



REMARKS

P.O. Box 2154, Southeastern, PA 19399



2000 ELECTIONS AT JANUARY MEETING

The Nominating Committee composed of **Al N3EA** and **Steve N3ORH** has presented a slate for the 2000 Board of Directors for MARC. As you will recall, any licensed club member could offer to run for office. A stampede, it wasn't.

Any licensed club member may be written-in for any office. Before mounting a write-in campaign on someone's behalf, please get that person's consent ... and you might ask why he or she didn't volunteer to run, in the first place.

A few things about the slate require comment. **Steve N3ORH** is resigning his position as Member-at-Large for the 1999-2000 term in order to run for President. **Janet KA3VTQ** offered to run for the remaining year of Steve's Member-at-Large term.

The Programs slot is not filled. If it remains that way when the new Board takes office on February 1, the other members of the Board will share the programming job among themselves. We will not go for a year without programs!

Ballots are enclosed for all licensed members. The deadline is the January 20 club meeting, when ballots will be counted and

2000 BOARD SLATE

President:	Steve Maslin N3ORH
Vice-President:	Bart Feroe K4BF
Secretary:	Bob Haase W3SA
Treasurer:	David Del Pizzo KB3CRY
Membership Services:	Kay Craigie WT3P
Programs:	(vacant)
Public Relations:	Bill Owen W3KRB
Public Service:	Bob Palin N3JIZ
Technical:	Dennis Silage K3DS
Member-at-Large 2000-01:	Al Maslin N3EA
Member-at-Large 2000:	Janet Vann KA3VTQ

the results announced. You may bring the ballot to the meeting or send it in by mail. **DO NOT SEND BALLOTS TO THE OLD VILLANOVA POST OFFICE BOX!** Forwarding may be too slow for your vote to be received and tallied. If you receive the newsletter by e-mail, please print the ballot page on paper and mail it in. That ensures your right to a secret ballot.

JANUARY JUNQUE AUCTION CONTINES AS NEW YEAR'S TRADITION

Out with the old, in with the ... old, but somebody else's. Bring your stuff, some money, and a sense of humor to the MARC January Junque Auction.

The ground rules are simple: (1) Ham and ham-related equipment only. (2) Only MARC members may offer items for sale - no dealers, please. (3) MARC receives 10% of the sales price or \$10, whichever is less. (4) Tag items with your name and callsign (if any), the minimum acceptable price, and what the item is. (5) Take home any unsold items. (6) All items are sold as-is. MARC gives no warranties or guarantees, implied or

otherwise, regarding items offered for sale. The club and the auctioneer(s) will not be liable for any problems arising from sales. (7) Bring no more than 3 items to sell, so all can have a chance to participate.

People are looking for small stuff and bargains, so you can leave the \$1,000 amplifier at home. Bring some small bills or a checkbook. Any questions should be directed to President **Tom N3JMA**. The auctioneer will be **Bart K4BF**, who will make you laugh even if he doesn't make you buy.

BOARD MODIFIES DECISION ON PACKET, 222.42/R

One club member asked the Board to keep the packet BBS on the air, and 4 or 5 expressed support for the 222.42 repeater. However, at their December 2 meeting, the Board agreed to try to keep these systems.

Regarding WB3JOE packet, the Board noted input from outside the club indicating that a wide-area APRS node is not needed in this area at this time. The Board authorized **Steve N3ORH** to purchase Y2K-compliant packet BBS software costing less than \$100. He has a Y2K-

FCC issues license restructuring decision! See page 7!

compliant computer that can be used for the packet BBS. The packet BBS will be kept on the air in Paoli if possible.

The Board also decided that the 222.42 repeater should be evaluated to see what it will cost to repair the system and make it useful again. We know that a new controller is needed. A committee will check out the site and determine if any other repairs / replacements are necessary. Then the Board will make a decision about what happens next with this repeater. *[story continues, page 3]*

ABOUT MARC

wb3joe@marc-radio.org
<http://www.marc-radio.org>

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

3rd Thursdays, 8 PM, Memorial Library of Radnor Township, Wayne. Guests welcome. Smoke-free. Handicapped-accessible.

