

Colorado QRP Club
The Low Down

Promoting QRP Since 1994

Club News...

CQC GARAGE SALE AND DONATIONS

The CQC garage sale has been very successful for the club. Not only in generating revenue but also for generating conversation at swapfest and new membership for the club. We currently have nice collection of external speakers for your QRP rig available as well as a nice collection of books on ham radio. All proceeds go to fund QRP activities. KI0RB@arrl.com for more info.



Jim KG0PP "working" during the CQC Picnic

Colorado QRP Club

Presidents Message

"Its About Learning and Teaching"

I was minding my own business several weeks ago when a long time friend called and invited me to play a round of golf. I had not hit a golf ball in nearly 25 years, but remembered enjoying playing. I accepted my friends offer and actually played every other day for nearly three weeks, thoroughly enjoying myself each time. Amazingly, the horrible slice I always had was gone after the 25 year hiatus.

What does this have to do with amateur radio? Elmers. I would not have rekindled an interest in golf without someone giving me a little push, a little encouragement.

Our Elmers are the ones that motivate us in ham radio. They are the ones who offer advice and support when we try something new. Our Elmers are attuned to our conversations and when the time is right they offer a suggestion for a new pursuit within radio, whether it be trying out

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For more information, visit our website at www.cqc.org

Issue 56 Sept/Oct 2005

Picture credits to

Roger Windell -WB0JNR

Marshall "ET" Emm - N1FN

Dick Schnieder - AB0CD

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Our next Regular meeting will take place
Saturday, Nov 12, 2005 at
10:00 am
Meeting Location: Offices of
Milestone Technologies
10691 East Bethany Drive,
Suite 800
Aurora, Colorado

CQ CQ CQ Net controllers

The Colorado QRP Club is in need of Net Controllers for the Monday night 2M nets. It's easy and it's fun. We provide you with the script and you can take it from there to develop your own "Net-tique". If you live on the Denver Front Range from Ft. Collins to Colorado Springs please consider a try at the mike. Contact Jim Pope - KG0PP at Ejim@aol.com



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The Low Down

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QRP Information Net: The Colorado QRP Club also meets on the air every Monday evening at 2000 local time on the 147.225 repeater serving the eastern slope of the Rockies from Cheyenne, WY, to Pueblo, CO, with linked repeaters in Boulder (145.46) and Colorado Springs (145.16). Backup frequency: 145.145. The Club's Denver metro simplex liaison frequency is 146.445. Meeting Dates: 2004 Meetings: Jan. 10, Mar. 13, May 8, July 10, Sept. 11, Nov. 13 at a location to be determined. Annual Picnic: Sat. Sept 18, 2004. Annual Banquet: To Be Announced. Changes will be announced on the Monday evening Net and posted on the [WWW,CQC.ORG](http://WWW.CQC.ORG) website, if time permits.

Informal Monthly QRP Gatherings: Members meet informally at a local restaurant -- details on the web-site. Annual Dues: \$12.00. Join via the internet at WWW.CQC.ORG. Or, send dues and requests for membership applications to: CQC, POB 17174, Golden CO 80402-6019.

Internet: WWW.CQC.ORG. Information, membership, renewals, officers, activities, CQC Swap List and CQC-List subscriptions.

Correspondence: Editor, The Low Down POB 17174. Golden CO 80402-6019.

CQC Logo mugs

Don't leave your shack without it!! Vince, our club Secretary, arm-wrestled a half dozen vendors until we got a good deal on a few dozen of these beautiful, cobalt-blue coffee mugs. Get yours while supplies last!!

Photo courtesy Marshall Emm N1FN



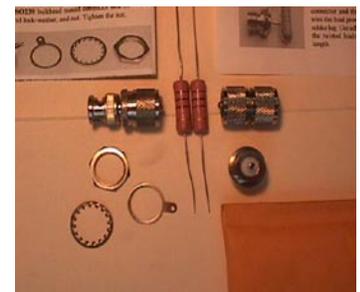
Photo courtesy Marshall Emm N1FN

\$10.00 (Pick one up at our meeting or other gathering)
\$4.00 (Shipping and handling if we mail one to you...)
Order from our web site using our PayPal secure service.

