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From: "Palmer, Ray" <PalmerR@lake.k12.fl.us>
To: "bcross@fcc.gov" <bcross@fcc.gov>
Date: 1/21/00 12:59PM
Subject: FW: Amateur Restructuring: Baby and Bath Water... Stage Right.

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JUN 21 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Palmer, Ray
> Sent: Thursday, January 20, 2000 1:36 PM
> To: 'cqletters@cq-amateur-radio.com'
> Subject: FW: Amateur Restructuring: Baby and Bath Water... Stage
> Right.

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Palmer, Ray
> Sent: Friday, January 14, 2000 1:27 PM
> To: 'cq letters@cq-amateur-radio.com'
> Subject: Amateur Restructuring: Baby and Bath Water... Stage Right.

> Dear Mr. Cross:

> In 1961, at age 13, my next door neighbor introduced me to
> the fantastic hobby of
> amateur radio. I haven't been the same since!

> As a 7th grader upon entering his low lighted ham shack I
> thought I had arrived at
> NASA central. The glow of all the vacuum tubes, their shadows on the
> walls, the large radio
> dials, all the displayed QSL cards etc. was just over powering . I
> was hooked!

> I studied for my Novice test, spent many hours learning the
> code, and several months
> later I passed my Novice exam and code test. I consider it one of
> the greatest moments in
> my life. A turning point for me.

> I learned that hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance pay
> off. That one only values in
> in life that which is proportional to the effort and hard work it
> takes to accomplish something.
> I had to wait a year before I could take my General exam.
> During that first year I
> worked all 50 states and a few countries on cw with a simple dipole
> and 75 watts! Life was
> good.

> Everyday after school I couldn't wait to get on the air or

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> see what QSL cards had
> arrived. A year later I passed my General test after three visits to
> the FCC field office. I never
> failed the code tests as it was the theory that always seemed to get
> me.
>
> In those days we didn't have any where near the self-help
> books or materials new
> prospective hams have today. One license manual with questions and
> answers. That was it!
>
> The 13 wpm code test was not hard at the time for several
> reasons. As a Novice I
> could only operate cw for one year. New hams take note. That and the
> fact I spent many
> hours on the air which in itself over time increased my code speed.
>
> By the time I took my first code test I was already at 13
> wpm and then some. No
> problem! Don't misunderstand. At the time I was sweating bullets. I
> couldn't decide what was
> worse, a trip to the FCC field office or a trip to my dentist. Too
> close to call!
>
>
> There should be a mandatory time period again before anyone
> can become a General.
> But then they wouldn't sell as much commercial ham gear...oops.
>
>
> At age 14 I received my General class license. I thought it
> would never come in the
> mail! No CSCE in those days. I went from KN0FSY to K0FSY. A great
> day!
>
>
> After working part-time for many months at \$1.25 an hour I
> bought a used KWM-2
> and power supply. I traded in my SX-96 and HT-40. I had the time of
> my life on ssb and cw.
>
> And contrary to what the FCC said in its recent Report &
> Order "an individual's ability
> to demonstrate increased Morse code proficiency IS indicative of
> that individual's ability to
> contribute to the advancement of the radio art!"
>
> Because we were required to operate cw for a year, Novices
> became very capable
> operators and did go on to become some of our country's best
> technicians and electronic
> experts! Who is the FCC kidding?! This so called "unnecessary
> requirement" never did so much
> for this country! FCC.. how soon you forget...shame on you!!!

>
>
> At the time getting an Extra Class license for me was a pipe
> dream. Not because of
> of the code requirement but after looking at those test questions,
> their answers, and explanations I thought not in my life time!
>
> I graduated from high school in 1966 and from Northwest
> Missouri State University in
> 1971 with a foreign language teaching degree. Unfortunately, I had to
> sell my KWM-2 my
> senior year to help pay for my college expenses. I let my license
> expire. What a mistake that
> was!
>
> Fast forward to 1991. Something deep inside me said, "Ray, you need ham
> radio you've
> been gone long enough." So much had changed. It had been 20
> years since I had copied
> code.
>
> I finally went to my first Novice class in 30 years. Our
> instructor started sending at
> 5 wpm. I thought ..can I do this...can I learn this again? Soon it
> all came back .By the end of
> the two hour class not only was copying code but I was doing it at
> almost 13 wpm!
>
>
> Fifteen minutes before the class ended a Novice came in and
> asked for some code
> practice before taking his General exam. Well, I said no time like
> the present. I'll try to copy.
> I missed a few numbers and letters but I did pretty well. Keep in
> mind this was after 20 years!
>
> If I can....you can. NO EXCUSES!!!!!!!
>
> I upgraded from Novice to Extra in a little over a year. I never have
> failed a FCC code
> test not because it came naturally but because I worked hard and
> didn't quit. I accepted the
> challenge and I wasn't going to stop until I mastered it.
>
> Funny thing about the code, one has to be able to spell and think on one's
> feet or I
> should say seat to send a message back. Perhaps this is one "real"
> reason why many don't
> like it let alone accept it.
>
>
> So after 27 years in teaching I have come to the conclusion
> that the dumbing down of America has finally reach ham radio. The

> FCC, it's bureaucrats, and too many wanna be hams
> have bought hook, line, and sinker the "lie" that equal opportunity
> should mean equal results. Excuse me everyone but where in the hell is
> that written?????

>
> Now all anyone has to do is pass a 35 question written
> exam and a 5 wpm to
> become a ham. Where's the incentive....where's the challenge FCC?

>
> We've lowered our standards now to the point that even a
> college degree is no longer
> a guarantee that a person isn't for all practical purposes a
> functional illiterate!

>
> Too many people, including the FCC, can not accept the fact
> that we are not all equal
> nor do we all have the same learning ability or potential. But when
> you lower the standards
> and take out the one filter that separated the men from the boys,
> you devalued the very thing
> you were trying to attain....for everyone!!!

>
> For the sake of expediency and immediate gratification we
> now have three license
> classes instead of five and one Mickey Mouse code test.

>
> The "powers to be" have given in to those who think they
> have the right to whatever
> they want without the work. I know your kind all too well. I had you
> in my classes. You wanted
> the all the privileges without the effort and the grades without the
> work!! I now have your
> children in class. Know what...not much has changed!!!!

>
> But those who have walked with me down that same road and
> made the same
> sacrifices to get their licenses...we know ...we know.

>
> There's alot of good DX on cw that you will never hear on
> ssb. Somebody has to work
> those stations and it might as well be us. So I guess we should
> "thank you" FCC.

>
> We'll see how long these new hams value their new licenses
> before something else
> tickles their fancy. Time will tell.

>
>
> Yours, Sincerely

>
> Ray Palmer

> KO4RN@arrl.org

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