



# ZERO BEAT

Southeastern Massachusetts  
Amateur Radio Association, Inc.  
54 Donald Street  
South Dartmouth, MA 02748



OUR 66th YEAR

Volume 34, Issue 9

SEMARA

September 1998

## FCC PROPOSES NEW AMATEUR RADIO LICENSING STRUCTURE

The FCC, in Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WT Docket 98-143, advocates the elimination of the Novice and Tech Plus licenses.

This would leave only four amateur radio license classes: Extra, Advanced, General and Technician. The FCC's reasoning behind the proposal is that "there appears to be an unnecessary overlap between the Novice, Technician, and Technician Plus license classes." Additionally, the FCC pointed out that new Novice class licenses have dropped to fewer than 1,000 a year, while new Technician class licenses have increased to over 21,000 per year.

Also raised by the FCC was a possible change in the Morse code requirements for licenses. The commission solicits input and comments on all aspects of the Morse code test requirements. Specifically, the FCC seeks input on whether there should be three levels of code (as presently exists) or should it be reduced to one or two, and if so at what speeds. The FCC noted that reductions in Morse code speed would be balanced by adding new questions on digital technology to the written examination.

Send your comments by December 1, 1998 to the FCC at: [www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html](http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html)



## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The August business meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm by President Rick Cabral. Twenty-two members and one guest were present. Following the salute to the flag and roll call, the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were read and accepted.

Committee reports followed: *Technical* - Scott Szala, W1EV, offered 120 feet of Rohn series 80 tower to the club for a new repeater tower. *Buildings and Grounds* - Need volunteers to cut grass. Large tree stump in front of club needs to be removed. *Scholarship* - None. *Code Class* - Planning meetings being held.

*Communications* - None

*Ratifications* - None

*Old Business* - None.

*New Business* - The following motions were made and approved by the membership: Motion to rescind the July business meeting motion to send a letter to Little People's College. Motion to erect permanent "No Trespassing" and "No Parking"



MEETING Page 2

## ARRL PROPOSES NEW AMATEUR RADIO LICENSING STRUCTURE

The ARRL Board of Director's voted to propose a simplified Amateur Radio licensing structure to the FCC. Under the new plan, approved during their July 16-18 meeting, there would be four written elements instead of the present five, and two Morse code elements instead of the present three.

Additionally, future Amateur Radio licenses would be known as "Class A" through "Class D" with existing licenses "grandfathered" as shown:

### PROPOSED PRESENT

Class A - Extra

Class B - Advanced

Class C - General, Novice,  
& Technician Plus

Class D - Technician

Class A&B will require Morse code proficiency at 12 WPM. Class C will require a 5 WPM test. Class D will require no knowledge of Morse code, and is identical to the existing Technician Class license. To offset the reduction in the Morse code speed required for class A,B&C, the written test requirements will be more difficult. The 12 WPM maximum Morse code requirement is consistent with practices in other countries.

ARRL members may comment on these proposals via their ARRL Directors or by E-Mail to:

[restrux@arrl.org](mailto:restrux@arrl.org)

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## ADVERTISING

Commercial ads the size of a business card will be accepted. Rates are \$5.00 for one insertion, \$20.00 for six insertions, and \$35.00 for twelve insertions.

Non-commercial ads up to forty words in length will be accepted. Rate is \$3.00 for one or \$12.00 for six insertions. Club members have one free non-commercial ad per month.

**MEETING - continued from page one**  
signs on club property. Motion that club officers negotiate a lease agreement with the band that rents our facilities. Motion that the Chairman of the Hamfest, if one is appointed, be given free dues for the following year. Motion that Scott Szala provide pricing and other details regarding erection of the Rohn 80 tower. Motion that Andy Reuter, WA1FNM, be appointed Chairman of this years fleamarket.



The meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm. Following the meeting, **Hank Riley, N1LTV**, gave a presentation on conducting local area balloon launches beginning this fall. (See related article on this page for full details.)

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no security  
in life...



only  
opportunities.

