

President's Corner

July 2009

Last month I rambled on about all manner of topics, and concluded my column by demonstrating how the various themes I raised could all be tied to amateur radio through the concept of “expanding our horizons.” Now, some folks might be put off by this idea; perhaps it sounds like too much effort is involved, or maybe they’re happy with the current state of their pursuits, and have no desire to change what already appears to be a good thing. But are there any hams out there who have failed to notice that our club (and indeed, ham radio itself) is experiencing a serious decline in the number of participants? The reasons (advent of the Internet, popularity of cell phones, and decrease in the do-it-yourself electronics hobby, among other things) have been mentioned many times – but is there anything we can do to help offset this loss?

There are certainly several things we can do. One is simply to adapt. Darwin was the first to make clear that evolution requires that life either adapts to its surroundings or else perishes – and I’d hate to see our club perish! Amateur radio operators cannot practice their craft all alone in a vacuum – communication, the heart of the hobby, is inherently a group activity. But adapting to the reality of the 21st century means expanding our horizons beyond the narrow confines of the traditional purview of amateur radio. There are several topics that are closely aligned to ham radio – including computers, robotics, and the proliferation of wireless devices. We will need to reach out to those who are interested in such fields, and convince them of their commonalities with ham radio, in order to ensure the survival of our hobby. As usual, I’m throwing some vague ideas out here, and hoping some of y’all who either have community contacts with such groups, or else are more creative thinkers than I, will come up with some more concrete ideas. John Corrington (WB2SGS), for example, suggested recently that we team up with computer hobbyists and invite them to vend and display their wares at our next hamfest – and excellent suggestion in my view!

Another activity that our club needs to increase is publicity. You and I are well aware of the community services we provide (and the potential to be lifesavers if ever disaster were to strike), but most folks are woefully unaware of the importance of amateur radio nationwide. I have appointed Bill Jaker (WB8RAE) as our Publicity chair (given his experience as a familiar radio personality on our local public broadcast station), but would invite anyone with ideas as to how to get the word out to let me know so that we can implement them. Let’s do presentations in the local schools. Let’s make sure the press knows about all our activities (Field Day, providing communications for local events, etc.). Anything to bring in another couple of members each year.

Got ideas? Let me know!

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