Photo courtesy Marshall Emm N1FN

CQC RFL-10 QRP Dummy Load Kit

The kit consists of 2 5W metal oxide resistors an SO239 socket and includes adaptors for connecting to either SO239 or BNC antenna sockets. Rates to 10W continuous power for at least 60 seconds, with a flat SWR across the HF spectrum.



\$7.00 - Members
(Includes Shipping and Handling!)
\$9.00 - Non Members
(Includes Shipping and Handling!)

New CQC Logo Tee Shirts

These beautiful tees are 100% cotton with the club logo and motto. Your call sign and name call can be added for \$2 Available in sizes XXL, XL, L and M

Photo courtesy Marshall Emm N1FN



Photo courtesy Marshall Emm N1FN

\$12.00 plain or \$14.00 with Call and/or Name
\$4.00 Shipping and handling
Order from our web site or pick one up at the next meeting and please specify size.

Photo courtesy Marshall Emm N1FN

Tentative Meeting
Schedulde for 2005/2006:

Nov 12 - Regular
Dec 10 - Chat 'N Chew
Jan 14 - Regular
Feb 11 - Chat 'N Chew
Mar 11 - Regular
Apr 8 - Chat 'N Chew
May 13 - Regular
June 10 - Chat 'N Chew
June 24 - Field Day

Regular Meeting Location:
Offices of Milestone Technologies
10691 East Bethany Drive,
Suite 800
Aurora, Colorado

QRP, starting our first homebrew project, or helping design and erect an antenna system. Our Elmers are there to support us when we have a problem we cannot resolve, or when we need a push to start a project.

So where do we find these "Elmers" ?

YOU are the Elmer. Elmering seems to have become a lost art.

Here are some ways to be an Elmer:

- Introduce a friend to amateur radio
- Provide a ham radio demonstration for a group
- Start an interest group net
- Help a ham design, construct, and install an antenna
- Write an article for the LowDown
- Present a program at a club meeting
- Help another with a construction project
- Discuss a topic during the 2 meter net
- Donate a kit to the QRP club, or another club

What other ways can we be an Elmer?

Jim * KG0PP

Llaves Miniature Dual Paddles



Jim - KG0PP prepares to use the new Llaves Miniature Dual Paddles and his Ten Tec Argonaut V in the Labor Day QRP contest. The gold plated paddles are attractive as well as functional. The paddle feel is very good, something that is not always the case with smaller units. The use of finger nuts on the terminals makes it easy to attach control wires to the transceiver. The paddle have a nice height, making them feel similar to larger units.

This would be a nice addition to any QRP rig.

Jim says thanks to Marshall (Morse Express) <http://www.morsex.com>

HAMCON 2006

It is hard to imagine that Hamcon 2006, the ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Convention, is less than one year away! Your Hamcon 2006 committee, made up of representatives from many amateur radio organizations across the state, is fully engaged in detailed planning and preparation. We're excited! We're planning for Hamcon 2006 to be **even better** than Hamcon 2003! That's a lofty goal and heavy responsibility, but the dedicated hams who attend deserve nothing less!!!

Hamcon 2006 will be held on June 9-11, 2006, at the Holiday Inn in beautiful Estes Park, Colorado. This venue is attractive for lots of reasons, not the least of which include the incredibly beautiful surroundings, great room rates, a wonderful facility and an extremely supportive hotel staff. As well, holding this convention outside Colorado Springs or Denver affords us a unique opportunity to get away from all our daily responsibilities for a few days, to focus as a group on important aspects of our service and our hobby in Amateur Radio. Plus, we can be together in the evenings and the early mornings, rather than commuting to and from our homes, building friendships and operational relationships that benefit Ham Radio and all that it serves!

The Holiday Inn has a limited number of rooms available for us, but the good news is that you can book your rooms beginning **now** until May 19, 2006! Why not book your room right now to avoid any disappointment in being able to stay there! Our rate is only \$82 + tax per night, single or double occupancy. And, for those who'd like to include a vacation around the convention, this great rate is good for up to 3 days before, and 3 days after the convention!!! To receive the special rate, you **must** call the Estes Park Holiday Inn **directly** at 1-800-803-7837, and ask for the "ARRL" Room Rate. **Do not** make your reservations using the national Holiday Inn reservation phone system or the Holiday Inn web site, as these likely won't have any knowledge of the special ARRL room rate. **Don't delay, book your room today!**



Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH

FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, will be our featured banquet speaker. Hollingsworth is no stranger to Amateur Radio Operators the world over. Since 1998, Hollingsworth has restored pride to Amateur Radio through strong enforcement actions, major 9/11 response and countless operating hours during hurricane season. Hollingsworth publicly states that Amateur Radio is the "only truly fail-safe communication service on the planet Earth." He is a strong ally of Ham Radio at the FCC!

