



THE TARA NEWS

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AN ARRL SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB
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SEASON'S GREETINGS & HAPPY HOLIDAYS



"BAND THREAT" PROCEEDING

Comments are due February 12, 2002, in the FCC Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order in ET Docket 01-278. Reply comments are due on March 12, 2002. The proceeding deals in part with a potential band threat to the popular 70-cm band from Part 15 RF identification devices proposed for deployment between 425 and 435 MHz.

SAVI Technology, which markets radiolocation and wireless inventory control products, told the FCC it needs the rules changes to satisfy customer demand for increased RFID system capabilities. The FCC has proposed to allow operation of RFIDs as unlicensed Part 15 devices in the 425-435 MHz band with transmissions of up to two minutes at field strengths now only permitted for extremely short-duration, intermittent control signals.

The ARRL has argued that under the Communications Act of 1934 the FCC lacks authority to permit unlicensed devices with substantial interference potential and that such devices must be

Breakfast with Santa

On Sunday December 16, 2001 there will be an all you can eat breakfast at the Colonie Elks. Admission is \$4.50 per person. There will be a large variety of breakfast foods and beverages to choose from.

Also for all of you who have been good this year, or want to bring the kids, Santa will be there to pass out presents to all. Hope to see everyone there.

Karen - KB2UUC

licensed. The ARRL also is looking into the interference potential posed to 20 meters by a proposal to increase the maximum emission levels permitted by Part 15 devices operating at 13.56 MHz, as well as the maximum level of out-of-band emissions. Comments are advised to read paragraphs 20-27 of the NPRM&O, which is available on the ARRL Web site, <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2001/10/19/1/290a11.html>. Interested parties may file comments using the FCC's E-Com Filing System, <http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html> applicable docket or rule making.



CHRISTMAS PARTY GOODIES

As usual, the T.A.R.A. Family Christmas Party will be a dining extravaganza, but only if we add that special touch. If anyone would like to make a special dish for all of us to share, PLEASE give me a phone call and advise me what you would like to make for the party. It doesn't matter what you make whether it be an entree, salad or dessert. Just let me know and I'll also let you know what we need if you need an idea. Call me or e-mail me, please!

Thanks, as always
Karen Smith 273-6594 or
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TROY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION
10TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY
DECEMBER 18, 2001 7:00 P.M.
Green Island Municipal Center
FOOD - FRIENDSHIP - FUN
Contact MR. Bill - NY2U or Karen - KB2UUC for details



E-QSL - THE FINAL COURTESY

by Dave Morris, N5UP, Founder and Webmaster, eQSL.cc February 5, 2001

The world's first and only eQSL exchange centre, www.eQSL.cc, started the year 2001 with a bang. Only a few weeks earlier, on the first of December, it had blown through the 1 million card mark, and now 2 million cards were in the central database. But instead of slowing down, the rate increased as thousands of eQSL cards were uploaded every hour.

The eQSL.cc site was launched in April of 2000, and included about 1500 hams who had been part of an earlier experiment in an electronic QSL card exchange. The "big" idea was that eQSLs should not be sent around from person to person via e-mail, but should be available at any time through a web-based exchange system and a central database.

Other concepts using e-mail or by posting one stock QSL card on a web page and calling it an eQSL were not satisfactory, because security could not be guaranteed, e-mail addresses had to be looked up, and the sender had to laboriously design his QSL card using graphic design software.

So, we used our 25 years of software development and database design experience to develop a site where each user could guarantee his identity with a scanned image of his ham license, could lay out an eQSL card design using simple point-and-click forms, and could upload logbooks either one-at-a-time, or by uploading an entire ADIF format log file at once. The concept is such a breakthrough, we have patents pending on its technology. To retrieve one of these eQSL cards, the recipient only need enter the callsign, date, and band of the QSO he wants to retrieve, and if the other ham has entered that QSO into the system, up pops the complete eQSL card, ready for printing on a local printer. Furthermore, if the recipient registers his callsign with us, he can get a listing of all incoming eQSLs, and can just point and click to print each card received. Sending a reciprocal card back is a matter of clicking a button!

Apparently, most everyone else thinks this is the right way to do it, too. Another six weeks after hitting the 2 million card mark, it appears the number of cards will double again to 4 million.

