

The Ragchewer

September 2007

The monthly newsletter of the
Lancaster & Fairfield
County Amateur Radio Club

On the Web: www.k8qik.org

Send email to K8QIK@columbus.rr.com

Club Meetings :

1st Thursday of every month
at 7:30 pm at the club house.

Radio Night:

Every Thursday except the
1st Thursday at the club
house, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

VE Testing:

The third Sunday of every
even numbered month.
Register at 9:30 am and
testing at 10:00 am

Club House

Location:

On State Route 37 (Granville
Pike) next to Beavers Field.

Nets:

Mondays at 9:00 p.m.
147.03 MHz (+.6)
146.70 MHz (-.6) Alt. Freq.
443.875 MHz (+5)
Thursday at 8:00 p.m.
443.875 MHz (+5)
UHF linked system

Packet BBS 145.53MHz
K8QIK-1 BBS
K8QIK-2: Ohio53

Weather Spotter Net:

146.76 Repeater with 123Hz
tone Tuesday at 7:30 pm
Alt frequency 147.24 MHz

September Birthdays

Paul Freshour	KD8DDD
Edward Campbell	WX7C
Kevin Numbers	KC8MTV
Larry Wright	KB8AHK
Donald Stephenson	WD8PCF
Joe Boyer	KC8ZQO
Robert Sparrow	W8AEY
John Lawson	W8AGS
Kelly Snoke	KB8GWB

Thursday Night Radio Night

Radio night is every Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
(except the first Thursday which is the club
monthly meeting). Work a little HF, maybe
build something? How about a hot cup of
coffee. We'll have them all waiting for you.

ARRL Membership

When you join the ARRL, or renew your
membership through the club, we retain \$15 for
each new membership OR lapsed membership
(of two years or more), and we retain \$2 for
each renewal. Please support our club, it doesn't
cost any more. Send or give all paperwork to
Treasurer with your money.

October VE Test:

The next VE test will be Sunday October 21st
at the club house on Route 37. Register at 9:30
a.m. and testing begins at 10:00 a.m. Prepare
yourself, take this test and upgrade!

Free Swap and Sell

If you have anything ham radio related, you can
swap it or sell it here. List your items for free.
Give a price and how to contact you. Send the
list to K8QIK@columbus.rr.com

2006-2007 Officers

President:

Don Stephenson, WD8PCF

Vice President:

Scott Snoke, WD8IXO

Treasurer:

Ed Campbell Sr., WD8PGO

Secretary:

Robert Northrup, KC8PSW

Trustee:

John Hilliard, W8OF

Station Engineer:

John Hilliard, W8OF

Net Manager:

John Fick, KD8EEK

Activities Manager:

Kay Hanna, KC8HJW

Public Relations:

Allen Sellers, KB8JLG

Flower Fund:

Mary Travis, KD8EEI

Chief Cook and Bottle

Washer:

Charlie Snoke, N8KZN

Editor:

Jack Travis, AE8P
(740) 687-1985

September 6, 2007 Meeting Minutes

At 7:30pm meeting called to order by President Stephenson, WD8PCF, who lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were 19 members and 3 guests present.

Guests were: Joe Testa, N8XCT, Pat Walker, KC8VWO and Russ Howell, N8QVF.

Two applications were reviewed for their second reading and another application was distributed for its first review.

Officer Reports

Secretary Report: Robert Northrup, KC8PSW

Minutes are posted in the Ragchewer. Motion to accept by Charlie, N8KZN and second by Griff, KG4IDG. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Ed Campbell, Sr., WD8PGO.

Ed gave the club financials. Motion to accept by Griff, KG4IDG and second by John, W8OF. Motion carried.

VP Report: Scott Snoke, WD8IXO

No Report

Trustee Report: John Hilliard, W8OF

John stated all was running OK.

President Don, WD8PCF distributed a document describing the duties of club officers for review and discussion. There was great discussion about elections and a few members present indicated some interest. Yes – folks – it's that time again. There will be openings in club officer and committee head positions this time around so search your soul (if you have one – hi, hi) and see how YOU can help/serve the club.

Committee Reports

VE Testing: Allan Sellers, KB8JLG

Allan was not present for his report but the next testing session is scheduled for October 21st at the clubhouse – more info next month. Also, Allan will be starting a General theory class in preparation for the General upgrade exam this Tuesday from 7-9pm for the next 6-8 weeks. If interested, get with Allan.

