



Hello WVARC! I am Don (KK7MGM) and wanted to share a little about myself. My interest in Radio started when I was about 7 Years old. I grew up here in Phoenix and used to listen to the LA Dodgers games on AM Radio. Because I wanted my radio, I would do things to earn an allowance, which was not a steady stream of income and was sparse. To supplement my earnings, I would look for and collect bottles back when you could still get a deposit back on them. Whatever I didn't spend on Spiderman comics or the 2-cent candies at the bottom of the rack, I would set aside for garage sale finds. I would ride my bike around and visit my neighbor's house, where I would go from sale to sale, which seemed to happen every weekend. I would find old radios that they had for sale, some of which were working, and some were not. I would hoard the treasures I received for sometimes as little as 25 cents, and whether it was working or not, I would set to disassembling them, much to my mother's displeasure. She did, however, humor my new hobby. I always seemed to have a knack for getting them working again. I would take the burnt tubes (remember those?) and run up to the SuperX Drug store and put them on the tester, find the bad tubes, and get the replacements. Then I would rush home and set to reassemble these magical boxes.

Later, my father, who was stationed in Alaska, would come home on leave and introduce me to SW Radio from around the world. I was hooked. Next thing you know, I was saving up all my funds and birthday money to get my own Panasonic SW Radio, and the long wire antenna to improve reception. I would sit out back in the lawn with that radio and an Eveready flashlight to explore the world. I always found foreign language stations fascinating. I wondered what they were saying. This is also when I first came across HAM radio, as I would occasionally hear them while scrolling through the dial (a genuine dial!).

Over the years, my interests came and went, and in the Navy, I would often hang out with the signalmen and radiomen above the ship's bridge, but I always returned to that SW radio when I could. Even at sea, I had a small SW radio I would use when out there. It was not until my 40s that I began to develop an interest in Ham Radio. When I was 46, I bought a ham radio HT and learned how to program it with a list I found online. And I would listen to all the conversations and the lingo as it went back and forth. I always wanted to say something but was not allowed to touch the forbidden PTT button.

Finally, at 53 years old, I decided to study and take my technician exam. I studied for about four days and then took the exam. I only missed one question and was super happy to be in the HAM Radio club. I got my callsign a couple of days later and was off to the races. I was never shy about speaking and had a great time. Of course, as you do, I started looking at gear and began exploring HF, knowing I could utilize that little slice as a Technician. But I wanted more. I spent another week studying and then returned in May 2023 to complete my General. I still plan to get my extra, but I have my plate is full with all that is available to me on HF already. So here we are, a couple of years later, and a bunch of radios, and I am now a member of the West Valley ARC and am your Sunday Morning Net control.

I hope you enjoyed my story, and I look forward to speaking with you all and hearing about your journeys.

'73' KK7MGM - Don