

Spotlight – Ken Ainge W7PKA

Ken has always been interested in amateur radio. He says, *Like many people my age, I got caught up in the CB radio craze in the 70s. As a teenager I had a base station at the house. Then when I could drive, I put a mobile CB in my car. Late at night we would drive up to the mountains and see if we could get a skip QSO a few states away; it was great fun. I wanted to get a ham license but the Morse code requirement seemed too overwhelming.*

In college Ken majored in Communications with an emphasis on television. He put himself through college working at KBYU-TV operating the transmitter, often turning on the transmitter early in the morning to begin the broadcast day. *I'm sure most people don't remember a time when TV signed off at night and came back on in the morning*, Ken states. He also worked in the TV truck when KBYU was broadcasting live at sporting events.

Ken's first job out of college was working as a photojournalist for KTVN in Reno, Nevada. A few years later Ken took a photojournalist job with KTVX Channel 4 here in Salt Lake City. After four years at the station, he worked an additional eight years there as their engineer. Another several years of doing live broadcasts for microwave NTSC Television and Ken moved over to Skylink and spent his time covering the news with the up-link truck on the K_u Band, which is the portion of the microwave band from 12 to 18 GHz.



Ken next worked at KTBX Channel 3 in Bryan, Texas. After a decade in television, he took a job in the Department of Technology Services for the State of Utah, working with computers, retiring after 20 years. Afterward, Ken decided it was time to get in to amateur radio. Using the HamStudy app, he passed the Technician exam in October 2024, and was licensed as KK7VSI. One month later, Ken passed the General exam, and then passed the Amateur Extra exam in December, after which he applied for and received the vanity call sign W7PKA. Ken says that the P is for Papa. That's what his kids call him. The K and A are his initials.

One of the things that Ken likes about amateur radio is meeting new people and participating on nets. He also loves to learn and says that there is always something new to learn, especially in ham radio. Ken became active in the Utah Valley Amateur Radio Club's New Ham Net on Thursday nights. When first licensed, the only radio he had was a Baofeng handheld, so he put up a Pockrus J-pole on his roof and joined the net. Later, Ken bought a Yaesu FT-991A.

He also installed a wire J-pole antenna for 10 meters in his attic since he is very active on that band. So far, he has made over 300 contacts with 38 countries. He says that VHF and UHF are fun, but making distant contacts on HF has been awesome, almost addicting. Ken hopes that by spring or summer he can put up a multi-band antenna on the roof of his house so he can use 40 meters and 20 meters. Ken is also interested in digital communications, and uses FT8 for sending short messages using the WSJT-X program. He is also keeping busy with mesh digital communications, using Meshtastic nodes. Ken is a member of UARC and the VHF Society. He also wants to help UVARC with the New Ham Net.

Ken collects coins and loves to spend time with his grandkids. He and his wife Cindy have one boy, three girls, and nine grandchildren. Ken is trying to get his family interested in amateur radio, so he's going to start with the FRS (Family Radio Service) and then help them get their GMRS license.

Ken, we welcome you to amateur radio!



– 73 from Linda Reeder N7HVF