

Feed Line

GARA - We're putting the "Spark" back in Amateur Radio®



Volume 15, No 5

Editor: Tom Forrest, N4GVK

Web Site: www.w4gso.org

May, 2006

E-mail: info@w4gso.org

The Demise of the First Phone License

Special to the Feed Line

by **Charles S. Fitch, W2IPI**

Have you noticed a trend in how qualification problems are addressed inside the Beltway over the last 50 years or so? In Washington, it seems, when enough people can't reach the qualification bar, they just lower the bar. Do away with the problem by the stroke of a pen; eliminate the requirement.

Ohhhh, if only we were so all-powerful! We would do away with taxes, reruns on TV and marriage (I must be crazy), among other things.

In our industry, the notable instance of this phenomenon was the disappearance of the Radio Telephone Operator License First Class, the possession of which was a long-standing requirement if you hoped to find meaningful and gainful employment in radio engineering.

Let's be clear. The FCC only licenses operators; it never licensed engineers engaged in intrastate commerce, professional or stationary. The commission never intended that one would have to operate high-pressure boilers or a power plant or design the foundations under your

towers. Licensing of professional and stationary engineers is a power held only by the states.

Boilers aside, that still leaves us ordinary mortals who build and maintain broadcast systems in a profession of profound scope and need. Every station has a lot of meaningful technical matters at hand, routine and otherwise.

Push to talk

The FCC licensing structure through the early 1960s was simple. In general terms, if you wanted to speak on a two-way radio, you needed a Radio Telephone

you wanted to service and install communications-level transmitters or certain safety devices, you had to hold at least a Radio Telephone Operator License Second Class. One had to pass the Third exam before you could attempt the Second.

Broadcast was considered the highest level of importance (oh, how the mighty have fallen) and the most complex; you needed a First to operate and maintain broadcast transmitters. Again, you had to have passed the Third and Second exams to attempt the First.

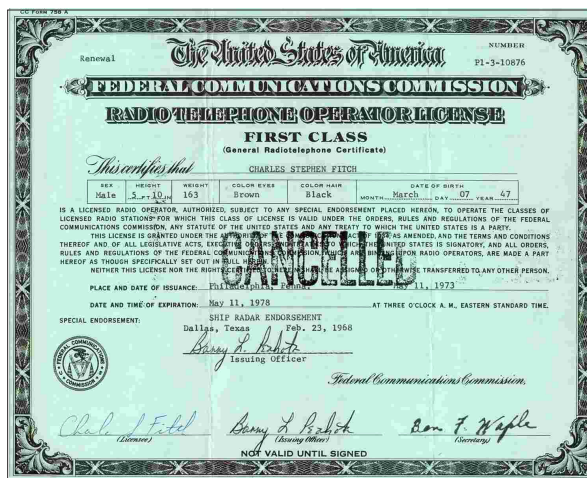
Prior to 1963, all broadcast stations were to be maintained and operated only by First holders.

From 1963 through 1973, as a sop to owners, FM and 10 kW or less non-directional AM stations were allowed to be operated by a First, a Second or the holder of a hybrid sort of license, a broadcast-endorsed Third.

With that in hand, you could turn the transmitter on and off,

take and sign the operating log and adjust power to stay within limits, but you could not maintain the transmitter with a Third.

After 1973, all classes of broadcast stations were allowed to be operated by an "Endorsed Third."



Radio Telephone Operator License First Class

Third Class Operator Permit. A classic example was the police radio dispatcher. He could push a transmit button on his big base station. Because he theoretically was supervising the system, his unlicensed police officers in their patrol cars could push the buttons on their mobile mics and speak back.

The holder of a "Third" couldn't service or install any transmitter equipment. If

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association will be May 24, 2006 at the Golden Corral Steak House off Wendover Ave. The program to be announced.

Please turn to page 3 —>

GARA Meeting Minutes



Regular Meeting April 24, 2006

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association was held at the Golden Corral Restaurant Monday evening April 24, at 7:15 PM at the Golden Corral Steak House off Wendover Ave. One visitor was present, Brent Wells.

