

July 2, 2014

To all users of the N1BUG repeater operating on 147.105 MHz from Stickney Hill in Brownville, Maine:

I think you all deserve to hear from me what is going on with the repeater and why. It is probably obvious to most who use and monitor the repeater that I am having a problem with two daily users of the system. I want to explain the situation from my perspective.

I was taught to stand up for what I believe in even when there is a personal price to be paid for doing so. When I was brought into amateur radio my elmer taught me there were some subjects that weren't discussed on the air. Down through the ages, and still today the vast majority of hams don't discuss politics or religion excessively on the air. They don't make racist remarks or outwardly criticize other countries and people. There are good reasons for avoiding these subjects. We are supposed to be a fraternity that welcomes all. Enhancing international goodwill is one of the reasons for the existence of amateur radio as stated in 97.1(e) of the FCC Rules.

This is a free and open repeater for all to use and enjoy. However I expect a certain level of courtesy, tolerance, respect for others and for amateur radio tradition. I have been deeply troubled by some of what I hear on the repeater almost daily. Frankly, I am ashamed to have visitors hear it and always make sure my 2 meter radio is off when I have company. There are only two or three individuals involved. The vast majority, of course, are very polite, respectful and considerate.

Those who find it necessary to constantly complain about and belittle others, or resort to raised voices and name calling need to stop or take it someplace else. It's that simple. We don't need to hear the same gripes about race, ethnicity, obesity, sexual orientation, foreign governments, citizens of other countries and so on day after day. Most of it we shouldn't hear the first time. We definitely do not need to hear words like "stupid" or "idiots" applied to any individual, nation, or group. This is amateur radio.

Why does it matter? It's just a local repeater? Consider this: We have people from all orientations and walks of life living and travelling among us. They all should feel welcome in ham radio. Anyone can listen to repeaters on a scanner or receiver. Anyone with a receiver and internet connection can stream audio from the repeater worldwide over the internet. I have no means of detecting or preventing this. I know of at least two cases where it was done without my knowledge at the time.

Some will no doubt question my actions in this matter. Everyone has a right to do so. The bottom line is I am as responsible as the offenders. The repeater operates under the privileges of my FCC license. I have put thousands of dollars and untold hundreds of hours into it. I did not do all that so it could be used to spread hate and discontent.

In order to bring this under control I have been forced into a position I never dreamed I would be in. I have established rules for use of the repeater and will enforce them if and when necessary. This is my right and I consider it my responsibility. I have no interest in micro managing. I will not take action against anyone who makes an occasional slip or error in judgement. I will take action when abuse becomes frequent or habitual.

On November 19, 2013, I notified two individuals in writing that their conduct on the repeater was unacceptable. I sent a second letter on June 20, 2014 advising them they are still crossing the line and that effective immediately I will moderate by shutting down the repeater as needed. I admit there are

problems with moderation. Shutting the repeater down, even temporarily, also deprives others of its use. Nevertheless it seems the point needs to be driven home, as telling them doesn't do any good.

What happens next? If these individuals don't stop what they are doing, I will ban them from the repeater entirely. If they try to use it after that, I will file a complaint with the FCC, which I hope will result in an official warning letter to the individuals involved. I have yet to decide what to do if the problem persists beyond that point.

Rules for use of this repeater are as follows:

Do not violate any provision of FCC Part 97.

Refrain from discussing religion excessively. In any case please don't criticize anyone else's religious beliefs.

Refrain from discussing politics excessively. While better avoided entirely, a few brief remarks pertaining to **domestic** politics are OK... occasionally. If it comes to raised voices and/or name calling it has gone too far. Frequently repeating a political opinion will be considered excessive. Criticism of foreign politics and policies of other countries is **not** OK.

Do not belittle, berate, defame or speak ill of others. This includes individuals, groups, nations, etc. Using words such as idiot, stupid, hate monger, etc. in reference to any person, entity or group is **not** OK.

This repeater is G rated at all times. Anything not suitable for all audiences is unwelcome here.

Further information on this repeater policy may be found at:

<http://www.repeater.n1bug.com/policy.shtml>

Recent FCC enforcement and warning actions are available online. Many of the warning letters are relevant to this situation.

<http://transition.fcc.gov/eb/AmateurActions/Welcome.html>

Sincerely,

Paul Kelley, N1BUG
147.105 repeater, Brownville, Maine