

Lauton Institute Announces Advances in Diagnosing Ham Psychoses

A CQ Exclusive:

Lauton Institute's Center for Research of Abnormal Personalities Offers Explanations for On-Air Misbehavior by Radio Amateurs

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In the October 2013 issue of CQ, James Millner, WB2REM, a licensed psychologist of 25 years, addressed a subject near and dear to the hearts of all amateur radio operators and especially DXers: *The Psychology of the QRMer*.¹ While Millner's article was not intended to provide a clinical analysis of the abnormal behaviors exhibited by some operators among us, his work did touch on the underlying factors and what operators could do to avoid unpleasant on-air experiences. In this article, Professor Heisseluft expands on Millner's work, revealing for the first time some of the remarkable clinical diagnoses associated with QRMs and DX operators. These are identified for us by the former director of the Lauton Institute's Center for Research of Abnormal Personalities. Readers will find the result both revealing and frightening.

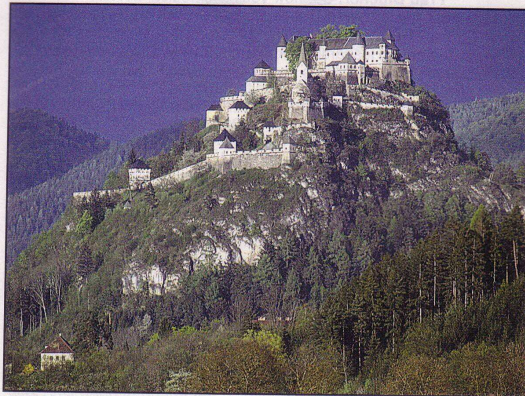
—W2VU

In his comprehensive review of the QRMer, James Millner, WB2REM, cited six reasons for the deterioration in behavior among hams that he believed were the root causes for many of the on-air problems heard today. These are:

1. Intolerance of divergent views
2. A general lack of operating experience
3. Feelings of station inferiority
4. Group diffused inappropriate behavior
5. Operating under the influence
6. Acts by truly emotionally sick individuals

The intentional interference resulting from the acting out of these behaviors, which often can be characterized as malicious, takes many forms. In general, however, they involve the deliberate introduction of QRM, including tuning up on the DX station's frequency, pirate operations, calling out of turn, and a plethora of other aggressive actions typical of various pathologies well known to the medical community. Given this, I thought it might be interesting to drop in for a few days on my retired colleague, Professor Hannah Blücher, the previous Director of the Lauton Institute's Center for Research of Abnormal Personalities, to put the question to her: What did she think was behind the deteriorating minds of many of today's radio amateurs? To help her understand the situation, I went armed with off-the-air recordings made during the latest CQ and ARRL

**Professor Heisseluft currently is vacationing at the Caribbean Weight Loss Clinic and Spa, Bridgetown, Barbados. Mail may be conveniently sent to the professor c/o CQ Magazine, 25 Newbridge Road, Hicksville, NY 11801.*



The Lauton Institute's Center for Research of Abnormal Personalities is located in this forested setting just outside Grossmaulander Donau, Austria. The facility currently is treating five radio amateurs who recently formed a DX contesting club. The members anticipate erecting a rotating tower with Yagis for 160 through 6 meters at the peak of the mountain. Doctors and nurses will be in attendance during all contests.⁵

worldwide DX phone contests. Of course, the entire matter could have been addressed in one day, but, oh, dear readers, Frau Blücher, who still makes her home near the Lauton Institute, makes the most delicious recipe for *Apfelstrudel*... such a super flaky crust with mildly sweet apples, raisins, and crunchy walnuts for a filling... but I digress.

Here is an edited version of our discussion, which went on for the better part of a week.

Professor Heisseluft: So, my dear Hannah, you have heard the contest recordings. Have you any overall conclusions to share with me for my readers?

Frau Blücher: Dey are crazy! The lot of dem! Out of der minds! Yelling and all dat, you'd tink the house vas on fire. Vat ver dey yelling? Letters? Numbers? Crazy!

Professor Heisseluft: Those were their callsigns. Each person has a unique callsign, or station identifier, that is based on their country of origin and other factors. Each person's license conveys certain operating privileges. The other numbers were signal strength indicators and location identifiers.

Frau Blücher: Makes no sense... grown men and women shouting like dat! And vat vas all dat interference... visting, oooohing and aaahing, swearing, belching, and da like. Vat? Dey can't turn off der microphones vile dey act like children?

Professor Heisseluft: Well, that's what I want to talk to you about. Perhaps, based on your work at the Center, you could tender some diagnoses related to the behaviors associated with some of the operators you heard causing malicious interference.

Frau Blücher: Absolutely ... it vud be my pleasure. Such miscreants ver da focus of my entire career. I am very familiar vis der strange personalities. Now, take dat man who vas swearing. Dat's an easy von: Tourette syndrome. Terrible ting ... inherited disorder of the nervous system. Lots of motor and vocal tics. Not all da comments dey make are obscene, but many are socially inappropriate, insulting, and unacceptable.

Professor Heisseluft: But Tourette's isn't that prevalent in our society, as I recall. At most, it might affect 3% of the population.²

Frau Blücher: So, now you're a medical doctor? You come here, Mister Smarty Pants, eat my strudel, and tell me my business? Next you'll be wanting to take over the directorship of the Center for Research of Abnormal Personalities from Professor Schratenthaler. He is my boyfriend, you know!

