

Spotlight on Night-Hawk!

What is your real name?

Tom Kidd



Think he's having fun here?

What do you do for a living?

I have owned a State Farm Insurance agency in Greensboro for 27 years.

Care to share any information on your family - Are any of them Geocachers?

I have been married to Angie for 25 years. How she put up with me for that long is a huge mystery. We have 2 daughters, Kristina and Savannah. My first cache was found as a family and Kristina was the one who made the discovery. They have all cached with me on a limited basis and the girls will still go a couple of times a year. When we go on vacation however, they have no choice but to enjoy the service stations en route to our destination. My girls convinced me to take them to Nashville last year by telling me I could cache while they were enjoying Nashville. I made them pay by turning the return trip of 8 hours into almost 12 hours. My older daughter ended up taking over the driving duties just so they could get home. So I guess the answer to the question is... YES, we do cache together!!

When did you start geocaching and what was the first cache that you found?

I found my first cache on August 12, 2001. The cache was "Hawk 1-A", GCCAD. That cache is less than 1 mile from my home and it is currently the oldest active cache in Guilford County.

Where did you first learn about caching? If another geocacher, who?

In August 2001 saw a blurb on WFMY News 2 one Friday night about a treasure hunting game. It caught my attention so I went to the website they referred to and did a little reading. I had an extra \$400 lying around that I had not spent, so the next morning I went to Office Depot and bought a Magellan MAP330. I went home, turned it on and noted the coordinates of my home. When I entered those numbers on the website, I discovered there was a cache was less than 1 mile from home. At that time, there were only about 10 caches in Guilford County. There was no such thing as a Park & Grab.

What is the origin of your caching name?

When I first signed up on the website, I had to have a name so my "original" name was "goodnabr". On March 9, 2002 (7 months after finding my 1st cache) I found my 4th cache. The country had been through 9/11 and everyone was being patriotic so I started leaving American Flag lapel pins in caches as a signature item. I changed my name at that time to "The Flag". During those days, you could change your name whenever you wanted to. On June 2, 2002 I was sitting at the computer when a new cache popped up and it was not that far from home. I took off for the cache at 11pm because I knew if I did not get it then, Hawk-Eye would get it in the morning. It was my 1st FTF, my 3rd night cache and

Spotlight on Night-Hawk!

only my 18th cache in 10 months. I didn't know of anybody else who hunted at night so I thought I would change my name to Night-Hawk.

What has been your most memorable caching moment so far?

Wow... what a question. There have been SO MANY. Without going into details, here are a few... in no particular order:

- a) 3 weekend solo runs to complete the NC DeLorme challenge
- b) 4 trips to Bristol, TN with friends
- c) 2 weekend runs to complete the NC County Challenge
- d) Attending GW6 with friends... the Pacific Coast Highway is amazing.
- e) Being involved with GW5
- f) Elvis Confluence

What kind of caches do you most enjoy looking for (size/location/etc.)?

Any cache that results in a smiley... I like'em ALL.

Do you enjoy events? If so, what are the things that you like about them?

The first event I attended was on Jan 5, 2003 (NOT JUST FOR THE BIRDS! A Winter Wildlife Cache – GCB61B) and it is listed as a regular cache today... I'm not sure we had the "event" icon in those days. We met at Ham's Restaurant in Greensboro and then went out in the woods and placed a cache. That cache is still active today. I didn't know anybody as I had cached alone 100% of the time and we did not have PAF in those days. I remember meeting David&Diana, honeychile and Bartacus. I love events now because I get hints... I mean I meet new people.

Describe your ideal cache hunt.

I still enjoy a nice hike with a "not so hard to find" cache at the end. I also enjoy a cache run with friends...

How many times have you been stopped or questioned by the police while caching or driving to a cache?

