Jim was first licensed in 1972 as WN9IZQ. His interest in radio and electronics started as a shortwave listener and grew when he was given a Model 19 teletype machine at the age of 14. After building an ST-5 demodulator kit so he could receive RTTY, he was offered a job at HAL Communications during his high school years. This hobby and work experience started his lifelong love of ham radio, and a future career in electrical engineering.

Jim's first official contest was the 2003 ARRL RTTY Roundup, shortly after which he joined the Tennessee Contest Group. At first, most of his competing was with RTTY, but once he became more comfortable with CW contesting, he was off to the races.

Everything accelerated in 2009, when fellow TCG members Ted (W4NZ) and Don (N4ZZ) twisted his arm to get into mobile contesting. Jim took the bait, and found it to be the most exhilarating and enjoyable radiosport activity he's ever done. Most years he can be found operating mobile in 5 state QSO parties, including FL, TX, TN, IL, GA, AL, and OH. Some of these are done as multi-op, but most are done single op with driver. That driver and navigator being his talented wife Melody (KI4HVY).