Zero Retries Administrivia - Activating Payment Options

zeroretries.org/p/zero-retries-administrivia-activating

Steve Stroh N8GNJ

Zero Retries is an independent newsletter promoting technological innovation in Amateur Radio, and Amateur Radio as (literally) a license to experiment with and learn about radio technology.

About Zero Retries

Steve Stroh N8GNJ, Editor

Jack Stroh, Late Night Assistant Editor Emeritus

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Web version of this issue:
https://www.zeroretries.org/p/zero-retries-administrivia-activating

Zero Retries Special Issue - Activating Payment Options

I'm packing a lot of administrivia into this one special issue of Zero Retries so it won't be necessary to use the editorial space in regular issues of Zero Retries to explain these changes.

Thus this issue can serve as an easy reference for the backstory of Zero Retries Payment Options.

Payment Options for Zero Retries - Coming In June 2023

This "Administrivia" issue of Zero Retries is a "heads up" to current Zero Retries subscribers *about* activating payment options for Zero Retries.

There will be *another* Zero Retries Administrivia Edition *when* Payment Options for Zero Retries *have been activated*.

I feel that I owe this explanation to longtime Zero Retries readers who signed up for this scrappy, irreverent little newsletter, who may feel that Zero Retries is morphing beyond those roots.

Again, as you receive this special issue, Payment Options for Zero Retries *has not yet been activated*.

Activating Substack's Payment Options for Zero Retries

I have dithered

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about whether to "accept Substack's offers" to turn on payment options for Zero Retries for nearly two years now. In June, 2023, I will do so.
The payment options for Zero Retries Paid Subscriptions will be:

- Free for all existing features of Zero Retries (no changes)

- $5 / month billed monthly for additional features

- $100 / year billed annually for additional features

- $150 / year billed annually - Founding Member for additional features

Again, when payment options *are* activated, *nothing will change for Zero Retries readers*.

Really!

All current Zero Retries subscribers will continue to be subscribed to the Free payment option. Future Zero Retries subscribers who choose the Free payment option will receive the same features as current Zero Retries subscribers. That is, Zero Retries subscribers who choose the Free option will receive a too-full issue of Zero Retries every week via email (or RSS), with full archives available online, and occasional special issues of Zero Retries.

As previously discussed, the Zero Retries Podcast will be moved to a separate mailing list that will also remain free.

Zero Retries Content Will *Remain* Publicly Accessible

My commitment to Zero Retries readers, and to Amateur Radio, is that after payment options for Zero Retries are activated, the content of Zero Retries will remain publicly accessible, available to *all*, without payment.

I continue my commitment (stated at the end of every issue of Zero Retries):

> In its mission to highlight technological innovation in Amateur Radio, promote Amateur Radio to techies as a literal license to experiment with radio technology, and make Amateur Radio more relevant to society in the 2020s and beyond, Zero Retries is published via email and web, and is available to everyone at no cost. Zero Retries is proud *not to participate* in the Amateur Radio Publishing Industrial Complex, which hides Amateur Radio content behind paywalls.

While some value-added features for paid subscriptions will be Amateur Radio content, that exclusivity (behind a paywall) is for *early access*. Eventually (the exact, exclusivity period to be determined, but it will be brief) *all* Zero Retries content will be made publicly available, which I feel fulfills my commitment to not hide Amateur Radio content behind a paywall.

Why Turn On Payment Options?

When I began Zero Retries on 2021-07-09, I considered activating payment options. At that time, I decided not to do so because I didn't know if I was capable of reliably publishing Zero Retries once per week. I'm confident now that I can do so.

Without solicitation

, a number of Zero Retries readers have offered to pay a subscription fee. Some of those offers have come via the Substack system, and some have come from personal conversations and emails, and some offers have been made publicly. In short, some people like Zero Retries and are receiving value from it and they want to see Zero Retries continue and are offering to pay a subscription fee to support Zero Retries.

The first priority for revenue from Zero Retries will be (re)paying overhead costs incurred in writing and publishing Zero Retries. (You'd be surprised.)

