

SVARA Harmonic

A monthly publication of the Saginaw Valley
Amateur Radio Association

February, 2007

Hello Fellow Hams!

It's official. Beginning February 23, 2007, Morse code will no longer be required to earn HF privileges. Technicians will have Tech Plus privileges automatically. General and Amateur Extra knowledge tests are still required for upgrades. If you have passed a General or Extra test without code in the past 365 days and have the CSCE paperwork you were given, you may use this for an instant upgrade at any VE session. (You still pay the testing fees) When you use the frequencies ranges added for your new upgrade, you will need to use the /AG or /AE suffix on your call sign until the records are updated in the FCC database.

If you are a Technician, you could take the General and Extra Tests before February 23 -- however without passing the morse code test, you wont have a General/Extra License until you show up at a future VE session after February 23 with your CSCE paperwork and pay the VE fee again.

Here is the link to the official word from the FCC as published in the Federal Register yesterday:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/E7-729.pdf>

Have fun upgrading -- and Best Wishes!

--Keith (N8XD)

QRM from Dave, N8ERL

Now that the code requirements for all amateur licenses has been lifted, I'm thinking that here will be a lot of hams who will be upgrading to general and then to extra class licenses. So, here is my two cents worth on upgrading:

First, consider bypassing the local hamfest testing session and go to a regularly scheduled session such as the Genesee County Radio Club's monthly session in the Flint area. Not that you would have a problem at a hamfest...I just think that it's a better deal to take your exam with a group that does the exams at a regularly scheduled time and is very familiar with the process.

My second choice would be at a special session such as SVARA is thinking of doing. You would be at a quiet organized situation away from the hustle and bustle of a Hamfest. Again, not that exam taking at a hamfest is bad, many hamfests have great sessions...but I have heard of the occasional clinch at one.

I just went to Flint to upgrade last weekend and was pretty impressed. These guys (and gals) are there once a month and have the program down pretty good. The room was comfortable, quiet, and well lit. The last time I took an amateur exam was at the Detroit FCC office (before VEC's) in 1983 so this was my first exposure to the VE system. There were five of us there with four VE's, with two of the candidates going from tech all the way to Extra.

If you attend an exam you will need: Your original license, one copy (bring two just in case), about \$14.00 (have the right change, out of the five I was the only one with the exact amount), a couple of pencils (for doing the test), one pen (for filling out forms), and a scientific calculator. You can find all the scheduled Michigan ARRL VEC exams at: <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/examsearch.phtml?State=MI>

Just a note: An exception would be if you want to upgrade at Dayton. Go for it. There's nothing like really cementing a Dayton experience with a new license upgrade!

For those of you who upgrade to general and extra you can expect to have a great time on HF as the next sunspot cycle gets going in the next couple of years. When I got back into radio in 2000 after a few years hiatus, it was in the middle of the last cycle. All I had for a rig was a 25 watt 10 meter Radio Shack HTX 100 and a 10, 15, 20 meter dipole in the attic. When 10 meters would open up, I could work DX stations pretty easy and had a ton of fun. The thing about 10 meters is...when it's open you don't need a lot of power or a big gun antenna to work DX.

I've been fooling around with a free ham software program called Ham Radio Deluxe. This is a free program written by Simon Brown, HB9DRV. HRD is a suite of Windows programs providing CAT control for commonly used transceivers and receivers and includes mapping and PSK31 software.

To put it mildly...this is one cool program. Both my IC-746 Pro and my FT-857 hooked up to it with absolutely no problem. By itself the FT-857 takes a little time to work with as it has a rather comprehensive menu system, but when used with my laptop and HRD it is a breeze to set up. HRD is without a doubt the neatest free computer program I have ever seen. It has a bunch of features and works with many, many rigs. Download it at: <http://hrd.ham-radio.ch/>

So, how has your winter been so far? Let me know what you have been up to with ham radio and I will pass it along in the newsletter. Got a new rig, have you upgraded, are you trying something new, reach a milestone or got an award? Email me at wz8ds@yahoo.com with what's new.

