

Mark DeBord – KA4ICK

My interest in radio started out as a young boy, staying overnight sometimes at my grandmother's house. She always listened to the radio at night (AM radio), as she went to sleep. WBZ radio 1030 in Boston (the Larry Glick Show) was her favorite. I could hear it plainly at the other end of the house. Sometimes if it was staticky (later I learned about propagation), she would change it to KDKA in Pittsburgh. As a boy, my imagination about the "far away" places were filled by the talk of Christmas, big snow storms, parades, funny stories from people calling in, etc. I enjoyed listening to the radio so much, I asked for a radio of my own so I could listen to it as I tried to doze off... For Christmas, I received a portable shortwave receiver that I soon discovered was so much more than just the standard AM broadcast listening! I was intrigued by hearing "conversations" (QSO's), occurring among the shortwave broadcasters... This was my introduction to ham radio (they were using AM)! One of the strong AM ham radio operators was K4KYV in Woodlawn, TN.

Shortly after that, I happened to notice an article in my town's newspaper about the "Oldest Ham in Tennessee" who lived close to me here in Kingsport (Forrest Pilgrim W4JD). I ended up visiting his shack and was blown away as I watched him work a German station, using a Vibroplex Racer, on his new Drake TR7 (His old Drake Twins were off to the side). I was hooked!! This of course inspired me to get my own Amateur Radio license. I ordered a copy of "Tune in the World with Ham Radio" that included a cassette tape, narrated by Jean Shepherd K2ORS, that taught me Morse code. I reached out to the ARRL on how I could take the test. They wrote me back and informed me to contact a local ham, John Sanders WB4ANX, to give me the Novice test. In the spring of 1979 at age 14, I received my Novice ticket and was limited to CW only before upgrading several years later.

I've been in and out of the hobby through the years, along with the ebb and flow of gear and antennas. I have always enjoyed the aspect of ham radio, in that, there are many hobbies within the hobby (CW, SSB, ESSB, AM, QRP, digital, contesting, dxing, ragchewing, satellite communications, POTA, SOTA, special events, field day, etc.). But I have always ended up

coming back to CW and working DX, which is my primary mode.

Through work, I have had the opportunity to travel the globe and being on the other end of a DX pileup. I also was thrilled at the opportunity of working the AMer, K4KYV, who I had listened to many years ago on that little portable shortwave radio. I had completed a full circle.... The magic is still there, as strong as it was when I first heard that distant station for the first time.

I also love listening to the Kingsport repeater and meeting local hams.

My other hobbies include photography and hiking.

I hope to work you on the air.

73's,
Mark KA4ICK