

Washington Amateur
Communications, Inc.
1696 East Maiden St.
Washington, PA
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The WACOM HAM

FEBRUARY
2004

A New Look...



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Over the last year, since taking over the newsletter, I've asked WACOM members for feedback on what you'd like to see in the newsletter, not just in terms of content but in style.

One consistent theme kept coming up... a different look. Question was, what? Most indicated that they wanted something more on the lines of a "traditional" looking newsletter, something that resembled 8½ x 11" sheets of paper. Of course, beyond that, there wasn't much of a consensus (but that's hams for you!)

So this is the first attempt at a redesign. It's not by any means a "finished" product. Where it goes from here will be determined by you — tell me what you like, what you don't like, what you'd like to see and what you'd like to go.

One thing I don't want to do is make the WACOM HAM look like a mirror image of other newsletters I edit. It would be easy enough to do, but it wouldn't be right. This is not to say you won't find some articles repeated in some form or another, especially those that are news related or of general interest to all area amateurs. A lot of that also depends on you — the more input, and more importantly the more articles and pictures I get, the more unique this newsletter remains. It's up to you!

73, Ron Notarius WN3VAW, Editor
wn3vaw@njdxa.org

W3C Special Event Station February 5th — 8th; Details Inside!
Special Note: February Monthly Meeting Moved to Wednesday



UPCOMING MEETINGS!

Next WACOM Monthly Meeting:
Wednesday, February 4th, 2004, 7:30 PM

Next WACOM Board of Directors Meeting:
Thursday, February 26th, 7:30 PM

Meeting Location: South Strabane #1 VFD, 1696 East Maiden Street, Washington PA 15301

All Welcome!

ARRL to Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access

NEWINGTON, CT, January 19th, 2004- The ARRL will ask the FCC to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license that would include HF phone privileges without requiring a Morse code test. The League also will propose consolidating all current licensees into three classes, retaining the Element 1 Morse requirement (now 5 WPM) only for the highest class. The ARRL Board of Directors overwhelmingly approved the plan January 16 during its Annual Meeting in Windsor, Connecticut. The proposals - developed by the ARRL Executive Committee following a Board instruction last July - are in response to changes made in Article 25 of the international *Radio Regulations* at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). They would continue a process of streamlining the amateur licensing structure that the FCC began more than five years ago but left unfinished in the Amateur Service license restructuring *Report and Order* (WT 98-143) that went into effect April 15, 2000.

"Change in the Amateur Radio Service in the US, especially license requirements and even more so when Morse is involved, has always been emotional," said ARRL First Vice President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, in presenting the Executive Committee's recommendations. "In fact, without a doubt, Morse is Amateur Radio's 'religious debate.'" The plan adopted by the Board departs only slightly from the Executive Committee's recommendations.

The entry-level license class - being called "Novice" for now - would require a 25-question written exam. It would offer limited HF CW/data and phone/image privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters as well as VHF and UHF privileges on 6 and 2 meters and on 222-225 and 430-450 MHz. Power output would be restricted to 100 W on 80, 40, and 15 meters and to 50 W on 10 meters and up, thus avoiding the need for the more complex RF safety questions in the Novice question pool.

"The Board sought to achieve balance in giving new Novice licensees the opportunity to sample a wider range of Amateur Radio activity than is available to current Technicians while retaining a motivation to upgrade," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ. "It was also seen as important to limit the scope of privileges so the exam would not have to include material that is inappropriate at the entry level."

As an introduction to Amateur Radio, the Novice license served successfully for most of its 50-year history. The FCC has not issued new Novice licenses since the 2000 license restructuring, however. Under the ARRL plan, current Novice licensees - now the smallest and least active group of radio amateurs - would be grandfathered to the new entry-level class without further testing.

Anticipating assertions that the new plan would "dumb down" Amateur Radio licensing, Harrison said those currently holding a ticket often perceive the level of complexity to have been greater when they were first licensed than it actually was. "Quite frankly," he said, "if you review the questions presented in our license manuals throughout the years, you will be surprised how they compare to those of today."

The middle group of licensees - Technician, Tech Plus (Technician with Element 1 credit) and General - would be consolidated into a new General license that no longer would require a Morse examination. Current Technician and Tech Plus license holders automatically would gain current General class privileges without additional testing. The current Element 3 General examination would remain in place for new applicants. ARRL already has proposed additional phone privileges for Generals in its "Novice refarming" petition, RM-10413, but the FCC has not yet acted on that petition.