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## LOCAL BALLOON LAUNCHES PROPOSED

**H**ank Riley, N1LTV, spoke to the membership following the August business meeting. He would like to launch high altitude balloons locally. The balloons would transmit temperature and altitude telemetry information via a 2 meter down-link.



Hank is soliciting help to make the launches a success. Support personnel are required for the following tasks:

- 1) Inflation support - Picks up from vendor and transports to the launch site large, bulky helium tank and related apparatus.
- 2) Inflator/launcher - Prepares the balloon for inflation, inflates, and launches it.
- 3) Launch assistant (balloon dog) - general launch assistance as required.
- 4) Launch Photographer - Records the launch for project archives and media use.
- 5) Telemetry stations - receives and tapes 2 meter telemetry. (Offsite)
- 6) HF net recorder - Receives and tapes HF net. (Offsite)

If you are interested in supporting this interesting project, please E-Mail Hank at:

N1LTV@AMSAT.COM

## NEXT SEMARA VE SESSIONS

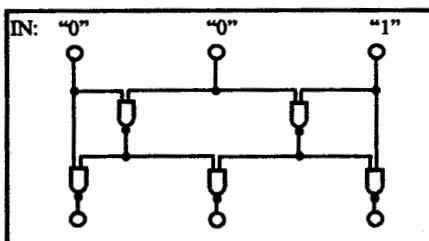
September 5 & 26, 1998  
Saturday, 10:30 AM

September 13, 1998  
Saturday, 10:00 AM

## LOCAL VE SESSIONS IN SEPTEMBER

- 10 Providence, RI  
Judy Nelson  
401-231-9156
- 12 Falmouth, MA  
Joanne Reid  
508-548-1121
- 23 Cambridge, MA  
Nick Alterndburnd  
617-253-3776
- 26 Middletown, RI  
Jack Garforth  
401-683-2250

## WHAT'S THE OUTPUT?



- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 1. 000 | 5. 100 |
| 2. 001 | 6. 101 |
| 3. 010 | 7. 110 |
| 4. 011 | 8. 111 |

ANSWER - See Page 6



## CLUB NOTES

For most people, summer is over on September 7th, Labor Day. However, fall "officially" starts on the Autumnal Equinox, come September 23rd. But, no matter how you cut it, the nights will be cooler, and the air crisper.

It is with deep regret we announce the passing of club member Daniel Alves, N1VZN, on Sunday, August 2, 1998. Dan had a true love of amateur radio and particularly enjoyed collecting and trading old "classic" radios. Rest in peace, Dan.

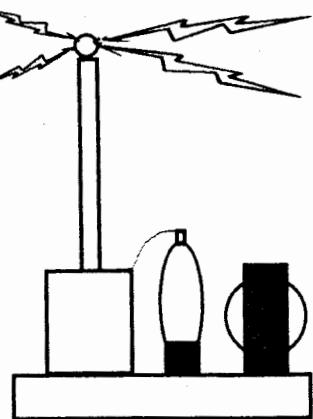
Your tired editor screwed up yet again! Henry Blanchett, W1GYL, informed me that it was Henry Deslaurier, WA1CQJ, that donated the surprise box to the club last month, not he. Well, at least I got the first name right! Thanks Henry (CQJ) for the donation!



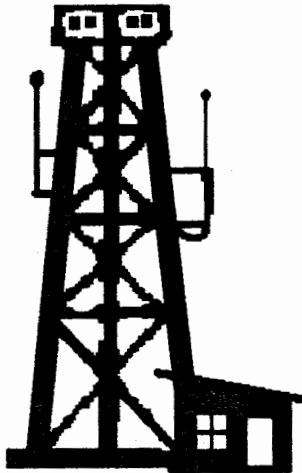
*With  
Deepest  
Sympathy*



The August 20th Tech-Talk on Tesla coils, was a shocking event! In addition to the Tesla coil, a "Jacob's Ladder" was also demonstrated. (A "Jacob's Ladder" is the upward moving arc you've seen in mad scientist movies) The air was crisp with ozone following the demonstrations. You missed a good one if you didn't attend!



