

# The Interview

## Magazine Editor Has Been Radioactive For 50 Years

By: Alison M. Bour

Bob Grove will soon celebrate his 50th year as a licensed amateur radio operator. Now 63, he first became fascinated in the idea when he was barely a teenager.

"I received my amateur radio license when I was 13," says Grove. "I became interested in electronics and science at an early age just as a result of going to science-fiction movies."

He hasn't ever left it though Grove says he is much more attracted to the listening aspect of wide-coverage radio than he is on the talking end of things. "I like monitoring communications throughout the spectrum. I especially enjoy government undercover operations. That's my favorite." Grove says this kind of information can be found on common frequencies and he often searches for military fly-overs. "I enjoy intercepts of long distance, two-way communication."

Grove also listens to public safety information and says his interests have developed in a fairly typical way. "Everyone, at first, is fascinated at being able to talk to someone long distance that you can't see. Then people develop specific facets."

What isn't typical about Grove is his business, Grove Enterprises which spans magazine publishing, computer networking and auctioneering.

In the early 1980's, Grove formed Grove Enterprises to offer hard-to-find accessories to radio enthusiasts and started manufacturing on a limited basis. Grove says he has always had a flare for writing and then began to put out a catalogue covering frequencies and the best way to find them as well as information on users. "We were the

first magazine out that covered just the listening hobby, both shortwave radios and scanners. People kept saying, 'If you put it out all the time, I'd buy it.'"

The magazine has been in existence ever since. Rachel Baughn serves as its current editor and the publication, *Monitoring Times*, also has a host of column editors. Grove's role these days is to establish policies and overall content which continues to change with the industry.

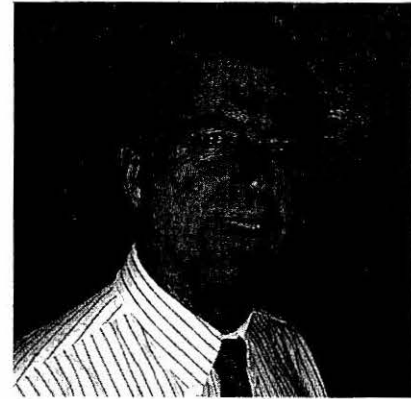
"We've adapted as communications have adapted to technology," he explains. "We follow the market quite closely."

In addition to its original coverage, *Monitoring Times* now publishes ham radio columns, amateur radio columns, information on satellite communications, and sections for experimenters who want to build their own antennas.

Two relevant topics that are on Grove's mind these days are trunking and digital communications, the latter of which he is most concerned about. The important question is, he emphasizes, how far will the law go in protecting encrypted information that is of interest to scanner hobbyists? "It's the newest frontier facing the hobby. At this point, there's a great deal of concern. This hasn't been challenged yet but it's being carefully analyzed."

Grove sees keeping track of these new aspects of listening as another mission of *Monitoring Times*. While he saw a drop in hobbyists about four years ago, now he says things are picking back up.

When the news hit that Newt Gingrich was overheard on radio, hobbyists got a bad rap as a result. "At the same time, the internet was



hitting," adds Grove. Electronics buffs decided computers were more fascinating.

But those same people are returning to their old hobby, according to Grove. "People have forgotten about the (Gingrich) incident. Many are rediscovering radio again."

Also, in an interesting twist, those computer buffs—who never knew about listening hobbies—are now finding them as attractive as learning about computers. And, they are, for the first time, discovering the hobby.

Grove's company no longer manufactures. He used to be a firefighter and arson investigator, serving as both chief and president of his local department. Now, when he isn't busy with publishing and listening to military fly-overs, he is hosting an auction. He and his wife, Judy run an auction business that attracts between 150 and 170 people every weekend. "We have a very large, very plush auction hall. It's the largest one in the area. We specialize in antiques and collectibles."

The Groves live in Brasstown, North Carolina, on the Western tip of the state. Brasstown is an agricultural suburb of a small city called Murphy.