

# W9JOZ

Volume 7, Issue 3

March 2017

**Next Meeting is  
March 16, 2017**

**2017 Dues are due.  
\$12.00**

If you wish, you may mail your dues to:  
John Poindexter  
204 South Main Street, Knox, IN 46534



Meetings are at the Henry F. Schricker Library on the third Thursday of each month, with the exception of December.

The library is located on west Culver Road, two blocks west of Highway 35.



**The Bands are OPEN!**

**Are you on the air?**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Meeting Reminder
- 2 Events/Articles

# January Events

## Birthdays

**March 8 - Joe AA9YQ**

---

### **Starke County Amateur Radio Club Weekly 2 Meter Net**

DAY OF WEEK: Saturday 8:00 p.m. Central time

HOST: KN9OX Repeater

FREQUENCY: 145.410 - 600

PL TONE: 131.8

---

## **Why are there so many Techs?**

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Recently, one of my readers asked, "Why do most people have a Technician license and not a General or Extra? Is it simply not interesting enough to get more privileges?"

This is a very interesting question, one that I've written about before. I think there are several issues at play here. In no particular order:

- It's pretty easy to get a Tech license, so a lot of people get them just for the challenge, but really never intend to use the license.
  - Some people get a Tech license, but then find out that amateur radio isn't what they thought it was going to be.
  - Some people get a Tech license, then can't find an Elmer to help them. They lose interest and give up on ham radio.
  - Some people get a Tech license, buy an HT, and think that's all there is to amateur radio. They quickly lose interest in amateur radio, because talking on the repeaters just isn't all that interesting.
  - Some people get licenses to participate in local emergency communications or CERT organizations. There's no need for them to get anything more than a Tech license.
-

- Since it's so easy to get a Tech license, even those that aren't technically inclined get them. Getting a General Class license requires a fair amount of study, and because they don't see the benefits of putting in that kind of work, they just don't bother.

I posted this question to my blog and got several interesting replies. Perhaps the most cogent was by Kenneth, W6KWF. He wrote: "The only thing General/Extra gets you is HF, which is becoming an increasingly small fraction of the possibilities of the amateur hobby. Amateurs could easily spend their whole lives moving from FM repeaters to microwave to VHF packet to EME to CERT/event support, etc, etc, without having any interest to explore what few facets of the hobby need HF privileges."

I think this is a great point. When incentive licensing was put into place in the late 1960s, HF was where the action was. Nowadays, more of the "cool stuff" is happening on VHF, UHF and microwaves. Getting additional HF privileges is not really a big deal anymore for many hams.

Yet another new license class?

Right on the heels of this discussion, the ARRL posted a news item, "ARRL Seeks Opinions Concerning Possible New Entry Level License" (<http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-seeks-opinions-concerning-possible-new-entry-level-license>). According to this report, the ARRL Board of Directors set up an An Entry Level License Committee in September 2016.

The committee is gathering member input via an online member survey (<http://www.arrl.org/license-1>) and will make recommendations to the Board for possible rules changes to submit to the FCC. They note, "The result could mean changes to the Technician license, but it could also be an additional, but simpler, license with privileges that would give a newcomer a taste of most facets of ham radio from HF to VHF and UHF. The survey will be online until April 7, 2017.

According to the survey page, the committee is trying to address several issues, including:

- The declining population of new hams under the age of 30.
- A decline in the number of new licensees who actually get on the air.
- Amateur Radio's lack of appeal for those under the age of 30, compared to other technical hobbies.
- The increasing challenge of engaging and retaining Technician licensees.
- A reluctance in much of the amateur community to embrace newer technologies of interest to the younger segment of the population.

Personally, I don't think that coming up with a new entry-level license class with privileges that are even more limited than the Technician Class is a bad idea, but whether or not it's successful will depend completely on the implementation. Unless the new class of license is accompanied by some kind of program that will help these new licensees really become engaged with amateur radio, then we're just creating another class of inactive licensees. I don't know exactly what this program would consist of, but without it, this effort is doomed to failure.

And, who's going to develop and run this program? The only organization that has the horsepower to make this work is the ARRL. They are going to have to step up big time. Most clubs don't have the people or

resources to do it properly. If you have any thoughts on this, I urge you to contact your ARRL division director (<http://www.arrl.org/divisions>).

---

When he's not pondering questions about the amateur radio licensing structure, Dan blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, writes the "No Nonsense" amateur radio study guides, and teaches ham classes. You can contact him by e-mailing [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).

---

## Handy Hint

### Removing Ground Rods

By Steve Mollman-KD9HL

It isn't often that a ground rod has to be removed. Usually this only happens when we reconfigure our set-up or when moving to a new QTH. There are a couple of tricks that can be used to get an 8-foot long rod out of the ground.

The first thing to do is use a long pipe wrench to rotate the rod a number of times before starting to pull. This breaks the adhesion between the ground rod and the soil making the pulling process easier.

Cantankerous as they sometimes are, probably the best tool for pulling is an old style automobile bumper jack. A bumper jack with an 18" lever can generate up to 2500 pounds of lift. Millions were made and they were standard equipment on US cars until the late 1970's. They are comparatively rare these days. Occasionally one can be found in an automobile junkyard or at a yard sale. Estimated price-\$5 to \$25. Sometimes they turn up on Craig's List and eBay. Harbor Freight sells new ones for about \$60, so it is worth looking for a used one.



To use a bumper jack, attach a chain or cable to the jack's hook and wrap the other end around the ground rod. Secure the ground rod end links together with a bolt and nut through two links. To keep the chain from slipping on the ground rod, don't use the clamp that attaches the ground wire to the rod. The best are made of soft brass and the cheaper ones of Zinc based pot metal. Either will either distort or break under stress. Instead, attach a pair of Vise-Grip pliers to the rod above the chain.

---

(A slightly off-topic aside: The local telephone company (Frontier) and Comcast use 4-foot ground rods. Do they believe that is sufficient or is it just a cost saving measure? After getting damage from a lightning strike that entered the house through Comcast's line, I have to wonder).

*β 73's and good DX β*

---

We have several pieces of equipment for sale on our For Sale Page

<http://www.w9joz.org/forsale.htm>

Please check it out.

If you have something for the newsletter, please send it to me before the 20th of the month.

See you at a meeting.

73

*John*, W3ML