At least 2 dozen times... One of those stops cost me \$115 but I was able to record that one as a "geocache"... >>FLITS<< (GC38D4). That cache was a locationless cache which we no longer have. I emerged from the woods one night in Winston-Salem with about 7 police cars surrounding my car. As it turns out, I had calculated some final coordinates wrong and I was searching at night in a high drug traffic area. This past January on a run to Wilmington with BearOakDruid, a policeman called us out from behind a sign at UNC-W at 2am with one hand holding a flashlight and the other hand on his gun. Once we told him what we were doing, he got back in his car and went about his business.



Spotlight on Night-Hawk!

About to jump into the Pacific Ocean, or not

We understand that on a trip to Bristol in 2008 the car stopped and everyone got out but there wasn't a cache there. What was up with that?

There were 5 of us (creacher, lilmahhikenbike, The White Dragon Clan, BearOakDruid and myself) in the car on a cache run trip. It was about 18° outside and we had just found a cache and were driving away and well... I'm not pointing fingers, but... someone in the car ate some bad food and the rest of us paid the price. The windows in the car were up and "locked" so getting the windows down would have taken longer than stopping the car and getting out. So, at 3am, I stopped in the middle of the road, all 4 doors swung open and all 5 of us leaped from the car. Use your imagination to fill in the gaps here.

Any other interests outside of geocaching?

I still like to go backpacking when I can. I have been hiking the Appalachian Trail in sections. I also like traveling to places with my family but the first thing I do when we make plans is to run a Pocket Query on where we are going.

Have other people become geocachers as a result of you introducing them to our sport? If so, about how many people?

I have no idea how to answer this question. I have relatives who have taken up the sport and I have discussed geocaching with a lot of people. Ryan Bosley and I even taught a couple of classes on geocaching at the local Gander Mountain here in Greensboro.

What type of GPS do you use and do you use it for anything besides geocaching?

I own the following GPS receivers:

Magellan MAP330

Garmin 60CS

Garmin 60CSx

Garmin Oregon 400t

Garmin Street Pilot 2820

I use the Garmin 2820 to get my car close to a destination, I jump out of the car with the 60CSx to find the cache and I use the Oregon as a secretary when I get back to the car... I also use the 60CSx for backpacking.

How often do you geocache now?

I cache EVERY day. As of this writing, I have found one or more caches EVERY day for the last 776 days in a row. I CAN stop anytime I want to.

Do you prefer to cache alone or with others and why?

BOTH actually... I used to cache alone exclusively. I think a long hike alone in the woods is very relaxing but I think caching with friends creates priceless memories... I finished up the NC DeLorme challenge alone by taking 3 weekend trips, I finished the NC County Challenge on a weekend trip with BOD and the trips to Bristol, TN with The High Point Mafia are ALWAYS fun. Each of those trips created memories that will last forever... I've had a blast.

Spotlight on Night-Hawk!



Tom in a redwood

If you could hide a cache anywhere on the planet (forget the guidelines for this one), where would you put it and why?

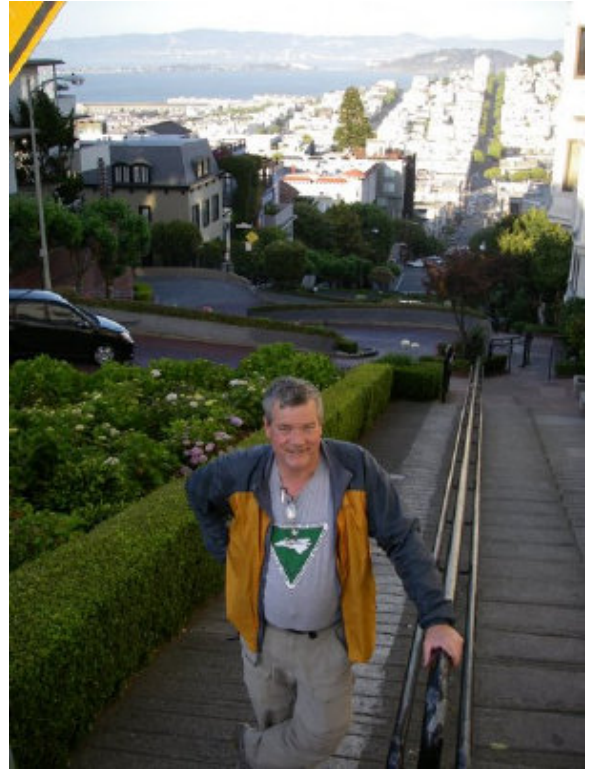
On the Appalachian Trail in the Shenendoah National Park.