Monday Night Net: John, KD8EEK

Sept 10	John, W8OF
Sept 17	Charlie, N8KZN
Sept 24	John, KD8EEK
Oct 1	To Be Determined

John said the largest number of check-ins (36) was during August.

Charlie also requested the net manager call or email, as a courtesy, those operators for the net so they don't forget.

Also, John, KD8EEK stated he will revamp the calling tree protocol so that the "tree" will be more effective during severe weather and that the 147.030 repeater can be set into "net" mode to enable better control and usage of the repeater.

Ragchewer: Jack Travis, AE8P

Jack said all is going well and is ready for the next installment of the "Chewer".

Submit your article, news item, cartoon, or other Ham related bits of trivia to Jack at k8qik@columbus.rr.com.

Emergency Coordinator: Ed Campbell, WD8PGO

No report.

Safety: Scott Snoke, WD8IXO

Scott mentioned the need for the handrail/steps from the parking lot to the rear door, as has been discussed in previous meetings and presented in the newsletter.

Several members noted that a simple metal or wood handrail is all that is needed to help steady a person as they navigate from the lot to the door. John, W8OF, with his contacts at the city offices, will contact the head of maintenance and get the ball rolling. More later.

Station Engineer: John Hilliard, W8OF

John stated the repeater project to replace the "670" repeater is stalled at this time. Those who said would help cannot be located or don't have the time so until this gets resolved the project cannot move forward. Get with John to assist.

Activities Manager: Kay Hanna, KC8HJW

Kay reported planning for the Christmas Party is still continuing.

Kay also mentioned that in the past, the club has done a "leaf peeper" tour of local colors when leaves change and stopped along the way for food and fun. If interested, get with Kay to set it up.

Flower Fund: Mary Travis, WD8EEI

Mary said there was \$12 collected and Ed, KD8EEJ won \$6, and donated it to the Radio Fund.

Fund Raising: Kay Hanna, KC8HJW

Kay said there \$14 collected. Allan, KB8JLG won but was not present so the proceeds go back into the fund for next month.

Old Business:

Charlie, N8KZN addressed members present about the club, its past, present and future and the need for new officers and committee heads to keep the club going strong and vibrant. (Editors note: As stated earlier, there will be one if not two or more officer slots and several committee slots open for the 2007/2008 club year. Consider how you can serve.)

In light of Charlie's presentation, George, KD8USP made a motion to delay elections until the November elections. After much discussion, Charlie, N8KZN and Ed, KD8EEJ would form a nominating committee to canvas membership, prepare a slate of officers and present it at the October meeting. The vote would be in November and officers would take ownership of their duties at the Christmas party. The motion was second by Charlie, N8KZN. Motion carried.

Charlie, N8KZN noted a pre-inspection review of fire extinguisher needs to be performed before the fire marshal visits. He will coordinate with our supplier. Charlie stated the fire extinguisher updates

are on hold.

There will be another Swap Meet to be held on the first Saturday in October at the clubhouse. So come with all your keen stuff and make a day of it.

Charlie also noted the club needs to replace the fluorescent fixtures in the clubhouse. This project is on hold for lack of funds.

New Business:

Charlie, N8KZN noted the use of HTs during the last EMA drill and the lack of communications between sites this caused. He proposed purchasing enough 2M base units, power supplies, antennas and speakers so that each location where amateurs were present could communicate to the others during a drill or a live emergency. This brought a good discussion from those who participated in the last drill and all the problems that came up. John, W8OF noted he was asked by the director of EMA to price such a setup and that was done. When on a drill or emergency the IC location (EMA vehicle) already has a 2M mobile installed but other locations are not so equipped. More on this later.....

President Don brought the floor to a close and the two applications for membership for Kaye Hartman, K8GZ and Rhonda Judy, KD8GNM where voted upon. Both were accepted into membership. So.... Welcome Kaye and Rhonda.

Motion to adjourn was made by Griff, KG4IDG and second by Gary, W8GTS. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Northrup, KC8PSW

Upcoming Hamfests

September 16th is the Greater Cincinnati Amateur Radio Association hamfest in Cincinnati, Ohio. You can get more info at <http://gcara.org/>

September 23rd is the Cleveland Hamfest & Computer Show. You can get more info at <http://www.hac.org>

Tubes For Sale

If you need tubes for your boat anchor or TV contact Jeff Bell WD8JLI at 614-774-2973 or email at jbell@imagearray.net he has a huge supply for most needs.