The meeting was called to order by President John Doggett, KI4BMS. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as printed in the "Feed Line." It was noted Earl Yeamans, N4ERL was at Beacon Place Hospice and Earl Fox, W4DWR, was home.

There was no old business reported. Committee reports were presented.

Treasurer Ernie Wall, NC4EW, reported a memorial contribution had been made in the name of Pete Wilson, K4CAV, to the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. Al Allred, K4ZKQ, gave his financial forecast, saying everything was on tract.

Secretary/web master/news letter editor Tom Forrest, N4GVK, said all was fine and the news letter was growing and the web site was being updated on a daily basis.

Engineering Committee report was presented by Arch, KT4AT. Arch said he had tuned all four repeaters, correcting the sensitivity by an average of 1 dB; frequencies tuned with CDMA/GPS synchronizer at 25 deg C, with all transmitters delivering expected power, with no SWR on feedlines/antennas. He also said the city had a new generator and it was awaiting installation at the site. At time of installation, both repeaters may be off the air for a few hours. Arch commented on his antenna software project and said the VHF controller club announcement problem had been identified and would be tested the following Monday.

Operations Chairman and Repeater Trustee Roy Smith, N4BYU, had no report. John Doggett, KI4BMS, reported about various upcoming events. Allen Bradley,

KD4IUN, requested volunteer operators for the Natural Science Center Ham station, and needed volunteers for the upcoming soccer tournament in May. President John Doggett, KI4BMS, commented on a couple of items: the fox hunt will be rescheduled and other projects for the club were still in the planning stages.

The program for the evening was presented by Jim Allred. Jim is veteran and a POW from the Korean War. Jim told the group about his experience as a captive under horrific conditions for 999 days during the war. He described how he managed cope with cruel punishment and torture. He said approximately 65% of the POW camp did not survive. The members thanked Jim for a very interesting talk.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8:10 pm

Respectfully submitted by Tom Forrest, N4GVK, Secretary

Ham Happenings NEWS briefs

Earl Yeamans, N4ERL, SK



Dr. Earle Yeamans, N4ERL, became a silent key, Monday, April 24, 2006, at Hospice of Greensboro's Beacon Place. Earl has suffered from cancer for the past few months.

Earl is a past officer of GARA serving as vice-president. Earl was also the GARA

Member of the Month in the September, 2005 Feed Line.

Earl was a decorated Army veteran of the Vietnam War, and a pediatric dentist.

He started his dental career in 1972 as a fulltime assistant professor at the University of Connecticut Health Center. He maintained a private practice until 1988, when he joined the Guilford County Department of Public Health as its dental director. At the time of his death, Dr. Yeamans served as the assistant health director for the department.

He is survived by his wife, Peggy; his four children, Lynne Yeamans with husband Mark Gore, Greg Yeamans, Michael Yeamans and Amy Campbell; grandchildren, Andrew Yeamans and Vivian Gore; and mother Theresa Yeamans.

Earl Fox, W4DWR, SK

Earl Fox, W4DWR, became a silent key on Tuesday, April 25, 2006. Earl was the treasurer for the Guilford Amateur Society.

Earl was born in a farm house in Kansas on Dec. 1, 1924. He served honorably during WW II in the Navy and in 1951

was called into naval service again for the Korean conflict. After the war, Earl earned a BS in electrical engineering from Kansas State University.



Earl was an amateur for over 45 years, being a member of the QCWA (Quarter Century Wireless Association) and a past member of GARA.

Surviving are his loving wife of 58 years, Mary; children, Jeff Fox and wife Shae of Atlanta, Ga., David Fox of Greensboro, Debbie Fox of Greensboro and Danny Fox and wife Debbie of Archdale.

Our thoughts and sympathy go out to both families during this time.

First Class Phone from page 1

In the 1980s, the commission sailed through a sea change of regulation. A basic premise was that the holder of the station license ultimately was responsible for the proper operation of the station.

