

Amateur

From the “Merriam-Webster Thesaurus”, copyright 1978; an “amateur” is “one who follows a pursuit without attaining mastery or professional status”; some synonyms given are dabbler, nonprofessional, smatterer, and tyro.

While some would argue to credit fewer years, I would like to claim that amateur radio has actually been in existence since the 1890s. This locates us in the 14th decade of this varied and exciting avocation. Marconi and others who had commercial or scientific interests in the early radio arts preferred to look upon themselves as amateurs and I tend to agree with them because they were referring to their own understanding of the, then infant science. Their enthusiastic approach to the unknown or undefined science of the day can only be equaled by the current groundbreaker, explorer, or advanced seeker-hobbyist of today. The only thing separating them from the Amateurs (spelled with a capital “A”) of today is the licensing structure regulating our on the air activities.

From the simple spark gaps employed by Hertz and others of the earliest scientific investigators to the modern, high

technology transceivers supported by computer technology there are many periods, phases, and practices of which Amateurs have been a part. Amateurs have even broken scientific ground for the academic and the professional!

Think back over your experiences in this avocation, what in our history made you want to become an Amateur. Imagine if you can, from having heard the experiences of others. Try to place yourself in another decade to experience the thrill of hearing an experienced brass-pounder at the key of a spark station hammering out yet another message or the warm tenor of a transcontinental rag chew at midnight on 75 meters AM. What part of historic Amateur Radio would you most like to experience first hand? I'm counting on you OTs to pick some good ones so that we can spread the jam of history thick upon the toast of today.

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FARA Net Discussion Topic