Professor Heisseluft: I'm sorry, Frau Blücher, I certainly did not intend to inject my own meager knowledge of your field into this discussion. Why don't you continue while I refresh my plate?

Frau Blücher: Please ... Emil ... haf a little respect for me. So, maybe only a few of those crazy people actually have Tourette's. More likely, they suffer from attention deficit disorder, or ADD. Ve see a lot of dat ... ants-in-da-pants ... *schpilkas*, as my *grossmutter* used to say. Always up and down, never sitting still, twitching, turning—

Professor Heisseluft: [returns with his second helping of strudel]—and you'd expect this to translate into the same kind of on-air behavior?

Frau Blücher: Certainly. Dey probably are spinning knobs, flipping switches, jumping up and down, pounding on desks, kicking chairs, God knows vat ... nervous wrecks. I'm sure da coffee doesn't help, dats for sure.

Professor Heisseluft: Did you hear any other disturbed personalities on the recordings, Doctor?

Frau Blücher: [Look of mock disbelief on her face.] Vat, are you kidding me? Der ver a ton of dem. Did you not hear dat von station becoming obsessed with contacting anudder von? You heard it on da recording ... calling, calling, calling. Da man vas crazy. No contact. More calling, swearing, yelling, screaming. He vas focused on contacting dat von station and *only* dat station. Den, he started making noises on top of dat station—his imitation of a rooster crowing vasn't bad, you know—until no von could be heard. Obsessive-compulsive disorder. A classical psychosis if I ever saw von.

Professor Heisseluft: Did you pick up anything else of interest?

Frau Blücher: Vell—and here, I haf to tell you, I am quite proud of myself—I heard several operators ... is that what you call dem?—

Professor Heisseluft: Yes, radio operators—

Frau Blücher: Yes, vell, several of dem ver suffering from auditory hallucinations.

Professor Heisseluft: Auditory hallucinations?

Frau Blücher: Absolutely. I clearly heard da station who vas the center of attention call anudder station ven von or more of da calling stations falsely taut he had responded to dem. Maybe some of deez people hear voices anyway, who knows? And the delusions, oy!

Professor Heisseluft: Delusions?

Frau Blücher: Oh yes, some of da operators ver delusional in da extreme. Did you hear dat von guy who taut every station

he called responded to him? I vud classify him as suffering from "primary psychotic delusions"³ ... dat is, actions not comprehensible in terms of normal mental processes. Dat is von hellava group of people I heard on da recordings you played for me!

Professor Heisseluft: Yes, well, these contests are very stressful. They go for 48 hours straight and involve operators from around the world. It can be very competitive. I'm told, in some cases, operators have been found in total states of catatonia at the end of these contests. Wives have gone into their husbands' stations, moved their arms to the upright position, and their husbands' arms have stayed there. The men were totally nonfunctional.

Frau Blücher: I believe it. Based on vat I heard, maybe dey should require a sanity test before dey issue dem licenses to operate. Did anyvon ever tink of dat?

Professor Heisseluft: Actually, I described such an effort in the April 2005 issue of *CQ* magazine: "Psychological Testing of Amateur Radio Applicants ... The Cure for Spectrum Rage."⁴ At the time, rule changes proposed by the Federal Communications Commission in the United States would have required applicants for new amateur licenses, as well as current licensees seeking to renew their licenses, to undergo psychological exams. The test results would have been used for the purpose of determining a person's psychological profile and fitness for accessing the airwaves. The hue and cry that went up from the radio amateur community was unbelievable. [*The telephone switchboards at CQ, the ARRL, and the FCC were tied up for three days because of calls from outraged radio amateurs.—ed.*] The measures never were adopted for inclusion in the FCC's Rules and Regulations.

Frau Blücher: Vell, based on what I heard, they should have been. Dat is von crazy bunch of people on the air! And I mean dat in every sense of da vord!

Professor Heisseluft: I have to think more than a few people would agree with you, Frau Blücher.

Frau Blücher: [Nods in agreement.] Have some more strudel, Emil ... and don't forget to take some *Zwet-schkenröster* vid you. And *Mohnstrudel* ... don't forget the *Mohnstrudel*. You always look so undernourished ven I see you.

Summary

In an attempt to better understand the psychoses affecting radio amateurs these days, Professor Heisseluft asked the former director of the Lauton Institute's Center for Research on Abnormal Personalities, Professor Hannah Blücher, to identify the problems she could identify in recordings made during both CQ and ARRL worldwide DX contests. Frau Blücher was quickly able to diagnose many of the operators she heard as suffering from one or more of the following: Tourette Syndrome, attention deficit disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, auditory hallucinations, and delusions. She was not at all surprised to learn that after these contests, some operators have been found in catatonic states. Her suggestion that radio amateurs be psychologically tested and profiled at the time they are licensed was previously discussed and withdrawn by licensing authorities in the United States after a major protest erupted among amateurs in that country.

Notes

1. Millner, J, WB2REM, "Psychology of the QRMer," *CQ*, October 2013
2. <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Turet+syndrome>
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Jaspers
4. Heisseluft, E., "Psychological Testing of Amateur Radio Applicants ... The Cure for Spectrum Rage," *CQ*, April 2005
5. Castle Hochosterwitz. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Austria license. Photo by Johann Jaritz.