

I recently returned from the Rocky Mountain Division Convention. In the weeks I have returned, I have thought about the things that I learned and some of the things that have happened as a result of the actions of a fellow ham, or club.

I still consider myself as a fairly new ham. It took a few years of my dad talking about ham radio before I felt the urgency to get my ham radio license. I lucked out and had a friend wanting to get her license as well. Off the two of us went to a club sponsored technician class. After working hard, studying and taking practice exams during the summer the testing session rolled around in October. I took the exam and waited anxiously for my results. We both passed and my friend and I were encouraged to come to the upcoming club meeting.

We arrived at the club meeting, and we were warmly greeted. We talked with the people at the membership table and we were quickly identified as "New Hams", welcomed to the club, and immediately someone asked us if we wanted an Elmer. When the meeting began we were introduced to the club along with the other new members. Later that week we were at our Elmer's and on the air.

Last year a few of my female ham friends worked to have a little get together a couple of times during the summer and invited the new female hams to join us. As part of this we had them check into our local ARES net to get them on the air their first time.

While attending the Division Convention, I was able to have a bit of a family reunion with my sister. She, her husband, and their son are new hams. They have had their license for about a year. Their first club they attended ended up not being an ideal fit for them. As Field Day this year rolled around I encouraged them to look around and see if there was another club close by that they could check out during field day.

The new club was great. They had someone recruiting people to get on the air. She told me she was going to be on 40m and I went looking for her. My sister's first contact outside of her immediate family was me. Colorado to Utah on 40 meters. That club made a difference.

When we met up at the division convention I had several items for my sister. I had acquired a few mobile radios at a recent swap meet, some books that I had duplicates of, and a special gift for my nephew from Arrow Antennas. My nephew, like my father, is a man of few words. At the convention there were not people his age, but this kit got his interest, and was timely as one of the classes he attended was the kit building class.

They got home from the convention on Saturday afternoon. He cleared the table (not his job that day), and his dad sat down with him and taught him to solder. He spent most of that Sunday working on his kit. A week later... He was participating in JOTA, he was working the soldering station and was interacting with the scouts and teaching them. This kit made a difference.

Rick Roderick K5UR the current ARRL President addressed us at the division meeting and was the keynote speaker at the dinner as well. At the dinner he told a story of a young boy who got his license. He then attended a club. At some point he missed a meeting, and the club members went to his parents and got permission to pick him up so he could attend the meetings. This club helped him grow and learn. As he became an adult he went away to college and then got a job and went to work. Years later he happened to be near the area he had grown up and decided to drop in. He was welcomed. They were putting up an antenna. The elders of the club were teaching the younger people how to set up the antenna, as they no longer could physically do the work, but they could help teach the younger people. The elder members were happy to see Rick, and the younger people had the opportunity to meet the Rick that the membership had talked so much about. This club made a difference.

Clubs and fellow hams make a difference. I know that I strive to meet as many new hams at my local club meetings as possible. COVID made this impossible, but now that we have been back in person I have enjoyed being able to associate the other hams again.

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