

# WORKING THE HAM RADIO USENET NEWS

*By Lillian Roberts AC6AL*

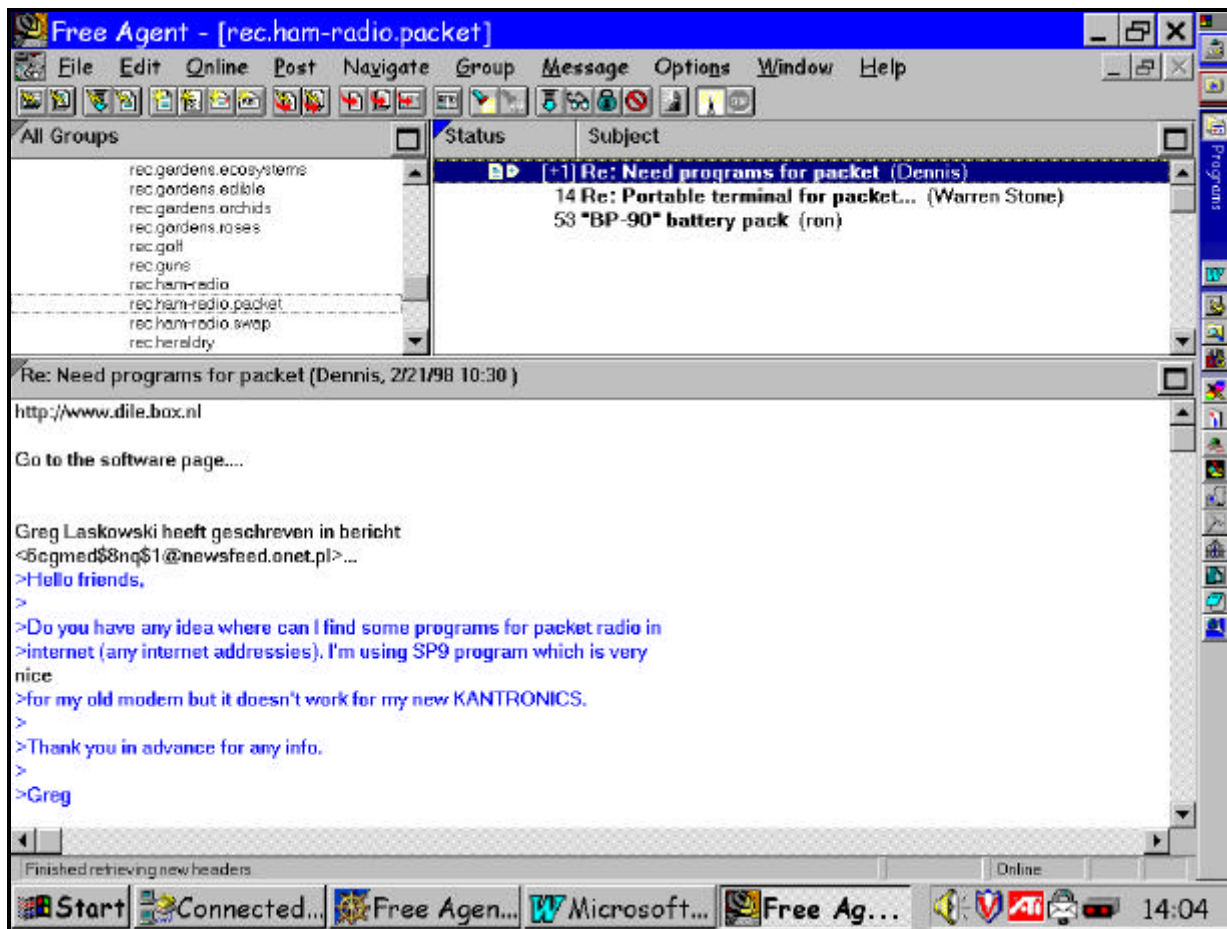
So you've heard about this "Usenet News" thing from other hams, but are not sure if the Usenet is for you, and if it is, how to participate. First of all, let me tell you that, "Yes! The Usenet is for all amateur radio enthusiasts, or those who are thinking about getting involved in our neat hobby." And, "Anyone with a computer connected to the internet can join in the fun." Let me tell you a little bit about the Usenet.

