

Spotlight – Tim Julian K7BOM

My name is Tim Julian. For some bizarre reason I was asked to share my ham story. So, here it is.

I'm a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and six years ago our Bishop called me to be over Self-reliance (SR) in our Ward. At the time I had no idea what that entailed. I soon discovered that we had 13 Block Captains and each one had a walkie-talkie, and that each only had a range of about one mile, if that much. Our group had a few Baofeng ham radios, but all this weird talk about *frequencies* was way over my head.

I finally came to the conclusion that to become better equipped to handle a real emergency I would need to become a certified (licensed) ham operator. So, I set a date, immediately paid my money (so I couldn't chicken out), signed up on HamStudy.org, got a set of Technician License Exam Flash Cards from Mometrix, and started studying like a madman. I missed one question (which to this day, I still do not believe I missed), and suddenly I was a licensed ham operator: K7BOM; that is, the BOMB for people not part of the LDS faith, or the Book of Mormon for those who are.

So, now I knew everything about ham radio operation, right? ...uh...nope...still baffled, and I was still not very useful. Fortunately for me, a kind ham radio helper and resource by the name of Noji Ratzlaff sent me an email asking if I needed any help, and so started our great relationship: the NOOB and the ELMER!

I finally got a good handheld ham radio: Baofeng BF-F8HP, and with Noji's help, I used the CHIRP program to start making sense of all those frequencies. Soon I realized I needed to have access to more frequencies. With Noji's help once again, and the two test-study-guides listed above, I passed the General exam with zero mistakes and the more advanced Extra exam with just two mistakes.

Now, let it be known, that I have a Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering and a Master's Degree in Computer Science, yet ham technology is still very foreign. I could however, memorize test question-answers well, so memorizing 1,488 answers was a breeze. :-)

We then decided that for improved reception we needed better antennas, and I purchased the following:

For VHF/UHF: Diamond X-300A, Dual Band, 10 feet tall

For DX HF: Diamond BB7V, 14 feet tall

For local HF: 7-band Off-Center-Fed Dipole Antenna, 140 feet long

I wanted one transceiver that could handle most frequencies, so Noji recommended the Yaesu FT-991A.

I recently had two knee replacements, so Noji climbed up on my roof several times to set up the antennas and lay out and install the coax. He also pounded in the ground rod, attached the lightning arresters, laid out the grounding system, drilled holes through our foundation, and installed a coax switch. With my new antenna analyzer, we tested out the three antennas, and did everything else to bring my new ham shack to life.

Currently, my favorite VHF/UHF nets are the LDS Church ERC Net on Tuesdays at 11:45 am, our once-a-month Stake net, and the Sandy Bishops' Storehouse net on Tuesday nights. My favorite HF nets are the Lindon Bishops' Storehouse on Saturday mornings and the Beehive Net on weekdays.

I'm still learning a ton, and would like to personally thank my Elmers: Noji Ratzlaff KNØJI, George Oates K7BFI, Alan Rasmussen AJ9R, Dave Becar KI6OSS, and too many others to mention, for all the help they have rendered and the patience they have shown me. The bottom line: if you want to succeed as a ham operator, understand well that all noobs need great ELMERs to achieve that success!

– 73, Tim Julian