I hope that revenue from Zero Retries will be sufficient beyond overhead costs to fund some enhancements to Zero Retries - see below.

A "stretch goal" of revenue from Zero Retries may be to fund travel to events (example - GNU Radio Conference, DEFCON, etc.) that aren't feasible to fund from my personal budget.

Professional Amateur Radio? I'd Rather Not.

Some YouTube content creators (and long before them, book and article authors, and those with jobs in Amateur Radio manufacturers, etc.) have decided that Amateur Radio is their full time job - as in, generates their primary income.

I don't want that for Zero Retries, or myself. Generating revenue from Zero Retries "taking over my life" (becomes a full time job) that would be *too* high a cost for me, and dilutes the fun and utility of Amateur Radio for me. If I don't have any time to *do* Amateur Radio (as a recreation / hobby), I can't offer any meaningful insight *on* Amateur Radio.

That said, functionally, the decision to activate payment options for Zero Retries does make Zero Retries a defacto business (and the overhead associated with even a tiny business). For me, revenue from Zero Retries is a *limited* means to an end, to enable continued growth of Zero Retries as a mission and a passion project in service to Amateur Radio.

Dance With The One That Brought You - Substack

Substack is the platform / system / company that I use to publish Zero Retries.

For my purposes, Substack's business model can be summed up as:

- Writer writes,

- Writer clicks Publish,

- Substack distributes the text via email, web, and RSS,

- Free subscription readers receive the free version of Zero Retries and Paid subscription readers receive the free version of Zero Retries and the value-added features,

- Substack

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  sends revenues to the the writer (me), minus a small cut for their overhead.

Some content creators, especially on YouTube, have embraced Patreon as a secondary revenue stream. I'm choosing not to do so for several reasons:

- Substack has been very generous in allowing Zero Retries to evolve at no direct expense to me, and some expense to them.

- Substack continues to innovate and enhance its services, and Zero Retries (and you readers) have benefited from those enhancements. In my opinion, Substack has the best features for publishing newsletters.

- Substack *has* a well-integrated revenue system. Keeping track of a second system with its own, unique customer base would be additional administrivia, and a goal with Zero Retries is to *minimize* administrivia, not multiply it.

- I want to spend the majority of my time *writing* about technological innovation in Amateur Radio *in* Zero Retries. To do so I need to minimize the administrivia overhead of the business aspects of Zero Retries, and Substack provides such a low administrivia writing model.

Valued-added Features for Paid Subscriptions

In discussing the possibility of turning on payment options in Zero Retries, one trusted adviser dissuaded me from (my original idea) of offering the exact same experience to non-paid and paid subscribers. Their advice was "People will be willing to support you financially, but they'd like a little something special for their contribution." *That was a very fair point.* Thus all paid subscriber benefits in Zero Retries will be **value-added** to the existing Zero Retries model, not value-subtracted as in paywalling a portion of the existing content of Zero Retries.

The first few value-added features of paid subscriptions are:

- Substack Chat

- Early access to Zero Retries Indexes

- Early access to Zero Retries on YouTube

- Founding Members mentioned in every issue of Zero Retries

Substack Chat

Substack Chat allows Zero Retries readers to converse between themselves more substantively than comments. Zero Retries' Substack Chat is private between subscribers. (Substack Notes, which I've chosen not to use with Zero Retries, was discussed in a special issue of Zero Retries is open to the public.)

Substack Chat will be the first value-added feature for paid subscriptions to Zero Retries.

Early Access to Zero Retries Indexes

There's a lot of information in the 100+ issues of Zero Retries. While there is a search function:

Search Zero Retries

… that only works when you kind-of know what you're looking for, and just want to know where it appeared in Zero Retries.

An index, on the other hand, is different from search because an index *lists* the significant topics, items, people, etc. *and* where they appeared.

I'm *slowly*

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putting together multiple indexes for Zero Retries because I need such a reference now that I've written 100+ issues and I need to be able to quickly find info that I've previously discussed.
As I develop these indexes:

- Monthly

- Quarterly

- Annual

- Cumulative

… *early access to these indexes* will be a value-added feature of paid subscriptions to Zero Retries.

