

The ARRL Board of Directors decision to further eliminate CW in an effort to "modernize" the hobby. Yet, in defense of the men who comprise the ARRL Board, perhaps this response is only "human." As man fears death and extinction, so do our clubs and organizations, which are little more than a reflection of our collective nature. Men who fear death will do almost anything to avoid it. Likewise, our organizations will do nearly anything to survive when threatened. Yet, few, if any organizations have achieved growth through lower standards.

The ARRL, along with others, believes that CW discourages new people from entering the hobby and therefore it must be eliminated. Where are the statistics? What types of polling or studies were done to arrive at this conclusion? Is CW more or less of a deterrent than theory exams? How does one know? When the full advantages of CW are demonstrated and explained does the opinion of a potential radio amateur change with respect to CW? Does CW really discourage youth, or does it actually attract them? Of course, the ARRL can't answer any of these questions. Like a desperate man clinging to the life raft and shooting off his last distress flare at a plane 35,000 feet up, the ARRL is making desperate assumptions.

In my opinion, the new restructuring plan will not bring long-term growth to Amateur Radio. One may see a number of individuals from the "CB slider ranks" finally upgrade to the Amateur Radio Service. One may see some former novice and technician license holders on-air. But the end result will be moot. In the end, Amateur Radio will not only have lost its essential uniqueness, but the ease with which one can obtain a license will offer minimal camaraderie or the necessary sense of unity to keep individuals active and interested.

When the ARRL created the no-code technician license, the argument essentially amounted to:

*The VHF and UHF spectrum offer the greatest potential for new digital technology and experimentation [a true statement]. If we eliminate the code exam for the technician license, Amateur Radio will be flooded with young, technologically savvy young people who will revolutionize the hobby through the application of digital modes and hybrid technologies.*

Ten years later, and in light of the Board's most recent decision, one has to ask:

Where the heck are they?

Personally, I would like an answer to that question. It seems to me that it is essential to understand the failure of the no-code license before we apply the same "no-code" paradigm to the High Frequency spectrum and submit yet more proposals to the Commission.

The no-code license did not result in increased digital technology, packet radio development, or Internet hybrid networks. Instead, it opened two meters to a large influx of former Citizens Band operators, who had been kept out of Amateur Radio by the code test. While most of these individuals have become good operators and have contributed much in the way of activity and public service, the fact remains that measured by its basic goals, the no-code license is a failure.