At the top rung, the Board indicated that it saw no compelling reason to change the Amateur Extra class license requirements. The ARRL plan calls on the FCC to combine the current Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensees into Amateur Extra, because the technical level of the exams passed by these licensees is very similar. New applicants for Extra would have to pass a 5 WPM Morse code examination, but the written exam would stay the same. The League's plan calls for current Novice, Tech Plus and General class licensees to receive lifetime Element 1 (5 WPM Morse) credit.

"This structure provides a true entry-level license with HF privileges to promote growth in the Amateur Service," Harrison said. "It also simplifies the FCC database by conforming to the current Universal Licensing System (ULS) structure and does not mandate any modifications to it."

Sumner concurred. "The Board started out by recognizing that three license classes was the right number when looking down the road 10 or 15 years," he said. "We need a new entry-level license."

"On the other hand, there's nothing particularly wrong with the existing Extra class license," he continued. "The change in the international regulations notwithstanding, the Board felt that the highest level of accomplishment in the FCC's amateur licensing structure should include basic Morse capability."

Sumner and Harrison say the current Technician entry-level ticket provides little opportunity to experience facets of ham radio beyond repeater operation. "The quality of that experience," Sumner said, "often depends on the operator's location."

Among other advantages, Sumner said the plan would allow new Novices to participate in HF SSB emergency nets on 75 and 40 meters as well as on the top 100 kHz of 15 meters. The new license also could get another name, Sumner said. "We're trying to recapture the magic of the old Novice license, but in a manner that's appropriate for the 21st century."

The overall proposed ARRL license restructuring plan would more smoothly integrate HF spectrum privileges across the three license classes and would incorporate the "Novice refarming" plan the League put forth nearly two years ago in a *Petition for Rule Making* (RM-10413). The FCC has not yet acted on the ARRL plan, which would alter the current HF subbands. The Novice refarming proposal would eliminate the 80, 40 and 15 meter Novice/Technician Plus CW subbands as such and reuse that spectrum in part to expand phone/image subbands on 80 and 40 meters.

The ARRL license restructuring design calls for no changes in privileges for Extra and General class licensees on 160, 60, 30, 20, 17 or 12 meters. Novice licensees would have no access to those bands

"We're trying to recapture the magic of the old Novice license, but in a manner that's appropriate for the 21st century."

Prez Notes

Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL

Meeting Change! Our February meeting will be moved to Wednesday, February 4th, at 7:30 p.m. This is to allow our members to be free to participate in the special event station at the Washington County Sports Show being held at the Washington Mall. At this meeting current club members will have the opportunity to come and examine some radio and electronic equipment WACOM is making available for adoption.

W3C: We will once again be in attendance at the Sports Show, and will have the radios up and running. Anyone is welcome to come and participate, licensed or not, in our Special Event. Our call sign is W3C, so listen for us on the air. Members, please let Ed, N3ZNI, know when you can man the station. Contact him by email at n3zni@arrl.net or by phone at 724-746-9235. He'll appreciate the help!

Calendar Tickets: WACOM will be once again selling Calendar Tickets for the month of March 2004. Help your club out; please help sell these tickets. The monies generated by the sale of the calendar ticket last spring brought in the money to purchase prizes for our hamfest in the fall.

TECH CLASS: Arrangements are being made to hold a class the first two weekends of March. Friday, March 5th, orientation and receive your book. Saturday March 6th, Sunday March 7th, and Saturday March 13th will be class days. Sunday March 14th will be the VE session. This class was very successful last spring, and we're hoping to have just as much success this year. A sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting and at the Sports Show. Contact Bob Ketzell at 724-228-0425.

If you or anyone you know wants to get a license, this is the place to do it.

Volunteers needed! We need people to run the WACOM net on Tuesday evenings. It doesn't take much time, it gives you great experience, and it isn't too difficult! Please contact Dave, N3IDH at n3idh@hotmail.com or Bob, KB3IN at KB3IN@Yahoo.com if you're willing to give it a try.

Congratulations to Hank KB3FNM, who upgraded to General Class at the WASH VE session on January 15th.

Announcing Pittsburgh's first online DX Cluster!!

(Actually, it is the only Southwestern PA online cluster.)

Ed Wolf N3UE has put together the N3YQX DX Cluster, running the DXSpider DX Cluster Software.

