

# *Old Timers.....* By Dave Lugo, W5TAZ

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**Larry N5LW & Wayne AA5JJ**

Listening around the bands at night can become habit forming. The groups one encounters can be everything from a delight to listen in on to an irritant! Many A dull night of mine has been made lighter and more memorable for me from the groups I tend to “sand bag” on.

Last night I awoke at about 1:00 am and was pleased to here a couple of guys I talk to from time to time on the local repeater talking about a wide variety of subjects. Wayne AA5JJ, who is out of Muskogee and Larry, N5LW who is the **second most famous ham** in the Winchester area were bouncing back and forth from FM repeater to CW on 80 meters.

I have not known Larry long and have never met him eyeball to eyeball but I do have a lot of respect for him. He strikes me as being “Old School” when it comes to ham radio. Always polite to anyone he meets on air, this operator is always willing to step up and help out, be heard and voice his opinion when he hears someone needing help or something that is not quite right on the air.

Wayne, AA5JJ is my “Yoda” or Elmer. Wayne has put in count-less hours teaching what he knows and loves, Ham Radio skills and etiquette to me. If not for Wayne I have to admit that I would still be non-proficient in CW mode.

As I listened to these two friends go back and forth with each other I heard a deep respect for each other emerging in the conversation. They both talked about the old days and how they have been licensed for over 25 years each. They talked about some old photos that are posted at a church where they attended together and became friends.

As we grow older and watch, as the older hams become silent keys, these two friends came to a realization, Larry said to Wayne that they were the “Old Timers” now! It was a profound statement and as the two of them continued, I was proud of them. The years of experience and the knowledge these two have between them are amazing!

Larry and Wayne are both very proficient in CW. Someday soon we may need these “Old Timers” to help out with a crisis. I can just imagine that if a major disaster or a full terrorist attack ever does occur, we will surely lose our communications equipment on a scale that can be crippling to us as a country.

Over the years as a ham I have met a lot of people around the world on air. Some have become my closest and most intimate friends. The knowledge, integrity, Generosity and the willingness to go that extra mile for his fellow man are strong in this hobby. To most of us it is not just a hobby, it is a way of life! I think if we as the newer generation of hams can model our-selves after these “Old Timers”, Someday we too will come to the profound realization that we are the Old Timers.

The newer hams of today don't seem to have the respect for the hobby that the older hams do. To the older hams, being a ham means something. Being a ham means you have a place to come with the entire family and not have to worry about what language you hear. It's a place where you don't have to worry about folks taking advantage of you or treating you like you are a nobody.

There are a few groups out there that are not quite what most of us would call good Hams but there are far more that are great hams. I guess what it comes down to is will you make a great “Old Timer?” Do you have what it takes to someday look back on 25 plus years and realize you are an “Old Timer and still be proud of the way you operate?” If so, great! If not, then you may want to take stock in your operating practices and change them accordingly.

Larry, N5LW is a lucky man, his entire family is involved in ham radio. His wife and kids and their spouses are licensed, I can't even get my wife to look at a radio these days.

Wayne, AA5JJ is still Elmering everyone he can, with a strong love for ham radio he has committed to teaching a Morse code class starting this month at the YMCA in Muskogee. Larry refers to Wayne as “Obie One Muskogee”, but to me he is still Yoda, the master. Old Timers ....., Old Timers indeed!