

JANUARY 2007

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER of the SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

SHORT SKIP



Morse Code Eliminated 1.5 decades later

The US will join the growing list of countries that no longer require Amateur Radio applicants to pass a Morse code test as the entry ticket to HF. Announcement of the pending historic rule change arrived with no fanfare December 15 in an FCC public notice. A full-blown Report and Order (R&O) in the proceeding, WT Docket 05-235, followed December 19. The best estimate of when the Morse code requirement will go away officially is sometime in February -- 30 days after the R&O appears in the Federal Register.

"We . . . believe that the public interest is not served by requiring facility in Morse code when the trend in amateur communications is to use voice and digital technologies for exchanging messages," the FCC said in its R&O. "Rather, we believe that because the international requirement for telegraphy proficiency has been eliminated, we should treat Morse code telegraphy no differently from other Amateur Service communications techniques."

The FCC says it deems the current regime of written examinations "sufficient to determine whether a person is qualified to be issued an Amateur Radio operator license."

The FCC cast aside arguments that Morse ability is advantageous in emergencies, concluding that most emergency communication is handled using voice, data, or video techniques. The Commission also turned away assertions that retaining a Morse requirement would help keep out the bad apples.

"The record is devoid of a demonstrated nexus between Morse code proficiency and on-the-air conduct," the FCC observed. It concurred with one commenter's observation that "maintaining the code requirement does not purge Amateur Radio of bad operators. Education and self-policing does."

Continued page 2

The Tuesday Jan 9 issue of the San Jose Mercury features a story about Dilworth Elementary School students in Cupertino making contact with the International Space Station on the previous day. The item is headlined, "'Space Call Launches Passion for Science". Color photos show an adult ham clutching his mobile mike in front of a student's mouth, his thumb hovering over the p-t-t switch.

The article talks of two years of effort--but provides no details. Actually that probably includes a lengthy administrative wait. It also states the ham radio crackled with static. Does that mean the 2 meter contact was marginal. No, I expect this was mere poetic license. There is absolutely no comment about the technology involved in this event. It could not have taken place without ham radio. And- it didn't cost the school district a penny.

I am compelled to comment on this event because I remember when Santa Cruz area students truly communicated with astronauts, back on September 13, 1992.

Students from, 25 area schools made contact with the space shuttle Endeavour on that Sunday morning nearly 15 years ago. Many student groups have conversed with the shuttles and the space station both before and after that 1992 date. I believe the event at Del Mar Middle School remains unique. All hands-on operations and conversations were conducted solely by students--not by adult mentors holding on to their microphones.

The actual equipment operation was conducted by both licensed and unlicensed students. All 41 of the participating students played an active role. While those holding licenses assured compliance with FCC rules, others performed vital behind-the-scenes actions. This included such things as plotting shuttle positions, keeping logs, and aiming the hand-held directional antennas. They had been trained by some 20 experienced hams from the SCAARC and SLVARC. Area newspaper and television coverage fully acknowledged the role of ham radio.

One of the three student control operators, 13 year old Gary Spangler KD6ISR said, "I was amazed how clear the shuttle astronaut sounded. (No crackling static.) Afterwards, I realized that everybody's hard work had really paid off." Another student, Sara Tuttle KC6PPC age 14, stated, "I thought it was really neat. It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance."

Eleven-year-old Brian Corbet had only recently passed the license exam. He didn't yet have a call sign. His comment says it all. "It was the most exciting thing I've ever done in ham radio." Most of the adult observers agreed.

My report on the event appeared in the December 1992 issue of World Radio. An expanded version appeared in the Proceedings of the 1992 ARRL Education Conference.

—Wayne, KB6KN

CLUB MEETING FRIDAY JANUARY 19, 7:30 P.M.



Our kick-off session for 2007 was well (18 +/-) attended. The downside is that it becomes difficult to tune into all the multiple conversations. No matter, it is good to see so many friends enjoying themselves. Chris KG6DOZ and Cap KE6AFE reported a very successful breakfast session in Moss Landing with the folk from Down Under. Down Under Monterey Bay that is.

Al KM6VV came with copies of material to be used at the upcoming entry level course. Several of us tried a few of the questions and found them a challenge! It still takes 5 or 6 classes to get through the syllabus so even without CW it isn't at all like CB or family radio.

Art WF6P described difficulties of maintaining the Maritime Mobile net on 40 meters these days due to QRM from foreign broadcasters. Propagation on most HF bands has been both good and dismal recently. With zero sunspot days of late it

is remarkable that our simple rigs get out at all.

Congratulations are in order to Mikey N6IL for passing all his exams for the semester.

Chris KG6DOZ showed off the insides of the MFJ antenna analyzer he just won at a SLVARC meeting. Seems to me proven statistically that 20% of members get 80% of the raffle prizes. Sour grapes !!

Bob K6XX showed the way his multi band, multi antenna, multi radio control system is viewed on a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)

Pat AA6EG came through well on Kathleen's KI6AIE laptop using external speakers but for Pat it was AM Bedlam.

