



Second Century

A Callout to Radio Clubs

Each month, I write this column intending to inspire and inform you about topics related to being both an ARRL member and an active Amateur Radio Operator. Recently, I was very inspired by two gentlemen and their passion and call to action related to radio clubs.

The first was our friend Hayden Honeywood, VK7HH, a YouTube content creator with the channel Ham Radio DX. We've featured Hayden in *QST*, and we continue to be impressed by the work that he does. It should have come as no surprise to me that Hayden, on top of everything else he does, is the president of his local club, the Radio and Electronics Association of Southern Tasmania. The call to action in his recent video on ham radio clubs is twofold, with one of the points being to stop treating general club meetings, which are the entry point for new club members, as business meetings. Keep the running of the club separate from the amateur radio part. Get new people excited about the club and about radio more broadly by having an interesting and engaging meeting.

The other area that Hayden focused on is "sub-groups," as he calls them, with some of them not even, strictly speaking, focused on amateur radio. Here is where clubs can shine! Find areas where there are a few club members who are passionate about an area of the hobby, and give them the space to put together projects or operating events for the club. If the interest is POTA or SOTA, activate a local park or a rare park, or get a group together to build a portable antenna. If it is satellites, do a simple demonstration during a club meeting, or go activate a grid — or again, build an effective satellite antenna. If it is contesting, get a group of club members to operate and submit a club score, or have a little competition within the club for the highest score: the most QSOs, the most multipliers, the most hours on the air, etc. Once you give a small group of passionate people the runway, they'll fly with the idea and attract others to their activities!

Then there's Ed Snyder, W1YSM, the past president of the Meriden Amateur Radio Club here in Connecticut. I have written about Ed before. Beyond him and his wife, Rose, being generous ARRL donors supporting radio club initiatives and our Collegiate Amateur Radio Program, Ed has built a model for strengthening and growing clubs, much in the way Hayden has, but on

a larger scale. During a recent breakfast meetup, Ed and I discussed the program, known as MARCONI — Motivating Amateur Radio Clubs to Open New Initiatives. The Meriden Amateur Radio Club was awarded an ARRL Foundation Club Grant, funded by ARDC, to build out the program for the benefit of the hobby (www.arrl.org/marconi-program).

How can MARCONI help inspire your club to grow? The program has eight different interest areas: POTA, Foxhunting, CW Training, Satellite Communications, VE Sessions, Served Agencies, NCS Training and Traffic Passing, and Radio Amateur Balloon Science. These areas have been built out so that current and potential new club members have an area of amateur radio where there are experienced mentors ready to help, along with ongoing projects or operating opportunities to participate in and learn new things. We are looking at building out a workbook for club leaders and club members who want to see their clubs get stronger and grow starting with the MARCONI program, which is now being expanded with a phase 2 initiative to help clubs gain 501(c)(3) status and help other clubs by working with, or even merging with, them to make stronger clubs.

How can you get involved? How can you strengthen and grow your club? What are your areas of passion or expertise? Start small. Build out a small group and get going! Clubs are the lifeblood of our hobby, helping newcomers become active radio amateurs. I hope you'll take this challenge to get inspired, be radio active, and be that connector bringing people and your passion for amateur radio together!

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