E-mail Addresses

If you are currently receiving The Ragchewer via regular mail but have an Internet account, the Ragchewer can be sent to you and save the club some money. You'll also get your Ragchewer about a

week earlier. Send me your e-mail address and tell me to take you off the snail mail list.

If you have a new email address, be sure to also let me know. Send to K8QIK@columbus.rr.com

The Wayback Machine #15

by Bill Continelli, W2XOY

The Technician license is, by far, the most popular class of license now held in the amateur community. Most new hams start at the Technician level, to the extent that proposals have been made to eliminate the Novice license as unnecessary. The amateur community accepts the Technician, especially the Technician Plus, as an acceptable mainstream license, either as a steppingstone to a higher class license, or as an end in itself. But it wasn't always like this. For the first 25 years of the Technician class license's existence, it was an official outcast, set apart by the FCC as separate and distinct from the other amateur classes. Why were Technicians considered second class? To answer this question, we must go back to 1951.

On July 1, 1951, the FCC replaced the class A, B, and C licenses with the Advanced, General and Conditional classes and created three new licenses--the Extra, Technician, and Novice. The FCC was specific about the purpose of the Technician class license, as shown in the following quote: "This class was established expressly for serious minded experimenters who need spectrum space in which to air test their equipment. It was not established as a communications service and should not be regarded as a stepping stone between the Novice and General operator classes. The Technician class of amateur license has as its purpose the provision for serious amateur experimenters to explore the higher frequencies and otherwise contribute to the art".

Thus, the Technician was an experimenter, not a communicator. For this reason, the FCC initially allowed Technicians privileges only on frequencies above 220 Mc. The FCC did not intend for the Technician to engage in casual conversations on the air. Other than allowing a Technician to simultaneously hold a Novice license (which at that time was valid for only one year and non-renewable), it was expected that the Technician operator would stick to experimentation, not communication.

Although many of the early Technicians were indeed pure experimenters, many others obtained the license as a means to communicate without having to pass the 13 WPM code test. These "Technician communicators" became restless with the limited frequencies available above 220 Mc., and wanted access to the more mainstream VHF bands at six and two meters. They were joined by a small number of

"Technician experimenters" who also wished access to 50 and 144 Mc., for the purpose of studying Sporadic E skip, building equipment for these bands, or even using their license for radio control.

Thus, in early 1955, a proposal was submitted to the FCC to allow Technicians access to six and two meters. Knowing that the FCC regarded the license as an experimental one, these proposals avoided mentioning "communication"--rather phrases such as "greater experimentation" were used. The ARRL supported Technician access to six, but not two meters. In announcing their decision, the ARRL stated that six meters was far less occupied than two meters, and could use the influx of Technicians to study the band, and thus contribute to greater understanding of the unique characteristics of 50 Mc. The ARRL went on to say that permitting Technicians on two meters would appear to make the Technician license too attractive. Many amateurs also wrote the FCC on this--some said that Technicians should have full access to all frequencies above 50 Mc., while others opposed the move, citing the FCC's original intent for this license, and expressing fears that by allowing Technicians to use six and two meters, they would become mere communicators.

On April 12, 1955, the FCC amended Part 12 of the rules and regulations to give the Technician class operator six but not two meters.

The fears of those opposed to Technician communicators were amplified in 1958 when, at the peak of the sunspot cycle, thousands of Technicians used F layer skip on 50 Mc. to work vast amounts of DX--with some earning the W.A.S. award. Nevertheless, allowing Technicians on six meters had a beneficial effect--it helped populate a band that was underutilized, and it allowed a greater study of E and F layer skip. For this reason, early in 1959 another proposal was submitted to the FCC to allow Technicians full access to the 144 Mc. band. This time the ARRL agreed. They stated that things had changed since 1955 and Technicians on two meters would benefit not only the advancement of the radio art, but would also allow all classes of amateur licenses to share at least one voice band in common, as Novices had access to the 145-147 Mc. segment of two meters.

