

RECEIVED

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

OCT 10 1992 8, 1992

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

ORIGINAL
FILE

RE: PR Docket 92-154--Novice Testing under VEC System

Dear Commissioner,

I just read of the pending proposal tonight and I have to comment. I am a Technician Plus, KD4FCK. I took my Novice and Code first and then upgraded to Tech. The novice tests were given by a group of local Amateurs at our missions technical center in North Carolina. They helped and encouraged me during my study. My tests were relaxed and very pleasant to experience. They all congratulated me as the word spread in the shop that I had passed.

Two months later, I went with some of them to the Shelby Hamfest/VEC to upgrade to Technician. Several hundred of us sat for hours as we waited for testing, waited for passing grades, waited for our certificates--it was a royal mess. I spent all but about an hour of our day in the testing area after driving for several hours one-way to get there.

I tried taking the 13wpm code test, but the amplified tape (no headphones) was terrible, and I was refused when I asked to try a different frequency of test tape (one I used to practice), or to use a W5YI computer program for the test (to select a better frequency--I have a significant hearing loss and use a hearing aid). I have little problem with 13wpm when using the test program.

The men I talked to scoffed at my suggestions--no other tape or headphones was available for my use. They hadn't even heard of using the program for testing (it gives totally random QSOs and selectable frequencies). As I waited to take my written test I listened to the 5wpm test and was shocked when I couldn't copy most of it, as the acoustics were terrible.

Needless to say, it was a very distasteful experience with the VEC testing group. Most of the people I there felt the same. If I would have had to go there for my Novice and Code tests, I would have walked out and said, FORGET AMATEUR RADIO! Several friends have had very impersonal contacts with other VEC groups--they treat you like they're doing you a favor just to be there and tend to be very authoritative in their testing.

Please DO NOT fold Novice Testing into VEC groups! Please leave them with local and personable Amateurs who care for the ones being tested. I know it is a bit more work in processing forms, etc., but it's the only way to be initiated into the testing process--not with the VEC's. Please let the testing be done by those in small clubs who can help a new Amateur get started right.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

James K. Lewis

James K. Lewis, KD4FCK--Jungle Aviation and Radio Service
67720 Peineta Road, Cathedral City, CA 92234 (619)329-9348
List ABCDE

No. 85 copies rec'd
0+9

P.S. The Oct. QST magazine has an article about an 11 year old girl, when in passing her GENERAL test commented, "The examiner didn't even smile at me, though--He just gave me my Certificate." So much for VECs.