



Here we see Terry Sterman, W9DIA demonstrating some of the ham equipment at Harris Radio Corporation in Fond du Lac, WI • 1957

## **HE'S 18 YEARS OLD . . . AND A SUCCESSFUL JOBBER!**

"And now, at the age of 18, I spend from seven in the morning until five in the afternoon, Monday through Friday at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. From seven until nine in the evenings, I am at my store in Milwaukee. On Friday afternoons, I return to Fond du Lac to sell amateur equipment at Harris Radio Corporation, at father's store. I'm there Friday evenings, and all day Saturdays until five. Saturday night, I have "off" to relax. Sundays, I am usually attending a Ham fest, or if necessary, down at my store getting caught up on my work."

In his own words, Terry Sterman tells a success story that many older men would be proud of.

Showing an early natural interest in radio and electronics, Terry was encouraged by his father, jobber Harris Sterman, head of Harris Radio Corporation in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. A review of the past five years shows them to be filled with activities which make his present financial independence at the age of 18 completely reasonable.

Here is his story:

"I first became interested in electronics in 1952 when I was thirteen years old. At this age I began building my first

We're very proud to publish this story about 18 year old Terry Sterman because it dramatizes the quiet ability, integrity and wholesome characteristics of millions of today's level-headed teenagers. And, because it is an amazing chronicle of a natural businessman who, we are firmly convinced, is destined to be a leading figure in our industry in the years to come. We know every person in the entire parts jobbing industry will share our own satisfaction in welcoming Terry to the ranks of successful parts distributors.

shock machine. In 1953, after much studying, I passed my Novice examination and received my call, WN9DIA." At that point, all interest in junior high school football faded away and Terry's hobby had him hooked. On April 4, 1954 he applied for his general class license in Chicago and passed the required exams for W9DIA.

With this solid accomplishment behind him, Terry began to meet other hams who were just as enthusiastic about their hobby as he was. He began checking into many of the nets around Wisconsin. Each night (presumably after the homework was finished) he would check into

the Badger Emergency Net, and soon became acquainted with many of his fellow hams in the state. At the Ham fests, he met these "voices" in person and much of their time was spent in discussions of equipment performance of various components their prices and sources of supply.

"This was when I first realized that there as an opening for a good ham distributor in the state of Wisconsin," says Terry. And the boy who had been sweeping up and washing the windows in his father's jobbing establishment, Harris Radio Corporation, now began putting some pressure on the boss.

"Why can't we put in some lines of amateur equipment?" asked the blond chubby-faced boy of his father. Though not yielding once, Harris Sterman finally agreed to stock some items of amateur equipment on condition that Terry would do all the ordering and selling. This was definitely the end of the football season for Terry. That first year he was sending out regular bulletins to a mailing list of over 300 which he built up through his contacts, and far from discouraging him, the work only increased his interest and enthusiasm. As an added incentive, his



Phenomenal Terry Sterman, standing right, talks things over in front of the Milwaukee School of Engineering with fellow student, Wayne Hansen.



In amateur wing of Harris Radio Corp., Fond du Lac, Harris Sterman, seated right, goes over sales figures with his son Terry who runs the department.



In his own store, Amateur Electronic Supply in Milwaukee, Terry Sterman takes a phone order while his salesman, Steve Potyandy, shows equipment

father began paying him a regular commission on the sales he made.

In discussing ways in which he built up the ham business, Terry says, "I found it very helpful to visit the various club meetings around the state donating prizes for drawings and that sort of thing. Very important, too, was the fact that I attended many of the Ham fests around Wisconsin. I was one of the Charter Members of the Fond du Lac Mike and Key Club, and have held various offices in the newly reorganized Fond du Lac Amateur Radio Club. In other words, I found that anything I could do for or with hams, helped to build up the business."

All this time, Terry was pursuing a regular high school schedule while working in his free time at the store. "This was a wonderful opportunity to learn about business," Terry asserts.

With graduation looming up, Terry began looking around for expansion possibilities. The amateur business had taken over its respectable share of the total sales of the organization, and Harris Radio had on hand a very good stock of new and used equipment. Terry, during the past three years had done all the purchasing and selling of amateur equipment, had built up a mailing list of over 1000 customers and prospects, and was ready to try his own wings.

"I looked around," Terry tells us, "and a logical place to me seemed to be the Milwaukee area. So, early this past spring, I took my savings which I earned from commission on sales over the pasty three years, and I began making arrangements to open my own store. It was to be called Amateur Electronic Supply. I found a place I thought would be quite suitable, and with the help of some friends, cleaned and repainted the whole store, and began bringing in the stock. Our grand opening at 3217 West North Avenue in Milwaukee was held last July 20."

"To help me in the store," Terry continues, "I hired on a full time basis my very good friend, W9BTN, Gus (Sandy) Wirth. This fall when Sandy returned to college and I started my classes at the Milwaukee School of Engineering, I hired an experi-

enced ham, W9EAN, Steve Potyandy, who handles the store for me during the day when I am in school." Terry is carrying a full schedule in the electrical engineering course at MSOE but the work load is so demanding (and Terry does spend his evenings at the store) that he is considering cutting his schedule down to an electronic communication technician course and then attending a good business school.

To illustrate just how smart this young businessman really is, Terry's best girl, KN9HWL, Kay Haase, takes all of Terry's dictation but not from his knee, because she's up in Fond du Lac in the Harris Radio Supply Office and Terry sends her a tape recording by United Parcel Service each day. He comes in to the store after classes, dictates his replies to that day's mail, and the following day the letters go out from Fond du Lac.

Furthermore, Terry has licked the problem of "watching the store" by renting a two-bedroom apartment right above the store, and he has furnished it for three others and himself, all students at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. "It needed quite a bit of fixing up," says Terry, "but I figure with the rent I collect from the others fellows, it will pay for itself."

With the new store, Terry is self-supporting and independent at 18 years. And how's business? "Amateur Electronic Supply seems to be doing very well, and should grow considerable in the next few years. You know, I owe a great deal of my success to my Dad. Without the full cooperation he gave me right along, I would never have been able to build up the ham business I have."

About satellites, Terry? "Well, I don't think that the appearance of satellites (the artificial kind) will give ham radio a tremendous boom. But we have been able to sell a few extra receivers to amateurs wishing to hear the signals. They come in on the general coverage receivers and not on the exclusively ham band receivers."

And so Terry Sterman, a true amateur (one who loves what he's doing) shows that he's a businessman as well... and proves that youth is no hindrance to someone who thinks and works like a man.