The Tower Committee is negotiating with NET-COM in an effort to replace our aging tower. To date the talks have been very promising. A full update on the status of the negotiations will be made at the next business meeting. If this project comes to fruition, it is recommended that a heavy-duty super stationmaster 2 meter antenna be purchased by the members and placed atop the new tower.

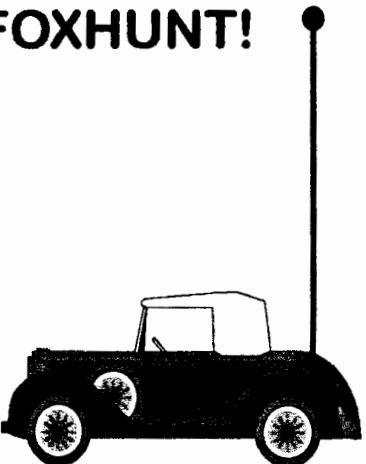


Do you like to talk? How about presenting a Tech-Talk on a subject you are well versed about. There are a few openings still available! ;-) Contact Bill Miller at (508) 996-2969 or k1ibr@lrh.net



## STEVE SAUNDERS, N1ZGX, WINS FOXHUNT!

It took Steve Saunders, N1ZGX, less than 20 minutes to find the fox during the August foxhunt. Although Rick Cabral, N1RFI, and Ed Gadue, N1XTT, hid in a super spot, Steve sniffed them out in no time flat! (They hid at the southern end of Field Street (a dead-end) off Grape Street against Rural Cemetery.) By the way, Rick and Ed are to be commended for making almost continuous transmissions. There were seven teams searching for the fox. They found the fox in the following order: 2nd - Chris, N1ZPI; 3rd - Bill, K1IBR, and Scott, W1EV; 4th - Ed, KA1AW, and Kita (his dog); 5th - Henry, W1GYL, Bob, N1XZJ and Nick; 6th - Manny, N1JVK, and Gil, N1MWG; and last but not least Bill, WA1FYF. The hunt was over after 1 hour and ten minutes. Following the hunt all thirteen participants headed to Friendly's restaurant in North Dartmouth where a big table was set up for the group. Amazingly, no outrageous excuses were offered by any of the hunters as to why they weren't first to find the fox. It was another FUN night!



# ALL ABOUT ENGINEERS!

**E**veryone wants to be an engineer. Or at least it seems that way. BEWARE! Some nasty, unscrupulous people attempt to pass themselves off as engineers. So, in an effort to help our readers "sort the wheat from the chaff", we offer this insight into what makes engineers tick. You might call it "the true hallmarks of a real engineer."

First and foremost, a real engineer has an inbred fascination with fixing things. In fact, engineers place everything in the universe into one of two categories:

1. Things that need to be fixed.
2. Things that will need to be fixed after an engineer "plays" with it for a few minutes.

This fixation on fixing things is not found in normal people. Indeed, most normal people say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Not so the engineer. His approach to the subject is more like, "If it ain't broke, give me a few minutes and I'll find its weak point."

An engineer's fascination with fixing things is only eclipsed by his urge to "modify" things. No engineer worth his salt can look at a TV remote control without wondering, "Gee, what would it take to convert this into a stun gun?" An engineer views the world as a toy box - a toy box full of sub-optimized and feature-deficient items. In fact, if a device has no problems, a good engineer will create some!

Another area where engineers are different than the rest of the people is best called the "social arena." All engineers find social interaction very difficult if not downright impossible. That's why most people view engineers as dull, boring, dorks totally lacking any social skills whatsoever.



