

Ham Operators Ride Out CB Craze

By CINDY WALLGREN
Press-Gazette Staff Writer

Citizen-band radio is popular today, but amateur radio operators have been around for decades.

Frequently, the only time you hear of ham radio operators is when a neighbor complains about interference from their equipment with television or telephone. But hams are still busy with their sometimes essential hobby and service.

When a fellow ham's equipment was stolen a couple of weeks ago, it didn't take but a few hours for members of the Mike and Key Club in Green

Bay, ham radio buffs, to pinpoint the thief.

According to Robert Heiser, 1547 Foeller Dr., club president, hams suspected a broadcaster was using stolen equipment because he wasn't using the proper call number. They kept him on the air until they were able to pinpoint his location with the use of direction equipment.

When the thief was pinpointed, the operators notified police of his location and he was in custody within minutes. The equipment had been stolen from a local operator.

There are about 35 active members in the Green Bay

Mike and Key Club, according to Heiser. Affiliated with the local American Red Cross, the main purpose of the club is to serve the public when radio service is needed.

The Red Cross in Green Bay houses a completely outfitted radio for this purpose. Bob Heiser is in charge of this operation.

Ham operators were of service during the Colorado flood in July. Communications were set up in Colorado to find out about people from the Green Bay area who were missing in the floodarea.

The club's second purpose is to be a channel through

which ham operators can share their experiences, said Heiser. "It's a fascinating hobby as well as a service," he said.

The ham operators meet about once a month to talk about interesting experiences or to practice disaster procedures. There's no age limit. "It just takes initiative," he said.

Richard C. Dickenshied, 2679 Regina St., obtained his novice broadcasting license when he was 14. He went after his general license a year later. Now, several years later, he has an outfit in both his home and car, plus a repeater which links the telephone to the radio.

"It's given me a great opportunity to make friends, not only in the community, but all over the world," Dickenshied said.

"I've talked to people clear on the other side of the world, then turned my antennae around and talked to the same party going the other way around the world," he said.

Since the citizen-band radio has become a big craze, more and more people have taken an interest in radio. But, according to Heiser, "most of the ham operators are not that crazy about the CB-ers."

"All the CB-ers have to do is buy a radio and they're on the air. We have to study hard to get on the air," he said.

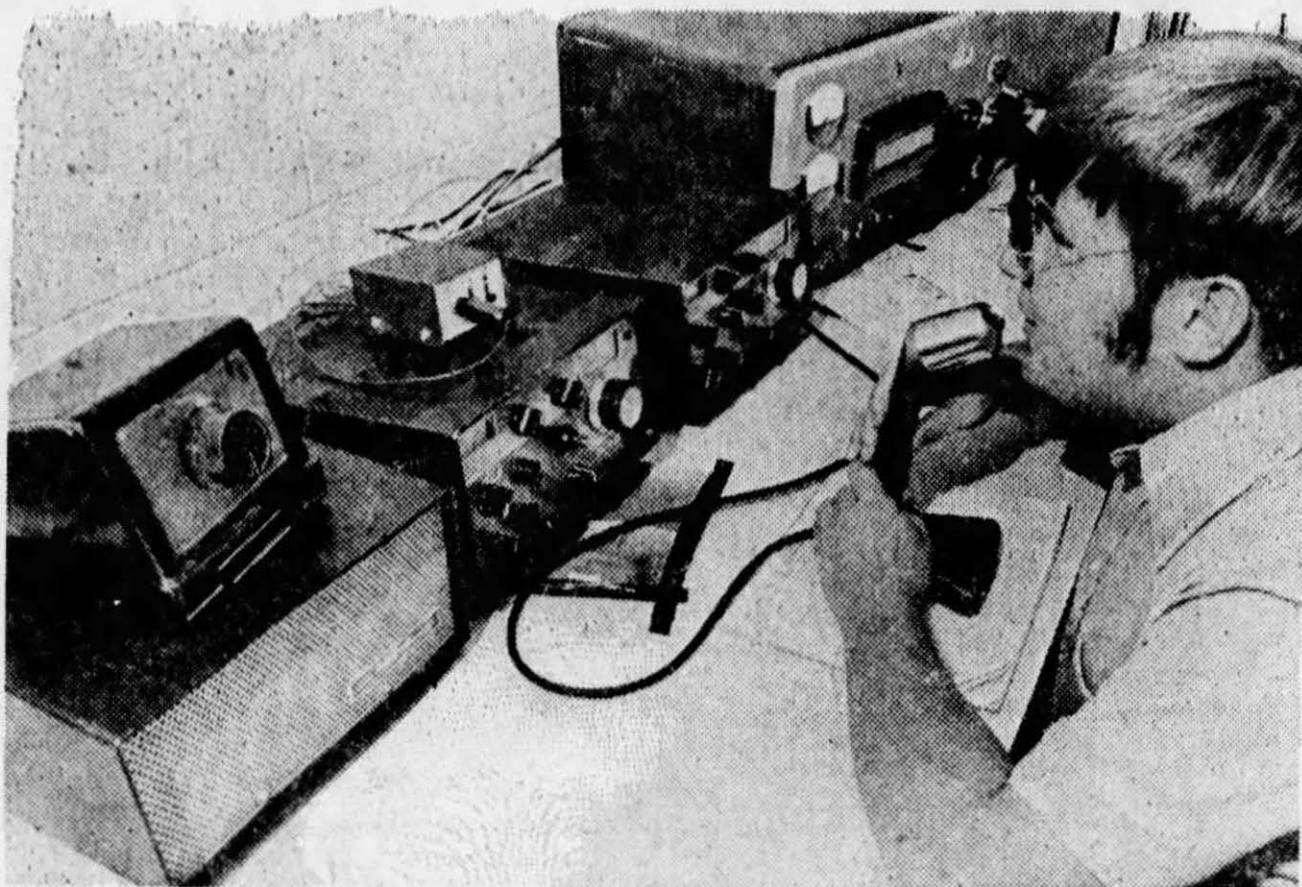
"There's no resentment," he said. "It's just a different thing."

"We're more interested in the technical aspects of radio rather than just pushing a button and getting on the air," he said.

Because the C.B. channels are crowded and there isn't much technical to learn with a C.B. radio, Heiser said that

many CB-ers will get tired of that and become a ham operator.

"We have a lot of fun with what we're doing and still feel that we're doing a service to the community," he said.



Ham Operation — Robert Heiser uses ham radio equipment located in the Red Cross headquarters, 123 S. Van Bur-en. Hams have often provided essential communications serv-

ice after a variety of disasters around the world. Members also use the radios just to keep in touch and to keep their skills sharp.

(P-G photo)