BOARD MEETINGS

4th Thursdays, 7:30 PM, Paoli Hospital. Members may attend as observers.

SYSTEMS

145.13/R, 147.06/R, 224.42/R
WB3JOE packet BBS 145.090
 Packet sysop and Webmaster:
Steve N3ORH (610-313-8080,
smaslin@fast.net)

NETS

Club Net, Sundays, 8:30 PM
 Traffic net, M/W/F, 8:30 PM
 All nets on 147.06
 Net Manager: **Carter N3AO**
 (610-993-9623, n3ao@arrl.net)

DUES

\$15 Full (licensed Amateurs)
 \$5 Associate (unlicensed persons)
 Family rate \$5 per ham after first member pays full dues.

NEWSLETTER

REMARCS is published in the odd months, edited by **Kay WT3P**
 (610-993-9623, wt3p@arrl.net)

**BRING A FRIEND
 TO A MARC MEETING!**

PUBLIC SERVICE ACTIVITY

Some info tnx Bob Palin N3JIZ

On October 31, MARC assisted the Wyeth-Ayerst Radnor Run, benefiting the American Lung Association. The weather was great, and the event was over before noon. There were no emergencies. MARC's communicators were **Roger N3VBZ**, **Rich KC2EFA**, **Rick N3AGS**, **Floyd KA3OXA**, and **Bob N3JIZ**.

On November 4, MARC communicated for the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 349, 5k run at the Norristown Farm Park. The weather was sunny and cool for the event. There were no accidents or injuries, and the event was over by 11 AM. The following operators participated: **Rich KC2EFA**, **Rick N3AGS**, **Josy WQ3E**, **Roger N3VBZ**, and **Bob N3JIZ**.

If you know about public events that could benefit from ham radio communications, please contact **Bob N3JIZ**.

Ten residents at St. Mary's Shelter in Phoenixville had a brighter Christmas because of MARC members. Modest gifts were under the tree for these people through MARC's participation in the Main Line Volunteer Force's "Santa's Brigade" project. Gift donors for 1999 were **Bob WA3PZO** and **Kim KB3COV**, **Gene WB3FTJ** and **Judy N3MBW**, **Bill W3KRB**, **Bob W3SA**, **David KB3CRY**, **Kurt KB3EJS**, **Tom N3JMA**, **Jenny KA3WVD**, **Carter N3AO**, and **Kay WT3P**. Special thanks are due to **Mike KF3CD**, who collected and delivered the gifts.

NOVEMBER TEST SESSION

Info tnx Bob Lees W3ZQN

MARC's November 6 test session served 4 candidates. One applicant earned a Novice license, and one upgraded to General. Another person passed 5 wpm code. The other candidate, unfortunately, did not pass any elements attempted. The VE's for this session were **Bob W3ZQN**, **Dick K3ITH**, **Ned WQ3Z**, **Harry W1JZN**, **Bob W3SA**, and **Hugh N3HT**, with **Tom K3YPO** handling logistics.

The next MARC session will be on February 5, 9:15 AM, at the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church on Montgomery Avenue in Bryn Mawr. Pre-registration is very important, because the session will be cancelled if no one pre-registers. Contact **Bob W3ZQN** for pre-registration and instructions. Remember that a benefit of MARC membership is the opportunity to take part in one club-sponsored VE session per year at no charge ... MARC picks up the \$6.65 test fee. It is a good idea to be registered in ULS before going to take an exam at any VE session, and take your license ID code with you to the session.

