



The Amateur in You, Part 2

What have you been pondering?



You might want to display numbers

During the lives of most hams, there comes a time when each must decide how programmed channels are displayed on their radio. The overwhelming majority of transceivers will only display the channel name, the channel number, or the frequency, but not a combination of them. When faced with choosing one or another, most operators tend to select the channel name (also known as the *alphanumeric tag*) as their choice of display, because the six-digit numerals are not very meaningful to them.

Before too long, it becomes apparent to many of these same operators that the labels are not standardized, in spite of some [published Standard Load](#) lists. In a hurry, the operator might call a friend and ask to quickly turn to the "ABCXYZ" channel for example, only to find that the friend has no such name programmed in his or her radio. In order to get on the same page, they both switch their displays to show the frequencies instead, coordinate by frequency numbers, and the two can begin communicating by radio.

It turns out that the six-digit frequency is the only thing everybody can agree on. The suggestion here, however, is not necessarily to resign yourself to seeing displays of numerals for the rest of your life, but to find an easy way for you to connect your names or channel numbers with their frequencies. One way of doing this is by keeping a nearby paper list handy. A paper might seem awkward, old-school, and prone to getting lost or damaged, but it does work for many operators.

Another is by purchasing a radio that can display both the channel name and frequency for each channel. Unfortunately, that feature is rare, and typically only found on a few mobile units and a few expensive handheld models. For them, simply use computer software



to associate the names with their frequencies, then upload the programming to the radio.

Also, when displaying names of repeaters on the radio, people tend to forget which label goes to which repeater. If the frequency is displayed, it's easy to verify the correct one, whether the offset and tone are enabled, and which shift direction is being used. If a friend is in need of a specific repeater frequency, you won't need to fumble with the menu to place your radio into the **NAME** mode to see it.

Finally, whether you set your radio to display names or frequencies is completely up to your comfort level, and you might never experience the problems just mentioned. Neither way is the right way or the wrong way, but it's something you might want to think about.

Noji Ratzlaff, KNØJI (kn0ji@arrl.net)