Continued next page

Bob Heil, K9EID, of Heil Sound is expected as well, and will conduct his awesome technical sessions on the science of audio.

The dynamite program for Hamcon 2006 will also include great technical talks and forums, a ladies luncheon, a fox hunt, outstanding prizes (and lots of them!), opportunities to operate W1AW/0, a sumptuous banquet, a broad cross-section of big-name manufacturers and distributors, and more. Of course, no convention would be complete without the time-honored Wouff Hong ceremony at midnight on Saturday! You just won't want to miss this Hamcon!

Please drop me an email about any thoughts, desires or questions about the convention. We're always looking for people to help out at the convention, and to help in many pre-convention efforts. Please let me know if you'd like to help out! We can definitely put you to work! My email address is k0srw@arrl.net and I'd love to hear from you!

Make plans to attend the convention now!

73,

Steve Williams, KØSRW
Hamcon 2006 Prizes and Exhibits Chair

CQC Field Pictures



Al - K0FRP on 15M



Rich - W0HEP on 40M



Paul - KF7MD on 20M



20M Yagi on Rampart Range Field Site

NEW UNIFIED AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE EXAM

Along with the proposed elimination of the Morse code requirement for operation on the HF portions of the amateur bands it has been proposed that a new unified amateur radio test be utilized. The new test is designed so that a single test can be utilized for all license classes. The license class a candidate would qualify for would be determined by the test score. Higher scores would qualify the candidate for higher classes of licenses. This proposed unified test will greatly simplify processing by the VE's.

Here's a copy of the proposed new exam.

=====

Please PRINT YOUR NAME (what they call you) _____

ADDRESS (where you live) _____

BIRTH DATE (when you was born)

EXAM INSTRUCTIONS:

Make a circle around the letter of the best answer! This is so we know what your answer to the question is!

1. You TALK into a microphone with your
 - A. Hands
 - B. Feet
 - C. Toes
 - D. Mouth
 - E. Armpits

2. When you talk into a microphone, you talk into
 - A. the front
 - B. the back
 - C. the top
 - D. the bottom
 - E. the wire

3. "HEADPHONES" are worn over the
 - A. Knees
 - B. Eyes
 - C. Toes
 - D. Ears E. Lips

4. What do you do with the AC line cord coming out of a power supply?
 - A. Hold it in the air to pick up signals
 - B. Pull on it to start the motor
 - C. Talk into the plug to get real "skip DX"
 - D. Hook it to your antenna
 - E. Insert the plug into a source of power

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To Use or Not to Use – That is the Question.

75 ohm Coax verses 50 ohm Coax

Like many hams I subscribe to ham radio online newsgroups. Yahoo groups, for example, has groups that center on almost any ham radio operating interest, technical topic, or specific radio. One such group is the “amateur repairs” group. This group focuses on a variety of technical topics and you never know when something interesting arrives in your email. An interesting question arrived last week.

“HI ALL, A question, I want to use the 100 percent shielded satellite dish wire, (rg-6,) with a 50 ohm radio, so short of using an antenna matcher, does anyone sell a converter to use on hf? I have seen them for vhf/uhf but that was a number of years back, where can I buy one? or does anyone have any for sale? this is a serious inquiry. thanks ahead of time... ANY positive input would be appreciated greatly..”

Most responses were along the lines of “just use it as it is.” Probably not bad advice as most antennas are not 50 ohms anyway so a mismatch occurs even if you use 50 ohm coax. But I began thinking, RG-6 (75 ohm coax) is less expensive than RG-8 (50 ohm coax) and is designed for higher frequencies so the loss seems to be less. There must be a way to homebrew a broadband transformer to match a 50 ohm coax to a 75 ohm coax. Besides, I have nearly 100 ft. of RG-59 (75 ohm) coax in my “junque” box that I would like to use.

