

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.

EDDIE BRADSHAW, KJ4R, #8048



I got interested in radio in 1985 during my last year in college. I ran across a copy of "Shortwave Listeners Guide" in a pile of discarded library books. I grew up in the 1970's, and as a young teenager I would lay in my bed at night with a little transistor radio placed to my ear and listen to WLS, WCBS, WOWO, and many other AM stations that I can't remember now.

The copy of "Shortwave Listeners Guide" made me aware that there was a lot more to be heard than just AM broadcast stations. I went to our local Radio Shack store at the first available opportunity and bought a DX-66 shortwave receiver. I spent many hours listening to shortwave stations from all over the world as well as hearing garbled SSB signals. The DX-66 didn't have a BFO, and anything other than AM was unintelligible. I spent a few years listening with the DX-66 and decided I wanted to upgrade to a better receiver. I bought an Icom R71A and it opened the world of SSB, CW, and amateur radio to me.

Shortly after getting the 71, I got interested in getting my ham license. The written test wouldn't be too bad, because I studied electronics in college, but the code was another matter. I rode around for months in my truck playing those 5 WPM cassette code tapes over and over until I felt I was ready to try for my Novice license. The week before I took my test, a local ham had a Kenwood TS 530 for sale and

I bought the rig as a way of adding incentive to pass the test. I figured if I spent money on a rig, then surely I was committed to getting my license. I passed the Novice written and 5 WPM code test in early 1993 and became KD4VKP. I also made myself a promise..... I put the microphone in a drawer and I would not use it until I passed the 20 wpm test. It took a while between work and other obligations, but in 1995 I passed the 20 wpm test. I still prefer and love CW and almost 99% of my operating is CW. For keys I have a Nye Viking straight key, an old Speed – X straight key, an MFJ Iambic paddle and my favorite, a Vibroplex bug.

Until about two years ago, most of my time on the air was spent trying to work new ones for DXCC, DXCC challenge, and US counties. That changed when I found John, K3WWP's website. I always had a passing interest in QRP, but for some reason I just never had done anything with QRP. Reading John's website and finding the NAQCC peaked my interest and I bought a Hendricks PFR-3B kit. I wanted to build a kit and when I was done, it would allow me to have a dedicated QRP rig. I put the rig together and to my surprise it worked! My first contact was with W1PID in NH and I was immediately hooked on QRP.

Since that time I've made hundreds of contacts using QRP and my simple homemade vertical antenna. I have a true ham shack.....99% of my operating is done from a small building in my back yard where I have my station set up. It gets hot in the summer and cold in the winter since I only have a fan for A/C and a small space heater to warm up things a little. If my CW gets choppy in the winter it's probably due to my hand being almost frozen!

Having been bitten by the award bug early on, I was naturally inclined to see what could be done with QRP. I was really amazed at how easy it was to work DX and it only took a little over a year of casual operating to get QRP DXCC. I'm still working on the QRP WAS. I need WA and my own state of SC to finish up QRP WAS.

I really enjoy the NAQCC challenges each month and I have a lot of good rag chews that remind me of my early novice days. For a long time I had moved into the "UR 599 73 TU" QSO mode, but now I find I'm really enjoying getting back to having good rag chews that often go on until my wrist gets tired. The sprints are also a lot of fun and I look forward to participating in them each month. I have to say that getting involved with the NAQCC and QRP has really put the fun back in ham radio for me. A nice plus is that since I've started being active in the NAQCC activities, I've made a lot of progress with working more US counties.

I work as a controls design engineer for a medical device company and most of my work involves working with PLC's (programmable logic controllers) and machine vision systems. I've been married to the same wonderful woman for almost 31 years. We have two grown daughters but so far I'm the only one in my family that has any interest in radio. My other hobbies are playing the guitar, hiking / backpacking, and cycling. My dream is to through hike the Appalachian Trail when I retire if I'm still in good enough shape to try it. I might even take a QRP rig if I can find one light enough! I feel very blessed to be part of such a great hobby and a great club.

