

“Parts one, two and three of Mentoring series

Title:::

1. Words of an Arkansas Ham,

The information I will be sharing with you this evening came to me in the form of an e-mail from one of our outstanding new Arkansas hams that began his journey into our hobby in 2007 and is now an Extra class. I believe his e-mail addresses the feelings and concerns of many of our Older as well as most of the newer hams in our Arkansas Amateur Community.

I QUOTE:::::::::::

We, meaning us new hams, don't have the experience of some of the older folks, but many of us have more energy to accomplish things that will benefit everyone. We just need folks that are willing to accept us and encourage us with a friendly word. I wish, as you do, that we could get more of the seasoned hams to dedicate some time to at least mentor one Ham.

I helped an older gentleman build an 11 element 2 meter beam this afternoon and constructed the Gama match from the scrap we had from TV antennas. The one I am using is the same pattern we used today and I get into the 940 in LR from here with 5 watts. The point being, I only have so much time to try to mentor, and I am one of the new ones who needs much more mentoring. I have had some good mentors for myself, you included in that group, and I am very thankful. I must admit I know that you have mentored other folks, and I do appreciate what you have done and do.

We need to be in a place of serving each other as friends helping each other without any prejudice on either side, because neither the new hams, or the older hams, really had much of a say about the rules as they presently exist. I know the newest hams didn't

cause any relaxing of the rules as they were not even hams when the rules and guidelines we now go by were put in place.

The thing is that some folks do not take advice very well, especially when they feel like folks are trying to change their ways by criticizing them. It doesn't work with the old ones and it won't work with the new either. They, some of the older guys, don't mind how it sounds to the new guy when they are criticizing them, but one word about how the old hams should act and the bolts start to fly out of the few machines that look for a reason to fall apart. I know that there are some, if they could read this e-mail, that would have a problem with me saying it as it would become the new against the old argument, which I never would have thought would be an issue in Ham radio. They forgot and left that one out of the materials I read when studying for my exams.

It is not that some of the older Hams are failing to do their duty, but it is more in these terms. If we could get more seasoned Hams to mentor and to Elmer us, what a great privilege it would be, and if they don't, then we will loose out on many of the great traditions of the Ham radio of the past that only they can teach us.

Lets consider discussing what it is the new ham needs to do in order to get some of those well rounded, extremely polite and understanding Elmer's and mentors to help us. What do the old timers expect the new guys to do? We can't change the ARRL or the FCC any more than they can. What did the experienced Hams that are now in the hobby have to do in order to get the Elmer's and mentors of their days to Elmer and mentor them? I wonder if any of the old timers experienced folks when they were new, who knew it all, but died with their information rather than to have shared it with a fellow Ham. I wonder how many

had rather take the bitterness they have toward National organizations, and let that hold them back from elmering or mentoring some new folks. I realize the correct difference between the Elmer and the mentor, but we have a great need for both. Either way, people need to understand, the new Hams are the future of ham radio like it or not.

The biggest thing I have gotten from the new hams in my area, and some of the older less vocal ones I have talked with at Hamfest this year, regarding HF, is not so much what has been said to them. They just don't like the constant controversy regardless of who they agree with, and some of the guys I am talking about have been hams for decades. They don't want to take time out of their evenings away from family to listen to any "us verses them" discussions. It doesn't matter if it is in reference to the ASTEN or the Sunday Morning Net, they just want honest accurate training and leadership without any us verses them. They want training that will help them be better operators - better Hams - Better EMCOMM servants and the list could cover much more, as long as it doesn't fit under the "green behind the ear, stupid New ham discussion" or the "grouchy old fart is on the rampage again discussions), both of those are considered a waste of time by most folks and I understand that you and I agree on that, but I am still venting a bit.

The older hams should realize, the only reason the new ham would ever lose respect for the older hams, is to listen to them bellyache and complain about how little knowledge the new guys have, and yet the old timers not offering to share the wealth of knowledge he has. It would make the new guy think, maybe it's because the only thing these older Hams really know is how to gripe and moan. It's like the older ham laughing at the new guy for being thirsty and then not being willing to offer him a drink because he knows if he offers him the drink, he can no

longer laugh at him for being thirsty. That's what causes me to loose respect for folks.

Maybe the reason they don't mentor or Elmer, is maybe they have forgotten. I don't think like that, but the only other option makes you think they have a tremendous amount of knowledge, but they want the new hams to starve out for a lack of support, and that is just not going to happen. Mentoring and elmering however is the issue that is a must (if the Ham radio even that I know, is going to survive)

In other words, in my fairytale land, we would all work together, the new and the old, we would all have wide shoulders and not be easily offended, the old would teach the new about tradition and share the experience they have and be excited for the new guy to be interested in what they had to say, the new guy listening attentively at every word wanting to learn..