VOX

Welcome new member **Jeff KB3DIV**, from Downingtown. Congratulations to **Kurt KB3EJS**, who has moved from the ranks of Associate members to the Novice license. Congrats also to **Brad KB8PPA**, who was a busy guy last year, moving all the way from Tech to Extra. MARC sends our deepest sympathy to **Al W2GPY**, whose wife passed away. Former member **Dick K3SXR** became a Silent Key. **Ray N3BPJ** just celebrated his 84th birthday. **Jen KA3WVD** will serve as VP of her college's student government organization for the last semester of her senior year. **Carter N3AO** and **Kay WT3P** enjoyed a holiday in the Sonoma County, California, wine country. **Ed KA3GGV** has moved from Bloomsburg to Northumberland. **Bob WA3PZO** conducts the public service column in the revamped CQ magazine, which has absorbed

CQ VHF. **Bruce N3JOV** and **Catherine KB3CXT** used the new CEPT license to operate on VHF on a trip to France. **Harry W3FM** installed a UPS in his shack after power failures gave his computer the fits. Super to see Colorado member **David KA3HBK** at the holiday party. **Paul N3YSI** got a classic Ten Tec QRP rig for Christmas. **Josy WQ3E** is another member who has gotten into QRP. Speaking of the holiday party, **Edie KA3NKP** put on another outstanding one for us. **Mike KF3CD** helped with the hot drinks. Thanks! Mike's car license plate is in the "Up Front" section of January QST. **Ned WQ3Z** and family have moved into their new home in Flourtown. **Dan NM3S** was honored by the Eagles Fly for Leukemia with their **Leonard Tose** community service award. Dan's a leader in fund-raising for this charity.

HAMFEST COMMITTEE MEETING January 30, 2 PM, at the home of **Mike Pilotti KF3CD**. All members who want to help plan the hamfest are welcome to attend. No previous experience required. For directions, phone Mike at 610-935-4429 or e-mail mpilotti@anroinc.com.

FROM THE EDITOR'S JUNK BOX

We are about to have the third major structural change in USA ham radio licensing since World War II. The first, in the early 1950's, introduced the then-controversial Novice license. The second, in the late 60's, was the intensely-controversial "incentive licensing" episode. Though there have been tweaks and patches (e.g., no-code), it has been that long since the whole structure was turned inside out and shaken.

Some hams welcome the latest changes as constructive and long-overdue. Others condemn them as the equivalent of spitting on the flag. Still others, understandably, have mixed emotions.

Look. If you are Amish, you can get away with living in the past. It's what they do. Ham radio, on the other hand, is a scientific, technological hobby. For hams to fear the future and see change as the enemy is a perilous exercise in double-think.

The nature of science and technology is to change, and change fast. Americans who never even finished high school can walk into the mall today and walk out with enough communications technology to make Buck Rogers look like Alley Oop. Clinging stubbornly to the way things were long years ago while repeating clichés about "dumbing down" would put us way behind the technology curve ... a deeply weird place for us to be.

If we don't reinvent ham radio to catch the interest of younger, well-educated, service-minded, technologically-hip people from all walks of life, then soon we aren't going to have ham radio. Period. Not just in the USA, but around the world. In other developed countries, where the average age of hams may be even higher than it is here and where growth has flat-lined as it has done here, license requirements are being revamped to reflect modern technology and reinvigorate the Amateur service.

Remember the lines in the Fleetwood Mac song: "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow. Yesterday's gone. Yesterday's gone." It's time to lose the double-think. Let's take positive advantage of change to promote the radio service we love: increase the activity of existing hams, spread the word about ham radio to the sort of good people we need, be willing to learn and eager to teach, encourage respect towards hams of all license classes. Change is not the enemy. Fear and prejudice and resentment ... that's another story.

If we hams don't have a positive attitude about ham radio, who will? If we don't embrace the future, will we have one? - 73, **Kay WT3P**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1999

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BOARD MODIFIES DECISION ON PACKET, 224.42/R

[continued from page 1]

Finally, the Board approved moving the 145.13 repeater from its temporary site in Norristown to the Paoli Hospital for a test. If users report that Paoli is a satisfactory site for users in the Norristown / K of P area, who find it hard to use '06, then arrangements will be made to place the repeater in Paoli permanently. Otherwise, frankly, we are in the chowder for a site for '13. Keep your fingers crossed.

If '13 moves to Paoli, the Board wants to keep the packet BBS on the air at the same site. If that proves technically impossible to do, then the packet BBS will have to move or go QRT.