Despite the ARRL's support of Technicians on two meters, there was opposition. Again, the argument as to the purpose of the license was brought

up. Many amateurs wrote to the FCC stating that a Technician was an experimenter, not a communicator, and that the license should not be used for the routine exchange of communications. One ham complained that Technicians were rag chewing and not experimenting. A few amateurs not only wanted Technicians kept off of 144 Mc., but asked the FCC to incorporate their statement as to the purpose of the license into Part 12, presumably so that Technicians caught "communicating" rather than "experimenting" could be fined or have their licenses suspended. Others, including the ARRL, did bring in valid "experimental" reasons to allow Technicians on two meters. Once again, the FCC compromised. They restated their official position that a Technician was an experimenter, not a communicator. However, they acknowledged that VHF studies could be made on two meters, and that it was beneficial to have one common meeting ground for all classes of license. Thus, on August 21, 1959, Part 12 was amended to

allow Technicians access to the 145-147 Mc. segment of two meters--the same subband that Novices had.

And so Technicians entered the 1960s as a distinctly second class license. They were not eligible for RACES station authorizations. They could not hold many ARRL appointments. And, despite the ARRL support of full Technician access to all frequencies above 50 Mc., the FCC's official position had not changed. Although no Technician was ever actually fined or suffered a license suspension for the "crime" of communicating, many hams felt that Technicians were merely "glorified CBers" who were violating the spirit, if not the letter of the law.

In our next installment, we will see how a new, short lived VHF magazine, and an official change in the ARRL's viewpoint, helped bring about a gradual acceptance of Technicians as "real" amateurs. I hope to see you then.

Severe Weather Calling Tree

We will be having a brief meeting on Thursday September 20 at 7:30 pm at the club house. All are welcome to attend and I hope to get more people to sign onto the calling tree list.

We currently do not have any calling tree members in the Pleasantville, Rushville, Amanda, Lithopolis, Pickerington, and Canal Winchester areas.

On the agenda will be discussion about how we will contact each other and Columbus Weather on the 146.76 repeater. If you have any questions prior to the meeting you may contact me at kd8eek@yahoo.com or at (740) 215-7096 (AT&T cell phone number). I also monitor the 147.030 repeater on a regular basis. Hope to see you there. John, KD8EEK

Annual Swap Meet In October

The Lancaster Swap Meet this year is going to be at the clubhouse on Route 37 North on October 6, 2007. It will start at 8AM and again there is no entry fee or prizes. Soft drinks, coffee and doughnuts will be available. I anticipate that we will finish up about noon.

I do not have any demonstrations scheduled but if someone wants to volunteer or propose a topic, I will consider it. Please pass this on to others in your group as I am not advertising it anywhere else.

Regards, Allen, KB8JLG

Help With Information On Member Status

Since I don't always get or read the newspaper, I need to be notified of the death of a member so flowers or a contribution to an organization can be sent from the club. Please call me at 740-687-1985 or send an email at metravis@columbus.rr.com.

If you are aware of a member who is sick or

recuperating from surgery; or has been recognized for any achievement in the community, notify me so a card can be sent.

Thank you for your help.

Mary, KD8EEI

Upgrading Light Bulbs Will Save Energy

In less than a minute, consumers can make a lasting difference in how much electricity they use. By purchasing compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs, an investment is made that will produce long-term savings and help the environment.

While the CFL bulbs cost more up front, they use 66 percent less energy and can last 10 times longer than incandescent light bulbs. A single CFL bulb can save consumers \$30 or more over its lifespan. Since many local home improvement stores, groceries and other retail outlets sell these light bulbs, it is an easy and simple way that residential consumers can make a difference.

According to the 18Seconds partnership (www.18seconds.org) – whose name is based on the mere 18 seconds it takes to replace a light bulb – if every American replaced a 60 watt bulb with a 13 watt Energy Star labeled CFL bulb, \$8 billion in energy costs would be saved.

While manufacturers are improving the technology behind CFL bulbs, consumers should be aware of some limitations. For example, for outdoor lights and those with a dimmer, special CFL bulbs

should be used that are appropriate for those types of lighting. A recent news article shows some consumer disappointment with the current dimming bulbs but that new and improved models should be available soon. Also, CFL bulbs should not typically be used in ceiling fans.

Some consumers also have expressed concern about the brightness of CFL bulbs. The current models make significant improvements over the older generations of fluorescent bulbs which flickered and distorted colors. However, consumers may need to try several types and wattages of the newer bulbs to find which amount of lighting best suits their needs.

