



ALAN THOMPSON WV6ZHL - 11 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Thompson, of Mosquito Road, Placerville, is the youngest licensed "ham", with the exception of one, in the United States. To a Layman who can't tell a dit from dah, the maze of wires, tubes, power supply contraptions, oscilloscopes etc., present just another unexplained development of science, but to Alan they are simply parts that he will put together to build a transmitter.
- Democrat photo

Eleven year old Thompson second youngest radioman - by Betty Yohalem

Not so long ago it was very unusual when a young man of 18 or so became interested in investigation and application of the phenomena involving the movement of free electrons known as electronics.

TODAY THE family, friends and neighbors of 11 year Alan Thompson are proud (but don't think it at all unusual) that Alan, who has been interested in electronics for almost a year is said to be the next to the youngest holder of a "ham" license in the United States.

Alan is one of four children Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Thompson of 1672 Mosquito road, Placerville. He has two brothers, Terry, age 16, and Keith who is eight and a sister, Janice, age six. When questioned about his interest in electronics, Alan said he first became interested when they lived in Whittier, California, where his father was in the television business. When the Thompson family moved to Placerville three years ago, Alan enrolled at the Pollock Pines school.

THE YOUNG ham gives credit for his advancement to all who helped him while those who helped him say it was all due to Alan's perseverance.

Harry De Biddle, of Camino, who holds the highest class of radio license issued for amateur and commercial radio operation and is authorized by the federal government to give tests, gave Alan the regulation test last April. He had the pleasure of notifying the young enthusiast in May that he had passed with points to spare, and that his call letters were WV6ZHL.

ALAN SPENDS many hours at the De Biddle home where he is permitted to use the transmitter and receiver that puts him in contact with "ham" operators all over the world.

He says the fascination of communications was one factor that intensified his interest in electronics.

Prior to his interest in electronics Alan passed through the chemistry and rocks and minerals phase, according to his mother, and his rock collection won him a ribbon at the 1961 El Dorado County Fair. It was in November of that year he was sure he wanted to study electronics and made up his mind he would try for his license.

HE SAYS his interest was stimulated by encouragement and help from his father and especially from John Hempt, a teacher at Pollock Pines school where Alan is a pupil.

The one great disappointment to Alan came when he learned that Hempt was to transfer to El Dorado High School next year. He said he has waited two years to get into Hempt's class and now that will be impossible.

HEMPT SELECTED and gave Alan books that would help him in his study while preparing for his test. He guided him in his studies and assured him that when he got his license he would give him used equipment and parts necessary to assemble his own transmitter.

At present Alan is painstakingly dismantling the equipment hoping soon to have his own transmitter to reach out to those far away places.