

David Stevens
WB4DES

At age thirteen, I became an amateur radio operator, WN2SIN, in Rochester, New York. I was inspired to become a ham operator by a friend, who was three years older than I was who was already a ham. His name was Joe Hood, K2YAH. I remember being at his house on a Saturday afternoon when he had just completed building a 500 watt linear and was making a contact to Germany on 40 meters.

Getting into the hobby, my first rig was a DX40 with a Heathkit receiver that I had built. This receiver was quickly replaced with a Hallicrafters S76. I enjoyed my first year as a Novice Class Ham doing only CW. In my first year, I quickly learned that you can't feed a dipole antenna first with coax to the window and then twin lead to the antenna. As a result of this, I got my first and only Pink Ticket from the FCC. Later that year, I went to Buffalo, NY, and passed my General license, WB2SIN, with only one area of code copied correctly for the necessary one minute.

In my early twenties, I had, in my Gold Duster Car, an old commercial Motorola Rig padded down to the two-meter band. A few years later, I additionally ran a Swan 270 HF rig while living in the New York City area. Unfortunately, this rig was stolen from my car in the parking lot of my employer. Without the Swan 270, using the old rig setup was not going to be helpful. The reason was the S76 did not have any "ears". I barely could hear any stations with it.

It was not until 1986, that my wife, Pattie, and my three young children, Darren, Brian and Emily met a ham operator at our church that wanted to sell his rig. They purchased a Yeasu FT-901DM for me. Now I had a real rig! I set it up in our den in Winston-Salem, NC and enjoyed rag chewing on 40 meters. I was using a G5RV antenna. One Friday evening, I decided to go and compete with the "Big Boys" on 20 meters. Up to this point, I'd never worked any long distance contacts. Well, my first contact was Germany. A second contact was Australia. Boy was I excited! As I sat there filling out my log book, I heard a station call me. When I called back, the ham operator informed me that I was 5,9 20 over going into Nauru Island in the Pacific Ocean. In addition, he was the only ham operator on the island. What a DX contact!

Well the years have gone by and my family moved to Kingsport, TN in 1999. While here I have done some operations on two-meters but not a lot on HF. I became involved with the KARC/BMRC clubs from 2001 to 2010 but then dropped out until 2015 when I once again became active in the club. During both periods of time, I've helped

our club in several different capacities under the excellent leadership of the different club presidents.

Four years ago (2015), I upgraded my license to the Extra Class and replaced my Yeasu 901DM with a Yeasu 450D. With this lighter and more compact rig, I'm now able to run mobile again. As you can imagine, however, having a call sign of WB2SIN would probably raise a few eye brows driving around Church Circle in Kingsport. Luckily, I was able to change my call sign to WB4DES, which are my initials.

I've learned a lot about electronics over the years and have made several good friends as an amateur radio operator. I look forward to continuing to grow in the hobby and, in the process, making new friends.