Many of the members of the eQSL.cc site are using stock images for their eQSL card designs. But since it is possible to upload a graphic image to use on one's card, there are many custom cards online as well. Users are signing up from over 180 countries all over the world. In many places, a stack of 500 traditional QSL cards might well cost the average ham operator and entire year's salary. On eQSL.cc, 500 beautiful full-color cards can be sent for free!

In an era when "dot coms" are failing left and right, it is noteworthy that the eQSL.cc site, which is supported almost entirely through voluntary donations, has been operating in the black since Day One. Since the site runs virtually without any human intervention, the only ongoing expenses are for development of new features, and for continually increasing disk space, processor power, and bandwidth. A small amount goes to answering the questions and suggestions that come into the webmaster's office by e-mail. In most cases, replies are returned within the same day.

Not everyone agrees that eQSLing is the way to go. Some people like to get their hands on that stiff cardboard with the exotic stamps that spent months in transit from the jungles of some island that is only above water for 3 weeks out of the year. Others are bothered that some amateur organizations still have "no electronic transmission" clauses in the rule books for their awards. Others still are spooked by the privacy issues that this interconnected new world brings up.

But it's very difficult to argue - as the saying goes - with success. And 4 million cards is success by anyone's measure. At the present growth rate (with the number of eQSLs doubling every month), eQSL.cc could be home to virtually all of the world's amateur radio operators within a couple of years. Contest "big guns" will be able to "QSL 100%" within a matter of minutes, saving hundreds of hours of time and thousands of dollars in the process. DXpeditions will be able to "QSL 100%" on the spot, whether it be from that desert island with a dial-up Internet connection, or when the crew gets back to "civilization". It's just a quick log file upload, and they are done!

And eQSLs, unlike their traditional cardboard counterparts, can be verified through automated computer interfaces by amateur organizations wanting to validate award and contest submissions. The presence of a scanned license image on file for each user goes way beyond the simplistic checking that is possible using the older traditional QSL cards.

And now eQSL.cc is also a favorite site for SWLs, because users can identify themselves as either licensed amateur operator, or SWL. The eQSL cards between SWLs and hams are automatically configured to contain proper SWL phrasing, making their lives easier and saving them tons of money.

Complex systems shouldn't be designed in a vacuum, so we have assembled a capable group of hams and SWLs into an Advisory Board. Among these advisors are users with satellite and DX experience, contesting backgrounds, and international origins, as well as technology gurus and people with long-term operating histories. This group discusses current issues and future development plans for the site on a daily basis. Just another feature of the interconnected world we have entered as the 21st Century dawns.

There were nay-sayers when SSB first began to push CW aside. There were those who thought packet radio was just a short-lived fad. Others thought we shouldn't be wasting money on amateur satellites. And some people think eQSLs are "not natural". But for tens of thousands of hams and SWLs who upload their entire logbooks nightly in an effort to live up to the "100% QSL" promise of amateur radio, the final courtesy of a QSO is an eQSL.

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NEW AMATEUR EXTRA CLASS QUESTION POOL RELEASED

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators' Question Pool Committee has released a revised and expanded Amateur Extra class (Element 4) question pool into the public domain. The new question pool becomes effective July 1, 2002, and must be used to generate all Extra class written examinations administered on or after that date. It replaces the Extra class question pool released April 15, 2000--the day Amateur Radio "restructuring" became effective.

The new Element 4 pool expands the number of questions by more than 20 percent--806 questions--as opposed to 665 in the current Extra class pool, and it contains more technical material. More than half of the questions cover electrical principles, circuits, signals and emissions.

The 50 questions in an Extra class examination are drawn from the question pool consistent with FCC rules and according to a formula that specifies the number of questions to be asked from each of nine topic areas. Applicants must correctly answer at least 37 questions to pass.

The new Element 4 question pool is available on the ARRL Web site, <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/pools.html>

The just-released Extra class question pool will remain valid through June 30, 2005.

The Question Pool Committee now will turn its attention to developing an outline for the Technician class (Element 2) question pool. A draft Element 2 syllabus is scheduled for public release and comment next spring. The QPC invites suggestions for the Element 2 syllabus and question pool revision.

Questions and comments about the QPC's work can be directed to:

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NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE/ARRL SPECIAL EVENT STATION

The National Weather Service and ARRL co-sponsored an on-the-air event to recognize the contribution of SKYWARN volunteers. The NWS/ARRL SKYWARN Recognition Day was on Saturday, December 1, 2001 from 0000 to 2400 UTC. This marked the third year that ARRL and the NWS have co-sponsored an Amateur Radio special event. Some 80 National Weather Service offices were signed up to participate.