The Usenet is a world-wide distributed discussion system. It consists of a set of "newsgroups" with names that are classified hierarchically by subject. "Articles" or "messages" are "posted" to these newsgroups by people on computers with the appropriate software -- these articles are then broadcast to other interconnected computer systems via a wide variety of networks. Some newsgroups are "moderated"; in these newsgroups, the articles are first sent to a moderator for approval before appearing in the newsgroup. Usenet is available on a wide variety of computer systems and networks, but the bulk of modern Usenet traffic is transported over the Internet.

## SOFTWARE NEEDED

A news reader is a piece of software that can read Usenet messages and present them on your computer screen in an organized fashion. All computer systems run some form (or several forms) of Usenet software. Among the systems used to read and post to Usenet are Vaxen running VMS, IBM mainframes, Amigas, PCs running various operating systems, such as MSDOS, Win95, or Linux, and Macintoshes. For brevity, I assume you are using either a Mac or a PC running Windows or Linux (the UNIX clone for PCs). I will qualify here: my list of newsreaders is not exhaustive! You may find many other good examples in cyberspace.

A terrific package for both Windows 3.1 and Win95 users is called, "FreeAgent." You can download (it's free) it from the Forte web site at <http://www.forteinc.com/agent/freagent.htm>. Here is a sample screen shot of FreeAgent in action:



Another Usenet application that is popular for the PC (Windows and Linux) and the Macintosh is Netscape Communicator's discussion groups feature called, "Collabra."

Yet another Usenet viewer called, "WinVN" for the Windows, Windows/95, and Windows/NT platforms is available for free at the Kennedy Space Center web site at <http://www.ksc.nasa.gov/software/winvn/winvn.html>.

Another good Macintosh Usenet newsreader program is called, "InterNews," and can be downloaded for free at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~moonrise/>. A Mac newsreader called, "Hogwasher," is also free to download at <http://www.asar.com/>.

## DEJA-NEWS: AN ALTERNATIVE

Deja News provides the World Wide Web based "My Deja News," a personalized service that enables users to easily read the latest discussion content posted to their favorite Usenet newsgroups. There is no charge for access to either the Deja News site or the new My Deja News service. The new service can be customized to display the latest amateur radio related news groups and messages, and you can post your messages to the groups you choose. To use Deja News, you do not even have to acquire and install newsreader

software; it is accessible via your web browser! Check it out for yourself at <http://www.dejanews.com>.

## THE HAM RADIO GROUPS

What follows is my list of some of the better-known amateur radio Usenet News groups. As you visit each of them and read some of the messages, you will probably be directed to additional groups.

rec.radio.amateur.antenna

Antennas: theory, techniques and construction.

rec.radio.amateur.digital.misc

Packet radio and other digital radio modes.

rec.radio.amateur.equipment

All about production amateur radio hardware.

rec.radio.amateur.homebrew

Amateur radio construction and experimentation.

rec.radio.amateur.misc

Amateur radio practices, contests, events, rules, etc.

rec.radio.amateur.policy

Radio use & regulation policy.

rec.radio.amateur.space

Amateur radio transmissions through space.

rec.radio.broadcasting

Local area broadcast radio. (Moderated)

rec.radio.info

Informational postings related to radio. (Moderated)

rec.radio.noncomm

Topics relating to noncommercial radio.

rec.radio.scanner

"Utility" broadcasting traffic above 30 MHz.

rec.radio.shortwave

Shortwave radio enthusiasts.

rec.radio.swap

Offers to trade and swap radio equipment.

triangle.radio

Items of Interest local the the Raleigh/Durham/Chapel-Hill area.

## GOOD LUCK!

If you find some more great ham related news groups that I haven't listed here, please drop me an email message mentioning the group's name. You can reach me at:

[lilrob@cts.com](mailto:lilrob@cts.com).