

CQ de WA2LQO

Sixty Nine Years: 1944 -2013

The official voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club

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GARC PICNIC AUGUST 21st

See Presidents Note for Details

How I Became a Ham (continued from July 2013)

By Bob Wexelbaum, W2ILP

Synopsis: As promised, Lou Pascal, W2LTQ phoned the ARRL Emergency Coordinator, W2DUP and told him about my avid interest in becoming a ham. This led to a visit of The Bronx Radio Club, where I was the youngest person there, and met hams and other wanna-be hams. There, I was inspired to become an EE.

My first meeting of The Bronx Radio Club was followed by many other monthly meetings to which I was transported by Lenny Nachemov, W2DUP. Lenny also brought me to his own QTH to see his ham stations. He lived alone in a small apartment on the top floor of the building. His QTH at that time was 3258 Corsa Avenue, Bronx, NY. This is in the Hunt's Point district of the east Bronx. It is not far from the American Banknote Company building, where paper money and postage stamps are printed for many foreign nations. Hunts Point was also an industrial area of junk yards. It later became famous as the early home of General Colin Powell. I grew up in an area that is within Hunt's Point where wild goats sometimes wandered into the streets from the point. I lived on 866 Stebbins Ave. during first to second grades at P.S 40 and on 891 Dawson St, near Intervale Ave. from third to fourth grades at P.S. 39. That area was named "Fort Apache" by the NYC police, sometime after we moved further north in the Bronx to 1154 Stratford Ave where we were within the Sound View - Classon's Point district where I attended P.S. 77 and James Monroe High School. [A map of The Bronx is shaped like a ghost and the east Bronx has its ghostly sheet pointing out into the East River.] It was there on Stratford Ave. where we celebrated VE and VJ Days (the end of WWII) and mourned the death of FDR. It was there that I saw the "cold war" begin.

Getting back to Lenny W2DUP's apartment, it was filled with his HF station and his 2-Meter station. There was no SSB at that time and not much NBFM. Lenny's station was all separate receivers and transmitters which he built himself. He had a manually rotated 2 Meter folded dipole antenna in his apartment. In addition he had very fine precision signal generators, grid-dip meters, SWR bridges, oscilloscopes, spectrum analyzers and panoramic adapters; all of which he built himself, sometimes based on Hewlett Packard designs. Everything was calibrated using standards that were traced back to WWV in Colorado. I mention that fact because many hams came to Lenny to check out and calibrate ham equipment, especially for 2-Meters where they couldn't afford to buy VHF items. In addition to helping youngsters become hams, Lenny served as an informal teacher for many poor kids who were interested in radio technology. Two of his "students" became electronic technicians which I later worked with professionally.

Because I was disappointed by not being hired to work as a TV technician for Lou, W2LTQ, I decided that I would start my own radio repair business. I needed money to buy a good HF receiver and to buy parts for many experiments and projects that I wanted to try. I realized that I could not build a good communications receiver with parts of discarded AM radios. That is because I needed better IF transformers than those used in BC receivers, and I was unable to make such transformers myself at that time. So I set my goal at getting either a National NC-57 or a Hallicrafters S-40, both of which were being sold for about \$90. That was a lot of money to have to spend at one time. I eventually did select the NC-57 because it had a voltage regulated power supply

for the oscillators, ceramic band switch wafers, and it also covered 6-Meters; all of which features were lacking in the S-40. I also needed money to start the radio-TV repair business. My friend Marvin and I decided to be partners in the business. Marvin was asked to help by lending our business enough money to buy Heathkit test equipment that was advertised in the Popular Science magazines. Marvin's mother thought that we were crazy, but she realized that it might be a good experience even if it proved to be a failure. I built a Heathkit VTVM, an RF signal generator and a tube checker. I had wanted an oscilloscope but it was beyond our budget. I built my own signal tracer using the audio amplifier stages of a discarded radio. Marvin also supplied me with hand tools and a metal tool box. Marvin and I traveled using Marvin's bicycle...with me and my tools on the back seat. Most of my customers were near-by friends and neighbors who knew me because of the many long wire antennas I had installed on the roof. They also thought that I was a genius because I had correctly predicted that the roof would eventually support a forest of TV antennas, at a time when nobody had a TV set.

