

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fred Bongard, W6JLL

Happy New Year. I hope that 2010 is a safe, healthy, and productive year for all of you.

On the home front, we need some help to keep 220 SMA not only viable but growing and thriving. I have bemoaned in prior messages my grim outlook for our hobby. The omens are all around us. When is the last time you saw a "kid" in a radio store? Times were that electronics stores were plentiful (well, at least it wasn't a 25 mile drive) and there were lots of young people interested in shortwave, ham radio and (perish the thought) CB. But at least we had a collection of youngsters that were standing in line behind us, ready to pick up a microphone or CW key. Today, the key has been replaced by the iPod and the microphone has been replaced by the cellphone. The hours that we spent reading through the pages of QST, CQ, or 73 have been replaced by drop down menus on the latest rage video game. As Don McClean put it in *Bye Bye Miss American Pie*, we seem to be a generation lost in space.

So what am I getting at? Here comes the pitch – look around you at the next radio club meeting you are at. Don't go to meetings? Exactly. How do think this whole thing is going to survive if we don't support it ourselves? The consequences are evident right here on 220. Remember the lower two megacycles of the band? Gone, but not forgotten. I was speaking with a site owner the other day bemoaning the fact that we lost two perfectly good megs of spectrum space to commercial interests who never even used the band. Who is going to get the vacated portion of the VHF TV band? Do think we have a chance? Do you think the iPod generation even knows what I'm talking about? Do you know what I'm talking about?

We need participation. I see the same faces at the 220 SMA meetings regularly. And thank goodness for them. They have the interest and the commitment to attend. Woody Allen once said that 90% of success is just showing up. Why is it that people only come to meetings when they feel threatened? We need a growing organization that appeals to everyone who uses the band. Not just trustees who are interested in protecting their coordinations. Here are just some things I think we should strive for in the year ahead:

- 1) Increased membership/attendance especially among repeater trustees/technical coordinators (please note that membership is *not* a prerequisite for coordination)
- 2) Technical forums
- 3) Regular programs at meetings (help would be greatly appreciated)
- 4) Updating of the web site to allow electronic submissions
- 5) Web bulletin board

We can't survive without participation and growth. Let's make this the year.