



The Amateur in You, Part 2

What have you been pondering?



Avoiding the geezer complex

When people think of the word *geezer*, they tend to envision an elderly male who's one toy short of a Happy Meal. In the amateur radio world, being a geezer has little to do with gender or age, and is defined more by attitude, behavior, and insecurity, but this article will use the pronoun "he" out of sheer laziness.

Just what is a geezer?

A geezer is a person who has a lot of experience at something, and tends to believe the way he has performed or accomplished that activity is *the only way* to do it, so that a change or deviation from that method is just plain wrong. Here are some symptoms that can clue you in to the fact that a person is in fact a geezer:

- many of his QSOs are long-winded, filled with re-living the past
- he jumps to conclusions without considering all the facts, such as assuming a ham is unintelligent when the ham asks a relatively basic question, or comes on the air with a mild speech impediment
- he's quick to criticize and correct others on the air, and refuses to acknowledge his own mistakes
- when another asks how he knows something, instead of providing useful information, he states that he has superior knowledge, and begins quoting his lengthy résumé, which might list thirty years of military service and forty years as a ham operator, starting as a teen who had to learn Morse code by candle light
- he bristles at changes in technology, saying that he and computers don't get along, and that digital modes have no place in ham radio

- he bristles at changes
- he criticizes any use of Chinese radios, smartphones, and / or non-ITU phonetics
- he'll sometimes start a response with, "Well, back in *my* day, ..."
- he is often negative, or often portrays a sour attitude, or often complains on the air about a variety of things
- he might use (even mildly) abusive words regarding his spouse or others on the air

You get the idea...the bottom line is that a geezer is a ham who is like concrete: a little mixed up, but set in his ways. He tends to be inflexible, wordy, and unwilling to learn or accept anything new.

That being said, it's ok to retrieve from a lifetime of learning, and to look back on those years with fondness...you deserve it, and you've earned the right. If you are a person who has many good years of great experience to draw from, the rest of us honor you and value your input and judgment. You have a permanent place in the ham radio world, and we welcome your contributions.

Be the helpful ham

So, how does one avoid becoming a geezer? Accept new ideas, embrace change, be open to suggestion and correction, understand that you don't know everything there is to know about a subject, and be the helpful ham, ready to provide good information in brief, thoughtful answers. If somebody questions something you've gleaned from your many years of valuable experience, try and understand what the person is really trying to ask or learn.

Who knows? Some day you might need to ask a helpful ham to return the favor. :-)