



FEEDBACK

December 2015

Your Story:

Do you have a story, humorous or otherwise about amateur radio? If so, please contact the newsletter editor (ac8ps@arrl.net) and get it published in FEEDBACK.

If you would like to place a classified ad to sell or purchase amateur radio related items, please contact the editor.

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Kids are Not the Future of Ham Radio

By Bob Witte, K0NR

You've heard it a million times: our kids are the future. That statement gets applied to almost everything, including amateur radio. How can you argue with an obvious fact like that?

But I am starting to think it is incorrect.

We've had really good success on creating new hams of all ages in our Technician License Class (at the Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association). We've been doing this for a while now and I think I am seeing a pattern emerge. We've been able to attract middle schoolers to the class and help them get their ham radio license. I've talked to many of them on the air. They've helped out with public service events. They seem to have fun playing with radios.

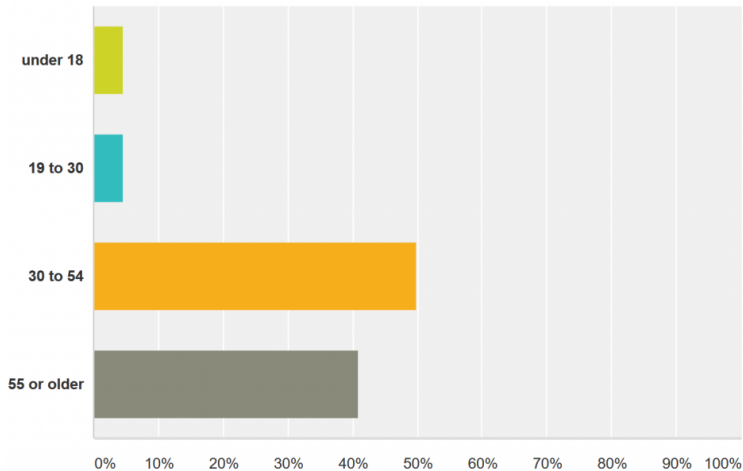
Then this thing called high school happens. The high school phase in the US is filled with tons of stuff to do: studying, homework, AP classes, science competitions, sports, dating, movies, driving and after school jobs. Way too much stuff. Ham radio starts to take a backseat to these normal high school activities. Then we don't see the kids at the radio club meetings or chatting on the local repeater because they are busy doing other things. Have we lost them forever? Not sure.

High school is often followed by college which has its own set of challenges: a totally new environment, away from home, a new set of people, new studies, etc. There might be a ham radio club on campus but maybe not. If a kid is not off to college they are (hopefully) out doing something to establish themselves in this world. Eventually they emerge on the other side, get a job, get themselves established, sometimes with a spouse and maybe a kid or two. By this time they are 25 to 30 years old, depending on the individual.

I recently posted about the demographics of our students in the Tech License Class (<http://www.k0nr.com/>). The chart below shows the age distribution of our students from our most recent class. Hmm, clearly most of our students are 30 or older. (Sorry, we have not collected age data with finer resolution.) This particular class is light on the under 18 crowd... sometimes we have a clump of kids in the mix.

What is your age?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



For whatever reason, it seems that most people find themselves in a situation as an adult that causes them to say "I want to get my ham radio license." When asked why they want to get their ham license, the top response is always emergency/disaster communications, followed by backcountry communications, pursuing electronics as a hobby and learning about radio communications. I suspect that starting to be established in a community and having some disposable income also play a role.

My hypothesis is that the most effective way of growing a vibrant ham radio community is to target adults ages 25 to 40.

This age range is more equipped and ready to be ham radio operators and are still young enough that they will be around for a while. Of course, we still want to work with all age groups, including kids and retirees. We've all seen very young hams get the bug for ham radio early and carry it throughout their life. And we also see plenty of older folks get interested in the hobby as they approach or enter retirement. We don't want to miss out on either of those groups.

So that's my read on the situation. I've got some data to support my theory but I can't really prove it. What do you think? What are you seeing in your ham radio community?

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Bob Witte, K0NR, blogs about amateur radio at K0NR.Com. You can find this post at <http://www.k0nr.com/wordpress/>. You can e-mail him at bob@k0nr.com. He is also on Twitter: @K0NR.

Meeting Minutes 11/19/2015

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions

Officers present – Stephanie W8AEZ, John W8JRD. Board members absent; Gary N8QC, Brian W8BDM.