For example, the **Zero Retries Index - 2023-05** would be available to those with paid subscriptions immediately as I begin creating that index page.

Eventually, for the benefit of all Zero Retries subscribers, and Amateur Radio, all the the indexes will be made publicly accessible.

Zero Retries on YouTube

Admittedly, discussing this value-added feature for paid subscriptions is a bit of cart-before-the-horse.

Short form video - YouTube, TikTok, etc. *is the medium most relevant to younger folks*. Like it or not, short form video is *the* media of the 2020s. I consider myself a *reader* and my preferred form of information is *text*… but even *I* watch a fair amount of YouTube.

Consider the *scale* of the audience on YouTube. In Zero Retries 0093 YouTube Edition, of the four YouTube channels that offer consistent Zero Retries Interesting content, the *least* popular of those four (KM6LYW Radio) currently has 3,380 subscribers - more than 4x the subscribers of Zero Retries (as I write this issue).

Thus, to further the Zero Retries mission:

- Highlight technological innovation in Amateur Radio;

- Promote Amateur Radio to techies as a literal license to experiment with radio technology;

- Make Amateur Radio more relevant to society in the 2020s and beyond.

… is going to require that Zero Retries be accessible on video. Given that YouTube is the video distribution that I'm most comfortable with (as opposed to TikTok), I plan to call the video version of Zero Retries…

Zero Retries on YouTube

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.
I don't (currently) have video (or audio) editing expertise. Of course, I could develop such expertise, either "by hand" or figuring out how to automate video production. But that will be time spent away from writing Zero Retries, or those Amateur Radio activities that I would really like to get back to soon.

Thus, Zero Retries on YouTube will require the services of a video editor - human or AI. Revenue from paid subscriptions will help fund

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those services.

When posting a video onto YouTube, it can be made non-discoverable (semi-private), accessible only to those who know the web address.

E*arly access to Zero Retries on YouTube videos* will be a value-added feature of paid subscriptions to Zero Retries.

Eventually, for the benefit of all Zero Retries readers, and Amateur Radio, each Zero Retries on YouTube video will be made publicly accessible.

Founding Members Mentioned in Every Issue of Zero Retries

I wouldn't have thought to offer a "Founding Member" tier for paid subscriptions to Zero Retries, but Substack defaults to showing that option to new subscribers, and several Zero Retries readers have now clicked the button to start a Founding Member subscription as soon as payment options are activated.

As a Thank You to Founding Members, their names (and callsigns) will be mentioned (with their permission) in each issue of Zero Retries.

Future Value-added Features of Zero Retries

There are a number of additional value-added features that I have in mind for Zero Retries. Some of those features will require additional revenue, and some will require additional time.

But before working on additional value-added features, I want to focus on *delivering* the *initial* value-added features mentioned above:

- Substack Chat

- Early access to Zero Retries Indexes

- Early access to Zero Retries on YouTube

- Founding Members mentioned in every issue of Zero Retries

… to those who are willing to support Zero Retries financially with paid subscriptions.

Special Mention - Zero Retries Paid Subscriber 0000 - Steve Davidson K3FZT

I am indebted to Steve Davidson K3FZT for his sage advise about "taking Zero Retries to the next level". Steve was an early and enthusiastic reader of Zero Retries and has graciously offered well-grounded advice from his background about evolving Zero Retries. For all his good advice, Steve asked only one small thing, that he be the first paid subscriber to Zero Retries, and thus I name Steve Davidson K3FZT…

Zero Retries Paid Subscriber 0000

Thank you very much, Steve!

Join the *Fun* on Amateur Radio

If you're not yet licensed as an Amateur Radio Operator, and would like to join the fun by *literally having a license to experiment with radio technology*, check out **Join the Fun on Amateur Radio** for some pointers.

Zero Retries Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) — In development 2023-02.