During the special event, hams or ham groups operated from NWS offices to contact other amateurs or amateur groups across the country. Last year more than 23,000 contacts were made from NWS offices. The object was for amateur stations to exchange QSO information with as many National Weather Service special event stations as possible. Stations transmitted callsign, signal report, location and a one or two word description of the weather at their location--such as sunny, partly cloudy, windy.

The NWS is offering participation certificates and endorsement stickers to amateurs who request them. Requests go to National Weather Service, 920 Armory Rd, Goodland, KS 67735. This year's endorsements includes the Patriot--a special endorsement to honor Amateur Radio volunteers who assisted in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Full information, operating instructions, a list of participating NWS stations, and certificate and QSL information is available on the NWS/ARRLSKYWARN Recognition Day Web page <<http://hamradio.noaa.gov/>> or see November QST, page 76



"THE BIG PROJECT" SEEKS LOGO

Now that the Amateur Radio Education Project-- "The Big Project"--is under way, it's looking for a logo. "The theme is using Amateur Radio in education," says The Big Project Coordinator Jerry Hill, KH6HU. "This is your opportunity to show off your creativity." The deadline for entries is December 28, 2001!

All entries should incorporate the ARRL diamond, portray the proper image in both black-and-white and in color, and be the same size as other standard patches, such as ARES--typically 3.5 inches in diameter. Entries should be submitted electronically at a resolution suitable for QST publication (at least 300 dpi when the image is sized at 4x5 inches or larger; see The ARRL

Author's Guide , <<http://www.arrl.org/qst/aguide/>>).

The creator of the logo selected as a permanent symbol for The Big Project will receive a handsome wall certificate, and the winner's name will be announced in QST, in The ARRL Letter and on the ARRL Web site. Remember, the deadline for entries is December 28. E-mail entries to The Big Project Coordinator Jerry Hill, KH6HU <kh6hu@arrl.org>. (Resubmit your entry if it's not acknowledged within two business days.)

" HOW TO SOUND LIKE A LID "

On two meters I have noticed a tendency of people making a effort to sound like a "LID". Since this appears to be the new style in Amateur Radio, I thought I would present this funny guide to radio nerd-dom.

Step One: Use as many "Q" signals as possible. Yes, I know they were invented solely for CW and are totally inappropriate for two meter FM, but they are fun and entertaining. They keep people guessing as to what you really meant. I.E. "I'm going to QSY to the phone." Can you really change frequencies to the phone? QSL used to mean, "I am acknowledging receipt", but now it appears to mean, "yes" or "OK". I guess I missed it when the ARRL changed the meaning. It is also best to use "OK" and "QSL" together. Redundancy is the better part of Lid-dom.

Step Two: Never laugh when you can say "HI HI". No one will ever know you aren't a long time CW rag-chewer. If you don't tell them, they'll think you've been on since the days of Marconi.

Step Three: Utilize an alternative vocabulary. Use words like "destinated" and "negatory". It's OK to make up your own words here. I.E. "Yeah Tom, I "pheelbart zaphonix" occasionally myself."

Step Four: Always say "XX4XXX" (Insert your own call) "for I.D." As mentioned in Step One, anything that creates redundancy is always encouraged. That's why we have the Department of Redundancy Department. (Please note that you can follow your call with "for identification purposes" instead of "for I.D." While taking longer to say, it is worth more "LID points".

Step Five: The better the copy on two meter FM, the more you should use phonetics. Names should be especially used if they are short or common ones. I.E. "My name is Al... Alpha Lima" or "Jack.. Juliet Alpha Charlie Kilo." If at all possible use the less common HF phonetics "A4SM... America, Number Four, Sugar Mexico." And for maximum "LID points", make up unintelligible phonetics. "My name is Bob... Billibong Oregano Bumperpool."

Step Six: Always give the calls of yourself and everyone who is (or has been) in the group, whether they are still there or not. While this has been unnecessary for years, it is still a great memory test. You may also use "and the group" if you are an "old timer" or just have a bad memory. Extra points for saying everyone's call and then clearing in a silly way "K2PKK, Chow, Chow."

Step Seven: Whenever possible, use the wrong terminology. It keeps people guessing. Use "modulation" when you mean "deviation", and vice-versa.