73,
Dave, N8ERL

VE Testing possible in Saginaw

We're thinking about holding a VE test session in Saginaw around the end of February or in March. This will coincide with the repeal of the element 1 Morse code test. Any VE's interested in participating, please send a short email to me. If you are considering an upgrade, perhaps from Technician to General it would be nice to hear from you too.

Best Wishes
--Keith (N8XD)

What is a Decibel?

In the amateur radio world we are always using the term decibel, commonly shown as db. A certain antenna is said to have a 25db gain over a dipole, a signal is referred to as several db over S-9, and we have X db of loss in a cable so many feet long. Yet the decibel is dimensionless. It is the logarithm of a ratio. In terms of power, $db = 10 \log_{10} P1/P2$, where P2 is the reference power. It sometimes is referenced to a milliwatt (.001 watt). Thus a power of 1 watt referenced to 1 mw would be $10 \times \log_{10}(1/.001) = 10 \times \log_{10}(1000) = 30db$. Anything that can be referenced to a ratio can be expressed in db. A simple example is the reference of a dollar to a penny. A dollar is $10 \times \log_{10}(100/1) = 20 db$. Remember db is only a ratio of one thing to another. If something is doubled then it is said to increase by 3db. If something is cut in half it is said to decrease by -3db. It's all a matter of the ratio of something to something else. The next time you buy or build an antenna make sure you know what the db gain is referenced to.

WA8GRI

Tech Classes Offered in Midland

Hello Fellow Hams!

Here is an announcement from the Midland Club...

The Midland Amateur Radio Club will sponsor a Technician class that will be starting February 6th at the Salvation Army building, 330 Waldo in Midland. Classes will run from 7 PM till 9 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Classes will run through March 8th with a VE examination session scheduled for Saturday March 10th. The only charge for the class will be the \$19 cost of the book we will be using for the class.

Class instructors will be Raleigh, W8QOI and Lee, KC8ITI. If you know of anyone that is looking to take a class be sure to let them know that there is one coming up.

Contacts for signing up are Lee, KC8ITI, Phone (989) 652-6213, email KC8ITI@ARRL.NET or Raleigh, W8QOI, Phone (989) 631-5591, email W8QOI@ARRL.NET.

If there is interest, a class in Morse code will also be taught with a certificate awarded for completion. Please notify W8QOI if you wish to take the code class.

The Salvation Army
ATT: Lee Hodges KC8ITI
PO Box 1447
Midland, MI 48641.

Board of Directors
SVARA
January 17, 2007
Texan on State Street

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 pm. Present were: N8XD, KC8BDQ, KC8YVF, W8LPV, KC8BYI, and KD8AVA.

Chairperson of the Board Election:
KC8BDQ nominated WA8GRI who declined.
N8XD nominated KC8BYI who declined.
WA8GRI nominated W8LPV who accepted.
W8LPV will be board chairperson for 2007.

The Secretary's report was accepted on a motion by KC8YVF, seconded by KD8AVA.
The Treasurer's report was reviewed.

Board Appointments:
KC8BDQ nominated KC8YVF for the repeater committee and KD8AVA seconded with all in favor.
The President, N8XD nominated KB8SWR to the repeater committee with acceptance pending.

Goals for 2007

- Trailer Renovations consisting of flooring, cabinetry and lighting.
- Trailer Awning Repair or replacement.
- Becoming fully 501 (c) (3) compliant.
- Establishing and implementing the SVARA Scholarship Fund.
- Establishing an A.T.V. repeater.

There are no plans for a program at the February, 2007 general membership meeting.
KC8BDQ will try to secure Darrin Bradley from News5 for the April meeting.

SkyWarn training will be held April 12, 2007 at 6:30PM in the Covenant Cooper Lecture Theater.

N8XD made a motion to postpone the purchase of loaner handhelds for the club.
WA8GRI seconded and most were in favor with KC8BDQ casting the lone nay vote.

On a motion by WA8GRI and seconded by N8XD the meeting was adjourned at 8:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Weirauch, KC8BDQ
Secretary

General Membership Meeting
January 5, 2007
Red Cross

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 PM. There were 26 members and guests present.

The Secretary's report was accepted as printed in the Harmonic on a motion by WA8GRI and seconded by N8YXR with all in favor.

