

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.

BOB OLSEN, WD4OHD, #0522



I built my first radio (a Knight Kit Star Roamer) at age 17, and I've been interested in radio electronics ever since. A few years ago, I bought another Star Roamer on eBay, tore it down completely, and rebuilt it from an original manual, just to relive the experience. After that radio, I moved up to a Hammurlund HQ-100AC and began listening to amateur radio transmissions as well as shortwave and medium wave broadcasts. I also have an HQ-100AC in near mint condition today.

When I was teaching school in Georgia in 1978, the local club wanted to use our facilities to teach an amateur radio class. I agreed to be the club's contact person since I was interested in getting an amateur radio license anyway. Getting my Novice ticket was easy but I wanted to upgrade soon, so a few months later I attended a hamfest in South Carolina and upgraded to Advanced Class in one morning. Just before the FCC dropped the morse code requirement, I upgraded to Extra Class. I guess I was one of the last ones to take the 20 wpm code test.

My first rig was a Ten-Tec Century 21. I've learned a lot from studying its design over the years, duplicating some of its circuits, and repairing ailing ones. It's still a fun rig to own and operate. I've converted a digital Century 21 to exclusive QRP use. Removal of the AC power supply saves a lot of weight and opens up the interior for accessory circuits. I've used the Ten-Tec rig several times during QRP Sprints, but usually I use a Kenwood TS-570SG dialed back to 5 watts output. For Milliwatt Sprints I add a homebrew power attenuator between the Kenwood rig and antenna for an RF output of about 750 mW.

I enjoy designing, building, testing, and using homebrew electronic devices. After settling on a design, I like to fabricate my own circuit boards from scratch, using an above-the-board surface-mount technique. It makes repairs and modifications quick and easy, and it holds up well over time. I usually have some kind of project on the workbench. The current project is an 80/40 meter vertical antenna, which I plan to use during future Sprints. I also have a couple of Heathkit HW-7 rigs that need work, a Conar 500 receiver and 400 transmitter to rebuild, and a vintage ARRL Handbook rig that's in the planning stage. All of my antennas are on homebuilt electronic switching circuits which connect them directly to an extensive earth ground system when not in use.

In addition to my QRP activity, I also chase DX on SSB, CW, and RTTY at power levels ranging from 5W to 400W. I only lack 80m for 5BDXCC and am now closing in on it. I don't have towers or a yagi at the home QTH, so I make do with verticals and dipoles. Progress has been somewhat slow but steady over the years, with 200+ countries now confirmed. I've long since had WAS on SSB, CW, and RTTY, so I'm now concentrating on confirming all 50 states on the various frequency bands. I am a member of ARRL, QRP ARCI, and the G QRP Club, and I have had a couple of minor publications in QST and Sprat.

My day job is teaching high school history (40+ years experience), although I also teach astronomy and electronics. For most of my teaching career I have had an amateur radio station in my classroom, and I've helped a number of students obtain their licenses during that time. The current school rig is a Kenwood TS-570D and a Cushcraft A3 triband yagi. I try to squeeze in a few QSOs between classes whenever I can and let students listen in whenever anything particularly interesting is happening on the bands.

Another of my hobbies is building scale model aircraft from the WWI and WWII eras. I have a number of them at home and some at school for use in my course on World War II. I build both plastic and balsa models and always have several on the workbench. I can only claim repairs and TLC for the black Fokker triplane in the photo of my home station. It was built more than 50 years ago from scratch by an uncle who helped launch me on my own path to building model aircraft and studying electronics.

It is an ongoing pleasure meeting many of you during Sprints. Although my schedule does not allow me to participate every month, I certainly try to do so as often as possible. I look forward to seeing you on the bands in 2016 and beyond. Best regards to all.

The second photo is a homebrew direct-conversion receiver.