On Jan. 5, 1979, the FCC eliminated the Third requirement, as well as the license grade, and allowed holders of Restricted Radiotelephone Permits (just fill out a form and mail it in) to operate broadcast transmitters of nearly all classes and powers.

This requirement ultimately was dropped; now no operating license at all is needed for local or remote controlled stations. Responsibility for proper operation at this time falls completely to the station owner.

knew something about what they were doing.

In other professions, comparable licensing also is done through exams with

All numbered classes of radiotelephone licenses were eliminated on Aug. 7, 1981, when the FCC established the General Radiotelephone Operator License (PG) and ceased to issue First and Second Class Operator Licenses. A single omnibus grade of license, the "General," remains, required mainly for the repair of non-broadcast communications equipment.

In the dim long ago, the "license wall" at a radio station's transmitter site was a special place, reserved for FCC licenses. As a youngster I visited one large station where all the soft blue-colored First licenses were arranged in seniority, like steps on a pyramid, leading to the large white primary station license at the top.

License walls are long gone. Hopefully the pride in our profession remains.



Radio Telephone Third Class Operator Permit.

Equity trap

In my rear-view mirror, I think the major reason the "First" disappeared was a basic flaw: The test process used a set question base that could be co-opted. This left industry with an exam that could be passed by memorization, detracting from the value of the license as a proof that a person

a set syllabus of concepts addressed; however, the tests do not ask the same questions each time. This "equity" trap — dumbing up the exam — is a flaw that the SBE certification process, the industry's own replacement for the First's proof of knowledge, has so far been able to avoid, in my estimation.

Information on the FCC's present operator permits and licensing can be found at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/commoperators/lpe.html>.

This article appeared in Radio World newspaper and is reproduced with permission. Visit www.rwonline.com.

Mine Disaster Survivor KC8VKZ Recalls Details Of Tragedy

Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ--the lone survivor of the January 2 Sago Mine disaster in West Virginia--has expressed his sorrow to the victims' families and shared his personal recollections of the tragedy.

"I cannot explain why I was spared while the others perished," McCloy wrote April 26, the Associated Press reports. The letter publicly revealed for the first time McCloy's memories of the incident that almost took his life. Following weeks of hospital treatment and rehabilitation,

McCloy, 26, is still recovering from the ordeal.

While he does not remember the explosion that trapped 12 colleagues and himself in the mine, he said he does recall the mine's filling quickly "with fumes and thick smoke," making breathing difficult. He said at least four of the emergency air packs failed to function, so the miners shared the units that did and there were not enough to go around. The trapped miners also tried to signal their location by beating on mine roof bolts and plates

with a sledgehammer, McCloy told the victims' families in his letter. As they began to accept their fate, he said, the group prayed and wrote letters to their loved ones. He says as his co-workers lost consciousness one by one, he just sat and waited, "unable to do much else."

McCloy, who did not testify during a public hearing into the Sago disaster this week, said he didn't know how long it was before he also fell unconscious from the gas and smoke. He was rescued after 41 hours underground. *From ARRL Letter 5/5/06*

"The Feed Line" is ©2006 by the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association and published monthly. Our address is P.O. Box 7054, Greensboro, NC 27417. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide the club and prospective members information about the club and amateur radio in general. Material and information should reach the editor by the first Friday of the month for the next edition of the newsletter. Opinions expressed in "The Feed Line" do not necessarily represent the views of the officers, directors, editor or members of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association. Material may be reproduced, provided proper credit is given to GARA.

Area Activities

FOURTH MONDAY – at 6:30 PM, the **Greensboro Amateur Radio Association** has their regular monthly meeting at the Golden Corral on Landview Dr., off W. Wendover Ave. Please plan to gather at 6:30 PM for dinner. The meeting is scheduled to start at 7:15 PM

CLUB NETS:

SUNDAYS – weekly at 9 PM, the **GARA News and Information Net**. This net features NewsLine and is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater. Roy Smith, N4BYU is always looking for net controls. Contact him if you would like to help.

THURSDAYS – The **Guilford County ARES Net** meets on the 145.150 repeater (100 Hz. tone) at 9 PM.

