



The Amateur in You, Part 2

What have you been pondering?



Appropriate on-air subjects

It seems like the number one most popular topic of discussion on the radio is radio and things related to radio. Antennas, transceivers, feed lines, propagation, and nets tend to dominate the repeaters. It seems kind of like the most popular use of a hammer is on hammers. Well, unlike hammers, radio is quite a complex topic, so it's natural that we talk so much about it. But is that what radio is meant for? What else can we talk about?

There isn't any particular thing we *should* talk about on the radio, yet there isn't anything good that we should avoid either. But even discussing a good thing can require good judgment on our part, such as being sensitive to the feelings of a potential listener when mentioning something a bit negative.

Openly talk about your job, schoolwork, your family, a favorite game, your car, what you saw when you went hiking, a restaurant you really enjoyed, something that made you laugh or cry, the latest movie, the weather, and your other hobbies.

Taboo

So, what kinds of things should we avoid discussing on the radio? Many who have been in the craft for a long time say two topics that should be avoided are politics and religion. Yet, even those two are not forbidden, provided the conversation remains civil. You shouldn't be afraid to mention your church calling, or even which religious beliefs or political party you adhere to. The one thing that should remain off-the-air, however, is sex. We're not talking about gender or identity either, but sexual content and sexual innuendo, which is the reference to sexually explicit language, actions, and thoughts.

The rules also mention that "obscene or indecent words or language" (Part 97.113.a.4) is

prohibited. Does this mean the FCC posts a list somewhere of words that are considered obscene? Well, no, and we don't need them spelled out for us, but instead the gubmit leaves it up to our good judgment and self-policing to keep from saying naughty words.

Talking about others behind their backs isn't always bad, especially when we're attempting to help them. But when we undertake to spread rumors about the personal or private affairs of others, especially in an unfavorable light, that's known as gossip, one more thing that has no place on the air. If you feel you need to mention something disparaging about somebody, take it in person or to the phone.



As we grow older, we find that health concerns tend to increasingly dominate our thoughts and conversations. Unfortunately, these often carry over onto the air waves because it's another conversational medium for us, and face it: ham radio is largely populated by an aging group. The fact that you've broken your leg or are not feeling well at the moment are good things to mention, to help others understand your situation. But to go in-depth about your colonoscopy experience or the details of your latest toenail fungus surgery is not likely to win you friends on the radio. Again, take that to the phone.

Finally

It's better to get on the air and chat away, than hesitate or shy away worrying about what subjects to discuss or avoid. Speak freely about your latest achievements or milestones, especially those involving your family. And yes, you can talk about ham radio stuff if you really want to.