

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.

WALT PECKHAM, KB1M, #8058



I have recently returned to ham radio after being QRT for 26 years. I had always made sure to renew my license, as I always felt that there would come a time to re-enter the hobby.

In high school, I had tried a novice class but soon dropped out as I just couldn't get past the CW hurdle. In the mid 1970's I got caught up in the C.B. fad, which led to me buying an issue of CQ magazine. Now that was an eye opener! Soon after, I was studying CW with the ARRL cassette tape "Tune In The World With Ham Radio". Natural CW aptitude was not something I possessed, but stubborn determination got me through.

After long months I mastered the tape, and subsequently received novice call WB1HJI in 1977 or 1978. Speed plateaus were never long lived. I received my present call in January 1981. CW soon took a nose dive. As I remember, I had foolishly gotten the idea in my head that 20 plus WPM was expected now. But I preferred a leisurely rate with a straight key.

Phone became my preferred mode, and November 1989 was my last log entry. Finally, in October 2015, having more free time, I decided to get on the air again. CW had been a large expenditure of effort for me, a hard earned skill that I did not want to lose, and also some of my fondest amateur memories were on CW. QRP CW seems a perfect fit for me, the small-size transceiver and headphones allow me to operate in a corner of the living room, so my wife is not left feeling like a "radio widow" with a husband

"holed up" in another room. It was also a low cost way to get my feet wet again. Due to hand injuries, straight keys are a thing of the past and I now make no apologies about my speed.

The NAQCC has been a great resource in re-entering ham radio. I have come to really enjoy and look forward to the QRP sprints. They have been a low pressure skill and confidence builder for me; activity nights in which I can compete against myself, not so much others, while working other QRP enthusiasts on a level playing field. The first monthly challenge I attempted was the June 2016 Field Day Challenge, and while only getting 14 of the required 20 states, it was a success in me starting to get over my fear of making exchanges with much faster operators. The few letter challenges I have done have been a lot of fun and have increased my log entries. DX stations that I previously thought were too weak to call have provided needed letters.

So far my expectation of making a few contacts and having a little fun has been very much exceeded. The magic of radio has returned along with an occasional WOW moment. I have no interest in trying any other modes and so far have felt little need for a 100-watt class transceiver. My goals are simply to have fun and continuously work to be a better operator.

Living in quiet rural N.H. on a hilltop certainly plays a large part in my success and enjoyment of amateur radio. Simple wire antennas strung between trees on my property work well for me. I consider myself very lucky. I feel greatly blessed to have received a warm welcome back from so many radio amateurs. Growing a vegetable garden and occasionally deep sea fishing are some other activities that I enjoy doing during the summer.

