

# The Monitor



March 2007



## Upcoming Events

TSRC Meeting            March 10, 2007, 9:00 am  
EBA's, Hanover, NH

TSRC Meeting            April 14, 2007, 9:00 am  
EBA's, Hanover, NH

## Message from the President

We finally had a major winter storm since the last newsletter so hopefully most of us had no damage to antennas or feedline. Our 2m repeater is however still having trouble. We've isolated it to beyond the inside feedline transformer, so until we can get on the tower it looks like we will be using the Isopole antenna on the generator building. This comes at the expense of our KA Node but everyone agrees that the FM repeater should take priority. Much thanks goes out to Dave, N1HAC, Dave WA1ZCN and Rex, AA1KL for their work on the repeater trying to sort out the current problems.

What you missed: last month's club meeting included a presentation by Bill Burden, WB1BRE, on his amateur setup at his home in Strafford, Vermont. The slideshow and explanation were excellent and I am delighted that we have a number of additional presentations on amateur station setups in the coming months. It's always nice to pick up a few clever tricks for my setup. Much thanks to Bill for his efforts.

Our New England ARRL Division Director will be joining us at this month's meeting. We are delighted to once again have an opportunity to have Tom presenting to our members. We have extended invitations to other clubs and individual hams in the area to take advantage of Tom's visit to hear what he has to say and to make our own voices heard at the league.

See you at the club meeting!

73 de KX1Y  
William Daugherty, TSRC President

## Help Wanted

As announced in the last newsletter and at the club meeting, I will be stepping down as newsletter editor and webmaster soon. This means we need someone to take over these duties.

If you are interested in these positions, please contact me or KX1Y as soon as possible.

Mike, K1IH

## Changes

A popular song of the 1960s proclaimed "The Times They are a Changing," and indeed the 1960s were a time of change for many things. For amateur radio though this may be remembered as the time of greatest change. When single sideband first became popular in amateur radio circles there were persistent battles between dyed-in-the-wool AM operators and fanciers of the new SSB technology. But that skirmish may be just a minor technological hiccup compared to the changes about to unfold in ham radio now.

What are these changes you ask? Well for starters, in the past the ARRL has always behaved somewhat like a timid puppy afraid to offend its master, the FCC. Recently though the puppy bit its master by suing the FCC in federal court. In the grand scheme of things the reason for the suit, BPL (that's Broadband over Power Lines, not Brass Pounders League), may not be nearly as important as the fundamental change in ARRL behavior. Will the ARRLs hard-line stance with the FCC carry over onto other matters in the future? If so, what will come of it? Is the door now open for the ARRL to make other aggressive moves on behalf of amateur radio?

The next (or maybe it should be ranked first) change maker is the FCC decision to drop the CW licensing requirement. Who can doubt that this is a biggie. The need for a code requirement is a controversy that's... Well, it's even older than I am, and now it's settled for better or worse. At the last club meeting I took a quick poll of attendees and most felt that elimination of the code requirement will be a good thing for ham radio. I hope they're right, but one thing is for sure: If elimination of the code requirement turns out to be a good thing it won't happen by accident. Hams, most likely led by the ARRL, will need to find ways to turn this monumental change to our advantage.

So, do you get the picture? Big changes may be ahead for ham radio, and the ARRL – as always - figures to play a big part in that future. Aren't you the lucky one that you can come to our next club meeting and hear what the ARRL has in mind directly from our New England Division director. You can also, via Tom, let the ARRL know what's on your mind. Don't miss the opportunity. [Thanx to Bill, WB1BRE, for arranging this program.]

Ken AC1H

## Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in The Monitor are those of the individual authors and do not reflect the opinions or policies of The Twin State Radio Club, Inc.