LTQ had showed me where I could get radio and TV parts wholesale, but if I wanted to do business there, without getting LTQ to buy the stuff for me, I would need to have my own business cards and letterheads. Marvin and I had the cards and letterheads printed at a local printer. The printer was a WWII veteran, who had just started his own business. He gave us a good deal on the printing job and allowed us to put up an advertising poster in his store window for free. We used Marvin's phone number because I did not have a phone at home. The cards read "*We Excel* **WEXEL Radio and TV Repairs**". The letterheads also added, "Radio Repairs – TV installations - Custom built amplifiers". We could then go to the wholesaler by bicycle and were accepted as professional customers. This advantage gave me access to a free subscription to a trade magazine. Each month the magazine published a fold out schematic diagram of a different TV set. It was free and a lot better than having to buy expensive "Sam's Photo Facts" for each TV set that we might come across. As in many trade magazines there was what we call "bingo cards" in each issue. These were postage paid cards that had the numbers of many advertisers. I could circle numbers of those cards to get free catalogs, free cardboard slide rules, free manuals and free subscriptions to newsletters from companies including RCA, GE, and Sylvania. Some of the newsletters were written especially for hams. The most interesting find was a monthly little (7 5/8" x 5 3/8") magazine called "The Capacitor", which was published by Cornell-Dubilier. I still have copies of that publication from April 1949 to July 1953, although I no longer have any earlier ones. "The Capacitor" will be shown to be a very important factor in how I became a ham! Unfortunately the trade magazines with the TV schematics were discarded by my mother when I was in military service. The old catalogs are now obsolete but I still have some that I saved for historical value...and the slide rules will never become obsolete. (To be continued.)

PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV

It is now August, when the usual club meeting is replaced by the annual picnic. It is on Wednesday, August 21st at Marjorie Post Park in Massapequa, where we have held it before. While the official starting time is the usual 5:30 PM, if you can get there early, please come by to give the guys a hand with the cooking.

Directions: Seaford Oyster Bay Expwy (NY135) south to the very last exit for Merrick Road (NY27A) east, and proceed 3 miles to Unqua Road. Turn left onto Unqua for 1000 feet and then turn left into the park. Make yet another left and then a right to get to the large parking lot. Look for the gazebo at the farthest end of the lot. If you prefer to travel from Suffolk on Sunrise Highway, just past the Sunrise Mall you can turn left onto Unqua Road and go about ¾ mile to the park on your right.

I got an e-mail from the trade magazine "Military and Aerospace Electronics" where editor John Keller said how countering the ever-growing threats to our military's secure satellite communications systems are making them ever more expensive. He then added that "military leaders are giving troposcatter communications, HF radio, and other terrestrial forms of long-haul communications another look." That came as quite a pleasant surprise. Deep down inside we always felt that ham radio techniques are universal and will always be useful. Feels good to have that feeling validated for once.

**GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 7/17/2013
By Karen, W2ABK**

The meeting was called to order by Ed at 5:45 PM

TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

Finances continue to be in good shape.

REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB

Repeaters are working OK.

NET REPORT – Karen, W2ABK

Thursday night net at 8:15 PM on 146.745 MHz had one check-in.

Thursday night net at 8:30 PM on 145.330 MHz had one check-in.

Sunday morning net at 7:30 AM on 7.289 MHz had 0 check-in.

VE REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

2 applicants applied for the Technician test and passed. One upgraded to General and one failed the General. 4 VEs were present: Ed, WB2EAV, George, WB2IKT, Dave, AB2EF, Karen, W2ABK

OLD BUSINESS

Discussing repair of the club's 40 Meter Double Bazooka Antenna.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussing plans for next month's picnic.

PROGRAM

Jack brought in old Field Day pictures from 1990.

GARC NETS: 40 Meters: 7.289 MHz at 7:30 AM EST Sundays

Net Controller: Eugene, W4JMX

2 Meters (repeaters) Thursdays: 146.745 MHz (-600 kHz) at 8:15 PM

145.330 MHz (-600 kHz) at 8:30 PM. Tone for both repeaters: 136.5 Hz.

GARC Net Controller Karen, W2ABK

ARES/RACES NETS: Mondays.

