

## Entry Level License Committee January 2018 – ARRL Board

Last July the Committee made three basic recommendations for the Board.

### Recommendations Summary

- Ask FCC to add some HF digital and phone access to the current Technician class privileges.
- Request a "new Novice" license class with basic privileges on HF and VHF+ bands.
- Focus on improving the Question Pools, outreach to potential hams, mentoring, training, and getting people on the air after becoming licensed.

During the July Board meeting, the Board voted to refer the ELL Committee recommendation for revisions to Technician privileges to the Executive Committee

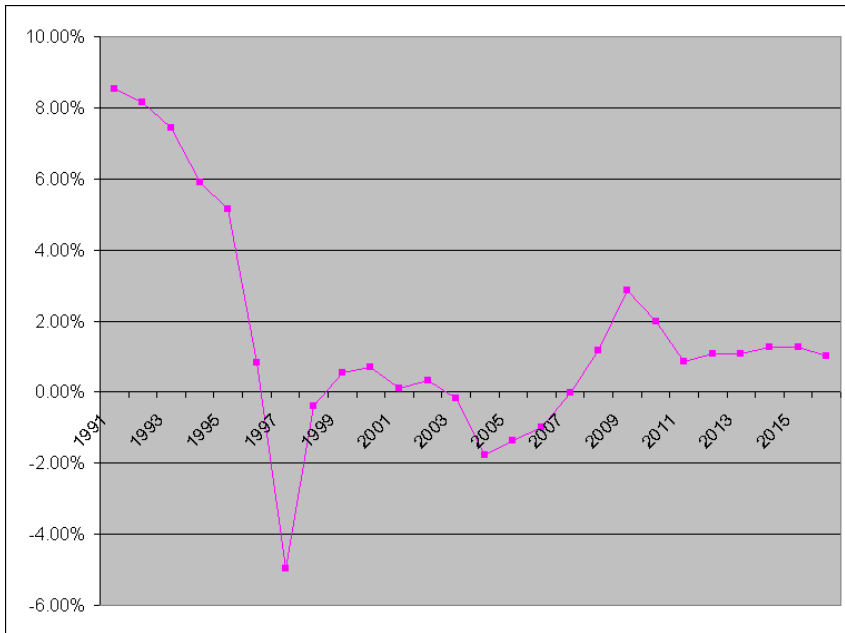
(Moved) that the ARRL Executive Committee is charged with developing a plan to implement recommendation #1 of that report which would see the additional mode and HF frequency privileges for the Amateur Radio Technician class license; and FURTHER that the Entry Level License Committee is requested to continue to research and develop the details of recommendation #2 contained in that report for ways to improve the successful outreach to potential new Amateurs that would help them through the process of becoming licensed..

In the October, the Executive Committee meeting voted:

12. Discussion next turned to developing a plan for implementation of recommendations that might come from the Entry Level License Committee. Mr. Imlay will work with Mr. Bellows and Mr. Frenaye to develop a specific proposal for the frequencies and modes to be requested to expand the current Technician class operating privilege. The goal is to have this proposal to the Executive Committee in time to be reviewed by the full board at their January 2018 meeting.

### Yearly Growth of Amateur Radio

The number of hams grew slightly during 2017 with an addition of 5,349 licensees (0.7%). The increase came as the result of 32,196 new hams (mostly Technicians) and the loss of 26,847 who became silent keys or let their licenses expire. The number of upgrades has been steady at around 10,000/year for the last nine years.



## ELL Discussions

The ELL Committee met via one conference call and has continued to exchange information and ideas via e-mail since last July.

Primary concerns are that while the plan to modernize the Technician license would help to make the license more attractive by allowing digital modes and phone on 80-40-15m is a positive step, it would not address the fundamental issue of having a simpler license within the reach of a significant number of young people.

The Committee believes the first step in licensing should have a simpler examination, and offer a limited set of privileges but enough to give a new licensee that possibility of experience a wide variety ham radio experiences.

## Entry Level License History

Bruce/K1BG has done extensive research on the Novice license that existed from 1951 until new Novice licenses were not issued during 1999. He presented that research at local clubs and conventions in New England during the last part of 2017. The original study material for the earliest Novice consisted of about four pages of material. When the Novice was phased out in 1999 the exam had strayed considerably from the original intent of having a simple entry level process to get people on the air.

The FCC's NPRM Docket No. 9295, April 21, 1949 had their original vision in Paragraph 7. (c) **“Creation of initial interest on the part of the novice, particularly youth, through the establishment of a short term, non-renewable beginner’s license of comparatively easy attainment.”**

In July 1951 the Novice class license created by the FCC “as an incentive to encourage a greater number of people to engage in the hobby of amateur radio.” According to the four page ARRL License Manual, the new license had limited privileges, a one year term, was non-renewable, had a distinctive callsign (KN1XXX, etc), and a 5 WPM Morse code

requirement. The exam was easy – just 20 multiple choice questions and 28 simple question “subjects”. It was a HUGE success....

The number of subjects to be studied slowly grew in the first 15 years to 34 in 1966, and then jumped to 50 in 1967, 60 in 1980, 67 in 1984 (200 questions), 100 in 1989, 120 in 1998. Some additional privileges were added along the way, VFOs instead of crystal control, an increase in power, two year term, and renewable. When the Novice was eliminated, the Technician became the entry level license, which now had 100+ subjects, a 35-question exam and Question Pool with 428 questions. This is a far cry from the original FCC intention for “a simple beginner’s license comparatively easy attainment.”

### **Conclusion**

The Committee believes a simple entry level license is essential. A modern entry level license would include digital and phone modes on some HF bands. Privileges granted to the new “Novice” would also need to be granted to Technicians.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Frenaye". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

### Committee members

Tom Frenaye, K1KI, chairman  
Bonnie Altus, AB7ZQ  
Tom Delaney, W8WTD  
Maria Somma, AB1FM  
Bruce Blain, K1BG  
Andrea Wayward, KG4IUM  
Paul Veal, N0AH  
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