

“Amateur Radio and why it is Essential”

The article below is from the ARRL web site and it is part of a speech that Riley Hollingsworth made at a recent appearance. Very good read!!

Lesson plan follows:

1. Be proud of what you have and let your feelings be known. Let the public know what you are, what Amateur Radio is, and why it's valuable. Let your feelings be known to Congress, to the FCC, to the media, to your states and to emergency agencies. Sprint does. AT&T does. Motorola does.
2. **Operate as if the whole world is listening. *It is!***
3. Take nothing for granted. Bill Gates can't, and you can't either.
4. You're at a crossroads now. An old Chinese philosopher (or my grandmother--I can never remember which!) said, "Be careful what you wish for. You may get it." Seize the moment, and make this your finest hour. Ham radio has been at a crossroads before and has thrived. Continue that tradition.
5. Make sure that, on your watch, Amateur Radio *never* becomes obsolete.
6. Teach the new licensees all you know. We've needed numbers for a long time.. *Respect* this wonderful legacy known as Amateur Radio that our mentors and Elmer's gave us. Every time you key the mike or hit the key, think about what a legacy you were given and your duty to pass it on.
7. **Enjoy ham radio. Celebrate it. But realize *it comes with responsibility. Every gift of lasting value always does.***
8. Stay away from arrogant, negative operators who know all the answers. They just haven't thought of all the questions. Encourage them

to take their anger and hate to the Internet. Every minute they are on the Internet is a minute they aren't on Amateur Radio.

9. Never allow Amateur Radio to become the audio version of *The Jerry Springer Show*.

10. You may not always agree with the League, and that's fine. But I'm standing here before you tonight talking about enforcement because they never gave up. Take care of the one voice you have. You must never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. They just did.

Ham Radio is **ESSENTIAL to Homeland Security in the United States** because our service is a dispersed and decentralized communications system that can not be shut down by a Terrorist attack. While Public Safety agencies rely on central dispatch stations, Amateur Radio operators can go on the air just about anywhere anytime. Hams, as we are called, are trained professional communicators with technical knowledge that prepares us to put our stations on the air at remote sites quickly, creating make shift facilities when needed. We have proven ourselves to be essential responders during weather and other natural emergencies as well as human origin disasters. When ordinary Public safety communications fail, we have often been the only means of communications from a stricken area to the outside world for hours and sometimes for days.

On March 19, 2003, Paul Harvey had these kind words to say about Amateur Radio:

“Americas’ quiet warriors are the legion of Ham Radio Operators, 700,000 of them, who are always at ready for back-up duty in emergencies. Amateur, unpaid, uncelebrated, civilian radio operators, during and after floods, fires and tornadoes. After the 911 attacks, Hams were indispensable in reuniting friends and families. Most

recently it was they who expedited the search for debris after the disaster to the Space Shuttle Columbia, and right now at this moment, they are involved in Homeland Security to a greater degree than you would want me to make public.”

These are the type of kind words that we need more of, but they must be earned. **Training, Honest Commitments** and a good **Attitude** are the three ingredients to our success and earning these kind words. **NOW THE REST OF THE STORY** but not from Paul Harvey.

It is unfortunate that there are Served agencies and the general public that judge our potential performance and relative value as a public service provider by what they hear on their scanners and short wave receivers during our Nets, Pre-nets, SETs', Field Day exercises and our daily activities. The public consensus is all too often, that Amateur Radio operators are nothing more than glorified CB"ers, and all too often as of late they are right to an extent. Have you heard the CRAP that goes on on some of the bands lately? **SOME** Amateurs simply **DO NOT PROJECT** the **“PROFESSIONALISM”** that is **RIGHTFULLY EXPECTED WITHIN THE AMATEUR COMMUNITY!!!** Then we wonder why Public Safety agencies do not call us when some thing happens and why our frequencies are under attack. **We must correct and promote our public image.** Remember, it is not the good things that you always do that is remembered by others, so , it is not always the professional, well trained operators that are remembered, but you can bet, operators that show up or get on the air with a CB'ers unprofessional untrained mentality will be remembered and will reflect negatively on the Amateur Community. **We must TALK with and TRAIN these operators in the correct procedures, conduct and protocols of Amateur radio!!**

We need to understand why some Pubic Safety agencies view Amateur Radio operators as nuisances instead of assistants. From research that has

been done, the following reasons keep coming up as to why agencies have these views of us:

1. The glorified CB'er image.
2. We do not pay enough attention to what the agencies really want and need.
3. That we tend to operate within our own perceptions of what we think they want and need.
4. That we do not seek a deep understanding of what their perception of wants and needs are.

In doing these things, the result is that the service we offer becomes greatly diminished in value to the Public Service agencies we serve. Also, we wind up offering and performing services convenient and effective for us but not necessarily what the agencies envisioned, really wanted or needed. **This is not an easy issue to resolve, but can be corrected by training of the collective Amateur community.**

Served Local, County, State and Federal agencies all know that they will eventually need help with emergency and/or disaster communications and that it will most likely be furnished by Amateur Radio operators. Generally speaking, we are in good standings with the majority of the Public Service agencies; however, we need to do our home work, if we are to get a passing grade. Our DEC's, EC's and qualified ARES/RACES members should be going out and gently educating their served agencies as to our complete capabilities such as Win-link, Packet, ATV, APRS/GPS, Long range HF, CW and VHF/UHF simplex and repeater communications. Then, carefully listen to them for clues to possible uses of the various modes to help solve their communications problems, wants and needs. Hams are great talkers, but the greater part of true and artful communications is listening. To this end, we must seek to identify all major issues of what is needed to accomplish the overall objective of providing **RELIABLE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS.**

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