Then in contrast the new guys who can, should offer to climb a tower, to help his fellow older hams, install wire antennas, crawl under the floor to run cables, find something for them on the internet and print it out for them and mail it to them if they don't have a PC or internet, and there are a lot of Hams who don't have computers. Maybe help them with computer questions and digital stuff for the ones who are interested. There are new hams that are doing stuff so advanced I never thought ham radio would include it. We have new hams here that are beaming broadband high speed internet, all over the county on 2.gigahertz. ONE OF Those guys is my son. I get internet at 3MB per second over RF. These guys can do things with 1 watt that I can't do with 1000. The thing is, we all have things to offer, but the new guys are not going to offer "what they know" to folks who will only gripe that the new guys, are somehow

stupid, even if they are electronics engineers and hold degrees, but they didn't learn the code etc etc etc.. HOGWASH

If ham radio is going to be what it should be, everybody needs to quit griping, both the new and the old, and start setting goals instead that will require the new guys to be mentored by the old, and the old to depend on the energy of the new to make new breakthroughs in the hobby. Surely this was done in the past, or everyone would still be using AM tube rigs?

If we CAN'T turn this thing around, and I honestly believe with a real honest effort on all sides that we can, the day will come when the new hams will carry the day, and it will be at the expense of the old. New folks are only going to respect the older hams for so long before they start to rebel and if that happens the day will come when you see the new hams ridiculing the old-timers for being obsolete and out of date and out of touch and laugh at them for the lack of knowledge about Modern Ham radio. The old timers won't all die out at the same time so that means many of them will have to suffer being a minority on the bands and I can only hope the new generation of hams will treat them with respect, yet I don't think it will be automatic anymore. It will have to be earned. (END PART ONE)

BEGIN PART TWO

None of the materials I will be using are meant to degrade any group, person, club, net, newer hams or Older hams. It is my hope that everyone will listen to what tonight's message is saying with an open mind and that it will be used as a tool by all to help reunite our Arkansas Amateur Community.

LIVE STREAMED at <http://w5ami.net> for those that do not have HF.

The goal of this Net is to identify some common feelings, and to encourage all of us, to work together to make Ham radio a fun hobby as well as an EMCOMM resource that we can all be proud of.

Originally I had planned to do four sessions but after going back over the material I had for tonight and tomorrow night I felt that they were too much alike. So since they were written by the same Ham I have edited the two into one. The Ham, KE5ICX, that wrote this evenings material lives in Dallas, TX and is into Emergency Communications and the NTS big time.

“Part two Mentoring series”

Kinder, Gentler, Ham Radio

I QUOTE:::::

I bring these things up, not in anger or in malice, but as a point of discussion or reason.

I would love to think ham radio is a noble hobby and an opportunity for others to enjoy the social and technical aspects of this hobby; a method of exercising “both” sides of the brain in a constructive and one would hope, fun way.

One of the phrases in ham radio is “Elmering”. The story goes someone new to ham radio had a buddy who mentored him into the hobby, his name, Elmer. Many, many hams state and believe this is the way to maintain our hobby, yet, and this is a personal observation over the last year and a half, but many hams don’t make a concerted effort to reach out to people in the hobby.

It’s my belief every ham should make that effort. They should show their enthusiasm and share that enthusiasm with potential

hams and new hams.

Personally, some of the behavior of many of our seasoned hams suggest the opposite, in my view. And while any licensed ham is free to do whatever is legally allowed, there's an undercurrent of resentment about where the FCC has gone in recent months and a perceived "loss of tradition" involving just how long a new ham should have to "wait" before entering HF or being considered "worthwhile" by established hams.

This may seem "hurtful", but as a new ham myself (licensed only for the last 1 1/2 years) – I'm still feeling a little like an "outsider".

I've heard the following phrases and their descriptions by some seasoned hams.

Appliance Operator: A person who buys a complicated radio and knows nothing about its operation, construction, or capabilities. They PPT and they are on the air.

Extra Easy Class: These are people who earned their Extra class with 5WPM or without element 1 code as a requirement.

CB Operator Mentality: Anyone - usually with a new call sign - who is trying to learn ham radio with a new rig and reach out to a repeater - any repeater - to talk with someone.

I'm sure there are others, but my point of this post is simple: as radio operators who are passionate about our hobby, it's in our best interest to help and engage other operators - particularly our new operators.

