FCC said.

The NPRM proposes changes to Part 15 that would "facilitate the deployment of Access BPL technology while protecting licensed users of the spectrum." If ultimately adopted as proposed, the NPRM would:

define Access BPL for the purposes of its rules

maintain the existing Part 15 emission limits for BPL

require that Access BPL devices employ "adaptive interference-mitigation techniques" require that Access BPL providers maintain a database of installation locations and technical information

adopt specific measurement guidelines for both Access BPL and other carrier current systems to ensure that measurements are made in a consistent manner and provide for repeatable results in determining compliance with its rules.

Sumner suggested that, with licensed services and government users taking up large portions of the HF spectrum, protecting all licensed HF users could prove to be a nightmare for BPL providers. He noted, too, that while the FCC maintains that licensed services must be protected, the proposed rules place the burden of initiating corrective action on the shoulders of the licensed services. "And as a practical matter, the FCC's proposed rules offer no protection at all to mobile and portable stations," he added.

Sumner further stated that ARRL would continue to combat the "misconception" that BPL systems are viable as a "last mile" broadband technology for rural dwellers. "In low-density areas, the economics just don't work," he said. "A potential investor who understands the constraints under which BPL must operate won't touch such an investment."

While conceding "significant concerns" from HF users--including the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, which regulates federal government radio use--and the Federal Emergency Management Administration, the Commission said it believes the

NPRM adequately addresses interference concerns.

The FCC was unanimous in its approval of the BPL proposal. Commissioner Michael Copps offered a partial dissent that had more to do with competition protections and the potential for cross-subsidization between regulated power companies and unregulated communications businesses, not with interference issues.

The NPRM can be viewed on the FCC Web site and is available in Microsoft Word format, or as an Adobe PDF file.

More than 5000 comments were filed in the wake of the FCC's Notice of Inquiry on BPL. Interested parties may file detailed comments on the NPRM via the main FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS). The comment deadline is 45 days after the NPRM has been published in The Federal Register, and that is not expected to happen for another week or two. The FCC also is accepting brief comments on the NPRM via its ECFS Express page.

Additional information about BPL and Amateur Radio is on the ARRL Web site. To support the League's efforts in this area, visit the ARRL's secure BPL Web site.

Page last modified: 02:02 PM, 27 Feb 2004 ET

Page author: awextra@arrl.org
Copyright © 2004, American Radio Relay League, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

PEGGY SUE GETS LICENSED!

During the recent Buddy Holly W5B commemorative special event operation, Peggy Sue Gerron-Rackham was perhaps the most prominent of the W5B guest operators. The namesake of Holly's 1957 "rockabilly" hit "Peggy Sue"--who went to high school with Holly and later married the drummer in his band,

The Crickets--says participating in the W5B event sharpened her desire to get her ham license. That happened this week when the FCC granted her the call sign KE5AKW. She now plans to apply for a vanity call sign.

"Out of all the Buddy Holly events that I have attended in my life," she said after the W5B special event. "This event will always stand out in my memory."

As rock n' roll history has it, Holly originally titled the song "Cindy Lou," but Crickets drummer Jerry Allison convinced the singer to change the tune's name to "Peggy Sue" just before the recording session. Gerron, who still goes by that name, says that story is "close" to the truth but not entirely accurate. After Holly's death, Gerron toured with The Crickets when the band got back together. Holly's follow-up song "Peggy Sue Got Married" inspired a 1986 movie starring Kathleen Turner.

Over the years, Gerron has made public appearances all over the country--including on "Oprah," VH1, the Oxygen Network, as well as network TV, and has worked as a speaker, columnist, back-up singer and talk

radio co-host (her show was called "Rave On"). Getting on the air during the W5B special event, however, turned out to be very "special" for her.

"You can do TV specials, and you can be interviewed by the very best DJs," she said, but there is nothing like the feeling of putting your finger down and transmitting your call sign and having somebody answer back."

The Buddy Holly special event--January 29 through February 2 in Holly's home town of Lubbock, Texas--marked the 45th anniversary of the entertainer's untimely death in a February 3, 1959, plane crash in Iowa.

The mishap also claimed the lives of early rock n' rollers Ritchie Valens and JP "The Big Bopper" Richardson.

The Lubbock Amateur Contest Club's W5LCC provided the site for the special event station. Some area hams still remember Holly as a classmate at Lubbock High School. Bryan Edwards, W5KFT, who ob-

tained the W5B call sign, reports W5B logged more than 1000 contacts. The special event generated a lot of interest in talking to Peggy Sue, and she obliged as many as possible. A few shared personal recollections of Holly and his music.

"This is not planned conversation," Gerron said of Amateur Radio. "It's one person communicating with another. Is anybody out there? You bet they are! Keep rockin'!"

Other operators during the W5B special event included Doug Hutton, W5JUV, Terry Bajuk, KE5BL, Dennis Brush, WA5CBG, Joey Johnston, KC5MVZ, Eddie Petmecky, KC5OBX, Davis Plunkett, K5DLP, Rick Roy, KB5KYJ, and Tom Tucker, KB5UOP.-- thanks to Mike Gruber, W1MG, who provided information for this article

REMINDER!!

Last fall the by-Laws were changed to that Dues are now Due at the first of the year!

You may bring them to the meeting on Monday night, 3/8/2004 or mail the to PARK c/o Georgia Milhone 1733 Gihon Rd. Parkersburg, WV 26101

Dues are:

\$16.00 individual

\$24.00 family

For one year!

PS we need net operators for the Tuesday night net. If interested see Curt or Blane

Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub
1733 Gihon Rd.
Parkersburg, WV 26101