For example, most "normal" people hope to accomplish several UNREALISTIC things from social interactions:

1. Engage in stimulating conversation.
2. Cultivate important social contacts.
3. Become part of the "in" crowd.

Engineers, on the other hand, have RATIONAL OBJECTIVES for their social interactions:

1. Demonstrate mental superiority.
2. Impress you with their technical gadgets.
3. Avoid "invites" to unpleasant events.

Unfortunately, the engineer's rational approach to social interaction makes dating a very difficult task. "Normal" people employ various sneaky, cunning tricks to create a false impres-

sion of attractiveness. Engineers, however, are incapable of such deception. They will go without a date before they will utter a lie.

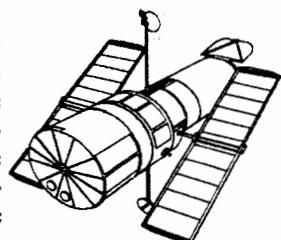
Fortunately, engineers have an ace in the hole! They are widely recognized as being intelligent, honest, dependable, and hard working. So while most "normal" people would prefer not to *date* engineers, they all harbor the secret desire to *mate* with them. (They recognize that an engineer's offspring will have high paying jobs long before they lose their virginity.)



If engineers have one virtue it's honesty. They can't lie. Knowledgeable managers are keenly aware of this fact and make it a point to keep engineers away from customers. *Far away.* (Most customers can't handle the truth!) Indeed, there is only one lie that all engineers are guilty of, "I won't change a thing without asking you first." Although stated with true sincerity, the engineer soon rationalizes that the situation has changed and action is required without the delay that asking for permission would entail. (See? To the engineer it's not a lie after all! Clever, huh?)

Engineers are very frugal. (It's almost legendary.) This doesn't imply that engineers are cheap and mean spirited. Quite to the contrary. Engineers are quick at cost analysis, and thereby optimize their spending habits. This in turn allows them to retain more of their hard-earned cash.

Fear of failure is a known phobia of all engineers. They harbor extremely intense feelings about failing. They actually have recurring nightmares about past engineering failures. (Titanic, The Tacoma Narrows Bridge, Hindenburg, Edsel, Apollo 13, Hubble Space Telescope, etc.)



Finally, no discussion of engineers would be complete without commenting on the colossal ego possessed by engineers. Some would call it the *defining feature* of all engineers. Life to an engineer is one big ego trip. How smart they are, and how many "technical toys" they own is the root basis of their existence.

In fact, smart managers capitalize on the engineers inflated ego when they remark, "This circuit can't be designed!" No self-respecting engineers will walk away from such a challenge. They will go for days without food (and proper hygiene) to solve the problem. When they finally solve the problem they will experience an EGO RUSH that is better than sex (and we are including the kind of sex where other people are involved!)

There you have it. A quick rundown of what makes an engineer tick. Sure there are other facets to the engineer's makeup (risk aversion for one, fear of public humiliation for another), but time and lack of space prevent any further comment.

**TECHNICAL TIPS**

An intermittent or open wire in a mike or control cable is a common problem. Invariably the break is close to or in the connector. And just as invariably it could have been prevented with a little care and attention to detail when installing the connector. First, remember to use a strain relief or put some heat shrink tubing on the cable where it exits the connector. Next, when using any shielded type cable, the shield should be soldered to the connector FIRST. Then, BEFORE soldering the remaining lead wires, you should tug on the cable while holding the connector firmly. This assures the shield anchors the cable, not the tiny leads. Finally, solder the remaining leads paying particular attention to not putting any strain on them.

**1998  
FLEAMARKET CALENDAR**

September 13 - SEMARA!  
September 19 - Foxford, RI  
September 26 - MITE  
September 20 - Newton, CT  
September 27 - Framingham, MA  
October 9,10 - Rochester, NH  
October 11 - Wallingford, CT  
October 18 - MIT  
October 31 - Barnstable, MA  
November 7 - Londonderry, NH  
November 21 - Newton, MA  
*(continued)*

**NET DIRECTORY****—Sunday—**

8am	28.375	SEMARA NET
9:30am	50.225	Yankee SSB
3pm	28.470	UFO
7pm	147.000+	Swap Net

