



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

AUGUST 2003

VOLUME 27 ISSUE 8

NCVEC Committee Studying New Entry-level License Proposals

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) has formed a committee to develop an FCC rule making proposal for a new entry-level Amateur Service license. The move came during the NCVEC's annual meeting July 25 in Gettysburg,

Pennsylvania, where attendees heard presentations on the possibilities for such a new ticket. At the same session, the NCVEC also approved plans to draft and submit a rule making petition to eliminate the current 5 WPM Morse code requirement (Element 1) and to give Novice/Tech Plus HF privileges to all current Technician

licensees. NCVEC Chair John Creel, WB3GXW, of the Laurel VEC presided over the gathering, which included representatives of 12 of the nation's 14 VECs.

NCVEC Question Pool Committee Chair Scotty Neustadter, W4WW, and Rules Committee Chair Fred Maia, W5YI, offered separate proposals for an entry-level license. Neustadter said while the current entry-level license, the Technician class, provides full VHF and UHF privileges, it does not offer a simple entry path. He recommended a 50-W maximum power output level, Novice/Tech HF subbands plus 12 and 17-meter privileges and a 20-question written exam.

Maia's proposal suggested upgrading all current Tech and Tech Plus licensees to General and allowing their use of all bands. Beginner licensees should be granted call signs from the NA-NZ#xxx call sign block, he said. Both Maia and Neustadter suggest ways to

streamline the number of license classes. Maia offered up the possibility of asking the FCC to eliminate the Morse testing requirement immediately, easing code exam format restrictions and giving serious thought to dropping CW-only subbands as well.

Neustadter recommended no changes in CW/phone allocations, at least for now.

Maia, Neustadter, Jim Wiley, KL7CC, and John Johnston, W3BE, will serve on the entry-level license study committee. The panel is to report back to the NCVEC within a few weeks.

The NCVEC representatives' approval to petition the FCC seeking the deletion of the

Element 1 Morse code examination requirement for HF access was in reaction to the World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) decision to leave such requirements up to individual administrations. The ARRL-VEC abstained from voting on the issue.

Responding to a question, the FCC's Bill Cross, W3TN, told the group that he did not believe the Administrative Procedures Act would permit the FCC to drop the Morse code testing requirement on its own motion. He predicted a lively debate during any proposal-and-comment period.

(Continued on page 3)



Scouts, hopefully future amateurs, from the Order of the Arrow troops watch the Walter Cronkite ARRL video describing amateur radio hobby.

Don't forget the September general meeting. Amateur radio emergency communications will be the topic with a display of an emergency communications trailer built by local amateurs. See you at the meeting!

2003 Club Officers:

President:
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Two Year Board Member:
Ross Lawler, W5HFF
w5hff@juno.com

Past President:
Kevin Foto, KD5O
foto@texas.net

Club Happenings:

General Meeting

Second Thursday each month,
Sugar Land Community Center,
224 Matlage Way

Board of Directors Meeting

First Thursday of each month,
Sugar Land Community Center,
224 Matlage Way

Volunteer Examiner Program

BVARC administers Amateur License
Exams on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at
the HCC Scarcella Technology Campus,
10141 Cash Rd. in Stafford.
Contact John Moore, KK5NU

Eating Schedule

Third Friday Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Location announced in the calendar.

Saturday morning breakfasts -

7:00 a.m. New York Coffee Shop
9720 Hillcroft, Houston
7:30 a.m. Viking Den
2939 S. Main, Stafford

Rag Chew Net

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays
at 7:00 p.m.

Public Service Net

Monday night on 145.47 (123 PL) at 9:00
PM

Minutes of Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club Board of Directors Meeting

August 7, 2003

Attendees: President Mike Hardwick, N5VCX; 2 -Year Director/Club Elmer Ross Lawler, W5HFF; Corresponding Secretary/ Treasurer, Mack C Arp, W5EET, Vice President Allen Brier, N5XZ; Past President Kevin Foto, KD5O; Past Secretary of Treasurer Camron Mitchell, K5CAM;. Recording Secretary, Joe W Morgan, K5JWM.

Meeting called to order at 7:36 PM by President Mike Hardwick.

Comments: Mike Hardwick-Take a look at the new web site and give us some feedback on what you think and what you my think will approve the site.

Emergency Business: Consolidation of Field Day expenses Orin still needs to submit to treasurer. Mike still working on the by-laws.

Old Business: Reading & Approval of the June and July minutes. And they were read & approved. Joe still working on new email roster for mass e-mail. Ross W5HFF is coordinating the ice cream social for August 14th.

New Business: Mack say Bank account is up to date as of Aug/08/03, Make extra news letters for mail out for new members to join and Mack will write front cover for the news letter. E-mail notifications for BOD & General meeting. Talked about taking poll on what members want.

Announcements: Ice Cream Social August 14th
Bike to the Beach-September 20th&21,2003

Membership count: 144 total members

Adjourn: 8:43 p.m.

