

**A**mateur Radio by Bill Leonard, CBS News President W2SKE. Amateur radio, as the airplane, is no longer a crude Kitty Hawk baby. Once it did take a garage full of fairly frightening equipment to say almost nothing to almost nobody almost no distance away and it took an odd breed of nose-in-the-formula duck to master the intricacies of the spark gaps, tickler coils and reflex audions, to say nothing of the dots and dashes. Today, a transmitter receiver combination no bigger than a portable typewriter is on the market, easily capable of regular communication with all parts of the world. It is about as difficult to operate as a home hair-rinse kit.

A great deal has been written about the work of hams in national and local emergencies, foods, wrecks and hurricanes. Hams are proud of their public service record. Perhaps just as important and frequently overlooked, is the fact that hams are among the nations best ambassadors abroad. An estimated 10 thousand conversations between US and foreign hams take place every day. The Voice of America considers ham radio of such vital international interest that one of its few programs in English, beamed to Europe and Asia, is a weekly ham show.

There are hams who are housewives (girls allowed) and bandleaders I.G. Gene Krupa, politician



(Herbert Hoover Jr.) and entertainers (Authur Godfrey) kings (Prince Abdullah Feisal of Saudi Arabia) and writers (Ernest Sweet Smell of Success Lehman) ship captains (Kurt Carlsen of the ill fated Flying Enterprise) and captains of industry (Hazzard Reeves K2GL, president of Cinerama) guardians of the air (Air Force Chief of Staff, General Curtis LeMay and the seedy New York Prison Warden Ed Dros. There are hams who are doctors, lawyers and a sprinkling of Indian chiefs.

There is too little room on highways of ether for the great number of ham stations traveling on them. So the ham at his own station has to contend with the problem of interference from other hams, as well as the never ending job of keeping his gear in workable shape. In the early TV days neither ham equipment nor television sets were designed to keep the ham signals from interfering. Now, ham techniques and equipment and television sets were designed to keep the ham signals from interfering. Now, ham techniques and equipment and TV receivers have improved to the point where television interference from amateurs is a steadily diminishing problem.

Actually ham radio is not simply one activity but many. For the competitive, the rigorous contests are available. But just as all motorists aren't race drivers, so most hams pursue quieter aspects of the hobby. For the tinkerer and do it yourself addict there is equipment to put together, tear apart and put together again, equipment handsome enough and complicated enough to satisfy any sci-fi bug.

The gabber gets a chance to talk endlessly on the airwaves and the listener can eavesdrop to his heart's content. It is not unusual for round table Kaffeeklatsch QSO's to embrace a dozen hams all on one wave length, but located on all six continents. English is the international ham language. Some hams concentrate on message handling (two N.J. high school students have handled over 15 hundred telephone patches - relays - for our Antarctica base personnel, others love Civil Defense work and yet others use their sets only to keep in touch with one or two friends. It is a great hobby, may it always be so. (Wm A. Leonard 1916-1994) age 78 leaves wife Norma and 6 sons.