

## President's Message

July 2008

Allow me to introduce myself – my name is Fred Bongard, and my call is W6JLL. I am honored by having been elected president of the 220 MHz Spectrum Management Association at the April general meeting. I began my ham career in the late 60's when I was first licensed as WB6JLL. While attending college in Northern California, I was introduced to repeaters by a group of mentors in the Bay Area. I was an active member of NORCAL and helped build several (crude) repeater controllers. After relocating to Southern California, I again engaged in repeater design and construction. My older son, Reid, is also an active ham – he earned his extra class license at the age of 13. He prefers CW, and has worked field day with the Hollywood Hills QRP club. Now that his voice is changing, he is no longer mistaken for a YL when trying to break a DX pileup – I told him to take advantage of his soprano voice as long as it lasts.

But enough in the way of introductions. I take my job as President of the organization very seriously. I think that “we” in ham radio are in real jeopardy for a number of reasons. Other users are vying for the spectrum that we now occupy, broadband over power lines threatens to turn 20 meters into a local band, the cost of quality equipment continues to increase, technology and miniaturization have made working on one's own radio nearly impossible, and cell phones have dramatically reduced the perceived need for mobile two-way communications. With all of that said, I believe that we are our own worst enemy. Here's why. We have generally failed to recruit and retain the interest of the youth. The internet and satellite communications have dealt a death knell to short wave radio and the mystique of radio communications. When my son's friends come over to our house, they are interested and amused by our equipment, but rapidly loose interest when we tell them that there is an exam involved. You Tube and iChat are so much easier. We need to recruit and retain this generation, without them we are lost.

So what does that have to do with 220 SMA, and why am I rambling on? Here is the way I see it. We are in a privileged position to extoll the virtues of our hobby to the next generation. But before we do that, we need to put our own house in order. We need to share the enthusiasm with each other, before we can extend it to both our peers and to the next generation. No enthusiasm you say? The attendance at 220 SMA meetings has been less than satisfactory. Very few technical representatives or trustees attend on anything approaching a regular basis. Communication with the organization has suffered, and the officers find themselves trying to conduct meetings and business affairs with little help and/or support. Guys, (an inadvertent sexist pronoun) we need to clean up our own act.

Let me start my expressing my request for ideas, although I do have a few of my own. We are going to start by rotating the meeting locations so that commuting to the meetings becomes easier. I'm looking for other locations, so that we can assemble throughout SoCal. I plan to introduce tech forums and guest speakers at the meetings – talking on topics were are all, or should be, interested in. Digital on 220 is just one topic that has flashed through my mind. I would entertain other topics. Think about it this way, what topic would bring you to a meeting. Let me know, I would be happy to speak with you about it. If you have a speaker or topic at hand, I'll try to accommodate it.

All of this said, I also intend to work on streamlining and expediting 220 SMA's own house. Correspondence, RFC's, etc all need to be handled as efficiently as possible to make this an organization we can be proud of and support. But I can't do it alone, I need your help.

Sincerely

Fred Bongard, W6JLL  
President 220 SMA