18 members in attendance total. No Quorum.

Secretary's report was not submitted and Brian out of town.

Treasurer's report was accepted.

Committee reports:

Hamfest 2015 – Wings Event Center has been reserved and the 50% down payment has been sent.

ARRL will be notified for listing in QST and approval from divisional members. (This has been done)

SKYWARN – Little to report except a plan to find volunteers to conduct nets. A radio, an antenna and a power supply for the radio have all been donated to assemble a "loaner" rig. Now to find someone to run it.

VE session – HIAD at Barry County: 10 candidates, most passed. Next HIAD at DPW on Kendall Street on the 21st. Also Kalamazoo County Sheriff's office on the same Saturday morning. The next SMARS VE session will be in February because of Christmas holiday. Vanity call signs are now free from the FCC!

Unfortunately, there are no 1 by 2 call signs available in the US.

Old Business – Christmas party is booked into Clara's for Saturday December 12th. Voluntary gift exchange set at \$10 or so. The remaining monies in the 50/50 pot will be given away but you must be present to win!

Tech Committee – The 2m Fusion repeater was used for about 3 months to be sure it would work and the Motorola was placed in service again. The Fusion repeaters are being stored off the repeater site to keep them safe. Jay is holding one and Tom will hold the other. Interference was heard on the 220 repeater again. Only lasted for a little while and not long enough for Don to try to locate the source.

The Radio Parity Act has been moved out of committee and on to the Senate floor (US). A pdf form for signing and sending to our Senators is available on the ARRL website. All amateurs are encouraged to sign and submit.

Club dues are to be paid up now.

No presentation this evening.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Jarrett N8ARR, acting secretary

Treasurer's Report:
Income and Expense Statement
11/1/2015 Through 11/30/2015 (Accrual Basis)

Category Description	11/1/2015- 11/30/2015
INCOME	
<u>Dues</u>	
2015	152.00
TOTAL Dues	152.00
<u>Sales</u>	
Equipment	710.00
TOTAL Sales	710.00
TOTAL INCOME	862.00
EXPENSES	
<u>Administration</u>	0.00
<u>Hamfest</u>	
Facility	1,300.00
TOTAL Hamfest	1,300.00
<u>Maintenance</u>	140.00
Repeaters	100.00
TOTAL Maintenance	240.00
<u>Meetings</u>	
Refreshments	28.89
TOTAL Meetings	28.89
<u>Utilities</u>	
Internet	30.00
TOTAL Utilities	30.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,598.89
OVERALL TOTAL	-736.89

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Note From the Editor: Jerry Bailey, WB8FBJ, became a Silent Key. He was a longtime SMARS member.

Who were your Elmers?

by Mike Russell KQ8N

I have been reminiscing the last few days about my ham radio Elmers, and how they have influenced me. To the new hams unfamiliar with this, an Elmer in simple terms is a mentor. The ARRL has a great explanation on their website.

I am sad to say that several of my Elmers are now deceased. The first that came into my mind was Les (W8YMG) L'Esperance (SK). As a young Tech I spent countless hours at his house on South River Rd and at Pine Lake listening to 6 meters, HF, and learning the art of radio swapping. I was awestruck by Emma (W8QOQ) L'Esperance's expertise as a phenomenal CW operator. The stations in their homes and the antennas on their towers were substantial (at least in my mind at the time). The other Elmer that came to my mind was Al W8ZEJ Cain (SK). He and his wife Louellis W8AQU invited me into their home after a simple knock on their door on LaVista. Their station was very simple. Just an HF and VHF radio set up on a desk in the dining room. They demonstrated to me that you didn't have to have a big station to have fun on the air and ragchew with friends. I will never forget Al's infectious laugh in person and on the radio.

Also, Larry (now W8VVG) Pasma helped a young couple (my wife Bev KA8HQJ and I) construct a simple (read cheap) 40m dipole antenna out of coax and help me hang it over our first house on Kingman Ave. Bev and I made many CW contacts via this antenna and our SB-102.

Who are/were your Elmers? This leads me to consider what I have done for others to get them involved, or MORE involved, in the hobby that I love. Much has changed since the late 70's, early '80's that I so fondly wrote about above. Most of us these days might be skeptical of anyone who just blindly knocks on their door and asks about the unusual antenna on their house, or wants to know about the amateur radio plate on their car. But these situations, or similar, still do occur. What would you do?

