

# Where Are They Now? The Novices of 1970

Fifty years ago, the faces of nine young amateurs appeared on the cover of *QST*. We decided to track them down and see what they've been up to.



## Steve Ford, WB8IMY

The June 1970 cover of *QST* celebrated the Novice Roundup Contest by featuring photographs submitted by nine participants. In the April 2020 issue of the magazine, we reproduced this cover as part of our “A Look Back” section.

As we were preparing the half-century-old cover image, we wondered if any of those young Novices still had their amateur radio licenses today. We decided to find out.

We knew our detective work wouldn't be easy. Assuming they had upgraded their Novice licenses, their call signs would have changed. And as they aged into adulthood,

there was a strong probability that they would've relocated and changed their call signs again — perhaps multiple times.

Of course, all of this assumes that they had remained in the hobby in the first place. We spent considerable time paging through old editions of the *Radio Amateur's Callbook* and searching online call sign databases. We also sifted through public records when call sign histories failed to provide the necessary clues.

## Reaching Out

To our astonishment, we were eventually able to dig up contact information for each of the Novices

shown on the cover. What was even more astonishing is the fact that they had *all* retained their amateur radio licenses.

Most of the former Novices had access to email, so we reached out and asked if they could provide current photographs and brief stories. In a few cases, we had to resort to postal mail to make contact.

The results were gratifying. Of the nine amateurs we attempted to contact, seven responded and said they would be happy to participate in a retrospective article for this issue. In numerical order, clockwise from upper right corner of the cover, here are their stories.

## 1 Larkin Crutcher, WN5WOW — Now WA5WOW

Larkin has remained an active amateur continuously since 1969. He credits amateur radio for introducing him to a love of electronics that eventually turned into a career.



“After high school, I went on to get a degree in electrical engineering,” he said. “I've spent my career designing and building RF/micro-wave and fiber optics circuits and systems. In fact, my first job out of college was working at Rockwell Collins, where I was involved in 6 and 12 GHz waveguide component design. I also did work on quadrature amplitude modulation (QAM) radio systems.”

Today, Larkin is retired and spends time restoring vintage tube equipment. He is currently restoring two Collins R-390As and a Collins R-388. He also does repair work on test equipment.

When he isn't enjoying international travel with his wife or working in his repair shop, Larkin gets on the air with various activities, primarily on the HF bands.

## 2 John Fore, WN2HID — Now W6LD

John is active in amateur radio today, although it hasn't always been that way. His current pursuits include building and maintaining the club station at Stanford University, W6YX, as well as a small contest station in Aruba (P4ØL/P49V; previously P49V), which he has co-owned with Andrew Faber, AE6Y, since 2003.



John says that once he turned 16, he began spending all his free time working at a local electronics/stereo store, which greatly reduced the time available for amateur radio. As a result, he became inactive.

After a long hiatus, John finally returned to the hobby. He said, “I got restarted in amateur radio when I stumbled across the club station at Stanford University while living on campus as a Resident Fellow in the 1980s. I started testing the waters in various contests and eventually connected with the terrific community at the Northern California Contest Club.”

John spent his career in Silicon Valley, primarily with technology start-ups and other growth companies as an outside lawyer in finance (including IPOs), mergers and acquisitions, strategic and other business transactions. Today, he is preparing to retire and looks forward to traveling, contesting from Aruba, and sailing (his other hobby).

### 3 Greg Carter, WN4OPG — Now KX4R

Greg was first licensed in October 1969 at age 15 and has been on the air ever since. He has also been an ARRL member continuously since then.

Greg became a General-class licensee as WB4OPG in 1971. He earned his Advanced-class license the following year and clinched his Amateur Extra in 1978. In 1980, his call sign changed to KX4R.



Upon graduating high school in 1971, Greg attended Georgia Tech University in the hope of earning an engineering degree. However, life had other plans. Greg said, "To help with my expenses at college, I got a job at UPS in 1973 and ended up staying there until my retirement 37 years later in 2010!"

Greg operates, as he explained, "on all bands, 160 meters through 23 centimeters, mainly DXing and contesting. I also collect and restore old tube gear."

