

ARRL License Restructuring Proposal

By Ken Larson, KJ6RZ

The following is a summary of the ARRL's proposed licensing restructuring for those of you who do not know the details.

The ARRL is sending a proposal to the FCC recommending three amateur radio license classes, Extra Class, General Class, and a "New" Novice Class. Extra Class will be the only class requiring a Morse code test.

Extra Class will have the same privileges as today with the same license exam, which consists of a written exam plus a 5 wpm Morse code test.

The current Technician, Tech Plus, and General class licensees will be combined into a new General Class with all of today's General Class privileges plus additional phone privileges. Current Technician and Tech Plus license holders will automatically gain the expanded General Class privileges without additional testing. The current Element 3 General Class examination will continue to be given to new applicants.

The entry level Novice Class will require applicants to pass a 25 question written exam. The Novice Class license will offer limited HF CW/data and phone/image privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters plus VHF and UHF privileges on 6 meters, 2 meters, 222-225 MHz, and 430-450 MHz. Power output will be restricted to 100 watts on 80, 40, and 15 meters and 50 watts on 10 meters and up.

The Novice Class is a true entry level license in that it provides Novice operators with an opportunity to experience the excitement of world wide phone and digital communications, participate in emergency communication nets, and enjoy the fun of local VHF and UHF communications. The hope is that the entry level license will draw more people into the hobby, and once they are "hooked" on the fun, that they will want to up grade to General or Extra to expand the number of frequencies on which they can operate.

The proposed changes to the HF frequency band allocations are shown below:

80 Meter Phone:

Extra: 3.725 - 4.000 MHz

General: 3.800 - 4.000 MHz

Novice: 3.900 - 4.000 MHz

40 Meter Phone:

Extra: 7.125 - 7.300 MHz

General: 7.175 - 7.300 MHz

Novice: 7.200 - 7.300 MHz

15 Meter Phone:

Extra: 21.200 - 21.450 MHz

General: 21.275 - 21.450 MHz

Novice: 21.350 - 21.450 MHz

10 Meter Phone:

Extra and General: 28.300 - 29.700 MHz

Novice: 28.300 - 28.500 MHz

80 Meter CW/Digital:

Extra: 3.500 - 3.725 MHz

General: 3.525 - 3.725 MHz

Novice: 3.550 - 3.700 MHz

40 Meter CW/Digital:

Extra: 7.000 - 7.125 MHz

General: 7.025 - 7.125 MHz

Novice: 7.050 - 7.125 MHz

15 Meter CW/Digital:

Extra: 21.000 - 21.200 MHz

General: 21.025 - 21.200 MHz

Novice: 21.050 - 21.200 MHz

10 Meter CW/Digital:

Extra and General: 28.000 - 28.300 MHz

Novice: 28.050 - 28.300 MHz

According to the proposal, no changes will occur in the privileges for Extra and General class licensees on 160, 60, 30, 20, 17, or 12 meters.

HRO MANAGER WILL SPEAK At the Club Meeting on FEBRUARY 12

CVARC's February speaker is Eric Christensen, KA6IHT manager of the Burbank Ham Radio Outlet (HRO). Eric will be bringing samples of the latest hardware and demonstrating items you may have been reading (and dreaming) about in the magazines.

Eric is an experienced ham, and is often heard on repeaters around Southern California. He is one of the few HRO employees who has been selected to represent that organization at the busy Dayton Hamvention for the past several years.

Come and listen to what's new and exciting in ham radio and perhaps get a "sneak preview" of new products that may be in the pipeline.

FCC License Examinations - Next Exam February 8th

By Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR

CVARC hosts FCC License Examinations at 8:30 AM on the second Sunday of even numbered months at the Ventura East County Sheriff Station on Olsen Rd. (near the Reagan Library). CVARC conducts exams for all license classes. Exam candidates must bring a form of government issued photo I.D., the original AND a photocopy of any existing license or Certificate of Exam Element Completion, a Social Security (or government issued Taxpayer I.D.) number, and \$12 ARRL VE Exam fee (cash is preferred). No advance reservation is necessary, walk-ins are welcome. Advance notice is needed for special circumstances, such as reading the exam to sight-impaired candidates. If you have any questions, contact CVARC VE Coordinator Jeff Reinhardt at 818-706-3853.