I have a fondness for books of all kinds and ham radio books are no exception. From what I have spent on ham radio books, I could have a new FT-897! I remembered a book I bought several years ago called, “Transmission Line Transformers,” by Jerry Sevick, W2FMI. It was published in 1987 and cost \$10 in hard cover (Try to find a new ham radio book in hard cover for \$10 now!!) Jerry’s book goes into the design of ununs and baluns and other impedance transformers. I also have his follow-on book, “Understanding, Building, and Using Ununs and Baluns,” published in 2003 as a paperback for \$20. (Times have changed!!) For those of you who have not heard about “ununs,” they are impedance transformers to match an unbalanced transmission line of one impedance to another unbalanced transmission line impedance. Thus, coax of 75 ohms in and 50 ohms out would be a perfect use for an “unun.”

Sure enough on page 6-18 of the “Transmission Line Transformers” book and again in Chapter 13 of the “Understanding, Building, and Using Ununs and Baluns,” W2FMI provides an easy to duplicate design of a 50 to 75 ohm broadband unun. This transformer uses insulated (enamel or plastic coated) wire. For low power (200 watts or less), 16 gauge wire is adequate.

The unun consists of four windings of a five-wire bundle, on an FT-140-61 1.4" OD toroid. Each winding has the five-wire bundle laying flat. The diagram below shows the how to connect the windings for three configurations.

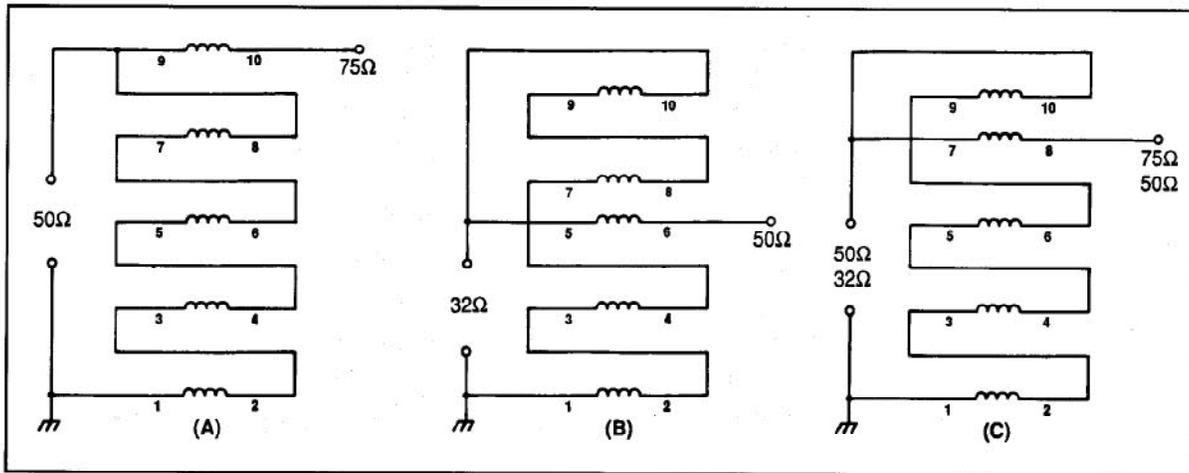


Figure 13-4. Three basic forms of a quintufilar 1.56:1 Unun: (A) optimized to match 50 to 75 ohms, (B) optimized to match 32 to 50 ohms, and (C) optimized to match 40 to 62 ohms, resulting in a good general-purpose design.

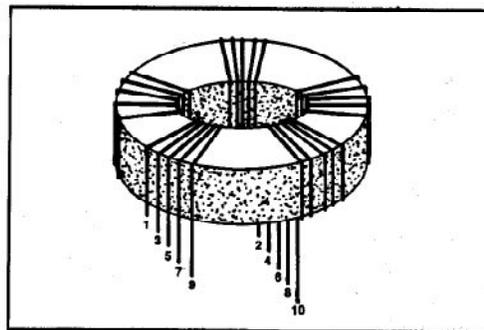


Figure 13-7. Pictorial of a quintufilar winding.

Source: page 92 and 94, Understanding, Building and Using Baluns and Ununs.

The third design is great for general use as both a coax matching transformer and to feed vertical. The theoretical impedance of a vertical is 37.5 ohms (1/2 of a dipole antenna which has a theoretical impedance of 75 ohms.) I have decided to make unun "C." When its done, I'll bring it to a Club meeting.