Closing the Channel

In its mission to highlight technological innovation in Amateur Radio, promote Amateur Radio to techies as a literal license to experiment with radio technology, and make Amateur Radio more relevant to society in the 2020s and beyond, Zero Retries is published via email and web, and is available to everyone at no cost. Zero Retries is proud *not to participate* in the Amateur Radio Publishing Industrial Complex, which hides Amateur Radio content behind paywalls.

My ongoing *Thanks* to:

- Tina Stroh KD7WSF for, well, *everything!*

- **Pseudostaffers** that write about about "Zero Retries Interesting" items on their blogs that I don't spot:

    - Dan Romanchik KB6NU

    - Jeff Davis KE9V

- **Newsletters** that regularly feature Zero Retries Interesting content:

  - Amateur Radio Weekly by Cale Mooth K4HCK is a weekly anthology of links to interesting Amateur Radio stories.

  - Experimental Radio News by Bennet Z. Kobb AK4AV discusses (in detail) Experimental (Part 5) licenses issued by the US FCC.

  - TAPR Packet Status Register has been published continuously since 1982.

  - Other Substack Amateur Radio newsletters recommended by Zero Retries.

- **YouTube channels** that regularly feature Zero Retries Interesting content:

  - HB9BLA Wireless by Andreas Spiess HB9BLA

  - KM6LYW Radio by Craig Lamparter KM6LYW (home of the DigiPi project)

  - Modern Ham by Billy Penley KN4MKB

  - Tech Minds by Matthew Miller M0DQW

- The Substack email publishing platform makes Zero Retries possible. I recommend it for publishing newsletters.

If you're reading this issue on the web and you'd like to see Zero Retries in your email Inbox every Friday afternoon, just click below to join ~~100~~ ~~200~~ ~~300~~ ~~400~~ ~~500~~ ~~600~~ ~~700~~ *800+* other readers:

Subscribed

Please tell your friends and co-conspirators about Zero Retries — just click:

Share Zero Retries

Offering **feedback or comments** for Zero Retries is equally easy — just click:

Leave a comment

If you're a fellow smart person that uses **RSS**, there *is* an **RSS feed for Zero Retries**.

Zero Retries (N8GNJ) is on Mastodon — n8gnj@mastodon.radio — just click:

Zero Retries / N8GNJ on Mastodon

Email issues of Zero Retries are "instrumented" by Substack to gather basic statistics about opens, clicking links, etc.

More bits from Steve Stroh N8GNJ:

- SuperPacket blog — *Discussing new generations of Amateur Radio Data Communications — beyond Packet Radio (a precursor to Zero Retries)*

- N8GNJ blog — *Amateur Radio Station N8GNJ and the mad science experiments at N8GNJ Labs — Bellingham, Washington, USA*

Thanks for reading!
Steve Stroh N8GNJ / WRPS598 (He / Him / His)
These bits were handcrafted (by a mere human, not an Artificial Intelligence bot) in beautiful Bellingham (The City of Subdued Excitement), Washington, USA.

2023-06-21

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Blanket permission granted for TAPR to use any Steve Stroh content for the TAPR Packet Status Register (PSR) newsletter (I *owe* them from *way* back).

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too long…

2
Without solicitation *by me*; Substack has added "suggestions to pledge payment" to all subscribers of Substack newsletters.

3
Technically, Substack integrates with Stripe for processing payments. Stripe takes a (small) additional cut of payments for its overhead.

4
You'd think this would be an ideal task to hand off to one of the new AI's. I considered it, briefly, but then realized that because the content of Zero Retries is so specialized (not represented in the datasets the AIs were trained on) I'd have to spend practically the same amount of time auditing the AI's output. Perhaps in a year or two this would be a trivial task for an AI, but I need this now.

5

I'm going to try to title this *Zero Retries on YouTube* to (hopefully) confer that the content is from Zero Retries (a text newsletter) that's *exported* to YouTube.

[6](#)

If Zero Retries on YouTube (*big* if) gets enough subscribers, there could be some revenue generated from YouTube, which would be a virtuous cycle.