Ron W6W0 mentioned a trend to be expected for the New Year and beyond called "Crowd Sourcing". This is where requests for proposals for solutions to problems, design challenges, code and the like will be broadcast via the Internet to an unlimited pool of talent. Who will be the winners and losers would make a great debate.

I heard a lot about a little that was being transacted. If this trend continues I will hear everything about nothing Hi HI

BCNU in 2 weeks. Stay Tuned

Code Eliminated continued

The FCC also ordered that all Technician licensees present and future -- whether or not they've passed a Morse code test, will get privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters identical to those of Novice licensees. "In eliminating this disparity between Technician and Technician Plus licenses, we are simplifying the Amateur Service licensing structure and promoting regulatory parity," the FCC said.

—From ARRL Newsletter

A Brain Teaser

Here is a question for our next CAKE meeting. Closest one to the right answers will be suitably rewarded.

What is the inductance of 1" of #20 GA bare copper wire, what would this become with a typical (0.25" long, 0.125" dia) Ferrite bead on the wire and why would we be at all interested ?

SCCARC Membership Renewals

If you have already renewed your membership for 2007, thank you! If you haven't, please do it now. Annual dues are \$25 for full members, \$6 each for each additional member at the same mailing address, and \$10 for full-time students age 18 or under. Dues may be paid in cash or check (payable to SCCARC) at regular Club meetings, or checks may be mailed to SCCARC, P.O. Box 238, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-0238.

--Kathleen KI6AIE, Treasurer, SCCARC



W6WLS REPEATER



W6LC

On Dec 31st, Eddy Pollock, W6LC, 46 year SCCARC LIFE MEMEBER, and a past club president, suffered a stroke and went into a diabetic coma.

He was rushed to THREE RIVERS HOSPITAL in Grants Pass Oregon and spent the next few days in ICU. He hopes to be home in few days.

Their son, DAVE teaches math and computer science at RCC (ROUGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE) --ONLY 2 MILES AWAY. Their daughter, Deanna Jo took a week off from her 2nd grade teaching position in Cloviis/Fresno to help Marilyn, Eddy and the home care medical staff. 1/09/2007

Never Trust Wired Infrastructure

More proof that putting your trust in a wired communications infrastructure can lead to disaster. In this case Thailand and other parts off Asia that will likely be without Internet access until the end of February. This, as the result of an earthquake that hit the region on Tuesday, December 26th.

CAT Telecom is Thailand's Internet regulator and operator of the country's international gateway. It says that four of its eight optical networks had been affected by the earthquake, causing its speed to drop by 50 per cent. The problem was expected to continue until repairs to the undersea network can be completed.

A vice president of CAT Telecom, told reporters that the company has yet to estimate the financial losses as a result of the damages to the undersea cable networks. The damaged under seas cables account for about 90 per cent of Thailand's total telecommunications capacity. The outage is mainly affecting connections to Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, and the US.

Its well known that a growing number of hams in the U-S are trying to tie future ham radio emergency communications to the Internet and its commercial wired infrastructure. Our advice: Think twice before putting all of your eggs in one bit-bucket. Having a parallel ham radio only back-up that uses battery or solar powered R-F and no Internet connections will be essential if and when a storm, earthquake or other disaster blows the Internet away. (Bangcock Post)

—From Amateur Radio Newline

W6OBB, BACK

Art Bell, W6OBB, has returned to the United States and has resumed broadcasting his weekend edition of Coast to Coast A.M. from his longtime home and studio in Pah-rump, Nevada. Bell opened the December 28 program by announcing that he had just relocated back from the Philippines along with his new wife Airyn, who had obtained the necessary paperwork for immigrating to the United States. W6OBB had not previously disclosed his plans to return to the high desert where he also owns radio station KNYE. Bell indicated on his December 30, show that one of the reasons for his return was not having access to the massive Amateur Radio station he had built up at his Nevada home.

—From Amateur Radio Newline



By Art Lee WF6P

CHATTER

I attended the CAKE meeting on Saturday. Those meetings are fun, really. Ron, W6WO, has a world of patience with us, and that is a necessary attribute. With three or four tables in series and another one or two in parallel, various earnest conversations, unrelated, are taking place. Ron is earnestly trying for some seriousness in the technological aspects of the meetings while others have a tendency to drift off into sea, air, and historical yarns. Ron, being the great host that he is, has to bounce from one end of the tables (the engineering side) to the, ahem, other end. I was disappointed when the antenna analyzer, sans cover, was passed around. I missed out. I too wanted a "look see." There is always something interesting to see or to guess "what the heck" is this.

In our own defense, at our end of the table a deadly serious debate was going on about the future of ham radio, the no-code requirements for future exams and new frequency allocations. A question under debate is: Once your Advance class license expires, is it renewable? A call to ARRL will provide the answer, of course. It is known that no new Advance class licenses will be issued. Then we discussed the future of the no-code Tech with respect to the no-code General and no-code Extra. Where will it all end? Interesting.

