

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Each month one of our members is randomly selected and asked to share their ham radio biography with all of us. Questions or comments should go to Paul, KD2MX.

DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the submitting member and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

ROBBY ROBSON, WB5RVZ, #2646



I first got attracted to ham radio in Austin, Texas, around 1946. My next door neighbor (Bob Folmar, W5NZE) had what had to be then a stellar setup. Behind his beautiful, rambling Austin stone house was a building that was a miniature copy of the "big house". That was his shack and beside it was the biggest tower and antenna my six-year-old eyes had ever seen.

One day I screwed up enough courage to ask him what that was all about. He took me into his shack and I was immediately hooked at the sight of those glowing tubes, twitching meters, and those strange voices from distant places emanating from those racks upon racks of equipment. He let me call CQ a couple of times, making sure I knew that one always pronounced the "Z" correctly ("zed").

For various reasons, I never followed through on my fascination and just kept the memories. There were times I thought I might try and get a ticket, but never had an Elmer nor the real drive to follow through.

Then, life got in the way. College; law school; Army; marriage and kids; grad school. But finally, in late 1975, I found the opportunity and an Elmer and got my novice ticket. I found the code, which had been a stumbling block, was not only fascinating, but fun as well.

I received my WB5RVZ call in 1977 after upgrading from Novice to Advanced Class. Unfortunately, life got in the way again and I went into a period of inactivity that culminated in my letting my ticket lapse.

In February of 2007, I made up my mind to get back into ham radio and, starting at the bottom again, got my General and immediately applied for and received my old callsign as a vanity callsign. A couple of weeks later, I pushed on up to Extra in what was obviously more of a compliment to my memorization and test-taking skills than it was to my innate technical skills!

I like CW, though the almost 40-year hiatus has affected my once decent CW skills. I am slowly building my CW copying speed back up; however, since I love straight key, my sending speed is going to be limited by wrists that are 40 years older. To paraphrase, "The fist is willing but the wrist is weak."

I also have discovered many of the newer digital modes and have enjoyed using and experimenting with them, thanks to the efforts of the free software providers (MultiPSK, Digipan, Hamscope, FLDIGI, HRD, etc.).

I have spent my life trying to figure out what I wanted to do when I grew up. I have been a lawyer (TX State Bar), a Military Officer (US Army 1966-1988), a Data Administrator (Mobil Oil), consultant, and a database designer. Still not sure what I want to do when I grow up, although I have been fully retired since 2005 and stay quite busy flitting from hobby to hobby in between enjoying my six grandkids. My wife and I, along with an African Gray parrot and two schnoodles live in Far North Dallas, where HOA restrictions make QRP operation an even greater challenge.

My current infatuation is with Software Defined Radio (SDR), especially the Softrock kits. I have thoroughly enjoyed building and documenting (www.wb5rvz.org) most of the kits offered so far. The Softrock kits got me interested in QRP. They also got me interested enough in SDR to spring for a Flex 3000 (and, later, lust after but not yet get, a Flex 6300).

Recently, I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to develop and field the NAQCC Letters App (<http://naqccletters.azurewebsites.net/>), a website for hams participating in the NAQCC Letter Challenges. The App helps them record their progress in the challenges and, when complete, formats and sends the email report to the challenge managers.

My Membership Numbers

NAQCC: 2646

YL-ISSB - 16545

OMISS: 7280

10-10: 76090

SKCC: 8565

