

Self-Reliance

Sometimes, a magazine can seem like a living creature with a mind of its own. This issue is an example of that, as it seems to have put itself together, with minimal guidance from me. Tucked between our Technology Special in December and our QRP Special in February, this issue wasn't supposed to have a particular theme. But it seems to have had other ideas, as it assembled itself into what we might call our *Self-Reliance Special*.

Our lead story demonstrates one of our hobby's traditional means of self-reliance, as Public Service Editor Richard Fisher, K16SN, reports on the response of hams in the Philippines to Super Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated large parts of that country, just weeks after the same region was struck by a magnitude 7.2 earthquake.

Next, we have a CQ Interview with Jim Kutsch, KY2D, the President and CEO of The Seeing Eye, the prestigious school for training Seeing Eye Dogs and their visually-impaired human companions. The Seeing Eye helps its students be more self-reliant, and Jim himself has been an example of self-reliance, modifying ham gear for use by people who can't see the dials and displays, inventing the first talking computer for the blind, and more.

We've also got project articles ranging from modernizing a classic "boatanchor" radio with a digital VFO and restoring antique radios to the latest in remote control via the Internet and an excellent tutorial on the basics of filters. In addition, five of our columns this month focus on various aspects of self-reliance, from an introduction to "DIY" (Do It Yourself) in Learning Curve to "Finding and Fixing Problems" in Contesting. Even the results of our September survey (p. 61) on what you do when a piece of your gear breaks speak to our level of self-reliance.

Self-reliance is a key characteristic of the ham radio personality and mindset—it's why ham radio works "when all else fails"—and the articles in this issue help illustrate the wide variety of ways in which that mindset can show itself. It's not just knowing how to get a station on the air when the communications infrastructure around you has crumbled; it's not just the ability to build some (or all) of the equipment for your station, or the technical knowledge to identify and fix problems when they crop up; and it's not just the willingness to experiment, to learn new things, and to share that knowledge with each other. It is all of those things, of course, but more than that, it's a way of thinking, a way of approaching a challenge, an attitude that says, "Yes, I can. I know how to do this. And if I don't know how, I'm willing to learn."

One of the key traits of hams as a group is our ability to make things work, to improvise as needed, and to *get things done*. It is one of the things that sets us apart from the general public, that helps us be more self-reliant, and is something of which we all can be justifiably proud.

Anniversaries and More

If you look closely at the Table of Contents page in this issue, you'll note that this is Issue 1 of Volume 70 ...

Reminder: 2013 CQ DX Marathon logs are due by January 10, 2014. See the CQ website for details.

yes, we are beginning our 70th year of publication, and that doesn't include our predecessor magazines, going all the way back to *Pacific Radio News* prior to World War One. For seven decades, we have been chronicling the latest and greatest in amateur radio, and often leading the way into new eras of ham radio communications and technology (it's no accident that those are the words of this magazine's subtitle), including radioteletype, transistors, and amateur satellites. Today, we're leading the way in integrating ham radio into the Maker movement.

Seven decades is a long time, but our friends in Newington have been helping to guide and protect our hobby for even longer. This year, the ARRL is celebrating its centennial, to be highlighted by a special centennial convention this summer in the League's original home, Hartford, Connecticut. Congratulations to all of the current and former ARRL officials, employees, and volunteers for your collective century of service to amateur radio.

Speaking of aging ... this past weekend, I managed to squeeze in a few hours to operate in the ARRL Sweepstakes. One of the interesting things about this contest is that part of the exchange includes the year in which you were first licensed. And one of the things that stood out to me among the stations I was hearing was the relatively small number of stations first licensed within the past 15 years. There were plenty of 50s, 60s, and 70s out there, fewer 80s, even fewer 90s, and very few zeros or teens. And I spent about half my time on 10 meters, where hams of any license class may operate.

The brightest spot from this perspective was that there were several college stations on (with *very old* "check" numbers but young operators), but the trend is somewhat disturbing. We have record numbers of licensees, but we are still having trouble attracting large numbers of these newer hams to the traditional activities on which our worldwide community is built. It's not just HF contesting; it's radio clubs, repeaters, and yes, magazines. All of these help provide a structure around which "community" is built. And while self-reliance is a trait which we encourage, self-reliance in a vacuum is not. We all are at our best when we can put that self-reliance to use as a community, whether it's to help the members of our wider communities in times of trouble (as we're seeing in the Philippines) or to help each other, either one-on-one or in groups. We've said it before here but it bears repeating: As a group, we must do a better job of identifying newly-licensed hams, inviting them to become part of our activities, and welcoming them into the amateur radio community. Amateur radio is not a solitary hobby. Every contact requires at least two people. We need to be self-reliant. But we need to be self-reliant together.

Happy New Year! May 2014 be a year of good health and good hamming for you!

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