

SO YOU WANT TO BE A LID!

Lid...a term used in amateur radio to denote a poor operator; one who is inept at the practice of the art.

A monumental problem facing amateur radio today is the alarming amount of poor operators filling the air waves. It is the opinion of many that one of the reasons for this is the fact that many of the new operators really have not been advised about proper operating procedures. Too many of the "amateur radio classes" produced today spend very little, if any, time correcting operating procedures. Their major thrust is to teach the code, cram the theory, and fill out a 610 form!

It is easy to be a lid, it must be, there are so many of them. If you are already a lid, read on. you may find some new "lid-isms." If you are not yet a full-fledged lid, you may learn some new material for your next transmissions.

Probably the most popular is "QRZ the frequency." Nobody can be quite sure what the exact meaning of this is. The ARRL Handbook lists QRZ as a CW "shorthand" signal meaning "Who is calling me?" On phone it may mean something else, although I can't imagine a frequency calling someone! I even heard a W5 utter "QRZ the channel!" Now this guy is a chief lid. The frequency was silent for a while (Probably as most good operators were in a state of shock) and then a signal from afar responded, "This is the channel and I wasn't calling you!"

I think "QRZ the channel" and "QRZ the frequency" are real winners. Use them a lot. You'll chase the good, experienced hams out of their gourds.

Actually, the use of "Q" signals on phone is in itself a true "lid-ism." The "Q" signals were devised by high speed CW operators as a form of "shorthand" in order to speed up their transmissions. What use they have on phone is questionable, as in many cases you can say the actual meaning just as fast. In many cases they cause more confusion than if you would have said the actual meaning. Then you get the real lid who comes off with "QRM-Mary or QRN-Nancy?" Good heavens, why didn't he just say he had interference?

Now, you must be ready with this one at a moment's notice: "HI." Never, ever, laugh if you find something funny. Say "HI" or even better "HI-HI." It doesn't really take the place of laughter, but it tells the other operators that you know how to laugh on CW.

Another one. Always give your callsign phonetically when operating on phone, especially when conditions are good and signals are clear. It's another small way to take up valuable air time without really adding any intelligence to a conversation. To cut a fine line, it is not legal to identify your station by saying "Whiskey Five Victor Sierra Romeo." If your call is issued W5VSR, the identification is "This is W5VSR." If copy is difficult and for clarification, then, "This is W5VSR. Whiskey Five Victor Sierra Romeo." So continue your lid-ism and show how clever you can be with ridiculous phonetics. A good friend of mine is W5BS; he has a lot of self-restraint!!

Are you interested in DX? Put these on your DX lid list, "CQ Dog X-Ray." jazz it up a little by saying, impressively "CQ Dog X-Ray, beaming Asia." Not only does that improve your antenna's directionality, but it lets everyone hearing you think you have a beam, whether you do or not.

The number one, all time lid award of the century goes to those great DX operators who listen down on one frequency in the foreign part of the band and transmit up in the American phone band without ever listening on the transmitting frequency to see if it was clear. Of course, you must use two processors, in tandem, mike gain wide open, and drive your three 8877 final tubes with an SB-220 while bellowing forth, "CQ Dog X-Ray" for five continuous minutes, before listening. This is the way to attract lots of attention. Lots of it!

Next on the list is the subject of "Break." I do believe that we inherited that one from the CBers. Just find a comfortable roundtable in progress, and say "Break" or better "Break-Break" or best "Breaker-Breaker." Don't give any calls; neither the station you hear nor your own. Don't listen for a few minutes first to find out if you can hear all of the stations in the roundtable. Just break in and disrupt everything. If that doesn't work, start tuning up your

rig on that frequency. After all, aren't the frequencies there for all to enjoy?

Here are some quickies: Say "Go" or "Come back" or "C'mon, Good Buddy," instead of "Over" if you think you must say anything at all to let the other operator know you are ready to listen to him. Don't forget the all time Broderick Crawford "10-4" or better "That's a big 10-4."

It is a shame the F.C.C. no longer requires us to indicate portable operation. They have taken away another opportunity for the lid-ism---"This is Whiskey Five Very Strong Radio, Port Five." I just typed this on my port typewriter!

RESULTS GUARANTEED!!

Did you ever hear a phone operator who sounds like he's operating from a dungeon? Maybe he is, but even without a dungeon you can get the same effect by turning up your mike gain and holding your Golden Eagle D-104 at least one foot, better at two, from your face. Never close talk a mike. Disc Jockeys never do and they are "cool." When you are on the air, you are "cool" too, so you do the same. Communications microphones are designed to be close talked. Keep that mike gain at a minimum level. That way you won't be transmitting the voices of your wife and kids screaming five rooms away. Of course, to be a super lid in the audio department, do use a "power mike" driving a processor. Everybody knows that the engineers who designed your transmitter purposely made it short on mike gain.

Lastly, when giving your name, refer to it as your "Handle." It's folksy. And be sure to say, "The handle here is Beaver." That's liddier than just plain, "My name is Beaver." It also helps to punctuate your remarks with "By golly" whenever possible and remember whenever in a large roundtable, especially on a VHF repeater, give each and every call sign in the group complete with phonetics when IDing. Also don't forget to add "For ID" after your callsign.

There are many other ways to be a lid, but I feel confident that if more operators were to take a look at this disaster from the lighter side, perhaps

we'll all see just how ridiculous most of the phone operation on the ham bands is today. Phone conversation should really not take on a much different atmosphere from talking to your friends on the telephone. Do you say "Over" or "Break" or the worst "Come back" when you are on the telephone? Well then, why do so many do it on the amateur bands? All of that is ever so redundant on a repeater system where most have "End-of-transmission" beep tones; and of course, there is usually a squelch burst ahead of that, so you actually ended up with a fellow ending his sentence with "Come back".... followed by a squelch burst followed by the repeater's beep and in many cases the repeater carrier dropping. You have just four indications that it's your turn! QSL?

Let's all pay more attention to this problem and see if we can help "Clean up" our operations and put amateur radio operations back up to the more professional nature that it enjoyed before many poor habits of the CB band crept up on us.

This article appeared in the September, 1978, Ham Radio Horizons, entitled "So You Want To Be a Lid!," by A.J. "Buddy" Massa, W5VSR.