All CFL bulbs contain a trace amount of mercury, small enough to fit on the tip of a ball point pen, and about 1/125th of the mercury found in some older household thermometers. As a result of the mercury, some states have passed laws prohibiting these bulbs from being disposed of in the trash. In Ohio, consumers have the ability to dispose of bulbs at a hazardous waste disposal site. The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Council (OCC) offers information on these sites on its website, www.pickocc.org.

Waking The Dead, Unruding The Rude

by **T. J. "Skip" Arey N2EI**

Editor note: Thanks John, W8OF for sending us this article.

Recently I had the opportunity to drive through a region of the country I have not had reason to visit for about ten years or so. In looking over my logs I recalled the area to have quite a few fine and very active repeater systems. Consulting the current edition of the ARRL Repeater Directory revealed almost a dozen machines that should have made my stay in this area lots of fun amateur radio wise. In preparation for the trip I programmed all the aforementioned systems into the memories of my handheld and looked forward to many hours of relaxing rag chewing.

What I discovered did not speak well of the state of VHF/UHF repeater activity in 2005, at least in that particular part of the country. I shall keep things nameless and regionless because, I know the situation to be a fact in more than a few locations around the country. As I drove through the area and set up shop in a number of bed & breakfasts and motels during

my travels, I found incredibly little repeater activity. On many of the machines my calls went unanswered, even during peak drive time hours. (This does not bode well for travelers in need of aid in an unfamiliar part of the land). Those machines where my call was answered almost always resulted in curt responses, sometimes with an overt indication that outsiders were not all that welcome. Roundtables consisted of a handful of friends talking only to one another and not opening up matters to general discussion. I can recall passing through this area in the past and being invited twice on two different repeaters to meet some local hams for coffee at local eateries. Now I find only dead air or the cold shoulder. Something is not healthy in ham radio land. While most areas are not in as dire straights as this part of the world I was visiting, I think we can all think of one or two machines near our QTH's that are either unfriendly or have been so inactive that dust comes out of the speaker when you key them up.

I guess the analysis needs to begin with how things might have gone down this road to radio

hobby entropy. The most common thing I hear from folks is “The Internet is to blame!” I suppose by some stretch of the imagination, an argument could be made that some folks have stopped playing radio in favor of playing with computers. My experience, and that of many of my friends, does not reflect that possibility. I cannot think of any ham who has become inactive due to the addition of a computer in the shack. Everyone radio person I know, ham or otherwise has seen the computer as a tool to enhance their hobby fun. While computer technology is a convenient excuse and target I just don’t see anything to really support this notion. Have you ever seen an ad in the ham radio press stating “Must sell my ham gear to buy a PC?” That dog just won’t hunt.

A more reasonable argument might be made for the growth of the cellular phone industry as cutting into ham repeater activity. Many machines sprung up around the use of, and access to, a viable area telephone patch system. I know more than a few folks, whose ham activity is mainly in the HF bands, who bought a 2 meter rig and supported a local repeater just for the security of being able to make an emergency call from the road. Today, for most folks, cell phones do the job. So the lack of need for phone patch based systems and their group support brings us to where the problem probably really comes home to roost.

I think we have nobody but ourselves to blame for the lack of repeater activity. Most metropolitan areas (with the reduction in phone patch use) probably have more repeater systems than they reasonably require. In the late seventies and early eighties, everyone who could get a channel off of their regional frequency coordinator (and even some who didn’t) put a repeater system on the air. So instead of a good number of folks sharing the fun in a few good places, smaller and smaller groups broke out onto the different machines and, over time, there just wasn’t enough activity to keep folks interested. And with very few folks depending on phone patching to let their significant other know when they will be home for dinner, a lot of machines have gotten awfully quiet. Quantity is seldom quality.