MARC has the money to repair 222.42 and WB3JOE packet, to keep them on the air. We have the money to operate 3 voice

repeaters and a packet BBS. Money is not what we lack.

What we need are enough volunteers to maintain so many systems throughout the year. **Jeff WN3A** keeps an eye on '06 and helps in more ways than most of us realize. **Steve N3ORH** takes good care of packet. **Dennis K3DS** will probably be the Technical Chairman for 2000.

In a club the size of ours, we should have plenty of people ready to step forward and help with the technical maintenance of the repeaters. Two or three people can't do and should not be asked to do all this work for the rest of us. Please contact the new Tech Chairman and volunteer your time and skills.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM: Gene Pressler W3ZXV from ARCC repeater coordinators, explaining what coordination is and why it is important to us. With a video produced by our own Dave N3LHY!

CONTEST CAPERS

Reported scores on the Pennsylvania QSO Party web site show MARC members did very well in 1999. Looks like our members won two counties, and finished second in another one. **Carter N3AO** will win Delaware County with 13,690 points. **Kay WT3P** will take Chester with 109,225 points. **Ron WA2SJW**'s 55,360 points will be second in Montgomery County. **David KB3CRY** turned in a very respectable 10,488 points in Montgomery in his first contesting effort. Though official results won't be announced for a while, it looks like **Murgas ARC**, a PAQP powerhouse back in the 1980's, has re-taken the club trophy after many years among the also-rans.

ARRL November Sweepstakes is one of the most challenging contests, because the exchange is quite complex. In California without a rig during CW SS, your editor did just enough QSO's in phone SS to qualify for a pin. **Ron WA2SJW** put in a much more serious effort in phone SS. He made 276 QSO's with 76 Sections, lacking only 3 Canadian Sections for the sweep!

"The list of excuses," says Ron, "is as follows: (1) Family obligations used up most of Saturday. (2) Lost my voice every couple of hours due to cold and sore throat. That new MFJ voice keyer is looking pretty good about now. (3) Went to two fire calls on Sunday. (4) Still haven't got a 75m antenna which is probably where the east coast of Canada was hiding. (5) My dog ate my homework." But he adds, "Most of all, I had fun."

And fun is what it's all about. **Carter N3AO** has been doing a lot of short QRP contests to test the rigs he's been building. He says about 2 or 3 hours is long enough to contest at one stretch, well before you develop a case of numb-rump. That's why there are all sorts of competitive operating events ... some folks like the sprints, while others enjoy the marathons.

The ARRL 10 Meter Contest had pretty good band conditions. **Steve K3KFD**, **Ron WA2SJW**, and **Kay WT3P** were some MARC members on the air in that one. My 485,000+ points were a personal best. Zelda the Jack Russell terrier was particularly helpful sitting in my lap while I worked CW. (Not!) Ron worked New Caledonia and Reunion Island, among other DX. He says, "Managed to buy and set up the Christmas tree, go on two fire calls, unpack the groceries and take care of the cat herd during the contest, so I maintained my essential relationships at home." Steve called CQ on phone all day long on phone, made well over 1,000 QSOs, and was rewarded with a score to be proud of.

The ARRL International DX contests are coming up soon. These and other contests are a great way to practice operating skills, study propagation, and work good DX. Who knows, you might be bitten by the competition bug and decide you want to start keeping score!

ARRL ELECTION RESULTS

In the election for ARRL Atlantic Division Vice Director, incumbent **Bernie Fuller N3EFN** was victorious with 60% of the votes cast. Director **Kay Craigie WT3P** had no opposition for re-election. Their new 3-year term begins January 1, 2000. Incidentally, Bernie appears to have won Crawford County (again) in the 1999 Pennsylvania QSO Party.

In the Eastern PA Section, incumbent Section Manager **Al Breiner W3TI** was unopposed for re-election. His new 2-year term begins April 1, 2000.

FOUNDATION FOR AMATEUR RADIO SCHOLARSHIPS

The Foundation for Amateur Radio plans to administer 73 scholarships for the 2000-2001 academic year to assist licensed hams. Based in Washington, DC, FAR is composed of more than 75 local ham clubs. Scholarships are funded either by the FAR hamfest's proceeds or by donations from private sponsors, which include both individuals and organizations such as QCWA and Ten-Ten.