TUESDAYS – at 8 PM, the **2 Meter SSB Net** meets on 144.225 Mhz. USB. Chris Thompson, K4HC is the net control station.

WEDNESDAYS – The **Guilford Amateur Society** holds their weekly net on the 145.250, W4GG repeater with an 88.5 Hz. tone. Jim Hightower, W4JLH is the net control.

TUESDAYS – at 8:30 PM **The Triad SkyWarn Net** meets on the 147.225, K4ITL repeater, no tone required.

OTHER ACTIVITIES :

FIRST MONDAY – The **Guilford County A.R.E.S.** monthly meeting is held at 1002 Meadowood St. off W. Wendover Ave, in the EMS building, beginning at 7 PM.

THIRD MONDAY – at 6 PM **The Guilford Amateur Society** holds their monthly meeting at the Golden Corral on Landview Dr., off W. Wendover Ave. Dinner at 6:30 PM and the business meeting is slated to begin at 7 PM.

SATURDAYS – at the K&W Cafeteria on Big Tree Way, hams get together for **Saturday Breakfast** at 7:30 AM. Talk-in is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater, with 100 Hz. tone.

MONDAYS & FRIDAYS – at 11 AM, Greensboro Hams get together for lunch. On Monday they meet at various locations. Check on the 145.15 repeater for current location and on Friday lunch is at the K&W Cafeteria off South Holden Road. Talk-in is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater with a 100 Hz. tone.

EVERY FRIDAY – at 8 PM (approximately) Greensboro Hams get together for coffee at Starbucks on Battleground (summer location till Daylight Savings time changes)

Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

P.O. Box 7054

Greensboro, NC 27417



Web:
www.w4gso.org

GARA OFFICERS

President

John Doggett, KI4BMS

Vice President

Rudy Langley, KG4HCT

Secretary

Tom Forrest, N4GVK

Treasurer

Ernie Wall, NC4EW

Financial Officer

Al Allred, K4ZKQ

Engineering

Arch, KT4AT

Operations

Roy Smith, N4BYU

Members At Large

Clark Doggett, KG4HOM

Mark Robertson, KG4STP

Webmaster & News Letter Editor

Tom Forrest, N4GVK

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Official Publication of GARA

If you getting the news letter, you're already a member of GARA. Remove this form and pass it along to a friend who might be interested in becoming a Ham. Please add your call here _____



The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association
P.O. Box 7054
Greensboro, NC 27417
www.w4gso.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

\$24 per year

(\$2 per month)

Please fill out the following information and mail the address above or hand deliver to the GARA treasurer. Your membership is appreciated!

Call: _____

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone number: _____

(please advise if this is unlisted and it will not be published on the club roster)

Note: Family memberships are available for persons living under the same roof or if a family member is a school student living away from home - no extra charge.

Is this a family membership? Yes () No ()

If ,Yes, family member name: _____

Call: _____

Comments:



The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association
P.O. Box 7054
Greensboro, NC 27417
www.w4gso.org

Not a “Ham” yet ? It’s easy ...

Ham radio is a fun and exciting hobby. Ham operators provide communications during times of disaster, assisting public service organizations world-wide.

If you’re not an Amateur Radio operator and would like to join the hobby, take a minute to look at our club’s web site:

<http://www.w4gso.org/becomeham.html>

Here you will find a link to download a nice study guide - FREE -

*“Amateur Radio No-Code Technician License Examination
Study Guide and Workbook”*

This is a very nice guide to assist you in obtaining your license.

From this link you can also download a copy of our club brochure and see the testing schedules for the area.

If you have any questions you may phone a representative of our club, Roy Smith, N4BYU, at 674-6131, with any questions you may have. You may also e-mail us at info@w4gso.org.



GARA member Ernie Wall, NC4EW, helps new-comer, twelve-year-old Kelli Joyce, make contacts during the 2005 “Field Day” activities. Kelli went on to get her license and is now KI4LRS.

GARA is a public-service oriented club.