So we have addressed the dead systems, what about those unfriendly ones. That might be a tougher nut to crack but it’s something we need to look at because, along with a drop in repeater system use has come a drop in the interest in emergency service activity. Even in spite of the events related to tightening up emergency response in relation to

homeland security, many areas still find it hard to get folks out for ARES/RACES nets and field activities. And sadly, some of those groups that are active show a trend to being rather insular and, while paying lip service to wanting new folks to participate, seem to go a long way in treating newcomers as outsiders. This is actually a fairly complicated subject that goes well beyond the ham radio world. An excellent book that looks at the problem and some of the solutions is called *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* by Robert D. Putnam (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). I commend it to you for further study. Some systems that were once open, with gregarious memberships who encouraged new activity, have turned in on themselves, feeling little or no connection with hams outside of the local group. I once drove through an area and made a call on a system listed in the ARRL Repeater directory as being “open”. Before the squelch tail dropped someone (who by the way neglected to give their callsign at the time) felt the need to inform me on no uncertain terms that people who did not pay dues on the system were not allowed to talk on it. Even if this was a case where the system had gone “closed” for some reason (it hadn’t) I am sure you can think of quite a few ways that interaction could have been handled with better amateur radio spirit and camaraderie.

So how do we get these inactive and insular repeater systems to wake up and operate in the best traditions of the amateur radio fraternity? In checking out matters with some of my local repeater groups and talking with folks in other parts of the country I think there are lots of ways to turn dead and unfriendly systems around. Let me outline a few that might be useful should you run into similar situations in your area.

JOIN YOUR LOCAL REPEATER GROUP

Regardless of if a system is considered open or closed for use purposes, the people who pays the bills always have the most say in how a system is run. Contributing membership in your local system(s) allows you to have input into matters, or at least have direct access to those that set policy. Remember that system I spoke of where I was told to get off the air because I wasn’t a paying member? I made a point of finding out who the system trustee was and getting in contact with him. That gentleman assured me that this unknown individual was not speaking for the repeater group, that the system was open and use by travelers was encouraged. He assured me that the

matter would be discussed at the next quarterly Repeater Group meeting and that he would advise regular users to keep an ear out for anyone making such inappropriate statements on behalf of the group. I wasn't a member of that group and my concerns were well heard. Think of how much more clout your position will have if you are a card carrying member?
GO TO GROUP MEETINGS

This is sort of a chicken and egg situation. I know of some repeater groups that, as they have become more inactive, have held less frequent meetings. This is 180 degrees out of phase. You need to hold more frequent meetings to discuss how to improve system participation, to meet and welcome new hams to the group, and to find out about any emerging matters that could have a negative effect on the system. More meetings will produce more activity. A more active repeater will have more members, who will come to more meetings... Get the picture? And while you're at those meetings, be a voice for the kind of repeater group you would want to be a member of. Remind folks of the public service aspects of the hobby as well as the brotherhood and sisterhood all hams should show for each other.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

As a bona fide member of your local system, make a point of getting on the air frequently and taking the time to greet and reach out to newcomers and travelers you hear on the system. Often, these folks will be people just starting out in their ham radio experience. You can not only help them to feel welcome, you can help them to learn correct practice and procedures and make them a better ham in doing so. Since the general demise of the Novice Bands, newcomers have no safe place to cut their amateur radio teeth. New folks need support and encouragement. A little effort on your part will go a long way and probably even bring in a new member

to your local group. You may even make a friend for life.

TALK ABOUT SYSTEM CONSOLIDATION WHERE APPROPRIATE

This can be a touchy subject because some folks have a lot of sweat equity as well as personal finances tied up in building and maintaining their particular systems. But what good is it to have a bunch of systems with nobody to talk to? In areas where the need for multiple systems has fallen off for the reasons mentioned above, repeater groups need to reach out to one another for their mutual survival. Most areas of our country could be better served if repeater groups begin to look at consolidation seriously and reasonably.

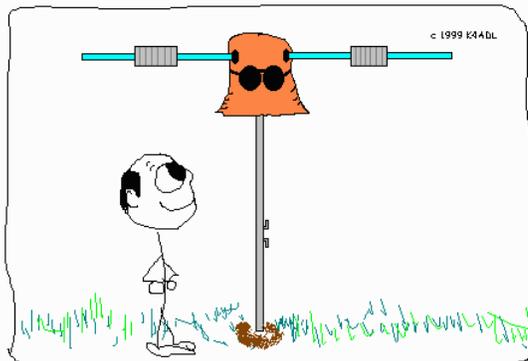
HOW ABOUT SOME ON AIR ACTIVITIES?

It's easy to encourage repeater system use through organized activities. How about a weekly swap net? Code practice? Technical discussion? Encourage taking turns moderating the activities to get more people involved.