Larry, WB6MVK, Dave, W8FLL, and I were locked in an in-depth discussion of the disassembly and repair of bathtub/shower flow control valves. A while back, Larry could not turn his shower off at all. He ran outside (fully clad, of course) and shut off the main water valve. He tore the flow valve apart, or most of it. He was unable to extract the entire core until a friend with a special, home-made tool, came to his assistance. "I was without water for two and a half days," said Larry. I took note of all this as my very

own hall shower flow valve is leaking at a rate of a gallon a day. (We pour this water into the clothes washer.)

Propagation is terrible in the mornings on 40 meters. The Baja Maritime Mobile Net has had to shift the net from 7.260 to 7.233 due to foreign broadcasts. The BBC news booms in as well as stations from Asia. (Sounds like pots and pans banging to a music background.) Terry Parks, N6NUN, and I shift to 15 meters on the ground wave when he is in Watsonville. I can barely hear him on 40; he booms in on 15. When he is on his boat in Sausalito, we use 80 meters.

When the big wind of last week came to my QTH, a copse of Eucalyptus trees hovering around my dipoles crashed down. Luckily the trees (six of 10" diameter size) fell away from the house and did not knock my antennas down. The root structure of these trees is very shallow. It looks like a couple of day's work with my chainsaw. My XYL Donna, AB6XJ, is always fearful that we will be squashed if the larger trees topple. I hope not.

Al Marconett, KM6VV, is teaching a Tech class at the yacht harbor. He asks for help from club members. (Note: Last month I misspelled Peter Kyril's name. I reported it as Carroll, KE6RAX. Sorry Pete.)

Microwave link to K6Bj-Status

We have the prospect of an alternative location for the Santa Cruz end of this link near the Yacht Harbor. The path is just 2 miles which should not be a problem however we do not have a clear line of sight due to some trees en-route. Hopefully we have sufficient margin in the power budget to make it viable. This will not be known for sure without testing a live link.

I am looking for volunteers to assist in conducting this test at a date and time TBD. I am particularly interested to know who were involved in the prior test. Having recently lost my Apple Mac and with it my email addresses I no longer have the list of individuals who have previously expressed interest in this project. I will create a new list so please respond to this if you wish to be included.

—73 Ron Skelton

SCCARC Board - 2006

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MONTEREY BAY REPEATER ACTIVITY

Santa Cruz County ARC	K6BJ 146.790- PL 94.8 Santa Cruz KI6EH 147.945- PL 94.8 Watsonville K6BJ 440.925+ PL 123.0 Santa Cruz • SCCARC Net Monday 7:30 PM 146.79- /147.180+ /440.925+ linked • SCCARC 10 Meter Net 28.308 MHz USB Monday 7:00 PM
San Lorenzo Valley ARC	WR6AOK 147.120+ PL 94.8 Ben Lomond • SLVARC Net Thursday 7:30 PM
Loma Prieta RC	WR6ABD 146.640-(PL 162.2) • LPRC Net Tuesday 8:00 PM
Naval Postgraduate School ARC	K6LY 146.97- PL 94.8 / 444.700+ PL 123 (Linked) Monterey • NPSARC Net Wednesday at 8 PM on K6LY/R • Monterey ARES Net Wednesday 7:30 PM K6LY 146.970- (PL 94.9)
ARES Nets	SC County Wide ARES Tuesday 7:15 PM on AB6VS 440.550- W6WLS 147.180+ AE6KE 146.835-(Linked repeaters / PL 94.8)
Followed directly by	• SLV ARES W6JWS 146.745-(PL 94.8) & WR6AOK 147.120+(PL 94.8) on alternate Tuesdays • South County ARES K6RMW 147.00+ (PL 94.8) • LPrieta ARES AE6KE 146.835- / AB6VS 440.550+ (Linked /PL 94.8) • Santa Cruz ARES K6BJ 146.79- / (PL 94.8)
	• Newline (Ham News) Broadcast Wednesday at end of NPSARC Net • Santa Clara Valley Section Traffic NET Tuesday 9:00PM 146.640- (PL 162.2)

FOR MORE INFO SEE: <http://www.k6bj.org/freq.html>

SCCARC Calendar of Events

Short Skip Deadline (January)	Monday	Jan 8
SCCARC Meeting	Friday	Jan 19
Board Meeting	Wednesday	Jan 24
SCCARC Meeting	Friday	Feb 16

MONTHLY MEETINGS.

The SCCARC Meets at 7:30 PM, on the THIRD FRIDAY of the each month (except December). Meetings are at Dominican Hospital, 1555 Soquel Drive, Santa Cruz.

NET CONTROL SCHEDULE

(Subject to Change)

1/15	Allen WB6RWU
1/22	Chris KG6DOZ
1/29	Tom K6TG
2/5	Cody KG6YPK
2/12	Phil KE6UWH

Short Skip

Published 12 times per year.

Free to members.

Santa Cruz County Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
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Tech License Class

Peter Kyryl KE6RAX is organizing a Technicians license class to be held at the Santa Cruz Harbor District meeting room, on January 13 from 1-3pm. For more information contact KE6RAX or listen to the Monday K6BJ net.

Technical Assistance Needed

If you are able and willing and have tools to measure and adjust frequency and deviation settings on the club's Motorola Mitrek and Micor repeater radios, please let Cap KE6AFE know. Our repeaters do need your help now.