

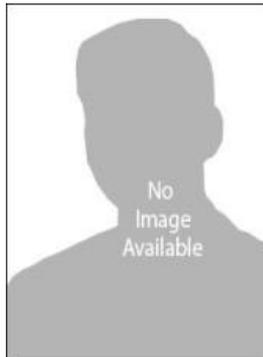
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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.

DON ZANK, AA9WP, #1104



I got started, like many others, by listening to shortwave radio with a Hallicrafters S-120. Occasionally I would wander over to the ham bands to listen to what was going on there. The Hallicrafters is still on the shelf, but with a new power supply filter capacitor.

In the summer of 1972 I was just out of high school. The local paper had an article advertising an amateur radio licensing class. The class covered rules, very little theory and CW. For the final exam, I passed the test and 5WPM CW and received my novice license with the call WN9NZH. I wish I could remember that teacher's name and call but both are lost somewhere in the gray memory banks.

Following the typical Novice path I built the Heathkit HW-16 transceiver and accompanying VFO. I did not have much success on the bands with that radio as I suffered from antenna and operator induced issues. Nevertheless, it was the start of my favorite part of amateur radio, home building. That radio is still sitting on the shelf here too.



Not too long after that, there came that period of time where ham activity was nonexistent because of school, and a job that had me traveling every week. After a job switch, I had more time and was able to acquire a General Class license in the early 90s. My new call was N9FGS and the Heathkit was back on the air. Of course, this was not QRP but it was CW. This time my success rate on making contacts was much better.

When the FCC announcement was made in 2000 that the code requirements were going to be reduced, I decided I wanted the Extra Class license with 20 WPM. Thanks to W1AW, I was able to copy 20 WPM and achieved the Extra Class license receiving the AA9WP call sign.

In 2001, I was not really into much QRP activity, but this was one of those great fun times in this hobby. Radio Shack was clearing out their 10-meter mobile rigs, and I picked one up and installed it in my pickup truck. I built a hand-wound helical 10-meter vertical antenna and installed that on the bed of the truck. I was traveling back and forth between college and work at night and the 10-meter band was hot. European stations could be worked easily in the morning, South American stations in the afternoon, and out to the west in the early evening. While not CW, and 25 watts, it was a fun time. Accomplishments include working South Korea and Japan. One morning I had an Italian operator who was also interested in County hunting. When I should have been headed into work, I was sitting in the parking lot slowly spelling Oscar-Zulu-Alpha-Uniform-Kilo-Echo -Echo for my new friend. A nice discovery useful for breaking pileups was to use the phonetics America-America Niner Whiskey Papa.

After I saw (heard?) what could be accomplished with 25 watts and SSB, and not being able to justify spending thousands of dollars on a rig, my interest in QRP and CW grew. To test the waters, and because I enjoy building equipment, I assembled a Ten-Tec 2015 rig. That rig was also used in my pickup truck, when parked of course. I followed that with the Elecraft K1 which has been in service for a number of years. The K1 rig was so great that this past winter I took on the Elecraft K2 Classic Transceiver. Now I finally feel like I have a real amateur radio. Of course, this also means I need to improve my antennas, but until then, the multi-band vertical is doing a great job.

I really enjoy working the NAQCC Sprints and the SKCC sprints. Unfortunately, I do not get to work as many as like because of other weekly commitments. I am also involved with local emergency services with the Ozaukee Amateur Radio Emergency Services (OZARES).

I have been employed at the local industrial automation manufacturer for the past 35 years. The job involves providing telephone and field technical support on their products. I learn something new every day in this position and it has been tremendous for developing troubleshooting skills.

Summers are short around here, and sitting in the basement during nice weather does not make much sense so I enjoyed getting back on this winter and working everyone on the bands.

