

# The Gift!

I would like to talk about a booklet that was sent to me by an Amateur Radio Club from Aberdeen that I once belonged to. The booklet is called "Ethics and Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur". The author's names are John Devoldere, on4un / Mark Demeuleneere, on4ww. I received this booklet during the height of the last presidential race. I am guessing that's because I'm a registered Democrat, but we can discuss that later.

First of all, I would like to thank them for the gift because there is some valuable information in the booklet. I wouldn't recommend running out to buy it, but if anyone would like to read it you are more than welcome to borrow it. The majority of the good information can be found in the book that I own called The Complete DX'er. This book is a great resource for contacting DX stations or working contests.

The booklet I received has some ideas that in my opinion is **what's wrong with Amateur Radio today**. For example, in the repeater section they state that you should always use and I quote, "as a member of the amateur radio community you are expected to know and use the typical amateur radio expressions or idioms". This they refer to as amateur jargon or

Q codes like QRZ, QRM, QSL or QSY. I will admit I do use some of these terms on FM, but mostly I use them on the HF bands because it is general practice there. The reason it is used on HF bands is to help with communication problems that occur due to static on the band. Using the Q codes helps shorten the commutations by condensing the information.

On FM repeaters where transmissions are clear and generally free of static, the Q codes are not needed. This is the main frequency where new Hams start the fun and enjoyment of amateur radio. The use of the Q codes confuses and intimidates new Hams, so I have been working on saying, "I understand" instead of QSL.

The second item I disagree with is and I quote, "The subject of our communication should always be related to the amateur radio hobby and they state that subjects that are NO,NO's are religion, politics, business, bathroom humor and derogatory remarks".

I love technical talk on the air because you can always learn something. I find that 90% of the conversation on the ham bands is about our hobby, but it is human nature to talk about things that are happening in the world we live in.

I agree you need to be courteous on the air because you never know who is listening. We all must remember that if you share an opinion on a subject, your opinion could offend

someone else. On HF where your signal can be heard around the world, it is very important to keep the NO, NO items in mind. I think that the NO, NO subjects are a gray area on FM. On a FM repeater you will normally find a local group of operators that become almost like a family. They tend to kid each other like siblings do. For example, you might have someone that supports a local sports team and they get blasted with comments when the team plays badly, or you might have someone that has a different political view and he or she gets blasted with comments when someone from the same party does something controversial. I agree that one needs to be very careful with these subjects, but as long as it's in good fun and good taste, it makes for a lively debate. With IRLP on some FM repeaters, you have to remember that your signal also can reach the far corners of the Earth.

What I read in the popular magazines about FM repeaters across the nation is that most repeaters are dead. They are so quiet you can drive all day scanning the band and not hear a thing. I think that part of the reason for this is that we have a generation gap in amateur radio. You have some older Hams that jump down the throat of a newer Ham because they did something wrong in their opinion or they believe that the frequency belongs to them because they were there first. This is the fastest way to discourage newer Hams to give up the hobby. Then there are some of the older generations that

won't embrace the new technology like IRLP or are envious when they see newer Hams able to absorb the new technology with ease, yet they didn't have to learn Morse Code. I know it's not right to lump all older amateurs into this group. I have found that their mentoring to be invaluable, but if you listen, you will hear a few bad apples on the HF bands and some on local repeaters yelling things like this, "On HF, what part of listening up don't you get!" or on FM, you might hear someone turning off a IRLP reflector without identifying. I don't understand why they feel the need to do these things. If you hear someone operating poorly, I would encourage that you let them know politely what they are doing and instruct them on a better procedure.

I hope that as I grow older, I will continue to encourage newer amateurs to enjoy the hobby and not become part of the problem that exists today.

Good Luck and Good Dxing.

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