

EDITORIAL

Change. I'm not talking about the nickels and dimes in your pocket. I'm talking about the kind of change that forces us from a position of comfort and familiarity to one of being forced to accept something new.

Change has been a constant in the history of ham radio and it will not be ending any time soon. First there was spark, then CW, then AM, then FM, then SSB and now another change is upon us. That of digital radio.

Many public service agencies and commercial institutions have already made the switch to digital. In the future, when this now new equipment becomes surplus, the ham community may not have the choice of analog or digital. It will be all digital.

Our club is very fortunate to have a state of the art VHF repeater that is capable of not only analog but the Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) format as well. This repeater operates in what is known as mixed mode and will probably stay that way for many years. We are also very lucky to have two other mixed mode VHF analog/DMR repeaters in Johnson County. There are also a number of UHF DMR repeaters in the area that offer communication around the world using your handy-talky. But these are digital only! DMR is here to stay.

However, when change happens there are always those who cling to the old way and don't feel it is necessary to keep up with the Jones's. Imagine if some hams were still using spark on 20 meters. Sometimes it is necessary to remove the old way as a method of encouraging people to accept the new way.

There are several other Fusion repeaters in the area with more on the way and the club will soon have a new Yaesu Fusion repeater on the air on 442.600. I believe that this repeater should be programmed not as a mixed mode repeater but as a Fusion only repeater. We already have an analog repeater on 443.725 so it should offend no one to have the new repeater be Fusion only. Perhaps this would encourage everyone to reconsider their opinion of digital and be more receptive to the new way.

Granted DMR and Fusion are not compatible with each other. And, there are currently no dual band DMR radios available. And there are no radios that support both DMR and Fusion. And there are probably several other reasons that can be used for not accepting change. Not the least of which is financial.

However these types of radios will be coming in the future. Now is the time for you to research the types of digital communications offered by the club and decide which mode you would be most interested in and then use that information when you purchase your next radio. We may be the only club in the country offering its members two types of digital communications so why not take advantage of one, or both?

Van
K0HCV