Currently, with the new removal of element 1 (CW) from FCC

regulations some folks who couldn't or wouldn't learn CW can now gain their General Class license. Listening to some hams you would have thought the world came to an end. But, in fact, the ranks of General and Extra Class have been in decline for years. The result? We could have lost those frequencies with Element 1 still in place. Next to polar bears - the "HF ham" may have become an extinct species.

Many fear a "CB" mentality on HF with the infusion of people who weren't novices, CW aware, or even interested in the technical aspects of the hobby. Some feel this means the "frequencies will go to hell" and I've already hear grouching about how breaking stations go "on and on" not knowing the frequency is in use. Or that people fail to use proper etiquette while communicating with others.

It's our job as hams to help each other and learn appropriate operating procedure. The fact is, you aren't getting Morse Code back as the "filter" to prevent easier entry to HF. It's up to those already on HF to help new people and to police existing hams on proper procedure.

On another, similar topic, it would be nice when new people visit local ham clubs, that those clubs embrace visitors, new members, and actively engage them. Even the clubs I belong to fail to make others feel comfortable. They run to their friends and engage in the latest technical topic of the day leaving new people sitting alone, to fend for themselves. My own experience with one club - one I've visited since November (it's now September - 10 months later) where not a single member (or officer) has attempted to talk to me. That's deplorable.

Maybe if I looked like the incredible melting man, or had bad

breath, or something worse, that might invite a cold shoulder from veteran members. But that's not the case. From the president down to lowly members - none feel the compunction to talk to their new membership and I'm an example of this. (Yes, I could jump in and force myself on them - but why SHOULD I?)

Of course, people like myself will eventually go away, never to return.

Sad isn't it? That our "proud" Emering heritage is that thinly applied today. We talk a good game, but do we really believe it?

And you are probably saying, you are full of it. We go to events and try to get people to join our club and participate in events."

That may, or may not be true. Some of the public service events I've been to I've watched club members sit as far as they can from a table where people are looking at information about the club. Club members don't walk over and engage those people - again - they sit with their friends outside of "ear shot" and engage conversation with the same folks they've grown used to. Come on people, we are radio operators. Our hobby is about communications with each other.

Field Day is another example of how we ignore visitors. I've noticed how few members of clubs actually walked up to visitors and gave them a tour of the club setup. Or offer materials the visitor can take home. Or offered them a chance to "get on the air." Our "Get on the Air" (GOTA) station sat vacant through most of Field Day. That station should be continuously occupied by new Techs, or those unlicensed to operate - with the most social General/Extra class operator available.

I'm very concerned we aren't even doing the minimal best to extend our hand to the community. One of the clubs I frequent is very much into emergency operations and support. They do a fantastic job with that, but they don't do any sort of "reach out" to the local community in any substantive way. You won't find them in the local school systems drumming up enthusiasm for amateur radio - or for their club. You won't find them responding to new people on their local repeater, or inviting them to a club meeting.

Why is that?

So I say this. Here's what I think is going on - and how to avoid it. Again, let me say, I bring these things up, not in anger or in malice, but as a point of discussion or reason.

1. Drop the "Elitist Behavior" - Sorry, some hams came into this hobby with "home built rigs" or got their license at the FCC field office and are masterful at 28 WPM CW. Good for you! Now share your knowledge and enthusiasm with new hams. Tell them about how "hard it was" but don't hold that against someone new to the hobby. Help them set-up their new HF station. Explain how grounding systems work, share net etiquette, and invite people to your daily or weekly net.
2. Move out of your "safe zone". Sure, you're trained, you've been to tornado stricken zones, you've been honored by the ARRL for your community service, and you are on a first name basis with your local mayor. When was the last time you invited a new ham to your disaster meeting? Offered to explain how ARES works? Taken someone on a fox hunt? Invited someone into your shack to listen in on your MARS net? Never?

Hummm.... How about inviting a new ham to “go for coffee” – there’s dozens of them on 2-meter repeaters anxious to make their first contact. Offer up some of those exciting stories you’ve collected over the years. Buy the guy (or gal) a cup of coffee - shake their hand and say, “Welcome to the most exciting and diverse hobby on the planet. Glad to have you here!” Imagine their reaction and the satisfaction you get by being the first bonafide REAL ham they’ve met - and YOU made them feel at home.

