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Conducted By John Hennessee, KJ4KB
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All letters will be considered carefully. We reserve the right to shorten letters selected in order to have more members' views represented. The publishers of QST assume no responsibility for statements made herein by correspondents.

THE LOST ART OF RADIO

□ Just about my entire career has been devoted to the generation of radio frequency energy. As a broadcast engineer and active radio amateur, I can think of little else I'd rather do. And yet, I have discovered that most of the people who do what I do are at least a generation older than I am. Although amateur literature has done a commendable job in recent years of addressing the lack of growth in Amateur Radio, the problem ranges far beyond the realm of Amateur Radio into the very heart of science and industry. Good RF engineers are almost impossible to find, and industries are considering where the next crop of technicians and engineers will come from.

Why has this discipline of radio, which at one time was the very heart and essence of electronic technology, come to the point where most people consider it an arcane science?

To answer this question, I have been forced to consider what it was that first attracted me to radio during my formative years: I liked radio because it was aesthetically appealing. I was not nearly as impressed by the capabilities of radio as I was by the very nature of radio. Radio is great, not because of what it does, but because of what it is.

Nobody buys an original Da Vinci painting to cover a hole in the wall. There are more expedient ways to achieve that goal. By the same token, there are other means of communication that are more efficient than bouncing signals off the ionosphere, but the very fact that we can bounce signals off the ionosphere makes it worth the effort. Although communication is usually closely associated with what we do as RF people, most of us dyed-in-the-wool radiophiles would find our trade equally as fascinating even in the absence of communication. Maxwell's equations appeal to the body, soul, and spirit. Sine waves are veritable works of art. Antenna radiation patterns are beautiful.

It is incumbent upon us radio initiates to convey the mystique and aesthetic aspects of our hobby to the newcomer. To fail to do that is to doom our hobby as well as the radio profession as a whole to the status of a lost art.—*Eric P. Nichols, KL7AJ, North Pole, Alaska*

GOOD SHOW, QST

□ I really enjoyed reading the four-part series "Tune in to Glasnost," which appeared in recent issues of QST. It gave me a new insight on ham radio in the USSR.

I would be interested in reading articles on how ham radio will be affected in the rest of the Eastern European countries, with the current dramatic changes taking place. I also wonder how they will affect commercial

broadcasting from these countries. I started out as a shortwave listener in the '50s and it sure is exciting to "listen to" these changes.—*Vince Staffo, WB2FYZ, Ilion, New York*

□ The articles entitled "Tune in to Glasnost" were very well written. They helped me to understand my fellow hams "over the pole."—*Jim Spaulding, W0UO, Englewood, Colorado*

SAINTS OF THE AIR

□ Hams do not always receive the recognition they deserve. I am referring to the recent earthquake in San Francisco. I have a son living in San Jose. I could not get through by phone and I then started listening on 20 meters and heard Dave, WO7K, and John, KB6GOZ, passing traffic on 14.300. I managed to get in and gave them my son's name and telephone number. A short time later, I received word that my son was okay. Thanks to these two hams, a mother's concern was relieved.

In the past, I have passed health-and-welfare traffic, but only now do I fully realize the importance of this service we provide for the public. I think a lot of hams regard this part of emergency traffic handling as insignificant. I now have a new appreciation for traffic handling.

Dave and John handled the net very well with no nonsense. All they wanted was the call sign, the name of the party to contact and the phone number. They did not spend 20 minutes explaining the rules of the net and another 10 minutes patting themselves on the back. They did an outstanding job and I hope this letter will bring them some small measure of public recognition.—*Minnie Flynn, KB5JM, New Orleans, Louisiana*

□ I commend highly those who devoted so much time and energy to helping others. Many, many operators were involved in the earthquake relief efforts, but these are a few I personally observed helping their fellow man in every way possible: KE9MA, N9HMZ, K6JJU, WW6J, KH6OE, KD9IV, KB6ZZ, WD6BPT, N6WJA, AA6G, N6LSO. Thanks ham radio!—*A.A. Mack, WD6DNE, Porterville, California*

□ My intent is to give well deserved credit to Merritt Dean, W3ISS, as well as providing yet another example of how Amateur Radio has served the general welfare of not only licensed operators, but also their families.

My wife's concern after the earthquake was to get word to our elderly parents that all members of our family in California were safe and unharmed. I put out a CQ on 15 meters for anyone outside of California willing to place a phone call. Within seconds, W3ISS responded with an offer to assist. Needless

to say, my wife has a new level of respect for Amateur Radio.—*George Taylor, AA6QZ, San Jose, California*

□ I would like to call to your attention the outstanding job performed by Amateur Radio Station WA6GFY during the recent San Francisco earthquake. The station of the Lockheed Amateur Radio Club, located near Santa Cruz, handled health-and-welfare traffic throughout the evening of the disaster.—*Art Rideout, WA6IPD, Fallbrook, California*

THE NEW FCC RULE BOOK: FB!

□ I received my copy of the new FCC Rule Book this morning. Outstanding! The book certainly puts the new Part 97 in proper perspective. The various charts, photographs, and forms make it very interesting and informative reading. I particularly like the various items with gray backgrounds which are presented throughout the chapters. Those alone will help to answer many of the questions which often arise.

The overall balance of the material presented shows a lot of thought and concern for clarity. The 214 pages of discussion, out of the total 278 pages, will go a long way toward helping the newcomer and the old-timer understand the new Part 97.—*George Race, WB8BGY, Albion, Michigan*

LINGUISTICALLY SPEAKING... "YOU KNOW?"

□ There's a linguistic lameness pervading the airwaves, and it's causing me to make fewer and fewer entries in my logbook. This repugnant gibberish is the constant overuse of "you know" by English speaking people expressing their thoughts.

Of the three forms of human communication—oral, written, and mechanical—there seems proof that man's ability to speak is rapidly eroding. This is evident as we listen to people stumbling, trying to verbalize thoughts.

According to a noted psychologist, people who stratify speech with the boring and meaningless "you know" do so because they are talking too close to their thinking. He called it "speech crowding the heels of thought." It's like a soldier marching out-of-step, toes thumping heels. He further theorized that people use such utterances as "pauses." A pause permits thought time to get ahead and out of the way. It seems that when thought leads speech sufficiently, there is no need for verbal rubbish such as "you know," "ahh... ahh," "what I mean is..." and "okay?"

Why should a person say "you know" when it hasn't been determined that you know what the person is talking about? If an original statement is properly presented, then why is "what I mean is..." ever necessary?