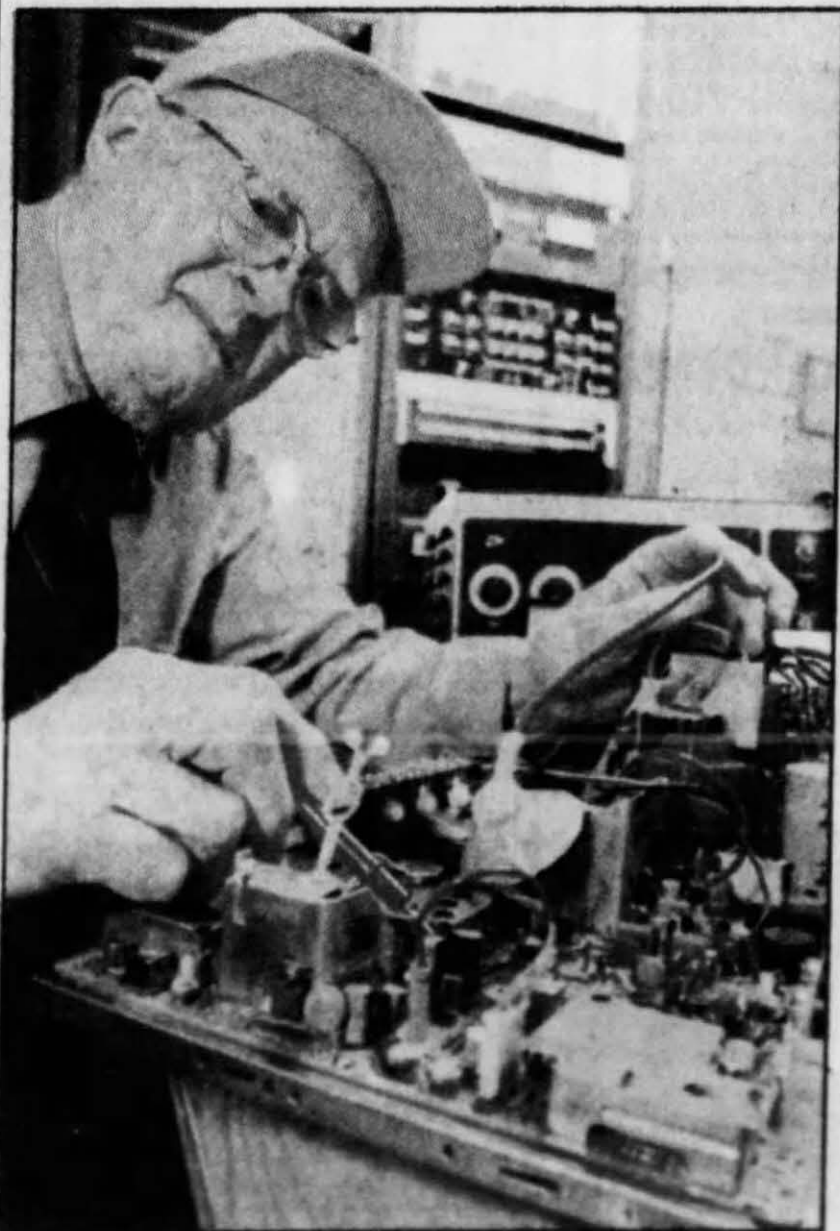


'Static' doesn't describe his lifestyle



Press-Gazette photo by Joan Gutheridge

Spotting the problem: Orin Thompson, 84, repairs a radio in his shop at 1314 Lost Dauphin Road in De Pere.

■ Thompson started repairing radios as a youth

The new year will bring major changes in the life of Orin Thompson.

At 84, he's considering retiring from his radio repair business after 55 years. The operative word here is "considering." He hasn't set a date yet for locking the door to his office at the WGEE-AM transmitter site on Lost Dauphin Road in De Pere, although he says "It's time to give someone else a chance to break my record."

Orin's career started before he was an adult.

"As a kid, radio repair was my hobby. I did a lot of work for the neighbors," he said. He later worked for a radio station in Madison and then for Sears. He almost didn't get that job.

"I went in to apply and they thought I was coming in to apply for the Santa Claus post," he said.

Thompson, who has held a commercial radio operator's license since 1971, earned the nickname "Static" while he operated a repair shop in Adams in 1931.

He remembers making service calls for \$1.

Since 1939, those who attended the tennis court dances in De Pere knew the genial Swede. He brought amplifiers to park dances and to schools, and the sound system to St. Norbert College football games.

"It's all remote control now," he said, looking at the monitors in his office, space provided by the radio station in exchange for his ability to get the station back on the

air if service is interrupted.

"I only enjoy *M-A-S-H* and *Cheers* on television. The rest of the programs leave me depressed at the end of the evening," he said.

Thompson meets with ham radio operators monthly. "I like to know what goes on in the world," he said.

Orin, who lives in Allouez, also is happy for his years in Scouting, as a Sunday School superintendent and teacher. He also served on the Board of Elders at First Presbyterian Church in De Pere.

Orin expects to spend leisure hours visiting friends in nursing homes. That and the pleasure he has with his three children and six grandchildren and ham radio operators across the country will keep the "static" out of Thompson's retirement.

Lois Kerin's weekly column, Life After 60, features active, interesting people 60 or older. If you have someone to suggest for a profile, contact Lois by writing: Green Bay Press-Gazette, Life After 60, c/o Lois Kerin, P.O. Box 19430, Green Bay, Wis. 54307-9430. Please include your phone number so she can contact you.