3. You don’t know everything – don’t expect new people to know everything either. Everyone has a “comfort zone” involving this hobby. I can’t tell you how many older hams lament “new radios”, computer software, D*Star, and other technologies which new hams may find interesting. Sure, you know the grid voltages of major transmitter vacuum tubes by heart. You can draw a working amplifier circuit on a napkin. You can load any band with your 40 meter beam antenna and talk the world. Perhaps that new ham who “doesn’t know which side of the microphone to talk on,” just might know something about how to make that cluster radio program work with your radio. Hummm.... You may be that “hard line” Advanced Class operator who won’t upgrade because “Advanced was harder than Extra and I’ve got the FCC license to prove it”, but still can’t get their PC to boot! Yikes! Get over it and combine forces with new people. Let others enjoy the hobby by sharing your own expertise with them and they with you. There’s no loss in pride by learning new things from people, younger than you, for which they can make this hobby “new to you”.

4. Stop sitting in that same spot at your club meeting. Engage in the effort to “make new friends.” And don’t practice “age discrimination” - sit with that 20 something,

30 something, even 40 and 50 something. Find the “new guy in the room” and walk right up to him. Introduce yourself, tell them “welcome to the meeting” and, if appropriate, “welcome to the hobby.” It’s all about “extending your range” - not through a linear amp, but through mentorship and friendship.

So, if you’ve read this far, and you are a ham, your blood pressure is probably through the roof. Good thing too, there’s a reason why I wrote this. It’s simply this. Ham operators, myself included, aren’t special nor do we wield special powers, insight, loyalty, or love. We are ordinary people who, potentially, can do good for their community, but they have to recognize several things.

1. In order to gain the respect of the community, you must give to it freely and honestly before they respect you. No “official” capacity, radio related or not, will automatically give you that respect.
2. You must be honest and caring about yourself and others around you. How you conduct yourself speaks volumes about you and how you relate to others on and off the radio.
3. Give back to the hobby. Offer your services and not lip-service. A liar is easy to spot - particularly if you are the person “giving” and someone else is SAYING they are “giving”. (END PART TWO)

BEGIN PART THREE

This evenings program was Written by: Clinton Herbert (AB7RG) who is the Speak Out Manager of eHam.net. As

written, the title of his message is “The True Art of "Elmering"”: Which is the one I labeled, “BOTH SIDES OF THE STORY.

I QUOTE:::~::~

I cannot count the number of times that I have heard fellow hams lamenting about the lack of "elmering" in Amateur Radio today. For those who are not familiar with the term "elmer," it basically refers to experienced hams taking new hams under their wings, showing them the ropes and helping them to get started in their Amateur Radio careers. Back in the "good old days" hams helped out hams, both new and old. I keep hearing that this is not the case anymore. There seems to be more division between new and old hams now. Why is this you ask? Well, consider the fact that your average Amateur Radio operator is approximately 60 years old. Thirty or forty years ago the average age of an Amateur Radio operator was much less.

The average age for an Amateur Radio operator can be directly attributed to the lack of physical elmering, i.e. helping to set up antennas and towers. You can hardly blame a 75-year-old ham for not being able to help with your tower work, now can you? Okay, so that issue has been "solved." Now what about teaching new hams the ropes on the air or in person, i.e. teaching for the purpose of upgrading and furthering the knowledge of another Amateur in the radio art?

I have seen newer hams get shunned by some of the older hams. They also get told that they are not a "real ham," whatever that is. Plus there is the fighting that occasionally goes occurs complete with "You should know that, you idiot!" type of comments. Many old timers do feel that new hams are getting into radio far too easily, and they discount them due to this. However, this is the wrong attitude to take. In these cases it is up to the more experienced hams to help out the new guys. Sure,

you have to be patient and do a fair amount of hand holding along the way, but in the end it will be worth it. Plato said, "Never discourage anyone...who continually makes progress, no matter how slow."

Remember the average age of the average ham? Okay, so what does this have to do with elmering you ask? In today's Amateur Radio we have to have a two-way street. This is the true *art* of elmering. How so? What can *I* possibly do to help out an older more experienced ham you say? Well, you're probably not going to impress him/her with your knowledge of radio, but you still can help him/her.

I have a perfect example... when it came time for an older ham to move to southern Arizona from north-central Arizona no one wanted to help him dismantle his towers or antennas. He could not climb anymore or lift the heavier things outside. No one cared, though. I even heard a few stations on the air commenting about it! That really has to hurt--being an Amateur Radio operator for so long, doing so much for others and for Amateur Radio, and helping your fellow hams all your life, then not being able to get help when you need it. I am sure that is where some of the bitterness comes from and why many of the older hams seem to have an inherent mistrust of new hams. Far too many new hams are unwilling to "pay back" the old timers by befriending them and helping them to do the things that they can no longer do physically. In today's world of Amateur Radio elmering is a give and take affair.