MEETINGS

General Meetings of the GARC are held on the third Wednesday of each month, starting at 5:30 PM, at the Ellsworth Allen Park in Farmingdale. Driving directions and map can be obtained from <http://www.mapquest.com>. It is suggested that the GARC web site be checked to be certain of meeting location, which may change after this newsletter is distributed. Board meetings are held a week before the General Meeting at the Bethpage Skating Rink.

WEBSITE

The GARC web site can be found at <http://www.qsl.net/wa2lqo> . Webmaster is Pat Masterson, KE2LJ. Pictures of GARC activities, archives of newsletters, roster of members, and other information about the GARC may be found there.

INTERNET LINK OF THE MONTH FOR INTERNERDS

The Internet link for this month is:- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2381805/warning-ahead-98-cent-drivers-understand-dashboard-lights.htm>

You might think that you would be able to recognize all of the 64 symbols that come up or flash alerts on your new car's dashboard but it seems that 98 percent of British drivers can't seem to do so. I don't know how many American motorists would also fail to recognize the symbols. Many symbols serve as important warnings that should not be ignored. Symbols are needed because spelling out stuff would take up too much space on modern flat screens, but more importantly because they can be universally read by people who speak many different languages...or are illiterate. If you are confused when interpreting symbols you might become distracted when driving and lose control of your vehicle! This could lead to DWIS charges...Distracted When Interpreting Symbols...I think.

In a similar manner airplane pilots must be trained to quickly recognize many digitally enabled symbols that can come up on their new flat screen displays and control panels.

Perhaps the Ancient Egyptians used symbols rather than phonetic rhetoric when they built the pyramids and obelisks because the workers babbled in different languages.

Ever since H. P. Maxim built early autos and Henry Ford mass produced the Model A here in the USA there had been a lack of communication with English automobile nomenclature. British English differs from American English. The article above comes from a British newspaper so let me translate the differences:

21) Tire Pressure Low 52) Hood Open 58) Windshield Defroster 59) Trunk Open 64) Auto Windshield Wiping

In this modern day of Global communication, you would expect English nomenclature to be uniform worldwide, but what Americans call "Cell Phones" the Brits call "Mobiles". I think that cell phones are named incorrectly. The "Cell" of the cell phone is the area covered by a cell transponder. Few cell phone users know or care about that. The word *cell* has too many different biological, electrical and legal definitions already.

Remember that your AAA, AA, B or C cells are not batteries. They are technically only 1.5 Volt cells. A battery must be made up of a number of cells. The little 9 volt Snap-On batteries are batteries because they contain six 1.5 Volt cells. A 12 volt automobile battery is a battery because it contains six 2 Volt cells.

Because of occasional power failures, people are buying gasoline powered emergency electrical *GENERATORS*...but wait...Technically they are buying alternators, not generators. Alternators **generate** AC. Generators generate DC...but "generate" used as a verb, but not as a definition of a rotary device, can debatably be used for any device or system that "generates" anything! The electrolysis of water can *generate* Hydrogen and Oxygen. No nit-picking technical editor or IEEE standard can alter what is now commonly accepted.

PUZZLE

This month I'll again ask the following question from the Amateur Extra Class Exam:-

What is a liquid-crystal display (LCD)?

- A. A modern replacement for a quartz crystal oscillator which displays its fundamental frequency
- B. A display that uses a crystalline liquid to change the way that light is refracted
- C. A frequency-determined unit for a transmitter or receiver
- D. A display that uses glowing liquid to remain brightly lit in dim light

Last month I asked his question from the Amateur Extra Class Exam:-

What is the definition of "baud"?

- A. The number of data symbols transmitted per second
- B. The number of characters transmitted per second
- C. The number of characters transmitted per minute
- D. The number of words transmitted per minute

The correct answer is A.