Submitted by Recording Secretary:
Joe W. Morgan, K5JWM

Silent Key

THOMAS JOHN (T.J.) LAYTON, RMCS.(SS) USN (Ret.), KB5TIB sailed out of this life into the next on Tuesday, August 19, 2003. T.J. was born in Dallas, Texas on May 21, 1923, but lived most of his life in Houston. He attended Stephen F. Austin High School. T.J. was a WW II veteran and a Purple Heart Recipient. He served on the USS Perkins and USS Brush, and participated in many Naval battles in the Pacific. At the end of the war, he joined the Submarine Service where he served until his retirement in 196 after 23 years of service. Upon retirement, he was employed by Simple Time Recorder Company for 21 years. T.J. was a past Exalted Ruler with the Elks Lodge of Pasadena, Texas, and was a member of the Brazos Valley Ham Radio Club of Houston. Survivors include his loving wife of 56 years Patricia Layton, KC5FTB of Bellaire, Texas, formerly of Sydney, Australia. Funeral Services was held on Saturday, August 23, 2003 at Earthman Bellaire Chapel, with the Rev. K. Dick Kruse, officiating. Interment was at Forest Park Westheimer Cemetery with full military honors.

New Entry-level License Proposals

(Continued from page 1)

In remarks at the meeting, FCC Special Counsel for Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth complimented the VECs for their efforts. He noted that complaints concerning the administration of amateur exams were at their lowest point in the five years he's been handling amateur enforcement. He also said VECs should not underestimate the FCC's concerns regarding examination integrity.

Members of the Licensing and Technical Analysis Branch staff at the FCC's Gettysburg office demonstrated a beta version of new Universal Licensing System <<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>> on-line filing software expected to go live in September. Among other features, the new, user-friendly software will incorporate on-screen links to context-relevant "common questions" and ease the process of applying for a vanity call sign. It also will provide compatibility with screen-reading software employed by sight-impaired users.

The NCVEC unanimously approved an extension of an experiment to use videoconferencing technology to conduct Amateur Radio testing in remote areas of Alaska. The NCVEC had voted last year to back a one-year trial run to be conducted by the Anchorage Volunteer Examiner Coordinator. Jim Wiley, KL7CC, of the Anchorage VEC told his colleagues that, after unexpected delays, his VEC expects to be testing within three months.

Reprinted with permission from The ARRL Letter The ARRL Letter Vol. 22, No. 31 August 8, 2003

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter/03/0808>



A future ham contemplates what to do next.

BVARC Website Getting Facelift

Your editor, KD5UJT, who is a professional web designer in "real life", is modernizing the BVARC website. You can find the beta site at:

<http://bvarc.freeshell.org/beta/>

Send comments and suggestions to:

Schaer@hal-pc.org.

Breakfast Anyone?

Join the group who meets at 7 am on Saturdays for breakfast at the Viking Den. Good conversation and good food.

Photos by Steven Schuster



The "breakfast gang". Sometimes there are more people than this.



The parking lot at Viking Den in Stafford

The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club Board of Director would like to thank Lockard & White Telecommunication Engineers for the printing of this newsletter.

The Story of the 146.28-88 Repeater, Part 2

Leon Vice, W5VCE/W5OBC as provided to
Pump Fawcett, WA5CYI

Following are notes received from Byrum Huddleston, W5LGQ, in October, 1996. It has been a long time since any entries were made in the story of the history of the 146.880 and the 444.600 repeaters. Here are some of the events as Byrum remembers them.

We had a very active club back in the 60's and 70's, Suburban West Amateur Club, K5YJG, with about 50 members and there were several that were employed in electronics, so it was no surprise when the talk turned to repeaters. Some of those members that come to mind after more than 30 years are Ed, W5SDA, and Leon, W5VCE. I do remember Leon talking about the effort to enclose the cavities and he mention that one of their early efforts was to mount the filters inside a coffee can. I'm sure this wasn't their final effort but it showed progress.

Now for continuation of the saga by Byrum, W5LGQ. ~~After I retired from CH 39 in 1982, I~~ made my dream come true by moving to Sargent to spend most of my time fishing. The next priority was to put up a tower so I could use the repeaters in Houston. Several years past and my passion for fishing cooled a little so I found other things to do. I was listening to Fred, K5MJA, and Frank, K5VQY, on 88 one afternoon and they were talking about some problems with the repeater.

I listened for a while and then broke in and casually asked if there was any thing that I could do to help? I soon realized that I had set a trap for myself because after 20 years they were looking for somebody to carry the load for a while.. After some gentle arm twisting I agreed to become the trustee of the 146.88 and the 444.600 repeaters. That was July 10, 1987.

We knew that the repeaters had few problems but we needed to take a good look at what we had gotten ourselves into. So Don, K5IXJ, my son, who would make many trips to the tower in the next 10 years, made his first trip up to bring both of the repeaters down. This was the start of an interesting 10 years.