## VE Session Scheduled

Good Day All,

The CVARC Volunteer Examination Team has scheduled a test session. Details follow:

Place: Berlin National Guard Armory

When: Friday, March 9th 6 PM

Amateur Radio Elements 2,3,&4

Requirements: Two (2) forms of Identification, copy of license for elements 3&4

For more information please contact:

CVARC VE Coordinator

Fred R. Messer

317 Meadow Road

Waitsfield, Vt 05673-9613

Phone & FAX: 802.496.3566

Cell Phone: 802.793.2238

Fred, WA1LIE

## Greetings from WB1CDN

Greetings from former TSRC member and past president Frank Wyckoff

Just happened to come across Dick Eastman's (K1OJH) web site and thought I'd see if there was a listing for W1FN.... Forrest's old call sign. Bet things have changed a lot since the 1970's. That club house on Mascoma Street got mighty cold this time of year, even with the brand new furnace that one of the members installed.

I've been out in Portland, Oregon for the past 20 years and still don't miss the snow that much.

Glad to see that the club is still active. Best wishes to all and 73 from WB1CDN.

## Nobody's Coming

Folks... I don't mean to be an alarmist, but if we're going to play "save the world," with ham radio, we better be prepared.

I used to think that if we had a disaster and I used my radio gear to call for help, somebody would come. As I get older, I realize that it's much more likely that no one will come... at least not for a while. Who's coming if the roads are blocked? The bridges are out? Who's coming when the resources are so limited? (My town has one police officer on duty at any given time.) Who's coming when there are more serious problems somewhere else?

When there's an emergency and a few people are injured, we can handle it. When houses across several counties are destroyed, we probably can't handle it. So I'm thinking we better be ready to tough it out for a few days... or a few weeks.

We've got a ready kit with VHF and UHF and some batteries. Most of us are ready for a four-hour walk-a-thon. How about the food? How about the water? How about the sleeping bag? We spend a week or so getting ready for field day... it's only a 24-hour event... and it's in the summer.

What about the real field day? The field day that comes when we don't expect it, and when we're not quite ready, and it's raining, and you can't pick up any extra gas for the generator. What about when you call for help and nobody comes?

Jim Cluett, W1PID

## APPLICATION AVALANCHE UNDER WAY AS NEW CODELESS TESTING REGIME RAMPS UP

The avalanche of Amateur Radio license and license upgrade applications prompted by the FCC's elimination of Morse code as a licensing requirement is well under way with no end in sight. ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, reports that paperwork from upward of 450 Amateur Radio exam sessions, most held since the new rules went into effect February 23, arrived this week, more than her department sees in a month under "normal" circumstances. The ARRL VEC has had to add personnel and schedule extended hours to keep up with the workload.

"We've been seeing some of the largest brand-new Technician sessions ever," Somma said. "These examination sessions are huge, and a ton of new Technician license applications has been coming in -- sometimes 60 or 70 at a clip." Somma says license upgrade traffic also has been brisk, and, with some 650 examination sessions already on the calendar for March and more arriving daily, it doesn't look like the pace will slacken anytime soon.

New Amateur Radio rules are driving the demand for new licenses and upgrades. Effective February 23, the FCC no longer requires Amateur Radio applicants to pass a Morse code test to earn operating privileges below 30 MHz. As of the same date, Technician licensees who never passed a Morse code test gained new CW privileges on 80, 40 and 15 meters and new CW, RTTY, data and SSB privileges on 10 meters. Since the Technician ticket has not required a Morse code test since 1991, most current Technician license holders will face a learning curve to take advantage of their new CW privileges. As of February 25, there were approximately 324,200 Technician licensees in the US -- more than any other license class.

Technicians may begin using their new privileges without having to apply for them. No other license class acquired new privileges as a result of the new rules that went into effect February 23, however. All license upgraders must first apply at an examination session, pay any application fee and either successfully pass the appropriate written test or present valid exam element credit.

ARRL VEC personnel must go through "every single piece of paper" that arrives from an examination session, Somma explained. Before keying application data directly to the FCC's licensee database,

the staff must make sure that session paperwork is in order, each application is filled out correctly and signed and any element credit is attached. If an applicant took an exam element, ARRL VEC must ensure that the test questions came from the correct question pool and that the applicant indeed passed. She said it typically takes up to 90 seconds for staff members to key in an application for a new licensee, but only about 30 seconds in the case of a license upgrade.

Among the growing stack of incoming paperwork February 28 was a package from a session held in the Bahamas for 56 US citizens -- more than likely retirees and members of the cruising and sailing communities in the Caribbean. Somma said it included applications for 12 new Technician licensees. The rest were upgrades.

