

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Each month one of our members is randomly selected and asked to share their ham radio biography with all of us. Questions or comments should go to Paul, KD2MX.

DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the submitting member and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.



**DUANE DAVIS, WI8J, #10084**

I discovered radio at a young age. In the 60's and 70's, I was listening to the radio all the time. From the local stations, I branched out to AM broadcast band DX. I used the AM/FM radio that my parents had on the kitchen counter. I was so excited to hear KMOX from St Louis or WWL from New Orleans. In high school, one of my elective classes was to build an AM radio. That sparked my interest in electronics in general.

At Lake Superior State College, I earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electronic Engineering Technology and an Associates Degree in Computer Engineering Technology. During college, I dabbled in the CB radio craze.

After college, I discovered Shortwave Radio and had a Radio Shack DX-200. My antenna was a random wire looped around the interior of my apartment. I worked just up the street from my apartment so I would dash home at lunch time and catch the game shows that were broadcast on the BBC. These days the shortwave bands are pretty much limited to China and Cuba. All the biggies are gone. Radio Moscow, BBC, Radio Netherlands, Radio Australia... all have moved to online services or just shut down.

In 1984, I switched employers and one of the lab techs at the new place was a General Class ham. He

encouraged me to get my license. I took my Novice test on July 5, 1985 from a ham in my childhood neighborhood. In August '85, I was assigned the call KA8WZX. So there I was, with license in hand and no way to get on the air.

I upgraded to Technician in September '85 and bought an ICOM IC-2AT and was able to get on the local repeaters. I was involved in ARES and SKYWARN for the next 17 years.

In early 1987, I picked up a used Kenwood TR-9000 (2M all-mode), an old HD 1410 Electronic Keyer and Bencher paddles. I rewired the keyer so I could plug my paddles into it. One of the local hams was really into 2M SSB/CW and chasing grid squares and that caught my interest. He helped me check out the keyer and said that the plastic paddles on the 1410 were like slapping two 2X4's together and I really needed to have a good set of paddles. With a 13-element beam and 10 watts, I was able to work quite a few grid squares while improving my CW skills.

I found a CW character generator program for my Atari computer and made my own CW practice tapes. In February 1988, I was ready to take the 13-wpm code test and upgrade to General Class. I was a General Class for about 10 minutes... while they passed out the Advanced written test. And then I took and passed the Extra Class written test. In May 1988, I passed the 20-wpm code test to finish my upgrade to Extra and received the WI8J call. I installed a 132-foot long wire and I was on HF. I started checking into CW traffic nets. I was a NCS for the Michigan Novice Net and the QMN slow session for about two years.

In 1993, all the antennas had to come down and were packed up for a move across town. My log book is pretty short for QSO's from '93 to 2002. The kids were older and school activities took priority.

I bought a Yaesu FT-817 in 2002, more for the all-band, all-mode capabilities in a small package. I played around with it portable on PSK-31 with a laptop and had some success at QRPp output levels.

Sometime in 2008, I blew out the finals in the 817. That didn't surprise me because of the wacky antennas I used in portable operations. I replaced the finals board and then went off the air for about 10 years. Other activities took priority over radio.

I would occasionally listen to Shortwave or AM band DX stations but didn't do much in the ham bands.

In June of 2019, I discovered that my 40/80M trapped dipole, that had been up for 20 years, had finally failed. I took it down and put up a 130-ft, end-fed half wave from MyAntennas. I have had great success with this antenna.

I retired in July of 2019 and have really gotten back into ham radio. I have developed an interest in serious QRP operations and did a web search for QRP organizations. That's where I found out about NAQCC. I read all the info on the website and decided to join and participate in the monthly sprints. October was my first Sprint. I had never been much of a contester, but I had so much fun with the Sprint. I participated in the November Sprint and had fun again. I can't wait until the mWatt Sprint in December to give that a go.

I have recently discovered two other radio activities. Parks On The Air and Summits On The Air. Both involve making contact with portable stations. I hope to be able to activate some of the local parks in the near future. There aren't many 'summits' here in the flatlands of southern Michigan, so a summit activation will require a trip to the upper Lower Peninsula or Upper Peninsula. Those activations will definitely be QRP portable. The SOTA contacts favor CW because of QRP and not so optimal antennae. If the bands are good, I try to make QRP contacts for both POTA and SOTA.

My current station is a Kenwood TS-570D, a Kenwood TS-430S, and a Yaesu FT-817 (for QRP). My

antenna is the end-fed long wire MyAntennas, Model EFHW-8010P, both ends at 20 feet.

I usually watch the [QRPSPOTS](#) and try to make contact with anyone calling CQ. See you there!

72/73

PS. I just worked John as NY3EC from the annual day before Thanksgiving outing at the USS Requin in Pittsburgh. 40M 2-way QRP.