GARC 2013 Officers

President: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV M/S:X08-14 516-575-0013 edward.gellender@ngc.com
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Vice President: Gordon Sammis, KB2UB Retiree 631-666-7463

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Treasurer: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV (see above)

WA2LQO Trustee: Ray Schubnel, W2DKM Retiree

2 Yr. Board Member: Jack Cottrell, WA2PYK Retiree 516-249-0979

1 Yr. Board Member: Dave Ledo, AB2EF

1 Yr. Board Member: Jack Hayne, WB2BED

1 Yr. Board Member: George Sullivan, WB2IKT

Newsletter

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Editor: W2ILP 631-499-2214 W2ILP.RADIO@gmail.com

Contributing writers: All GARC members (we hope). To submit articles or ham equipment advertisements contact the editor. Articles will only be edited when permission is granted by the author.

GARC Webmaster

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GARC VE Exams

We normally proctor exams for all classes of ham licenses on the second Tuesday of each month, starting at 5:30 PM. The exams may be given at various locations. Ham Exams are: Element 2 – Technician, Element 3 - General, Element 4 – Amateur Extra Class. All applicants must pre-register to determine the location of a VE session by contacting Ed Gellender WB2EAV. Time and location of exams are subject to change. If there are no applicants VE sessions will be canceled. The fee for 2013 is \$14 for all exams taken at one sitting. New first time applicants should be aware that their Social Security Number will be required on the application form unless they register with the FCC for an FRN. Applicants for an upgrade should bring their present license and a photocopy of it. All applicants should bring picture ID such as a driver's license. Study material may be bought from the ARRL-VEC or W5YI-VEC <http://www.arrl.org> or <http://www.w5yi.org>. All VECs use the same Q & A pools.

Editorial

I finally have some good personal news to report. My daughter, Rachel S. Wexelbaum, has officially been granted tenure at St. Cloud Minnesota State University. She is now an Associate Professor! She will continue her academic education so as to become a Full Professor.

On July 19th I celebrated my 80th birthday. It isn't easy getting old as most of you may well understand. I am physically unable to do many things that I formerly took for granted. Fortunately I remain able to keep my mind busy....I think. My long term memory is good enough to remember past history that is required to write the continuing saga of how I became a ham. I have documents to prove everything I write about, because some of it might seem much too coincidental to be true.

As of his time I think that my XYL and I will be able to attend the picnic, so I look forward to seeing all who will be there.

--W2ILP (I Like Picnics)--

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215 Birchwood Park Drive
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PICNIC WEDNESDAY AUGUST 21 – See page 2 for details

MY OLD LOG

Ever since my son Mark returned from American Samoa he has been living with us. To make room for him I have been ordered by my XYL to get rid of some of my books and archives that have filled up three bedrooms of our home. This is a formidable task because most of the stuff is unorganized. I have been going through the job of trying to get rid of some of the papers that were college notes, old snail mail, computer print-outs, essays and poetry, etc. trying to find stuff that I no longer need. In the course of doing so I spend a lot of time reading the old stuff and cannot part with a lot of it because it means something to me. I must admit it is a result of my own egotistical belief that someday I might want to refer to it, in the same way that amateur photographers may save too many old pictures. Today we can save texts and pictures on CDs that can take up less space than the photo albums, books and papers of yesteryears. Anyway I came across an old amateur radio log book (ARRL log book, priced at 50 cents) that covered W2ILP operations from 1965 to 1971. This particularly interests me because most of the operation was on 20 Meter SSB. I moved from The Bronx to Commack in 1969. I used a vertical $\frac{1}{4}$ wave antenna in the Bronx, with a ground plane provided by a flat roof that was painted with conductive aluminum paint. In Commack I had a rotary Mosley tri-band beam on a 50 foot tower. In the Bronx I had a Heathkit HW-32, driving a Heathkit HA-14. In Commack I advanced to a Heathkit HW-101, driving the same HA-14 “Kilowatt compact”. The old log recorded contacts with 40 US states and 84 DX nations (not enough for WAS or DXCC). There was a lot of chatting on many of the QSOs...not just signal reports. There were attempts by me to communicate in Spanish, and even some chess games scheduled and played on 10 Meters. There were Certificate Hunters Club (CHC) and Flying Ham Club (FHC) contests that were run by K6BX. My daughter got a hold of the log book when she was leaning to use a pencil and she doodled on some of the pages. It’s all old history now. I haven’t put any of it in the ARRL Log Book of the World. My antennas are limited now and I seldom QSL. –w2ilp--