After we got the old repeaters down we contacted Steve, K5LTK, who had been doing most of the maintenance, to get the spare parts and the

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documentation of the repeaters and also get a few pointers. Jerry, K5IHK, also was very helpful in getting over the rough spots. It took a while to learn the ins and outs of the repeaters but the day final came to put them back into service. Then Don was making his second trip up the tower, this time to re-install the repeaters. After making a few on the air tests, we realized that we already had hams standing by waiting for the word to go. So we turned them loose. Everything was fine for several years with only a few trips to replace relays and tubes until we ran out of good tubes. Often with day and night operation, the tubes wouldn't last very long. We had a wake up call when we went looking for replacement tubes and found that they were in short supply. That's when we began thinking of replacing the repeaters with all solid state surplus commercial mobile radios. GE Master Exe II seemed to be the most promising. "We put out the word and before long Allen Fox, K5LKJ, on a hamfest trip to Austin came up with two Ex II's for two meters and it wasn't long before we had two more for UHF, so now we had the radios, we needed to build four repeaters because we wanted to have a spare repeater for each frequency. We soon got pointed in the right direction to make repeaters out of them.

Even though we got a lot of basic advice, I still had to convert the radios for duplex operation and interface them to the other equipment. The S Com controllers sure did make our life much easier because I only had to supply inputs and outputs to it and it would do the rest. It gave us ID, Squelch delay, Time out, PTT, adjustable audio in and out, TX on and off, and PL input. These could be activated remotely without the need for a phone line. First we had to compile a list of material that we would need to build four repeaters.

One 12 volt power supply that would deliver 35/40 amps. Supplied by W5GBR.

- Two S COM 5K Controllers.
- Four receiver crystals.
- Four transmit crystals.
- Two TS32 PL boards.

This looks like a pretty short list but just wait until you get the bill. On March 23, 1991, Don installed the new repeaters and retired the old one after 20 years of service.

More on the 146.880 Repeater

This information is believed to be from Steve Davidick, K5LTK

In 1969 I was introduced to 2 meters FM with my RCA carphone. I got to know Wiley Hamilton and Leon Vice a little better and before I knew it I was making trips up the big stick as a helper with various technicians. As time went by I acted as combination gofer and a minor maintenance tech myself.

In 1971 we had a change in club officers and trustee. The new trustee was Bill Benton, WA5DWX, and the new repeater call was WA5YUX. The license was good up to April 1973. Because of upcoming license changes and requirements. It was during this period of time that we decided that I was wearing out the tower elevator and our repeaters were off the air too much when they were needed. So we bought a GE Master Pro Mobile unit. Wiley built up a power supply and a repeater package for it. On August 25, 1972 we put our new repeater on the air. Shortly after we installed new antennas and replace the old RG-17 coax with Heliac cable.

A new control unit was built by Bill Bremer Jr., WA5RRR, to give us a more reliable control system with extra control functions. After the WA5YUX license expired, we had a new trustee Frank, K5VQY that was in May 1973.

He received the new license with the call of WR5AAA. Late that night the new ID was installed in the repeater. A lot of work went into getting that license by Bill Bremer, W5EKP. In January 1976 we installed our second GE Master repeater on 444.600. On 5/17/76 we had our first total failure on the 146.88 machine, it was a blown line fuse. This is one of two failures this machine has had to this date (6 years later). About a week later we had our first failure on our UHF 444.600 machine. A bias protection relay vibrated lose from its socket. This is the only failure this machine has had to the date (2 1/2 years of 24 hour operation).

Repeater Tips By Byrum

Just a few additional tips on some the problems that might be encountered if you are building a repeater using the GE Master Exec II or Master II.

You don't need the remote cable and control head, they just take up a lot of room. I removed all the wires from the cable plug except the two large wires

for + and - power and built the control head directly into the plug, which is a trick in itself. It's a pretty tight fit for volume, squelch, speaker jack, on-off switch and two LED's.

Using the original power wires was a big mistake. If you are installing a repeater in a nice snug air conditioned building, you would never have any problems, but at the top of a 1500 FT. tower where the temperature in the summer must get up to 140 degrees and humidity reaches 100% is a bad environment.

After about five years of operation, we started losing power output on one of the repeaters. Our first thought was that the final amplifier had failed, so we replaced it with the amp from our spare, and sure enough that restored output until a week or so later when we had the same problem. This went on for a while until we discovered that the harsh environment had caused the two pins that supplied + and - power to the final, which draws 10 to 12 amps and is in almost constant use, had developed enough resistance to cause severe heating to the point of melting the plastic shell and cut off the power to the final.

Don brought both repeaters down and I built and installed new front control panels and brought power to the final amp from the back using 10-gauge wire that eliminated the plug problem.

The 146.880 repeater is currently operating from Chase Tower in downtown Houston. It will hopefully, in the near future, be returned to the height that made it one of the tallest repeaters in Houston.

The KARS-HVRA Auction-Swapmeet is coming up this Sep 13th and we are looking for folks interested in speaking. A talk on the Red Cross Ham Station would be great, as well as the ne ECHO certification program. Or, a topic that may be important to you. Please let me know if you are willing to give a talk. Charles Knobloch <knobcls@omnilaw.com>

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