Normally with a staff complement of six, ARRL VEC now has as many as eight full-timers plus three part-timers to handle the rush. Somma says her team by and large has been able to review each application and transmit license and upgrade application data to the FCC within three or four days of receipt. She also had words of praise for the Volunteer Examiner (VE) teams.

"I want to thank the VEs," Somma said. "Most of the paperwork is neat and orderly, and this makes it easy for us to just key it to the FCC." She did caution VEs to make sure they include any proof of prior element credit -- usually a Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination or CSCE -- when submitting applications.

Some VE teams have been sharing observations and photos from their examination sessions. "We're enjoying those," Somma said. "Keep 'em coming."

## **FCC SAYS "NO" TO PETITION CALLING FOR EXAMS IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH**

The FCC has turned down a petition seeking a rule requiring question pools be prepared for each examination element in languages other than English. Filing on behalf of the Puerto Rico Amateur Radio League (PRARL), Victor Madera, KP4PQ, sought the change to §97.523 of the rules last year. Madera is the PRARL's secretary and ARRL Puerto Rico Section Manager. The organization cited a need to administer standardized ham radio license exams in Spanish. In a letter February 23 <[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DA-07-814A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-07-814A1.pdf)>, Scot Stone, deputy chief of the FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) Mobility Division suggested that the PRARL would be better off to approach the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) Question Pool Committee (QPC) about establishing language criteria.

"The Commission's rules do not specify any particular language(s) in which Amateur Radio Service written examinations must be administered," Stone wrote. "Consequently, no rule change is required for the NCVEC QPC to maintain Spanish-language question pools." Stone said that because Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (VECs) cooperate in maintaining standard question pools, the NCVEC QPC might be the more appropriate forum for the PRARL's request.

The PRARL has developed Spanish-language question pools and has offered them to the NCVEC QPC at no expense, Madera told ARRL. "We have been using [a standard Spanish-language question pool] for close to 10 years with excellent results, thanks to the ARRL/VEC," he said. Madera says he presented the issue to the NCVEC without success before going to the FCC. He's also proposed a standard Spanish-language question pool to the ARRL VEC, and that issue is pending.

Stone noted that §97.523 in part requires that VECs "must cooperate in maintaining one question pool for each written examination element" and that each question pool be made publicly available prior to its use in making a question set. "Thus, the written examination questions are drawn from a uniform national database of multiple-choice questions and answers" that the NCVEC approves, he said.

The PRARL also publishes Amateur Radio study materials in Spanish. The organization told the FCC that because there's no uniform Spanish-language version of the Amateur Radio exam question pools, Volunteer Examiners (VEs) prepare Spanish-language Amateur Radio license examination questions at random.

"You are concerned that this method of preparing examination questions may result in Spanish-language examinations being prepared without following a standard pattern," Stone said, "thereby resulting in Spanish-speaking examinees not being treated equally to English-speaking examinees."

The FCC suggested that PRARL's concern regarding disparate treatment of Spanish speakers appeared to be based on speculation. "The petition presents no evidence of an existing problem meriting a rule change," Stone concluded.

## **FCC Universal Licensing System announces new Hotline hours**

The FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) has announced new hours for Universal Licensing System (ULS) Customer Support Hotline. Online customer support remains available 24/7 on the FCC Web site <<http://esupport.fcc.gov/index.htm>>. Effective March 5, customers will be able to reach the FCC ULS Customer Support Hotline Monday through Friday (excepting federal holidays) from 8 AM until 6 PM Eastern Time. Contact ULS Customer Support at (877) 480-3201, option 2 (toll-free); (888) 225-5322, option 2 (toll-free) or (717) 338-2888. TTY service is available at (717) 338-2824.

## **TSRC E-mail Reflector**

The TSRC reflector is a good place to get or give help. list equipment for sale, announce your results in the last contest, recruit volunteers for a public service event, and more!

Point your web browser to <http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/tsrc> Follow the instructions there and you will be able to do all of these!

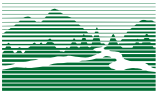
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Don't forget to check the TSRC Home Page!  
Make it your default start page!  
<http://www.w1fn.org>



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