

Yellow Bird

Years ago, my wife's uncle purchased a CB radio for his camper truck. This was early on when a radio license was required and the application came in the the box when you purchased the radio. He filled it out, signed his name to the fact that he was over 3 feet tall and breathed at least once each hour, put it in the mailbox and waited for his shiny new license to come back from the FCC twelve weeks later.

When it arrived, he was surprised to find his call letters weren't something snappy like WBZ or KNOX, but rather he was now officially K809184ZQ98. Some of you may remember those calls. Or maybe you don't, because most CBers threw their licenses out the window as they revved up rolled on down the Highway 41.

Ever the solid citizen, Uncle Bill signed each transmission religiously with, "this is K809184ZQ98, on the road near Podunk.....Ten Four?" As time went on most CBers simply flouted the law and gave themselves nicknames such as BigArse, Bottled Bubba and FrankenStench. Uncle Bill kept to the script, however, and continued to use his Official U.S. Government call letters, though he rattled them off so fast that it sounded like he was saying, "Kaynoatezcrante" or something

like it. Every time he would use the call sign near New York City or in Florida, responses would occur in Spanish, like "Hey, Que Pasa, Amigo, qué cabra en el camino?" Up near the Canadian border, he would get, " Qu'est-ce que c'est? votre pantalon est-il allumé vers l'arrière ?"

Finally fed up, he styled himself Yellow Bird for a while. But everyone he met on the air insisted on calling him Big Bird instead and he took that as an insult.

Uncle Bill has now gone to hang his hat on that big dipole in the sky, but his small contribution to two-way communications could be the fact that he eventually gave up the airwaves and bought a mobile phone for emergency use, thereby becoming a part of Nokia's business case for cell phones.

By the way, his wife, our tiny Aunt Emily, up there beside him in the truck seat with her feet dangling off the floor, would turn around, put her finger to her temple and cock her thumb while mouthing to the kids in the back, "Dead Bird."

David Griffin

Copyright 2007

The Windswept Press
Saugerties, NY