

### The Rip VanWinkle Effect

My personal ham radio journey reminds me of the story of Rip VanWinkle.

Rip VanWinkle is a short story by the American author Washington Irving, first published in 1819. It follows a Dutch-American villager in colonial America named Rip Van Winkle who meets mysterious Dutchmen, imbibes their strong liquor and falls deeply asleep in the Catskill Mountains. He awakes 20 years later to a very changed world, having missed the American Revolution.

In my case, 30 years of career and family activity passed between my Novice license activity on my Ten-Tec Century 21 (C21) and retirement when I upgraded my amateur radio ticket and finally got back on the air again. That's when I "woke up."

I discovered that I missed a lot of changes in the amateur radio world. I would describe the biggest change as being "RF meets Digital." For me, that meant a steep learning curve was ahead. What a Revolution!

In my early days of ham radio, I had to look up call signs in the thick Call Book with the tiny print. Now it's a quick QRZ.com lookup. There were no WSJT-X, Winlink Express, and Digital Mobile Radio (DMR), just to name a few. However, CW had not changed and my trusty J-38 straight key was still relevant, but online organizations such as Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) were new.

No, I do not opine for the "good old days" where you hear the old timers tell about having to walk 10 miles uphill both ways in the snow to the FCC to take their license exam. These are great days for ham radio, and I know I'm not alone on the learning curve.

We are very fortunate to have highly knowledgeable ham radio operators as members of KCARC to help us learn and grow in the amateur radio hobby. I know I have benefitted quite a lot from our members.

I'm not alone as a senior citizen getting back into ham radio. And I know we have younger members who have recently joined us. No matter where we are on our ham radio journey, there is always something to learn and knowledgeable operators eager to help.

Don't be shy in asking for help. When you do, you will find yourself surrounded by operators ready to point you in the right direction.

By the way, I am still pounding away on my straight key on my C21!