

Microvolt

Monthly newsletter of the Utah Amateur Radio Club

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Creating Interest



From your early years you've been fascinated by the ability to communicate wirelessly, whether that's from listening to broadcast radio, watching TV through its rabbit ears, or talking with a friend by a pair of walkie-talkies. And now, you're fairly excited about the craft of amateur radio, but what caught your attention, the utility, the hobby, or something else? Back in "the day" most were introduced to the **hobby** of amateur radio, but today it's more likely the **utility** that gets noticed. So, now that you've been hooked, how do you lure others into the sport?

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Cover – Creating interest

Once we become immersed in the world of amateur radio, it's only natural for many of us to want others to share the excitement. We've also learned by experience that coaxing, reminding, and pushing a person to get licensed simply does not work, and often has the opposite effect. Setting up a ham radio demo, class, or other ham radio event rarely arouses interest in the normal person; often a heavy investment with little return. So, how does one go about getting more people interested enough in ham radio to get licensed?

Attract instead of preach

The solution lies in *attracting them*, not *pushing them*. They have to *want* to get involved, and that means *they need a reason* to even go there, and that reason is seldom ham radio itself. The two biggest reasons people get into amateur radio are *utility* and *hobby*. The hobby side of amateur radio often attracts people without much convincing, so this discussion focuses on the utility side.

- Set up an event that features something besides ham radio, but that uses ham radio incidentally (as a secondary activity), to showcase how it's operated to solve an interesting problem. People are **interested in problems**, because each gets them thinking of how they might approach it. Then, people like seeing **how you go about solving it**. And if that solution includes ham radio, suddenly you've got their amateur attention, possibly in a way they haven't thought of.
- Set up a preparedness fair, in which you present classes on food storage, water collection, sanitation, emergency handyman skills, communication, and sheltering in-place. During the communication and shelter-in-place classes, you can demonstrate how to use various forms of communication to either keep current with events or to request assistance. And while you're attempting to request assistance, you can **show how effective amateur radio is over other forms**. This approach tends to generate a lot of questions.
- Help with a CERT class, which should focus on the seven major ideas outlined by FEMA. During the Organization portion, you can demonstrate that runners can be given orders by Incident Command to be sent to the Triage team. The runners rush to the Triage team in ten minutes, deliver the orders,



receive requests and questions about procedure from the Triage team, run back to Incident Command in ten minutes, receive answers to the requests and questions, return to Triage team in ten more minutes, only to find that the victim only had 25 minutes to live, and the running took 30 minutes. However, if both Incident Command and the Triage team had ham radios, their communication would have been **almost instant**, potentially saving the victim's life.

Tell them stories

Your family sets out on a two-vehicle road trip. About 170 miles into your vacation and no bars on your phone, your vehicles become separated by traffic. Your vehicle, which is a few cars in back, encounters a fork in the road. Take the right or the left? You've brought your FRS walkie-talkies, and try to communicate, and you know the one in the other vehicle is on, but nobody answers. Using ham radio, **you can demonstrate how to solve this problem**.

Finally

In the end, if a person says **No** to amateur radio, then drop it and let it be. From that point on, let your example be the only invitation they see; don't try and keep ham radio in their face, and don't ever mention it. Let them casually see you enjoy your hobby without you trying to pressure them into attending any ham activity.

And if they start showing interest, don't suddenly pounce on them like a used car salesman. Give them brief answers to their questions, and leave the "they don't know what they don't know" attitude out of the conversation. Most of all, set a good example of kindness and genuine friendliness.

Microvolt editorial staff