Here's a great activity that allows for participation by retirees and shut ins. Set up a schedule for repeater monitoring so that as many hours of the day or night are covered by someone from the group. Easy enough to do, just get folks to sign up for an hour or two where you promise to keep your rig on and answer any call that comes in. Even if you can't get 24/7 coverage try to see that your machine is covered during peak commuter hours and on weekends. What a great service to travelers and newcomers!

No repeater has to fall into disuse or, worse yet, rudeness. With a little effort and some reflection on what makes the amateur radio hobby great, any repeater can become a popular place that performs good service and is fun to hang around.

I'll see you on the bottom end of 40 meters, that is, unless you answer my call on your local machine!



WARREN REALLY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF A "DISGUISED FLAGPOLE ANTENNA."



IN A BIZARRE ALIEN UNIVERSE ON THE MORNING OF THE BIG HAMFEST, LYZUTH GIVES HER HUBBY A YUMMY BREAKFAST AND EXTRA CASH TO SPEND.

Riley Reiterates Recommendation To "Lighten Up" On Ham Bands

FCC Special Counsel in the Spectrum Enforcement Division Riley Hollingsworth's main message at the Dayton Hamvention® <<http://www.hamvention.org>> 2007 FCC Forum may not have been a new one. But it's certainly one he believes bears repeating -- at least until it starts cutting through the QRM and QRN that pervade more communication channels than our Amateur Radio bands.

"Well, you could have gone to the flea market, but you came to church instead," Hollingsworth quipped to his Dayton forum audience. "I've got you now."

Hollingsworth repeated what for many Riley Watchers has become a familiar refrain: That the Amateur Radio community needs to "lighten up" on the air. Acknowledging that he was repeating himself, Hollingsworth urged his audience to take his message more to heart. "All of you can learn from each other," he said, "and you need to work together more and show a little more respect for your diverse interests and for the Amateur Service as a whole. It isn't about you. It isn't about enforcement. It's about Amateur Radio."

As radio amateurs take to the airwaves, he continued, they need to decide what's most important -- the best interests of ham radio or their ego, pride or perceived "rights."

"I realize I may be preaching to the choir here, but on the air you need to be more cooperative and less argumentative -- and I need you to take this message with you when you go home," he continued.

As a "homework assignment," Hollingsworth encouraged his listeners to read the "It Seems to Us . . ." editorial, "Most Effective Use" <<http://www.arrl.org/news/features/2007/05/01/1/>>, by ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, in May 2007 QST. In his commentary, Sumner stressed that interference occurring as a side effect of legitimate Amateur Radio activities in crowded bands "is simply a fact of life" and that it's "unfair to your fellow amateurs to assume that every instance of interference you may encounter is a hostile act."

Hollingsworth offered good news and bad news. "The good news: Nothing is wrong with Amateur

Radio," he allowed. "It is a good service that is showing its value to the public on a daily basis."

The bad news, he asserted, making a comparison to "road rage," is "that there is an element of Amateur Radio that too often reflects present society generally."

Hollingsworth urged all radio amateurs to cooperate more and depend less on the FCC to solve their operating issues.

"We live in a rude, discourteous, profane, hotheaded society that loves its rights, prefers not to hear about its responsibilities, and that spills over into the ham bands," he said.

Hollingsworth's bottom line: Be flexible in your frequency selection and make regular use of the "big knob" on the front of your transceiver to shift to any of the "thousands of frequencies and hundreds usable at any given time of day or year" as necessary to avoid problems. "The world is ugly enough -- don't add to it," Hollingsworth advised.

"We can enforce our rules, but we can't enforce kindness and courtesy or common sense," Hollingsworth concluded. "And a very wise person, who happens to be standing to my left [FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau staffer Bill Cross, W3TN -- Ed] once told me: 'You can't regulate stupid.' If we could, we'd be working for the United Nations instead of the FCC."

In his comments, Cross singled out the controversy that erupted recently over fears that automatically controlled digital stations would overwhelm the amateur bands, eclipsing most other modes. Cross cited §97.7 of the rules, which requires each amateur station to have a control operator and, in essence, to employ a "listen-before-transmit" protocol."

When a station is under automatic control, regardless of the transmission mode, Cross explained, the control operator need not be at the control point, but must employ station control devices and procedures while transmitting that ensure compliance with the FCC rules and does not cause harmful interference to ongoing communications of other stations.

The operational rule, Cross said, is: "Your call sign, your responsibility."

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