Can you think of a theme song that would best describe your caching experiences?

I think I would have to adopt 2 songs...

Willie Nelson's 1980 song "On the Road Again" would be an obvious choice as my main song. My 2003 Expedition just turned 200,000 miles and at least 75% of those miles have to be geocaching miles.

Johnny Cash's "I've Been Everywhere" would be another good choice as it relates to my travels in North Carolina.



Tom in San Francisco

Do you have any geocaching goals you are getting close to (milestone number, DeLorme or County challenges, number of states, streaks, etc.)?

I reached the only "numbers" goal I had on a trip with the High Point Mafia in February. I was with them when I reached 10,000 finds. That was also one of the most memorable days I have had while caching. I completed the NC DeLorme Challenge, the NC County Challenge and The Well Rounded Cacher Challenge all while keeping my streak of "days in a row" going. I will complete my distant goal of finding a cache in every state at some point but that is not a current "active" goal.

Do you often trade items in and out of caches and do you have any signature item(s)?

I try to trade TBs and Geocoins whenever I can. I never "discover" items in a cache... I try to move them.

Spotlight on Night-Hawk!

What was the best item you ever found in a cache?

I found a Standing Liberty coin in a cache in Kernersville that says it is 1 ounce of 99.99% pure silver. I still have that coin today and it is quite tarnished now.

Who is this other woman Betty that we keep hearing about?

Betty is the name that has been given to my Garmin Street Pilot 2820. She guides the car to the caches and when I miss a turn, she has quite an attitude. She gets me where I want to go and then she gets me home and honestly, without my track log, I have no idea how I got there or how I got back home.

What happened to your old camera?

I went on a cache adventure with SSShaarkie1 and BOD to grab some caches on the Dan River that had popped up. It was the maiden voyage of the canoe, April 27, 2008, that I bought so I could go after boat access caches. The water levels were up enough for us to navigate the Dan River. At our first stop for a cache (GC18B7WC), I soon discovered that I would have to wade through chest deep, rushing water, to get to GZ. After making the cross through that area I reached for my waterproof camera and it was GONE. The rushing water floated the camera out of my pocket. It has some great pictures on it too. I placed a cache a little later and named it "Have You Seen My Camera?" (GC1BPXC). I also offered a reward of \$100 for anyone who finds it... that offer is STILL valid.

Do you have any advice to beginners for seeking and/or hiding caches?

I usually advise new cachers to start with an ammo can or a larger cache that has been found recently so they will not get frustrated with the game. I also tell them to look for something unnatural in a natural place. I have never seen short sticks naturally fall in a parallel formation. Some

of the urban caches can be VERY deceiving and trying to find an easy urban cache may prove to be difficult to someone who is not used to finding caches. I try to discourage new cachers from placing caches until they at least learn how to use the GPSr but... there are no rules on when or who can hide caches. After placing a cache and recording the coordinates, walk away and see if the coordinates you marked will take you "near" the cache. A new cacher will often mark the spot and never check the coordinates. Consistently bad coordinates are not something you want to be known for.

Anything else? The soapbox is yours.

I'm just grateful to have had the opportunity to meet so many good people through Geocaching. We all have a common interest and we ALL have a story to tell. I could talk for hours more about Geocaching... I have LOTS of good stories.



I hope this one doesn't get him in trouble but he didn't send me any pictures and I just had to do it!