Via radio: 145.010MHz, connect to N3YQX (local EN90wi)

Via telnet: dxc.no-ip.com:7300

Via the web: <http://dxc.no-ip.com:9000/cgi-bin/spider.cgi>

JOIN WACOM ON THE AIR

2 meter net: Every Tuesday at 8:30 PM on the W3CYO repeaters 145.49 and 443.3 MHz

10 meter net: Every Tuesday at 9:00 PM on 28.340 MHz

FYI Networks

For Your Information needs



**Make FYI
Your Internet Service Provider
CONTACT FYI AT 1-877-FYI-4NET
ON THE WEB AT WWW.FYI.NET**

MENTION THAT YOU ARE A WACOM MEMBER FOR A SPECIAL PRICE OF \$18 / MONTH.

Upcoming Events

February 4 — WACOM Meeting Date Rescheduled

February 5, 6, 7 & 8 — W3C Special Event Station, Washington Sportsman's Show, Washington Mall. W3C will be set up in front of the Radio Shack store. Operators needed, for more information please contact Ed N3ZNI. All welcome to stop by, visit, and operate!

February 14 — Breezeshooters Groundwave CW

February 21 & 22 — ARRL DX Contest CW

February 29 — WASHFest 2004, Castle Shannon VFD Memorial Hall, Route 88 Castle Shannon

March 6 & 7 — ARRL DX Contest SSB

March 14 — 2 Rivers ARC Hamfest, The Boston Spectrum, 6001 Smithfield Street, Boston PA

March 20 — Breezeshooters Groundwave SSB

March 27 & 28 — CQ Worldwide Prefix Contest SSB

May 8 & 9 — First Annual Mid-Atlantic QSO Party

June 6 — Breezeshooters Hamfest, Butler PA

2004 Breezeshooters Ground Wave Contests

Dates & Times: **CW** Saturday, 14 February 2004, 8:00 PM to Midnight EST
SSB Saturday, 20 March 2004, 8:00 PM to Midnight EST

Eligibility: This contest is open to all amateurs using the Ten Meter Band

Eligible Contacts: Any ten meter ground wave contact in the area is valid.

Awards: Certificates will be given to the top three entries in each category.

Competition Categories:

Zone One any power not more than 125 watts output
Zone Two any power not more than 125 watts output
Zone Three any power not more than 125 watts output
Zone Four any power not more than 125 watts output
Low Power any zone, radio not capable of more than 30 watts output
Multi-Operator or Club any zone, any power not more than 125 watts output; list all operators
Mobile any power not more than 125 watts output

**Two contests, Four
fun filled hours
each, only on the
Ten Meter Band!**

Map: Mark your **exact** location on the map. Each entry must have the location of operation indicated, with **colored marker**, on the map provided (see web site if you did not receive one in the mail). If your location is off the map, please so note and indicate closest Grid Square with an arrow. ***This map must be returned with completed logs and summary sheet. Incomplete logs and logs received after the deadline will be disqualified and used as "Check Logs."***

Duplicate contacts: Enter only one contact per station worked per contest, regardless of square. Duplicate contacts are penalized loss of contact and eight (8) additional points.

Logs: If possible, use the log sheets provided on the web site, or approved logging software. Otherwise, indicate call, time, grid number, mode, and points for each QSO.

Mobile stations: Must indicate between appropriate entries in the log any change in grid number.

Portable: Entered as categories A through F, must specify location of portable operation.

Multi-Operator: Please list all operations.

Important: Send separate logs for SSB & CW!

Power: High power is restricted to not more than 125 watts output. Low power, category "E", is intended for low power rigs, 30 watts or less output.

Exchange: The exchange consists of call and contest grid number (see **Grids & Zones** below). It will not be necessary to give your zone.

Scoring: For a QSO with a station in the same grid square as you are, score one point. For a QSO with a station in a different grid square, use the grid key sheet to determine the total point value of the contact. Any station outside the grid should use the Grid Square closest to their operation location as their home grid.

Scoring Example: A Square 25 station works another station in Square 49. Using the grid key sheet, locate row 25 and follow the line across the sheet to the point of intersection with column 49. This will give the point value of the contact. In this case the point value of 4 will be given for this contact.

