

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.

PETER DELUCA, AA2VG, #6563



My Journey From CB Addiction to CW Addiction

I would like to share my story in hopes that it will guide other innocent people from going down the CB to CW addiction path.

Born in 1950, I grew up in a small town on Long Island NY. I had no idea that amateur radio existed in the '60s (sad but true). It was off to college at Rutgers, then to medical school, and finally to start a family and open my pulmonary practice.

In 1992 I was introduced to the “entry drug” called CB radio! My XYL and I purchased a van (Chevy conversion) to travel the country with our three young children. The vehicle came complete with a television, VHS player and yes.... a built-in CB radio. Our first major trip was a three-week journey out west to Yellowstone National Park. During our long stretches on the road we called “breaker 19” and had some interesting conversations with the truckers. My XYL seemed to get most of the attention and perhaps that was because her handle was “Hot Stuff”! Mine, on the other hand, was “Van Man”.

The week we returned I had a case in the operating room along with my anesthesiologist Dick Sepowich (KA2HOM). While waiting for the case to begin I mentioned to Dick that I had come back from a cross-country trip. I told him about our use of the CB radio during our travels. That’s when it happened... He told me that I should move on to “real radio”. He explained that he was an amateur radio operator.

He also went on to tell me that since he was a man of few words, CW (which he explained was Morse code) was his favorite mode of communication.

In June of 1993 I obtained my Novice ticket with the call N2UYX. By January 1995 I had my Amateur Extra class license, having passed the 18 wpm code test. My call became AA2VG .

Addictive behavior is often characterized as demonstrating compulsive and impulsive acts. I had this urge to have a fantastic home station. The G5RV and the Kenwood TS-850 worked out very well at first. I started reading QST and one day I noted that US Tower had just put their fifty-foot tower on sale. I also found out that Alpha Amplifiers was marketing a reasonably priced amplifier made in Bulgaria (91b). I NEEDED to have BOTH.... I couldn't help myself!! I got permission from the XYL to buy the tower but she really didn't know exactly what I was buying. When she finally saw the tower erected she uttered words that still are etched into my brain...."You Owe Me".

Addicted individuals often use poor judgment. Here I was with a 600-pound steel tower in my driveway. First I needed to dig a 3 foot x 3 foot x 6 foot deep hole for the tower base. As a busy physician I did not have lots of free time so I needed to make the time. For one week I rose in the morning at 5 AM and was digging in the backyard by 5:15. I would dig for about 45 minutes, return to the house and get ready for work.

Luckily for me, my next-door neighbor Vinny didn't follow his instincts and call the police. He noticed the digging from his window and hadn't seen my XYL or the kids out in the backyard for several days!! He finally approached me one morning. I convinced him that I was digging a base for my amateur radio tower and the family was just fine.... Close call!!

Addicts often have no consideration for others. During the years that followed I was hell bent on collecting CW DX. It didn't bother me that my 1500 watts was probably doing damage to the ionosphere or even perhaps contributing to climate change. I would not worry about possibly causing interference to my neighbor's television reception. Alarming the XYL and kids was a more difficult problem as the house speakers sometimes made strange noises when the high power CW electromagnetic signals jumped off my Mosley Pro 67b antenna atop the fifty-foot tower.

Addicts are known to spread their addiction. This became quite evident to me just last year. My grandson, then three-years-old, loved to visit my shack. He spent time on my lap as we tried to raise another club member on our 2-meter repeater. A week later I got a call from my daughter. She found our grandson in the corner of his room with the TV remote up to his mouth yelling something. At first she couldn't understand him but finally she heard "AA2V Listening".

After a number of years being relatively inactive (2005-2012), I returned to ham radio with a new sense of purpose. I discovered that there are hams that communicate with low power on CW. I discover the NAQCC and have enjoyed all the club has to offer. Still there is one more addiction trait I must talk about, grandiose thinking.

After I took first place in an NAQCC sprint I felt I was ready to take on any CW pileup. Perhaps on a far away Dxpedition or in the ARRL centennial celebration as W1AW/2. Since there were no Dxpeditons willing to take me, I signed up to operate as W1AW/2. About three weeks before I was to operate a sense of fear set in. Was I really ready to control a pileup? ?

I decided I needed to practice during the few weeks I had before my assigned centennial spot. I downloaded "Morse Runner" <http://www.dxatlas.com/morserunner> to my office computer. Since I forgot to bring my headphones to the office I ran the program on the computer speakers during my lunch breaks. When the office staff heard the 600Hz tones emanating from my consult room they inquired.... "What the he** are you doing?" I explained that I was practicing CW pileup techniques for my W1AW/2 operation!!! They turned and walked away appearing very puzzled!

I may indeed be addicted but I am having fun in this wonderful hobby we call ham radio. My station now consists of an Icom 7300 and an Elecraft KX3. My most prized possession though is my Bayou Jumper. Long gone is my fifty-foot tower, sold to a ham in Pennsylvania in 2004 and replaced with a Carolina Windom. Although I will occasionally turn on the old Alpha 91b to get that rare DX, having a qrp ragchew with my Bayou Jumper is what I enjoy the most. I am semi-retired now and have more time for radio. I enjoy participating with my local radio club and being an Elmer to younger hams.

I have decided to keep my four-year-old grandson away from the 2-meter microphone and I have already picked out his birthday gift, an MFJ-557 deluxe code practice oscillator. Don't tell him, it's a surprise!

