

Newcomers and Elmers Net: Amateur radio Resources Robert AK3Q November 17, 2013

Amateur Radio is a community first and foremost. Without others to talk to there is no amateur radio; ponder that one for a few moments!

- Amateur radio is a world-wide community going back over 100 years—lots of history and lots of hams
- Clubs and organizations have formed over the years, some with a really long history—not uncommon for clubs to be 50,60, or 70 years old and more
- OHKYIN and K4CO clubs are both over 50 years old; the Milford Amateur radio club will be 40 years old next year
- I have mentioned this before on the net several times—if you are not involved in a local club you need to be!! There are plenty of hams in the area, and there are always other new people coming in, and so you should never feel awkward
- Clubs love to have new members and good clubs will go out of their way to make you feel welcome
- You may have to try several clubs until you find the right fit, but you will find a place to call home
- Clubs offer camaraderie, an opportunity to learn, and often the chance to do some hands-on training. You can also usually find folks willing to help with setting up a station or an antenna, or just a place to see what amateur radio is all about

Amateur radio National organizations

- One of the oldest organizations for Amateur radio is the [ARRL](#) celebrating 100 years this year
- The [Radio Society of Great Britain](#) is celebrating 100 years as well – so these folks have been around a long time!
- Both organizations are invaluable sources of information and learning in the hobby as you might imagine!
- Both groups have monthly magazines just for amateur radio, and both are filled with useful articles, how-to projects, and equipment information
- They are well worth the cost of membership in my opinion
- I do not know as much about the RSGB, but for American amateurs, I think all of us should be members—the resources they represent alone are invaluable, but they also fight for amateur radio rights all the time—something we cannot do easily by ourselves
- Some folks have this or that against the group, or they don't like something or some persons in the group—fine; but they are still the best thing we have going (and no I do not get a kickback for promoting them!)
- Membership not only gives you the magazine every month, but it also gives you some help if you need legal council, training for emergency response; traffic handling; and a library of past articles going back almost to the beginning—that's almost 100 years worth of articles and columns and instruction from some of the best minds in amateur radio
- It's the best \$40 you'll spend a year on the hobby – nowadays that's like one trip out for pizza with the family or less!

- ARRL and the RGSB have very useful websites even for non-members, but members get a whole lot more
- Add to this their extensive lists of publications, and there is not much you cannot learn from them

Specialty Clubs

- there are many specialty clubs which can meet locally or on the air, or over the internet
- Emergency services groups are common if you have an interest in this, as are groups for operating low-power (QRP); Morse Code aficionados, DX groups, APRS groups, Satellite junkies, amateur radio astronomy groups, DXpedition groups, young people's groups. Ladies groups, and nets of all kind that meet daily
- If you have a interest in a particular aspect of the hobby. I can almost guarantee there is a group out there with the same interests
- The Internet is a great resource for finding like-minded folks, and it has opened up all kinds of possibilities not even imagined a mere 10 or 20 years ago
- Blogs, email reflectors, discussion lists, forums, discussion boards, podcasts, web TV and video channels, you tube how-to videos on everything imaginable, and on and on
- Even amateur radio store websites can be a treasure trove of information

Some Useful Websites

- Eham.com – this site allows folks to post reviews of equipment and services; the more reviewers something has to more accurate the ratings will likely be; as you gain experience with the reviews you will learn how to tell the useful reviews from the people who just want to rant
- Eham also has a good set of forums for folks to aske questions or search out a topic
- QRZ.com is a site many hams use for callsign lookups and other information—some folks put up rather elaborate pages describing their station, history, or interests
- There is also a great buyers and sellers section where you can find used equipment in a range of prices; as always, buyer (or seller) beware; most people are good and honest, but sometimes they are not
- The [DXZONE](#) is a great resources for training and information of all kinds dealing with radio, as is [Ham universe](#)
- Another similar site is [AC6V](#) – there is enough information on these two site alone you could spend months if not years going through it all
- If you are into contesting (or want to be!) try <http://www.ng3k.com/Contest/> -- there is all kinds of information on contesting as well as information on specific contests;also check out [WA7BNM](#) (thanks, Tyson!)
- Yahoo groups has at least one group or more for almost every conceivable topic in amateur radio, whether it is for software, hardware, old radios, new radios, antennas, dx-ing, qrp-ing, etc., etc.

- Once you join you have the option of getting every email/post individually, or you can get them as a daily digest, or you can simply opt to visit the group and scan message posts that way
- Like any internet resource, weigh advice carefully and, as the old saying goes, “trust but verify”; some folks know what they are talking about while others do not know nearly as much as they think they do
- Similarly there are discussion boards around the net for all kinds of topics, such as specific equipment boards, antenna boards, dx cluster groups, digital mode groups, magazine groups etc.
- And of course Social media groups abound for various interests, so they might be useful as well

Books and Magazines

- there are some really useful books on the market which will take you as deeply into the hobby as you want to go
- the Amateur radio Handbook prepared by the ARRL is a standard of the hobby, and there have been dozens of editions
- while you can buy the latest, greatest, an older version will be very useful and could save some money; I have editions going back into the 1930’s because I like reading about what was going on then, but they are primarily reference books – you will not likely read it cover to cover
- the same is true of the Antenna handbook produced by the ARRL – I believe they are up to edition 22 now; but again, a used one 5 or 10 years old would be great too
- both books have scads of information, how-to projects, and information on new and old technology (sometimes older technology is still better technology!)
- The RSGB also has similar publications, and worthy of checking out new or used
- Both the ARRL and the RSGB have hundreds of books, any of which might be useful to you; also there are starting to be a lot of e-books for sale on the Internet through Amazon, Google Play, Apple, or individual websites, as well as many useful software apps for Apple and Android
- Just do a search for Ham radio or Amateur Radio and dozens of programs will come up
- There are several useful magazines besides QST and Britain’s RadCom, such as Popular Communications, CQ, CQ VHF, World Radio Online, and one starting up in January, Spectrum Monitoring from some of the writers of the soon-ending excellent Monitoring Times
- There are also numerous newsletters and journal publications, too numerous to cover here; I get one on QRP, another on AM DXing, the Antique Wireless Society, and the International Radio Club to name a few

Finally, don’t forget ragchewing with other hams on nets, repeaters, or just one on one on the HF bands—you might be surprised at what you can learn just hanging out and talking with folks