Grids & Zones: The contest grid center is located in respect to the Point in Pittsburgh, PA. There are 49 Squares in the grid, each one is approximately 25 miles square. The contest zones are made up of various squares in the grid as follows:

Zone 1	Square 25
Zone 2	Square 17 18 19 24 26 31 32 33
Zone 3	Square 9 10 11 12 13 16 20 23 27 30 34 37 38 39 40 41
Zone 4	Square 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 14 15 21 22 28 29 35 36 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 & any other location outside the grid

Check the map for your square before the contest begins. This information will be necessary for your Exchange, as it will be your grid number. Also, check the map for your zone. This information will be necessary for your log summary sheet; it will **not** be a necessary part of your exchange. If a grid line bisects a town or city, the contestant must determine to the best of his/her ability their proper home square.

Use the actual location of operation and not a mailing address. Logs **will** be disqualified if the incorrect zone is used.

Entries: Include summary sheet with call sign, name, address, class of license, equipment used, total claimed score, and entry category. Be sure to sign your log, and submit it postmarked no later than April 9th, 2004 to:

Breezeshooters, Groundwave Contest, PO Box 100158, Pittsburgh PA 15233-0158.

Please mark your entry category (A - G) on the left front of your envelope.

Each person submitting a log will receive one free ticket for the main prizes at the Breezeshooters Hamfest.

All submitted logs become the property of the Breezeshooters and will not be returned.

The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

Entry deadline: Logs must be signed and postmarked by April 9th, 2004.

Web Site: All information, including complete rules, software, the map, log pages, and grid sheet is available on-line at

<http://www.breezeshooters.net> Hotline: 412-826-8006

Now in our NINTH big year!



WASHfest 2004

The South Hills Hamfest
Sponsored by the Wireless Association of South Hills, Inc.

Sunday, February 29, 2004
8 AM till 3 PM Rain or Shine! (or Snow!)

Castle Shannon VFD Memorial Hall
3600 Library Road (Route 88) Castle Shannon, PA
Talk-in on 146.955(-) N3RNX Repeater 131.8 PL

FREE COFFEE

For the entire hamfest Courtesy of Ham Radio
Insurance Associates Of Canonsburg



(800) 545-8881



Win an Icom 706MkIIIG,
an MFJ antenna analyzer
Or an LDG automatic antenna
tuner—Drawing at 2 PM.

For reservations or information, contact:

Steve Lane, W3SRL (412) 341-1043 or Bill Hill, W3WH (724) 746-1776
Or email us directly at washarc@yahoo.com Website: <http://www.washarc.org>

Hamfest table reservation form—please print legibly ALL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: () _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Call: _____

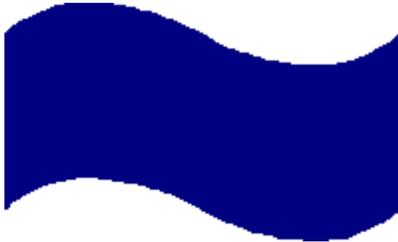
Tables WITH electricity: _____ X \$15.00 = _____

Tables WITHOUT electricity: _____ X \$10.00 = _____

Make checks payable to:
Wireless Association of South Hills
897 Lovington Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15216-1725

(Tables WITH electricity are located along the walls. They CANNOT be mixed with tables without AC power)
We reserve the right to resell any tables not occupied by 8 AM, unless prior arrangements are made!

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Washington, PA 15301



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The editor welcomes articles and timely information of interest to members and the general amateur community.

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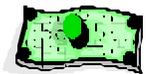
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PLEASE SEND YOUR 2004 DUES AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Annual WACOM membership dues are only
\$15 . A couple pays only \$22.50.

Send your check payable to WACOM to:

Ed Oeschlager, N3ZNI,
Washington Amateur
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1696 East Maiden St.
Washington, PA 15301



WACOM e-Mail Reflector

An e-mail reflector has been set up for WACOM members.

What's a reflector? It's a mailing list which lets you send one e-mail message to the list address — wa3com@yahoo.com — and have it "reflect" to all members of the list. Unlike a personal mailing list, you don't need to know all of the e-mail addresses for every single member of the list. Only group members can send e-mail to other members of the reflector — no spam allowed!

E-mail reflectors are being used by many area Amateur Radio clubs as a means to facilitate news and information at a moments notice. Yahoo! Groups (formerly eGroups) provides this service for free to anyone who wants to avail themselves of their list server. Yahoo! also provides calendar, file storage, & additional services.

To join the WACOM reflector, simply send a blank e-mail to:

wa3com-subscribe@yahoo.com