

I was 12 in 1960, living on Dorothy Ave. My receivers were a Knight Kit Ocean Hopper, regenerative detector, and a Zenith AM/shortwave floor model minus the cabinet. My "Popular Electronics" registered Shortwave Listener certificate was tacked to the wall. It said I was WPE8BYP- - not a ham license!

I got a phone call from Vince Weber, KN8WDO, who proceeded to exclaim, "there is a club of radio amateurs that meets twice a month at the Parma Savings Bank-- there's a meeting this Friday!! Lets go!!" I believe Vince got his information from his elmer, Ray Rosenberry, K8EBF.

Up until this time Vince, KN8WDO, and I had only visited ham stations where their antennas were visible from the street- - ring the doorbell, introduce ourselves and ask (beg) to see the equipment! Some wonderful memories include tours of the stations of Tom-K8DHT, Dan-W8BM, Chuck-K8GVQ, Henry-W8DSG, Elmer-W8ARD and Bill-K8DEK ! After Vince and I said a few words to the operator at the other end of K8DEK's demonstration QSO, Bill let each of us pick one goodie from his "junk box"- - we were sure we had struck gold!

When Friday night came, Vince and I met at the back door of the bank, along with our maximum 12-year-old enthusiasm. We entered the PARMA RADIO CLUB meeting - - two awe-struck pre-teens! So many hams! About 30 at this meeting and every meeting! Things started with president, Henry Bormann, W8CZM, calling for order. John, K8JZI, was the treasurer and Tom, K8DHX, was club secretary. I remember listening to Roger, K8BQY (K3TM), give the PRC 10 meter net report and thinking I MUST be at the peak of maturity now!

The two 12 year olds totally enjoyed coffee and donuts after that first meeting while being so kindly engaged in encouraging conversation with PRC members from 12 to about 75 years of life experience! I approached Tom Hill, the secretary, with a completed membership form, paid my \$1.00 dues and became a member!!

Two Parma Radio Club meetings a month, second and fourth Fridays, were never missed and gave meaning to the book I was forced to read for school, "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens! PRC business was taken care of in effective short order followed by outstanding amateur radio centered programs: Finco Antenna teaching the theory and operation of their 6 & 2 meter beam, Al, W8PAL, leading the effort to expand the 160 meter band, W8PYR from Astatic Microphone offered a great door prize after his presentation, Antenna Specialists also gave a door prize and Jules Zeph gave us a program all about those state of the art tantilum capacitors his Chicago-based company was working on!

Field Day 1961 planning started around February, another "Great Expectation"!

Since having fun was integral to a high score according to PRC philosophy, installing 3 telephone poles by hand for optimum strategic antenna orientation at our Crile Veterans Hospital FD site and purchasing 3 new military surplus tents was approved!

On that wonderful weekend in June 1961, the generators were in place, 3 stations ready to go in tents! A Heathkit Apache transmitter teamed with a Mohawk receiver were set up in Rolly's, W8FFK, van! Jack Shott, K8IIU, provided the Hallicrafters receiver and Heathkit Seneca transmitter with hopes of dominating 6 meter AM since that station fed a Finco beam at the top of a 30 foot telescopic tower mounted on the Finco box truck!

Ray, K8EBF, had his Collins S Line set up for 20 meters in one of our new tents and Bob, K8QPX, provided his Collins S Line for 40 meters out of another new surplus tent! Gene, K8NPH (K8EE), and Roger, K8BQY (K3TM), used a Heathkit DX100 and Mohawk receiver to attempt a new QSO record from the third new tent!

About 15 minutes before Field Day 1961 officially started, each station was on the air making a few test contacts under the operator's own call sign. I was watching Bob, K8QPX, operate while Roger Adanich, K8UFW, logged. Bob, was using his Vibroplex Original Deluxe chrome plated bug with red finger pieces and calling "CQ TEST CQ TEST DE K8QPX/8 K8QPX/8 CQ TEST K8QPX/8 K".

If you can sense how the rhythm of that CW transmission sounded and the meters on the Collins transmitter swung, better than a square dance, you'll have empathy with my new found determination to be able to use a bug like Bob and get my amateur radio license!!

I became WN8EKR (K2ZT) thanks to Otto Vlcek, K8NXV!! I couldn't afford a new bug, however, my dad bought me a used Les Logan Speed X bug, \$5, from JeffTronics!

Many thanks to Roger, K3TM (K8BQY), for pulling out his copies of old "PRC Bulletin(s)" and giving me the presenters names and companies who produced programs for our PRC meetings!! Dr. Roger Kaul is not only a renowned electrical engineer, he is an author and has held various chairmanships in the Parma Radio Club!! Roger was the "PRC Bulletin" editor from 1961 through 1967!!

Hopefully, Part 2 soon... 73 es TU, JAY, K2ZT