

## **Have you heard? (ex-President's Message)** **By Ron Adcock/KK4YCW**

### **"What's Your Level of Radio-Activity and if it's zero to low, then what's holding you back?"**

October 14, 2017

Getting up and talking in front of a group of people has never been too difficult for me. I guess it started when I was in the eighth grade and was the master of ceremonies for a large school class elections. Microphones didn't scare me even then.

During my professions as a pastor and a state official I spoke in front of groups as small as fewer than ten and larger than 1,500. The smaller group was probably more challenging than the larger.

Where am I going with this? Well, I read the editorial by ARRL Chief Executive Officer Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, in the October 2017 *QST*. In it he noted that tens of thousands of persons received their ham licenses every year through ARRL. He was concerned, however, that almost half of them "never get on the air."

I got to wondering how many of the men and women who have ham licenses in and around The Villages never get on the air. And why not? Partially, at least, I'm one of them.

Going on the air is in my opinion, different from speaking to a group of people. It's usually just one-on-one. And most of us don't have a lot of problems with that. So why is talking into a radio mike so much more difficult for us?

I frequently go on the "rag chew net" Monday evenings at 7pm (443.225 MHz (+5) PL 103.5 & Echolink at K4VRC-R). There are a few reasons that this is easy to do: 1) The radio you need is relatively inexpensive; 2) You may have already met many of the participants face to face; 3) The structure of the net is pretty informal and there is not a whole lot to learn. Even so, fewer than 10% of the hams in our area participate. Some may feel that they would rather spend their time on the HF frequencies. And that's OK. But I'm inclined to think that there are other reasons for most new hams, and even those who have had licenses for some time and still haven't been on the air.

I feel comfortable on the rag chew net, but not so much when I sit in front of an HF rig. During the last Field Day I made my way into the operating trailer and George Briggs, K2DM, "held my hand" through a "contact". That was my first non-handheld contact (other than Echolink). Why did it take me so long? I've had a license since 2014. Why was it so difficult?

Tom, NY2RF, offers some reasons in his editorial. Take a moment to read it if you haven't already done so.

Here are some of my reasons. First, I don't know what HF radio I should get. And what do I need to go with it (power supply, antenna tuner, amplifier, and don't forget the mike)? Second, when I look at the HF radio I don't know what I'm supposed to do with all of those buttons. Third, I don't know what kind of antenna will work at my house. Fourth, I'm still not familiar with the operating protocols and afraid I'll made a mistake.

I know that I have passed the Technician and General License exams, but there is still so much that I don't know. I need a mentor (also known as an Elmer). How many other new or inexperienced hams are in the same or a similar situation?

What is it that TVARC can do to turn some of us HF inactive hams into full participants in the amateur radio hobby? I need to think about that. Perhaps next month I can make some suggestions. In the meantime, if you have an idea or suggestion, forward it to me so that I can share it with others.

That's it for this month.

73,

Ron Adcock/KK4YCW