Step Eight: If someone asks for a break, always finish your turn, taking as long as possible before turning it over. Whenever possible, pass it around a few times first. This will discourage the breaker, and if it is an emergency, encourage him to switch to another repeater and not bother you.

Step Nine: Always ask involved questions of the person who is trying to sign out. Never let him get by with just a "yes" or "no" answer. Make it a question that will take him a long time to answer.

Step Ten: The less you know on a subject, the more you should speculate about it in the roundtable. Also the amount of time you spend on the subject should be inversely proportionate to your knowledge of the subject even though you have no damn clue.

Step Eleven: Always make sure you try to communicate with only a handheld and a rubber duck antenna. Also, make sure you work through a repeater that you can hear very well, but it cannot hear you. This will put out a kind of "LID mating call": "Well, Joe, I can hear the repeater just fine here. I wonder why it can't hear me?" You will score maximum LID points if you are mobile, and with the radio lying in the passenger seat.

Step Twelve: If you hear two amateurs start a conversation, wait until they are twenty seconds into their contact, and then break in to make a call, or better yet to use the auto-patch. Make sure you keep the repeater tied up for at least three minutes. This way, once the two have re-established contact, they won't even remember what they were talking about.

Step Thirteen: You hear someone on the repeater giving directions to a visiting amateur. Even if the directions are good, make sure you break in with your own "alternate route but better way to get there" version. This is

most effective with several other "would-be LIDs", each giving a different route. By the time the visiting amateur unscrambles all the street names whizzing by in his mind, he should have moved out of the range of the repeater. This keeps you from having to stick around to help the guy get back out of town, later.

Step Fourteen: If an annoying station is bothering you, make sure your other "LID" buddies have a "coded" frequency list. Even though "CODES" are strictly forbidden on Amateur Radio, it's really neat to practice "James Bond" tactics. **Step Fifteen:** Always use the National Calling Frequency for general conversations. The more uninteresting, the longer you should use it. Extra points are awarded if you have recently move from an adjacent frequency for no reason. Make sure when DX is "rolling" in on 52.525 that you hang out there and talk to your friends five miles down the road about the good old CB days!

Step Sixteen: Make sure that if you have a personal problem with someone, you should voice your opinion in a public forum, especially a net. Make sure you give their name, call, and any other identifying remarks. For maximum points, make sure the person in question is not on the repeater, or not available.

Step Seventeen: Make sure you say the first few words of each transmission twice, especially if it is the same thing each time. Like "roger, roger" or "fine business, fine business". I cannot stress enough about encouraging redundancy.

Step Eighteen: If you hear a conversation on a local repeater, break in and ask how each station is receiving you. Of course they will only see the signal of the repeater you are using, but it's that magic moment when you can find a fellow "LID", and get the report. Extra points are awarded if you are using a base station, and the repeater is less than twenty-five air miles from you.

Step Nineteen: Use the repeater for an hour or two at a time, preventing others from using it. Better yet, do it on a daily basis. Your quest is to make people so sick of hearing your voice every time they turn on their radio, they'll move to another frequency. This way you'll lighten the load on the repeater, leaving even more time for you to talk on it.

Step Twenty: See just how much flutter you can generate by operating at handheld power levels too far away from the repeater. Engage people in conversations when you know they won't be able to copy half of what you're saying. Even when they say you're uncopiable, continue to string them along by making further transmissions. See just how frustrated you can make the other amateur before he finally signs off in disgust.

Step Twenty One: Use lots of radio jargon. After all, it makes you feel important using words ordinary people don't say. Who cares if it makes you sound like you just fell off Channel 19 on the citizen's Band? Use phrases such as "Roger on that", "10-4", "I'm on the side", "Your making the trip" and "Negatory on that".

Step Twenty Two: Use excessive microphone gain. See just how loud you can make your audio. Make sure the audio gain is so high that other amateurs can hear any bugs crawling on your floor. If mobile, make sure the wind noise is loud enough that others have to strain to pick your words out from all the racket.

Step Twenty Three: Start every transmission with the word "Roger" or "QSL". Sure, you don't need to acknowledge that you received the other transmission in full. After all, you would simply ask for a repeat if you missed something. But consider it your gift to the other amateur to give him solace every few seconds that his transmissions are being received.

Step Twenty Four: When looking for a contact on a repeater, always say your "listening" or "monitoring" multiple times. I've always found that at least a half dozen times or so is good. Repeating your multiple "listening" ID's every 10 to 15 seconds is even better. Those people who didn't want to talk to you will eventually call you, hoping you'll go away after you have finally made a contact.

