

CHARLIE'S WHISTLE

By

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DX Hill and the valley between it and the neighboring ridges to its south through north covers a fairly large area, about fifteen square miles and constitutes the majority of House District twelve in the state Congressional districting plan. This year, for the first time that Charlie and Mary can recollect, an Amateur was running for the office of State Representative. In fact, the candidate running was not just an Amateur but a fellow club member as well as an active DXer. The best kind of ham for sure! Naturally, Charlie knows this fine fellow very well and was excited to learn of his interest in becoming a state rep. His name is Glen MacIntyre and he moved to the area 20 years ago when his employer at the time, relocated their RFID design and fabrication work to a new facility in the DX Hill area to take advantage of the greater availability of skilled assembly labor that was in the area.

Charlie and Mary, without a moment's hesitation, offered Glen whatever help he needed to convince other voters in the district what a perfect choice he would be on Election Day, not only for Amateur Radio but all families that are concerned with the hi tech industry and the work force in the valley. The incumbent was seeking a fourth term and in the opinion of some, who had heard his recent speeches, had become just a wee bit too comfortable and complacent in the office of Representative. It was time for a change and hanging a QSL card on the District Twelve office seemed to be a perfect solution to the problem.

At the last club meeting, Glen came with a box full of handout brochures to give to volunteers who wished to help the campaign by distributing them at the shopping center and outside the cinema as voters left the weekend movies. He asked members to follow him to his car after the meeting to pick up brochures. He didn't want to take them into the meeting and turn it into a political event. Some might resent that. Quite a few members followed Glen afterward and took a handful with them as they left for home and promised that their families would distribute them.

Glen had never been in politics before now but decided that he had time to step up and try to help his neighbors. He was a senior manager in his company, working long hours and hardly needed more things added to his "to-do" list. But, that's the way it is with busy people. They're normally the most dependable ones from whom to expect delivery and completion of any task.

Glen's political brochures don't mention that he has any party connection. After the club meeting, someone who has known Glen for some time questioned him about that. He said that he hadn't been registered with any party since he moved to the DX Hill region from Silicon Valley. He told the group that the Secretary of State's records show him as a registered Independent. That seemed to satisfy most in the meeting.

Charlie has known Glen for some time as a DXer and respected his skilled operating technique. He didn't know how Glen would perform as a state rep but was comfortable in voting for a fellow DXer and giving him a try. He thought about it for some while and he couldn't remember the last time that an active ham served in some political position in his town, county or state. Well, it was about time, he thought.

This made Charlie think a great deal more about how Amateurs serve their communities in so many different ways. Our fraternity is quite unique in the respect that our very existence is linked to public service. Of course, we have dozens of volunteer opportunities including being a VE,

instructor, ARES member, Section Manager or Director, club officer and so many other ways in which an Amateur may serve. The elected positions such as state or federal Representatives or Senators illustrate a higher calling where an Amateur may substantially bring his or her experience into the service and make certain that the ham knowledge is used when fellow Amateurs need help.

The very first sentence in our rules, [97.1(a)] of FCC Part 97 that grant all of our rules, regulations and privileges, state (in part) that “rules and regulations in this Part are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles: (a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public....”.

Charlie has explained to all his students over the years that our very existence is inseparably linked to public service. Unless amateurs perform service that is a value to the public’s interests, our very existence could be called into question. Fortunately, the Amateur fraternity usually understands the message and most are happy to serve in many different ways. More importantly, I doubt that any Amateur who volunteers in ARES, serves the duties of some elected or appointed leadership or support position or runs for formal elected office ever thinks to perform the job in order to justify the terms and directives of Part 97. Charlie and thousands of other helping hands do what they do because they love to help fellow hams and citizens. Next time you see someone volunteering time as a communicator at a road race or parade or giving up a Saturday morning to offer his service as a VE, shake his or her hand and thank the person for the service. You will surprise him but that form of payment will be appreciated.

When an Amateur considers running for elected office in the state or federal Congress or Senate, please do whatever you can do to support the candidate and assure that he or she is elected. By the way, don’t forget to vote, even if there don’t happen to be any Amateurs on your ballot this Election Day. Many citizens of other countries risk their lives to vote. All you have to do is endure a little inconvenience waiting in a short line. Please remember to vote. As you leave the voting place, please thank the volunteers who help facilitate the process. Charlie and Mary thank you as well.