Until then – happy hamming.

Steve Finch
AIØW

Exam continued

5. A "two meter" radio is:
- A. twice as strong as a one-meter radio
 - B. two one-meter radios in series
 - C. a CB with two meters on the front panel
 - D. a good doorstop
 - E. a monoband radio
6. A "ten-foot mast" is how long?
- A. Three meters
 - B. Ten pounds
 - C. Two meters
 - D. Tree-top tall
 - E. Same length as basketball hoop is high
7. A "Triband antenna" is made to work on how many bands?
- A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. 3
 - D. 4
 - E. 10
8. The "Marconi" antenna is named after:
- A. Marconi
 - B. Mantovani
 - C. macaroni
 - D. Dean Martin
 - E. martini

Continued on next page

Identify this ham



HINT



Steve Finch - AI0W

OK so finish your EXAM...

9. What colors of DIODES can you buy at a Radio Shack store?
- A. Red, blue and black
 - B. Red, yellow and green
 - C. Orange and brown
 - D. I am color blind so this is a discriminatory question and I should automatically get a waiver on this question.
 - E. I have no intention of ever using DIODES, so don't care what color they are.
10. What color of SLURPEE can you buy at 7-11?
- A. Red, blue and black
 - B. Red, yellow and green
 - C. Orange and brown
 - D. I am color blind so this is a discriminatory question and I should get another waiver on this question. I now have two questions right.
 - E. All the above
11. You have just installed your new mobile rig in your vehicle and you are still parked at the curb, you need to pull out into traffic and you are talking to another station?
- A. You put down the mic long enough to signal that you intend to pull away from the curb
 - B. You keep on talking and just pull out in traffic
 - C. You open your left rear door to signal that you want to pull out in traffic, while calling CQ DX on the repeater
 - D. You install a light bulb at the top of your antenna so that it will flash when you are talking on the radio and people will then know to let you out

END OF EXAM.

YOUR SIGNATURE (slap yo tag here)



Announcing...

The 2005/2006 Winter Fox Hunts

The 40M QRP Fox Hunt will begin on Thursday, 10/27/05 and conclude on 3/9/06.

The 80M QRP Fox Hunt will begin on Tuesday, 11/29/05 and conclude on 1/31/06.

The 40M and 80M Fox Hunts will be conducted under our Winter Rules.

Information and complete schedules will be posted at

<http://www.qrpfoxhunt.org>

Funny Noises

By the Numbers

The expression “by the numbers” is used to describe a process that is defined in sequential steps, and usually it is the best way to do anything that is complicated. If you are undergoing brain surgery, for example, you probably will want your doc to do it “by the numbers.” If you are building a transceiver kit, you will probably be working with numbered instructions and you can easily end up in trouble if you don’t do it “by the numbers.”

But the expression has another meaning when applied to running a business or other organization, and management by the numbers is fraught with peril. We have a generation of MBAs in charge of many of our corporations (and even government departments) who have been trained to run their operations “by the numbers.” After all, numbers are how we measure our successes and failures in business and in government, and numbers don’t lie. Or do they? It is said that there are three kinds of lies— “lies, damned lies, and statistics.”

You can indeed run an organization effectively if (a) you have accurate numbers, (b) you understand what the numbers mean, and (c) you know what to do about it.

Generally speaking, if there is a problem in the numbers (sales going down, costs going up, whatever...) the effective manager will verify the relevance and accuracy of the numbers, look for the causes that underlie the problem, and act accordingly. That’s doing it by the numbers.

If you don’t do it by the numbers you might well act to solve a problem that doesn’t exist, and you could end up creating a worse problem than the one you were trying to fix.

Therein lies the biggest problem faced by the Amateur Radio Service today.

Continued bottom of next column

The Doctor is Destinated

Questions & Answers for the New Ham.

Q. Why do so many guys ham with SSB?.

A. Because it is easy. Here is a demonstration.... The Dr. is switching over to SSB now. Wait... gotta find the Mickyphone...
OK here we go.

NnYAAAKmn.mKYAANNwuwuWHAANG.

