

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.



MARK YERGIN, W8EWH, #9622

Thanks for the opportunity to share a little bit about myself! I joined the NAQCC last year after many years away from the hobby. I am not a QRP operator exclusively but do enjoy operating QRP during the monthly Sprints and from my backyard, and would like to start activating parks (POTA) in the not too distant future. By far my favorite QRP / NAQCC activities are the monthly Sprints as I enjoy the relaxed nature of this contest and the chance to evaluate my equipment and skills.

I really enjoy CW and consider it another language. I've always been in awe of those that can speak multiple languages and consider using CW the equivalent of being able to "speak" another language. This year I raised my hand when the club was looking for a new Nets Manager and I took over this roll in October. Glad to give something back.

2019 marks my 35th anniversary as Ham, being first licensed KA8UXM in 1984 when I was a Senior in High School. That was a Novice license, with 5 WPM code and all. Within a few months I upgraded to General. I operated during that spring and summer on CW only using second hand (at least) equipment (Knight Kit transmitter and Heathkit receiver). Then it was off to college and radio took a back seat for a few years.

I got back into the hobby after graduating until the early 2000's (during which time I changed my call to N8IFU and operated using a new TS450SAT and an attic dipole). Then work (currently an Engineering Manager for General Motors at the Milford Proving Grounds) and more significantly family (two boys) became a priority and I was completely away from the hobby.

In the summer of 2018 I received a mailer from ARRL for the Extra class license manual and something clicked. With one son graduated from college and the other nearly so, I had the time, money, and inclination to get back into the hobby. So I studied for a few months and passed the test first try. I like being able to operate anywhere on the bands without having to pay attention to license restrictions.

My HF station currently consists of an ICOM IC-7300, an Elecraft KX3/PX3 for portable operations, an Elecraft K1 which I built, and a QRP Labs QCX40 which I built. I use a Begali Expedition key. I'm current building an Elecraft K2 which I want to finish up this winter. I have a QCX20 in the box waiting to be built, and I plan to order the much anticipated QSX once Hans is ready to sell it. As you can see I also enjoy the kit building aspect of this hobby.



The antenna "farm" consists of a multi band OCF Dipole (inverted V) at about 30 feet (Spiderbeam fiberglass telescoping pole) which is really meant for portable operation so is not left up, and a new EFHW 8010 which is more or less permanently up but not near as high as I'd like it to be (trees not that tall) so on the lower bands it is an NVIS antenna and does not do all that well with DX. But it does do fairly well domestically and gets me on 80M where the OCFD will not.

I operate CW and digital modes (FT8) exclusively. I'd like to get set up for RTTY in 2020. I completed the CWOps CWA Level 1 course in February of 2019, and have taken the Level 2 course but I'm not yet ready for Level 3. I am however proficient enough that I'm able to participate in contests/sprints/QSO parties, and I'm finding that contesting, special events, and hunting POTA and SOTA are a significant part of my on-air activities right now, along with the occasional rag chew.

A few words about my current call - W8EWH. This call was originally issued to my dad, David Yergin, in the mid-1950's when he was around the same age I was when first licensed. I don't think he ever upgraded past Tech. In the mid-70's when I was around 9-10 years old, I discovered that he had been licensed as a kid when I was playing around with a toy walkie-talkie that had a Morse Code sender at the bottom. I remember talking with him about getting into (or in his case back into) the hobby, but tragically he was killed in a car accident in April of 1976.

Around the time I was first licensed I was able to visit with my grandmother and she allowed me to take home all of his ham radio "stuff" that she had been saving in her basement. In this collection was one of his QSL cards, and this is when I first learned of his call sign - W8EWH. After vanity calls became an option in the mid-90's I may have briefly considered taking this call, but I actually thought the call was not available based on a misunderstanding on my part regarding what calls were available. In late 2018 I learned that this call was in fact available, and in December of 2018 I applied for and was granted W8EWH. As far as I can tell, only my Dad and I have ever held this call.

Thanks for the opportunity to share my story and I hope to work you on the air soon.