The treasurer's 2006 summary report and January report were accepted on a motion by N8YXR seconded by W8HZF.

K8CQF had some questions about the treasurer's summary report.

N8XD recapped the High Speed Multimedia project night.

KD8AVA initiated a discussion of the proposed band plan changes and the elimination of Morse code.

New Business:

KB8QO requested permission to convert our old log files to PC format. K8CQF asked that the logs be copied first and KB8QO use a copy. W8CWD made a motion to proceed in that fashion. All were in favor.

KC8YVF handed out ARES identification cards as well as mentioning the ATV grant from the county. They are in the process of preparing a proposal for the ATV equipment. The county may purchase an enclosed trailer for this purpose as well.

WA8KFC asked about club access to the ATV repeater. It will be available.

All were in favor of a motion to allow the ATV repeater equipment at Rosien Tower.

K8CQF congratulated KC8VOA on his recent wedding.

W7KEH said he would be emailing RACES members reminding them of renewals.

WA8GRI won \$15.00 in the 50/50 drawing

Meeting closed at 8:59 PM on a motion by WA8KFC and seconded by N8YXR.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Weirauch, KC8BDQ
Secretary



SVARA HARMONIC
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 The Saginaw Valley Amateur Radio Association
 PO Box 1783 Saginaw, MI 48605-1783



Visit our web site at: www.k8dac.com

SVARA Members sponsor the 147.240+ PL 103.5 & 224.28 Open Repeaters K8DAC/R
 -and- Emergency HF stations at the American Red Cross and auxiliary field operations.

General Membership meeting - monthly on the 1st Friday, 8:00 p.m.
 at the American Red Cross, 1232 N. Michigan.

Board of Directors meeting - monthly on the second Tuesday following the general membership meeting,
 8:00 p.m. at the American Red Cross (members always welcome).

Club Breakfast – monthly on Saturday morning after the meeting,
 9:00 a.m. at the Texan Restaurant, 5656 State St.

2007 SVARA Officers

President	Keith DeLong, N8XD	989-695-5131	n8xd@arrl.net
Vice-President	Jim Stutesman, WA8GRI	989-791-2156	wa8gri@arrl.net
Secretary	Jeff Weirauch, KC8BDQ	989-797-0692	weirauch@chartermi.net
Treasurer	Judy Weirauch, KC8BYI	989-797-0692	weirauch@northwood.edu
Board Member 2007	Ron Huss, KC8YVF	989-799-2679	kc8yvfv@rhuss.cncfamily.com
Board Member 2008	Lou Vescio, W8LPV	989-799-1467	lvescio@midmich.net
Board Member 2009	Aaron Stella, KD8AVA	989-497-0463	astella@bcdglobal.com

2007 SVARA Appointments

Newsletter Editor	Jeff Weirauch, KC8BDQ	989-797-0692	svaraharmonic@yahoo.com
Emergency Coordinator	Carl DeMeritt, KC8YVI	989-792-2151	cdemeritt@chs-mi.com
Public Info Officer	Aaron Stella, KD8AVA	989-497-0463	astella@bcdglobal.com
Repeater Committee	Ron Huss, KC8YVF Brad Mellberg, W8QPO Jeff Metiva, KB8SWR		

To subscribe or submit articles, please send requests to Jeff Weirauch, KC8BDQ -- svaraharmonic@yahoo.com

SVARA Elmers

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APRS + WX	Brian Buckstiegel, N8AVR	989-781-6875	brian@n8avr.us
CPR-AED Training	Roger Steffes, K8DVX	989-752-9891	RogerSteffes@speednetllc.com
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General Questions	Joe Turner, K8CQF	989-793-7373	k8cqf@arrl.net
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RFI	Jim Stutesman, WA8GRI	989-791-2156	wa8gri@arrl.net
Satellites	Keith DeLong, N8XD	989-695-5131	n8xd@arrl.net
Slow Scan TV	Keith DeLong, N8XD	989-695-5131	n8xd@arrl.net
Towers	Verne Williams, KC8FUV	213-689-5258	vw54@ncats.net