

# Ham Radio Magazine: Alive for Hams.

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Like any business, there is a life-cycle. W0UN is right in that the death of Jim Fisk did hurt the magazine but the "technical torch" was picked up by some pretty competent technical folks (W1SL, W1MD, K2RR, WA1TKH to name just a few) and HR did survive another ten years after Jim's death. One of the reasons HR survived was we paid our authors which QST did not at the time and that gave us a leg up on the competition.

At the founding of HR in 1967, amateur radio was still a fairly technical hobby and there was a wealth of writers and articles doing some pretty technologically neat stuff. By 1990, things had changed.

By the late 80's, the publisher was looking for alternatives; he had enough of the magazine and wanted to retire. Ad sales were OK as was the circulation but our perception was it would not continue. The graying of amateur radio was not helping HR survive. Magazines survive on two closely interrelated revenue streams: circulation and advertising sales. We tried to maintain a 60/40% ratio of advertising to editorial material: the more ads you sell, the more editorial pages you can support. Strong circulation allows you to sell more ad pages.

But remember, amateur radio is a "small market" compared to most others and the advertisers only have a finite amount of money to spend.

I looked at buying the magazine and modeled it as a virtual entity: we'd close the Greenville office and work from our homes outsourcing as much of the work as possible. At the time we were using independent technical editors but the quality of articles had fallen and we were not getting what we needed to maintain the technical standards we were known for. After many sleepless nights, I decided that owning a magazine was not what I wanted to do and we set about the task of looking for a new home.



## Ham Radio Magazine, November, 1967 Cover

One of the possibilities was combining with 73 as they were local, struggling and part of IDG (a large computer publishing empire.) Several meetings were held but nothing came of those negotiations.

The other logical avenue was to explore a deal with CQ which eventually was what was done. CQ took us over and absorbed the Ham Radio subscriber list with the last issue of HR being June 1990. Dayton 1990 was very sad as it was the end of an era.

The good news is we were able to convince CQ that publishing a technical magazine was a good idea and that is why Terry Littlefield, KA1STC and I were able to publish Communications Quarterly under the CQ banner.



<http://www.radio-ware.com/>

## ANTENTOP- 01- 2005, # 007

Sadly the momentum could not be continued and with the weakness in the economy Comm Quart was folded in to the ARRL's high tech magazine QEX.

One interesting aside, we often agonized that we closed the wrong magazine. In 1980, we shut down HRH due to the malaise that was effecting amateur radio and the economy in general.

The communications bubble had finally burst after a strong five year run. Ads sales had plunged and it was hard to sell two magazines that were serving many of the same readers to the same base of advertisers. Strange as that may seam, many of HR's high-tech readers enjoyed HRH too and circulation for HRH was strong. Bob Locher, W9KNI and Bill Orr W6SAI were two of our features. In the long term and with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, keeping HRH alive might have been the better decision. Can't worry about it though.

You can see Contest of HRM's articles by topic at: <http://webhome.idirect.com/~griffith/hrindex.htm>

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So, that's the story of why HR is no longer being published. In it's time HR had no peers and to this day published some of the most cutting edge articles in the amateur radio industry.

In 1991, I took over HR Bookstore from CQ and have since merged with Radioware. Our website is [www.radio-ware.com](http://www.radio-ware.com).

When you hear W1HR in a contest, that's one of the HR Alumni as we try to keep the call alive!

Finally, I have been in the ham business since 1977 and it has been fun to mix my vocation with my avocation. I have gotten to know some very wonderful folks over the years. Some are silent keys, others are still active. At Dayton every year we toast those who are still here and those who have passed on. Sadly, the list of SKs grows every year.

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