Q. Which is better— Upper Side or Lower Side?

A. NnYAAAKmn.mKYAANNmuKWAK
KWAK wuwuWHAANGNnYAAAKmn.mKYAANN
wuwuWHAANG

NnYAAAKmn.mKYAANNKwuKUwuWHAANG
NnYAAAKmn.mKYAANNwuwuKWANGKWAAK?

Q. What is the best way to learn SSB?

A. KWANGnYAAAKmn.mKYAANNKwuKUwuWHAANG
NnYAAAKmn.mKYAANNwuwuKWANGKWAAKNnYAAA
Kmn.mKYAANNmuKWAK KWAK wuwuWHAANGNnYAAA
Kmn.mKYAANNwuwuWHAANG NnYAAAKmn.mKYAANNK
wuKUwuWHAANG.

Send your questions about Life, the Universe, and everything in it to the Dr., who is also known as the Chief Umpire of QRPNess..

Funny Noises continued

Amateur Radio is ‘run’ by two organizations, the FCC and the ARRL. The FCC has a complex agenda which includes Amateur Radio but with a very low priority. The numbers that drive the FCC are the dollars that they can get for administration and regulation of communications. Administration of the Amateur Radio Service is generally left to the ARRL, which has historically done a very good job.

It has become increasingly apparent, however, that the ARRL is currently working with inadequate numbers, doesn’t fully understand the numbers that they have, and has absolutely no idea of what to do about it. Here’s what happened:

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CQC TOP TEN...

...ways to winterize your shack.

10. Wrap all cables in burlap to prevent freezing.
9. Flush and refill the radiator in your linear..
8. Bundle and stack old copies of QST and the Low Down for use as fuel.
7. A cat or dog makes a great foot-warmer.
6. Put snow tires on your rotator.
5. Invite Capt. Morgan in for a visit..
4. Get a big dummy load and learn how to use it.
3. Install a thermometer so you can brag about how cold it is.
2. Get a fox pelt and make a hat out of it.

And the Number 1 way to winterize your shack.

1. Wear the fox hat.

In the late 1990s the ARRL saw a sharp decline in membership, found a corresponding decline in FCC license numbers, and concluded that the hobby was in serious trouble. The decline in membership was a fact. The decline in license numbers was also a fact, so it was seized upon as an explanation for declining League membership. From there, the League somehow concluded that it was too hard to get an amateur radio license.

The ARRL is essentially a publishing organization— by far the majority of its resources go to publication of QST and books. A decline in League membership is the same thing as a decline in subscriptions to QST, and advertizing revenue is directly tied to subscription numbers. So, yes, QST was in trouble and therefor the League was in

Funny Noises continued

trouble. The editorial staff at any normal magazine, confronted with declining subscriptions, will recognize that one way or another the magazine is not meeting the needs of its readers. The editors will take steps to change the magazine, or else the magazine will go under. QST and its parent organization were in the unique position of being able to change the hobby. Or so they thought. “More people will become hams if it is easier to get a license,” they thought. The one thing they could do to make it easier was to reduce the Morse requirement. In April of 2001 the 13 and 20 WPM code requirements were eliminated, with dramatic and immediate results. Everybody and his dog upgraded to General or Extra at the first opportunity.

But the hoped-for increase in new licenses did not happen. “Aha,” thinks the League, “any Morse requirement is too much.” And so in the very near future, the Morse requirement will be eliminated completely.¹ Undoubtedly the League expects or at least hopes for a big influx of new hams, but it ain’t gonna happen. Here’s why.

The decline in League membership (i.e., QST subscriptions) had another explanation. All print magazines are seeing declines due to the prevalence of more timely modes of mass communication. The content of a magazine is frozen at least a month before delivery to subscribers. Who among us wants to read news that we saw on the Internet or TV a month ago?

As at April 1st 2000, QST was one of four national magazines devoted to non-specialized amateur radio. Since then one has gone out of business and the remaining three are all struggling.

