

Member Spotlight

Scott Avery, KA4ZZQ

Scott Avery's parents were both amateur radio operators. In fact, they met at a transmitter hunt! Scott grew up in his South Carolina home surrounded by the sights and sounds of ham radio.

"Dad would be on the Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) net and I would be hanging out listening," Scott recalled. "His station was in the only room in the house with an air conditioner, so that was an extra benefit. Dad was a self-employed electronics wizard and even had the WWV station playing as background noise in his work shed."

Despite the ham influences at home, Scott didn't obtain his Novice license until he was a freshman in college in 1982. Although he had the license, he wasn't on the air much until he happened to meet an avid VHF/UHF contester at his job. Scott said, "He really got me motivated to earn my General license and get on the air."

Scott explored different activities, including transmitter hunting, amateur television, contesting, CW, and public service, but he eventually fell in love with 6 meters. "Living in Nebraska, when the band opened up, I would find myself working pileups. What a hoot!"

Parenthood

Like many amateurs, Scott found that parenthood took him off the air for several years. In fact, his daughter's athletic activities brought him to a different hobby. "When my daughter became a gymnast, I decided to procure the necessary gear to photograph her. This led to bigger and fancier stuff and I found there were a whole lot of opportunities to share my talents with the local newspaper and other parents," he said. "I've been shooting high school sports for 11 years at my daughter's

alma mater. I started with football, then I picked up basketball, volleyball, baseball, soccer, wrestling, swimming, and cross country."

Amateur Radio Returns

Scott and his wife recently moved to a new home in a development with a strict homeowners association (HOA). Outdoor antennas are out of the question, but Scott's house has a large attic with enough room to string some antennas, allowing him to return to his amateur radio roots. "I've retained my original call sign as I intended to return to 4 land when I retired, but that may not happen," he said.

His current ham interests are operating Field Day with his local club, trying new HF digital modes, and assisting SATERN — the Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network.

Computers and "Flying"

Computer technology plays a large role in Scott's life. For the last 33 years he has worked as a programmer, primarily with mainframes running COBOL/JCL.

When Scott isn't working with computers at his day job, he's flying World War II-era aircraft in a multiplayer online simulation known as *Aces High*. All aircraft are modeled to simulate the flight characteristics of the real thing, and each is flown by pilots like Scott from around the world. Every pilot has a "call sign" and Scott is known in *Aces High* as "AP Drone." Like Scott, I am also an *Aces High* bomber pilot and have flown with him on several missions.

"While they do have arenas where hundreds of people duke it out in the air, I prefer the historical matchups between two countries such as the US 8th Air Force B17s and B24s



When Scott Avery, KA4ZZQ, isn't working or enjoying amateur radio, he is commanding missions in the multiplayer online simulation *Aces High*.

being escorted into clouds of German fighters protecting their industrial complexes," he said. "I'll often act as the commander of many other bomber pilots. I'm busy designating targets, coordinating coverage with the fighter commanders, setting routes, and managing my own plane's defensive arsenal."

Going Forward

Scott plans to expand his attic antenna farm and eventually configure his station to operate remotely — from many miles away or just from the other side of the house, where his office is located. He also plans to explore VHF digital with Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio (D-STAR).

"My hopes are high for the return of sunspots and abundant activity on 15 meters, one of my favorite bands. In the meantime, I'm active with FT8," Scott said.

With a long career in computer programming, Scott is particularly excited to see the rapid development of digital operating in amateur radio. "There is enormous potential for the hobby, and it is only just now being tapped."