



## Announcement and Invitation: *“Adopt - a - Ham”*

### Background

The gratifying results of our HamCram license testing process has always had one disappointment: out of the 20 to 30 new licenses that are usually awarded, we normally see few of them develop into active operators. The vast majority are never heard from again, apparently abandoning ham radio before getting started. We have tried to alleviate that by providing various informative handouts, citing helpful websites, inviting them to our club meetings, and hosting occasional Ham University sessions, all with very little success.

### Why isn't that enough?

The problem was recently discussed in great depth among several club members. The consensus was that the missing element is direct and ongoing personal support to the new ham. What's needed is hands-on guidance, so that the new licensee can personally experience actual ham radio operations and equipment. A proposal was offered that we establish an “Adopt-a-Ham” team in the club, whereby a successful test-taker, if willing, might be immediately paired with a volunteer who would provide direct active mentoring over time. The goal would be to get the new Technician comfortable and familiar with typical ham radio operations and activities through actual guided experience.

### How would it work?

The mentoring can take many forms, as long as it's hands-on and in person. Invite the new ham to your shack and let him or her operate on the air with their new call sign. Demonstrate your mobile rig and explain how it's installed. Take them with you on Peddling Path or similar field ops. Invite them to a club meeting, watch for them to arrive, and have them sit with you. Explain operating

techniques, like phonetics and net procedures. If they have a new radio, whether an HT or whatever, help him with memories and operating hints. If they can put up a base station antenna at home, be on hand and help get it done. If you have a spare radio that they can use for a while, loan it out. None of those things cost the new ham very much, some of it costs nothing, yet all of it can help a great deal in keeping yet another new licensee from disappearing from the hobby.

These same concerns apply equally to the Technician or General who needs help upgrading. In-person guidance can make a lot of difference to the candidate who is on the edge of getting to the next level.

### Who might volunteer?

The volunteer can be anyone of any license class, even if relatively new to ham radio, who has progressed beyond an HT and repeaters. If you have some type of base station, maybe a mobile installation, and have worked some HF or our special events, you have the experience that the new ham can't get alone.

Also, while *Adopt-a-Ham* originated within the Stockton-Delta club, there's no requirement that volunteers be club members, nor is there reason why other clubs and their members cannot participate. The need is obviously not specific to any one club or area, so maximum participation from any quarter is encouraged.

### What's next?

*Adopt-a-Ham* will be a regular topic on our Monday night Technical Net at 7:00 pm on the Stockton-Delta repeater system.<sup>1</sup> Plan to join the discussion to aid in getting the effort started and in managing it over time. If you are willing to serve as a mentoring volunteer, notify W6CPR or KG7OR (contact info below), or make it known on the next Technical Net.

### For more information

|                     |              |                  |
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<sup>1</sup> 147.165 & 442.250 mHz, PL 107.2, near Plymouth, CA