

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Terry Allison, K5TDA



In the summer and fall of 1969 my father set me up with the husband of one of his employees to learn about ham radio. Dad knew, of course, about my interest in radio and electronics but could not help me along himself in that area. I was in the 7th grade and with Bob's help I started learning the code while modifying an old surplus ARC-5 airborne radio receiver and building a simple 40 meter transmitter. Bob was transferred away about the end of the year, but my tutelage continued under two very fine gentlemen, one a high school teacher and the other an engineer at the local TV station.

Over the Christmas break I took the Novice exam. At that time, the exam was not graded locally and had to be sent to the FCC in Pennsylvania for grading. When they got around to it they would let you know if you passed or not. If you did, then you got a license. In March of 1970 I received my Novice license (the day after the Midland swapfest). Which means sometime around the time you read this I will have been a ham for 40 years. If I can get loose from the work in Presidio I will go to Midland for the swapfest this year, 40th anniversary style.

So, I started out building my own equipment and operating Morse code (that is all Novices were allowed on HF). I still do those things to this day. Next came a General license with phone privileges, soon followed by 2 meter fm and radio teletype (RTTY) using an old mechanical weather service teleprinter. I don't do those things much anymore, but still have the capability (with modern equipment of course). Why not?? Because I got bored with it. And that is the point.

After a period of time in any hobby, including ham radio, you can get tired of doing the same old thing over and over. That is not always the case as I still do the same things I did when I started the hobby. One person's lifetime passion is another person's snooze. I have tried many aspects of ham radio over the years and don't actively participate in most of them anymore. But they were fun for a while.

The great thing about ham radio is that there is pretty much an infinite number of ways to get or stay involved in the hobby. If one part of it gets boring or you lose interest in it, then try something new. It is not possible to even keep up with new developments and there are 100 years of old developments that still can be played with as well. Some hams really enjoy the public service aspect of our hobby. You are needed at Hammerfest. And at the Skywarn school. Some enjoy a particular mode or activity. Go after Dave's high contest scores. Make some noise on the repeater system. See if you can beat me to an 11 band CW Worked All States.

You can look on QRZ.com and search on our local zip codes. There are sure a lot of hams out here who I have never heard on any band or mode. Some are members of the Club, but not

active. We all worked really hard to get a ham license. This hobby is just too cool to not use your hard earned privileges. Bored, need ideas?? If you are a General class or above, get on HF. Any band, any mode. The digital modes are really cool and it's not hard to connect your computer to your rig and go at it. There are new modes to try out every day and some old trusty ones that work extremely well. And a few goofy modes; example, try Hellschreiber, a German print mode from WWII. An analog digital mode if you will. And it works! If you are a Technician, get on 6 meters. What a neat band. Opens to the world when it wants to. You can spend your life trying to understand propagation on this band. Catch me if you can, I have over 40 states confirmed on this band in only one year with a basic radio and reasonably sized antenna. My most recent new mode was to work digital meteor scatter on 6 meters. Not hard to talk to stations in a large part of the US, any time of day by bouncing your signal off the ionized trails left by meteors as they burn up in the atmosphere. Moon bounce is not out of the question with a little power and more aluminum up in the air. Is this stuff boring? Not hardly. Is it difficult? Not really. You can buy your way in if you wish, but it is more fun to build at least part of what is needed to make it happen. Intimidated? Ask for help. In our club we have specialists in several of the popular aspects of ham radio, and many helpful generalists.

Let me know if you want to know more about some aspect of radio. We can always make a club program out of it, or can schedule a day to get together a group and try something out.

After 40 years this hobby is still fun! And educational. I hope it is for you too.

73

Terry, K5TDA

FROM THE EDITOR

Bill Baker, W5ATO



I really don't have a lot to say this month, but the newsletter columns aren't breaking in good places and we have ended up with an even number of pages. So I have two things to do. Get the columns to break at aesthetically pleasing points without too much white space. Then I have to figure out how to make the newsletter body end in an odd number of pages, so when we add the mailing cover sheet there is an even number of pages and we don't have to Xerox a blank page.

I'm not looking for sympathy. I'm just trying to fill the white spaces.

But this month we're going to get the newsletter out ASAP for the benefit of Skywarn (a registered trademark of NOAA, used with permission.) So it looks like we will have some white space.

Not a lot happening after this month for a while I think. I did buy Rosettastone Spanish at Christmas time and I haven't started it yet. So if the next month's newsletter gets out late, or the next month, you know what I'll be doing.