



*“Opportunity
is often difficult
to recognize;
we expect it to
beckon us with
beepers and
billboards.”*

*— William
Arthur Ward*

An Ode to a Beeper

C Douglas Phillips, MD, FACR

My first portable electronic signaling device!
Fastened to my belt
you looked sleek and modern
and you had an (initially) soothing buzz.
I felt important
and needed.
Almost no one else
had one like it
(except drug dealers).
Many a time you summoned me
to the site of a waiting family
or patient
to be asked questions that as a medical student
I had no earthly idea how to answer.

In residency, you were even cooler.
A digital display
and a clock.
But, you woke me up all the time.
“Check this lateral c-spine.”
I wasn’t very nice to you, often.
Can I ever forgive myself
for slamming you into the wall?
At least the page operator was forgiving.

You followed me for years.
We grew up together, you and I.
Giving me numbers to call
and people’s names to ponder over
before finally calling.
A constant companion
(usually unwanted)
but you’re gone.
Replaced.
I sign out to my cell.
And now, I’m starting to hate it, too.

Mahalo.

Dr Phillips is a Professor of Radiology, Director of Head and Neck Imaging, at Weill Cornell Medical College, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, New York, NY. He is a member of the Applied Radiology Editorial Advisory Board.