CW is Greg's mode of choice, but lately he has been trying some digital modes. "I'm still as fascinated with radio communication today as I was when I was a Novice. Through the years, I have accomplished DXCC #1 Honor Roll (2002), 10-band DXCC, DXCC Challenge Award (2,826 worked), DXCC Phone (only BS7 needed), DXCC CW (only P5 needed), and have accumulated a pretty good collection of vintage equipment from the '30s to the '60s, which will provide me with enough projects to keep me busy for another 50 years."

### 4 Richard Davis, WN9ZAZ — Now N3FDR

Rick is still an active amateur, "but not nearly as much as I would like. My work schedule has only gotten more intense over the last 5 years or so." When time permits, Rick enjoys participating in traffic nets, occasional public service communications support, as well as casual contesting and DXing.



His career has been in the arts, primarily theater, and in higher education. He said, "I got into theater at a very young age through stage lighting, because of my ham radio and electronics interests."

Rick retains his love of the hobby and has many fond memories of his Novice days. "Being a ham has been a nice slice of my life since those early days — off and on, to be sure — but I still 'speak' Morse code fluently, and the early education in electronics still helps me understand things about the world today," he shared. "My older brother, Scott, K5TA, who got me into radio back in the late '60s, is a serious contest operator and I've worked him once or twice in Sweepstakes, but I get nervous that I'll slow him down!"

### 5 Richard Masak, Jr., WN8EIZ — Now WB8EIZ

Although Richard has been continuously licensed since 1969, holding five different call signs in the process, he has been off the air since about 1990.

"Circumstances and other interests took priority over ham radio through the years," he explained. "When my wife, Brenda, and I moved to San Diego in 1987, our backyard was extremely small, but I did strap a Hy-Gain vertical antenna to a chain-link fence along a canyon rim. After a while, I lost interest and finally took it down and put it away. Desert camping, mountain biking, hiking, and Baja, Mexico exploration took a front seat to staying home in front of a radio."



Richard found work in the electronics industry for nearly 20 years. He said, "I have been employed by small companies and large corporations alike. My initial involvement was with Intel 8080 micro-processor diagnostics support for wall-mounted energy management systems." He also spent 4 years in the US Navy in the 1970s, and was more recently employed in retail for a number of years.

Today, Richard is retired and enjoys making and flying kites. "I have yet to use a kite as a sky hook for an HF long-wire antenna, but the thought does cross my mind every now and then," he said. He keeps his amateur radio license current in the hope that someday the bug will bite once again.

## 6 Craig Saunders, WN3NPS — Now WA3NPS

After 50 years, Craig is no longer active in amateur radio, but he still owns a small handheld transceiver. In addition to keeping his license current, Craig considers owning a handheld as his way of maintaining a small stake in the hobby. He said, “I still turn the radio on occasionally, just to listen.”

At the time his photo was taken for the June 1970 QST cover, Craig was an active Novice and involved in his high school amateur radio club. “I made a friend in the club and we’ve remained lifelong pals.”



## 7 Tim Kresky, WNØYMK — Now ABØS

Tim Kresky has been off the air for only 3 years during the last 5 decades. “The longest time away was in my late teens, when amateur radio was replaced by school, work, girls, and partying,” he said.

Today, Tim is involved in contesting, mainly on the HF bands with CW and RTTY. He also enjoys casual FT8 and FT4. He explained, “I go hard with Sweepstakes, both SSB and CW, as part of the longstanding WØNO, KØWA, and ABØS multioperator team. I also love the CW North American QSO Parties and Sprints.” Tim is a proud member of CWops and the Deep Dixie Contest Club.



He didn’t pursue a career in electronics, but instead earned his undergraduate degree in accounting and acquired his Master’s in business administration. Today, he is the financial controller for one of many factories owned by an international farm equipment manufacturer.

“I’ve been a ham since 1969 and married since 1975, with two grown children,” Tim said. “While they all appreciate and support my hobby, none have an interest in it. I live in a small town with a 30-foot limit on antenna heights, so my home station is limited to a multiband vertical antenna.”

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### Where Are You Now? Tell Us!

Maybe you’re the same age as these hams, with similar “before” and “after” photos. Take a minute to write to us about what you were doing in ham radio 50 years ago, and send it, along with a photo of your “good old radio days,” to [celebrate@arri.org](mailto:celebrate@arri.org). Selected stories may appear in QST’s monthly “Celebrating Our Legacy” column.

