

Connections

Ham radio, in my mind, is all about connections—whether they be physical connections of components and wires on a circuit board, the ethereal connections of contacts on the air or the personal connections of lasting friendships made through our radio hobby. The strength and durability of these connections determines the strength and durability of the hobby itself. A few illustrations...

The Maine Event

While on vacation last summer, I was on a repeater in southern Maine that was part of a linked system covering much of the state. I made a random contact with another ham on another one of the repeaters in the system. In the course of our QSO, this ham mentioned that he was on his way to visit his son in a small town in central Maine. The name of the town rang a bell with me. A ham friend of mine who worked at the same television network I did before joining CQ had had a summer house there. I hadn't seen or talked with my friend in nearly 20 years, and had even forgotten his callsign (although I did remember his name). I had no idea whether my friend was still there, or even still here.... Knowing that the odds were remote, I explained the situation and asked the ham if he or his son possibly knew this gentleman. He said that he didn't and that his son wasn't a ham, but that he would check with him when he arrived. That's when the fun began.

Another station broke in, said he knew my friend, that he was still in Maine, and had been one of his first contacts after he got his license. At that point, two other stations broke in. The first said, "Well, I just drove past the diner where (your friend) often eats breakfast, but I don't see his car there. I talk to him pretty frequently, though, and I'll be happy to give him your regards." The second station simply asked, "Would you like me to call him?" A few miles farther up the road, my cellphone rang. My friend and I were reconnected. Only in ham radio...

The story isn't quite over: Later that evening, while sitting on top of Cadillac Mountain outside of Bar Harbor, a couple of hundred miles from that first repeater, I got onto a different repeater on the linked system—and ran into the same ham on his way home from his son's house! I was able to fill him in on the day's events and complete the circuit.

Saying Goodbye

Another type of connection in ham radio is the link we feel with people who pave the way for us in the hobby, both those we know personally and those public representatives of the hobby whom we feel like we know even though we've never met. We've lost two of these "public hams" in the past month, *Popular Communications* founding editor Tommy Kneitel, K4XAA (ex-K2AES), and former CQ Technical Editor Irv Tepper, ex-WB2FUZ.

Tommy was a fixture in the radio hobby for nearly a half century, particularly in the shortwave listening and scanning arenas (see obit in last issue's News section). As a columnist for *Popular Electronics* back in



Tommy Kneitel's WPE program for "registered short wave listeners" provided a sense of accomplishment early on for thousands of SWL novices.

the '60s, Tommy started the WPE program for "registered" shortwave listeners. I remember being one of them; my first (albeit unofficial) callsign was WPE2RIY. Tommy moved on to edit S9 magazine, and in 1982, he and CQ Publisher Dick Ross, K2MGA, launched our sister publication, *Popular Communications*. Tommy was its editor until his retirement in 1995. I never met Tommy in person but still feel the connection. He left an indelible mark on the radio hobby and will be sorely missed.

Irv Tepper served as CQ's Technical Editor for 11 years, starting out without a ham license and eventually becoming WB2FUZ. Irv was primarily a teacher. He



Irv Tepper, ex-WB2FUZ (center), in a photo from 2003 with sons Brian (left) and Robert (right). (Photo courtesy of Brian Tepper)

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taught at the George Westinghouse Vocational Tech High School in Brooklyn, New York, for many years and wrote curriculum for the State of New York. Of course, part of his job as CQ's Technical Editor was to be a teacher as well, making sure everything was not only technically correct, but clearly explained. Irv was also the author of several books on electronics. He became a Silent Key on August 31. While Irv most directly touched his family, friends, students and those with whom he worked at CQ, he indirectly touched anyone who read this magazine between 1960 and 1971, and who learned even a little from our resident electronics teacher. It's another one of those connections, those links, between past and present, and among hams.

Saying Hello

While we say goodbye to Tommy and Irv,

we also make a new connection, saying hello to Brittany Decker, KB1OGL, CQ's new Youth Editor. Brittany is 14 years old, holds a General Class license, and has already had two articles published in CQ, most recently last month's "A Rookie's Guide to Contesting." Starting next month, she will be writing a quarterly column by, about, and for young hams (and other young people thinking about becoming hams). Welcome aboard, Brittany. You are joining a conversation—a connection—between CQ's writers and readers that has been going on nonstop for nearly 65 years. We hope you can help bring along the next generation to join that conversation.

We are also pleased to announce the return after a many-years' absence of CQ logo shirts, hats, etc., which will be available either personalized or in a "generic" format. See our holiday ad on page 72 for details. And speaking of holidays, all the

best from all of us at CQ for a very happy Thanksgiving.

Clarification

One sentence in my October editorial may have given some people the mistaken impression that one needs to be a computer programmer in order to use, or contribute to software development for, the FlexRadio FLEX-5000 transceiver. I am told by the folks at Flex that no special skills are required to operate a FLEX-5000, that you simply load the driver and PowerSDR software and begin operating. In addition, they say actual programmers are a small minority of their user base, and that participants in the collaborative process that leads to new features, enhancements, etc., range from those with no programming skills whatsoever to those few real, live programmers.

73, W2VU