The decline in FCC license numbers had another explanation. There was a big influx of no-code Technician licensees ten to fifteen years ago, and their ten-year licenses have not been renewed. Why? We forget what the world was like before

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Jake's Corner

Jake ,N0LX, one of the CQC club's QRP hams is always working on something. Whether it's a new antenna, a mountintop QSO or doing the Monday night 2M net Marine mobile, we can always count on Jake to set the bar one notch higher for us all. We dedcate this section to all his endeavors and ask that you visit Jake at his web site to see it all - <http://hometown.aol.com/n0lx>



N0LX's Modified Petlowwany vertical
<http://hometown.aol.com/n0lx/spirals.html>



QRP Marine mobile on Lake Estes - Estes Park Co
<http://hometown.aol.com/n0lx/estespark.html>



Jake's Rockmite project - QRP packed with features
<http://hometown.aol.com/n0lx/rockmite.html>

cell-phones. Large numbers of no-code techs got their tickets so they could use local repeaters and autopatch. Getting a ham license was a lot easier and less expensive than getting the old-fashioned mobile phones. But there was little in League membership or in QST to hold their interest, and no need for the license once cell-phones became readily available.

The decline in FCC license numbers was not necessarily an indication of a problem, and that's where we get into the notion of "validity and relevance." The ARRL (and QST's) market can easily be defined as active amateur radio operators. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the FCC database to indicate whether an amateur is actually using the privileges of his ticket. From there we can easily see that substantial changes in the overall license numbers, and even the numbers for new licenses, give us no idea at all about changes in the active population. For all we know the number of active amateurs could have been increasing steadily over the last ten years. Haven't we QRP operators noticed an increase in CW activity on the bands, and haven't the phone operators been complaining that the bands are too crowded?

There's another important question here that didn't get asked and couldn't have been answered— what is the "right" size for the amateur population?

If numbers are declining a bit, is that necessarily a bad thing? If they are increasing is that automatically a good thing? The only thing that we can say about these numbers, with any confidence at all, is that current subscriptions to QST are not enough to keep QST in the style to which it has become accustomed.

It is sad that the ARRL failed to understand amateur radio demographics, sadder if they deliberately distorted the picture to support their own preconceived notions, and beyond sad if they were motivated and blinded entirely by institutional self-interest.

But if the League's perception of a problem was sad, their attempts to solve it have been pathetic. They still seem to be operating under the assumption that interest in the hobby is declining because it is too hard to get a license.

As one who fairly recently earned his wings, I can tell you that it is a whole lot harder to get a private pilot certificate than it is to get an Extra class ham license. If you want to fly, you'd better plan on investing hundreds of hours over the course of about a year, and somewhere between six and ten thousand dollars. You will have to pass a written test, and also a check ride with an FAA examiner. Hard work? Yep. Expensive? You bet. So please explain me this:

There are 1.2 million licensed private pilots in the US. There are approximately 680,000 licensed amateur radio operators. There are approximately 700,000 active pilots,² compared with who knows how many active hams.³

What can we conclude from those numbers? Simply this— N1FN's first law of hobby economics:

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If people really want to do something they will find a way to do it, regardless of time, effort, and expense.

The corollary is equally obvious and important: if people don't want to do something, it doesn't matter how easy it is.

And thus we arrive at N1FN's second law of hobby economics:

You can't make people want to do something.

If the ARRL wants to get more people into amateur radio, they are wasting every bit of time, money, and effort that they are expending to make it easier. Instead they should be focusing on promotion of the core aspects of the hobby, including but not limited to HF CW. You won't get a whole lot of recruits by showing them how easily they can get a license to do things that they can already do better and cheaper with a cell phone, or with a computer and the Internet.

(Footnotes)

¹The ARRL has proposed retaining a 5 WPM Morse requirement for the Extra Class license. The cynic in me suspects that this is because survey after survey has shown that the majority of ARRL members want the code requirement to be retained. Ironically, the FCC has seen what a nonsensical proposal this is, and has moved to eliminate the code requirement entirely. As something that can be and often is done by Cub Scouts for a merit badge, a 5WPM qualification is really no Morse qualification at all, and associating it with the Extra ticket borders on insulting. As my own Elmer told me a long time ago, "Your 5 WPM test gets you a license to learn Morse."

²The number is known because pilots must maintain a medical certificate and pass a review every two years.

³We could apply the pilot percentage to hams thus: 68% of pilots are regarded as active, and 68% of amateur radio licensees would be around 475,000. But that actually sounds high and I could speculate that a high activity rate for pilots is a reflection of what they have invested in their ticket. I could also speculate that ARRL membership, currently at around 172,000 as reported to IARU or around a quarter of all licensees, is a better measure of activity. For that matter, QST is known to have had an average of 138,310 paid subscribers for the six months ending 30th June 2005.