

Microvolt

Monthly newsletter of the Utah Amateur Radio Club

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The People of Amateur Radio



A couple of months ago we mentioned that ours is a **diverse craft**, but one reason for that is because it's composed of a diverse people with diverse cultures. This means ham radio operators can be people of any color, nationality, political persuasion, disability, faith, or gender preference, and all are welcome. Still, there are operators and classes who are excluded from our hobby, and while not the focus, these exceptions might be worthy of discussion. One of the purposes of amateur radio is to enhance goodwill (Part 97.1e), locally and internationally. Let's examine whether that goodwill should be extended unconditionally.

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Cover – Amateur radio people

So just who are the people of amateur radio? If you're reading this, chances are you're one of them! As mentioned, operators, hobbyists, and licensees come from all walks of life, every profession, every background, and every up-bringing. We welcome all with open ears and hearts ready to share our joy of the craft, *even if they hold no license*.

Tolerance

While we hams most definitely foster a culture of our own, we appreciate those who are different from us culturally and socially. On one hand, we advocate tolerance toward ethnicities, races, and languages we're not used to, but the word **tolerance** is not truly representative of the attitude we should embrace in order to express how we should approach others.

It seems like the better word is **acceptance**, which seems to indicate that we'll take you as you are, not simply *endure* your presence if we have to. Acceptance doesn't mean you believe the same way as another, or accept a person's behavior or attitude, but rather that you **accept that another human being is attempting to experience what you're willing to share**. For example, you might not agree with a person's religious or political views, but you can still welcome the person into your world of activities.

And yet, there are good folks who don't find a home in our community for whatever reason. We won't satisfy everybody's need for fellowship, and we can't please everybody, yet that shouldn't prevent us from trying. Reaching out to a fellow amateur is not everybody's cup of tea; after all, we're introverts in a hobby of introverts. That shouldn't stop us from at least being **friendly** toward each other, even if we don't always agree.

Our craft has evolved

Originally, the amateur radio community was made of men and boys who had an inclination for gadgetry, **mechatronics**, and technical material in general. That nerd mindset paved the way for numerous inventions, discoveries, and unprecedented advances in science. But the face of amateur radio has changed. Today's interests have swung more toward emergency preparedness, which attracts a large number of readiness-minded operators, of which women make up a larger proportion today than they ever have.



Due to this shift toward preparedness, it's now quite normal for newly licensed hams to know little or even care at all about Ohm's Law or what a tuner is used for. It's not because today's hams are less intelligent than those of former days, but rather they are drawn to a different kind of craft than many were once drawn to. In olden days, the hobby was the end goal, but today ham has become more of a utility, a means to an end.

The social medium

One aspect of the craft that has caught the attention of club mentors and organization leaders alike is the **social face of amateur radio**. Not to be confused with hams asking questions or posting comments on social media, many have found themselves drawn to the social side of radio, which has existed since its early inception. Many find that they prefer to casually **ragchew**, or carry on a friendly conversation rather than the pounce-and-run method of contesting. They want to get to know you and look for friendship.

The anti-social sector

Speaking of the introvert community, many amateurs find that they simply don't want to interact with anybody, and that's alright too. But if they don't want to communicate, why in the world would they want to do ham radio? You might actually be one of them, who feels excited about the hobby, but safer contacting somebody on another continent, somebody with whom you will never likely encounter personally. Many like you have found a haven in FT8 for example, where no conversation is necessary, and that's ok as well. A few simply ask for a signal report on the repeater, just to maintain connection, and for them, that's their ham checkbox for the day.

Microvolt editorial staff