Licensed hams may compete for these scholarships if they plan to pursue a full-time course of studies beyond high school

and are enrolled in or have been accepted for enrollment at an accredited university, college, or post-secondary technical school. Awards range from \$500 to \$2,500. Additional information and an application form may be requested by letter or QSL card postmarked prior to April 30, 2000, from FAR Scholarships, PO Box 831, Riverdale, MD 20738.

Please tell student hams about these scholarships now. When you're financing higher education, every dollar helps.

FIELD DAY FEEDBACK

MARC's Field Day score, 2810 points, appears on page 95 of December QST, about mid-way down the second column from the right. MARC's new member **Tim N8LXR** is quoted on page 91, describing his maritime mobile exploits on Field Day. Maybe Tim will join us landlubbers for MARC Field Day 2000.

By the way, we still need a Field Day captain for this year. **Carter N3AO** will consult with the new person, but he has done it for a number of years and is ready to hand off to someone else. Want to have Field Day this year? Think about volunteering to lead it.

BOARD MEETING REPORT

The December 2 Board meeting was mostly devoted to discussion of the repeaters and packet BBS, covered in another story. However, members will want to know that the treasury balance was \$8,260.66.

FOR CLASSICAL MUSIC FANS

Bob W3ZQN reports that his son **Timothy Lees**, concert-master of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Pops, will perform free local recitals on January 5 and 7, 2000. Mr. Lees will be accompanied by George Reeves of Philadelphia as he plays the Korngold violin concerto in D Major, Op.35, as well as sonatas for violin and piano by Schubert and Brahms.

The Wednesday, January 5 performance will be at 7:00 P.M. at

the Schultz Community Center of the Meadowood retirement community, Route 73, one-quarter mile west of Route 363. The Friday, January 7 performance will be at 7:30 P.M. at the First Presbyterian Church, Airy and DeKalb Streets in Norristown. Parking is free on the county parking lot across DeKalb Street from the church. The public is invited to attend either recital. For information call 610-272-1357 (day) or 610-265-6032 (evening).

ON THE BOOKSHELF

ARRL's HF Digital Handbook (1999, \$15). This paperback introduces today's most popular HF digital modes, setting up a HF digital station, and using the modes on the air. There are also reference sections that point you to additional information sources. If you want to find out about some stuff on HF besides voice and CW, then this will be \$15 well spent.

NCJ Collection CD-ROM 1973-1998 (CD-ROM, 1999, \$39.95). The *National Contest Journal* began as an

independent publication put out by contesters. When they ran out of steam, the ARRL took over the publication so it would not die. On this CD-ROM, you get scanned images of 25 years of NCJ, with indexes.

What was it like to compete in the days before logging programs, packet spotting networks, and computer-interfaced stations? I'd rather read about it than do it, believe me!

HELP STAMP THIS OUT!

Centuries of Scottish ancestry has made me hate to throw stuff away. That's not to say I don't do it. I just don't like it.

For example, a lot of beautiful postage stamps come into the house on mail both domestic and DX. If **Carter N3AO** doesn't want the stamps for his collection of cancelled commemoratives, I resist tossing them in the bin. **Harry W3FM** has an alternative for those of us who wish there were a better way to dispose of attractive stamps. He corresponds with **EU1FY** in the ex-Soviet republic of Belarus. That ham has a 10-year-old

son who's an avid stamp collector. Harry would appreciate our sending him interesting cancelled stamps. He'll send them on to the boy. Give him a buzz at 610-827-7374.

When you snip a stamp off its envelope, leave a half-inch or more of paper around the stamp. Collectors want the perforations intact. Harry's project is a very good way to help one young person decide that Americans are not the jerks and ogres we're sometimes made out to be.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

[In the early 1980's, David Fetter KA3HBK was a MARC Board member while still in junior high school. Today, he has his own computer consulting business in Denver. After a quick visit back east during the holidays, he found an unfinished letter on his computer, completed it, and sent it on by e-mail. It's something the whole club should share.]