I'm going to take the term elmer one-step further here; I feel that not only does the term apply to someone who is a mentor for a new ham but that it also applies to anyone regardless of their age or license class who helps out their fellow Amateur. There seems to be less and less elmering as well as fewer hams helping other hams, especially when age is a factor. I really wonder what

happened to camaraderie here? As I said, the true art of elmering is a two-way street.

I cannot tell you the number of times that I went to help elderly hams put up their towers and antennas with virtually no help besides my dad. It never ceases to amaze me when hams do not want to help out their fellow hams. It is even worse when no one even seems to care about fellow hams. One thing is for sure-I am going to continue to help out my fellow hams whenever they need it. Hopefully others will do the same.

I have received lots of e-mail since I became Speak Out Manager of eHam.net on the subject of elmering. I have noticed that the general consensus from new hams is that they did not get ANY help with getting licensed or upgraded. However, they did not say if they bothered to ask for it or not. You cannot assume that other hams know that you want or need help. You have to ask. It seems like many of the newer and younger hams are not helping out the older hams when it comes to putting up their stations when they move somewhere and are unable to do it by themselves. They also are not helping out with simpler tasks like routine antenna maintenance. Remember what I said about give and take? Don't make them ask. Go out and offer your help. You are the new ham; it is up to you to make the first move. You might be surprised at the help and knowledge that you receive in return. You will most likely end up with a great friend!

Sure there is a fair amount of division between the "old guard" and the "newbies" these days. We have both groups wanting help from the other without recognizing the needs of the other group. Let's start breaking down the "barriers." The best way to accomplish this is to get out there and start helping your fellow hams. I feel that elmering should go both ways. This is the true art of elmering. That is the way it always has and always will work for me. It is time to start giving back not only to your

fellow Amateur but also to Amateur Radio by practicing the art of elmering.

73 Clinton AB7RG

Now, here is just one short reply out of many to tonight's message from eham:::

Remember, "Good judgment comes from experience, experience comes from bad judgment".

Unfortunately there is always going to be a group of hams, old timers, seasoned ham or whatever you want to call them who think that because you didn't pass the same exams they did that you don't deserve your ticket or that you are somehow lesser of an operator than they are. It's an old argument that has been around at least since the code requirement was lowered to 5 WPM for all classes. "They didn't pass the same test I did so I'm not going to talk to them, I'll just take my toys and go home!" Sounds kind of like a five year old brat doesn't it? Well it is a brat; it's just an older narrow minded brat is all. Ignore them and enjoy the hobby.

Find yourself a copy of the amateur's code and conduct yourself according to that. Ask for help when you need it and give help to those in need. You'll be fine and you'll be accepted and respected by the majority. As for the rest, let them wallow in their poisonous negativity and bitterness. I think they really enjoy it or they would have gotten on with the hobby and continued enjoying it rather than grouching about "how it used to be".

MY COMMENTS AFTER THE PRESENTATION/ BEFORE COMMENTS

Folks I want to thank John, KE5NZY the ASTEN Net Manager for allowing me to bring the information I have for the past few

nights. We have had 121 check in's for the three nights, the three nets ran for a total of 4 hours and thirty-three minutes and that is great. Also I want to thank everyone who has participated; the comments have been positive which says to me that everyone wants us all to be able to work together toward the common goal of making our hobby better, stronger and kinder, which was my intent on bringing these messages. Any kind of Us Vs Them conflicts or attitudes in our hobby is counterproductive and can only hurt the amateur radio community. We all need to remember what Dave, KE0DL said in his e-mail in response to Monday evenings net, "Ham Radio is not what the FCC makes it, it's what we Ham's make it."

Now, one last thing and we'll get right to the comments...

Is the subject we've been on for the past few evenings a problem here in Arkansas... Well, we have had several newer hams to say they have had this problem... Is this a daily thing where new hams are shunned.... I don't believe it is, most likely it is less prevalent here in Arkansas because Arkansas hams care and the majority of our seasoned hams are more than willing to help.... Is this something we should even be concerned with or about.....I personally think it is if we are going to grow as a team.... Amateur radio is about a lot of things and there are all types of personalities in our hobby, but we all have one thing in common and that is our love for our hobby. As we all have heard this week from some of our seasoned hams, and I quote, "New hams ask me for help if you need or want it." "New hams I say this to you, take that first step towards making a life long friend and ask for help when you need it", "remember that sometimes you may need a thick skin", "stay away from those that are negative towards you", "live your Amateur life by the Amateurs Code", "research the internet and read the thousands of great articles

written by seasoned Hams about procedures, policies, antennas etc. get your feet wet and if you make a mistake learn from it and move on towards becoming the best ham you can be”.