

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.



BARRY WHITTEMORE, NF10, #1637

In early 1977 I was given the Novice exam by Pete (K1TMD) who asked if I wanted to make a CW contact, I did from his station and when I was done he said congrats you passed the code test. Months later, I finally received my callsign, WB1EDI and immediately got on the air with my brand new FT101E. First QSO was with W2BXP. A month or two later I worked WB1EJH for his first QSO.

I have several thousand cards but only three are on my shack wall, W2BXP, WB1EJH, and my very first card. Later that year I took the General exam at the Boston FCC office and passed the written but failed the code test for 13 WPM. Three days later I was getting my head shaved at Navy boot camp. I was not very active during my 6 ½ years in the Navy. I was schooled in Avionics and worked on E2C and EC130 aircraft during my Navy career. Ham radio made me go into electronics.

In 1984 I got out of the Navy and started a new job at Sanders in Hudson NH. I worked in an Electrical Engineering group for the next 34+ years and retired in December 2018 from the same building that I started in.

During those years I was looking to get back to Ham radio. By 1993, I convinced my wife to get her technician license so she could get me in the car on 2-meters. Well, she ended up getting her Tech+ with 5WPM code. That gave me the incentive to upgrade. We lived in a townhouse condo in Manchester, NH, but I bought an ICOM 725 transceiver and tuner and put a TV-twinlead-fed dipole tacked to the ceiling.

That's when I started working DX for the first time and I was hooked. I upgraded to Advanced in 1993 then to Extra in 1994. Once I got my Extra, I stopped doing CW because I passed the 20WPM so I did not need to practice any more.

It wasn't long before the CW urge came back and I started chasing DX on CW as well as SSB. Mary caught the DX bug also but 10-meters was all she could do SSB on and the sunspots being as they are made for slim pickings.

By the end of 1995 I had earned my WAS, WAC and DXCC awards with the indoor dipole and started working toward the 5-band versions. I also dabbled in the QRP world with an SWL30 kit that I put together.

In 1998 we moved to a real house on a hill in Manchester with a large City lot (.6 acres) and no HOA. I was finally able to install real outside antennas which eventually grew to a triband beam and monoband verticals for all bands. We had city noise but much better signals on RX and TX. Eventually I earned my 5BWAS,5BWAC and then 5BDXCC and DXCC Challenge awards.

I joined several QRP organizations including NEQRP, NAQCC, and NORCAL. However the DX bug stuck with me but the QRP bug did not. I did however set a goal to get 9Band upgrades to the 5B wards and I had and do it with 100 Watts. In October of 2015 I got my 100th country on 160 for the 9th band at 100 watts. I also earned 9BWAS and 9BWAC status. While not all QRP, it was all done with just 100W.

I built a few QRP transceivers and transmitters including an SWL-30, QCX-20 and a 1929-style Hartley oscillator made with a UY-227 Triode. All of which I have made many QSOs with including DX. My favorite QRP DX was made in 2013 when I was tuning through 30 meters when I heard a weak CQ. It was weak but copy-able and I answered the CQ from VK7JB who gave me a better signal report than I gave him. We had a nice chat and he told me he was camping and running 4-watts to a wire antenna in a bush. After we finished I realized that I should have dropped from the 100 watts to 5 watts but never did. It would have been a very good MPW QSO.

While I am not a dedicated QRP guy, I do appreciate the QRP world and enjoy seeing what a few watts can do. In late 2019 and early 2020 I have even participated in a few NAQCC sprints. This was new to me. I plan to do some more of them in the future. I use a straight key routinely and presently it is a WW II German Baumuster. I collect Keys so can choose from many.

In late 2018 my wife and I retired to a new home on a mountain top in Unity NH where we could put up a better antenna farm and suffer far lower noise. It was a good choice and both of us have gotten new countries and/or band countries. We love the opportunity to play radio in peace any time we choose.