Hi Kay:

I'm on an airplane and was catching up on my reading. To be more specific, the September/October 1998 REMARCS (pretty pathetic, huh?).

"From the Editor's Junk Box" stood out: You discussed similarities between your local diner and MARC. That really rang true.

Even today, when I am asked to describe ham radio to a friend, I typically discuss the diversity of people and activities, frequently contrasting ATV and QRP, or public service and

contesting. I also discuss the range of people, sometimes highlighting Roy Neal K6DUE, Barry Goldwater K7UGA or King Hussein JY1.

There is one specific story, however, that I never leave out:

Shortly after getting my license, which was sometime before my voice changed, I was at the home of a local college professor. There were several of us folding, stapling, and stamping MARC hamfest flyers. In addition to the college professor and myself (roughly age 12), there were several other people preparing mailers: A janitor at the local college, a vice president of a major corporation, an accountant, a truck driver, an engineer at a major television station, a doctor.

The experiences and friendships ham radio, and more specifically MARC, have given me are invaluable and have had a profound impact on my life. I have never found anything else like it. - 73, **David KA3HBK**

AREA HAMFESTS

For more hamfest information, go to the nationwide searchable calendar at <http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html> or the Atlantic Division Web page at <http://www.bfdin.com/atlantic/index.htm>.

FEB 19	Harrisburg RAC, Oberlin, PA
MAR 12	Keystone VHF, York, PA
MAR 25-26	*Baltimore ARC, Timonium, MD
APR 30	*Penn-Del ARC, New Castle, DE
MAY 7	Warminster ARC, Wrightstown, PA
JUN 10	*Columbia-Montour ARC, Bloomsburg, PA
JUL 2	Murgas ARC, Wilkes-Barre, PA
JUL 10	Mid-Atlantic ARC, Kimberton, PA
JUL 30	BRATS, Timonium, PA
SEP 28-30	*Microwave Update 2000, Trevoise, PA
OCT 1	Pack Rats, Wrightstown, PA
OCT 22	RF Hill ARC, Sellersville, PA

* indicates ARRL State, Section, or Operating Specialty Convention.

Support our neighbor clubs' hamfests. Get some friends and go to these events!



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First it's RF exposure, now it's trichinosis! You think they were trying to market this for *ham* radio?

PUBLIC SERVICE is why we have the privilege of enjoying so much valuable spectrum. Chester County hams, join ARES/RACES now. **Carter N3AO** can tell you how. Montgomery County hams, contact **Bob W3ZQN** to learn how to join RACES. Get on the MARC traffic nets and learn the skill of formal message handling. It is not hard, and you will need it for drills and ... we hope never ... the real thing. Are other hams earning the spectrum while you just use it? Don't be a free-loader! Join your fellow hams in learning how to prepare for emergencies.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Dues can be paid in person at a club meeting or by mail. The deadline is March 1, 2000. Paying before we have to send you a separate notice in the mail saves the club's money ... that's YOUR money ... and volunteers' time. Please remember to use the new PO box number, shown in the box below. Thanks for your continuing support of our club!

NAME _____ CALLSIGN _____ () New Member
 () Renewal

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP + 4 _____

TELEPHONE () _____ OK to publish phone number? YES NO

E-MAIL _____ OK to publish e-mail address? YES NO

ARRL MEMBER? YES NO LICENSE CLASS? E A G T+ T N None

COMPUTE AMOUNT DUE:

Full Member (licensed ham) @ \$15	\$
Family Member (licensed ham, after 1 st member pays full dues) @ \$5	\$
Associate Member (unlicensed person) @ \$5	\$
Club Logo callsign badge @ \$6.50 (see note below)	\$
Total enclosed with this form	\$

The membership year begins March 1. We do not accept more than 1 year's dues at a time. MARC dues are NOT tax-deductible. Make checks payable to Mid-Atlantic ARC and send to MARC, PO Box 2154, Southeastern, PA 19399.