Step Twenty Five: Always use a repeater, even if you can work the other station easily on simplex ... especially if you can make the contact on simplex. The coverage of the repeater you use should be inversely proportional to your distance from the other station.

Step Twenty Six: When on repeaters using courtesy tones, you should always say "over". Courtesy tones are designed to let everyone know when you have unkeyed but don't let that stop you. Say "over", "back to you" or "go ahead". It serves no useful purpose but don't worry, it's still fun!

Step Twenty Seven: Use the repeater's autopatch for frivolous routine calls... especially during morning or evening commute times. While pulling into the neighborhood, call home to let them know you'll be there in two minutes... or, call your spouse to complain about the bad day you had at work. After all, the club has "measured rate" service on their phone line so they get charged for each autopatch call. Your endeavor is to make so many patches in a year that you cost the club at least \$20 in phone bills. That way you'll feel you got your money's worth for your dues!

Step Twenty Eight: Never say "My name is" It makes you sound human. If at all possible, use one of the following phrases: a) "The personal here is ..." b) "The handle here is..."

Step Twenty Nine: Use "73" and "88" incorrectly. Both are already considered plural, but add a "s" to the end anyway. Say "73's" or "88's". Who cares if it means "best regards" and "love and kisses." Better yet, say "seventy thirds"! (By the way, seventy thirds equals about 23.3).

Step Thirty: If the repeater is off the air for service, complain about the fact that it was off the air as soon as it's turned back on. Act as though your entire day has been ruined because the repeater wasn't available when you wanted to use it. Even though you have never paid a penny to help out with the upkeep of it.

These easy steps should put you well on your way to "LID-Hood". I hope these helpful hints will save you some time in your quest to sound like the perfect "LID". I should also note that these steps need not apply to simplex operation, as nobody really gives a crap because that HTX-202 isn't going to get out too far with just a rubber duck.

Our Thanks to Scanner Nuts @ <http://webdeals.net> and John Henderson, KD4DLU for this bit of humor.

Editor's Note: This article is intended for Entertainment purposes, only. BUT, if you see something in this article that looks familiar. Think about it! After reading this I started to think that I may have to modify some of my habits, too.

AO-40 Transponder Hiatus Looms

Necessary adjustments to AO-40's attitude to compensate for unfavorable sun angles over the next several months will silence the satellite's transponders for a while. Recent reports indicate that AO-40 continues to operate well, providing coverage between many parts of the world.

A scheduled attitude shift to compensate for the unfavorable sun angle will leave AO-40's antennas pointing away from Earth until next spring and lead to a transponder shutdown period that could start as soon as late December. The satellite is currently in a long period during which Earth eclipses the sun near perigee--its point closest to Earth. AO-40 relies on solar panels for its power.

Command station team member Stacey Mills, W4SM, said that testing and development continue on AO-40's three-axis control system, to account for significant changes in the final orbit, the so-called "mystery effect" and the loss of some sensors. But he said that three-axis control would not be ready in time to avoid the unfavorable solar-angle season, so AO-40 will remain in spin mode, with attitude controlled by onboard magnetorquers. The onboard magnetorquing system--which consists of solenoid coils--makes use of the Earth's magnetic field to control the spacecraft's spin and orientation.

"Within a few weeks, we will have to change ALAT (AO-40's attitude with respect to Earth) dramatically, probably to about -50 degrees, to allow the sun to pass us by for about three months," he explained. The resulting high "squint angle" will render the S2 transmitter ineffective for transponder use, and the passbands will be shut off temporarily.

Mills estimated that ground controllers may need to start shifting the satellite's attitude starting sometime just before Christmas. He didn't expect a favorable sun angle that would again allow pointing AO-40 directly toward Earth (ALON/ALAT 0/0) until mid-April. "It's possible that we can leave the transponders on during the first part of the move and turn them back on slightly before April 15 as we start back toward 0/0," Mills said, "but you can figure that things will be sub-optimal from about Christmas until April 15."

During the transponder shutdown period, Mills pointed out, telemetry also will be harder to come by. He urged AO-40 telemetry gatherers to be as active as possible during the transponder downtime.

The current AO-40 transponder operating schedule and more information are available via the AMSAT Web site, <http://www.amsat.org>.

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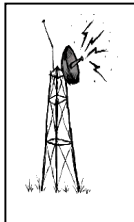
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