**— 4th Sunday —**

9pm	449.575	EM-ARRL
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**— Daily —**

5:30pm	3.915	EM/RI NTS ssb
7&10pm	3.658	EM/RI NTS cw
6:45pm	147.315+	NTS/Trivia
7pm	146.550	SEMARA NET
8pm	145.230-	EM-NTS

**— Monday to Friday —**

8am	14.262	UFO
8pm	145.490-	Weather

**— Saturday & Sunday —**

8am	7.237	UFO
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**— Thursday —**

7pm	14.264	UFO
8pm	147.180+	Trivia

**— Saturday —**

7:30pm	3.978	UFO
1800G	14.300	Coast Guard

**— ARES NET —**

1st &amp; 15th of the month

at 7:30 pm

147.000+ on the 1st

145.490- on the 15th

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[MEMBERS.AOL.COM/RICABRAL/HAM/SEMARA](http://MEMBERS.AOL.COM/RICABRAL/HAM/SEMARA)
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**Vice-President** Andrew Reuter, WA1FNW  
**Secretary** Henry Blanchett, W1GYL  
**Treasurer** John Carreiro, W1ZYV

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 William M. Miller Jr., K1IBR  
 Norman Riley, W1ATI  
 Frank Fonseca, WB1ASD  
 Martin F. Jordan, KA1YFV

**SEMARA EVENT CALENDAR****SEPTEMBER 1998**

- 3 - Business Meeting, 7:00 pm
- 5 - VE Session, 10:30 am
- 10 - 2 Meter Foxhunt @ clubhouse, 7:00 pm
- 13 - SEMARA FLEAMARKET  
(VE Session, 10:00 am)
- 17 - Tech-Talk, 7:00 pm - "The Internet"  
by Tim Smith, N1BTQ
- 21 - Instructors Meeting, 7:00 pm
- 26 - VE Session, 10:30 am (Fall National Exam Day)

**OCTOBER 1998**

- 1 - Business Meeting, 7:00 pm
- 8 - 2 Meter Foxhunt @ clubhouse, 7:00 pm
- 15 - Tech-Talk, 7:00 pm - "Babuns"  
by Bill Miller, K1IBR
- 19 - Instructors Meeting, 7:00 pm
- 26 - BOD Meeting @ clubhouse, 7:00 pm

**Coffee Hour at the clubhouse  
every Sunday at 9:00 am  
Drop by and ragchew!**

## LOCAL REPEATER DIRECTORY

Frequency	CTCSS	Call	Location
<b>144</b>			
145.150 -		WA1DGW	Fall River
145.490 -		KAIWBF	Fairhaven
146.445 +1Mhz	91.5	KB1BWN	Dartmouth
146.655 -	88.5	WA1GPO	Falmouth
146.685 -		N1OEG	Plymouth
146.700 -		K1CR	Cranston, RI
147.000 +		WIAEC	Dartmouth
147.045 +		WA1AIC	Yarmouth
147.135 +	67.0	ND1N	Taunton
147.180 +	77.0	N1FDX	Bridgewater
147.315 +	156.7	N1BBT	Wareham
<b>220</b>			
224.340 -		N1SGK	Dennis

Frequency	CTCSS	Call	Location
<b>440</b>			
441.400 +	192.8	WG1U	Assonet
442.200 +		N1NRL	Fall River
442.350 +	141.3	N1QWW	New Bedford
442.600 +	100.0	K1LIQ	Tiverton, RI
443.450 +	88.5	K1MYL	Westport
443.600 +		NS1N	Norwell
443.800 +	88.5	N1RFH	Dartmouth
443.850 +	131.8	W1ARM	Chatham
444.250 +	141.3	WA1GPO	Falmouth
444.550 +		N1FDX	Bridgewater
447.075 -		N1DZD	Kingston

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Southeastern Massachusetts Amateur Radio Association, Inc.  
 54 Donald Street, PO Box 80007  
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**SEMARA**

**FIRST CLASS**

**Scanned by N1TI**  
**January 2011**