



Would somebody please enlighten me as to what is so important that it can't wait until one gets home or to the office to pick up a real telephone? I mean really, was I absent one day or what? Did something happen in the world that makes it necessary for one to communicate with anyone at a moment's notice? Was there a proclamation, a referendum, a coup? Are there really that many of us affected by a hostile takeover? How many obstetricians can there be out there? What in blazes is so all-fired (no pun intended) crucial that it has to be discussed simultaneously with navigating 2000 plus pounds of hardware that has already gone on record as being a killer? One of you out there, pleazzzzzzeee, educate me.

Don't get me wrong now. I do like new technology. I bought TWO VCRs, for pete's sakes, one of each format because I understood that some movies HAVE TO be recorded on Beta while the weekly offering of L.A. LAW or CHINA BEACH is merely grist for the VHS mill. In my energetic past, when I was commuting regularly between Miami and Jones Beach, I even allowed myself to fall prey to the dreaded "Smokey" monster and bought myself a state of the art CB. A couple of years ago we even got a CD player partially because Crazy Eddie advertised a deal we couldn't refuse but mostly because TH glared at the quaking salesman when he was told that they might be sold out of that particular item. Like the rest of us, TH hates it when they advertise something they have no intention of stocking up on and probably doesn't even exist. Ironically, the CB went for a song at a long forgotten garage sale, putting my semi-perfect driving record on the line, the CD committed laser interruptus about two months ago and it will be cheaper (and more fun) to go back to Crazy Eddie and terrorize another salesman than have it repaired. Both VCRs have been to the electronics hospital, one for perpetual burping and the other for general malaise. With this track record I shudder to think of how automotive communication equipment would fare.

Cellular telephones. Think about it, even the name is weird and prompts me to imagine millions of squiggly paramecium all lined up in a row to make some mystical connection possible. It's mildly disconcerting to know that there is this very intricate technology out there that is based on invisible waves bouncing off other waves or the atmosphere, which is becoming a pretty risky proposition these days. And doesn't it make you crazy to think that the sole purpose of all this bouncing is for some clown out there to be seen talking on his phone while attempting to stay within his half of the middle of the road. Unsuccessfully.

About the only cultural improvement I can see that car phones have over the CB is that the owner/user is no longer required to come up with a clever identifying name for himself. Recalling such an adolescent handle as "Slippery Richard" still wilts my psyche. Having abandoned the CB years ago I can now admit that my own clever identifying name changed frequently and usually in response to a lascivious suggestion offered by a fellow traveler (usually in a pickup) on how we should spend the remainder of the afternoon. Gratefully, our language also seems to have recovered from the assault of the truckers' patois so prevalent in the late 70s'. Who can forget such memorable phrases as "Bear in the Woods," "Seat Covers" or the ever popular "bodacious," a term used to describe everything from fancy mudflaps on an 18 wheeler to the more obvious physical attributes of a scantily clad female driver.

I guess it's important to add that I have never used, much less passengered in a vehicle equipped with a car phone. I have observed, however, the body English of those who have made one an addition to physiques that already have the prescribed number of parts. It's not a pretty sight. From my observation, and please correct me if I'm wrong, car phone users lean. The first couple of times I passed by a user who was actively involved in conversation it struck me that the position his body was in was precisely the same that used to prompt my mother to implore, "Stop Slouching - Sit up straight!" I now understand what she meant when she admonished that pretty soon my body would be shaped like a question mark with a perpetual tilt toward Staten Island. This seems an unreasonably high price to pay just for the ability to get an up to the minute stock quote or to order a pizza on the fly.

Speaking of unreasonable prices, some informal research has gleaned that a modest cellular system runs in the neighborhood of \$1200 installed, assuming you want to call someone farther away than the next car over. If that's the case, \$89.95 will get you a more than adequate CB and you get to conjure up a new identifying name for yourself. After you have plunked down the better part of your tax refund for this new equipment, you have the monthly user fee to look forward to. On a new twist to an old theme, not only are you charged by the minute for the calls you make out but you

have also earned the privilege to pay for the ones coming in! Someone stayed up all night figuring that one out! Can you imagine the monthly toll for the poor slob whose number is one digit away from Pizza Hut?

Still, there are some folks out there that probably should have car phones. Off the top of my head these include Hizzoner, Ed Koch, so he can keep up on the latest indictment handed down on yet another member of his inner circle. George Steinbrenner is a prime candidate just in case he ever gets a pang of consciousness and wanted to apologize to someone Donald Trump would find one useful to check on the hourly on time record of the Eastern Shuttle so he could adjust his take over bid and Ivana's credit line accordingly. And, finally, there is Greg Schnoor, because he is our friend and we tend to be lenient with friends who want one just for the hell of it!