

The Alphonie Saga
Alphonie

Well, hello, there, *Alphonie* here. I must take you on a journey that started without any warning. I mean, I was sitting right here, just rolling along, putting out an easy kilowatt, and enjoying the slight tickle from the *field* as we engaged so many others in communication on the twenty meter band. It was really nice, so enjoyable to be back at my real job, that of ensuring that absolutely NO QRP signals leave this station. I mean, Walt, K1QS, lives by the credo “Life is too short for QRP.” And, his friends all believe that too, and subscribe unequivocally to that very same philosophy. It is so nice to just sit here and listen to the blower (forced air cooling) whistling through my tubes, and the sound of the cooling fan on my power supply. Life is simply grand.

I did suddenly feel something scraping around my coax output connector. I seemed to be receiving RF from somewhere other than my exciter. I concentrated so hard, The cooling blower was running at top speed. Then, I was able, by concentrating really hard, to decrypt this signal. Oh, my goodness, it was for me and my owner (Walt, K1QS, in case anyone has forgotten) from an amplifier that said his name was Alphonie, and he was at present pumping out the RF for Don, K2DC. He said he would like everyone to know of him, so here is his story.

Hmmmmmmmm..... Alphonie here with a few facts about my Alpha experience. I am called Alphonie because I am an elder statesman, perhaps the Patriarch of the Alpha powered guys.



I was born in 1986. That makes it legal for me to drink. You know, maturity and all that. It was sometime around May according to my serial number. At that time, I was entrusted to Lennart Lindquist, who is KK4UA and SM6SSP. I had an easy life in Florida, was very well kept and never asked to work too hard.



A little background on my new guy pictured above, Don, K2DC with his lovely wife. Don had been using an AL-1200 for three or four years,

but was not happy with it. The power supply filter board just wouldn't hold up. Filter caps were arcing internally because equalizing resistors were failing. The board was repaired three times when, finally, one of the soft-start relays *fuzzed* and the whole amp had to go home for repair. In the meantime Don bought K3SUE's SB-200 for a backup, and he still has it. He also still has the AL-1200, but just doesn't trust it for full time use. It may soon need a new home.

In May of 2005, Lennart decided to spend the rest of his retirement back in Sweden, and just couldn't take all of his equipment with him. So he asked his grandson John Miller to find me a new home. Zoo that it is, John decided to turn to the wilds of eBay to seek that new home. Enter K2DC, stage left who took the advice of a friend, coworker, successful eBayer and fellow ham Moe, WA2ICB. On Moe's advice, Don decided the maximum he would let go for the prize and entered the bid with about 30 seconds to go. BINGOOOO – I was his for a reasonable price and certainly less than his maximum number. Here I go again, back into the ubiquitous *brown* truck and I arrived about a week later in the hills south of Lafayette, New York (state) having survived the long journey in that big brown truck. I was wrapped in original ETO boxes that proudly proclaim "It's An Alpha !" on the outside. Boy, Don really loved me from first sight. He thought that I was absolutely gorgeous ! Nary a scratch could he find. No nicks, no dings, no soft paint, no nothin'. On the side of my enclosure was a Dymo label with Lennart's name and call signs, and it's still there today. He tested me and found that I was very strong, boasting about 1600W on every band (into a dummy load, of course). We were very happy together.

About seven months later he did a very bad thing. He was chasing a new one on CW, got tired of the foot switch on the rig and went to VOX. Little did he know that his relatively new rig (MKV *field* de AA2WC) defaulted to QSK on CW VOX. He had let the smoke out of the T/R relay. I was very sick and didn't talk to him any more. His new friend, Dick Byrd, N4UQ came to the rescue. There I was, again sitting in the back of one of those big, brown trucks. Did you know that there is no light in the back of that truck when the doors are closed? There isn't any light inside that box, either. Anyway, I was on my way to Dick, and he did an excellent job. The T/R relay came from Allen Bond at Max Gain Systems (Dick went across town to pick it up, freshly Hi-pot tested and ready to go). He also replaced the RCA input connector with an SO-239, did the PA meter doubler mod so the meter doesn't peg at legal limit output, touched up the tuned output circuits for bypass mode, and tested me on all bands. \$260 total shipped and insured both directions. How could anyone go wrong?

Then, in June '06, Don made another great find. He had posted an ad looking for spare 8874's for me. That caused me to worry a bit. I thought that he might have decided to run me at my absolute highest input, but I was to learn that he is a bit fussy, and he always prepares for the worst. He got a response from Doug, KA0G, who had just had his 78 converted to 3CX800's by N4UQ. He agreed to sell Don his three 8874's shipped and insured for the price of a single new Svetlana tube. They are not quite as strong as my original tubes, but still do 1400W in bypass mode, and more with manual tuning. Don left these "new" tubes in my final area, satisfied in knowing he has a much hotter set in the closet if he should need them. Life is good.

"Just the facts, ma'am, just the facts." Well, yeah, with a little embellishment, that's my story and I'm sticking to it.. I hope that we (Alphie and Alphredo) will have a long and adventurous life, just working DX and conversing with friends, even if they don't all enjoy the luxury of *Alpha Power*.