

BULLETIN BITS

The weekly bulletins have been a MARC service for many years and are tuned in by many hams who aren't club members. Our current bulletin station is BART KC3BP. If you have information appropriate for a bulletin announcement, you can mail it to Bart at his callbook address or packet it to him on the WB3JOE PBBS. Producing a good weekly bulletin is not as easy as falling down the stairs -- thanks, Bart!

NEWS FOR THE NEW

Here are a few ideas for new 'fone ops. You worked hard for that callsign, so speak it plainly over the air. None of that "This is K-A-3-gargle-fuzzy stuff! When operating in a net, we still have to follow identification rules. To satisfy the "every 10 minutes and at the end of the communication" bit, we usually ID when turning the frequency back to net control after passing traffic or making comments.

On the other hand, there's a tendency to over-identify in normal QSO's on FM -- it really isn't desirable to end and begin every transmission with "N3QRZ this is KA3ZOT." In fact, the habit drives many people nuts.

On FM there is nothing gained by shouting into the mic. In fact, very loud speech may cause your signal to break up. A normal, conversational voice is the best choice. This is particularly true if you become involved in emergency communications. Bawling into the mic drives everyone's tension level up and wears you out faster. Rigs aren't all the same. With a friend listening, experiment with your mic until you find how close to your mouth to hold it so a quiet voice will still be easily understood.

Even though you may use cute phonetics in casual conversation, be sure to learn standard phonetics for use in emergency communications, traffic handling, and DX. I've heard too many experienced operators make dips of themselves by using "original" phonetics in the wrong situation.

The best advice for learning to be a good operator is to listen, listen, listen -- and ask questions when you're uncertain about good operating practice. Nobody was born knowing how to do this stuff, and nobody ever knows it all, regardless of what some old goats of all ages may tell you.

C L A S S I F I E D

FOR SALE: (1) Hallicrafters Skyrider Defiant (modified) low band rcvr. A classic oldie. (2) Utica 650 & 6m VFO xcvr. (3) SBE Formula D, 21 ch., Xtal control CB & floor mount. (4) Cushcraft 6m 8 element beam Call BILL K3ZLL, 644-1851, after 4 pm

FOR SALE: Kenwood TS120S xcvr, excellent condition. \$375. Call BOB K3QXH (383-4019).

FOR SALE: IBM PC, 2 360K drives, 640K RAM monochrome monitor, some software, excellent condition. Price \$850. Call STAN N3CUS/MARY KA3QOP (527-7734).

THIS IS A TEST...

Phil-Mnt Mobile Radio Club continues to test on the 1st Monday of the month (except when meetings are moved for holidays) at 6:30 PM sharp at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. Although August tests will be the regular date, their July tests will be on the 13th, while September tests will be on the 14th to avoid holidays. Be there early. Test opportunities also exist in the suburbs. Call KAY KC3LM at 688-5045, or leave me a message on WB3JOE, and I'll find out what's convenient to you.

AND SO IS THIS!

Novice tests now require two examiners! If you are thinking of giving a Novice test, be sure to have the new, enlarged question pool and a second examiner who must also sign the 610 form. Things may be speeding up at Gettysburg. KEVIN KA3RMD's Novice ticket took just 8 weeks from test day to ticket appearance, while my own recent upgraded ticket was dated 6 weeks, 2 days, from my test day.

PACKET FORWARDING

Packet has been so often sold as the RF equivalent of instant pudding that many operators don't realize it isn't all done with mirrors. Take, for instance; the matter of forwarding mail to your friend at another BBS. We're not talking NTS traffic, here, just mail. Not long ago some BBS sysops (not ours) were roaring about these lids who don't set it up right and then complain when it doesn't work. I sent one of them a message suggesting that educating the zillions of new packet ops might help solve the problem more effectively than raging at them. Several days silence. Then a "how to" file appeared on one board. As one who urged this approach, I'd like to pass my own version of the "how to forward" advice along to readers of REMARCS.

1. Always fill in the @BBS parameter: S WBPYF @ KB3UD.

Without the @ KB3UD, there's no way the sysop knows where my friend WBPYF hangs out. He might live in Idaho instead of Easton, PA! If you don't know what BBS your friend uses, find out before you send messages -- or use NTS, which doesn't depend on your knowing the destination BBS (but that's another story).

2. Make sure the destination BBS is for real.

If the destination BBS has folded, or is a personal message system like the new Kantronics KAM firmware, your mail probably won't go past the first forwarding hop. Then it will sit and rot until the sysop, now in a bad mood, zots it.

3. Use correct spacing.

If you type S WBPYF@KB3UD or S WBPYF@ KB3UD or something like that, the originating BBS won't be able to interpret it. Your message won't move. Eyeball that address line before you hit the return key. If you still goof it, kill the message and start again.

4. Find out what BBS's your home board now forwards to.

It would be nice if sysops posted a file saying which BBS's are already in the automatic forwarding list, but many don't. So before you blithely expect your @BBS address to work, ask the sysop to send you the current list. If your destination BBS isn't there, send the sysop a message asking that it be added: "Please add KA3ZOT PBBS in East Chickenlips, MD, to the forwarding list."

5. Remember that sysops are volunteers.

There are socially defective persons who actually order sysops to do things. Sysops are under no obligation to put up with rotten manners. So if you ask the sysop to add a BBS to the forwarding list, please don't phrase it as a royal command. You don't have to offer to kiss the guy, just be polite.