

I find myself frequently reading online forums, blogs & articles from various sources for many reasons. Mainly... because I have a desire to learn and continually improve myself. This past month brought an interesting post on Reddit.

The following is printed under the Fair Use doctrine. Originally posted at https://www.reddit.com/r/amateurradio/comments/1979snh/how_to_make_you_ham_radio_club_as_unappealing_as/

I joined an amateur radio club and experienced issues that make me question the competence of the club president and the board. So here's my list of things a club needs to do to make it as unappealing as possible:

- Don't answer any emails that the new member sends you. Even if the new member asks if you got their email, say something like you'll take a look but actually never do it.
- On the same note, never check your spam folder. If a member's email lands in there, it'll be there for a reason.
- If you do reply, don't use a salutation. Also, don't close your email with "Kind regards" or similar. Use an unfriendly tone so that the member will stop emailing in the future.
- If there is some email back and forth with a member, just stop answering them at one point. Even if the member tries to reestablish contact, keep ghosting them.
- Basically, just be bad at communication and try to come across as unfriendly as possible.
- Have the same people on the board for years, and all of them have to be 70+.
- Start all meetings at least 30 minutes late. Bonus points if the presenter is late and needs extra time to figure out how to hook up their computer to the projector.
- Only have one club meeting per month. Other activities are useless.
- Don't give members an easy way to communicate with each other outside of club meetings.
- Ignore any ideas from new members, especially if they try to make the club more appealing.
- Don't organize any events or activities besides Field Day and Winter Field Day. Only share minimal information on Field Day organization and preparations. Make it as hard as possible for new members to join the event.

There are great people in the club, but no improvement is possible due to board members that don't want change or don't think any change is necessary.

This struck quite a chord with me. Reading the comments posted were also... enlightening. A few caught my attention, but here's one for example.

I will confess I've had some of the thoughts you share. Over time, I've come to realize that what I get out of my amateur radio club is as much as I choose to put into it. (Cue the Beatles: "*the love you take is equal to the love you make*".)

There are some initiatives I'd like to see my club take on. Adding AllStarLink to the club repeater is one of those wishes, but that hasn't happened because (a) club members don't see the value and (b) nobody else in the club is a subject matter expert. I could complain about it, but instead I'm trying to

learn more about how repeaters actually function and how to tight beam an internet connection to the repeater which does not have an internet connection.

The other thing I've done is joined other clubs. Each is unique. If you don't like the club you're in, find a different club. (Or in my case, add another club.) My "home" club seems most interested in sticking close to home. Nothing wrong with that. My "other" club is in a major metropolitan area and they are setting up a new repeater site and then will invest in AREDN capacity. I can, and do, learn from hams in both clubs.

Not to sound too unsympathetic, but: it's your choice whether to stick with the unappealing club or not.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/amateurradio/comments/1979snh/comment/ki660d4/>

Eventually, after reading thru many comments, I couldn't help but "air" my experiences as a "young" ham who is just starting his 10th year as an amateur radio operator. My comments were:

My "home club" suffered from much of what was mentioned above and so much more when I first became involved in amateur radio almost a decade ago. To make things worse, there was a "clique" of like 6 people. If you weren't one of them... you & your opinion didn't matter. It was even to the point that they'd have "secret society" meetings (they called them "Executive Committee meetings") minutes before the regular club business meeting... allegedly to discuss what would be allowed to be discussed at the regular meeting. If a topic wasn't pre-approved during this EC meeting, then it would NOT be allowed to be brought up at the regular meeting. Oh, and NO regular member was allowed in these meetings! PERIOD!

With some persistence and the threat to the aged clique's health during the "pandemic", club leadership has now changed hands and changes to the club have taken place. In my opinion, the club has greatly improved... there are no longer any "secret society" meetings... ALL meetings are open to the membership and most are open to the public. We have added "Tech Night" where we work on and discuss each other's projects. We have also added a monthly exam session!

When I first joined there was two events you could talk about each year. One annual public service event and Field Day. Now, we have a few public service events we help out with and also participate in more "contests" than just Field Day.

Besides events, our relationships with the local emergency managers & their offices have grown and we now have a youth committee who is actively working with other youth organizations in the area.

Anyway, I guess my point is that clubs can change and that I would encourage everyone to be patient and persistent towards the goals of sharing the hobby, being open to learn as well as to teach. Being closed-minded is usually the cause of problems in the club, so... strive to keep an open mind.

What say you? What are your thoughts about club activities? I know some think the "numbers" in the CVARA are down, but I'm pretty optimistic. I think we have a good & active group. Take the tower project, for instance. Even though our group is "small", we have been able to raise \$15k towards replacing the damaged tower. This is a project that right from the beginning we knew it was going to be a multi-year project and one that would cost in the ballpark of \$30k.

I do know that there are many members who wish they could be more active, but like me... they still have a daytime job. The majority of retirees that I know in the club have largely claimed health reasons for their lack of involvement. Though some are "snow birds" who will come back with warmer Spring weather. What's your "excuse"? What could the club do to encourage you to become more active & involved? If it's a personal issue or a disagreement with club leadership... I encourage you to let us (the club officers) know what it is and what can be done to help resolve the issue.

73,

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