As many of you know, I teach a Tech Level class with Terry N8LN a couple of times a year. I have helped numerous folks get their ham licenses, but I must confess that I do not feel as though I have done much with the follow-through for these folks after they receive their Tech ticket. Many of you may agree that the new Techs that Terry and I have helped get their license during our six week study process are much more prepared to be on the air initially than many of their ham-in-a-day counterparts.

But, sadly, that is the point where these new hams need encouragement from us, the already established ham community, and we are falling short. We need to expand their horizons beyond the 2m/440 FM handheld radio. These new hams may only be in it because of the local CERT group. I do not need to tell YOU there are so many other aspects of the hobby that these new hams need exposure to. THEY need to be told and shown about the different aspects. They need Elmers like I had, and like I hope you had the pleasure of knowing. Being an Elmer does not necessarily require any amount of money. At a minimum it requires your time and patience. The recipient is likely to remember it for a lifetime, like I have.

I do not usually make New Years' resolutions, but this year I am. I resolve to become an Elmer to a newly licensed radio amateur. I hope you have the time to do the same.

A gentle reminder from our Treasurer, John Davidson W8JRD, that membership dues for 2016 are due. Cost is \$10.00 for the first family member, and \$1.00 for each additional family member. Both cash and check payments are acceptable. If you wish to pay by check, please make it payable to SMARS.

Respectfully submitted,
John Davidson, W8JRD
SMARS Club Treasurer

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"With the holiday season fast approaching, it's time to make plans to attend this year's SMARS club Christmas party! Clara's on the River will be hosting our event on Saturday, December 12th from 6:00-8:00pm. By popular vote at last month's club meeting, the four entree choices offered will be Club Car Chicken Hawaiian, Fettuccine Alfredo, Meat Lasagna, and Club Car Top Sirloin. The price per person is \$16.99 (with the exception of the Top Sirloin entree, cost of which is \$18.99) and includes pop, tea, or coffee. Other beverages will be available on a cash-bar basis. We will also do an optional gift-swap: men are invited to bring a gift for another man, and ladies may bring a gift for another lady. We look forward to seeing you all there!"

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Halbert, W8AEZ
SMARS Club Vice President

S.M.A.R.S. W8DF Club Repeaters

- 2M Repeater 146.66MHz, -600KHz offset, CTCSS 94.8Hz
- 2M DStar 146.79MHz, -600KHz offset
- 70cm Repeater 443.59MHz, +5MHz offset, CTCSS 94.8Hz
- 1.25M Repeater 224.24MHz, -1.6MHz offset
- APRS Digipeater/Igate, 144.39MHz

70cm & 1.25 meter repeaters are linked, and also available via echolink.

Other Repeaters

- 2M Repeater 147.12MHz, +600KHz offset, CTCSS 186.2Hz
- 70cm Repeater 442.35MHz, +5MHz offset, CTCSS 94.8Hz

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY FEEDBACK

<p>Club Meeting 3rd Thursday of every month Maple United Methodist Church 342 Capital Avenue NE Battle Creek, MI 49017</p>	<p>SKYWARN Coffee 1st Saturday of every month Immediately after Siren Test Coney Island, N.E. Capital Battle Creek, MI</p>	<p>BLB Luncheon 1st Thursday of every month Coney Island, N.E. Capital Battle Creek, MI</p>	<p>SMARS Breakfast 2nd Saturday of every month Coney Island, N.E. Capital Battle Creek, MI</p>
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<p>SMARS Nets: Before Lunch Bunch Monday—Friday 11:30 AM, 146.66 Sunday Evening 8:00 PM, 146.66 Monday 7:00 PM, 147.12 (Skywarn) Monday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95 Wednesday 7:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95 Wednesday 8:00 PM, 28.365 Saturday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95</p> <p>Please see page 5 for offsets and PL tones</p>	<p>Upcoming Events: Club Meeting: December 17th @ 7:00pm BLB Luncheon: December 3rd @ 11:30am Siren Test: December 5th @ 1:00pm Skywarn Coffee: Immediately after Siren Test SMARS Breakfast: December 12th @ 8:30am Christmas Party: December 12th @ 6:00pm</p>
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