New CVARC Members

It is with great pleasure that we welcome our new members Rick Barrett KE6DKF, Mike Jones WB6I, and Robert (KG6TFU) & Shirley Richards who joined the club in December and January.

Broadband Over Power Line Project

In January, CVARC sent an additional \$120 to the ARRL (\$60 contributed by members plus \$60 in CVARC matching funds) to assist in the fight to overturn the Broadband over Power Lines proposal that has been presented to the FCC. To date, CVARC and its members have contributed a total of \$330 to the effort. The fight against the proposal is beginning to draw some strong allies. The Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA) told the FCC in December that BPL would seriously impair its critical HF radio operations.

Free Radio To A Lucky Young Ham

CVARC President Rory Eikland announced last May that CVARC had authorized an incentive program for young hams, 18 years of age and under. Whenever a young person attended a CVARC meeting, they were given a ticket for a drawing to be held at the end of the year at the annual CVARC holiday gathering. The person holding the winning ticket would receive a brand new transceiver. The winner of that radio was Ben Champion, AE6NY. Congratulations Ben.

InterACE - The Latest Digital Mode

By Alan Masson, K6PSP/G3PSP

I had just started using Echolink, the computer / radio repeater voice transmission mode, at the start of the Christmas holidays, and thinking I was state-of-the-art, when one of my Echolink contacts asked if I were active yet on InterACE. It didn't take long to find that this was another of the many modes now available using free software from the Internet.

InterACE is essentially a color picture-transmission mode available only to radio amateurs and Short Wave Listeners (SWLs). It is accredited to Martin Emmerson G3OQD, 2003. It employs computer-to-computer transmission without any RF link. It is described as "SSTV" but pictures are transmitted and received almost instantly, without the tedious line-by-line scanning of conventional slow-scan. As it is digital, the picture quality can be excellent. It is virtually noiseless (certainly no QRM / QRN) but the pictures do suffer a little quality degradation due to the digitization and compression used to limit the transmission bandwidth. For example, some contouring of gradually changing tones may be seen.

The display consists of a listing, on the Left Hand Screen (LHS), of the stations currently connected to InterACE, and a large picture display on the Right Hand Screen (RHS). Four buttons each are provided at the bottom to select Received Pictures and Transmitted Pictures. Pictures can be sourced from existing JPEG files such as scanned photographs or digital photographs. A Scottish station I contacted on Echlink said he had saved several thousand received pictures and now used them as a library. Callsigns and other text can be superimposed with a choice of fonts and colors. Various test cards are provided. The first check that is recommended is to send a picture to yourself. A comparison of a test card before- and after transmission will reveal the digital artifacts, but they are not obtrusive. Sending an image consists of selecting a picture, clicking on the other station's callsign and then on "Send To".

InterACE is just beginning to become popular. The list typically may have 50-60 stations from worldwide during the day, dropping to perhaps 20 at midnight. During the holiday period, pictures were appearing on my screen quite frequently from stations "out of the blue" with various holiday greetings. InterACE is a picture-only mode but is sometimes used in conjunction with Echolink, with the latter providing talk-back. It is recommended that you put the symbols "@\$" in your Echolink details to indicate that you are also active on InterACE.

The downloadable software for InterACE (and Echolink) is available at: <http://www.g4xgt.co.uk/interace-sstv.htm>

The latest version is V1.8a. The recommended server is <voyager.mcc.ac.uk> / port 72. .

Although a 500 MHz CPU is recommended, my old 200 MHz Pentium II / Windows 95 machine seems to be quite adequate. I do have a high-speed fiber Internet link. No doubt a slower dial-up service might be less convenient. I suppose some might say that InterACE is just a digital "toy" but it is fun to use and with the current limited number of users and the holiday season it has proven to be a very friendly mode.

