Why Ham Radio?

I am Farmer and a service technician for an Ag sprayer company called Hagie MFG. This job includes a lot of travel in the tri state area. I currently do not have HF communication in the truck but due run UHF,VHF, IRLP and APRS. When I’m driving and there is no one on the radio It gives me a lot of time to think and ponder questions.

I find myself thinking a lot about Amateur radio. I enjoy thinking about different aspects of the hobby like antenna design, remote operation and DXing. However the other day a person asked me at a gas station what the antenna on the truck was for and when I told him Ham Radio he commented “People still do that?”. That got me thinking what is it about Ham radio that brings out my passion for it.

That night at the hotel I picked up my latest CQ magazine and read an article about how Ham radio is the original social networking media like Facebook and Twitter.

Ham radio has always been about keeping in touch with friends and family. If you ask me picking up a microphone and putting out a call on the local repeater or over IRLP is so much better than typing on a computer. Being able to hear the other person’s voice, creates that personal connection unlike texting or tweeting.

The lifelong friends I have made using Ham radio are very special to me. If it wasn’t for Ham radio I may have never meet them. Think about who you call on a cell phone or e-mail. Unless it is for business I bet 98% of the communication you receive is from people you either grew up with or are related too. I bet most of you could count on one hand the number of people you have meet that you didn’t know using one or all of the social networking sites or people of questionable background my see your information from the use of this type of systems.

Don’t get me wrong I use the new technology and enjoy part of it but Amateur Radio too me is much more than social networking. It is a media that allows you to make new friend in your local area and across the world and it helps keep my electrical trouble shooting skills up for my job and my farm.

When I show my radio gear to a non ham and I pick up the mic, put out a call and get a reply from someone across the country or overseas I always try to keep my eye on the non Ham’s face because they generally show surprise. They are astounded how easy it is to say “Hello” to someone sitting in London or Maine. That’s social networking.

Those of us who have been a Ham for several years forget about the **Magic of Radio**. What other hobby hones so many skills. Language, Electrical, Mechanical, Math, Organization, Communication the list is endless.

As a member of the PRCA, I would like to put out a challenge too all of our members. I want everyone to pick out a part of this great hobby that you have never done before and pursuit. Maybe you have always wanted to learn or perfect your Morse code, build your own antenna or learn to solder on a coax end. The choice is yours. I personally would like to start a DX group inside PRCA. We could set goals like try to work a special event station or country by a certain date.

We are a small group locally so far, but within this group you have a lot of resources. Remember that PRCA stands for? (Region) and that means we have a much larger resource to draw from.

I especially enjoy learning from older Hams. The knowledge they possess is invaluable very much like the WWII vets. If you think about it every day our county is losing the stories of how the greatest generation freed the world from Tierney. How many of those vets were Hams? Think of how their radio skills saved lives on a daily basis during the war.

We are so used to the modern radios we use that take little skill to maintain, unlike the radios of WWII that kept them busy just keeping them working. So the next time someone asks you what your antenna is for I hope you will have a better answer than It’s my Ham radio rig.