

Kings Point

Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

Bringing together all levels of ham operators, both newcomers and veterans, to share in the enjoyment of shortwave radio and emergency communications

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From The President

Musings from an old Ham...

Occasionally I sit back and think about where amateur radio is today, what it means to me, how it is changing, then all this leads to a few thoughts of pseudo wisdom.. First off, I think Sun City Center is unique and blessed with so many diverse interests. Even in our radio community, there are many facets of our hobby. With the advent of computers, amateur radio has flourished in many directions. Here are a few things that have changed that have led us to where we are today.



Dick Bishop, W4NWD

The Kings Point Amateur Radio Club meets the first Monday of the month from October through May at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Club-house Craft Room.

1. Call books. -- How long since you bought a three-inch thick monster? Most of us just go to QRZ, ARRL or FCC web site to look up a call.
2. License Exams. -- Who can remember when we did not have the answers given to us in a study guide or have a PC with practice exams?
3. Packet radio. -- Did computers really kill it or just absorb it only to expand digital messaging?
4. RTTY. Remember the mechanical RTTY that looked like an IBM card sorter... the one before computers? RTTY is much easier and less equipment intensive today, and as a bonus you get Amtor, Wefax, PSK, SSTV, and Winlink. What a deal! The digital age has arrived.

5. How long since you built a rig, amplifier, or piece of test equipment? Most radios and equipment is computer-based today, and most often they interface with computers.

6. Internet linked radio has expanded our communication ability. It has made the HT's a very powerful communication tool and has added a lot of fun and DXing capability to low-cost ham radio. If it is not radio, then what about all the phone patches we ran for missionaries or phone line control links we use on repeaters, or auto dial or speed dial. Just remember, that cell phones and their technology is still radio.

I could go on, but I think you see where I'm going. The computer age has changed our hobby. Equipment is more reliable, more fun, easier to operate, more robust, and smaller than our nostalgic machines of the 50's and 60's. Also our knowledge base has grown with the changes. Our amateurs today have a broader, more technological base than ever. New amateurs have a steep learning curve which begins immediately after passing the exam.

Now for some pseudo wisdom. I hear a lot of complaints about new ham's lack of knowledge, making mistakes, using the wrong terminology and just not operating like "us good old experienced boys do". Well, here are the facts. It is up to us "good old boys" to teach, train, encourage and enlighten our new brothers and sisters. If we do not step up, then who is to blame if our practices drift to a different level? It behooves every

Old Ham to use his tact, skill, and knowledge to encourage our hobby. Criticism is still criticism even when it is meant to be constructive. How we say things is as important as what we say. I personally make a lot of mistakes and I ask that you allow me to make those mistakes, knowing that I mean well, and who knows; you just might help me learn something as a result.

We must realize that because our hobby is so diverse, we will have hams that get a license for many reasons. Their reasons may be singly focused and they may not participate in all facets of amateur radio. To be critical because some one is interested in emergency communications and not DX is short sighted.

So what does amateur radio mean to me? Well first off, it is a technical pursuit that challenges my mind, presents a chance to be creative. It also offers different methods of communication and opportunities to learn through interaction with others. Lastly, it is a social hobby which brings me into contact with interesting, talented, people whom I thoroughly enjoy.

As our seasonal friends leave Sun City Center, we wish them a safe and enjoyable summer and hope they find a way to stay in touch while away.

73,

Dick, W4NWD

May Meeting Program Could Be A Mystery



Vice President and Program Chairman Russell Akridge had talked to Captain Bach of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office about the new emergency communications vehicle. Captain Bach said he would be willing to bring the vehicle to a KPARC meeting for a demonstration as soon as equipment installation and testing is complete which should be by the middle of the April. So based on the conversation our program should be the new emergency communication vehicle. After several phone calls and emails asking for confirmation for the May KPARC meeting program no response was received. Therefore, our program chairman has a few items ready incase the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office can not make the date.

Russell works very hard to bring informative programs to our meetings. Proof is the very interesting presentations we've had this year so far. **Our next meeting is Monday, May 5th at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Clubhouse Craft Room. Come out and enjoy the company and bring a friend.**

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Amateur Radio Clinic

A clinic for newly licensed hams and veteran operators needing a refresher on current operating has been instituted at the Kings Point Amateur Radio Club radio room.

The first week participants visited the National Weather Station in Ruskin where Nick Petro, N3OET, Senior Forecaster, led the Skywarn Weather Spotter basic training. All those who took the training will be official weather spotters. Members of the class were given a fascinating tour of the station and invited to come and help out with 2 meter net traffic at the NWS.

The second week Dick Bishop and Russell Akridge gave a seminar on repeaters that included what they are, why we need them and how they work, and then they explained the difference between duplex and simplex and showed how to go from one to the other. Individual assistance was given for those who needed help with programming the newer HT's.

Everyone is invited to attend these clinics, we especially encourage new hams to come and meet with people who want you to succeed.