NOTE: FOR CALLSIGN BADGE ORDERS, PRINT FIRST NAME AS DESIRED ON BADGE: _____

AMATEUR LICENSE RESTRUCTURING ANNOUNCED BY FCC

New System Takes Effect April 15

Adobe PDF version of the report and order: <http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/wt98-143ro.pdf>
Text file version: http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/1999/db991230/fcc99412.txt

On December 30, 1999, the FCC released their Report and Order WT-98-143, most of which is devoted to restructuring the Amateur Radio licensing system in the USA. It's a lengthy, complicated document, available on the Web at the FCC and ARRL Web sites.

No one loses operating already earned. Nobody is forced to upgrade or get out. That's key. With one exception, nobody gains any privileges, either.

Under the new system, there will be 3 license classes (Technician, General, Extra) and 4 examination elements. Element 1 is the 5 wpm Morse code test. Element 2 is Technician theory (35 questions), Element 3 is General theory (35 questions), and Element 4 is Extra theory (50 questions). No new Novice or Advanced licenses will be issued, but present Novice and Advanced licensees will continue to have their present privileges ... presumably forever, unless and until they upgrade. Medical exemptions for 13 and 20 wpm code, and the controversy over bogus exemptions, will disappear.

License documents that say "Technician Plus" will no longer be issued. Techs and Techs with HF privileges will be classified together as Technicians. However, Tech Plus operators will keep their HF privileges. It is the responsibility of the licensee to have proof that he or she passed the 5 wpm code test! This information will not be recorded in the FCC's database any more. Whatever you do, people, don't lose that piece of paper that says "Technician Plus."

In fact, keep every piece of official paper documenting your progress through the Amateur Radio licensing gates. When rules change, we must take responsibility for proving our own status. Put these papers in your safe deposit box with your birth certificate, military discharge papers, car title, passport, divorce decree ... all those documents you'd blow your brains out if the pipes burst and destroyed them.

The only hams who will qualify for an "instant upgrade" are Technician Plus licensees who prove that they passed the Tech/General 50-question theory test that was in effect before March 21, 1987. They get credit for Elements 1 and 2 by virtue of their current Tech Plus ticket. They get credit for Element 3 by presenting an expired Technician license granted before March 21, 1987. ("Expired" in this context means that the old license document is past its expiration date.) Elements 1 + 2 + 3 = General class. They will bring their documentation to a VE session on or after April 15, fill out the paperwork, pay the test fee, and get a General license.

Could you use your free MARC test session for such an occasion? Sure!

The FCC's decision says that the content of theory exams is to be revised and updated. The Commission says that "the general standard suggested by the ARRL -- i.e., testing should be related to privileges, should place greater emphasis on operating practices and current technologies, and should support and encourage experimentation -- is a reasonable standard ... to use in reorganizing the current question pools and revising the written examination elements."

Although there will continue to be standardized national question pools for each theory element, the FCC has removed the requirement for a specific mix of topics to be on an exam. Each VEC will be free to determine the percentage of questions an applicant must answer on a particular topic in the syllabus for each exam level.

Existing license prep materials for Tech, General, and Extra should be reasonably useful under the new system until revisions can be published.

BITS OF NEWS

Because of other personal obligations, **Carter N3AO** will not conduct a Morse code class this spring. However, he will probably do it again in the fall if there is interest. Somehow, given the impending changes, we suspect there will be.

What kind of programs would you enjoy at meetings this year? Whether or not we have an official program chairman, the Board needs your suggestions for interesting programs. What speakers have you heard at other clubs that we would enjoy at MARC? What subjects in ham radio are you curious about? We're good, but we can't read your mind. Tell a Board member what you want for programs in the new year.

Members of Montgomery County RACES were on duty at area hospitals, in case the Y2K bug bit. Chester County ARES/RACES staffed the West Chester EOC station and had operators on call at home in case something sputtered. Fortunately, preparations paid off, systems worked fine, and everybody was bored stiff. The good news is that ham radio is still what the authorities call upon when they are afraid the stuff is going to hit the fan. They trust us. Think about that the next time you hear some ham talking down today's ham radio.