Experimental EchoLink Node in Thousand Oaks

By Steve Champion, AE6NX

Since Eddie (WB6DFW) gave a talk on Internet linking at the Club last year, I have been bemoaning the fact that none of the local repeaters are hooked up to either EchoLink or IRLP. Rather than just whining about the situation, I decided to set up a 2m EchoLink node on an experimental basis. Now, on my drive to and from work, I have been able to have several enjoyable QSOs with the UK and with Australia.

License conditions require that a Control Operator monitors transmissions at all times that the link is on, so that will limit the amount of time that it will be activated. However, if there is sufficient interest it should be possible to add more control operators. If you are interested in trying out the link, tune your rig to 145.785MHz simplex and set your PL to 100.0Hz. Full details regarding control codes for this particular link can be found at <http://link.stevechampion.com>.

At any given time, the link can be in one of three modes. When the computer is OFF (basically at night) the link will not respond. When the computer is on, sending DTMF digits "08" will cause the link to indicate whether it is ENABLED or DISABLED. It will be enabled any time that we are able to monitor it from within reach of the wire-line control.

If you are already familiar with using EchoLink from a PC, the transition to using DTMF digits to control an on-air link will be straightforward. If not, please feel free to play with it a little. You can get node numbers from your own EchoLink installation, from <http://www.echolink.org>, or you can use the shortcut codes given on the web page.

For help, please email me at ae6nx@stevechampion.com

Code Quick: A Fast, Affordable, and Fun Way To Learn Morse Code

By Ben Champion, AE6NY

Recently, I used a computer program called Code Quick 2000 to learn Morse code in preparation for the 5WPM code test. Like many Amateur Radio programs, it is moderately priced, and is easily obtained on the Internet. Code Quick is fairly easy to use, although it has a few quirks which can be irritating.

Although the registration and installation of Code Quick is straightforward, it requires phoning or e-mailing the supplier to get the registration code. Code Quick is different than many Amateur Radio programs since you can't try it before you buy it. Unfortunately, this makes deciding whether or not to buy the program difficult. After obtaining the software and the registration code, the next step is installation. My installation went smoothly without any crashes. Having set up the program, I found that there was not much left to do besides reading the program's help file to learn how to use the program. Setting up Code Quick is simple.

Code Quick's user-interface is mixed, with some good features and some bad features. The graphical user interface looks a bit "home-made", but it's not hideous. Code Quick's lessons are in editable RTF format. This is a good thing because you can edit the lesson to suit your preferences. On the other hand, the lesson files can be accidentally overwritten, which is definitely a bad thing! Progressing through the lessons, I also realized that the files didn't really have descriptive names. They could have been named according to the letters taught in that lesson, as opposed to "Lesson 1 A". Since you can change the names of the files easily, you could go through the lesson files, look at the letters they teach, and rename them according to their content. This would solve the problem. Changing the speed is a bit frustrating, since you have to recalibrate each time the speed is changed. The user interface is a mix of good and bad features, but the good outweighs the bad.

As far as actually teaching you Morse code, Code Quick is excellent. Although Code Quick's advertising slogan "Code Quick Could teach a tree stump the code!" may not be true, the program certainly comes very close. Code Quick teaches Morse code using "Sound-Alikes", which are phrases that have the same rhythm as the Morse code character. An example is "DOG-did-it" for the letter d. If you want an additional way to remember the character, you can activate a feature that shows a humorous picture relating to the Sound-Alike, which will further help you remember the character. Code Quick's usefulness doesn't wear off after you've learned the letters, numbers, and prosigns and have passed the 5WPM test, however. Currently, I'm using it to get my speed up. Despite its imperfect user interface, Code Quick excels at teaching Morse code.

Overall, Code Quick is a program, which, even though it has some imperfections, is very good. To learn more about Code Quick or to purchase it, go to www.cq2k.com. Thankfully, Code Quick 2000 will only set you back \$34.95 if you download it, or \$39.95 if you want it on a CD. You certainly won't regret purchasing it. Code Quick is a fast, fun, and affordable way to learn Morse code.

