

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the matter of:

REPLY COMMENTS		
1998 Biennial Regulatory		WT DOCKET Nr. 98-143
Review, Part 97.1		
Amateur Radio Service		

Summary

While the comments of virtually all respondents to WT Docket Nr 98-143 that favor reduced requirements for general entry into the Amateur Service are not well crafted, they should nevertheless be adopted to allow progression of the hobby towards a personal radio hobby as they represent the will and fabric of the population. Whether due to changing cultural or economic factors, the Amateur Service no longer has realistic expectation of serving in a true educational role, its original purpose.

Overview

Petition RM-8260 filed in April 1993 by Scott Leyshon asked the Commission to hasten a license with minimal entry requirements as a stepping stone basically devoid of code and theory elements. While the petition was denied, it is gratifying that the Commission has essentially come to the point where it realizes alternatives to the traditional purpose and scope of the hobby as technical in nature must be examined.

Amateur radio is not a vital ingredient in furthering the nation's educational base, and has not been for over thirty years. In such cases, it is proper to acknowledge the wishes of the majority of Amateurs participating in such a service, as considerations of life and death do not hang on the Commission's decision. Virtually all comments by those favoring reduced requirements clearly indicate this, despite the best efforts to (thinly) cloak their statements as supporters of a "strong" Amateur Radio. As three cases in point, comments such as from Messrs. Dick Ross and Fred Maia, as well as a group called the No-Code International (NCI) organization, indicate a code-free exam structure should be accompanied either by more bolstered, or "more relevant" ham exams. But no single comment from the aforementioned commenters actually provides a thorough plan to attack the root of the problem, basically surrounding the question of rote-memorized testing. This strongly confirms no basic concern over the technical difficulty of the exams, and a desire by the majority to open up the doors to the hobby to everyone. In the case of Messrs. Ross and Maia, with an economic tie to the

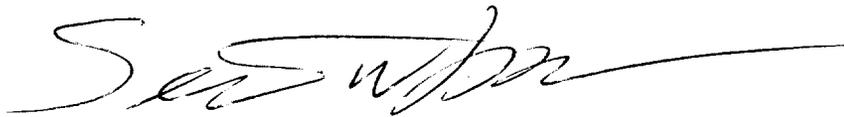
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hobby, their comments are not unexpected.

Conversely, to be even-handed, the best crafted letter by those supporting an Amateur Radio that is technical in purpose, and probably the shortest but saying the most in the least space, was submitted by Mr. Vincent Biancomano. One cannot but see a detailed response from an informed individual who understands the problems of the Amateur Service. But the response, although accurate, represents an idealistic approach to affairs that is passe and furthermore is no longer of any concern to most of those in the Amateur Service, or the country at large. For that reason, it is reasonable for the Commission to accept the nature of culture and economics as it exists today and to implement the least path of resistance as proposed by those who support an easing of requirements. While the comments of many who support lowering barriers to this hobby have been rather hazy and at some times embarrassing to those who have any degree of sensibility (for example, bringing in not so subtle legal terminology such as "hazing ritual," "human rights" and "Constitutional rights" to help the Commission decide the "right" course of action), the Commission must understand that these views by the same token represent the will and fabric of the majority. The Amateur Service has had a very unusual and at the same time storied history. But that time has now passed.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Leyshon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott Leyshon, WA2EQF
188 Tinc Rd.
Bartley, NJ 07836
January 14, 1999