# But I'm Afraid To Talk Into That Microphone!

*- Alan Jones, KD7KUS*

We have all had mike fright and it can strike beginners and experts alike. This session will help you overcome mike fright by explaining amateur radio etiquette - knowing the procedures will help you build confidence to get on the air. The dos and don'ts of talking over the radio will be demonstrated, and you will have an opportunity to both observe and practice these techniques on the air in a friendly environment. We'll go over typical net procedures and how to check in to a net, and how to start a contact on the air with someone you've never met. You will have an opportunity to get on the air in the CommAcademy's own "CommAcademy Net."

## 1. Radio Etiquette

*1.1*  PTT / RTL Button – *Don't think on the air; compose your thoughts beforehand!*

*1.2*  Beginning a Transmission

    1.2.1  Listen to a frequency for several seconds before transmitting. If there's no conversation, say your <call sign>, <call sign> – "Listening", or <call sign> - "Monitoring." Can use "CQ" on any band to solicit a conversation.

    1.2.2  If there is a conversation and you wish to join, wait for a break and say your <call sign>. Considerate operators will always leave waiting periods before keying up during a conversation.

    1.2.3  If you want to speak with a particular person/station, give their call sign and then your call sign: "N7HXX, this is KD7KUS". Wait 30 secs and call again. If no one responds, announce "<your call sign> Clear" and try again later.

    1.2.4  If a conversation is on the frequency you want to use to contact a friend, wait for a break, give your call sign, wait to be recognized, ask to make a quick call. If your friend responds, tell them to move to another frequency or standby for the current conversation to end.

    1.2.5  If you're conversing and you hear a call sign, recognize the caller. Try to accommodate their wishes to join your conversation or make a call. Be polite.

*1.3*  Repeater Operation

    1.3.1  Remember to pause for "1001" after keying and before speaking. Most repeaters are "open" – anyone within range can use them.

    1.3.2  After you release, you'll hear the unmodulated carrier for a second or two. It tells you that the repeater is working.

    1.3.3  Repeaters have time-outs (90 secs up to 10 mins). Don't drone on without a break – unkey your mike! If you time-out, the repeater may shut down for several minutes. Either stop speaking or say "Break."

*1.4*  Simplex Operation

    1.4.1  Underutilized. Affords more privacy than a repeater. Can usually have extensive conversations without interruption.

    1.4.2  Use your radio's *reverse* feature when your friend is speaking to hear if simplex is possible (*Check your repeater's operations section for the monitor transmit $\lambda$*).

*1.5*     Everyone can hear you.  No profanity, no disparaging people by name, don't give out your address and announce that you'll be away for a week!  Most people refer to one another by call sign and/or first name; don't use surnames.

*1.6*     Verbal Interference – NEVER acknowledge the heckler by rising to the bait! Move to another pre-arranged, hopefully unknown, frequency.

*1.7*     Exercise verbal efficiency – keep transmissions short, concise and use plain language.

*1.8*     Emergencies:  FCC rules require that you make every effort to contact a caller who has an emergency.

*1.9*     Give your <call sign> every 10 minutes and at the end of the conversation.  You don't have to transmit your friend's call sign, although many do.  Illegal to key up without your call sign.  If you want to test your radio, say "<call sign> Testing."

## 2.  Net Procedures

*2.1*     What is a net? (*a group of stations who gather on one frequency with a common purpose.  Nets provide structure to allow for an orderly flow of messages or information*)

*2.2*     Nets serve a function: rag-chewing, swap meets, emergency communications, regular social interaction among friends

*2.3*     Some nets are directed, some are open or informal.  May or may not have a **Net Control Station** (NCS).

*2.4*     If the net is formal, there will be a check-in controlled by NCS.  Check-in is either by roll-call or general invitation

2.4.1   Roll-call: unusual, but typical for small, regular nets

2.4.2   Check in with your call sign and anything else the NCS requests (any items of business or traffic?).  No need to say call at the end of the net.

2.4.3   General Invitation, by Call Suffix, or by Geographic Region

2.4.3.1     There will be pile-ups and people stepping on toes – Don't Worry!

2.4.3.2     Be patient, Net Control will sort out the pile-up.  Wait for Net Control to refer to your call, a suffix or a prefix, etc

*2.5*     Nets are like roundtable discussions, not telephone calls. Be courteous and contribute when you have something to say.

*2.6*     If you wish to leave a net, polite to ask the NCS for permission to leave.

## 3.  Ragchews

*3.1*     Be a good listener.  Ask questions that follow your friend's conversation.  He's from South Dakota?  Is it really that cold there?  He's using a vertical antenna?  How many radials did he lay down?  You're a retired teacher? Do you miss teaching?

*3.2*     Enter an existing conversation with "Break" or your call sign.  One speaker should recognize you and allow you to join in.

## 4.  Getting on the Air – The CommAcademy Net Exercise

*4.1*     In-class on-air conversation.  146.52 MHz, simplex, low power.