Event Calendar 2004

Date	Event	Comments
Jan. 8	CVARC Meeting	General CVARC Meeting

Jan. 11	So. Cal. Orienteering	In Griffith Park near Travel Town Arrive 9:30 AM
Jan. 13	CVARC Radio Class	New class for Amateur Technician Lic.
Feb. 8	FCC License Exam	Begins at 8:30AM at East County Sheriff Station
Feb. 12	CVARC Club Meeting	General Club Meeting
Feb. 20-22	Coyote 4 Play	3 day Cross Country Race in Ojai & Santa Monica Mts.
Mar. 6	CLU MS Walk	CROP Walk Tentative Date
Mar. 11	CVARC Meeting	General Club Meeting
Mar 13	Westlake Street Fair	Tentative Date
Mar 14	CROP Walk	Radio support for T.O. Crop Walk
April 3	Simi Valley MS Walk	Tentative Date Volunteers Welcome
April 8	CVARC Meeting	General Meeting
April 11	FCC License Exam	Begins at 8:30AM at East County Sheriff Station
Apr 24-25	Baker to Vegas Run	Supporting Ventura County Sheriff Dept.
May 8	Cruisin Conejo Bike Ride	Tentative Date CVARC supports Conejo Valley Cyclist
May 13	CVARC Meeting	Club Meeting
May 15	Sea To Summit Bike Ride	Tentative Date Ventura ARES/RACES event
June 10	CVARC Meeting	General Meeting
June 13	FCC License Exam	License exams given at sheriff station
June 26-27	Field Day	CVARC annual field day event, don't miss it!
July 3	Moorpark Fireworks	Comm. support for Moorpark's 4th of July Fireworks

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

Ventura County Area 2 R.A.C.E.S. members are encouraged to check in every Tuesday night at 7:00 pm

on the Area 2 Check-in Net. Specific ARES/RACES times and frequencies are as follows:

ARES/RACES Times And Frequencies

Area	Time	Mode	Frequency	PI	Repeater
County	7:30-8 pm	Voice	146.880 -	127.3	WA6ZTT
County	7:30-8 pm	Voice	224.020 -	127.3	WB6ZTR
County	Before 6:30 pm	Packet	145.710	No pl	Hospital Net
County	RACES Simplex	Voice	147.570	No pl	_____
Area 1	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	147.930 -	127.3	WB6WEY
Area 2	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	147.885 -	127.3	N6JMI
Area 2	Simplex	Voice	147.555	No pl	_____
Area 2	Backup Repeater	Voice	146.850 -	94.8	K6AER
Area 2	Amgen Repeater	Voice	449.440 -	131.8	KE6SWS
Area 3	7:15-7:30 pm	Voice	147.150 +	127.3	WB6ZTQ
Area 4	7:15-7:30 pm	Voice	146.970 -	127.3	WB6YQN
Area 5	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	145.400 -	No pl	N6FL
Area 6	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	147.975 -	127.3	N6AHI
Area 7	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	146.985 -	127.3	WB6ZTX
Area 8	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	145.280 -	100	WB2WIK
6 Meter	6:45-7:00 pm	Voice	052.980 -	082.5	K6SMR

The Net Controller's script for the Area 2 weekly RACES check-in net is on the CVARC website, in printable form. Every member is encouraged to periodically serve as net controller. RACES members should remember that their RACES card is issued for only two years. When your card is due to expire call

Jackie at the Office of Emergency Services in Ventura for an appointment to renew your card. Call (805) 654-2551 or toll free from the east half of the county at (800) 660-5474. For packet, call coordinator Dan Dicke KE6NYT (805) 983-1401. To register for Red Cross Disaster Services Classes, call (805) 339-2234 ext 0 Ventura County ARES/RACES web site: <http://home1.gte.net/res19999/>

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ARRL

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The Conejo Valley Amateur Radio Club is an ARRL affiliated Special Service Club. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, unless otherwise noted. Meeting location is at the Elks Lodge, 158 Conejo School Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA. Meetings start at 7:30 pm. with a pre-meeting social and technical assistance session, for those who are interested at 7:15 pm. Meetings are open to the public, and members are encouraged to bring their friends.

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