



JUNE 1996; THE LAST ISSUE OF RCMA SCANNER JOURNAL

by USSN Staff

With an ambiguously-worded postcard, members of the Radio Communications Monitoring Association were notified in late June that the June 1996 issue of the RCMA Scanner Journal would be the last. This came as a surprise to many, even a shock. But their desperate financial situation evidently left the RCMA Board with no other choice.

As explained in the postcard, in an effort to revive declining membership RCMA began selling the Journal in various bookstores. Unfortunately, the distributor they chose turned out to be less than reputable. (This same outfit is one of the two USSN uses and they are into us for more than a few bucks, too!) RCMA, being non-profit, could not function for long with little or no income! Their printer was evidently more than gracious, but they couldn't continue to operate "by the skin of their teeth" forever.

This is really a sad day. The RCMA has been around for over twenty years. The RCMA Journal was different from any of the commercial magazines, being a combination of columns on various scanner-related subjects and authoritative local frequency information that no other publication could begin to match.

The topical columns were usually excellent, although they admittedly varied in quality over the years. The number and subject matter of the columns changed over time also, as interests changed. And it was always interesting reading through the local frequency columns, even for other geographic areas; reading about the newest radio system going in, how many fre-

quencies they had, how they were configured, what type of radios they used; little details sent in by various members. NO other magazine has done this, at least anywhere near as well.

The columns in the Journal were authored by a parade of writers over the two decades. They came and went, some lost interest, some moved on to bigger and better things. Some were with RCMA from the beginning. Almost EVERY editor and writer for USSN has been active in the RCMA.

More than a few people are unable to understand why they couldn't keep things going, rather than just, seemingly, give up. Actually, burn-out may have played a part in the Board's decision, but so did the bleak financial outlook. What they perceived to be the reality of the situation was more than a minor determining factor in their decision. Simply put, things just didn't look like they were going to get any better.

The Board at this point is trying to salvage the situation. They are genuinely concerned for their membership. What money they are able to squeeze out of the distributor, though, will have to go to pay their overdue printer bill.

People are blaming everything from trunked radio systems to the Internet for RCMA's demise. The popularity of the hobby may well HAVE peaked, as some assert. But there continues to be an ardent following for this fascinating pastime. The hobby attracts persons interested in Public Safety or in two-way communications in general; people with a fascination with radios or anything electronic; those interested in what's going on in the community and the blatantly nosy!

These people will probably continue to be enthusiastic about the hobby. Unfortunately, the RCMA won't be around to share it with.

Next month—details of RCMA's agreement with USSN for compensating members for the remainder of their subscriptions.

USSN

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